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Message from the President

Finding Blue in a Sky of Gray

“As Henry Ford said, Whether you think you can or can’t, you’re right.”

Jeff Spitzer, Northwest MRA

What a crazy time in the world today. We have a record deficit, demonstrations across the US, politicians bickering and pointing fingers, continuing unrest in the Middle East and now Europe’s economy threatening what little bit of stability we have left here at home. Could 2012 really be the end of our world as the Mayans predicted? Oh, if only we were that lucky! (Just kidding...)

With so much uncertainty in the world economy right now, some people may be concerned about their financial outlook for 2012. I, however, chose not to be among them and I don’t think you should either. Think, feel and act positively, and we will all get through this mess just fine.

Don’t let yourself get distracted by the negative news; just stick to your plan, your dreams and your hopes. Set your goals and work toward them. Keep taking steps forward and focus on the brighter future and the unlimited possibilities. Today may seem difficult, but if you shut out the negative and stay positive, you will be surprised at how great a year you will have.

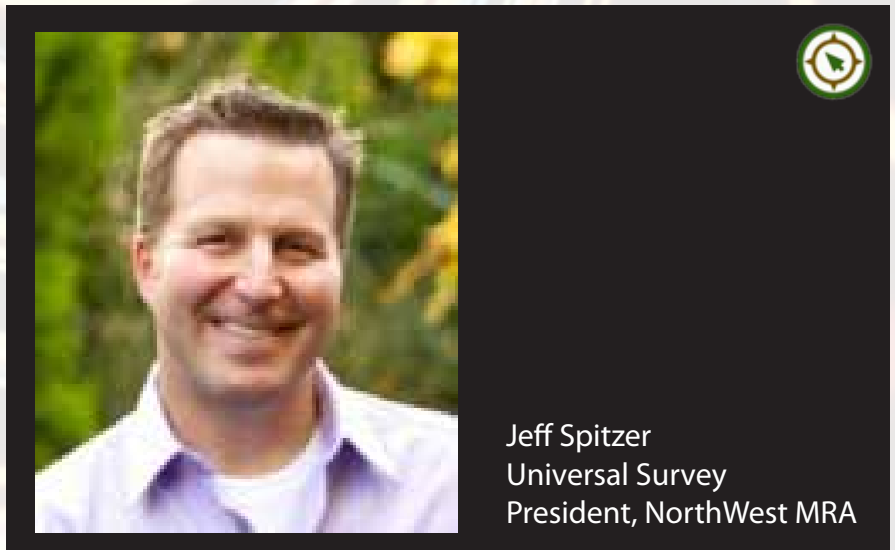
For myself, whether the economy lags or not, I fully expect to grow my business in 2012, and beyond. In fact, 2012 will be my best year EVER – both professionally and personally. Why? Because I choose it to be!

As Henry Ford said, “Whether you think you can or can’t, you’re right.”

I can, and I will. Who’s with me?

Wishing you all the best in the New Year...

P.S. In case you weren't already aware, the NorthWest Chapter now has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Take a moment and connect with us!



Jeff Spitzer
Universal Survey
President, NorthWest MRA

Editors Note

Brian Parker

While my family and I are buckling in for our first full winter in our new Chicago digs, I'm jealous of all my friends in the Northwest MRA (especially in San Francisco) that aren't having to deal with the wintery mix weather! Also, I couldn't help putting in an article with some reference to golf since my sticks have been put away for quite some time now.

In our winter Topline, we have a great piece from our President. As we all are reflecting on 2011 and goal setting for 2012, I can't think of a more appropriate message.

Now that we have the right attitude going into the new year, Paul Kirch gives us an action plan with his article on finding the Problem, taking Action, and producing the Result.

Thanks to Rommell Montenegro for putting together a list of great upcoming Research events and Amanda Durkee for sharing a few words on the recent joint event between the Portland



Brian Parker
watchLAB
Editor, NorthWest MRA



Featured Article

Paul Kirch

Par isn't just for Golf

As part of my coaching and training strategies, I rely heavily on examples to get my points across. I find people can relate to concepts if I can find ways to spell out the idea in a straightforward manner. Doing so enables them to put the concepts in their own terms. I have a friend who teaches people the neural sciences approach to connecting with prospects or customers. He has a deep understanding of how people respond to visual or audio stimuli, especially dialogue. How and why we respond to certain things is engrained in all of us and allows us to build bonds or deep connections. Among the myriad of elements my friend teaches are acronyms, stories, questions and relevant examples that can help us engage with other people. If you've followed my writing or have seen any of my presentations, you've seen these same philosophies. While he approaches things more scientifically, mine is more practical, experience based. At the same time, we're both talking about ways to build connections or rapport.

If you look at the list above, one

of the things I mentioned is acronyms. Our industry is certainly not lacking in acronyms. We've surpassed the idea of embracing them, to perhaps abusing the use of them. However, I still believe they can be powerful for remembering key ideas. Acronyms can act as a code that allows us to put a formula in place to resolve issues. One of my favorite examples is something that stems from my college days, learning to write advertising copy. It's something that can serve as an organizational strategy or can be used to help you formulate a plan to address specific issues. The term is PAR. Most of us are familiar with the term PAR as it is used in golf to describe the ideal number of strokes to go from the tee to the hole. A score of PAR is the goal or the standard for each hole. In business, however, the term PAR can represent something greater than a standard. The acronym itself stands for Problem – Action – Result. What it can represent is the answer to questions about your value propositions, or it can help someone stand out by sharing examples of success and so much more.

If you're someone who does a lot

of hiring or if you've recently gone through the hiring process, you might recognize the term PAR. Many websites suggest that a resume should follow the PAR formula when creating strong statements of achievement. In addition, often an interviewee is asked to share examples of success. This formula can serve as the ideal roadmap for telling his story. In fact, any great story teller will implement this formula to get his point across more often than not.

The PAR formula is extensively taught at Harvard, Wharton, Yale and other renowned schools of business. How can something so simple matter to such institutions? How can it make such a difference? Quite simply, Problem-Action-Result is a business story. It's the foundation of most great stories. A great story not only has a beginning, middle and end, it is also memorable. PAR can help you create a memorable story that gives buyers confidence you understand their needs and can provide real solutions. It can help you stand out if the story resonates with them. It can also influence your marketing and advertising. Describing the

faced, then talking about the action your team took and sharing the end result is a simple formula that can make a huge impact.

Case studies can be extremely impactful. They show potential customers that you have experience in areas that matter to them. If your team is armed with current, relevant case studies, then you are on the right track. If not, then create them following the PAR formula. After all, if you're struggling to differentiate your business, stories of how you overcame hurdles or objections can be a form of differentiation. Create a case study or white paper from it and you've got a powerful tool that can set your company apart from others.

I encourage you to take a look at how you're currently positioning your brand. Throughout time, many brands have been established using the simple PAR formula to stand out with their advertising. Depending on your age, you most likely remember the famous Alka-Seltzer commer-

cial that had the jingle, "Plop, Plop, Fizz, Fizz... Oh, what a relief it is." Their brand recognition was built upon the PAR formula. The problem was pain or indigestion. The action was popping a couple of effervescent tablets into water, and the result was relief. What problem does your service or product solve? What result are you providing?

The new business economy demands that you stand out. It demands that you are seen as more than just another supplier in a "me, too" world. PAR can help you tell stories that are unique. It can lead to stories that matter when trying to relate to your potential customers. Even if you don't believe you can truly differentiate your company, your stories, case studies, white papers, value propositions and other messaging may tell a tale of a brand that's memorable and unique. Where do you begin? First, start by sharing stories of success and failure inside your company, and connect with team members and colleagues to put

PAR into action. What were the problems your clients presented to you? What action did you take to address those problems? What was the end result? What did that mean to your client? What could this mean to others? These simple steps can help you create and uncover what your brand really represents. From there, you can work on your brand positioning.

Neural science can teach us a lot about how we build connections. As I mentioned, in golf PAR is considered a standard for each hole. With the PAR formula, however, you can set a new standard, a standard that drives connection and sets your company apart from the competition. In fact, if business were golf, we'd have to redefine PAR as a hole-in-one. That's a winning score no matter how you look at it.



Paul Kirch
President and CEO
ActusMR Inc

Brief Bio : Paul Kirch is President and CEO of ActusMR, Inc™. The Business Health Specialists™, using tools to measure areas of improvement within an organization, focusing on sales, marketing and business strategy. Leveraging tools, consulting and training, they strive to enhance those core areas. His firm specializes in servicing the marketing research industry. Paul has served more than 19 years in marketing research and is an active volunteer with the MRA and other industry organizations. He is also a Past-President for the NorthWest MRA Chapter, serving on the Past-Presidents Advisory Council.

NWMRA meets: The Research Club



Amanda Durkee
Partner, Senior Consultant
PRC



The NWMRA co-hosted its Fall networking event in Portland, Oregon with Research Club on November 17. Attendees braved heavy rains and Occupy protests to join the fun at Saucebox, downtown. They were treated to entertainment, appetizers and lively conversation with about 75 guests. The event drew an international crowd, including the Research Club's, Bob Qureshi, all the way from London, and attendees from Canada, Washington and California.





Event Photos:
Holiday in Seattle





Upcoming Events: NorthWest MRA

December 30th 2011 - Professional Development Program Winter Application Deadline

January 11th 2012- Portland Holiday Meet and Greet 6-9pm Sky Box and Fireside Lounge at Grand Central Restaurant & Bowling Lounge

January 19th 2012 - Discovery on a Budget: Logitech Uses New Quantitative Research Technique to Revamp Products Jeff Chen Manager, Consumer Insights Logitech, Inc.

January 26th 2012 - San Francisco Holiday Party at Butterfly

April 11th-13th - Las Vegas - 26th Annual Joint Chapter Conference

May 8th-13th- Spring Educational Conference 8am-5pm at the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry OMSI

For more marketing events please see the NorthWest MRA Website

Financial Statements: NorthWest MRA

Marketing Research Association, NorthWest Chapter

Balance Sheet

As of November 30, 2011

Total		
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts	50,339.46	
Total Current Assets	\$50,339.46	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$50,339.46	
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Total Liabilities		
Equity	50,339.46	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$50,339.46	

Financial Statements: NorthWest MRA

Marketing Research Association, NorthWest Chapter

Profit & Loss

July - November, 2011

	Total
Income	
Annual Sponsorship	5,000.00
Event Attendees	390.6
Event Sponsors	700
Membership Dues	1,400.00
Total Income	\$7,490.60
Expenses	
Bank Charges	30
Dues & Subscriptions	49.75
Event Expenses	1,101.11
Event Expenses - Facility	600
Legal & Professional Fees	500
Meals and Entertainment	1,438.13
PayPal Fees	218.75
Recognition/Awards	50.81
Taxes & Licenses	30
Website	125.75
Total Expenses	\$4,144.30
Net Operating Income	\$3,346.30
Other Income	
Interest Earned	1.75
Total Other Income	\$1.75
Net Other Income	\$1.75
Net Income	\$3,348.05