

N T Higgs: CV 2023 - Biographical details

Neil Higgs has retired from TNS South Africa (now Kantar), his last position being Chief Innovation Partner. He has a B.Sc (Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics) from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He has been in research for 46 years and was at TNS for 31 years. His roles were technical consulting, innovation, troubleshooting and research-into-research, with a special focus on demographics, measures aimed at understanding people's lives (such as socio-economic status, quality of life and people's worldview), as well as advances in statistical analysis and reporting to clients.

He still does occasional part-time consulting under the name Neil Higgs Consulting.

His special research interests are –

- Innovation in all aspects of the digital arena as they affect the research process in terms of data collection, survey design and representativeness issues, with an emphasis on mobile;
- Developing new thinking around key statistical and sampling techniques in research, especially those used in routine analysis and client insights;
- The role of living circumstances, self-perceptions, influence, quality of life and worldview in research, marketing and ad take-out and decision-making;
- Segmentation and the construction of specialised continua and indices;
- Consulting on studies that involve advertising claims and studies where a legal dispute or an interpretation of findings for a court is involved.
- Specialised analytic techniques in tracking;
- Health, stress, poverty, poverty alleviation and overall quality of life/well-being – socio-economic measures at all levels;
- Understanding people, decision-making and brain processes, influence style and people's social networks;
- South Africa as a society in transition, both politically and socially;
- Environmental issues;
- Staff commitment and well-being;
- "Consumer" confidence; and
- Corporate image.

He has presented fourteen papers at the annual Southern African Marketing Research Association (SAMRA) convention, winning ten awards - best paper seven times, bronze twice and best contribution to standards in research once. He was an invited speaker to the 2006 and 2011 SAMRA Conferences and to the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute, Durban, August 2009. He has presented overseas to The Institute of Statisticians, to the Market Research Society in the UK, the Pan African Marketing Research Organisation (PAMRO) and to the US Academy of Marketing Science. He has also been published in *The Statistician* and had a paper on the well-being and everyday quality of life of South Africans published in *The Journal of Social Indicators* in April 2007. He has also had short articles published in ESOMAR's *Research World* and the *Southern African Journal of Marketing Research* in 2013 and 2018. He has recently published a book on numeracy, *All/other things being equal – Ceteris Paribus* through the School of Thought in Cape Town.

He is a past Chairman of SAMRA (and SAMRA Durban) and is now an honorary member of SAMRA. He is a past Chairman of RSSA - the Research Suppliers of Southern Africa (now SAMRA Corporate) - and was one of the statutory directors of SAMRA. He is an SAMRA Accredited Researcher (SAR).

He is a certified member of the British Market Research Society and a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society. He has undertaken considerable lecturing and training in the industry. He ran training seminars for TNS for over 28 years, and has been a contributor to the SAMRA training programme.

He has also been a part-time lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, lecturing in Multivariate Statistics to Marketing Hons students.

He has served on a number of industry committees and councils:

- Chairman of SAMRA Durban – 1985
- Chairman of SAMRA Council – 1987/89
- He was the Convenor of Judges for the SAMRA annual convention awards from 2007 to 2012.
- He was an APEX (advertising effectiveness) judge from 2009 to 2019 with the exception of 2016.
- He sat on a SAMRA sub-committee responsible for the industry's stance on the Consumer Protection Act and the Protection of Personal Information Bill in 2011 and 2012
- He sat on the Public Service Excellence Awards Advisory Council from 2009 until 2011.

Specific areas of expertise

- Construction of specialized continua and indices

- Short-form measures for mobile
- The role of culture, sub-culture and micro-cultures (tribes) in marketing and advertising – Worldview Segmentation
- Quality of life, networks and influence style, health, stress and poverty, the understanding of well-being and influence models – and understanding socio-economic issues
- Demographics
- Statistical techniques in marketing research, especially the relationship between power, effect size and commercial and statistical significance, as well as how Bayesian thinking fits in
- How people *really* make decisions and process advertising
- Interpreting survey findings for legal purposes
- Specialised techniques in tracking (change points, Bollinger bands, control charts, smoothing techniques)
- Consumer confidence
- Sampling techniques, especially where mobile is involved, weighting and effective sample size issues
- Corporate image (developed ImageLink™, a corporate image measurement system)
- Measures of socio-economic status and urbanisation

Bibliography

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Higgs, N. T. (1982). The Basics of Marketing Research and Statistics, Probe Market Research (Pvt) Ltd, Harare, 1982

Higgs, N. T. (1983). Demographic and Social Group Measurement in Zimbabwe, Probe Market Research (Pvt) Ltd, Harare, 1983

Higgs, N. T. Vincent, J. V. and Fleet, R. (1984). Variable stars: Observer effects on estimations of magnitude, Monthly Notes of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa (MNASSA), Vol 43, Issue 1-4, p 13-19, Johannesburg, April 1984

Higgs, N. T. (1986). Attitude Measurement - Are We Measuring Attitudes or Scales? Proceedings of the 8th SAMRA Convention, South African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 1986

Higgs, N. T. (1987). Measuring Change in a Multi-Ethnic Society - The Transition from Rural to Urban Living, Proceedings of the 9th SAMRA Convention, South African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 1987

Higgs, N. T. (1990). The Silent Minority, Proceedings of the 12th SAMRA Convention, South African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 1990

Higgs, N. T. (1991). Practical and Innovative Uses of Correspondence Analysis, The Statistician, 40 (2), Institute of Statisticians, London, 1991

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Higgs, N. T. (1994). The Structure of the South African Population, Research Surveys (Pty) Ltd, Johannesburg, 1994

Higgs, N. T. (1994). Little Boxes Made of Ticky Tacky, Proceedings of the 16th SAMRA Convention, South African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 1994

Higgs, N. T. (1995). Used Cars, Anyone? Or Truth vs Glory, Proceedings of the 17th SAMRA Convention, South African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 1995

Higgs, N. T. Zietsman, S. (1998). Towards a New Way of Measuring and Managing Corporate Image, Proceedings of the 20th SAMRA Convention, Southern African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 1998

Higgs, N. T. (2002a). Measuring Socio-Economic Status: A discussion and Comparison of Methods Or - Letting the Gini Out of the Bottle, Proceedings of the 23rd SAMRA Convention, Southern African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 2002

Higgs, N. T. (2002b). Understanding People's Lives: From Socio-Economic Status to Understanding Well-being, "Extreme Marketing" - Proceedings of the 2002 IMM Marketing Educators' Conference, Institute of Marketing Management, Johannesburg, 2002

Higgs, N. T. (2003a). Beyond Wealth and Poverty: A New Model – Measuring Well-being and Everyday Quality of Life: How People Live. Proceedings of the 2003 Market Research Society Conference, Market Research Society, London, 2003

Higgs, N. T. (2003b). Are you in (future) shock? The link between well-being and perceptions of the future. Proceedings of the 24th SAMRA Convention, Southern African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 2003

- Higgs, N. T. (2003c). Multidimensional Man. Journal of Marketing Vol 9 No 5, Johannesburg, 2003
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- Higgs, N. T. (2013a). Do we have an effect? Adding effect size to significance to add power to research. Proceedings of the 34th SAMRA Convention, Southern African Marketing Association, Johannesburg, 2013
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- Higgs, N. T. (2013c). The changing role of statistics in marketing research. Southern African Journal of Marketing Research, No 8, 4th Quarter 2013, SAMRA, Johannesburg, 2013
- Higgs, N. T. (2014). New thinking, new opportunities. Presentation at the 35th SAMRA Conference, Southern African Marketing Association, Stellenbosch, 2014
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- Higgs, N. T. (2015). Context matters: Creating more powerful marketing strategies by resonating with people via an understanding of the lens through which they see the world and manage their lives. Proceedings of the 36th SAMRA Conference, Southern African Marketing Research Association, Johannesburg, 2015
- Higgs, N. T. (2015). A pan-African measure of socio-economic status. Proceedings of the Pan African Marketing Research Organisation (PAMRO) annual conference, Johannesburg, 2015
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- Higgs N. T. (2015) Every Day Quality of Life: Are Traditional Marketing Models Incomplete? In: Spotts H. (eds) Marketing, Technology and Customer Commitment in the New Economy. Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-11779-9_23
- Higgs, N. T. (2016). Developing a measure of socio-economic status for Africa, Strategic Marketing Africa, Johannesburg, 1/2016
- Higgs, N. T. (2016). Statistical handbook, 3rd Edition, Kantar South Africa, 2016.
- Higgs, N. T. (2018). Understanding people – a tale of two cities. Southern African Journal of Marketing Research, Johannesburg, 2018
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Higgs, N. T. (2023). All/other things being equal – Ceteris paribus. School of Thought, Cape Town, 2023. ISBN 978-0-6397-8107-5 (print), 978-0-6397-8108-2 (ePub), 978-0-6397-8109-9 (pdf).

Awards

1982 - JPS Award for best paper (SAMRA Convention)
 1986 - JPS Award for best paper (SAMRA Convention)
 1987 - JPS Award for best paper (SAMRA Convention)
 1990 - AMRO Award for the paper best enhancing research standards (SAMRA Convention)
 1995 – Made Honorary life member of SAMRA
 1998 - The SAMRA trophy for best paper (with S Zietsman) (SAMRA Convention)
 2002 - The SAMRA trophy for the best paper (SAMRA Convention)
 2003 – The SAMRA trophy for the best paper (SAMRA Convention)
 2004 – Adcorp Chairman’s Award for Innovation
 2004 – The SAMRA trophy for the best paper (SAMRA Convention)
 2013 – SAMRA Bronze Award (Best paper) (SAMRA Conference)
 2015 – SAMRA Bronze Award (Best paper) (SAMRA Conference)
 2016 – Piet Smit PAMRO Achiever of the year 2016
 2018 – Bell Award for overall contribution to media research
 2019 – APEX Legacy of Excellence Award
 2020 – PAMRO Best Paper award (with S Misra, P Munsamy, K Diepraam and K du Chenne) (21st PAMRO Conference)

Detailed Employment History

From	To	Company	Position	Contact person
Aug 1972	Dec 1973	Lever Bros, Zimbabwe	Economics & Stats Specialist	Mel Brooks
Jan 1974	Oct 1974	Lever Bros, Zimbabwe	Mngmt trainee – Marketing Research	Ross Jennings
Nov 1974	June 1975	Lever Bros, Zimbabwe	Asst Marketing Research Manager	Ross Jennings
July 1975	Dec 1977	Lever Bros, Zimbabwe	Marketing Research Manager	Ken Seisun
Jan 1978	Aug 1978	Lever Bros, Zimbabwe	Marketing Research Manager (upgrade)	Marketing Director
Sept 1978	Dec 1980	Lever Bros, Zimbabwe	Marketing Services Manager	Marketing Director
Jan 1981	June 1984	Probe Market Research, Zim	Managing Director	-
July 1984	July 1985	Research International	Client Service Director	Geraldine Kenton
July 1985	Nov 1985	Research Surveys	Durban Client Manager	Butch Rice
Dec 1985	Sept 1986	Research Surveys	Director, Dbn office	Butch Rice
Oct 1986	Dec 1996	Research Surveys	Director, Jhb Office	Butch Rice
Jan 1997	Sept 2001	ResearchWise (subsidiary of RS)	Joint Managing Director	Steve Zietsman
Oct 2001	Dec 2006	Research Surveys	Director in various roles	Henry Barenblatt
Jan 2007	Dec 2010	TNS Research Surveys	Director: Innovation & Development	Margarita Putter
Jan 2011	Dec 2012	TNS South Africa	Senior advisor and Head of innovation	Margarita Putter
Jan 2013	Dec 2013	TNS South Africa	Senior advisor and Head of innovation	Karin du Chenne
Jan 2014	Aug 2015	TNS South Africa	Chief innovation partner	Ansie Lombaard
Sept 2015	Oct 2016	TNS South Africa	Chief innovation partner	Alida Jansen
Nov 2016	Present	Neil Higgs Consulting	Ad hoc research consulting	-
Jan 2001	Dec 2002	University of the Witwatersrand	Part-time lecturer (multi-variate stats)	Prof R Sinclair
Oct 1975	April 1980	Military service at DRR, Pay Corp, ADPU (RDM and DSM)	Rifleman (Rfn) to L/Cpl to Cpl to Sgt (full)	None now