

REPORT ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

CONDUCTED FOR

CRD

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May 30, 2008



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**REPORT ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
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CRD WATER SERVICES
MAY, 2008**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document reports on the findings, conclusions and indicated actions from a series of four focus groups conducted on behalf of CRD Water Services. The focus groups were part of a larger study for CRD Water Services, which also includes a quantitative public opinion survey intended to gain insight into CRD Water Services users' awareness, knowledge and attitudes about water quality, water management, and water conservation. The objective of the focus groups was to allow for an in-depth discussion of attitudes about water and conservation, including factors that motivate people to behave in a certain way.

A total of four focus groups were conducted on the evenings of May 7th, 8th and 21st, amongst a total of 29 participants. The focus groups were comprised of randomly selected CRD Water Services users, specifically: CRD residents aged 50+ who pay the water bill (1 group), CRD residents aged 18 to 49 who pay the water bill (2 groups), and CRD residents aged 18+ who do not pay the water bill (1 group).

There was a great deal of consistency in the comments made by the respondents across age segments and amongst both those paying their water bills and those who did not pay the water bill.

The focus group participants said that many people don't think a lot about water use or water conservation. They felt that many people see water as a commodity – something that is always there whenever they turn on the tap – and that too many people take their water for granted. In Canada, they said, we are incredibly fortunate to have such an abundant supply of natural resources, including water, and this means that as a nation we have not been concerned about the way we use, and conserve, our water. We have assumed our supplies of water will always be unlimited.

While they felt that people may be aware of water shortages on a global scale, it is difficult for many people to relate what they see in the media to a need to conserve water here at home. Part of the reason is the apparent abundance of our water supply in a rainy climate such as Victoria's where it is seemingly always being replenished. Other factors contribute as well. It is difficult for some people to know how much water they consume. Those whose garbage and water bills are combined, as well as renters whose landlords pay the water bill, and those who live in condos or townhouses and don't receive a water bill, for example, have no way of knowing what their water consumption is. If one does not know how much water they are consuming, they said, it is difficult to see why it might be important to cut back.

When they were asked if people are more concerned about water conservation and water management now than they were several years ago, most respondents agreed that people are both more aware and more concerned, but that most people are not really doing very much about it. Interestingly, while the focus group participants felt that many people do too little to conserve water, they said that they themselves were aware of the need to reduce their water use, and that they themselves were already doing a number of things to conserve water.

Many of the participants felt that an increased awareness of the importance of conserving water in the CRD could be traced directly back to the water shortage experienced seven

years ago. The drought conditions and stage three watering restrictions that were imposed at the time were a wake-up call that made most of the residents of Victoria aware that their water supply was not limitless, and that efforts need to be taken to conserve our water. But a number of participants felt that the enhancements to the Sooke Reservoir that had increased its capacity following the water shortage may have created a sense of security about our water supply. A couple of respondents did not agree that people are more genuinely concerned about conserving water than they used to be. One even expressed outright skepticism that there was a need to conserve water.

The groups generated a lengthy list of things that people can do to reduce their water use. Many of the focus group participants said that they were already implementing a number of these suggestions. Several in each of the groups said that they had already installed low flow toilets or had purchased front-loading washers. A number had replaced their shower heads with low flow versions. Several in each group had let their lawns go golden. Many said they were either reducing the time they spent in the shower, or were turning off the water while they soaped up. A couple of the respondents also mentioned that while they had started to put some of the ideas on the list into practice, it was difficult to determine whether they were actually having a measurable impact on their water consumption.

A number of important ways of motivating people to conserve water were suggested by the groups. The most effective of these, they said, would be making it more costly not to conserve. This could be accomplished by charging more for water, through broad scale rate increases (although this was understandably not a popular suggestion!), through a sliding scale system that would charge more to those who use more water or through higher fees for usage during peak times. It could also be accomplished by providing incentives to those who use less water.

Helping people understand why it is important to conserve water would also be a very important motivator for a number of the respondents. While they hear the message that it is important to do so, they said, the reasons are not clear to them. Understanding why it is important to practice water conservation is critical to their willingness to do so and, in their opinion, critical to convincing the general public to reduce their water use.

Rebates and incentives, and increasing the political will to legislate and enforce conservation would also be important motivators, as would education (especially of young children), and making an emotional connection that also helps people understand how their conservation efforts can have an impact.

Interestingly, those who do not pay the water bill said they are still motivated to conserve water. For some this is because they felt they should do their part to ensure we do not run out of water, or because they were raised to make a habit of using water (and other resources) wisely. Others said this was because they did actually pay for their water, although indirectly, either as part of the strata's water bill or because the cost of water was incorporated into their monthly rent.

About half of the respondents (including those who do not pay the water bill) said that they had recently purchased or shopped for either new appliances or plumbing fixtures. Most said that the salespeople they spoke to had mentioned that one of the benefits of the purchases they were considering was water conservation, although several said that they either mentioned lower water usage in the broader context of environmental consciousness, or that the focus was on hydro conservation over water conservation. Most felt that the salespeople, while mentioning water conservation, had not emphasized it in their conversation. Several also indicated that the salesperson had mentioned a rebate program

as well as reduced water and energy usage, but at least one respondent had missed out on a rebate that they could have collected because the salesperson had not told them about it.

Almost unanimously, the respondents said that they thought that overall, the quality of the water currently supplied by the CRD is excellent. Having said that they felt the quality of their water was excellent, however, several respondents expressed some issues with it, ranging from the smell of chlorine or other odours, to a yellowish or brown colour when the tap is first turned on (which they did not believe was due to the pipes).

There were a number of participants who confessed that they did not drink water straight from the tap. Several in each focus group said they used Brita water filters, had fridges that dispensed filtered water, kept their drinking water in a jug in the fridge so it could “gas off”, or boiled their water. For these respondents, though, the reasons for not drinking water straight from the tap were not related to concerns over the safety of the water, but were because they disliked the taste of their tap water.

Most respondents said they did not feel they knew very much about CRD Water Services and what it does. Several indicated that not only did they not know much about CRD Water Services, they did not know much about the CRD, either. They were even less sure about the relationship of CRD Water Services to the CRD.

Many of the participants indicated that they had seen ads in the local newspaper about watering restrictions coming into effect (although several others said that they had not seen the ads and, moreover, had not been aware that restrictions had started for the summer). Several also indicated that they had seen rebate offers from CRD Water Services. A couple said that all they could remember seeing from CRD Water Services was the information that had accompanied their water bills. Several respondents described the materials from CRD Water Services that their children had brought home from school. Only a handful of the participants had visited the CRD Water Services web site.

When they were asked for their reactions to a sampling of CRD Water Services communications materials, quite a few of the focus group participants commented on the amount of information on several of the pieces. While they agreed that most of the information was valuable, and that they found it interesting and helpful, they were concerned that most people would not take the time to read it. The main message most respondents took away from the materials was “conserve, conserve, conserve”. While some of them agreed that the availability of rebates was a strong message, too, they also understood that the purpose of the rebate programs is to encourage people to reduce their water use.

When they were asked what else they would like to know about water conservation, water quality and water management, a number of respondents said they would like to know more about water quality, specifically about its chlorine content and the presence of other substances. Others reiterated what they had said earlier in the groups about the importance of knowing why we need to reduce our water use or conserve water.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document reports on the findings, conclusions and indicated actions from a series of four focus groups conducted on behalf of CRD Water Services in May, 2008.

The focus groups were part of a larger study for CRD Water Services, which also includes a quantitative public opinion survey intended to gain insight into CRD Water Services users' awareness, knowledge and attitudes about water quality, water management, and water conservation. The survey offers the advantage of a large number of opinions on topics that are more objective in nature, allowing inferences about the population at large in the area served by CRD Water Services, while the focus groups provided the opportunity to explore more subjective topics in detail.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of the focus groups was to allow for an in-depth discussion of attitudes about water and conservation, including factors that motivate people to behave in a certain way. The focus groups covered a range of topics, including:

- identifying behaviour and attitudes about water use habits and practices, including conservation;
- exploring initiatives or actions that might best influence consumers to conserve water;
- identifying awareness and recall of marketing, advertising and promotion efforts by CRD Water Services;
- examining CRD Water Services' educational and marketing approaches to water use and conservation, in particular the effectiveness of current approaches in altering water use behaviours;
- investigating understanding of the nature of the relationship between CRD Water Services and the CRD;
- understanding attitudes about water quality and potential public messaging about water quality; and
- soliciting opinions regarding the most effective means of communicating with the public about water conservation, water quality and related issues.

3 METHODOLOGY

A total of four focus groups were conducted at the Venture Market Research Corp. focus group facility on the evenings of Wednesday, May 7th, Thursday, May 8th and Wednesday, May 21st, amongst a total of 29 participants. Each of the focus groups was approximately 2 hours in duration.

The focus groups were comprised of randomly selected CRD Water Services users, specifically: CRD residents aged 50+ who pay the water bill (1 group), CRD residents aged 18 to 49 who pay the water bill (2 groups), and CRD residents aged 18+ who do not pay the water bill (1 group).

The recruitment of the focus group participants was conducted by Venture, according to a recruitment screening questionnaire (“screener”), which was provided to the Client for review and pre-approval. A copy of the recruitment screening questionnaire is attached to this report as Appendix 1. Ten respondents were recruited for each of the four focus groups, with the expectation that eight would actually arrive to participate on the designated evening.

As is customary, those attending the focus groups were provided with a cash incentive to thank them for their time and their participation. In this case, the respondents were paid an incentive of \$60.00 cash.

A written discussion guide, which served as an outline for the group discussion, was prepared by the focus group moderator and provided to the Client for review and approval in advance of the sessions (see Appendix 2).

The focus groups were moderated by Cathy Whitehead McIntyre. Cathy’s professional profile is attached as Appendix 3.

4 NOTE TO READER

The reader should be reminded that while qualitative research provides a rich source of information in clarifying existing theories, creating hypotheses, and giving direction to future research, the intention in qualitative research is to uncover and explore people’s motivations, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and feelings, not to count the number of people who demonstrate a particular attribute. Although the participants in this study were drawn from the group(s) in the population from whom we seek answers, they were not chosen on any statistical basis. The findings presented in this report must therefore be considered directional in nature and no statistical inferences should be drawn from the results of the research.

Please note that participant responses quoted in this report are presented verbatim, exactly as they were articulated by the participants during the focus groups. Because they are quoted verbatim, they have not been edited for content or grammar. The names of the respondents have not been included, in order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of those who were kind enough to participate in the focus group discussions.

5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

It is both interesting and important to note that there was a great deal of consistency in the comments made by the respondents across age segments and amongst both those paying their water bills and those who did not pay the water bill. Where one of the target segments responded differently to the questions from the moderator than did the others, this has been specifically noted in the report. Otherwise, the reader may assume that the findings presented in this section of the report were consistent across all four of the focus groups.

5.1 WATER USE AND CONSERVATION

Awareness and Understanding

The moderator began the focus groups by asking the participants what they believed the average person understands about water use and conservation. Respondents said that many people don’t think a lot about water use or water conservation at all. They felt that

many people see water as a commodity – something that is always there whenever they turn on their taps – and that too many people take water for granted. Interestingly, however, while the focus group participants felt that many people take water for granted and do too little to conserve water, they said that they themselves were aware of the need to reduce their water use, and that they themselves were already doing a number of things to conserve water.

In Canada, they said, we are incredibly fortunate to have such an abundant supply of natural resources, including water, and this means that as a nation we have not been concerned about the way we use, and conserve, our water. We have assumed that our supplies of water will always be unlimited.

I think in Canada we have a profligate use of water at many levels. I think we assume because we see so many lakes that there is unlimited – and rivers – unlimited water.

I think they just take it for granted. They take water for granted. We're so privileged to live in a country like Canada where we haven't had mass droughts, famines.....We don't realize that fresh water is an asset all over the world. Water is really political, so we have to know about it.

That said, they felt that there was a growing public awareness of droughts and water shortages in other parts of the world, and that this was beginning to make people realize that water is a precious, and certainly not an infinite, resource. A couple even expressed concerns that water might at some point become political, if other countries run short and grew jealous of our resources.

I think we're starting to understand more and more as we become more globally connected and there's more humanitarian work out there. We start hearing about more places that don't have water like we have water. Even if you're not aware of how important it is to conserve it, you're more aware of how important it is because there are so many places that don't have it.

In the next 10 years other countries will be coming knocking on our door looking for water. We're hyperconscious about that resource. It's rare and people are going to want it.

Several respondents also made reference to the fact that our water is relatively cheap compared to water in other countries, and that residents of other countries have learned to conserve more water because they pay more for it. Europeans, for example, have been using front loading washers, and recycling grey water, for years, they said.

Those in the focus groups felt that while people may be becoming more aware of water shortages on a global scale, it is difficult for many people to relate what they see in the media to a need to conserve water here at home. Part of the reason, they said, is the apparent abundance of our water supply, in a rainy climate such as Victoria's where it is seemingly always being replenished. But there are other factors that contribute as well. It is difficult for some people to know how much water they consume. Those whose garbage and water bills are combined, as well as renters whose landlords pay the water bill, and those who live in condos or townhouses and don't receive a water bill, for example, have no way of knowing what their water consumption is. If one does not know how much water they are consuming, they said, it is difficult to see why it might be important to cut back.

I think the only way I can tell my usage is through the water bill. And it's a really bad way of looking at it.....And so there's no other way of looking at your usage unless you're aware. It's really difficult to think about that.

When they were asked if people are more concerned about water conservation and water management now than they were several years ago, most respondents agreed that people are both more aware and more concerned, but that most people are not really doing very much about it.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of conserving water, said several of those in the focus groups, that is probably tied to more public awareness of environmental issues overall, however, they also felt that people would be more likely to think first of conserving power or recycling when it comes to environmental initiatives than conserving water.

I think there's a lot of awareness generally about the environment. I think people have maybe even been hyperconsciousness about going green. I think in terms of the whole issue around water, maybe not so much.

Many of the participants felt that an increased awareness of the importance of conserving water in the CRD could be traced directly back to the water shortage experienced seven years ago. The drought conditions and stage three watering restrictions that were imposed at the time were a wake-up call that made most of the residents of Victoria aware that their water supply was not limitless, and that efforts needed to be taken to conserve our water. A couple mentioned that since the drought they were seeing a lot more brown lawns than they used to, and, in fact that lush, green lawns seemed to stand out because they are in the minority these days.

Importantly, a number of participants felt that the enhancements to the Sooke Reservoir that had increased its capacity following the water shortage may have created a sense of security about our water supply.

And now with the increased capacity of the Sooke Reservoir, a lot of people think, you know, 'happy days are here again'.

I think people view Sooke Lake as being enormous and limitless and since the most people don't ever go and see it they don't have any real idea of its scale, it seems kind of crazy for us to have watering restrictions.

There was also a concern expressed in the groups that with the rapid pace of development and the population growth we are experiencing in the CRD, there are good reasons to begin to conserve our water supply. Several also stressed the importance of including water conservation initiatives, such as grey water recycling, in new developments.

We are lucky we do have a fairly big supply but it's not going to.....we just can't keep consuming water and using it the way we do. And all these new projects that are happening, there's only one that I've heard of, over here in Langford, that's really going to do the grey water thing. There's one below me there and there's a huge complex and nothing with that. It's not part of their plans at all.

A couple of respondents did not agree that people are more genuinely concerned about conserving water than they used to be. One even expressed outright skepticism that there was a need to conserve water.

People are more concerned about keeping their lawns green than they are about water conservation. People I think have the perception that we're interested in water conservation when really we're not. We're interested in conserving a way of life. And that means being able to water (your lawn) and wash your cars when you want, not a lot to do with the resource and what it provides to us.....Until you turn on your tap and nothing comes out I don't think the point will really be driven home.

I think they're more guilty into concern than anything else....just the folks in the media and literature and information from people at the CRD who are forcing us to do the restrictions.

I'd be the first to jump on board and say I'd conserve if there's a requirement. I haven't seen it. I'm mindful of the levels in the reservoir. I don't personally think they're an issue.

One participant mentioned that when people are buying new appliances and plumbing fixtures these days they are likely to hear about how they conserve water, and that this is making people more aware of the need to conserve water. But while they may be more aware of the need, said this respondent, it is still a “tough battle” to get people to actually change their behaviour.

Ways to Conserve Water

The moderator conducted a group exercise, asking the participants to list the things they could think of that people can do, or are doing, to reduce their water use. With only one or two exceptions, the ideas for water conservation that surfaced were very similar from group to group. They included:

- not watering the lawn/letting the lawn go brown, or not overwatering
- converting lawns into (rock) gardens
- watering the garden only when necessary (or at night), using alternatives to old irrigation systems and sprinklers (such as soaker hoses and drip systems), and programming systems correctly
- using rain barrels to collect water for the garden, or collecting water from downspouts
- observing watering restrictions
- being cautious about what goes down the storm drains
- don't wash down the driveway (or do so less frequently)
- growing native plants, or drought-tolerant plants
- washing the car less frequently (or washing the car on the lawn)
- turning off the tap when brushing teeth
- plugging the bathroom sink rather than letting water run
- repairing dripping taps, leaking toilets and replacing worn washers
- taking fewer showers and baths, taking shorter showers, turning off the water when soaping up, and not filling the bathtub all the way, having little kids share baths
- flushing the toilet only when necessary (if it's yellow, letting it mellow and if it's brown, flushing it down)
- installing low flow toilets (especially the double flush models)
- putting bricks in the toilet tank

- running appliances such as clothes washers and dishwashers only when full
- low flow shower heads and toilets, or flow restrictors on showerheads and faucets
- low flow dishwashers and front loading washing machines
- not using bottled water
- using grey water – either through technology/installed systems, or by collecting grey water (e.g. using water from baby's baths for laundry); treating grey water through reverse osmosis before reusing
- water jackets for instant hot water
- keeping a jug of water cooling in the fridge
- redirecting overflow from swimming pools
- monitoring usage through meters
- education, especially among young children
- building public awareness of what life would be like without plentiful water.

When they were asked which ideas resonated with them, or which they were already putting into practice, many of the participants in all of the focus groups said that they were in fact already implementing a number of these suggestions. Several in each of the groups said that they had already installed low flow toilets or had purchased front-loading washers. A number had replaced their shower heads with low flow versions. Several in each group had already let their lawns go golden (although they described this as letting their lawns go "brown"); and they said that this had the additional benefit of reducing the amount of mowing required. Many said they were either reducing the time they spent in the shower, or were turning off the water while they soaped up.

A number also said, however, that there were things they were simply not prepared to do. Several were unwilling to let their lawns go golden, for example, because they had either kids or pets (or both) that played on the lawn. A couple talked about how difficult it was to limit shower usage in their households, either because they simply liked long showers or because their teenagers did.

A couple of the respondents mentioned that while they had started to put some of the ideas on the list into practice, it was difficult to determine whether they were actually having a measurable impact on their water consumption.

We did all the low flow toilets and shower heads in our house. We don't know if it made a difference because, as you said, our bill just keeps spiraling higher. But we can definitely tell when we go to somebody else's house and use a regular toilet. You just go wow. It's a huge difference.....

Motivators and Barriers to Water Conservation

When they were asked what they thought motivates people to change their water use or conserve water, and what might be some of the things that hold people back from changing, the focus group participants had a great deal to say.

The most important motivator, said many of those in one of the 18 to 49 age groups, would be helping people understand why it is important. While a couple of participants in other groups questioned why we need to conserve water, it was a recurring theme in this focus group; the participants returned again and again to how important it would be for people to understand why they should conserve water. While they hear the message that it is important to do so, they said, the reasons are not clear to them. For these respondents, understanding why it is necessary to practice water conservation is critical to their

willingness to either do so, or to do more. Moreover, they said, in order to convince the public to do so, it would be critical to communicate why it is necessary.

I want to know why. I would accept a policy or a practice if I understood how it would benefit me. But if there's no measurable value, if there's no demonstrated benefit.....

Why conserve water? If it's falling down from the sky in copious quantities every winter and filling up reservoirs that just pour down the big pipes into our homes, why am I conserving? And so there has to be, in my mind, a real tangible result or product that, ya, the why has to be answered.....I'm not experiencing not having water, so why?

Making the case in a way that ties the reasons for conserving water to the quality of our water would also be important, said the 18 to 49 year-olds. One said that making the link would be especially helpful in encouraging more conservation, for example, by reminding people that the quality of our water here in Victoria is exceptionally good, it is also a good reason to make sure we conserve the good quality water that we have. Just hearing that conservation is necessary, without hearing why, is not a compelling rationale for taking the necessary steps.

I think there would be value if for example water conservation would mean that we end up with better water quality or we end up with a removal of limitations about the use or things like that. But just conserving water, or taking a measure and spending money on an issue just because it seems like a good thing to do, is a bit of a stretch.

The discussion about what people can do to conserve water caused many respondents to remark that the most important thing that could be done would be making it more costly not to conserve. This could be accomplished by charging more for water, through broad scale rate increases (although this was understandably not a popular suggestion!), through a sliding scale system that would charge more to those who use more water or through higher fees for usage during peak times. It could also be accomplished by providing incentives to those who use less water.

The only way you're going to stop homeowners in that is to hit them in the pocketbook.

Hit us where it hurts. Financially.

Many of the focus group participants also felt strongly that one of the most important motivators would be increasing the political will to conserve – convincing politicians to bring in legislation that forces people to conserve, requires developers and builders to install low flow plumbing fixtures and appliances, and to adopt grey water recycling practices. In addition, the political will to enforce conservation practices – through imposing penalties that carry real consequences – would also be important in motivating people to reduce their water use.

Education, starting with young children, would be another important motivator in changing not just their behaviour, but their family's behaviour as well, said the focus group participants. A number of them spoke about how much pressure they felt to reduce their water consumption when their kids came home from school and “bugged them” or “nagged them” about reducing their water use.

As well, making an emotional connection that also helps people understand how their conservation efforts can have an impact would be important.

One of the things that motivates me personally is when I see something in print or something out there telling me that if you turn off your tap this is how many gallons of water you're saving. Something that hits you emotionally. That works. If you don't run the water while you're brushing your teeth, one small thing, but that could be saving this much water....If you hit people emotionally and make it feel like we're contributing, and you make it convenient for them to contribute, most people would contribute.

It would also be important, said one respondent in the 18 to 49 age group, to appeal to people's social conscience, making it clear that conserving water is part of doing the right thing by your community.

The other thing to do, I think, in order to get people to adopt that philosophy, obviously awareness, education, making them realize there's value, and the next step would be appeal to people's conscience about wanting to be good to the earth, doing the right thing. The majority of people want to do the right thing, be morally responsible and just help out.

Rebates and incentives would be important motivators to get people to conserve water, according to many of the focus group participants. They stressed, however, that rebate and incentive programs need to be simple, straightforward and easy to do in order to be truly motivating. Quite a few of them had taken advantage of one of the CRD Water Services rebate programs (either for low flow toilets or for laundry appliances), but many of these felt that participating in the current program was a lot of work, in fact quite daunting. A couple related their experiences taking their old toilets to the disposal facility, and a couple of others described the difficulty they had experienced in determining which types and models of appliances would be eligible for rebates. One also felt that rebate programs were only offered with more expensive fixtures and appliances.

At that point the CRD had a rebate program. They had some obscure location where you could bring your old toilet and we never found that obscure location. And we were laughing because we were going, they didn't make it very easy.....

.....We did low flow, the toilets, and the guy at Home Depot said 'If you buy this toilet and this shower head you can send in this rebate and here's where you've got to take your toilet'. And it's like 'Where are we taking our toilet?' And I drove down there with it in the back of the van and where am I going?.....

.....We wound up taking ours to the dump.....

.....We found it and we actually ended up getting our rebate. We got it quite quickly.

Many of those who felt that rebate programs were important motivators (and some felt quite strongly that they were) also felt that the programs need to be delivered right at point of purchase. When there were some in the groups who said they felt this would place a burden on the retailer, those in favour said that they believed that a smaller rebate (for example \$50 instead of \$75), delivered at point of purchase to the consumer, would be more effective. If necessary, they said, the \$25 savings could be paid to the retailer to encourage their participation in the program.

A couple of people felt that businesses and commercial users need to be required to conserve water, and, importantly, that the public should be made aware of what business and industry are doing in this regard. Knowing that businesses around the CRD are also conserving water may not be a strong motivator, they said, but thinking that businesses are not even trying is a barrier to conservation for some, as it makes them wonder whether their efforts could add up to anything substantial compared to commercial water users.

One participant was concerned that even though a number of the groups' ideas for reducing water use were good ones, and even though there seemed to be some good reasons for conserving water, not many people were doing much in the way of acting on them and, in fact, not much had changed in the last twenty years.

Twenty years ago you could have sat in the same focus groups and the ideas, the conversation would have been the same. For the most part we're doing the same things as twenty years ago. Not much has changed from a government will perspective, from a general population perspective. Until there's a real concerted effort by somebody or some government body to change through taxation or regulation it's not going to change. People have been talking about this for over 20 years.

Interestingly, those who do not pay the water bill said they are still motivated to conserve water. For some this is because they felt they should do their part to ensure we do not run out of water, or because they were raised to make a habit of using water (and other resources) wisely. Others said this was because they did actually pay for their water, although indirectly, either as part of the strata's water bill or because the cost of water was incorporated into their monthly rent.

Shopping for New Appliances and Fixtures

About half of the respondents (including those who do not pay the water bill) said that they had recently purchased or shopped for either new appliances or plumbing fixtures. Most said that the salespeople they spoke to had mentioned that one of the benefits of the purchases they were considering was water conservation, although several said that they either mentioned lower water usage in the broader context of environmental consciousness, or that the focus was on hydro conservation over water conservation. Most felt that the salespeople, while mentioning water conservation, had not emphasized it in their conversation. Several also indicated that the salesperson had mentioned a rebate program as well as reduced water and energy usage, but at least one had missed out on a rebate that they could have collected because the salesperson had not told them about it.

A couple of the respondents thought that the rebate programs could be better advertised. Either they themselves had not been aware of the rebates available, or they felt that public awareness of the programs was either not as high as it could be, or had been in the past.

I think the advertising on the rebate programs could be known, be brought more to the fore to the people of the city. A lot of it came out many years ago. People have forgotten about them. The rebates then were say \$75, they're still \$75. They haven't increased. They haven't encouraged people to do more. And they haven't done any more advertising.

One participant, who owned an irrigation system that they described as four or five years old, mentioned that it came with a rebate for their rain monitor device.

5.2 WATER QUALITY

The focus group participants were asked how they felt about the quality of the water that is piped into their homes. Almost unanimously, they said that they thought that overall, the quality of the water currently supplied by the CRD is excellent.

I think the water quality here is excellent. Probably exceeds most bottled waters. I mean bottled water is good relatively if you look at other jurisdictions but I would be surprised if there were any commercial products that were better.

Having said that they felt the quality of their water was excellent, however, several respondents expressed some issues with it, ranging from the smell of chlorine or other odours, to a yellowish or brown colour when the tap is first turned on (which they did not believe was due to the pipes).

Only two participants had any questions regarding the quality of their water. One wondered if a strange odour in the summer, or the chlorine in the water, might have any impact on water quality. Another individual was concerned that what had happened in Walkerton a number of years ago could conceivably happen here.

I worry about it in the summer and I realize that the algae blooms aren't supposed to create any health effects but sometimes you do turn on the water and you know it does smell a little funny. The other thing that concerns me is how much chlorine there is. Sometimes you turn on the shower and there's just a huge waft of chlorine.

There were a number who confessed that they did not drink water straight from the tap. Several in each focus group said they used Brita water filters, had fridges that dispensed filtered water, kept their drinking water in a jug in the fridge so it could "gas off", or boiled their water. For these respondents, though, the reasons for not drinking water straight from the tap were not related to concerns over the safety of the water, but were because they disliked the taste of their tap water.

I've got a filter on my line to my fridge and it dispenses the drinking water and then if I taste the water out of the tap it tastes horrible.....But I don't think there's anything wrong with it (tap water). It's healthy.

Most respondents had not changed their water consumption habits recently, except to drink more water (or try to) because it was a healthy thing to do. A couple in each group said they had stopped drinking bottled water because of health concerns about plastic, they were skeptical about the purity of bottled water, it is expensive, or because they felt that its production and transportation to point of sale used too much energy.

5.3 CRD WATER SERVICES

When the moderator asked the focus group participants what they could tell her about the role of CRD Water Services, most said that they did not feel they knew very much about CRD Water Services and what it does. Several indicated that not only did they not know much about CRD Water Services, they did not know much about the CRD, either.

On further discussion, however, there were a number who described various initiatives and activities of CRD Water Services. These included:

- billing residents for water
- reading water meters/checking consumption
- operating the Sooke Reservoir, and providing tours to the public occasionally
- enforcing water restrictions
- education in the schools
- displays and booths at home shows, fairs and other events around town

I've been to quite a few water conferences now and each time there's always somebody there from the CRD. I go every other month to see if there's something new for children, and they've had wonderful stuff for children, and I pick up stuff that I can disseminate to different people because I find that the education process is exceedingly good.

When the moderator asked the groups about the relationship of CRD Water Services to the CRD, they were even less sure. In fact, even though respondents thought that the moderator's question might have indicated that there might be a difference between the two, they said they had thought they were "one and the same". Throughout the focus groups, they continued to use the blanket term "CRD" to refer specifically to "CRD Water Services".

5.4 ADVERTISING AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM CRD WATER SERVICES

Advertising Recall and Awareness

The moderator asked the participants what advertising or messages they could recall seeing and hearing from CRD Water Services, and where they saw or heard them. Many of the participants indicated that they had seen ads in the local newspaper about watering restrictions coming into effect (although several others said that they had not seen the ads and, moreover, had not been aware that restrictions had started for the summer). Several also indicated that they had seen rebate offers from CRD Water Services. A couple said that all they could remember seeing from CRD Water Services was the information that had accompanied their water bills.

Among the 18 to 49 year-olds, several respondents described the materials from CRD Water Services that their children had brought home from school. They included colouring books, word search games and stickers. Interestingly, once the package of materials prepared for the focus groups had been circulated to the participants (see below), a couple mentioned that several of the materials in the package (tablets to test for leaks, seeds) had made their way home from school.

Only a handful of the participants had visited the CRD Water Services web site. One did so to learn about water quality, one to try to find information about when they might water their lawn, and a couple to monitor water levels in the reservoir during the drought several years ago.

Reactions to CRD Water Services Materials

The focus group participants were all provided with a package of communications materials assembled by CRD Water Services for this purpose. They were asked to study the materials and think about: whether the materials appealed to them (and why), what they thought CRD

Water Services is trying to tell them – the main messages in the materials, and who they thought CRD Water Services is trying to reach with these communications materials.

When they were asked for their initial reactions to the CRD Water Services communications materials, quite a few of the focus group participants commented on the amount of information on several of the pieces, including the “Cost of Water Waste” card, the “Smart Wash” and “Water Wise” brochures, and the “Efficient Irrigation Devices” brochure. While they agreed that most of the information was valuable, and that they had found it interesting and helpful, they were concerned that most people would not take the time to read it.

*There's too much information. This one for example (“The Cost of Water Waste”), I'm not sure how many people are going to take the time to read this. I would try to, personally, keep the same bulleted headlines and reduce the amount of information by half. I think it would read better.....
..... On the other hand this is the kind of pamphlet I would keep. Because it has so much information that I would stick it somewhere where if I'm looking for something that has to do with a faucet or whatever I would say oh I have something on that.*

I found the information informative. I found it quite wordy.....But I think I don't want to have it dumbed down to a level. I think we need to take some responsibility, we have to educate ourselves. I think it's important that there's information like this that's being sent out. I think the one that I liked best was this one – The Cost of Water Waste – because it kind of puts it into perspective for the individual. It gives that individual thing. These pamphlets. I read them. I think this is important. We need to have it. We need to have that information going out.

A number of respondents commented on the rebate program brochures (“Smart Wash” and “Water Wise” versions), saying that they found them eye-catching because the dollar amount of the rebate was emphasized on the front panel of the brochures. Several also said how much they appreciated having the details about watering restrictions on a handy fridge magnet (although a couple did comment on the relatively large size of the magnet).

Several also expressed concerns with the size of the brochures – saying they would like to see smaller versions with less information (which would make them less daunting for most people, they believed). Smaller versions would also have the advantages of being less expensive to produce, as well as creating less paper waste for recycling.

The main message most respondents took away from the materials was “conserve, conserve, conserve”. While some respondents agreed that the fact that rebates are available was a strong message too, they also understood that the purpose of the rebate programs is to encourage people to reduce water use.

Most respondents, whether homeowners or renters, agreed that the information in their packages was geared to homeowners.

There were several who thought the leak detector tablets and showerhead bag were especially engaging. They would be fun and informative to use, they said, particularly if they were used as part of a family activity that could help educate the kids. The participants also reacted to the packet of seeds with a great deal of enthusiasm, saying it was informative

and educational, as well as a nice “freebee”. (A couple commented that it was too bad it would take 2 years before the seeds would flower, however.)

When they were asked to compare the two formats of rebate brochures (“Efficient Irrigation Devices” and “Water Wise”/“Smart Wash”), most expressed a preference for the latter, saying this format was more eye-catching, provided more emphasis on the rebate offer, and would be less costly to print. One even felt the “Water Wise” and “Smart Wash” brochures looked “more official” than the “Effective Irrigation Devices” brochure. Those who preferred the “Effective Irrigation Devices” format said it was more colourful, more attractive and more pleasing to the eye, but did acknowledge, however, that the rebate offer was not as obvious as in the other format. That said, what was most important was the information in the brochures rather than the format in which it is presented.

I think that what's important though is the information that's in them. Both of them, what caught me was the numbers. I see the numbers right away and that's visual.

When they were asked what other advice they had for CRD Water Services when it comes to their advertising and communications, the focus group participants had a number of suggestions, including:

- using bigger fonts in printed materials;
- using “little quotes and faster facts” rather than including as much information on printed materials;
- including information about the effect on water conservation of planting native plants;
- printing information, including tips about how to conserve water, directly on water bills (and perhaps on property tax assessment notices) to save paper and distribution costs;
- ensuring that appliance and plumbing fixture rebate information brochures are displayed at retail point of purchase, and that information about rebates on irrigation system rebates is available at nurseries, irrigation supply stores or even landscaping companies;
- putting the bulk of the information on the CRD Water Services web site and providing links to the information on smaller information pieces, on water bills, and on other advertising and communications materials; and
- using television, radio and bus advertising to advertise watering restrictions, as well as information about water conservation.

Several respondents also repeated their earlier advice to CRD Water Services about communicating the reasons why conserving water is necessary and important.

I think what we were talking about earlier.....what we were talking about before is, is there a need, what's the benefit, and appealing to people's better or moral judgment by doing the right thing for the environment. None of that's here. It's all appealing to dollars. And that's a good way to go, but I think it should be a multi-pronged approach. It really should address these other issues as well....And feel good about what you're doing.

Interestingly, participants in all of the focus groups mentioned the current BC Hydro television campaign as a great example of compelling, memorable and effective advertising to encourage conservation.

Water Conservation Tips

The moderator asked the respondents for their reactions to four new “Water Conservation Tips”. Most liked the subject matter, and appreciated that the tips were small changes that would likely be easy for most people to do, that would all add up to a reduction in water use. Including tips that were too difficult to implement could be daunting, they said, and would not be adopted. One or two people, however, felt that the tips were things that they were already doing or aware of, and that they would have appreciated some new suggestions about how to conserve water.

I thought all the tips were very, very easy to attack. It wasn't too big a challenge. If it's too big you're not going to think about stepping towards it.

I think the tips they're actually suggesting there are really, really obvious ones that most people know. What they should be doing is giving suggestions that some people might not even be thinking about.

Many respondents reacted to the use of the word “golden” in Tip #1, saying that it was a more appealing way to describe what they had previously referred to as “letting their lawns go brown”. A couple also spoke to the photograph of the young girl in this tip, saying it made an emotional connection for them that they found quite moving.

While most liked the photographs used on the tip sheets, others mentioned that they found the photograph of the fertilizer confusing; they were unsure what the substance was. A couple also said that while they understood the reasons for showing a push mower in Tip #2, they were not sure the picture was the most effective match for the content of the tip itself; they thought the tip related specifically to using a push mower.

Interestingly, in all but one of the four focus groups, the respondents commented on the phrase “Be the Difference” before the moderator initiated discussion about it. Most respondents liked the tagline, saying it sends a positive message, and speaks to a sense of personal responsibility and personal efficacy.

I like the 'Be the Difference'. I really like that. Because it connects to 'Make a Difference'. Because it connects to a set of values that I like and I think that most people now are really keyed into making a difference. And so it's a feel good thing.

It makes it sound like one person could do something. You don't have to get everybody to convert. Whatever the tip is that they're giving, you could do it and make a difference to your water bill and.....It's simple. It's good.

It encourages you to live your life that way, as opposed to just doing it once, or once in a while.

The participants in one of the four focus groups agreed that the visual accompanying “Be the Difference” was not as clear as it could be. They said the visual was not immediately recognizable as a drop of water (rather a candle flame or the Amnesty International logo), and that its size could be increased.

While none of the focus group participants volunteered a comment about the phrase “Most people are actively finding ways to conserve water...”, when the moderator drew their attention to it and invited their comments, the majority agreed that it was a positive statement. That said, they also felt that it might not be the case, and questioned whether

most people really are trying to conserve. Several suggested that “many” people might be more appropriate than “most” people. A couple remarked that the phrase might be intended to provoke a little “peer pressure”, and that in a way that could be effective. Others were concerned that it might have the potential to turn people off.

What Else?

When they were asked what else they would like to know about water conservation, water quality and water management, a number of respondents said they would like to know more about water quality, specifically about its chlorine content and the presence of other substances.

To tell you the truth, I don't care about the supply. I'm more concerned about the quality. I don't care how much there is if it's crappy water. So I would say ditch the conservation stuff and tell me more about our water quality because that's what I'm more concerned about.

Others reiterated what they had said earlier in the groups about the importance of knowing why we need to reduce our water use or conserve water.

Like when we have watering restrictions, what is the environmental impact of that? What are the next steps if we don't? Like what are the other reasons why we should?.....

.....People probably wouldn't be too happy if they're finding out that they're paying a ticket for watering on an odd day when they should be watering on an even day and the next day they're opening up the spillways because there's too much water behind the flashboards. Then they'd say 'You obviously don't need to, you're penalizing behaviour that's unnecessary'. I want to know why.....

....Just to break it down – where are we now, what's going to happen if we don't, what are the implications and what are the results of us taking action?

A couple of respondents mentioned they would be interested in more information about the regulations, codes, safeguards and incentives for developers, specifically as related to ensuring adequate water supplies for the future and encouraging both water conservation and grey water recycling in high density developments.

When one participant said they would like to know more about what steps were being taken to conserve water at industrial and commercial sites, a couple of others agreed.

5.5 OTHER INFORMATION

A small minority of the focus group participants owned in-ground irrigation systems. Among the handful that did, most had purchased homes at which they were already installed – only one participant had installed his own system. Those with systems confessed that only a handful were regularly maintained; among those that were, a couple reported that they paid an outside company to do the maintenance and only one participant maintained his own system. Several other participants reported that they owned drip irrigation systems or used soaker hoses instead of in-ground irrigation systems.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND INDICATED ACTIONS

1. Water users need to understand why it is important for them to conserve.

While most of the focus group respondents understood, and accepted, that it is important for residents of the CRD to reduce their water use, it was not clear to them why this is necessary. In a community where rainfall is abundant, and the reservoir's capacity has been expanded, it is difficult for them to believe that the future of our water supply is in question. Some even question why ongoing watering restrictions are required. The case for water conservation would be significantly more compelling if it included the reasons why we in the CRD must conserve. If the case for conserving water can also be linked to the quality of our water – specifically to preserving its current high quality – it would be even more compelling.

2. Awareness and recall of advertising and communications from CRD Water Services among the focus group participants was low.

Very few of the participants were able to recall seeing or hearing any advertising or communications from CRD Water Services. While a number did indeed recall seeing ads about watering restrictions recently, there were also a number who were not aware that watering restrictions were in force. Advertising awareness and recall may be something that could be explored further in the quantitative portion of the research study.

3. The water in the CRD seems to be regarded as being of high quality, however, a number of the focus group participants said they would like more information about the quality of their water.

The focus group participants made it very clear that they believe the quality of the water in the CRD is very high, however, a number mentioned concerns about the amount of chlorine in the water, and expressed an interest in learning more about water quality. CRD Water Services may wish to consider adding this information to their communications mix. It might also be interesting to explore the issue of water quality quantitatively in the public opinion polling portion of the research.

7 LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Recruitment Screening Questionnaire
Appendix 2	Discussion Guide
Appendix 3	Professional Profile of Cathy Whitehead McIntyre

6(ii). What were the topics discussed? ()

(Thank & Terminate if anything to do with water issues)

6(iii). How long has it been since you last attended a group discussion? ()

(Thank & Terminate if within last 6 months)

7. Have you ever worked in or do you or does any member of your household currently work for/in any of the following:

(Read list, Thank & Terminate if yes to any)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Market Research Firm	()	()
Marketing or Advertising Agency	()	()
Any Media (radio, TV, print)	()	()
Public Relations	()	()
CRD Water Services	()	()
Local/ Municipal Government	()	()
Water Supply Company	()	()

8. What is your current occupation?

Type of job ()
Type of company ()

(Check that no mention is made of the categories in Q7. If so, Thank & Terminate)

9. And what is the current occupation of your spouse/partner, if applicable?

Type of job ()
Type of company ()

(Check that no mention is made of the categories in Q7. If so, Thank & Terminate)

10. All of our focus group discussions are audio and videotaped so the moderator may prepare a summary of the proceedings. You will remain anonymous and your remarks will only be used within the context of the focus group for analysis. Do you have any objections to this?

No () Yes () (Thank & Terminate)

If respondent qualifies, confirm date, time and location of the focus group.

The focus group will take place at Venture Market Research. We are located at Unit 210, 2728 Spencer Road: At the intersection of the Transcanada Highway and Spencer Road (Langford). We are attached to the Shell Gas Station. Take the exit off the highway for the Shell gas station and come round the front of the building facing the highway. Half way down the car park there is a set of double doors, we are upstairs on the left.

Remind respondent that the group will last about 1 & 1/2 to 2 hours and he/she must arrive 15 minutes early so we can start the groups on time. (For the 5:45pm group - remind them to allow time for traffic at that time of day). If for any reason they find out they cannot attend, they must call Venture (250-391-9898) as soon as possible.

Tell them coffee, tea, soft drinks and light refreshments will be available. We will email or phone to remind them a couple of days before the group.

Respondent Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____

**CRD WATER SERVICES
FOCUS GROUPS
MAY 7TH AND 8TH, 2008**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

(Welcome respondents and thank them for attending. Explain purpose of session, role of the moderator and moderator's independence, one-way glass/observers, audio-taping and video-taping, turning off cell phones and pagers, anonymity and confidentiality, importance of real opinions, no right or wrong answers, and importance of active participation.)

As we get started, I'd like to give you a chance to introduce yourselves to the others in the group. Please tell us your first name, the neighbourhood you live in and what you do for a living. Let's just go around the table..... *(Probes: If unclear from participants' responses regarding what they do for a living, ask if in the landscaping business or irrigation business.)*

Focus on Water Use and Conservation (30 minutes)

You hear a lot these days about the environment, reducing pollution, and about conserving water. What do you think the average person understands about water use and conservation?

Do you think people are more concerned about water conservation and management today than they used to be? Should they be more concerned?

(Note: Pay particular attention to discussion and, if necessary, probe if ever received a notice of violation.)

What are some of the things that people are doing, or can do, to reduce their water use? I'm going to list them on the flip chart as we go. *(Probes: watering lawn and/or garden, irrigation systems, switching to native plants, lawns going golden, washing clothes, flushing toilets, taking shorter showers, toilets and appliances, greywater recycling, rainwater cisterns, etc.)*

(Flip chart suggestions as they arise. Once listed, lead discussion:)

- Which ideas resonated with you? Why?
- Which are the highest priority/the most important? Why are they important?
- Which of these things on the list have you already undertaken personally? What motivated you to do that? Why is it important to you to do so?
- What other things have you done personally that weren't on the list? Why is that important to you?

What do you think motivates people to change their water use or conserve water – the things that are most powerful in influencing them to change their behaviour? *(Probes: incentives, workshops)*

What are the things that hold people back from changing their behaviour – the barriers to overcome? What else could be done to convince people to change?

Have any of you been shopping for new appliances or plumbing fixtures recently? Let's do a quick show of hands..... For those of you who have, what have you heard from retailers and sales people about water conservation? How did you feel about what you heard from them?

How many of you have taken advantage of a rebate program – let's do a show of hands. For those of you who have, please tell me about the program you took part in and why you did so.

Water Quality

How do you feel about the quality of the water that is piped to your home? Have your opinions about water quality in the CRD changed at all in the last while? Why?

Have you changed your water consumption habits recently? What has changed and why? (*Probes: bottled water vs. tap water*)

Focus on CRD Water Services (10 minutes)

What can you tell me about the role of CRD Water Services? What about the relationship of CRD Water Services to the CRD? (*Probes: Water, Parks, Hartland Landfill as businesses*)

Focus on Advertising and Communications (30 minutes)

What kinds of advertising and/or messages can you recall seeing and hearing from CRD Water Services? Where did you see or hear the advertising?

How many of you have visited the CRD Water Services web site? Let's just do a quick show of hands. For those of you who have visited the site, what did you think of it? What do you recall about the site and the information you found there?

I'd like to show you some examples of CRD Water Services' communications materials and get your reactions to them. Before you comment, please take a couple of minutes, grab a piece of paper and a pen, and jot down your first reactions to the materials. Don't say anything to the group just yet, just jot down your own thoughts and then we'll discuss them as a group. Please write down your responses to these questions:

- Do the materials appeal to you? Why?
- What do you think CRD Water Services is trying to tell you – what are the main messages in these communications materials? What do you think of those messages? Are they of interest? Are they appropriate?
- Who do you think they are trying to reach with these communications materials?

(Once participants have had a chance to jot down their thoughts, collect papers and lead discussion.)

What advice do you have for CRD Water Services when it comes to their advertising and communications materials? Is there a better way for them to be communicating to the public about conservation, water quality and water management?

Water Conservation Tips

CRD Water Services is preparing a new series of Water Conservation Tips. I'd like to show you some of them now and get your reactions. What do you think of the new materials? (Probes: "Be the difference" and "Together We Can Make a Difference", "Most people are actively finding ways to conserve water.")

I'm particularly interested in what you think of the phrase "Be the Difference". What is the message that you take from this phrase? What does it mean to you? (Probe: do respondents understand it is up to them, their responsibility?)

Other Information

What else would you like to know about conservation, water quality and water management? Why is that important?

How and where would it be most helpful for you to get this information? Where else? (Probes: types of media - pamphlets/brochures, advertising, online, e-mail, etc., information distribution methods/outlets - tradeshows, workshops, etc.)

Questions from Observers (5 minutes)

(Check with observers to see if they have any additional questions.)

Final Thoughts (5 minutes)

Have we missed anything in our discussion? Is there anything anyone would have liked to have mentioned but didn't? Are there any other issues related to water use and water service in the CRD that you would like to raise and have not had a chance to do so in the group this evening?

(Thank participants, on behalf of CRD Water Services, for their time and their valuable opinions. Advise participants that the host will provide them with their incentives once they've signed the signature sheet. Advise them that there may be others waiting outside for the next focus group and ask that they not say anything about the group to anyone until after they have left the building.)

CATHY WHITEHEAD MCINTYRE, M.B.A., C.M.R.P.



Cathy McIntyre, M.B.A., C.M.R.P., is a uniquely qualified senior executive with a background that includes more than 25 years of marketing, advertising and market research experience. She has worked in the business-to-business, business-to-consumer and not-for-profit sectors, assessing market opportunities, positioning and branding new initiatives, developing and implementing advertising and communications programs, and developing strategic marketing plans. After beginning her career in consumer goods product management, Cathy moved “agency side” to work in account/client service for a number of multi-national marketing communications firms, with such disciplined consumer packaged goods clients as Procter & Gamble, General Foods, Beatrice Foods, Beecham, and Johnson & Johnson. After subsequently spending a number of years in marketing and sales management in the newspaper industry, Cathy began working as a qualitative research consultant in 1997.

A skilled and seasoned qualitative research consultant, Cathy has moderated hundreds of focus groups (both traditional face-to-face and online focus groups) and has conducted scores of one-on-one in-depth interviews. She has also planned, implemented and project-managed a number of multi-modal research studies, including qualitative, quantitative and secondary research, and has conducted numerous online surveys.

Among others, Cathy’s clients include: Terasen Gas, BC Hydro, the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, BC Assessment, Lilydale, Thrifty Foods, Monk Office Supply, CHUM TV, Island Savings Credit Union, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, the Times Colonist newspaper, the Greater Victoria Public Library, the Mary Winspear Centre, the Victoria Symphony Society, Camosun College, Thompson Rivers University, and the University of Victoria.

Cathy adds value for clients by bringing her marketing, advertising and management experience to bear on their research projects, and by employing her strategic thinking and analytical skills. Cathy’s background gives her specific expertise in qualitative research involving advertising and communications strategy development, concept testing and evaluation, positioning and image research, new product/service development, and brand strategy development and assessment. Her superior moderating skills, combined with her marketing management background and project management expertise, ensure she runs productive qualitative research projects that satisfy the client’s research objectives.

Cathy trained as a focus group moderator at the prestigious AC Nielsen Burke Institute in Cincinnati, earning a Certificate of Proficiency in Qualitative Research from that institution. She also holds the Certified Marketing Research Professional (C.M.R.P.) designation awarded by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association. Cathy’s educational credentials also include a Master of Business Administration from the University of Victoria, a certificate in Media Relations from the Niagara Institute, a course in Project Management from the University of Victoria, and a certificate in Managing Strategic Change from the University of Toronto. She is a member of the Marketing Research & Intelligence Association (formerly the Professional Marketing Research Society), the Qualitative Research Consultants Association, the Travel and Tourism Research Association, the Canadian Evaluation Society, and the American Marketing Association.