

An aerial, top-down view of several people walking on a light-colored surface. The people are scattered across the page, some in small groups and some alone, moving in various directions. They are wearing casual clothing, and the overall scene suggests a busy, everyday environment.

THE Q REPORT

An independent study, written for and developed with the help of client-side marketing research and insights professionals

QUIRK'S
MEDIA

CORPORATE RESEARCHER REPORT 2020

D I S T A N C E D
but DETERMINED

Welcome to the seventh annual Quirk's Q Report!

2020 is obviously different from any other we have faced in recent memory. Past editions of the Q Report have taken a broader view of researchers' work lives but this time around we felt it made sense to focus on COVID-19 and its impacts.

Thus the survey the report is based on looked at the pandemic's effect on budgets, hiring, the tools and methods being used, the changes that COVID-19 has wrought, the best and worst outcomes of the virus and respondents' general takes on their chosen profession. We skipped the salary and compensation portion this time around, figuring the data would be just too skewed by the current reality.

The purpose of the report is to give corporate researchers (those

whose job it is to gather, analyze and disseminate insights about their organizations' customers, products and services) an in-depth look into their world, helping them learn more about what their peers and colleagues are doing and also benchmark themselves and their departments.

The 2020 Q Report work life study of corporate researchers is based on data gathered from an invite-only online survey sent to pre-qualified marketing research end-client subscribers of Quirk's. The survey was fielded from July 29 to August 12, 2020. In total we received 463 usable qualified responses. An interval (margin of error) of 4.5 at the 95 percent confidence level was achieved. (Not all respondents answered all questions.)

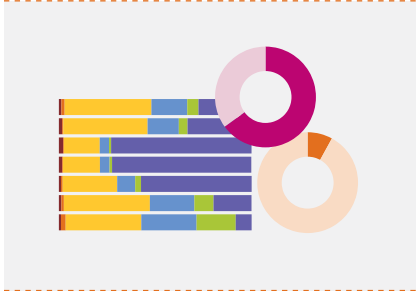
We want to thank all of our client-side readers who took the time

to complete the survey and provide their candid thoughts.

We also want to thank our content partners for sharing their industry insights. Confrimint offers tips on prioritizing innovation. Insights Now takes a deep dive into COVID-19's impact on consumers' product choices. Perksy explores how brands can talk to Gen Z. Quantilope examines how to leverage quantitative insights. SurveyMonkey Market Research Solutions reports on its survey of market research pros and their use of DIY tools. Toluna looks at the value of collaboration. And Decision Analyst makes a case for marketing research's ability to lead us to a brighter future.

We hope you find this report useful. Please let us know how we can make next year's edition more informative and valuable to you.

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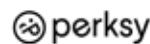
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'IN ORDER TO CHANGE DIRECTION, WE MUST HIT A WALL FIRST!'

Researchers, facing pandemic, are undaunted, ready for the challenge

By Joseph Rydholm, Editor » Quirk's Media

Resilience is a something we've all had to exhibit lately, as the pandemic and its associated effects impact us in ways that seem to constantly change. Beyond the chaos visited upon our day-to-day existences, our professional lives have been upended. Most of us are now working from home, engaging with customers, colleagues and friends over Zoom calls. Sometimes that's great. Other times it sucks. But, thanks to resilience, somehow we're managing. That which does not kill us, right?

Researchers are doing better than just managing, according to findings from our annual Q Report survey of client-side insights professionals. And while it would be an overstatement to say they are thriving, in reply after reply to the many open-ends we asked in this year's iteration of the survey, they expressed optimism, pride, excitement and almost a sense of renewal even in the face of a worldwide disaster.

Recognizing 2020's unique circumstances, we scrapped our usual approach for this year's Q Report survey, replacing questions about salary and compensation and other aspects of life as a researcher with a focus on life as a researcher during a pandemic, with liberal use of open-ends to let respondents tell their stories in their own words.

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51 percent reported a cut in pay

We started the survey out by trying to get a handle on the pandemic's impact on readers' salary and work

hours. Of the 100 responses we received to the question, "Which of the following apply to your employment since the COVID-19 crisis?" (my pay has been cut; I have been or am furloughed; my hours have been reduced), 51 percent reported a cut in pay; 34 percent said they have been or were currently furloughed; and 15 percent reported having their hours reduced. (Multiple responses were accepted.)

Next we asked about staffing levels and, perhaps surprisingly, 76% said their staffing levels have stayed the same. Just over 6% said the levels had increased and 17% said levels had been reduced through permanent job cuts, furloughs or hour reductions.

Those numbers were generally echoed in the range of comments on staffing. Hiring freezes were frequently cited. There were many mentions of being overworked and understaffed. Some departments had furloughs or forced vacation but are now coming back to full

strength. There have been permanent reductions in staff along with a few staff expansions and multiple respondents wondered aloud about possible reductions to come later in the year if the virus's effects linger.

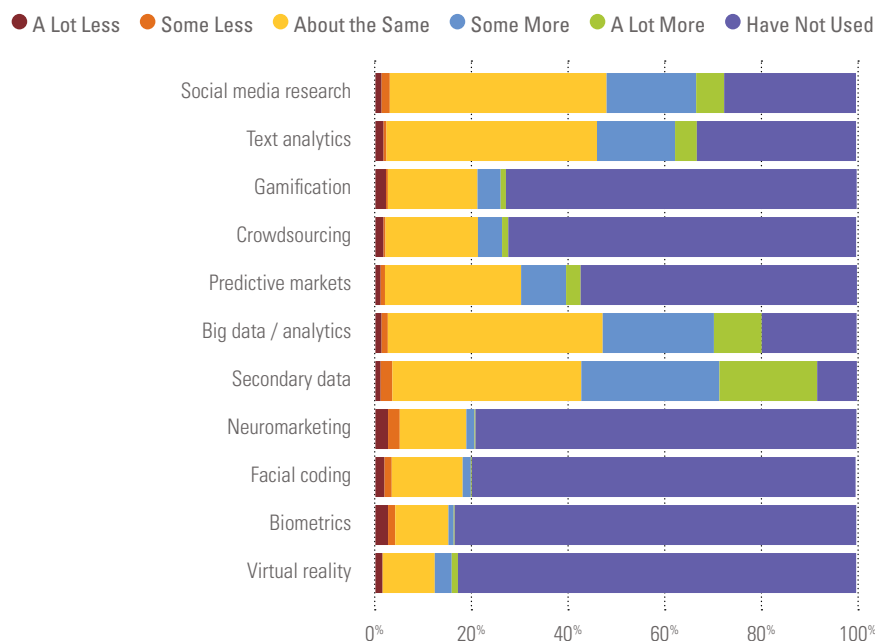
To get more clarity on the hiring plans we asked how likely it was that the organization would hire additional MR employees in the next 12 months. Some variation of “unlikely” drew the highest percentages – 36% very unlikely; 17% unlikely and 6% somewhat unlikely – while the “likelies” as a group only mustered a collective 23%.

Related to staffing, of course, is budget and we asked how the budget or spend on MR had changed in 2020 due to COVID-19. About 45% said their budget had stayed the same. Just over 30% said their budget had decreased by more than 10%. Ten percent said they had seen a decrease of between 5% and 10%.

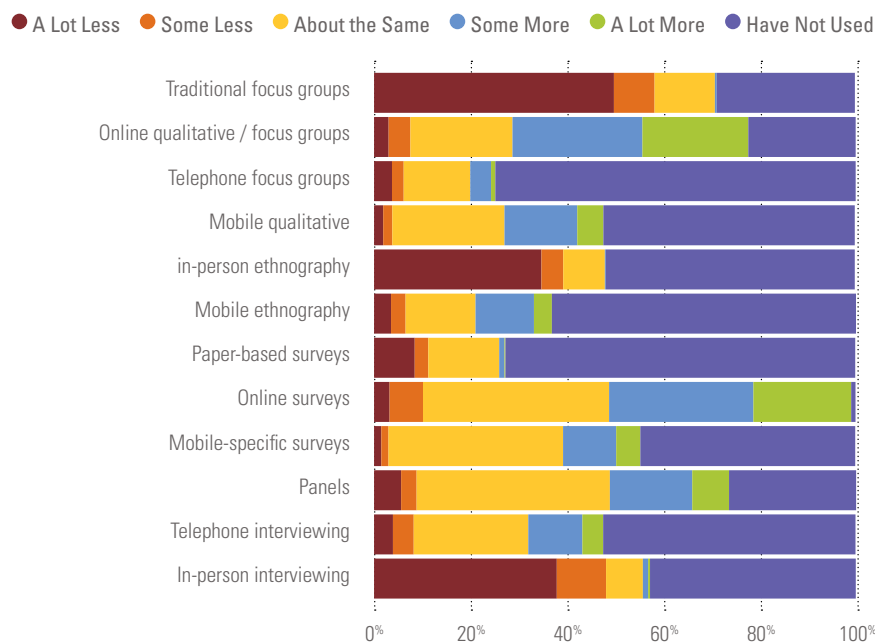
Of those who reported increases, 3% cited a budget rise of less than 5%, just under 4% cited an increase of between 5%-10% and just 2% enjoyed an increase of more than 10% in their insights budgets.

So, which techniques are those budgets being used on? We asked identically worded questions about two broad groupings of techniques (see accompanying charts). The first grouping encompassed techniques that are more widely or commonly in use. There, panels, online surveys and mobile-specific surveys scored the highest percentages of those reporting the same usage levels. And while traditional focus groups, at almost 50%, earned the highest “a lot less” usage percentages – along with in-person interviewing (38%) and in-person ethnography (35%) – online qualitative/focus groups earned a combined 47% “some more” or “a lot

As a result of COVID-19 is your company doing more or less of the following?



As a result of COVID-19 is your company doing more or less of the following?



more” usage, so it’s clear that the problem lies with the in-person aspect of qual, not the techniques themselves.

In-person declines

Among the second grouping of techniques – generally those that are newer and/or less commonly used – secondary data earned the highest combined percentage

(nearly 50%) of “some more” or “a lot more” usage, a finding that was borne out in several open-end comments. While the sheer volume of COVID-19 “reports” being issued by seemingly every research company in the world this spring took on its own virus-like aspects, apparently the onslaught was warranted, as our survey clearly showed a thirst for that kind of information among client-side researchers. Many respondents mentioned using the reports and other secondary sources to help get a big-picture handle on what was going on with the world in general and their consumers in particular.

I've gathered and synthesized more secondary research during the last few months than I have in years to help the organization better understand the state of the world and our industry.

There has been a lot more secondary research available and we've been using it!

Biggest change

We asked respondents to tell us in an open-end about the biggest change their organization has made related to marketing research as a result of COVID-19. The change could be anything but most responses centered around the tools and techniques that were – or were not – being used as much as before. As you would expect, in-person research basically stopped altogether in favor of digital and/or online equivalents. No focus groups, one-on-ones or CLTs.

We shifted all of our focus on studies that revolve around the impact of COVID-19. We tried operating as “business as usual” the third week of

Surviving 2020: Research industry trends and expert tips for moving forward with confidence

By Morgan Molnar
Director of Product Marketing, SurveyMonkey Market Research Solutions

2020 has been a challenging year. In order to succeed, organizations around the globe need to effectively adapt and it's never been more critical to make data-driven decisions. But that comes with a challenge: market research teams are getting more requests from stakeholders amidst falling budgets and scarce resources.

We decided to find out how organizations are using market research to navigate the changing marketplace. We spoke to 15 industry experts and conducted a survey of over 2,000 market research pros – both pre- and post-COVID-19 outbreak – and published our findings along with expert advice in SurveyMonkey's 2020 Market Research Survival Guide. Here's a sneak peek of what we heard.

- **More companies are benefiting from DIY research than ever before.** Respondents who reported that their companies had experienced financial growth in the past year have been moving toward DIY by boosting their in-house research over the past five

March when everything was shutting down but it was impossible to ignore how it has fundamentally changed how we go about our daily lives and impacted shopping behavior.

No in-person research is being conducted; otherwise we have continued with online surveys and online qualitative as before covid.

Our biggest change has been the shift from traditional, in-person, multi-city focus groups to online qualitative in its many forms. We've used OBBs, online groups, online one-on-ones ... anything that doesn't require travel or the face-to-face meeting of our consumers is fair game right now.

Focus groups are now only online – interestingly, we are getting the same quality insights this way (cheaper and less travel for team members).

Moved away from extensive in-person playtest and usability tests and gone completely online. We are only now dipping our toe back into the water to try some very small in-person playtests (with plexiglass dividers and all precautions: masks, temperature, health questionnaire, sanitizer, etc.).

Some respondents said they expect things to return to normal, in terms of the tools and methods they use. Others say things will never be the same.

years, more so than those who reported their companies were on a financial decline (54% vs. 36%). Nearly 50% of market research professionals conduct more DIY research today than they did five years ago.

- **DIY survey tools help drive decisions but resources are still a challenge.** The vast majority of companies (87%) report using market research to inform at least some of their decisions but only 24% of respondents said they were able to meet all stakeholder demands given their current research budget.
- **People are looking for good data solutions as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to decimate marketing budgets.** Budgets are more than twice as likely to have decreased (42%) than increased (19%). To address the gaps this will create, respondents were over three times more likely to believe that their use of DIY tools will increase (41%) instead of decrease (13%). In contrast, respondents said their use of full-service vendors is more likely to decrease (54%) instead of increase (20%).

COVID-19 has accelerated an already emerging trend toward more in-house research. Our results confirm this clear trend toward do-it-yourself research. Seventy percent of respondents in our study predicted their com-

pany will likely transition to even more DIY tools in the next year. As this pandemic continues (especially as we enter the 2021 planning cycle), it's becoming more apparent that hiring expensive agencies to conduct market research is no longer a viable option for many. Enter DIY tools like SurveyMonkey, Fuel Cycle, UserTesting and others to the rescue.

To go beyond the data and learn how top companies are navigating and thriving in spite of the uncertainties we're all facing, check out our full report at surveymonkey.com/market-research/survival-guide/.



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Totally scrapping in-person research. I'm not terribly sure in-person research will ever come back in the ways it previously existed. We haven't used any virtual qualitative platforms just yet but I imagine we will in the coming months.

We had planned to do lots of in-person qualitative immersion work this year. That, and all other in-person qualitative has either been delayed until sometime in 2020 or moved online. As a result, we gave back a huge chunk of our budget.

Pre-COVID we conducted 15-20 in-person focus groups. Now in the current

state of the world, I feel we may never go back to those traditional groups.

The key phrase there is "in the current state of the world." Hopefully, once a vaccine is in place, even if we still have to wear masks more regularly, we will still conduct in-person qualitative – though of course, we don't know what the impacts will be of mask-wearing on being able to read a focus group participant's emotions! Several respondents offered variations on this take about in-person versus online research:

I hate not getting face time with consumers in real environments. Being

able to stand with them and see how they interact with the environment in the store or look around the room to learn more about them and their personality when doing in-home interviews is sorely missed. Online qual can be good but it gives you tunnel vision to only what the consumer shows you. Lots of subtle cues are hidden.

Led to opportunities

For some, the COVID-driven changes have led to opportunities:

Marketing research has become even more strategic. We got invited to join a number of strategic initiatives since collecting VoC data via traditional

ways – like clients directly talking to customers – is limited now.

Our use of virtual focus groups (online) has increased – we very rarely used it in the past. And we've been given license to test advertising creative, something that our brand team has always pushed back strongly against in the past.

Our biggest change has more to do with how we are reporting out insights. We are trying to stay ahead of the curve and push information out to the right team members as soon as we receive. This is to help exec teams make decisions based on these insights. This has been a huge undertaking for us but we've seen great engagement with what we are sharing.

My part of the company relies on IDIs with clients. We suspended all client research from lockdown until the beginning of July but have resumed. The only noticeable change so far is how many clients who weren't willing to do video calls now are totally comfortable with it.

Another oft-mentioned change was bringing more work in-house that used to be delegated to vendors, which has some staffs in danger of being overworked.

We have stopped outsourcing projects and brought them back in-house, which means a lot more work for my department for reduced pay. No relief in sight. Morale has tanked and we are not motivated to go above and beyond since we are not even thanked for our efforts.

Acknowledging the impact that the shift to in-house has had, there were also many expressions of em-

From qual to quant: Leveraging quantitative insights during the stay-at-home economy

By Thomas Fandrich
Co-Founder and U.S. Managing Director, quantilope

Beatrice Capestany
Research Consultant, quantilope

Johanna Azis
Head of Marketing – U.S., quantilope

Brands often use qualitative research to get at the “why” behind consumer behavior for a deeper understanding of customer needs, anchored associations towards brands and categories and in-depth reactions to new products or innovations. While face-to-face conversations with consumers can add a human touch to data points, they can also be increasingly difficult to attain. Getting your specific target group all in one place, gathering a substantial sample size and then conducting and analyzing the study is effortful from both a logistics and cost perspective.

Even more, COVID-19 and social distancing orders have introduced a new level of complexity to qualitative research as many consumers are forced to stay home. Today's researchers not only seek a more efficient solution to qualitative research but are now required to find a valid alternative for gathering qualitative insights as many traditional modes no longer exist.

In these cases, and in general, quantitative research can be used as a replacement for traditional qualitative approaches. Advanced quantitative research uses statistical modeling and analysis to transform respondent data into explanations or predictions of the “why”

pathy for vendors, who have been forced out of the equation.

We have lost some vendor partners who have gone out of business due to the pandemic. This has been so unfortunate and also caused us to scramble to try to find new vendors to complete projects we had in the pipeline.

We've had to delay (for a year) or cancel some projects that we were looking

forward to, which not only creates uncertainty for us but can make our vendor relationships uncomfortable, as they are obviously hurting from this.

Best and worst

Next we asked twin questions to find out what have been the best and worst outcomes of COVID-19 on their jobs as insights pros. The best part about the worst part? The

behind consumer behavior. By leveraging advanced, automated quantitative research methods researchers can quickly unlock deeper consumer attitudes typically associated with qualitative results.

Here, quantilope has developed a three-step, scalable process for researchers to implement advanced quantitative insights as an alternative to qualitative research. Steps 1 and 2 provide a framework to identify which quantitative method can be used to replace your qualitative question. Step 3 introduces how you can implement automated advanced quantitative research in an iterative framework for a complete view of your consumer or to support the development of a project from beginning to end. Iterative workflows provide the same deep insights at a fraction of the investment or length that multiple qualitative studies could take.

Step 1: Ask, what business question is your qualitative research trying to solve for?

Step 2: Ask, what is the goal of your qualitative research question?

Step 3: Create a series of iterative learning loops
For example:

Qualitative research question 1: Can we expand our business into a new product category?

Research goal: Understand what people associate with a certain category, what they associate with our brand and how this fits together.

The quantitative solution: Implicit testing using the single- and multi-association tests. Data from qualitative IDIs or focus groups are used by brands when looking to create a new product outside of their category. However, leveraging

automated implicit tests provides a more efficient approach to understanding why the product will or will not be successful.

Based on decades of neuroscience and psychology research, implicit tests capture the underlying unconscious attitudes of your consumers. Implicit tests can help you understand the signals a category, product or brand conveys to help you strengthen your own value proposition. Brands can leverage implicit tests to understand what consumers subconsciously associate with your brand and how those associations connect to the new product category you want to enter.

Implicit tests go beyond the insights that a qualitative approach can provide as they measure the unconscious forces that drive consumer decision-making – rather than a direct question-and-answer format. When automated, implicit tests can also offer a representative, reliable sample that's cost-efficient, providing insights in just days versus weeks or months.

To learn more, read quantilope's full whitepaper, *From Qual to Quant*, with additional examples and expanded sections on how to leverage automated advanced research methodologies in lieu of qualitative alternatives.



Want to learn more? Visit
www.quantilope.com/en-us/blog/from-qual-to-quant

large number of “n/a” or “nothing really” responses. Seems that some have been able to avoid being negatively impacted by the pandemic (or maybe they're just really positive people!). But this response summed up the feeling of many:

Uncertainty all around as an insights professional, employee, parent, husband and citizen of the United States. These are very trying times.

As you might expect from a group whose job it is to think and talk about people and why they do what they do, the majority of the “worst” outcomes revolved around isolation, loneliness and a lack of connection to their colleagues and customers.

I'd say not being able to conduct in-person focus groups.

No water cooler chats with other people to trade insights and updates.

The “drive by” conversations don't happen. This can be good and bad.

Loneliness, if you can call it that, of not seeing my fellow insights professionals and my energetic internal customers. No commute to ponder problem-solving. The distractions and challenges awaiting as soon as the

workday has ended resulting from COVID-19 sometimes cannot be compartmentalized or go without addressing.

And, many mentions of the difficulties of working from home and having to navigate the needs of one's four-legged and underage office mates.

We have two young kids (5 and 7) and it's hard to work a full day and also be their teacher and entertain them during the day.

Also, the personal aspects of being a manager during an economic crisis.

Personally, I took a minor pay cut. Professionally, I had to furlough my entire team, which was incredibly difficult.

Verge of collapse

Many spoke of being asked to do more work with less budget and fewer staff. This, coupled with the often whipsaw nature of the research requests coming in (Focus on COVID and how it's affecting our consumers! Forget COVID! Tell us where we need to go from here!), has left respondents feeling on the verge of collapse.

Burnout risk – the intense sense of mission and urgency of collecting up-to-date data for our teams risks burning out my team, and the change in working conditions and lack of in-person connection makes it really hard for me to ensure everyone is doing ok and to provide the emotional support resources we would normally rely on.

Additional workload for reduced pay and no gratitude expressed, just more demands. I am burnt to a crisp.

Brutal, soul-crushing hours. Everyone else is bored at home and I'm working nights, weekends, non-stop to keep up with the research demands.

There are more collaborators within the research space than ever before – here's why

By Nick Langeveld
Managing Director, North America, Toluna

Market research has always been an important business function – and it's going through a complete transformation, again. Over the last few years, interest in research has been renewed as businesses realize they can't afford to make the wrong decisions and they can now access insights more efficiently – company-wide.

To understate things, 2020 has been a whirlwind. Given dramatic and ever-changing consumer behaviors, market researchers find themselves more pressed for time and more involved in more critical decision-making than ever before. Entire industries have pivoted on a dime, adjusting swiftly in light of COVID-19. As a result, researchers have been called on to test messages in near real time (over time) and validate new business ideas, distribution concepts and more. In short, we're doing more than adapting. We're helping to chart the course for our organizations, presenting to our executive teams more often and in the process collaborating with new stakeholders along the way.

The good news? We are ready for this heightened responsibility. We've already adapted, using smart automated insights solutions that empower us to collaborate with key stakeholders and ultimately relying on output quality so we can spend our time answering critical questions. Automated technologies have made market research more accessible and easier to deploy, allowing teams to perform 25% more work with 25% less staff and infrastructure. As businesses face pressure to increase or defend their market share by intelligently unlock-

More essential than ever

So, what about the best outcomes? Many were mirror expressions of some of the worst aspects, lighter yangs to the dark yins. The pandemic has forced companies to focus on the importance of insights, several said, leaving them busier than ever but also feeling more essential than ever. Many extolled

ing consumer insights, the role of market research is even more integral to business.

Workflow efficiency and information-sharing provide efficiencies

Platform-based consumer insights approaches enable teams to work together seamlessly, collaborate and build upon each other's knowledge base. Companies can share surveys and reports through the same platform to ensure quality, consistency and accessibility of insights.

Collaboration is crucial as research becomes cross-functional

The rise of market research's accessibility and perceived value has driven a corresponding uptick in company collaboration and a renewed interest in the role of research – and researchers. What's more, today's market researchers are leading global automation initiatives and understand that to ensure these initiatives are successful, they must be able to share best practices and collaborate with other stakeholders. Those stakeholders include other researchers and chief data officers, who fuse claimed data with behavioral data, customer experience data and survey data. This type of collaboration means better decision-making, marketing outcomes, customer service and monetization.

More access to data (and thinking) than ever

Market research has evolved into part of a richer, broader business story and strategy. From customer data to social media and other qualitative data, insights can tell a deeper story when coupled with additional information. As researchers, we're now working with new

teams – within the marketing team to data scientists and more. Businesses extract more value from their research initiatives, intelligently power decision-making and identify new opportunities.

Quality and scalability provide opportunity

As platforms have evolved, they've empowered researchers to provide trusted resources to marketers, executives and other stakeholders to easily conduct and access high-quality research and instill confidence that their next business decisions are based on tangible data. With market research gatekeeping eliminated, more employees can access insights that drive real business outcomes, not merely validate preconceived opinions.

As market research continues to evolve, it represents a unique opportunity for research and researchers to play a pivotal role in the business and help accelerate change. Today's consumers are increasingly complex and only through data can we truly understand them and their requirements. With new easily accessible and real-time platform-based research offerings, researchers can collaborate across their organizations to help drive the customer engagement lifecycle, contribute to critical business transformation and ensure the most informed decision-making.

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the benefits of being able to work from home full-time. Rather than missing commutes, they were happy to not have them and relished saving money on transportation and/or parking and eating workday meals out.

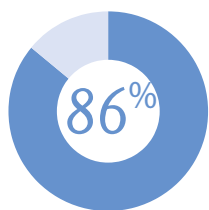
More broadly, those respondents who are also department managers were excited at the

prospect of being able to draw from a geographically wider pool of job candidates, now that being physically located near corporate offices is no longer a must for potential applicants. Others reported pride in how their teams have shown their mettle during the crisis, responding to the increased workloads and demands for insight with aplomb.

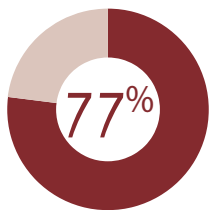
A HUGE appetite for insights from executive leadership, whether voice of customer, market impacts or competitor movements.

The ways we are finding to innovate have been amazing. Sometimes "shaking things up" is a great way to learn, improve and advance our work.

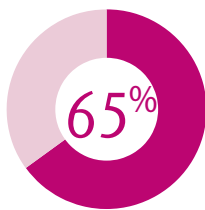
Which of the following do you do to stay up-to-date on research methodologies and techniques? (select all that apply)



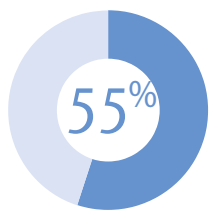
Attend webinars



Attend virtual conferences or events



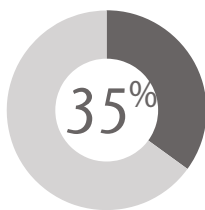
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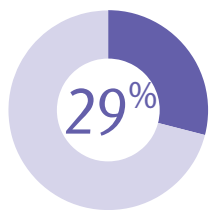
Read blogs and websites



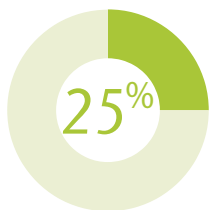
Read print or digital magazines



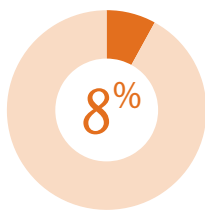
Request information from potential suppliers



Belong to research associations or chapters



Read or participate in online discussions (such as LinkedIn Groups)



Read or follow research feeds on Twitter

Our consumer research results have been elevated in importance to the highest levels of the organization.

My internal clients (stakeholders) have started to understand power of different methodologies (online discussion board, online IDIs, etc.).

We are delivering results that are used in Congress to make national-level decisions.

The potential to emerge in a different form through all this change.

Adapting to the new reality. Our company is spread out across the country and in some ways, we have had MORE contact with people in other locations, which has led to interesting new insights projects.

Many traditional methods of collection are off the table at this point, so we have had to be nimble and try new things. There has been an opportunity to innovate and use new technology that we probably wouldn't have previously. Knowing that everything is in flux, we have had to become comfortable

Gen Z needs real talk from brands

By Chloe Cheimets
VP of Research, Perksy

In times of social change, brands – and by extension the consumer researchers who advise them – are faced with a difficult set of choices. Speak out and risk overstepping your credibility or stop communicating and potentially alienate consumers with your silence. COVID-19 and the current movement for racial justice have renewed the urgency of these choices. Over the last five months, Perksy has been measuring sentiment around brand communication with a focus on the feelings of Gen Z, a generation notoriously difficult to reach on traditional platforms. Our research shows that Gen Z consumers not only expect brands to communicate more during these difficult times, but also to meaningfully contribute to the solving of social issues.

So, who are Gen Z, the generation emerging into adulthood in the midst of this enormous uncertainty? Born after 1996, they are, according to a Pew study published

with being nimble and coloring outside the lines when needed.

Several respondents reported a renewed interest from internal audiences/groups in turning to the insights function to help the organization get a handle on the pandemic and its impact on the world.



in May, the most diverse generation in the United States, composed of only a thin majority (52%) of non-Hispanic white people. They are also poised to be the most educated generation, with 57% of current 18-21-year-olds enrolled in college. Crucially, Pew states that 70% of Gen Z believe that the government should do more to solve problems, the highest proportion of pro-government sentiment in any generation. In Perksy's research, we've found that among Gen Z, this desire for institutional intervention in social problems extends past the government to brands.

At the start of the pandemic, Gen Z felt least vulnerable to the effects of the disease. In late March, when cases had begun to rise, Perksy data showed that only 19% of Gen Z respondents were very worried about the effects of COVID-19, compared to 24% of Millennials, 37% of Gen X and 40% of Baby Boomers. Despite this skepticism, Gen Z were more likely than older generations to want communication from brands during this time. Fifty-six percent of Gen Z (compared to 46% of Millennials) wanted brands to communicate more during the pandemic. Gen Z also wanted brands to

directly address the pandemic in their marketing materials. Forty-nine percent of Gen Z consumers wanted to see communications addressing COVID-19 compared to only 33% who wanted communications that did not.

As the pandemic progressed and the movement for racial justice grew, Gen Z consumers' lives changed drastically. They underwent personal and familial job loss, witnessed the scope of racial and economic inequality and found their educational futures disrupted. Our research shows that these experiences have changed them more than any other generation. Fifty-nine percent of Gen Z report being more aware now of racial injustice than before the pandemic (compared to 48% of Millennials) and 47% more aware of income inequality. A change in attitudes about brands has accompanied this shift in perspective. Gen Z consumers are

more likely than any older generation to believe that the role of brands has changed since COVID-19. For example, 36% of Gen Z believe brands are creating community during this time, compared to 30% of Millennials and 19% of Gen X. Gen Z is also optimistic about the impact brands can have on injustice. Sixty-eight percent of Gen Z consumers believe brands can make real change regarding racial inequality.

In the future, attracting and maintaining Gen Z consumers will require regular communication about pressing issues and a dedication to making the world a better place. As time passes and the Gen Z generation becomes an increasingly powerful share of the economy, successful brands must adapt to the role this generation expects them to play in their lives.

To learn more, visit www.getperksy.com.



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Suddenly everyone relies on insights even more – and we became the go-to source of understanding what is happening to our business. This was always true but many didn't realize it and paid more attention to sales than consumer behavior holistically. Now they really understand that other behaviors are more forward-looking

indicators of what will happen to sales.

There were also multiple mentions of other unexpected side benefits to the pandemic in answers to the various open-ends, including higher response rates (especially among B2B respondents, who perhaps have more time on

their hands or are stuck in their home offices) or improved uptake and effectiveness of certain digital tools, especially those involving video – likely as an offshoot of all of us being forced to live on Zoom calls to see our co-workers and family members.

“We are rising to this unprecedented occasion...”

51% of respondents are moderately or extremely positive about their future in market research

Before COVID, getting traction on behavior change around research tech tools was slow. Now there is wide acceptance and fast adoption – because we don’t have a choice. Like most things in nature, in order to change direction, we must hit a wall first!

While many readers said they were busier than ever, several respondents reported having more time for professional growth during the pandemic, whether it was in the form of learning about their company and its industry or exploring new research-related topics or techniques. We asked respondents how they stayed current at a time when in-person events aren’t possible. Attending webinars was the most popular way to stay up-to-date on research methods, followed by attending virtual conferences or events, reading e-newsletters, blogs/websites and print or digital magazines.

How do you feel about your profession?

While we gleaned many viewpoints on the topic from answers to other questions, we felt it was worth a more direct ask to find out how readers feel about their jobs as insights professionals. On a scale from extremely negative to extremely positive, “moderately positive” came in at 33%, with 18% extremely positive. Fifteen percent were smack in the middle, neither positive nor negative. Slightly negative clocked in at 10% and just 4 percent were moderately negative and 1 percent extremely negative.

The open-end responses to this question echoed many of those detailed above. Just as there were multiple expressions of optimism about the role and status of research, so too were there an equal number of gloomier takes. In the main, it seems to come down to how valued the insights function is by those in upper management. If an organization puts a real emphasis on listening to and hearing from customers, the insights function naturally has a chance to thrive. But if MR’s status is iffy to begin with, some respondents have said COVID-19 has been a convenient excuse to slash budgets and headcounts. As always, researchers seem aware of and realistic about how the business world works.

There are many things that excite me about the profession but I worry that we are perceived as, or hold on too strongly, to traditional approaches. In order to remain relevant, we need to adapt (or die).

How to prioritize innovation

By Wale Omiyale
Global SVP Business Development
Confirmit

2020 has not run according to plan. For research businesses, some of whom were already struggling with the challenges of commoditization and DIY tools, it’s been the straw that broke the camel’s back. For others, though, it’s been an exercise in agility. An unprecedented push in making changes that were already under consideration. In short, it’s been a survival mission.

Like most survival missions, it’s about prioritizing what matters, getting the balance right and not getting distracted.

For research businesses, a critical balance is between being smart and being clever. No, they are not necessarily the same. We all love to play with clever new bits of kit – the shiny new tools that we’ve not been able to use before and which are fun and different. The thing is, at the moment, we’ve got to prioritize the things that add value.

With budgets being cut, it makes it harder to do quality research that will lead to a ROI. I worry that there is also too much demand and not enough of me (I am solo), which tends to never end well.

Truly remarkable

Taken as a whole, given the unprecedented nature of the times we are living in, the prevailing feeling of hope that our readers

Yes, it's shiny and new. But do your clients want or need it?

Remember a couple of years ago when so many got very hot under-the-collar at the idea of using Google Glass and VR for gamified data collection? Pretty sexy. But uptake was minimal. The tech was too unwieldy, delivered an uncomfortable experience for the respondent and the insights were not necessarily "value adding." Clever, but not smart. Now is not the time for that.

I don't mean to be negative. There is absolutely a case for innovation in research, it just needs to be the right innovation. There are plenty of possibilities out there. What are the questions you need to ask to help you decide?

1. Who is my audience? Seems basic, but it's vital. Age groups, demographics and location all have an impact on how people communicate with the world. Is now the time to break out an Alexa survey? Fifty percent of all age groups use voice technology now, so maybe it is.

2. Will technology add value? Think about whether you're deploying technology because it will deliver efficiencies or if you want that shiny toy out in the world.

Does it save money? Time? Will it boost response rates or improve the quality of insight, or not?

3. What is the actual benefit?

What do you actually need to achieve? With budgets being cut, deliver what your client needs, rather than trying to wow them with something new. Will text or social analytics, for example, get you to where you need to be more quickly and efficiently?

In getting this balance right, think about how to streamline your delivery, too. As insights professionals, we rely on data visualization to help us deliver insights. But often, the people you're delivering to need a helping hand to interpret data. Of course, there are times when you set up workshops and meetings to share insight and drill down into the implications. But at the moment, speed and simplicity are of the essence, so look at how you can use technology to reduce your

resource load and meet the client's needs. Automation is our friend.

The great advantage of data visualization is not just that it helps everyone understand data, but the speed at which we can now deliver through automation is greatly enhanced. Faster delivery results in more time for delivering the research story to a client – which means the opportunity to drive business value. Speed is also important on the competitive playing field – it can present a true advantage to be equipped to make an informed follow-up faster than your competitors.

As you face the remainder of what will continue to be an uncertain year, it's time to be ruthlessly pragmatic. Embrace the tools that will make you more efficient, more competitive and better able to serve your customers. Think of it as back to basics, with an innovative flair.



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expressed throughout their responses to our survey is truly remarkable. They acknowledge their good fortune – they have jobs at a time when so many do not – while also realizing the weight of the responsibility being placed on their shoulders. But perhaps the most laudable thing is, they, for the most part, seem to welcome the challenge and

are prepared to help their organizations make a path forward.

I believe this will be the defining moment of my career and feel incredibly proud of my team of researchers for the work they are doing. We are rising to this unprecedented occasion and doing intensive, impactful work to amplify the voices of people living

through an incredibly hard time. Every day I see my company use our insights to better inform and support people around the world who are struggling through the pandemic. There's never been a time I was more thankful for my training and experience. ①



LEANING INTO DISRUPTION

Under increased pressure, and reduced budgets, client-side researchers rise to the challenge

By Emily C. Koenig, Digital Editor >> Quirk's Media

snapshot

Quirk's Editor Emily C. Koenig shares how several client-side researchers are adapting to the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, while also touching on their hopes for the future.

This year, the marketing research and insight industry is working overtime to face the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, redefining insights and identifying the skills necessary to survive. Individuals and teams around the world are managing drastically shifting budgets and new work environments due to an ever-evolving new normal. In light of these challenges, I decided to reach out to a few client-siders to see how they – and their teams – are handling the changes brought on by COVID-19.

While each researcher I connected with was impacted in different ways, one thing stood out: from working under added pressure, to managing reduced budgets and finding new ways to understand the customer, researchers have taken on the challenge of adapting in the midst of crisis. As Jennifer Golson, consumer insights, Universal Parks & Resorts, put it, “A crisis like this forces us to reflect and question the way we have done things in the past and to take opportunities to improve and change.”

Getting to the heart of why: Consumer change in a disrupted world

By Dave Lundahl
CEO, InsightsNow

It's easy to follow what consumers have been doing but difficult to predict what they will do. A classic approach to predicting behavior is to attribute behavioral change to a shift in need states. However, in a world disrupted by COVID-19, this Maslovian needs state model is too simplistic. It does not sufficiently predict behavior for marketers and innovators to plan their response in the face of market disruption.

For the past four years, we have been tracking a segment of consumers called Clean Label Enthusiasts®. This group increased during that time from 12% to 34% of all U.S. primary household shoppers. In addition to their clean-label buying behaviors, a unique characteristic of this segment is a higher than typical distrust for large corporations as well as government institutions who set regulations for how products are manufactured, advertised and labeled. They are the consumers behind the growth of the natural products industry, which promotes products with ingredients that are organic, natural and sustainable. Our question going into COVID-19 was whether this segment's motivators would change and whether these shoppers might seek different price-value trade-offs.

The answer is becoming clear. The COVID-19 disruption has accelerated rather than inhibited global demand for natural and natural-positioned products. Why? Because the media broadcasting through various channels about COVID-19 continually reinforces the basic tenet that large corporations and government institutions cannot be trusted.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 53% of Clean Label Enthusiasts distrusted the U.S. food system. Recently, the U.S. FDA issued a temporary guidance to help food manufacturers more easily make "like" ingredient changes without a label change in order to quickly address supply chain challenges. This regulatory change

– while welcome by food manufacturers – is further eroding trust among consumers already on high alert about health and safety concerns. The short-term economic gains for food brand owners may not be worth the long-term consequences. These ongoing changes to regulations continue to disrupt consumers and make it difficult to use Maslovian needs states to predict behavior changes. A stronger, more predictive approach emerged when we applied a behavioral framework called the Emotions Insights Wheel™.

Using this framework, we projected back in March what we believed would be short- and long-term consumer behavioral changes due to COVID-19 and we have been tracking Clean Label Enthusiasts' behaviors and motivators since then. This model predicted an initial rise in functional motivators for purchases of consumer packaged goods to address health and safety fears. We saw this play out in the hoarding of toilet paper and clearing of retail shelves of disinfectants.

We are now seeing a rise in predicted psychological motivators where people are seeking products to help them feel better and change their moods. We are also seeing a rise in sensorial motivators that drive purchases of products to re-experience what has been recently lost due to the restrictions of the pandemic. Further, we are seeing family time emerge as a key social moment motivating product purchases. Predicting motivators has been helpful to marketers and innovators seeking to stock store shelves with the products consumers currently seek.

Today, more than ever before, marketing researchers are needed to get to the heart of "why." To help our internal or external customers plan for the future, we must go beyond the Maslovian needs state model and embrace behavioral science. If you wish to learn more about our predictions and recommendations for your brand or product, check out our COVID-19 Tracker of Clean Label Enthusiasts®.

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“A crisis like this forces us to reflect and question the way we have done things in the past and to take opportunities to improve and change.”

It's important to note that this article is not an attempt to provide a definitive take on the effects of COVID-19 on end-client researchers. Instead, it is my hope to spark important conversations about growth, resiliency and change within the industry.

Adapting to change

Several researchers spoke to the challenges faced due to changes in their day-to-day collaboration habits. This is not unique to researchers, but something employees around the world faced when suddenly jumping into work-from-home life, many for the first time. When listening to client-siders, it quickly becomes obvious that the challenges brought on by the sudden shift to virtual working environments is more than just a social one. While tools like Microsoft Teams or Zoom assist in maintaining vital communication lines, adapting to new solutions takes time and (continued) effort.

“PBS did not have a big work-from-home culture before the pandemic began so it was a big shock to send everyone home so quickly in March,” says Eliza Jacobs, director, consumer insights and analysis, PBS. “Over these past few months, what I have come to truly miss is the convenience of dropping by a coworker’s office or cubicle to ask a quick question or have a chat.”

Jacobs went on to describe what she calls “video meeting fatigue” – something introverts in particular may be struggling with – sharing tips that have helped her manage, if not completely overcome, it.

“We have talked about blocking our calendars on a particular day in order to get work done, and I engage in what a friend of mine calls ‘defensive calendaring’ – preemptively blocking my own calendar to give myself space that I need.”

With nearly all interactions being planned out in advance, and spontaneous conversations nearly impossible to achieve due to the shift away from a traditional office setting, Julie Levine, senior consumer insights manager, Cuisinart, reflects on how the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the importance of unstructured conversation to problem-solving.

“The most challenging aspect for me is communicating with my internal clients. Pre-pandemic, I would often stop by in person to ask a quick question. Some of my most productive encounters were spontaneous run-ins in the hallway, kitchen or even the bathroom,” says Levine. “Now, working from home, communication is planned and deliberate. I find that people have their own personal styles and you need to be open to all methods.”

Stephanie Heller, consumer insights, Universal Parks & Resorts, shares how her team has taken on communication and collaboration

Using ‘basic’ research to guide us to a brighter future

By Jerry Thomas
President and CEO, Decision Analyst

The emergence of COVID-19 is not surprising. Given the growing pandemic risks driven by world population growth, greater urbanization and faster transportation systems, the probabilities are high that we will see many more pandemics over the next 100 years. What is most unique about COVID-19 is its devastating economic impact. Presently, preventing the virus from overwhelming health care systems requires shutting down roughly one-third of all economic activity. COVID-19 will bring about a deep worldwide recession in 2020 and probably cost the world economy something on the order of \$20-\$25 trillion. The COVID-19 pandemic, its high death toll, its disruption of social life and its destruction of the

challenges brought on by virtual work, improving their internal partnerships from a project development perspective. “One thing we are all doing more is working in pairs or small teams on projects that may have been run by a single individual contributor in the past,” says Heller. “We still have project leads, but this new collaboration is driving best practice dissemination, training and also just helping people feel more connected.”

economy will be seared into our collective human memories for a long time to come.

Consumer attitudes and perceptions will be changed forever. Industries, companies and brands will be forced back to the drawing board to relearn and re-understand their consumers, markets and distribution systems. Companies will have to reinvent, reposition and rejuvenate their products, services, marketing and advertising. No one knows exactly how attitudes and perceptions will mutate and evolve but any company or brand that fails to reinvest in basic marketing research to understand and stay in touch with their markets and customers is at peril of oblivion.

In-depth qualitative research is one technique of great value (conducted online, for now, due to COVID-19, but eventually we will get back to in-person). Not only can qualitative research help us understand the deeper psychological and emotional impact of COVID-19, but it can help us look into the future and make intelligent decisions about the likely range of consumer attitudinal

and behavioral responses. Once we know what's likely to change and the range of those changes, then we can bring quantitative research methods to the fore. Choice modeling is a powerful quantitative technique that measures and predicts how consumers will change and imputes the strategy implications of those changes. Choice models allow us to create different scenarios of the future and measure how consumers will choose among those scenarios.

One other basic research technique is worthy of mention. Twenty years ago, most brands had some type of awareness and attitudinal tracking studies in place to monitor the effects of advertising and media initiatives. During the Great Recession, 2007-2009, many of those large, expensive tracking studies were permanently cancelled, on the very eve of the greatest changes in media in the last 50 years. Many



companies and brands tried to navigate the post-recession years without any understanding of the changing advertising and media landscape and some of those businesses are no longer with us. Brands with good tracking studies in place sit in the catbird seat. They can analyze the pre-coronavirus world and compare it to attitudes and behaviors post-coronavirus. This pre-post research design yields valuable information, especially during periods of rapid change or disruption.

All of these suggestions fall into the category of "basic" research – and there are many other types of research to consider. Now is the time to increase research budgets and rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of knowledge and truth – and a brighter future.



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Decision-making

Finding ways to connect with and understand consumers during a global pandemic has been a challenge for many brands. And as Lisa Saxon Reed, director, global sensory, Mars Wrigley, says, it has left many client-side leaders asking, "How do we make sure the consumer is at the heart of our decision-making when we can't connect in the usual ways?"

"Pre-COVID we were experimenting with virtual and AI techniques to help us stay close to our consumers," says Reed. "COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to accelerate this work, learn what does and does not work, and how to do it 'right' on a larger scale. Accelerating this new way of working presented significant logistical challenges, especially with product experience research outside of our hometown or our home country."

Bernard Brenner, senior director research, CMR, Microsoft, expressed a similar sentiment. "COVID-19 tested the agility and creativity of our research managers. Nearly overnight, research managers got pressure on business questions, methodologies and budget," says Brenner. "We were asked to investigate environmental impacts on our customers as they were rapidly evolving in the market. We had to pull out of qualitative

research as facilities shut down. We had to cancel or reduce sample sizes on quantitative projects that were scoped to address key strategies.”

While many may be daunted by this need to quickly pivot – specifically in a time when concrete answers are hard to come by – insights teams around the world are proving they are up for the challenge. Brenner went on to share how the need for rapid response and quick answers helped his team grow.

“They quickly adopted more diverse data sets, such as organic social data to understand business issues in real time,” he says. “They experimented with telemetry data sets to get signals on how usage was actually happening. And they onboarded new qualitative techniques, often doing interviews themselves ... I think a benefit from COVID-19, which sounds weird, is that our researchers are more adaptable, creative, resilient and faster. And these qualities will only serve our business better as we move forward to a new normal.”

But even when insights teams are able to adapt, act quickly and connect with consumers, the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 can be overwhelming. For some industries, such as travel and leisure, using research to inform long-term decision-making is the greatest challenge.

“A major challenge is balancing the unavoidable impact that COVID is having on current consumer mind-set to travel with the need to do research to inform organizational decision-making in the both the near- and the long-term,” says Golson, Universal Parks & Resorts. “Our insights projects are very forward-looking, and while it is clear that this pandemic is going to have long-lasting social and cultural

“How do we make sure the consumer is at the heart of our decision-making when we can’t connect in the usual ways?”

impacts, we all hope for and expect a recovery at some point, and a lot of our work will inform decisions that will come to fruition years from now. Balancing those needs with the present extreme salience of COVID on the consumer psyche is difficult.”

Hope for research and insights

While there is no doubt that brands are facing an uncertain road ahead, the individuals I interviewed hold so much hope for research and insights. And they aren’t waiting around for business as usual to return before getting to work.

One area where this is most obvious is the more widespread adoption and use of virtual research techniques. COVID-19 is pushing researchers – and brands – beyond their comfort level in terms of methodology and technology choices.

“Our biggest challenge has been: How do we make sure the consumer is at the heart of our decision-making when we can’t connect with our consumer in the usual ways? ‘Virtual done right’ can work in many markets around the world,” says Reed. “Does that mean we will be 100% virtual when the COVID storm passes? No. Will it be a much larger percentage than it would have been? Definitely, yes.”

Golson pointed to similar work being done within her team. “Rather than waiting for a return


of a normal that may never come,” says Golson, “we are taking on these challenges as opportunities to adjust and even wholly transform some of our most bedrock research programs.”

Bessam Mustafa, director, fan insights, Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club, also believes it is important to continue on – in his case, this means surveying fans and soliciting feedback with respect to the pandemic itself and how fandom is manifesting during these unprecedented times.

“To date, the response has been positive. In some cases, we’re seeing higher response rates and quality of data. We were some of the earlier movers when it came to asking customers honest questions about how they perceive the pandemic,” says Mustafa. “We can’t disappear now and expect people to participate with us again in three, six or 12+ months when it’s convenient for us – I’d rather keep the trains rolling.”

Several researchers also expressed hope that some of the new perspectives and behaviors originally sparked by this unprecedented time will stay with the industry long after it has regained stability.

“Our industry is incredibly resilient,” says Jacobs. “Obviously this has been an incredibly turbulent few months, but what I am most heartened by is how many honest and, at times, painful conversations are now being facilitated by insights professionals. The insights are deeper and more meaningful.”

At the end of the day, it may be this resilience that allows researchers to rise to the challenge, step back, gain perspective and ask the tough questions to best serve consumers and brands during these uncertain times. 



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Advice for researchers on surviving the impacts of COVID-19

By Christina Nathanson

Let's face it: 2020 has been a year for the record books. We all thought 2020 was supposed to be about a clear vision but what did it actually prove to be? To me, it's felt a little like getting stuck halfway through putting on a sports bra after not thoroughly drying off from a shower. I'm just waiting for someone to help cut me out of this thing!

We've had our fair share of Zoom meetings, Netflix bingeing and social distancing. There were no graduations or proms. Parents became teachers and teachers became technology experts. You may have lost your job, been furloughed or saw unusual gaps in your calendar because research plans and budgets were frozen and your company's sales declined significantly.

As researchers, we need to stick together even through losses, insecurities and setbacks. Events like this can rock us to the core and strip away our assumptions. They push you to reconsider what is most important.

My goal with this article is to leave you with a new way of thinking, no matter where you are in your career life stage.

There's a great quote by my late uncle Hank Virgona, a New York artist: "The things you see out of the corners of your eyes are the things that are most important." He pointed out that as an individual, there are so many instances where we just go about our day-to-day, missing out on the little bits and pieces around us, the lighting, the shadows, the way something – someone, a new idea, a competitor – is sitting there, right next to us and we just missed it. Countless episodes of our lives are lost because of the numerous distractions and diversions that take place.

Why do I mention Hank? He was no marketing guy but for all intents and purposes, he was right!

**This leads to the first tenet:
Be powerful – find your why.**

Uncle Hank played a significant role in who I am today. He was a New York City artist, rode the subway to and from his home in Queens, N.Y., to his art studio in Union Square until he was 89. He observed everyday people on his daily commute, his “models,” in their natural habitats. Life was simple and art became his muse. In just a few strokes, behind a newspaper, sketchbook and pencil in hand, he captured and preserved people and objects around him. He illustrated sorrow, happiness, anger and stillness almost every day until he could not commute anymore.

In December 2018, his art posse organized a one-man show called The Full Virgona. This two-week event rejuvenated him in his why – his love for art and for people. On opening night, he sold 45 paintings; he had not sold that much in over five years. This turning point in his art career gave him the momentum to continue making art until the end of his life, just five-and-a-half months later. His rediscovery of his why late in life prompted our two worlds to collide as he passed his legacy and art responsibilities to me as executor. (For more about his life and his art, check out the documentary “Nothing Changes: Art for Hank’s Sake” by my nephew Matthew Kaplowitz. It’s free if you are an Amazon Prime member!)

Since I was unemployed, I took the time to personify Hank and elevate him to the level he deserved. He always said to me, “The

difference between Picasso and me was that Picasso had a better agent.” Well, Hank, I hope to make you even more famous as I undertake the role of art consultant and curate your works. While I’m not artistic, I am a marketer. I understand Hank and can become his persona. I love hosting virtual gallery showings on Zoom as it’s given me exposure to a whole new network of creative people and lets me tell stories about him through his art.

A blog post from Scarlett Erin, a writer and counselor from Assignment Star in the U.K., entitled “Your why matters: the 10 benefits of knowing your purpose in life,” has served as a compass for me. As she explains in her post, knowing your why:

- **Helps you stay focused.** When you know your life’s purpose, it becomes easier to focus on what matters the most in your life. Uncle Hank focused on his art and the objects and people around him, revisiting his why every day. Focus has grounded me in my darkest days.
- **Makes you feel passionate about your goal.** Knowing your why helps you find your true passion and this feeling becomes an essential driver for achieving something extraordinary. While Hank didn’t sell a lot of art, he knew that there was a meaning behind it. His passion pushed him to reach his goal of painting every single day.
- **Gives your life clarity.** People who know their why in life are unstoppable. You have a goal, you won’t waste your time on sweating the small stuff. Hank knew his purpose; he also didn’t sugarcoat it either.
- **Makes you feel gratified.** When you feel gratitude, you express it

regularly and base your decisions, thoughts, feelings and actions around that overarching purpose. Hank saw good in others, thus making a more significant impact through his work, which encourages a sense of gratification. He was also thankful that he could still do his art every day.

- **Makes life even more fun.** When you know your purpose, you enjoy every minute of it. There is so much pleasure in living a powerful, purpose-driven life and better tackling every situation in a creative way. Even the dullest thing becomes beautiful and artistic. You become one with others.

This points us to the second tenet: Stay resilient – shift your mind-set.

You’re probably tired of hearing the word resilient as it’s been used in so many advertisements over the past several months. But resilience is important because it allows us to develop a positive means to protect against experiences that could be upsetting. It also serves as a way to maintain equilibrium in our lives, especially during stressful times like COVID-19. However, resilience doesn’t just come overnight.

I have some advice on how I’ve stayed resilient and shifted my mind-set.

Data visualization is everything to me! Seeing an aspect of my life in a visual way added so much more meaning to what I was trying to accomplish. During quarantine, I committed to exercising at least 30 minutes of activity, sometimes more, every day. It was difficult to make this commitment when Netflix and the couch were so close to where I worked out in our house. But as I looked back at my activity



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log on my Apple Watch since the quarantine, I was shocked!

To keep the exercise habit alive, I started free Orangetheory virtual workouts with a friend who kept me accountable and I posted daily updates to my Instagram story. Sometimes we did them on Zoom together. Other times we used our apps to log in. Not only did we get fit but we also had followers who reacted to our story, catching the attention of the local fitness studio. We built up our own community and tribe. Further, I'm extremely proud of this because I am physically stronger and have a stronger immune system.

Mental health is also critical. According to the American Psychological Association, mindfulness meditation can improve both mental and physical health. Self-talk and meditation will enhance resilience – just five minutes a day can keep you sane. Meditation helps people stress less, focus more and, most of all, sleep! Headspace is an app that makes meditation really easy, teaching you life-changing mindfulness skills in just a few minutes a day.

Another way to stay balanced and improve resilience is through journaling as it allows you to talk to yourself without judgment. If you find it difficult to start writing, you can try a guided journal. I purchased "One Question a Day: A Five-Year Journal" for each member of my family for the holidays last year. It offers one random question per day to be answered on the same day for five years in a row. The questions range from prosaic, "What did you have for lunch today?" to the contemplative, "Can people really change?" On other days, I have literally written, "WTH is this world coming to?" or "I don't

BE POWERFUL

Revisit your "why"

FOCUS • PASSION • CLARITY • GRATITUDE • FUN

STAY RESILIENT

Shift the mind-set

PEOPLE • SELF-TALK • MIND & BODY • CONNECT
• OPTIMISTIC

BE FULFILLED

Try something new

RESOURCEFUL • EXPLOIT • NETWORK

know how I managed to survive that (whatever)."

Finding a creative outlet to be optimistic about and having some feel-good vibes around the neighborhood made for more positivity. For example, we painted rocks and left them in front of a neighbor's tree or in a rock garden to show our gratitude. I also hosted a virtual wine glass painting night with six friends on Zoom, where we spent an hour or two sipping wine, chatting, painting and observing the beauty in our creativity. (I think the wine may have helped.)

To recap, how can we stay resilient?

Shift the mind-set. The saying "birds of a feather flock together" is true. Surround yourself with like-minded people who match your desired mind-set. They don't have to be in your career – my Orangetheory Fitness community became my tribe. You will feel better about yourself and will have a stronger foundation for your roots.

Keep up the positive self-talk. Honestly, if you tell yourself that life sucks and that it's going to be awful, it probably will be. Saying "I can do this" instead of "I can't"

works. For me, those Orangetheory classes were tough. I said to myself, "I can do anything for 30-60 seconds at a time." And remember, modify if you have to. Posting on my Instagram story every day started a tribal following and made me accountable and helped me change my language from "I can't" to "I can."

Take care of your mind as well as your body. Some days, you need to be alone. If the only free time or place you have is either in the shower or on the toilet, take advantage of those moments. Close your eyes. Meditate with Headspace and breathe. Other times, you need to work out – it could be a long walk or a 30-minute video. If your mind and body are strong, you will become stronger.

Sometimes you can't go it alone, which means connections are important. Sift through your LinkedIn list and find successful colleagues from your past and message them. "Hey, it's been a while. I really miss how we used to sit in your office after a long meeting and chat. Do you have some time next week to connect via phone or Zoom?" You don't have to

have a particular ask but you never know what will come out of it. Just updating each other on your lives may create a new venture for both of you.

Lastly, be optimistic. An easy way to do this is to write down one thing every day that brings you joy and put it in a jar. When you are feeling down, pick a note out of the joy jar. For me, it was my Instagram posts or sharing the rocks that I painted with others. By the end of the week, there will be many things to share with a group of friends who can share their moments of joy too. And all of this can be very healing.

And now we've reached tenet three: Be fulfilled – try something new.

Shark Tank entrepreneur and Dallas Mavericks basketball team owner Mark Cuban has been a driving force to support small businesses during the coronavirus crisis. His advice for those out of work during COVID-19: collect unemployment; don't stop applying for jobs; and most important, make use of whatever downtime you have to brush up on the skills that might impress your future employer. As he has said, "The first question every interviewer is going to ask you is: What did you learn during the pandemic of 2020? What skills did you add?"

Not sure where to begin? I'll share a few tips to get you started.

One thing that has saved me is **LinkedIn Learning**. It's an online educational platform that helps you explore business, technology-related and creative skills through expert-led course videos. The learning I have undertaken has paid off in spades, including



Artist Hank Virgona at work in his studio.

courses on writing articles and blogs, SEO and Google Analytics, how to use HubSpot and WordPress and also the basics of blockchain. And you can post the certificates on your LinkedIn profile, adding to your toolbox of new skills.

Salesforce is great if you are in sales and find yourself with more downtime than you prefer. Even if you don't use Salesforce in your business, you will pick up tips and tricks along the way.

Research Rockstar delivers specific research training as well as offering freelance opportunities if you're looking. Its president, Kathryn Korostoff, is an amazing instructor, too. I took a behavioral economics class with her in May and learned more than I even bargained for.

Through the end of 2020, Class Central reports that **Coursera** is offering free certificates for 115 courses, ranging from personal branding to marketing analytics. Another online tool is **eLearning**

Industry, with both paid and free courses, webinars and seminars.

I can't go any further without mentioning the importance of networking. Aside from LinkedIn, I have stumbled across a few great resources to find like-minded people. **Fairygodboss** is all about improving the workplace for women by celebrating, supporting and connecting them. Its co-founders, Georgene Huang and Romy Newman, are committed to providing a free digital platform for millions of women to access anonymous job reviews, community advice and jobs at top-rated companies for women. You can chat with other career go-getters and connect on advice across the spectrum anonymously if you wish. If you are an independent consultant, **EM Marketing** is a great resource. Not only is it a marketing consulting company but it also facilitates an independent consulting forum with a Slack channel as well. We have lively Zoom discussions and share ideas and resources with the

consultant community. The last one is **Sweathead**, a private Facebook group to help people who think for a living practice how they think. They encourage participation on their Facebook page and post questions, ideas, frameworks, videos and articles that will help people approach their work in better ways. Hosted by Mark Pollard, it's a really different way of learning.

To be fulfilled, it's important to spice it up and bit and try something new every once in a while.

- **Be resourceful.** As Mark Cuban mentioned, make use of whatever downtime you have to brush up on skills that could impress your future employer. Carve out 30 minutes a day for online classes. If you are working, look at your company's website for specific management development train-

ing. If you have a lull in sales, start a Salesforce module even if you don't use it. Also, there are opportunities to get certified and pass an exam given by a certifying body which you can leverage when job-hunting or asking for a promotion. Depending on your industry, there are multiple certification options, programs and organizations to choose from.

- **Exploit the heck out of the free or low-cost educational courses that you can take.** You'll gain solid experience and some will also offer a certificate to prove you took that course. In addition to free training, try something new. There are webinars available to learn more about a specific topic in a short period of time, usually 30-60 minutes. Even better, they're guided by someone,

often in real-time, so you can ask questions and enjoy that classroom feel.

- **And don't forget to network.** At the recent Quirk's Virtual Event, I connected with 20 new people the day I presented the session this article is based on. I loved it! Every new person you connect with brings the potential for a new adventure. As the kids used to say, "YOLO!" 🍷

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The **Merlien Institute** will hold its MRMW NA event online **September 30 - October 1**. Visit na.mrmw.net.

Informa Connect will host TMRE: The Market Research Event as a virtual conference **October 5-7**. Visit informaconnect.com/tmre.

Worldwide Business Research will hold its eTail Boston 2020 event on **October 13-15** at The Sheraton in **Boston**. Visit bit.ly/2YHLAco.

The Bay Area Virtual Pharma Market Research Conference will be held online **October 14-15**. Visit bay-area.pharmamarketresearchconference.com.

Empresarial will hold its 2020 Printemps Des Etudes (Spring Studies) Trade Show on **October 22-23** at Palais Brongniart in **Paris**. Visit printemps-etudes.com.

Informa Connect will hold its UX Research and Insights Summit as a virtual conference **October 26-28**. Visit informaconnect.com/ux-research-insights-summit.

The Quirk's Event Virtual, Fall: New World, New Tools, will be held online **October 27-28**. Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

ESOMAR will hold its APAC Insights Festival online **November 1-3**. Visit bit.ly/2YEt8RO.

The European Pharma Market Research Conference will be held **November 3-4** in **Opfikon, Switzerland**. Visit europe.pharmamarketresearchconference.com.

The 2020 Pharma CI Europe Conference and Exhibition will be held on **November 5-6** in **Opfikon, Switzerland**. Visit europe.pharmaciconference.com.

Informa Connect will hold its Insights Leadership and Talent Summit as a virtual conference **November 9-10**. Visit informaconnect.com/consumer-insights.

The **Merlien Institute** will hold its MRMW APAC 2020 event as a virtual conference on **November 17-18**. Visit apac.mrmw.net.

The **Merlien Institute** will hold its MRMW EU event on **December 1-2** in **Amsterdam**. Visit eu.mrmw.net.

Informa Connect will hold its FEI event online **December 8-10**. Visit informaconnect.com/fei-usa.

The Pharma Market Research Conference USA will be held on **February 3-4** in **Newark, N.J.** Visit usa.pharmamarketresearchconference.com.

The 2021 Quirk's Event – Chicago will be held on **June 2-3** at the Hyatt Chicago in **Chicago**. Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

The 2021 Quirk's Event – London will be held on **July 20-21** at the InterContinental London O2 in **London**. Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

The 2021 Quirk's Event – New York will be held on **August 17-18** at the Javits Center in **New York**. Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

*Event details as of August 17, 2020.
Please see websites for more details.*

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10 minutes with...

Bessam Mustafa

Director, Fan Insights, Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club



“We want to keep people in dialogue with us until we can welcome them back to the stands.”

What surprised you the most when moving from supplier- to client-side research?

I think that everyone who makes the switch to client-side research realizes that they're suddenly an influencer as much as – or more than – they are a researcher. There's something a little bit humbling in knowing that decisions are going to be made with or without you, and you just hope that you can explain how they're made better with you in the mix. I'm fortunate to have arrived at an organization that was primed for a data-driven transformation when I got here, but I've spoken with many people taking client-side roles who are met with a wall of “we've always done it this way” naysayers.

Can you describe the biggest difference between fan/sports insights and more traditional corporate consumer research?

I think there are two pieces to this: the audience and the externalities. I don't think many people would say that the relationship they have with their bank, insurer, drugstore or other commercial entity is central to their identity. Of course, it's the opposite with sports fandom – it can be very emotional and people invest themselves heavily into it. Response rates are seldom an issue for me now, because people want to influence this thing that is so important to them. It's a great problem to have – instead of trying to get people to focus on something that's not top-of-mind, you spend your time trying to craft instruments that get you the answers you want while still giving respondents an opportunity to go somewhere else with their feedback.

That's where externalities come in. Team performance can swing certain types of responses wildly in a way that is impossible to ignore but also very hard to parse out from the underlying questions we are asking. There's a saying that when the team performs well, the beer is colder and the lines are shorter. When you're losing, the beer is warm and you've spent half the game waiting for a stale hot dog.

What steps is the Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club taking to continue capturing quality insights in this ever-evolving global crisis?

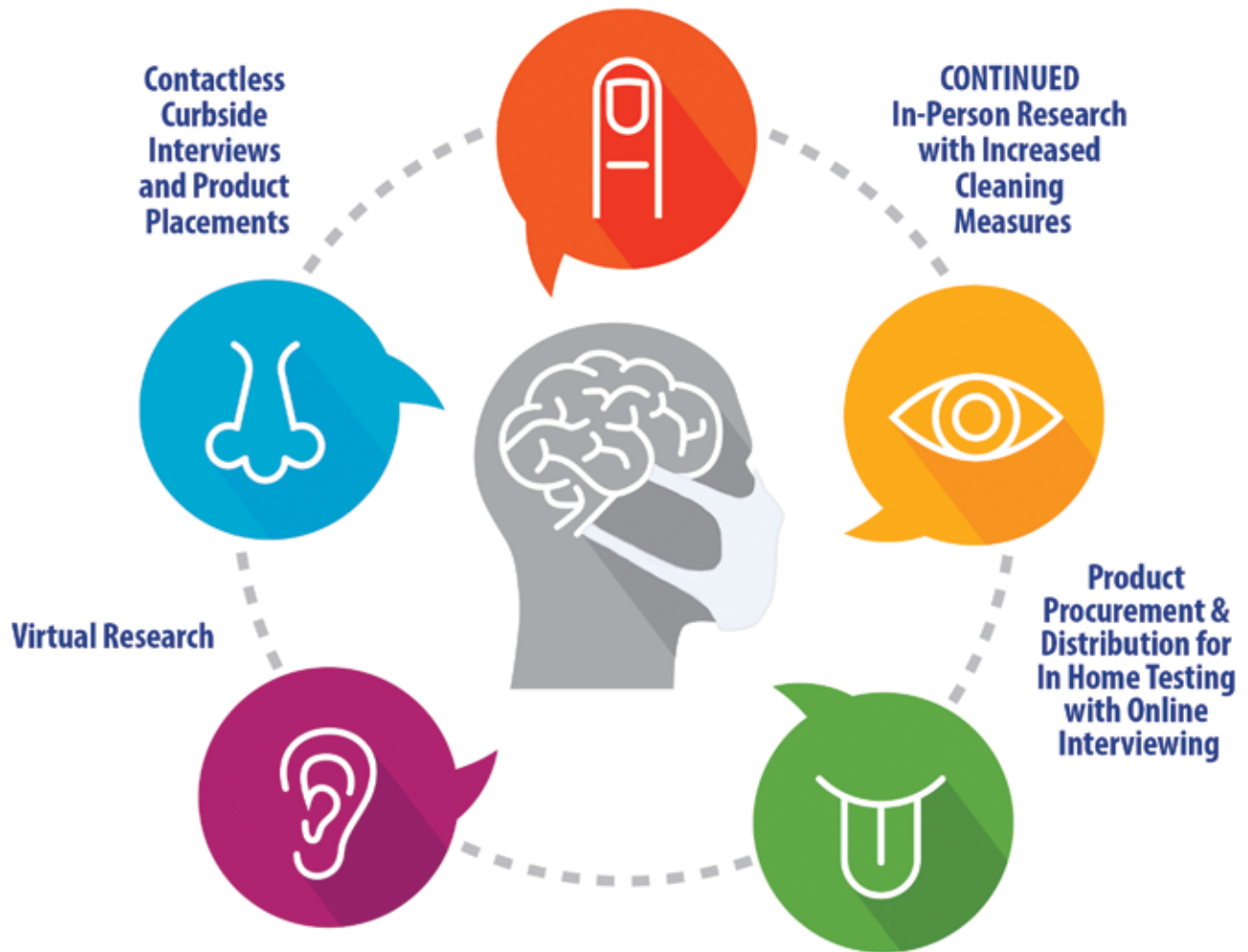
Since March our focus has shifted from optimizing the in-stadium experience to enhancing our virtual engagement opportunities. We want to keep people in dialogue with us until we can welcome them back to the stands. Over the past two years we have worked diligently to establish a feedback loop with fans who engage with us, knowing that we take their input seriously. For example, we have an insight community that we tap regularly and share plans and results with. We're continuing to survey them and solicit feedback with respect to the pandemic itself, how people's fandom is manifesting in these times and what we can do to keep people's attention until we can sell tickets again.

Read the full interview at www.quirks.com/articles/2020/20200922.aspx.

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