Market Research in the wider world

Contributed by ICG
Thursday, 21 September 2006
Last Updated Thursday, 21 September 2006

Market Research in the wider world

Recent Survey Results from Ciao and the Independent Consultants Group highlights the role of market research outside its traditional heartland

20 September, 2006 (London, UK) â€“ Results published this week from a recent online survey conducted by Ciao illustrates how users of market research value working with independent consultants in comparison to larger agencies. The survey results highlight the range of client-side job roles that buy market research and lend insight into reviewing the role that market research plays in the wider world.

A White Paper, discussing the findings in detail, was released today by the Independent Consultants Group (ICG). More information is available on http://www.indepconsultants.org/ or by emailing whitepaper@indepconsultants.org

Tim Williams, Chairman of the ICG, explains that the survey was conducted by Ciao in June 2006 among users of market research in their online panel. â€œIt was aimed to investigate the role of research in the wider world, outside the traditional users within the Marketing context. We were interested in what respondents have to say about working with a variety of players, independent consultants as well as agencies,â€• says Williams.

â€œThe study highlights how the use of market research has expanded across a range of functions within organizations from sales to finance and IT, for example. This indicates a shifting dynamic about researchâ€™s relationships with the other functions within client organizations,â€• continues Williams. â€œImportantly, market research is highly valued as a source of information in these organizations and itâ€™s seen as having become more integrated into the organization in recent years.â€œ Anecdotal evidence and open-ended responses also suggest that many people think that market research is becoming easier to conduct and increasingly important as well.

The Ciao-ICG White Paper also looks at the range of suppliers used for market research and highlights the important role of independent market research consultants in addition to market research agencies. Survey findings show that users have a positive image of independent consultants, valuing their creativity and good working relationship in particular. Small/medium research agencies are also valued but more for their experience, practical skills and value. In contrast the large/global research agencies are seen much more negatively as offering more off the shelf options rather than understanding the clientâ€™s problem.

54% of the sample think that independent consultants are free thinking and creative, whereas 15% think that global agencies are
52% think that independent consultants are good listeners whereas 17% think that global agencies are
57% think that the large global agencies want to sell a solution rather than necessarily understand the clientsâ€™ problem whereas only 15% think that independent consultants do this.
Â

Williams also states, â€œA key learning from this project is that the research industry needs to be more flexible and to adapt its skills as it moves away from the traditional Marketing client base. Clearly this is an area where independent researchers have developed their skills.â€•

Â