



## 2008: Accomplishments and Growth in the Face of Adversity

By Jon Last, MRA President (2008-2009)

Despite the challenges of a global economic meltdown, your Association continued to assert its preeminence in the profession. In 2008, MRA continued to set the standard for research professionals around the world with cutting edge education, countless opportunities for professional development and personal growth, and a clear strategic vision that enabled us to continue to expand upon our member constituent base.

In 2008, MRA once again brought forth a variety of innovative new initiatives to add value to its membership. Here are some of our proudest 2008 accomplishments:

• **Online Panel Quality - Internal Review Program and Professional Leadership:** MRA was first with a comprehensive multi-tiered program that allows panel providers an opportunity to conduct both a self administered assessment of the quality of their online panel, as well as an independent audit performed by professional MRA staff. MRA also took a lead role in a variety of cross association efforts aimed at assuring and defining the quality of online data. This will be accomplished through a variety of webinars, conference educational content and a lead role in the industry wide ACE (Association Collaborative Effort). A special 13th issue of MRA's *Alert!* Magazine also was produced with an exclusive focus on this critical area.

• **Taking a Stand for the Profession on Capital Hill and in Assuring the Highest Standards of Respondent Cooperation - The CMOR Merger:** During a year when so many organizations were cutting services, MRA was the only organization that put its attention behind two areas that remain vitally important for all in the profession. By absorbing the responsibilities of the Council for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR) into the MRA leadership structure, your Association took great strides to protect the best interests of our profession with government leaders. In fact, MRA saw immediate dividends by helping to defeat pending state legislation in New Mexico that would have severely crippled the ability of marketing researchers to add value in the pharmaceutical arena. We continued to offer dedicated conference programming on improving respondent cooperation, and provided professional infrastructure to insure that the mission of CMOR would be preserved within the framework of a united and expanded MRA.

• **Tools for Organizational and Professional Success - The Virtual Business Guide:** MRA's Business Services Workgroup (BSW) unveiled a dynamic online offering, the Virtual Business Guide (VBG). In response to requests by MRA business owners and operators, the VBG became the one-stop repository for a variety of tools and templates to aid members in most effectively managing their businesses. Members can now

visit this section of our Web site and download business forms, templates and access other advice and direction from association leaders.

• **Providing the Standard for Research Practitioner Excellence:** In 2008, MRA reached out to other sectors of the profession, providing open enrollment opportunities for those who were unable to take advantage of MRA's initial registration period for PRC.

• **Measuring the Health of the Profession - The Research Industry Index (RII):** In 2007, MRA launched the first industry wide barometer of the relative health of the marketing research profession. The quarterly RII is calculated across a series of consistent but critical performance metrics, as reported by full service research firms, data collection agencies and client side researchers. The RII is the most comprehensive barometer of overall industry pulse and market conditions, and has become a widely accepted tool throughout the profession.

In summary, your Association continues to innovate and evolve amidst a rapidly changing macro environment. Our recently completed strategic planning process and ongoing outlets for member feedback provides the necessary mechanisms to keep our thinking current and to enable MRA to deploy its resources in the best ways possible to make sure that we remain the preeminent and essential organization that moves the marketing research profession forward.



## Looking Ahead to the 2009-2010 Board Year

By Kim Larson, PRC, MRA President Elect (2008-2009)

We are living in interesting times. The financial environment has been challenging for everyone, and like most of us in our businesses, MRA has re-evaluated current programs and benefits to make sure we will be providing what you need

in the coming year. As a result of this, you will see a renewed commitment from MRA to help you network with your colleagues and clients, and create new business opportunities. MRA is also committed to helping member companies

develop new strategies. We are also committed through our Government Affairs Program (formerly CMOR), to protecting the industry from

*(Continued on next page)*