

Client Feedback

Here's what some recent CERC clients are saying . . .

Client: Ray Melendrez, Oceanside Firefighters

Service: Municipal candidate polling

Ray says: *"We're very happy with your polling. It was very comprehensive and suited our needs."*

Client: Judy Walsh-Jackson, Associate Director, Policy Panel on Youth Access to Alcohol

Service: Survey research to determine attitudes toward underage drinking

Judy says: *"Thank you so much for this analysis. It's excellent!"*

Client: Louis Vidaure, Market Media Group

Service: Municipal measure polling

Louis says: *"Thanks for all your help John. I sincerely appreciate your expertise. You clarified a lot of things for us going into the final push."*

Winter 2007

Social Responsibility

Most of us professionally involved in politics and public affairs probably went into the business because we felt, deep down, we wanted to help improve our community. To varying degrees, we all like it when we deliver to our inner selves that feeling of community involvement and advancing a cause greater than ourselves. No doubt we often fall short. But not infrequently, we at CERC find that, if we work hard enough, opportunities to play a genuinely helpful civic role will come along. That happened when CERC was asked to join the San Diego Institute for Policy Research in their effort to bring a high quality think tank to San Diego County. Based on how the 21st century has so far unfolded, this region needs all the help it can get in terms of dialog and consensus building. We're proud to be affiliated with the SDIPR in this new endeavor and truly hope that we make good on our promise to elevate the quality of debate.

We're also proud of new additions to the firm. CERC has brought on a new Office Manager and Research Associate. These professionals are dedicated to principled research and providing our clients superior data quality.

CERC and San Diego Institute for Policy Research Launch Opinion Barometer

CERC has announced a two-year partnership with the San Diego Institute for Policy Research – a civic-oriented think tank – to explore local issues and promote dialog to solve local problems. CERC’s role is to objectively and accurately convey public opinion on a range of important topics every two months. Timely reports will be compiled and released to foster public discussion.

If this sounds similar to the research CERC was conducting with KPBS awhile back, it is. The objective is the same: to inform the public about what it really thinks. But CERC President John Nienstedt says this effort will be more comprehensive. “We’re going to be in the field every two months so the SDIPR/Competitive Edge Research Barometer will be very topical. The questionnaires themselves will be longer so we can go into more detail and explore issues from multiple angles. The sample sizes will be larger; 500 in the City of San Diego and 1,000 in the County.” Nienstedt adds that, “when it comes to public debate and discussion, we want the point of departure to be fundamentally sound. Our Barometer provides that for San Diego.”

Importantly, the SDIPR itself will assist in analyzing some of the data. Economist Kelly Cunningham will assess the consumer confidence results and others will be tasked with writing white papers to dig into social and civic issues.

Steve Francis, Chairman of AMN Healthcare who founded the Institute, believes that San Diegans need extra-governmental dialog to create a problem-solving environment. “I’m excited because CERC’s civic research will, with the Institute’s resources, engender the healthy discussion we need to tackle problems our region faces.”

The inaugural Barometer appears January, 2007. Results will be posted at www.cerc.net ¶

Nov. '06 CERC Polling Accuracy Review

After a primary season in which CERC’s pre-election polling was literally perfect, the bar for November’s election was set pretty high. After all, no polling firm is going to be right 100% of the time, right?

Alas, out of 34 pre-election polls conducted in October and early November we did misfire on the outcome of one race. In the race for Mayor of Pleasanton California our numbers 19 days out projected that the challenger would “beat” the incumbent 52.2% to 47.8%. It was a contentious fight to the finish and the incumbent was re-elected with only a 188-vote cushion. So in our only errant call of the cycle we were off by just 2.5%!

How does CERC do it? It starts with dedication. The Competitive Edge team – at all levels – is dedicated to producing accurate results. This costs more, but our reputation is worth it. Education and experience are other important elements. We take advantage of the educational opportunities afforded us by our location in one of the nation’s most learned cities. We also hone our abilities by attending conferences where the latest survey advances are discussed and debated. Finally, the technology and techniques we employ allow us to properly train and supervise our personnel. Our reputation for accuracy is hard earned and results from a multi-pronged team effort. ¶

Meet Office Manager Shari Ciancio

Shari Ciancio (pronounced CHON-cho) has been hired as Competitive Edge’s new Office Manager. She will take over operations at the front desk and become CERC’s “first face” for many who visit or call. In that capacity, clients will have the opportunity to interface with Shari. In addition to organizing the office, Shari will assist with the hiring of CERC personnel.



Shari joins CERC with more than 12 years of experience in the research field. She previously held positions at Jagorda Interviewing and Flagship Research. CERC President John Nienstedt believes Shari’s background in the industry is a major plus. “We’re attracting talented, research-savvy individuals who want to be part of growing CERC into the brightest light in the survey research and political services industry,” Nienstedt said. “Shari Ciancio’s solid experience and professionalism will make a big difference for CERC. Hiring her is another important step.”

Shari studied accounting at Miramar and Palomar colleges and is married to John Ciancio, an educator. They have a daughter who is in her senior year at CSU Fullerton. ¶

New Research Assistant Joins CERC

CERC’s research department added Brian Lewis as an assistant to the staff in November. Brian is responsible for cleaning and coding verbatim responses to open-ended questions, proofreading documents and implementing our innovative approach to quality control. He also writes the CERC News (an internal newsletter for the interviewers) and handles special projects. Brian holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in marketing and finance from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Brian reports directly to Research Manager, Tracy Duben. Tracy comments that “Brian is a committed researcher with a great work ethic who understands that quality control measures produce superior data.” ¶

On CERC’s Nightstand . . .

“Appleby’s America: *How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community*” – Douglas B. Sosnik, Matthew J. Dowd & Ron Fournier. It gets repetitive and its case study approach is thin, but the book’s message is right on: be authentic; use values, not issues; leverage targeting opportunities; perceive new realities and adapt to them; focus on opinion leaders. Key quote: “Will [a voter’s] past voting history be the best indicator of his 2008 vote? Or will his lifestyle choices be the best guide? The answer is that you must know both, and failing to take advantage of lifestyle data available to 21st century campaign strategists borders on political malpractice.” ¶