Learning and doing social science through teamwork and technology

The Center for Social Research prepares its team members for leadership and community collaboration through innovative social-scientific research, technical excellence, and entrepreneurial drive. Our intentional, learning-oriented culture of teamwork has driven us to become a leading center of research and development in West Michigan and beyond.

CSR aims to be a valued learning partner for academic, public-sector, nonprofit, religious, and business organizations seeking wisdom-driven social research and development. We strive to be welcoming, inclusive, diverse, anti-racist, and affirming. Our partners thrive and our best work is done when we embody these values.

Supporting wisdom-driven communities and organizations

CSR serves clients with a variety of interests, including pure research, nonprofit program evaluation, business intelligence, and predictive analytics. We have the broad expertise and client focus to be your valued learning partners.

Our engagements range from brief advisory consultations to full-service projects, including research design, data collection, analytics, and reporting. We invite our clients to learn and grow with us in our space and our systems.

CSR is committed to modeling technical and methodological excellence in our work, while helping your team discover ideas that empower and equip you. We stand ready to learn alongside you and help you make informed, wisdom-driven decisions based on sound research.

“The relationships and skills I developed at CSR helped me pursue my vocational goals and enter graduate school confidently. CSR promotes many tangible and intangible skills without which I would not be where I am today.”
—Jordan Daley, Psychology ’16, PhD student at Northwestern University

Data
Conversion of complex data into simple, intelligible concepts.
Deep understanding of digital tools and data management.

Information

73%

Evidence
Analysis and synthesis of trends, patterns, and exceptional cases.

Knowledge
Confidence in the existence of actionable causal relationships.

Wisdom
Experience to place knowledge in historical and local context.

Interventions seeking more X must attend to Y.

The data-to-wisdom continuum is inspired by Longley et al, Geographical Information Systems & Science (2015), Wylie & Sons
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATION SERVICES FROM CSR

Learn to run your business; then run your business to learn
Since 2004, CSR has been building a broad, flexible business infrastructure for our work as a research consulting team. We can be valued learning partners for digital transformation in all kinds of business organizations in any sector of the economy, from startups to mature firms.

Human Resources and Work Culture
We can help you build an everyone culture with talent development, recruitment strategy, application design, interviewing methods, training, engagement, and evaluation.

Analytics and Data Science Stack
Our team has deep experience in creating efficient interactive analytics from complex data sources. From surveys to statistical models to financial analytics, we can help you make sense of your data.

Operations and Project Management
CSR has conducted dozens of complex, labor-intensive, multi-stage projects with ad hoc logistical systems that allow us to punch far above our weight class. We can understand your operational challenges and design for sustainability.

Systems Integration
Our team has worked with a number of clients to implement complex web-based systems-integration solutions to meet their needs. We know how to make cloud apps talk to each other.

Accounting and Financial Services
CSR has maintained our own QuickBooks Online system for 15 years, and we have supported client organizations with QuickBooks financials. We won’t replace your accountants, but we’ll help you make better use of their time and yours.

Marketing and Customer Experience
We know how important it is to better understand your customer and stakeholder needs. Through custom survey design and exclusive business analysis, we can help you gather essential data to refine your customer experience.

- QuickBooks: accounts, banking, time tracking, quotes, billing, reporting
- Quick Base Sync integration with QuickBooks for Tableau analytics
- Advanced project estimating and cost tracking with Excel and QuickBooks
- Project progress tracking and logistics
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) with Salesforce or Quick Base
- Custom relational database development in Quick Base and MySQL
- Systems integration among multiple cloud and on-premise systems
- Customer and stakeholder surveys and focus groups
- Exclusive Tableau business intelligence analysis of Qualtrics surveys
A sample of CSR clients and projects, 2019–20

Steelcase
Since 2013, Steelcase, the world’s leading manufacturer of office, education, and healthcare furniture has collaborated with CSR on innovative analytics projects to aid development of new products and workspaces. Using visual data, CSR has provided Steelcase with outputs that help define and refine the usability of new furniture and workspaces.

Gateways for Growth
Gateways for Growth is a national initiative for communities to develop multi-sector plans with the goal to better integrate immigrants and refugees in their local community. CSR administered a survey in seven languages, and following data collection from respondents representing 64 countries, our team created an interactive visualization highlighting key focus areas.

KConnect
KConnect leads collective impact efforts to bring prosperity to all children in Kent County by aligning the efforts of schools, service providers, and philanthropic funders. CSR Director Neil Carlson has co-chaired the Data & Capacity workgroup, and the CSR team is developing a data-rich system map of workgroups and organizations with hundreds of stakeholders and thousands of connections.

The Colossian Forum
The Colossian Forum provides congregational resources that foster cultural transformation and spiritual growth in the face of conflict. CSR has worked with the Colossian Forum to develop an evaluation system for their events, tools, and curricula to assess which resources are moving their mission forward. Our team has successfully integrated Qualtrics and Salesforce for this project.

Talent 2025
Talent 2025 brings together Michigan business leaders to support talent development. CSR was commissioned to convene workshops of workforce experts and collect secondary data on the future of work in Michigan. Using O*Net and BLS data from the past 20 years, CSR created an interactive data visualization highlighting the relationship between automation, occupation salaries, and soft skills.

CSR services and skills

Core competencies
- Community outreach, coalition building, and teamwork
- Research design
- Planning, fiduciary services, and project management for large, multi-party collaborations
- Interviews and focus groups, with transcription, translation, and analysis
- Surveys in print and online
- Randomized experiments
- Statistical and spatial analysis
- Workshop and listening session facilitation
- Data visualization and illustration
- Report writing and publication

Software expertise
- Documents and presentations
  Microsoft Office advanced features, Adobe Creative Suite, Zotero
- Project management & accounting
  Trello, QuickBooks Online
- Data modeling and management
  Microsoft Excel and Access, Quick Base, SQL Server, MySQL
- Online surveys
  Qualtrics, including advanced features and integrated workflows; standardized relational database export with qual2db, built by CSR
- Qualitative data analysis
  StartStop transcription software, NVivo analysis system
- Data processing and analysis
  Stata, IBM SPSS, SAS, Python, R
- GIS and cartography
  ESRI ArcGIS Suite, Tableau
- Data analytics and visualization
  Tableau Desktop, Public, and Server

Disciplines supported

Our typical workflow

- Partnership building
- Research design
- Project planning & management
- Instruments
- Databases
- Data collection
- Statistical & qualitative analysis
- Collaborative learning

Reports
Graphics
Maps

Calvin University 1876