

Jeff Mann

Vice President
Joined Zeldis Team: 2016



When did you start in Market Research and what attracted you to it?

I came into market research from being an academic more than 20 years ago. I was a psychology professor at Wheaton College in Massachusetts teaching research methods and statistics. When I transitioned to the market research industry it was for the insurance industry trade association LOMA. In those early days, I was a quantitative methods guy, and really liked the quantitative work.

In the years since you started, what's the most notable change in how research is done, or how you conduct your research?

As I mentioned, I was a purely quantitative methods guy in my early career. Once working in business, I quickly realized the benefits of combining qual and quant and it has become a big and important part of the research I do.

What does a typical day at work look like for you?

A great thing about this industry is the variety it offers. Even before COVID, but especially now, typical days are a combination of routine, research task work and deep thinking about research implications. There's variety almost every day, including project management, new opportunity development, results analysis, report writing, focus group interviews, etc. And, importantly, a good part of every day is spent collaborating with colleagues, whether my internal team or client teams.

What technologies have you come to rely upon over the past two or three years that you hadn't used much previously?

While we started utilizing web conferencing like Zoom and MS Teams before COVID, it's now the primary way we communicate with clients, our partners, online focus groups and online interviews. Frankly, we rarely communicate via telephone anymore. We use web conferencing for everything from client kickoff meetings, to workshops, to de-briefs. Regarding clients, it's sometimes a great way to get insights to internal learnings in real time, something more difficult when communicating by phone or email.

What's the most rewarding thing about your job?

I know that it sounds trite, but the people that I work with are the most rewarding part of my job. Everyone has one another's backs and we share the workload. Quality of life is considered here. And we're all working, collaborating and critiquing to make our product better. People here know how to give advice at the level you need it, and it's really nice to have a team to rely on.

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What excites you about the future of this industry? What's the biggest challenge you see coming as a market researcher?

The richness of the questions clients bring to us always excites me. There's great social value to many of them. An important part of what we do is consulting.

The biggest challenge is that everything is faster paced and we all need to work faster and provide briefer, more concise answers. Telling stories/developing narratives is both more insightful and challenging in compressed timeframes. We're constantly focused on maintaining quality of data, despite the increasing challenge of getting good response rates online or on the phone (fewer people want to respond to surveys, or even pick up the phone). It's increasingly challenging to identify the right people at the right time and fully engage them.

Is there a particular philosophy or perspective that guides your work?

I always remind myself to keep the bigger, overarching project objectives in mind. I'm a top down thinker. I need to understand the big picture, and what will make the research a success for our client. What's the one thing they have to know?

What's something interesting that people may not know about you?

I started teaching myself to play the guitar about 5 years ago. I'm still a beginner but sticking with it. Hopefully it will be a lifelong hobby.