



MEET ALI CAMERON

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Most people in the market research (MR) industry somehow fall into their career; most don't plan a career in MR. Ali Cameron, on the other hand, was excited to get into the field.

Ali started her career at Reckner in 2010 as a host at their research facility, while she was an undergrad studying marketing and international business. In 2012, she moved to Focus Pointe Global, where she was the facility manager. After that, she found her position in project management with M3 Global Research.

During her time in both of her early positions, she picked the brains of the clients, moderators, and researchers on how they got into MR so she could learn which areas it was best for her to focus on gaining experience. She ultimately found that her undergrad courses didn't prepare her quite as well as the knowledge she gained in her real-life experience for her MR career.

What appealed to Ali, that led her to pursue a career in MR, was how much preparation and research goes into any successful launch. She learned that even when you do all the research you want, a product could still end up not being

successful. Having learned that in an undergrad market research class opened up her eyes about how much goes into developing and marketing a product, which she found fascinating. She was always interested in learning what people liked and didn't like—learning the answers to questions to understand 'why'. As she grew more involved on the studio side, she learned how many different layers there are to MR—from creating a research plan, fielding, moderation, and analysis—that she was able to learn the pros and cons to each. These experiences helped Ali determine what direction she wanted to go in within the industry.

In her first MR job at a research facility, Ali was exposed to the in-person interviews being conducted. She also participated in panel recruitment outside of the facility, where she went to concerts and went through the crowds asking if concert-goers would be interested in providing their opinions. She found that everyone has an opinion and being able to go more in-depth with them was something she always found interesting.

In Ali's current role at M3 she works in a centralized department dedicated to formalizing the program management of several related projects, with the

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intention of improving M3 business performance. She supports global training for Operations and works to improve the company's internal systems and workflow. She works to make improvements and ensure that the company's internal system can meet the staff members' needs to help them do their jobs better and ultimately provide better services for M3's clients.

Ali is also directly involved in onboarding and training new hires in the US Qualitative department and she works with Sales and Operations on client SOWs and best practices.

The fact that no two days are ever the same is what Ali enjoys most about working in the MR industry. She finds that she enters a new adventure every day, starting out the day with a series of planned meetings, then something unanticipated pops up or a new project comes from around the corner different than any she's worked on before. Ali finds it exciting when a new opportunity comes up with a project that makes her think outside the box. Where some people might be cautious about taking action on something they haven't done before, she views it as a personal challenge to overcome and is excited about learning something new. She's found that with this attitude, when she encounters something down the road that is similar, she can pull from those experiences.

What Ali finds most interesting about the industry is the opportunity to learn the different types of research that companies conduct. Some just do standard TDIs while others add in an ethnography, follow-up WATIs, or IDIs. Others will mix qualitative and quantitative methodologies for one study. She finds it interesting to see which of the different layers of market research a client will choose to conduct for their unique study.

The person who has had the biggest impact on Ali's career has been M3's Brooke Allen-Watson. Ali worked with Brooke at a previous company, then joined M3 with no project management experience but Brooke saw Ali's potential because of her prior studio experience, working face-to-face with clients, and gave Ali the chance to get her foot in the door in project management.

Having had the opportunity to learn one-on-one from M3's clients, what they're looking for, and then being able to share her experiences and the knowledge she's gained from her interactions with those clients with M3's new hires has been a unique and valuable contribution that Ali has made to the company. That transfer of knowledge about insights into what makes a good partnership with M3 is helpful in setting up new hires for success and ensures clients will continue to receive the best quality service from M3 staff. When clients approach



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M3 with challenges, having teams well-trained on what steps should be taken and what ways they can think outside the box is what separates this company from other MR companies.

Ali has found that no matter what role you are in during your career in MR, there will always be something perplexing or unique that is exciting to experience. One of Ali's most memorable experiences in her MR career has been when she was the facility manager for an MR studio that was hosting studies like taste tests and product viewings on large shelving units. In this position, she was responsible for scouring the city to locate everything required for the onsite research projects and to understand the specific needs such as placement of products on shelves.

Ali has only ever worked on qualitative projects. She admires people who can do both qualitative and quantitative because she recognizes there's a learning curve in both areas and if you have the experience in both, it makes you that much stronger as a project manager. She looks forward to learning about quantitative work in the future.

Ali likes to work on both patient and healthcare professional (HCP) studies; however, of the two, she finds HCPs to be easier to work with. M3 Global Research is diligent about ensuring quality

participation, and Ali finds HCP panelists easier to validate and confirm that answers are consistent and truthful.

For someone who is interested in a career in MR, Ali recommends that they stay open to trying different aspects of the industry because there's so much to be learned from each area. She recommends people new to the MR industry work their way up in the industry and learn all that they can; it's about the journey, not just the destination. Ali believes that she wouldn't be in the role she's in today if it weren't for the diverse experience she's had in her career.

If Ali had pursued any other career outside of market research it would have been athletic training, which she did consider as an option early on. She was an athlete growing up and she always liked helping others advance. But, she felt that market research was a better fit for her at the time, allowing her to consider personal training down the road as an enjoyable hobby outside of her career in MR.

Cooking at home is Ali's go-to release to unwind. She especially enjoys going "off recipe" to experiment a little when cooking and she tries to avoid repeating a recipe more than once. When she's not working or cooking, Ali can be found playing with her son (who is nine months old at the time this profile is being written). When she's



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not busy chasing after her son, she's often at the park with her husband and their yellow Labrador Retriever. Getting outdoors and staying active is critical for Ali in maintaining a healthy mindset.

Ali has always been career-driven, but since having her son it's opened her eyes that on the weekend, she needs to take the time to unwind with the family and wait until Monday to catch up on her emails—realizing that they will certainly still be there waiting for her. She believes it was perfect timing in her life, and in her professional career, to have him.