

Demographic Perspectives, LLC

Demographic, Survey, and Market Research

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Demographic Perspectives, LLC, is a consulting firm that provides custom demographic, survey, and market research services for the higher education, nonprofit, and business communities, for real estate development, and for public agencies. For over fifteen years, we have provided data and analysis that is tailored to the strategic, programmatic, physical, assessment, and community planning initiatives of each client. We have been involved at every stage of project development, from goals and visioning, to data collection and analysis, to project communication and public outreach, and to evaluation. Our key focus is the data-driven aspects of decision-making and communication.

The methodologies we employ include surveys; stakeholder interviews; focus groups; town meetings; design charrettes; quantitative and qualitative benchmarking; population modeling, mapping, and projections. We are experts at data analysis and the visual display of information.

We also help organizations effectively utilize data that they routinely gather on individuals in their community (e.g., students, employees, donors, members, residents). This includes activity data (event attendance or donor data), personal data (demographic information), and feedback comments.

Our clients are universities, K-12 independent schools, architects, planners and engineers, real estate consultants, developers, nonprofits, businesses, and public agencies.

Surveys and focus groups have a power that is underutilized. Their obvious use is to collect data, but they also communicate key messages of the project, and can serve to gather participants into the stakeholder community.

--Rena Cheskis-Gold

**Rena Cheskis-Gold,
Principal**



Rena is the founding principal researcher at Demographic Perspectives, LLC. With over twenty-five years as a researcher and evaluator, speaker and author, Rena is an expert in providing custom data and analysis for strategy, assessment, communications, and for managing change. Formerly with Yale University's Office of Institutional Research, Rena has conducted research to inform decision-making at over 40 colleges and universities, nonprofits, and businesses. She also conducts public outreach for planning processes.

One of Rena's specialties is designing surveys, focus groups, and other analytic tools to guide student, participant, donor and customer recruitment, retention, program planning, career services, alumni engagement, and for project evaluation.

She also specializes in working with universities to develop strategic material such as demand studies that are necessary for programming and planning community common spaces and student and faculty housing. Her research has been used in the development of many student housing plans, including the Harvard Graduate Commons residential life program, 1,000 new graduate beds in Harvard's Riverside and Trilogy housing, the renovation plan for Princeton's Hibben-Magee housing, and Washington University in St. Louis' neighborhood plan for north of Delmar Avenue.

Rena teaches, speaks, and writes regularly on incorporating data and research into planning efforts. Most recently, she taught a webinar on “Data-Driven Decision-Making for Nonprofits,” participated in a SCUP online conversation on campus housing, spoke on housing trends at the Northeast ACUHO conference, and was keynote speaker at the 2011 East Coast Conference on Faculty Housing. She has been a regular guest speaker on utilizing survey research for customer insight and strategy at both the Harvard Business School and the Yale School of Management. Her customer-oriented approach to survey research is featured in a Harvard Business School case study on survey research¹.

Rena holds a B.A. with distinction in Demography from the University of Illinois, an M.A. in Demography and Population Studies from Brown University, and has completed doctoral preparation at the same Brown program.

Alexandra Delaney Danahy
Senior Associate



With a background in urban planning and management consulting, Alexandra has strong research, analysis and writing skills as well as significant knowledge of physical planning. She has managed physical planning projects both for a Boston non-profit, A Better City (ABC), and at Harvard University, where she served as a Harvard Presidential Fellow for the Allston Development Group (formerly Harvard Planning and Allston Initiative). At ABC, Alexandra managed the stakeholder process with businesses and

¹ See Harvard Business School Case Study 9-505-059, www.hbsp.harvard.edu.

institutions for the Boston Crossroads Initiative. At Harvard, Alexandra managed the stakeholder process for Undergraduate House Renewal and the Faculty Housing Taskforce, as well as feasibility studies for re-use of buildings, and demand modeling for housing in Harvard's new Allston campus.

With Demographic Perspectives, Alexandra designed and analyzed surveys, led focus groups, and conducted benchmarking for strategic housing initiatives at Princeton and Yale Universities, Harvard Law School, the University of Chicago, Washington University in St. Louis, and Wellesley College. She was the lead in the development of the university housing benchmarking tool for Sightlines, LLC.

Alexandra holds an M.A. in Urban Planning from Harvard University and a B.A. from Harvard College.

Michael Ben-Avie
Senior Evaluator



Michael Ben-Avie, Ph.D. is an academic psychologist with postdoctoral work at the Yale Child Study Center.

He is a nationally-recognized expert on education as co-editor of six books on educational change and youth development with James. P. Comer, M.D., Associate Dean of the Yale School of Medicine. As an Associate Research Scientist at the Yale School Development Program, he conducted national, large-scale assessment activities, including the design of

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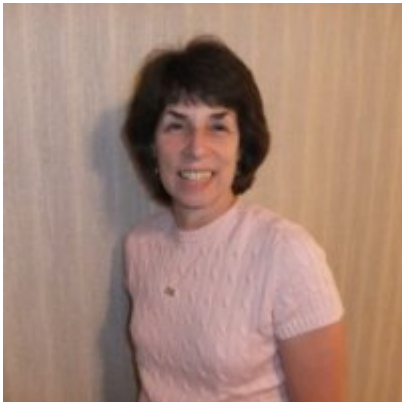
research studies, the design of assessment systems, data collection and management, statistical analyses, and data interpretation workshops. These activities contributed to schools' implementation of a data-driven process of educational change.

As Principal Investigator and co-P.I., he conducts outcome evaluations for federal grants, including grants from the U.S. Department of Education, and a collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice.

Dr. Ben-Avie serves as an academic advisor and consultant to many philanthropic organizations. He has conducted numerous research studies with colleagues in the Jewish community, including the Educators in Jewish Schools Study, a national study of educators in congregational and day schools. He was a co-investigator of a study on the childhood roots of Jewish adults' quality of life (which studied day and congregational schools, camps, and youth groups). His most recent research in the Jewish community is the outcome evaluation of the Rose Community Foundation's MazelTot initiative.

In 2005, Michael was accepted for inclusion in the U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences' What Works Clearinghouse Registry of Evaluation Researchers.

**Lynn Saltz, Principal
Business Innovative Strategies International**



As a partner to Demographic Perspectives, and as a principal in her own firm, Business Innovative Strategies International, Lynn specializes in customized strategic public relations plans incorporating the nuts and bolts of internal and external communications tactics. Lynn

capitalizes on her skills as a highly organized, self-directed, results-driven individual to focus on problem solving, and on effective and actionable results.

Drawing upon her significant established local media networks and relationships, Lynn has planned and executed successful public relations and communications strategies for many nonprofit organizations in the greater Stamford area. These include the Norwalk Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Stamford Downtown Special Services District, the Connecticut Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, Play With Your Food, an innovative Fairfield County performance program, and the Jewish Family Service of Stamford. As an outside consultant for the Stamford Downtown Special Services District, Ms. Saltz developed a communications strategy to educate the retail community on the desirability of operating a business in downtown Stamford.

Other Connecticut-based clients include Gilbertie's Herb Gardens, Edelman Leather, Cucina Casalinga, and Haverson Architecture and Design.

As an over thirty-year resident of Fairfield County, Connecticut, Lynn has an in-depth understanding of the constituencies in the geographic area and of course, how to effectively speak to each of them. She is a graduate of Cornell University, and received her MBA in Marketing Management at St. John's University.

Providing Data and Analysis for Strategy, Assessment, and Communications, and for Managing Change

Methodologies, and Project and Client List

Selected Methodologies

Surveys; stakeholder interviews; focus groups; town meetings; design charrettes; quantitative and qualitative benchmarking; population modeling, mapping and projections; data analysis and visual display of information;

Selected Processes

Demand studies; feasibility and programming studies; post-occupancy evaluation. Public outreach. Studies of participant and donor recruitment, satisfaction, engagement, and career path. Program and grant evaluation. Data and analysis to support strategic planning and communications, and organizational analysis. Institutional and organizational research.

The Student Experience

Harvard University	Amherst College
University of Pennsylvania	Bates College
Yale University	Bowdoin College
Princeton University	Bryn Mawr College
University of Chicago	Colby College
Washington University in St. Louis	Connecticut College
Johns Hopkins University	Hamilton College
Columbia University	Middlebury College
Wesleyan University	Mt. Holyoke College
Tufts University	Pomona College
Harvard Divinity School	Swarthmore College
Harvard Law School	Trinity College
Yale School of Public Health	Williams College
Bryn Mawr Graduate School	University of New Haven
Academy for Jewish Religion	Jewish Day School Consortium of
Northwood School	Southern New England

Parent Surveys

University of Chicago	Amherst College
Columbia University	Northwood School
Yale University	Manhattan Country School
Swarthmore College	The Epstein School (Atlanta)
Bryn Mawr College	Solomon Schechter Day School of
	Greater Boston

Undergraduate and Graduate Student Housing and Dining

Princeton University	Columbia University Medical Center
Yale University	University of Michigan
University of Chicago	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Harvard University	Northeastern University
Harvard Law School	Wellesley College
Harvard Divinity School	Babson College
Brown University	Sightlines, LLC
Washington University in St. Louis	

Donor and Alumni Surveys

University of Chicago
Princeton University
Harvard Divinity School
Yale University
Yale School of Management
Yale Law School
Columbia University
Bryn Mawr Graduate School
Wesleyan University
Amherst College
Bryn Mawr College
Swarthmore College
Academy for Jewish Religion
Northwood School
Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven
Camp Ramah
North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY)

Faculty Issues: Housing, Quality of Life, Library, Demographics

Harvard University
Princeton University
Yale University
Columbia University Medical Center
Columbia University
Johns Hopkins University
New York University

Assessment Projects

(Program evaluation; post-occupancy assessment)

Harvard Real Estate Services

Manhattan Country School

Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA)

National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY)

Camp Ramah

Steinhardt Foundation

Rose Community Foundation

Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. and National Urban League (Scholarship Builder Program)

Organizational Analysis and Institutional Research

(Review of methods and systems for gathering and organizing data for strategic decision-support; developing an internal research function or office)

Yale University

University of Chicago

Harvard Divinity School

Wesleyan University

Princeton Office of Housing

Harvard Divinity School

Johns Hopkins University

Yale School of Public Health

Swarthmore College

Bryn Mawr College

Pomona College

Berklee School of Music

University of New Haven

Behrman House Publishing

Partners

K. Backus & Associates, Inc.

Perkins + Will Architects

Austin Architects

Newman Architects

The Georgetown Company

Sightlines, LLC

Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven

Business Innovative Strategies International (BISI) Public Relations

Providya Web Survey Group

Recent Guest Lectures, Webinars, Conference Presentations, and Publications

Guest Lectures, Webinars, and Conference Presentations by Rena Cheskis-Gold

Lecture on Survey Research for Understanding Customers class, Harvard Business School

Lecture on Survey Research for Listening to Customers class, Yale School of Management

“Trends in Student Housing: Process and Product,” Northeast Association for College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO), with Susan Keller, Harvard Real Estate Services, and Merle Bicknell, Harvard College

“Data-Driven Decision-Making for Nonprofits,” Nonprofit Webinars.com

“Understanding Your Faculty,” East Coast Conference on Faculty Housing

“Providing Data for Career Services,” Career Services Group at Yale

“The 2010 Greater New Haven Jewish Community Population Study,” Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven Taste of Honey series

“Everything You Need to Know About Focus Groups,” upcoming webinar

“International Graduate Students on our Campuses: Numbers and Needs in Cultural Context,” upcoming conference presentation, Northeast Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)

“Smart Analytics for Career Services,” upcoming conference presentation, Eastern Association of Career Services (EACE), with Felicia Spencer, Yale School of Public Health

Selected Publications

Cheskis-Gold, Rena and Alexandra Danahy. (2012) “Trends in Undergraduate Student Housing: Process and Product,” *Planning in Higher Education*, Volume V41N1.

Cheskis-Gold, Rena, E. Shepard-Rabadam, R. Loescher, B. Carroll, “Essential Steps for Web Surveys: A Guide to Designing, Administering and Utilizing Web Surveys for University Decision-Making.” (2006), *Association for Institutional Research Professional File*, Number 102.

Ben-Avie, M. (2008). “A moment of developmental triumph! Adolescents in Jewish education.” In Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg (eds), *What we now know about Jewish education: Perspectives on Research for Practice* (pp. 113-122). Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions.

Ben-Avie, M. (2008). “Underprepared for the business sector: Seven design principles for interventions.” *Journal of Business Management and Change*, 3(1), pp. 7-34.

Ben-Avie, M. and Comer, J. P. (2005). “Philosophy and empirical evidence: Achieving vision through research.” *Journal of Jewish Education*, 71:67-94.

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