

For Further Information:

Jon Siegel, 585-271-2955 jonsiegel@melioraresearch.com

Mitch Sanders, 585-360-2726 mitchsanderson@melioraresearch.com

Bob Loeb, 585.586.8840 rel@frontiernet.net

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Newly formed Meliora Research leverages technology and national expertise into customized-yet-affordable market research solutions

Firm to focus on providing services to Rochester/Finger Lakes-area businesses, organizations

Between the 'do-it-yourself' e-mail-based survey and the proprietary custom-built survey instrument is the niche where Meliora Research hopes to thrive.

Newly formed in 2013 by Jon Siegel and Mitch Sanders - alumni of Gordon Black Co./Harris Interactive Inc. - Meliora Research focuses on harnessing the power of technology with a mix of creative coaching and consulting to make market research affordable and available to large and small businesses (retail, business-to-business), corporations, manufacturers, non-profits, and other entities in the Rochester area.

Over the last decade, new sophisticated technology has become available for marketing research, everything from Internet surveys to online communities to a variety of real-time and do-it-yourself solutions. However, most of the benefits of these innovations, according to Siegel and Sanders, have gone to large firms.

Meliora Research seeks to change that—not by ignoring large firms—but by offering the small and mid-sized firm *both* consulting and coaching, by creating new solutions, and by helping companies choose wisely and do better from among the huge array of 'do-it-yourself' solutions.

Among the new and unique research programs and solutions Meliora offers are:

- The Meliora Rochester Community Survey, an ongoing survey that allows local and regional clients to ask as many or few questions as they like to consumers in Monroe County and the surrounding areas, selected by traditional demographics (location, age, income, etc.). Meliora Research offers guidance and advice on how to best frame questions so as to yield useful feedback.
- Meliora InStream, an event or location survey capability that captures real-time results from customers or participants via a displayed QR code and a Smartphone, such as a survey of people who come into a retail store or attend a special event. Both standard and custom options are available.

- Meliora CS ExAct, an experience-focused customer satisfaction/loyalty program designed for organizations that make continuous quality improvement a primary goal and have found traditional rating-scale driven methods ineffective. Integrated with Meliora Instream, CSExAct provides real-time customer feedback.

The partners are particularly excited about the Rochester Community Survey, “because it opens up research opportunities for local business and organizations that just didn’t exist before,” says Meliora partner Mitch Sanders. “With RCS, it’s possible to learn some very specific things about consumers in our area, driven by an organization’s particular needs – like understanding advertising awareness, identifying the most promising potential customers, or discovering what consumers think of a business and its competitors.”

The RCS is highly flexible, so even if a business or organization has a small number of questions, or even just a single question, it’s not only possible, but quite affordable, to do a survey and get actionable insights.

Some examples of how Meliora Research’s capabilities will benefit area businesses and organizations:

- A restaurateur might use InStream to get immediate feedback from diners about their dining experience; he or she might also use the Community Survey to gauge awareness in the community or to test new menu ideas. A mall-based retailer could do similar things.
- A non-profit health-related agency might use Meliora Research to gauge perceptions of healthy behavior practices among residents in the community or test out which of a number policy innovations might be most likely to be accepted.

Flexible Expertise

“We work with clients of all sizes, in all industries, creating sophisticated yet affordable research solutions to understand the behaviors and mindsets of their customers, clients and constituents,” says founding partner Jon Siegel. “Plus, our business model offers clients a great deal of flexibility in how they engage our services.”

Siegel points to the coaching model as particularly appropriate for small to mid-sized businesses that already have some marketing and data capabilities but may not be realizing the full potential of what they have. “By combining Meliora’s know-how with theirs in innovative ways, we’ll use our knowledge and experience to supplement what they have, to add the *why* to the *what*,” he says. “We provide that extra help in designing and interpreting a survey so the results they get are *highly* reliable and meaningful – we’re like the icing on the cake!”

“In a lot of cases, organizations can substantially improve their surveys and other research instruments with only a few hours of coaching from us,” he adds. “Also important is how to select the best survey vehicle from the dozens that are readily available – we can help with this if a client wants to go this route and we’ll help them get the most out of it.”

“We’ll also work with a client’s template or ‘do-it-yourself’ survey to insure that the proper questions are asked and the insights needed are the insights that can be delivered,” says Sanders, who points out some of the pitfalls of these kinds of do-it-yourself survey vehicles. “A key issue here is that these types of survey vehicles often ask for opinions that consumers don’t have.

“With answers and insights into marketing questions and consumer preferences out there just for the asking, we’ll ask the right questions and gain the relevant insights for our Rochester clients.”

All of the services Meliora offers are based on the partners’ mastery of precisely defined disciplines and deploying them in creative ways: research design, survey design, sampling, survey programming, data processing, statistical analysis and modeling, and reporting and insight generation. The value-added is that “we leverage the new internet and computing technologies to make all of this affordable and accessible,” say Siegel and Sanders.

The name of the firm is taken from the Latin word *meliora*, which means *ever better*. However, there is no formal connection to the University of Rochester, which uses Meliora as its motto.

Meliora Research (www.melioraresearch.com) is located at 1255 University Avenue, Suite 100, Rochester NY 14607 research@melioraresearch.com 585-360-2726

About the Principals

Jon Siegel has more than 35 years of experience designing, conducting and analyzing surveys and nearly 30 years of experience in the marketing research industry. His technical areas of expertise include survey and question design, sample design and data analytics, with particular interests in attitude formation and change and segmentation.

Prior to founding Meliora Research in 2013, Siegel was a senior vice-president with Harris Interactive. From 1999-2000, he directed Harris Interactive’s Election 2000, the largest polling effort in the history of the United States and the proof case for the validity and accuracy of Internet-based research. This effort involved the first live online focus group and poll during a debate (Iowa Republican debate) and predicted more than 70 presidential, gubernatorial, and senate races with the final poll based on some 300,000 people, outperforming everyone else in the industry.

Siegel joined the Gordon S. Black Corp. in 1987 after completing a master's degree in political science from Stanford University. He received a bachelor's degree in political science and history from the University of Pennsylvania. He resides in Brighton, a suburb of Rochester, New York.

Nationally acknowledged as an expert in the application of statistical methods to market research and the social sciences, Mitch Sanders has worked closely and collaboratively with clients in a wide variety of industries. He joined Harris Interactive in 2004 as a research scientist in Internet methodology, where he developed and implemented best practices for achieving representative data for the firm's client research initiatives.

In 2008 and working remotely from Rochester, Sanders joined Gongos Research in Auburn Hills, Michigan as a research director in its Analytics department. As director of the Quantitative Methods division of Smith-Dahmer Associates from 2010 to 2012 he again worked remotely from Rochester, leading a team of six market researchers responsible for all quantitative research conducted by an Inc 5000 company.

Prior to his professional corporate research activities, Sanders held academic positions as assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and Lab for Social Research at the University of Notre Dame and assistant professor of political science at Florida State University. He is author or coauthor of numerous publications in social sciences and market research, including the book *Understanding Multivariate Research* and articles in *Quirk's Marketing Research Review*, *Political Analysis*, and *Theory and Research in Education*.

Sanders received a bachelor's degree in mathematics and political science from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Rochester. He is an avid coin collector, and writes a monthly magazine column for beginning collectors. He resides in the Park Avenue area of Rochester, New York.

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