the SAMPLER
from Response Analysis

An informal newsletter to acquaint our clients and other friends with Response Analysis techniques, findings, and people.

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ELECTRIC VEHICLES SHORT OUT IN SURVEY

Proponents of electric-powered vehicles felt their time had finally come when the energy crisis hit last winter. In January 1974, the Electric Vehicle Council asked us to conduct a survey on knowledge and attitudes in this area. The results were not too encouraging.

Public Misunderstands

As announced by J. H. Young, Executive Secretary of the Council, the public misunderstands, to a surprising degree, the availability of alternatives to the internal combustion engine which are currently on the commercial market.

Golf carts are the only vehicle recognized by a majority of the public as being available in an electric-powered version. (Men are more likely than women to be aware of this fact.)

Results Listed

Public knowledge of other electric-powered vehicles is as follows:

Fork-lift trucks used in plants	45%
Lawn mowers	22%
Garden tractors	22%
Passenger cars	20%
Buses	18%
Delivery vans	15%

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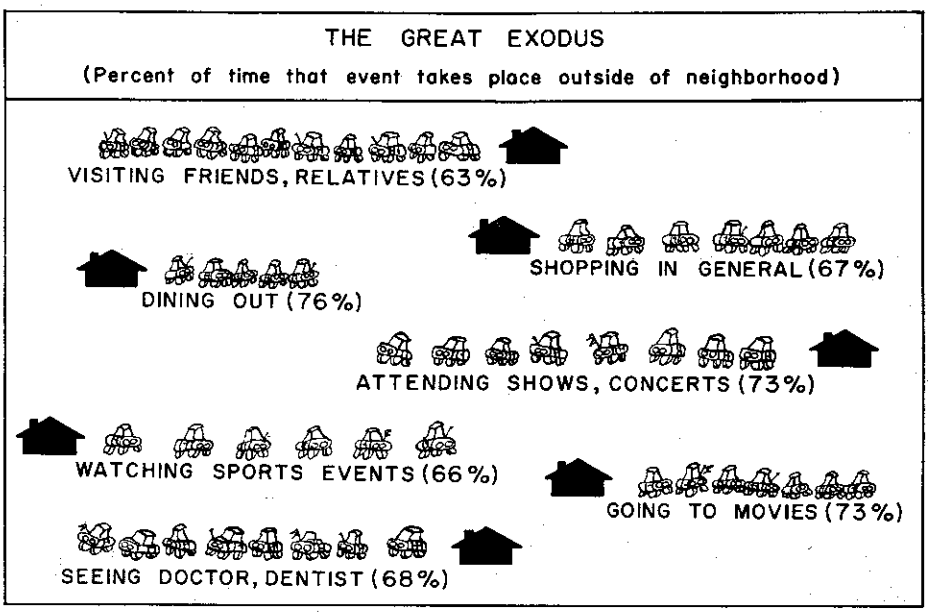

STUDY DOCUMENTS HOW AUTOMOBILES RELEASE TIES TO NEIGHBORHOODS

As anyone masochistic enough to read sociological journals knows, the availability of the car has allowed people to buy homes and accept employment in areas where they never become part of the community. This fact of life was vividly demonstrated in a Spring 1974 study that we conducted for the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc.

In the survey, random samples of telephone households were constructed for five metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Boston, Erie (Pa.), Omaha, and Portland (Ore.). In each household, the lady of the house was contacted twice by phone and once by means of a mail questionnaire. In addition, each was asked to keep a three-day diary on all shopping activities, including purchases and travel. Husbands were also contacted and asked to complete a mail questionnaire. Altogether, nearly 18,000 interviews were completed among 5,900 women and 2,700 men.

Results document the tremendous social change wrought by the automobile. Long ago, one's immediate community formed the social background of daily life. Today, neighbors are seldom counted as social acquaintances; rather, 63 percent of all trips by women to visit friends or relatives are beyond their own neighborhood. The finding is illustrated in the chart.

This pattern of travel permeated every activity except trips to the bank, religious services, and club meetings. More often than not, these activities were in the immediate neighborhood.

Without the car, American shopping habits would have to change beyond recognition. In every city, nine out of ten shopping visits were made by car. And this was at a time when the nation was just emerging from the effects of the Arab oil embargo.

Public transportation was used by only 4 percent of the respondents. Walking was slightly more popular, with 6 percent indicating that it was the preferred mode of travel. The car predominated all the way into downtown shopping areas. Boston was the only exception; just 17 percent of shoppers went to the inner city by car.

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STUDY ON NEW YORK CITY PROBLEMS REVEALS ISOLATION OF RESIDENTS

Some people swear by New York City; others swear at it. This is an article about the latter. It is rather one-sided because it reports on a study in which the focus was on community problems as seen by cluster samples of various ethnic and social groups making up the metropolitan area; no one was asked what he or she liked about the city.

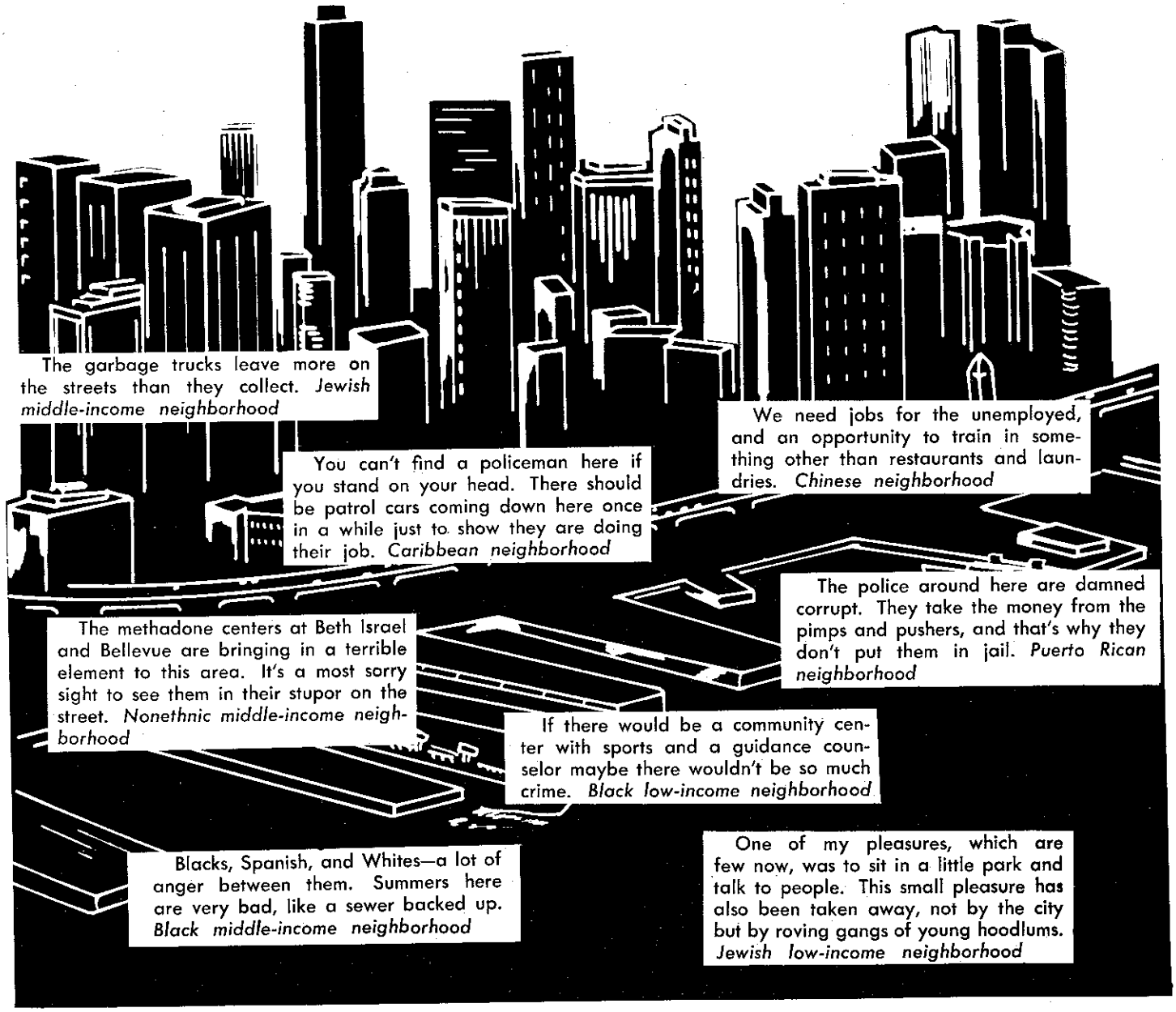
The research was carried out for CBS, Inc. It involved interviewing over 2,100 metropolitan area residents during the first two weeks of August 1974.

Two basic subjects were probed: "What do you personally feel are the important problems that concern people who live in this community?" and "What local person, if any, do you know of who speaks for how you feel on this issue?"

The strongest finding from our study was the isolation of residents from local leadership. Over 70 percent of those interviewed could not name a single person who could act as spokesman for any problems cited. Residents of a Chinese neighborhood were the only ethnic group in New York in which a majority identified particular spokesmen for their point of view on problems.

This finding of remoteness from or indifference to influential persons is not unusual. Previous studies conducted by Response Analysis for CBS in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Los Angeles show a similar pattern. Typically, two thirds of the residents in these large metropolitan areas do not name any spokesman at all.

In New York, the top mentioned problems were: neighborhood or urban social and living conditions, crime and law enforcement, cost of living problems, and housing problems. The quotations accompanying this article contain representative comments expressed by residents of various neighborhoods within the metropolitan area.



NATIONAL FOOD ADS NOT WIDELY TRUSTED

A significant proportion of U.S. consumers (34 percent) are rarely or never satisfied with the reliability and truthfulness of information in ads sponsored by food manufacturers, according to a Response Analysis survey conducted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in spring 1974. In comparison, only 11 percent of consumers expressed similar feelings with regard to food store ads. Our research involved personal interviews with a national probability sample of 1,831 adults.

More Contact

In releasing the results of our study, the Department of Agriculture commented that food stores "have more frequent and direct contact with consumers than do manufacturers. Being on the firing line, they often take the brunt of consumer irritation, yet their close interaction is apparently reaping dividends."

Another factor may be that food stores rely more heavily on local newspaper advertising while major food manufacturers concentrate on other media. In our survey for the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (described elsewhere in this issue), we found that approximately 58 percent of the sample found newspaper ads trustworthy while only 17 percent expressed such confidence in commercials on television.

FAMILY CAR

(continued from page 1)

The family car has placed even far-from-home shopping areas within striking distance of the consumer. Only 33 percent of shoppers bought goods (other than food and drugs) mostly in their own neighborhood; the majority shopped outside their neighborhood and a small proportion divided their shopping equally between the neighborhood and more distant shopping areas.

Great Debate

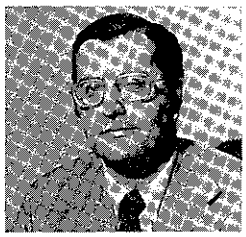
There is no question but that transportation is one of the major forces shaping the culture of American society today. A great debate is growing as to whether or not our current patterns of travel can be changed, particularly in light of energy and environmental considerations.

The data presented in the NAB study indicate that if transportation is to be changed so too must concepts of visiting friends, of going out for entertainment, and of shopping.

Copies of the NAB report, titled "Shoppers on the Move," may be obtained from Response Analysis.

The Staff Observer

James W. Gouthro on THE PARTNERSHIP CONCEPT



(Editor's Note: After nine years as a Marketing Research Manager with CNA Financial and Joseph Schlitz Brewing, James Gouthro recently returned to the research agency business as a Research Executive at Response Analysis. Prior to joining Schlitz, he was a Survey Director at Opinion Research Corporation.)

Too often there is a wide gulf between clients and their research firms which does not allow full utilization of the millions of questions asked of the American public each year. I personally find this wasteful. Having been on both sides of this gulf, I would like to argue here for the "partnership concept."

Client Problems

Part of the gulf is due to many research firms not having a sense of how their studies can be useful. Even when research is well done in terms of sample design, completion rates, and quality of interviewing, it's still possible for a client to run into the following:

- Research results presented as discrete data, question by question, with little attempt at integration or tying the results back to objectives. This is coupled with an unwillingness to draw conclusions useful to executives.
- Research firms unwilling to go beyond the data to interpret the implications of the findings. Many firms don't know enough about the subject being studied or the economics of the client's business to draw such implications.
- Too little sense of what the data are worth to a client when preparing proposals where a sample size is not specified.
- Insufficient focus on problem definition and the creation of hypotheses. Many proposals are really suggestions for a series of questions with the hope that something useful will fall out. If hypotheses are suggested, too little attention is paid to how proving or disproving them would be useful.
- Not enough professionalism in developing new techniques or mining a firm's collected data and experience. Methodological experimentation should be an investment which established firms make on their own, either individually or collectively.

Term Defined

The above need not hold true in a partnership relationship, however. By a partnership, I mean a willingness to use a research firm on a continuing basis with multiple assignments. It also means an investment in educating the research firm on the company's position in the industry, the planning options that position implies, and the company's marketing objectives.

The traditional argument against such a relationship is the danger of a loss of objectivity. A research firm can get too close to the client and its problems. As a result, the research may reflect knowledge of a client's own inclinations or biases rather than the reality of the marketplace.

Benefits Listed

This can be overcome through proper management of the client-agency relationship. The benefits can be considerable.

1. Research results can be action-oriented. There is sufficient knowledge of the real constraints facing a client, to be able to draw usable implications from the data.

2. Greater knowledge of the client's problems also allows for a more meaningful transfer of the research firm's experience. This experience can be in other industries which are faced with similar problems, with governmental agencies working on regulatory issues, and with academicians conducting basic behavioral and attitudinal research. The cross-fertilizing potential of research firms is largely untapped.

3. Continuity of the relationship means the research firm should be better able to interpret trend results and assess which research approaches have been most productive.

Many of the points made here apply to several of the relationships clients have with outside agencies supplying corporate intelligence services. But the "partnership" relationship, well managed, seems particularly appropriate for survey research firms, where more than data collection is required.

"SCALE" DATA SIMILAR FROM TELEPHONE, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

It is said there are two sides to every question. In our business there are often two sides as to how to ask questions: in person or by telephone.

Generally the questions to be used in telephone interviews have to be short and simple. Exhibit cards, of course, cannot be used. In contrast, personal interview questions can be more complex and exhibits can be used.

Solved Problem

Despite the basic differences between the telephone and personal interview approaches, we recently faced and solved the problem of converting a series of "scale" questions which had been used in personal interviews into a telephone interview mode.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW
SAFETY SCALE

VERY SAFE	10
SAFE	9, 8
KIND OF SAFE	7, 6
A LITTLE RISKY	5, 4
RISKY	3, 2
VERY RISKY	1

We had been obtaining trend data (dealing in part with perceptions of product safety and risk) via personal interviews, and our client asked if we could convert the trend series to telephone interviewing for faster turnaround time. To assess the effects of the changeover, we conducted simultaneous personal and telephone interview surveys, and compared the results both with each other and with previous data from the series.

In the personal interview study, respondents were handed cards containing an illustration. The interviewer then said: "For each thing that I ask you about, just pick a number from 1 to 10 that shows how safe or how risky you think it is for someone to do regularly."

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
SAFETY SCALE

Question 1	Question 2
SAFE	VERY SAFE
	SOMEWHAT SAFE
IN BETWEEN	IN BETWEEN
	SOMEWHAT RISKY
RISKY	RISKY

In the telephone interview study, we were obviously unable to show the respondent a picture of the scale nor could we ask the respondent to mentally "juggle" a ten-point numerical scale with six verbal reference points. Instead, we pretested a two-question approach for developing the scale data.

For each product or situation evaluated, we first asked whether it was safe, risky, or somewhere in between. Then, if the respondent said safe (or, risky), we went on to ask whether it was very safe or somewhat safe (or, very risky or somewhat risky).

Comparable Data

Careful analysis of the results from both the telephone and personal interview studies indicate that the two interviewing methods produced closely comparable data. Put another way, the information produced by each study would lead to the same kind of management conclusions.

Data from these scale questions were then used to develop numerical safety/risk scores for our client's products (none of which are mentioned in this article). Here again, the results were comparable.

While we feel the personal interview method continues to be the most appropriate when highly accurate, in-depth information on attitudes and behavior is desired, we also believe that there is much to argue for greater utilization of the telephone interview. In particular, we believe the experiment described here broadens the use to which this kind of interview can be put.

SELECTED RESULTS FROM THE TWO STUDIES

	Personal Interview			Telephone Interview		
	Safe	In Between	Risky	Safe	In Between	Risky
CIGARETTE SMOKING	4	15	80	2	19	78
BIRTH CONTROL PILLS	20	35	35	16	38	38
CANNED TUNA FISH	51	33	12	57	29	9
FREQUENT AIR TRAVEL	53	26	18	58	28	12
UNLOCKED DOORS AT NIGHT	4	8	88	4	5	92

(No opinion omitted)

EMPLOYEE HIERARCHY OF DISSATISFACTION CHANGES

Generalizations that one used to be able to make with a fair degree of confidence about work attitudes and motivations of different kinds of employees simply can no longer be flatly accepted.

Hierarchy Described

In the good old days (say up to the late 1960's), when one did an employee study, the hierarchy of dissatisfaction among employees was usually predictable. This hierarchy progressed from hourly employees, who were almost always the most dissatisfied group, through technicians, professional employees, and clerical employees to managers, who typically were the company's best and most loyal employees.

Topsy-Turvy Result

Today it doesn't always work that way. For example, in a recent study for a large manufacturer, we had a topsy-turvy result: higher management was the most dissatisfied group, hourly employees were least so. The reasons for this were complicated and go beyond the intent of this article. In an ironic way, however, this study illustrates the virtue of poor communications under certain circumstances. Word about how bad things were hadn't percolated down from management to the gang working in the shop. Ineffective communications were at least partially responsible for buying management some time in which to take corrective action, before everyone at the plant had become disillusioned.

This case is another illustration of a point we made in a recent article in *the Sampler:* no employee group can be taken for granted today. Employee attitudes and reactions to the employment situation are in a state of flux.