

Research, Consultancy, Advice



I am a highly motivated and successful individual with a wide range of expertise and experience. The core of my career has been focused on impacting policy and political decisions through high quality research. But, more than that, what motivates me is a desire to lead colleagues to develop, grow business in new areas and with new clients and my love of communicating analysis and advice clearly and effectively.

Expertise:

- **Researcher:**
 - Led all Ipsos MORI's political polling, comment and analysis through a period of significance change, including the 2014 independence referendum, elections in 2011, 2015, 2016 and 2017 and the EU referendum in 2016
 - Delivered Scotland's most significant social research studies - Scottish Crime and Justice Survey and the Scottish House Condition Survey. Led research for government, public sector and businesses covering all public/social policy issues
 - Skilled qualitative researcher - design, moderate and report high profile events, from focus groups to large scale deliberative workshops across all policy issues.
- **Communicator:**
 - Speak regularly at events and conferences, including political party conferences
 - Appear frequently in national media; on current affairs and political programmes to discuss public opinion and analysis of political events – two examples from many (with hyperlinks):
 - *Scottish Television:* [Live focus group with undecided voters](#)
 - *BBC Radio 4:* [Week in Westminster analysis](#)
 - Write regular analysis of public opinion for important national publications – two examples from many (with hyperlinks):
 - *The Guardian:* [Future of public services in Scotland](#)
 - *The Herald* [The EU Referendum in Scotland](#)
- **Leader:**
 - Decision-maker on key business issues, including budgets, marketing activity and recruitment and promotion
 - Led team in Edinburgh in ensuring our clients are always delighted in service and used our research to make key decisions.
- **Business focused:**
 - Work tirelessly and successfully to attract new clients from all sectors
 - Work hard to ensure clients are pleased with our service and always come back.
- **Consultant and Advisor:**
 - Provide insight and advice to governments (including [Westminster Committees](#)), public bodies and business on decisions which flow from public opinion research
 - Advise clients regularly about the most suitable way of approaching opinion research and how to make the most of findings

Career:

Since moving to Edinburgh in 2000 I have undertaken two senior roles in the private and public sectors, giving me a clear and detailed understanding both of government and public bodies and of running a business in the private sector.

I have now set up my own company 'Mark Diffley Consultancy and Research' to pursue my skills and interests under a new, exciting banner and to continue to provide high quality services to a range of clients.

Director, Ipsos MORI Scotland

2000 to 2004, 2008 to 2017

I am currently a Director with the well-known and independent research organisation Ipsos MORI, with whom I have worked for nearly 10 years in total.

My roles are wide and varied. I cut my teeth in managing and directing research studies for clients in all sectors in Scotland, ranging from large-scale complex quantitative studies like the Scottish House Condition Survey, to bespoke, small-scale qualitative studies aimed at having impact in local communities.

As my career has developed I have assumed a wide range of internal responsibilities which are the hallmark of running a successful business. These include managing and accounting for budgets, marketing the business, developing new products and approaches, developing more junior colleagues and hiring new staff. I have approached and undertaken all these responsibilities with the same drive, enthusiasm and success as I have the other aspects of my career.

Portfolio Manager, Audit Scotland

2004 to 2008

Between 2004 and 2008 I worked in a senior role with Audit Scotland, responsible for leading audit teams to deliver national performance studies on a range of issues.

This included important studies on various aspects of Scottish government performance from meeting waste management targets to improving bed-blocking processes in hospitals and assessing investment in Scotland's school buildings. A selection of reports I produced are provided below:

http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2007/nr_080320_school_estate_km.pdf

http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2007/nr_070920_waste_management_km.pdf

I led the organisation's education portfolio, representing Audit Scotland in the industry and among the profession. I appeared frequently at Audit and Education Committees at Holyrood, including <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/audit/or-07/au07-0402.htm>

I managed human/financial resources to ensure studies were delivered to time and budget.

Education

MA (Hons) Research Methodology, University of London 1997 - 1999

First Class BA (Hons) Politics with Economics, University of London 1993 - 1996

Professional Bodies

- Member of Social Research Association (former committee member)
- Former member of Market Research Society
- Active member of The Association of Scottish Public Affairs