

## Falsification of Data

*Topic:* Marketing Research (via research supplier company)

*Characters:* Greg, Marketing research analyst  
Elizabeth, Project/Work coordinator  
Ms. Jordon and Mr. Collins, Co-owners and active managers

Greg is in his second month of employment with XYZ Marketing Research. The firm is a large, well-known, highly respected, very successful supplier of marketing research. Its clients include major companies in many different industries throughout the world.

Routine procedure is for Ms. Jordon and Mr. Collins to secure business in the form of research projects. Each project ends with an analyst preparing a written report with marketing strategy recommendations based on his/her interpretation of the data. This report is given to Elizabeth who gives it to Ms. Jordon and Mr. Collins who then deliver the written report, complete with a verbal presentation, to the client.

Projects are assigned to one of the 16 research analysts by Elizabeth, depending on the work loads of the different analysts. Given the volume of projects and the similarity of most projects, different analysts usually work on different parts of a project. For example, different analysts are used to plan the sample, construct the questionnaire, and interpret the data. Data collection and computer processing of data are conducted by separate companies contracted with the XYZ Marketing Research company.

Greg's responsibilities are to interpret the data and write a report with marketing strategy recommendations. He has completed about 20 such projects, for which the co-owners have praised his work. On Wednesday afternoon he completed this project. Following regular procedures, he gave the completed report to Elizabeth to give to Ms. Jordon and Mr. Collins. Thursday morning when Greg arrived at work, he found the original computer data printouts by his door with numerous numbers in the tables changed with red ink. There was also a note to see Elizabeth.

Elizabeth explained that Mr. Collins thought the findings would have been different and that the client would probably not agree with the actual findings and related recommendations. He has therefore taken "research license" and changed a few numbers in the computer data printouts. Now he wants you (Greg) to rewrite your report accordingly. Elizabeth explained that since clients are provided with a copy of these summary printout sheets, she has called the outside computer firm to send new printouts with the revised numbers.

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