

TNS Research Surveys takes three of four awards at SAMRA conference

Issued by [Kantar](#)

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Mark Molenaar, TNS Research Surveys' National Director: Client Service, won the award for the best paper at the annual South African Marketing Research Association (SAMRA) Conference held at Spier Estate in Stellenbosch last week.

At a gala dinner on Friday 25 May 2007, Mark, who had just won the Best First Time Presenter's Award, was called up to receive the elegant glass SAMRA trophy for his paper critically examining the claimed power of the "Would you recommend to a friend" and Net Promoter Score measures becoming popular amongst CEOs worldwide.

This question has been touted as "the ultimate question" – the one question that gives all the information that is needed to manage customer relationships, grow businesses and set targets. It has become increasingly popular with CEOs around the world because of its simplicity and the extravagant claims made for it – that it is the single most reliable predictor of a company's growth.

Mark showed that this question measures no more than what is already measured by simple customer satisfaction or brand performance questions and that a reliance on just this one dimension is seriously misleading. He showed that high proportions of so-called "promoters" (those who give a company or brand nine or ten on the "ultimate question's" 11-point scale) can be highly uncommitted and will either defect or share their spend with another brand – they are not promoters of the brand at all. Further, he showed that some "non-promoters" (those who score the brand six or less) are, in fact, committed to the brand and can spend as much as promoters on it. They are not the "unenthusiastic customers" claimed by the measure's developers at all.

He concluded that the problem lay in the fact that this highly simplistic approach does not take into account how people feel about competitors, that it does not reflect the importance of the brand-buying decision to people and that it does not understand that different people use scales like these in different ways – it uses absolute rather than relative ratings.

As such, people who use it in favour of more multi-dimensional approaches can make serious strategic mistakes in customer attraction and retention policies by focusing on the wrong people and misdirecting effort - people are not uni-dimensional when it comes to brand-buying decisions.

Best Contribution to Research in Africa award won by TNS Research Surveys' Nomsa Khanyile and Rudo Maponga

Nomsa and Rudo focused on the controversial issue of job hopping amongst black professionals. They showed that the current level of job hopping amongst this groups was, in fact, lower than that, particularly, of the equivalent group of whites – it is a myth.

But, crucially, they showed that it is a tsunami waiting to happen with many black professionals actively unhappy with where they are and already looking for other positions.

They found that 41% of the black professionals interviewed said that they were looking for another job (compared with only 16% of white professionals). So, job-hopping can be expected to become a very serious issue. Their research showed that black professionals are less likely to be committed to their job or their company than expected from global norms. They then looked into why this might be and found that key pressures or frustrations include -

=> racial discrimination;

- => lack of support and no clear career planning;
- => culture clashes; and
- => pressure to work much harder than peers.

Contrary to popular belief, black professionals are not primarily driven by money. Higher salaries are seen more as a sign of recognition and other factors were seen as being of greater importance than money. Corporate South Africa needs to provide –

- => **recognition** and fair rewards for their efforts;
- => their **competency** not to be constantly questioned;
- => **equal opportunities** to learn, grow and add value to the business;
- => an environment that embraces their **individuality** and promotes **diversity**;
- => **support and guidance**;
- => **transformation** of not only policies but also transformation of management's attitudes and systems; and
- => BEE strategies that promote **internal grooming** in the corporate world, leading to growth for black talent.

BEE is generally viewed very positively although there were concerns in the way it was currently implemented. They concluded that job-hopping amongst black professionals is soon going to be more of a reality than just a myth.



Mark Molenaar, Rudo Maponga and Nomsa Khanyile of TNS Research Surveys with their trophies, won at last week's Southern African Marketing Research Conference.

TNS Research Surveys' contribution

Of the 20 papers presented at the 2007 Conference, TNS Research Surveys contributed seven and The Customer Equity Company (our sister company) a further two. Other topics covered by TNS Research Surveys and CEC included the relationship between brand architecture and brand equity, the innovative use of on-line bulletin boards in qualitative research, research conducted for the SA Revenue Service, the power of packaging, key issues affecting brand attribute exercises, the impact of new communication technologies on teens' ability to relate to the real world and their ability to communicate acceptably, and how technology drives different facets of Black Diamonds.

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