MRIA Standards for Public Release of Market Research Results

Members of the MRIA all have in common the single goal of encouraging excellence in the conduct of marketing, social and opinion research in Canada and elsewhere. In addition, MRIA promotes the responsible use of research for decision making in the public and corporate domains and works to increase public understanding of research methods.

In order to preserve public confidence in public opinion research—a science of mutual importance to the Media and Market Research industries—please consider our following recommendations before releasing survey data to the public:

1) Please include the following key facts in the report:
   • Sample size, and population surveyed (who was included)
   • Sponsor of study (who commissioned the research)
   • Survey method (e.g. telephone, on-line, intercept)
   • Timing (when the survey was done)
   • Statement of sample error/margin of error (i.e. “+/- 2.5% 19 times out of 20”)

2) Please make the following facts available to the public upon request (if not included in report):
   • Name of practitioner (company conducting research)
   • Sampling method (e.g. random, custom list)
   • Weighting procedures (statistical weights, if used)
   • Exact wording and order of questions

3) Always differentiate between scientific (most public opinion polls) and non-scientific studies (reader/viewer polls or other “self-selection” methodologies).

4) Where appropriate, use the caveat that research is not necessarily predictive of future outcomes, but rather captures opinion at one point in time.

Additional Standards for Reporting on Qualitative Research

Additional considerations should be adhered to when reporting on qualitative research observations (such as focus groups, or other small sample in-depth research).

5) Clearly defined recruiting specifications (i.e. product usage, party affiliation, specific demographic specifications, etc...)

6) Inclusion of statement of non-projectability. Results of qualitative research are not statistically projectable to the population at large.

7) Qualitative reporting should not include percentages or precise proportions. Expressions such as some, most, or a few, may be used.