QUIRK'S

For marketing research and insights professionals

The heart of the matter

Communicating with limited-English-proficiency patients in U.S. emergency rooms

PLUS

Projecting durable-goods sales

Tips for better research communities

Pro Insights: Customer satisfaction

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19 Top Data Collection Companies

10 Top Product Development, Testing and Positioning Research Companies

Quirk's Marketing Research Review
MAY/JUNE 2025
VOLUME XXXIX NUMBER 3
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••• Write for Quirk's

Quirk's is looking for interesting, objective articles on all aspects of marketing research and insights.

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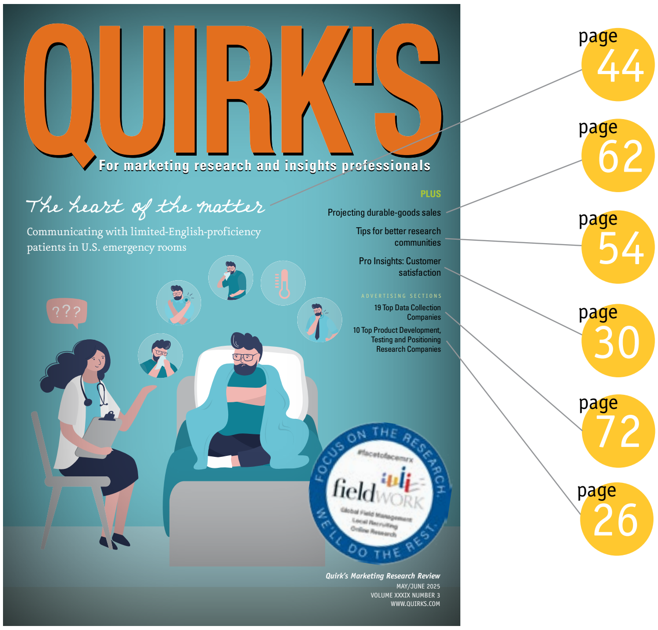

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Quirk's Awards: Nominations and judging

There is still time to submit a nomination for the Marketing Research and Insight Excellence Awards! The nomination portal closes on June 16 at 11:59 p.m. ET. Don't miss your chance to shine a light on a researcher, research organization or project. Nominate today at QuirksAwards.com/Nominate-2025!

Interested in judging a category or two? The Marketing Research and Insight Excellence Awards are looking for industry judges! E-mail awards@quirksawards.com for more information.

Quirk's Virtual Sessions – DIY Research

The next Quirk's Virtual Sessions series is coming up fast! Join fellow researchers for all things DIY research on June 11. For more information and to register go to https://bit.ly/42fClkd. Remember, your free registration gives you access to every session live AND on-demand access to the recordings. See you online!

// E-newsworthy

Marketing research: Guiding companies to focus on the right problems

Understanding the barriers to battery electric vehicle adoption

Formalizing market research innovation programs in the age of AI

Work and Play: Classical piano, focus and obtaining the unobtainable

AI for insight teams: Start small, scale smart, stay human

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// Noted Posts

Quirk's Blog

The value of attending marketing research industry events
https://bit.ly/4cmeDaF

Economics class to researcher of the year
https://bit.ly/3YlAf0x

Making complex research simple: Q&A with the Marketing Research Supplier of the Year
https://bit.ly/42xl4nY

Research Industry Voices

The future of marketing research in Central America
https://bit.ly/4iZrYYU

How brands shape consumer health
https://bit.ly/42iD2t5

Addressing AI concerns to buildconsumer trust
https://bit.ly/4lsovE7

Research Careers Blog

Navigating networking: How Canadian women are handling industry barriers
https://bit.ly/42mkok7

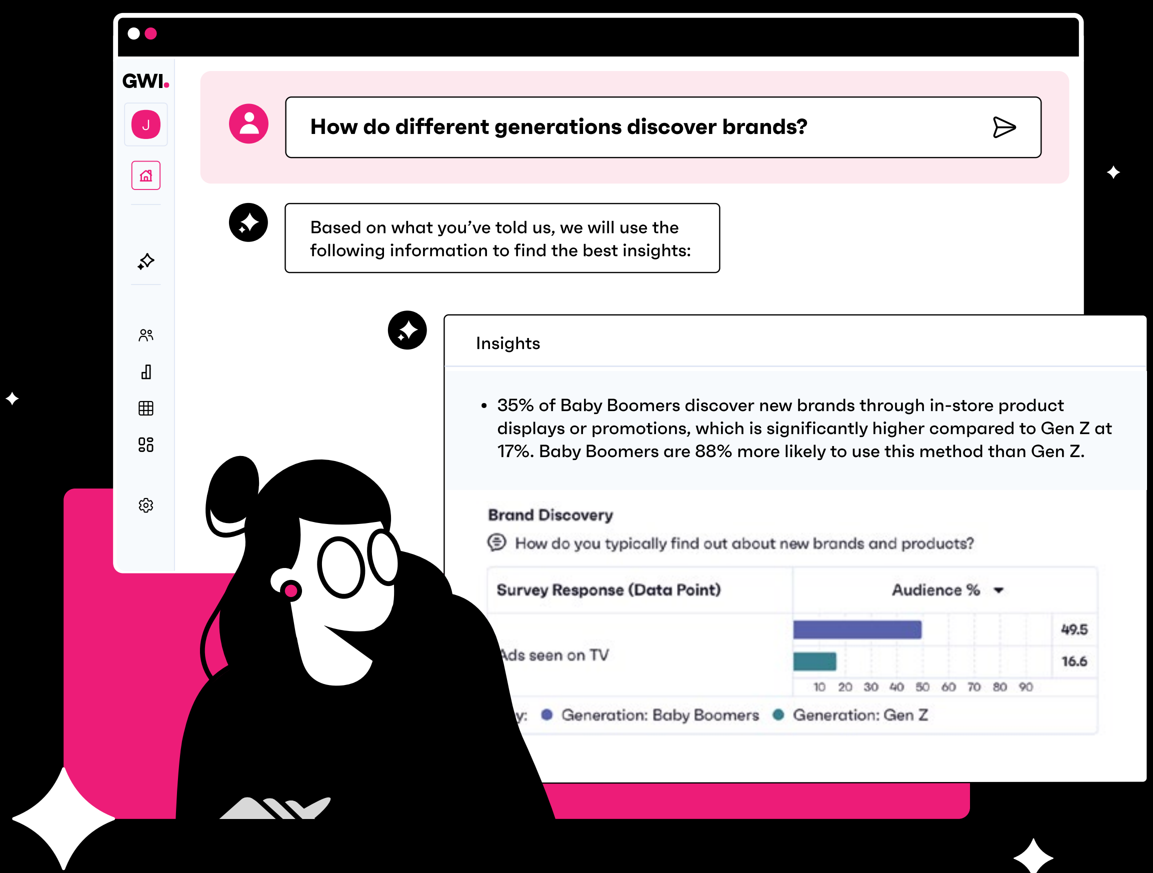
Insights on employee satisfaction, tech adoption and workplace wellness programs
https://bit.ly/3BMQxIo

Leadership orientations: How to balance task-oriented and people-oriented leadership
https://bit.ly/4fCb8gj

GWI Spark

Power up your productivity

Spending too much time on ad-hoc insight requests? **GWI Spark takes care of that**



GWI.

••• advertising research

Ads with in-jokes stay with viewers longer

Drawing on the time-honored movie and sitcom practice of callbacks – where jokes, plot or character elements are put into different contexts for (hopefully) comedic effect – is a good way for brands to make consumers laugh and also build trust, according to researchers at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

Yuji Winet, an assistant professor of marketing at the school, and other researchers analyzed callbacks in thousands of Netflix comedies and in feature films to quantify how much more effective callbacks were in inducing laughs than regular jokes.

And then, in an experiment, they showed 17 TV commercials to 748 participants. Some ads were shown once, some twice and some were callback ads, selected from an Energizer Bunny campaign that employed callbacks. These were shown in pairs: an Energizer Bunny commercial followed by a callback commercial – a seemingly unrelated ad disrupted by the arrival of the bunny.

To test which commercials were most memorable, the researchers gave participants a surprise memory test immediately after watching the ads and a second test two weeks later. Initially, both repeated ads and the callback ads showed an advantage over ads shown only once. But after two weeks, the callback ads were remembered significantly more than the twice-shown ads, which by then performed no better than the single ads.

"Two weeks later, they still remembered the callback ads quite well, whereas the repeated ads were almost completely forgotten, to the point where it was no different from having seen the ad only once," Winet says.

Further experiments with jokes revealed that participants reported greater enjoyment from callback jokes compared with non-callback jokes. They also expressed a greater likelihood of sharing the experience with their friends. The key, Winet says, was that callbacks gave consumers the feeling of being guided through the experience.

By setting up consumers to understand things in one way, then reshaping those things so they can be understood in another way, the creator tells the consumer, "'I understand you. You can trust me. Enjoy the experience,'" Winet says.

In the context of brand experiences, this may translate into consumers feeling more positive about the brand and being more willing to pay for its products. "Callbacks improve consumer experiences by making them more memorable, more enjoyable, more meaningful and more rewarding. This can lead to better downstream marketing outcomes like higher star ratings and more sharing by word of mouth, while making experiences worth paying more for," Winet says.

By Joseph Rydholm, Quirk's Editor

For researchers, a time of action rather than reinvention

©Clare Pix Photography www.clarepix.com

Joe Rydholm can be reached at joe@quirks.com

As a longtime observer of this industry, I kind of feel bad for client-side researchers. They're out there, doing their work, digging up insights, helping guide organizational decision-making – often with very little help or budget – and then some wiseacre comes along and tells them they need to reinvent themselves, lest they go the way of the dinosaurs.

In my early years here at Quirk's, the arrival of the internet disrupted everything but there really weren't wide calls from all corners for researchers to cast off legacy methodologies like focus groups or telephone interviewing or else risk obsolescence. (Maybe those voices were there but not everyone heard them because we didn't all have lightning-fast web access and blogs and LinkedIn to spread them around!)

Things were pretty quiet for a while and then big data arrived and threatened to replace marketing research and marketing researchers – setting off a torrent of "evolve or die" exhortations at conferences and online. (Remember when you were all urged to learn coding so you could keep pace with the data jockeys?) The reports of research's demise were greatly exaggerated…until AI came along and stirred up a bunch of existential angst for insights professionals.

As was eventually the case with big data after some of the hysteria died down, many in the industry are now viewing AI as another tool in the toolbox, or a kind of all-knowing personal assistant, rather than a relentless monster like Jason Voorhees or Leatherface who won't stop until the last human insight worker has been hunted down.

But at our April Quirk's Event in Chicago, I couldn't help but notice a reemergence of voices suggesting the need for researchers to act – not necessarily to reinvent themselves but to play offense rather than defense. That is, be active, stay alert and take the lead.

In a session with aytm, Tina Tonielli, insights and analytics lead at Haleon, said she had seen more changes in the last two years of her career than in the first 20. She urged researchers to cultivate a growth mind-set, one that's characterized by having an insatiable curiosity, being willing to lead change and not being satisfied with how things have always been done.

As part of his talk in Chicago, James Wycherley of the Insight Management Academy also offered calls to action, defining tomorrow's corporate insight professional as someone who is a growth consultant, a knowledge farmer (rather than just a data hunter) and an insight influencer. Researchers need to be "students of their own business," versed in how the company makes its money, where it sits in its industry and what its competitive landscape is like. Having these contexts lets you add strategic heft when you deliver the insights you've uncovered to your internal audiences.

Mind-sets were also a topic covered by Mondelez SVP and Global Chief of Insights and Analytics Pam Forbus as she outlined the shifts in thinking that are necessary for researchers who want to gain and retain a seat at the C-suite table. Along with asking "How do I have impact?" (by understanding the factors that give you executive presence, by getting politically savvy and by learning the language of the C-suite), you need to ask "Who do I serve?" (insights and analytics can serve the entire company, not just marketing) and "What is my role?" (you can share the facts about the insights your team has generated but then also share your point of view). She also stressed the need for researchers to invest in their skills and find ways to "always contribute outside your job description."

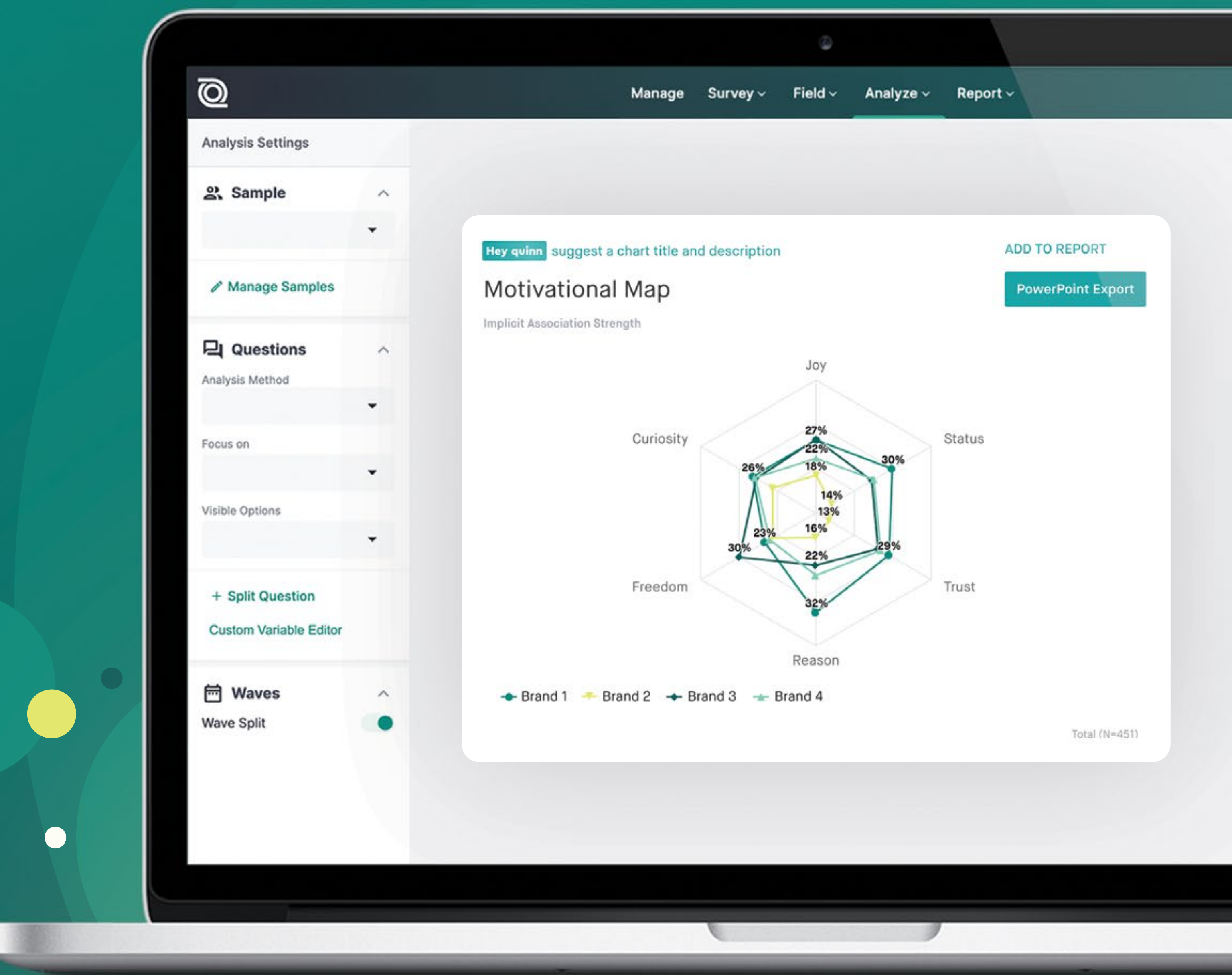
The good news is, not everything has to change in this AI-crazy world. A panel of researchers from powerhouse brands including Major League Baseball, Daisy Brand, PepsiCo, Kraft-Heinz and Haagen-Dazs made a compelling case for the enduring value of qualitative research, citing example after example to moderator Ron Raskin, CEO of Insights in Marketing, of the impact and necessity of human-based and -generated insights.

As it was when I started here, one of the superpowers of the marketing researcher is the connection they have to consumers. While digital and technological obstacles may arise to interrupt or dilute that bond – in the process spurring insights gatherers to reevaluate how they do their jobs – the core mission of translating customers' needs and opinions for their organizations will endure.

quantilope

The Consumer Intelligence Platform

Offering 15 fully automated advanced research methodologies, an easy-to-use tracking solution, and on-going support from a team of expert researchers.



2025 INSIGHT PLATFORMS

7 Top INSIGHT PLATFORMS *for 2025*

Survey Platform

Get better insights, faster

VOXCO

Everyone wants insights that keep them ahead – Voxco helps you deliver them first.

Answering complex research questions has never been easy, and outdated survey tech has often been part of the problem. Every wave of innovation, from early computing to AI, brought new complications. Researchers were left managing clunky platforms, technical bugs and overwhelming data while the demand for faster, sharper insights kept growing.

That's why Voxco has helped teams focus less on tech and more on answers since 1976. When researchers needed better telephony, Voxco built an auto-dialer and IVR. To streamline workflows, we created an all-in-one multimodal survey platform. And when coders were buried in manual work, we added the industry's best text analytics and verbatim coding solution.

Today, Voxco is a research platform built for serious researchers who need serious flexibility – because one-size-fits-all surveys aren't the answer.

Visit voxco.com or scan the QR code to book a demo.

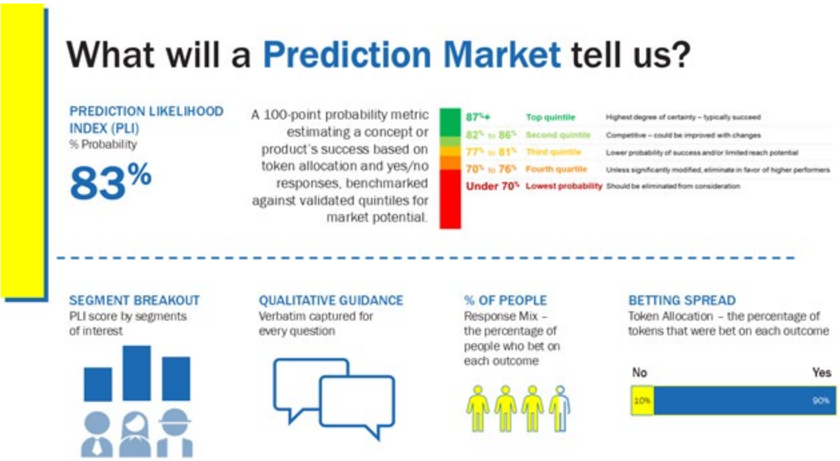
VOXCO
Answer Anything

How HUUNU is predicting the future through the wisdom of crowds

CRG GLOBAL

CSS-PI's HUUNU platform was created to address the need for a fast and cost-efficient research approach to test and indicate market potential for both future trends and innovation ideas/concepts. This need is driven by the rapidly changing CPG landscape in almost all categories across the globe.

HUUNU leverages a tried and tested prediction market algorithm, which taps into the "wisdom of crowds" philosophy (or crowdsourcing). The platform was developed to deliver a gamified user experience which allows participants to bet virtual currency on how a targeted audience will react to ideas and events, reducing rational response bias and providing both indices of market potential and rich qualitative data.



The platform's strengths include its high degree of accuracy in the predictions (90%), validated by years of in-market product performance data, a level playing field for databasing and a unique combination of quantitative and qualitative insights – providing both the what and the why to inform further development. It has also been shown to identify disruptive or breakthrough innovation better than traditional survey-based tools and the further out from an event, the more accurate prediction markets become (vs. "claimed" future behavior about oneself).

It provides complete flexibility in areas of questioning (not limited to fixed/prescribed measurement metrics) and can target prediction questions about an intended audience rather than general population. HUUNU can evaluate all stages of innovation for refinement opportunities and is also uniquely equipped to predict the speed and size of trends, market forces and customer needs.

Removing the need for black-box models, HUUNU provides clear indices of market potential with the ability to understand both the opinion and weight of confidence in that opinion, allowing insights teams to make informed decisions about their brands and categories.

So, whether you are looking to understand the potential of future trends (FUTURES) or the market opportunity for a new idea (FORESIGHT), HUUNU offers rapid, cost-effective and validated insight that you can rely on.

Currently available in 20+ global languages.

INTERPRETING RESULTS

Results are based on the collective judgment of participants over hundreds of predictive Purchase questions in the CSS-PI Global Database.

The purchase outcomes in this study can be interpreted by these Prediction Likelihood Index (PLI) quintile tiers.

CSS Predictive Intelligence Global Database

87%+	TOP QUINTILE	Highest degree of certainty – typically succeed
81% to 86%	SECOND QUINTILE	Competitive – could be improved with changes
75% to 80%	THIRD QUINTILE	Lower probability of success – reassess if modification can improve
64% to 74%	FOURTH QUINTILE	Unless significantly modified, eliminate in favor of higher performers
Under 64%	LOWEST PROBABILITY	Should be eliminated from consideration

www.crgglobalinc.com

Agile Insights Platform

Don't irritate yourself with DIY tools

M/A/R/C RESEARCH

At M/A/R/C® Research, DIY means "Don't Irritate Yourself." Do-it-yourself (DIY) tools have revolutionized research by offering cost-effective, agile solutions, but they often demand significant time and resources.

M/A/R/C's Accelerated Solutions combine quick insights with comprehensive service, enabling you to make better business decisions without the hassle.

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Determine which ideas break through and create relevant emotional connections using implicit response time with an intuitive swipe exercise.

ACCELERATED SCREEN

Screen concepts to identify those that warrant further development – assessing appeal, implicit emotional connections and concept diagnostics in a sequential monadic exercise.

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Green light ideas with confidence using predictive measures validated to determine concepts with the most potential to activate consumers. Gain extra insights with Price Sensor or TURF analysis.

AD IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Gauge the potential of your marketing communications to connect with your audience and drive activation.

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Survey Platform With Qual Depth

Reimagining the survey: All the features of quant plus qual depth

INCA

The future of quant is here and it's looking a lot like qual – it's engaging, empathetic and participant-led yet still delivers quantification of business KPIs and robust validation. The outcome? Higher-quality data and a more profound understanding of people, leading to more informed decision-making.

INCA IS THE ONLY PLATFORM THAT DELIVERS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **Robust metrics:** The question types and features of a quantitative survey delivered in an engaging, intuitive format for participants.
- **Qualitative depth:** AI probing that has been trained by market research experts to connect with empathy and deliver deep insight from open-ended questions.
- **Multimodal:** Participants can answer by voice, video or text in 90 languages.
- **Understand emotion:** Qualitative projective techniques to enable participants to express their feelings and emotions.
- **Deep-dive diagnostics:** Tools that provide robust feedback about stimuli and insights about how to optimize them.
- **Immediate insights:** All data is available live on the inca dashboard, users can analyze data by subgroups, export charts to PowerPoint and use inca's expertly trained AI to code open-ended responses.

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inca

E2E's Raven dashboard, Qprobe and DataPilot

E2E Research
Delivering Data Diligence

E2E

E2E Research Services is a boutique research agency with a competitive edge, providing technology solutions that meet the modern market research needs.

Raven can help with quick dashboarding, on key hypotheses and conclusions for custom projects or ongoing trackers. It saves time, money and eliminates accidental errors arising from manual charting; unearths tracker trends in multiple waves of data and helps understand the unique perspectives of targeted demographic or psychographic consumer segments.

The **Raven dashboard** helps generate survey insights with real-time survey data or SPSS file. It offers crosstabulation to analyze data for correlation and trends effortlessly; the ability to implement multiple filters; data visualization, offering editable charts for quick reporting; statistical data analysis, providing comprehensive statistical analysis with mean matrices, significance difference; multi-format export in PPT, PDF and Excel; ability to create dynamic themes, customizable visuals, personalized branding and tailored evaluation methods to meet diverse project needs.

QProbe is an advanced AI tool that generates real-time follow-up questions for surveys. It intelligently crafts questions aligned with the survey objectives based on the primary questions and respondents' answers. Qprobe enhances data depth, generating tailored follow-up questions, providing deeper insights from respondent answers. It dynamically probes open-ended responses, reducing ambiguity and capturing precise feedback; adapts to respondent input in real time, ensuring relevance and engagement throughout the survey; and can be easily integrated into survey platforms for flexible and scalable deployment.

DataPilot is an intelligent tool designed to check the logical flow of data by autonomously filling the survey data. This is NOT a BOT. It helps perform comprehensive logical flow checks and error detection. It simulates all possible permutation and combination scenarios across survey links, making it ideal for testing and validating survey designs before deployment. Key features include survey automation across platforms, customizable answer filling, dynamic question handling, dashboard for full control, quota checks/least fill quota checks and randomized answers.

Visit our website for more details e2eresearch.com.

AI-led Qualitative Insights Platform

A paradigm shift in insight generation with Conveo's AI-moderated video interviews

CONVEO.AI

In today's rapid-paced business environment, understanding the "why" behind consumer behavior is more critical than ever. However, traditional research methods present significant hurdles. They can be time consuming, expensive or limited in scale, making it challenging to gather the depth and breadth of insights needed to drive informed decisions in sync with the business. Conveo revolutionizes this paradigm, offering an end-to-end AI-led qualitative insights platform that empowers brands to save weeks while maintaining depth and scale at every step. Conveo's AI insights assistant democratizes research and makes it 10x more powerful with (multimodal) AI-moderated video interviews and a cumulating body of knowledge.

THE NEW PATH MUST BE CHOSEN WITH INTENTION

Conventional qualitative research generates great depth but requires effort. Planning and conducting interviews, generating transcripts and undertaking meticulous analysis takes weeks – all while the business demands swift action. While quantitative research provides scale, it hardly provides context. In contrast, many contemporary AI solutions focus on "synthetic data" which can introduce new challenges such as bias and a lack of genuine human insight.

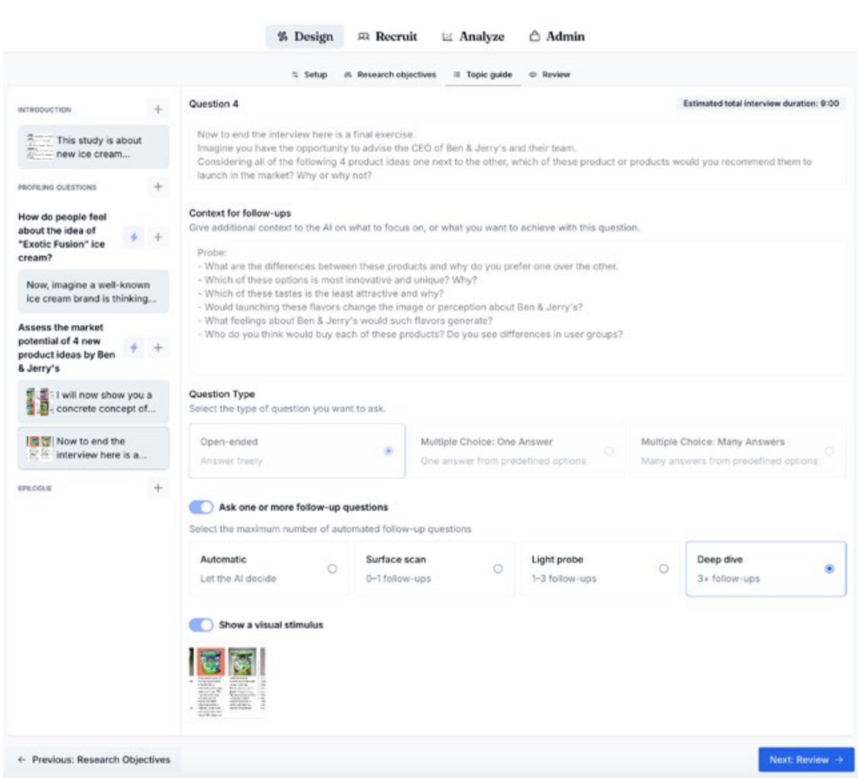
Conveo is a true research co-worker' and distinguishes itself by harnessing the power of artificial intelligence throughout the entire research life cycle, focusing on engaging with real humans to generate authentic insights. Our platform covers much of the depth of a qualitative researcher but does so at 100 times the scale and with perfect memory and oversight.

ENGINEER YOUR STUDY EFFICIENTLY

Users define a briefing with their business challenge, research objectives and information needs as well as upload any previous data (e.g., previous interviews, reports, strategic plans). Conveo's AI co-worker generates a topic guide tailored to the specific business problem and addresses relevant knowledge gaps. Simple prompts allow editing and uploading stimuli such as images, videos or website links.

SEE REAL PEOPLE, HEAR REAL STORIES THROUGH VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Unlike static surveys and AI solutions relying on synthetic data, Conveo's interview engine engages with people in a dynamic and natural voice conversation. Conveo's intelligent AI moderation goes beyond mere data collection and (video or text) answers to open-ended questions. Our smart probing techniques uncover authentic voices and observe genuine behavior. The advanced AI assistant simultaneously conducts hundreds of AI-moderated video interviews in virtually any



Conveo's set up is AI-powered but allows full editing, uploading stimuli, different probing levels and smart probing prompts.

Conveo.ai

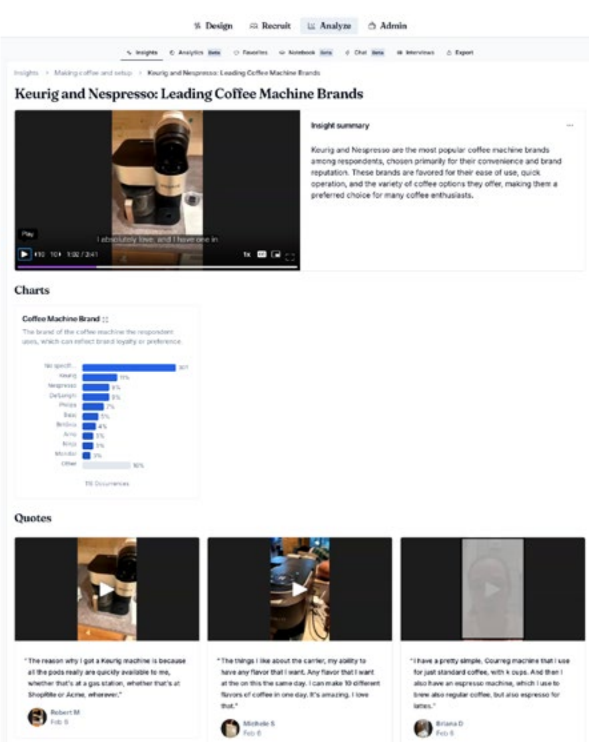
language, breaking down geographical barriers and reducing the reliance on human interviewer resources. This dramatic increase in scale empowers brands to connect with and observe hundreds of real people in hours, not weeks, providing a richer understanding of their target audience. This enables a higher volume of qualitative research to be conducted. Conveo's developing multimodal AI capabilities will interpret video content for non-verbal cues and objects (e.g., brands and facial expressions), generating observations of actual behavior which people might not articulate.

ANALYZE INSTANTLY AND "TALK TO YOUR DATA"

Conveo's AI engine automatically transcribes and translates every interview, identifies key insights and crucial themes and extracts compelling verbatim quotes and video snippets. But the power does not stop there. If needed, to dig deeper and seek clarification, the Conveo AI assistant allows prompting your interviews as well as your uploaded information to come up with additional views on your data and formulate relevant, data-driven recommendations. This "talk to your data" functionality empowers a thorough exploration of the "why" from multiple angles, leading to enhanced understanding and more effective decision-making. All this to get researchers faster to the storytelling, where the real value lies.

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE: THE HUMAN TOUCH IN AI-MODERATED INTERVIEWS

Despite its technological foundation, AI-moderated research with Conveo maintains a strong human element. Participants engage in personalized video conversations, resulting in a more natural and engaging experience – even when, or especially when, discussing sensitive topics. Data indicates high participant satisfaction, with 93% to 97% rating the interview experience a four or more out of five across various demographics. This positive feedback underscores that well-designed AI can create research experiences that are both efficient and human centric.



Conveo's analytics surfaces concrete stories and behaviors, from themes over statistics to the raw interview transcripts.

THE BENEFITS OF CONVEO ARE SUBSTANTIAL!

- **Authentic human connection:** Video captures genuine emotions and real stories.
- **Scalability across markets:** Conveo runs infinite interviews in parallel in 50+ languages with participants from diverse cultures simultaneously.
- **Supreme depth:** Intelligent AI probing uncovers the real "why" behind consumer actions and beliefs.
- **Instant actionable insights:** AI analysis delivers summaries and key themes in minutes.
- **Effortless data exploration and interactive analysis:** Users can deep-dive into their data by prompting the AI assistant.
- **Rapid turnaround:** Insights are generated in days, a significant reduction from traditional timelines.
- **Significant cost savings:** Achieve more comprehensive insights with reduced resources spent.
- **Enhanced participant experience:** Individuals generally find the AI interviewer engaging and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES US?

- **Video first.** Conveo is built around facilitating natural conversations rather than tying a series of isolated open-ended (video) questions.
- **Ease your job.** Our platform aims to ease the researcher's workload by automating tedious aspects of the research process, providing end-to-end assistance.
- **Democratize and activate.** Conveo seeks to democratize research skills and insights throughout organizations.
- **Leading in technology and research.** What makes Conveo unique is the combination of decades of research expertise with a technical team that built AI-platforms before. We have access to the latest technology and top engineering talent (e.g., via the YCombinator network). We co-create with customers, both on the tech and research side.

Conveo is a game-changer that leverages the power of video interviews, sophisticated AI and rapid interactive analysis to bring users face-to-face with authentic human stories. Conveo's AI assistant democratizes insights and gives researchers superpowers throughout.

Book a demo at: https://conveo.ai/home.

[1] It is not an agent, which would suggest it to be fully autonomous. As we believe in a "human design" our goal is to give researchers and decision makers superpowers, while staying in the driver's seat.

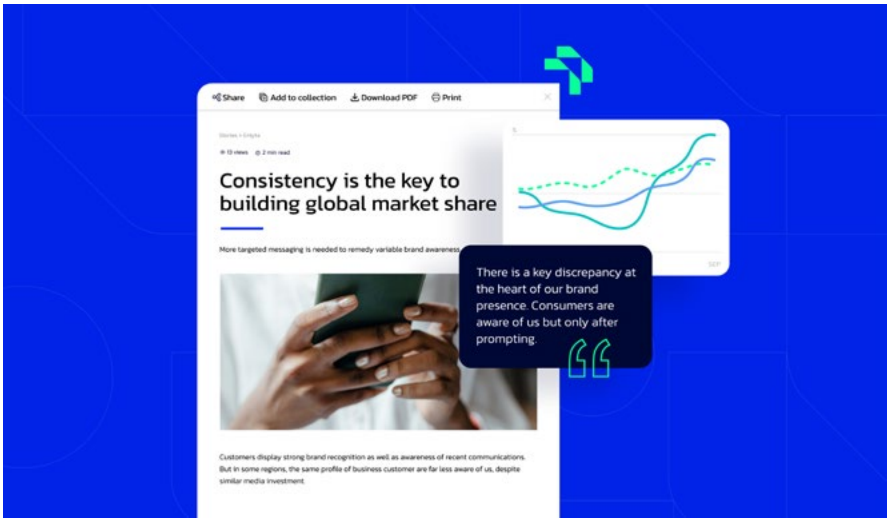
Transforming brand tracking from reactive reporting to proactive insights

ENLYTA INSIGHTS

Brand tracking is crucial for monitoring a brand's performance and perception in the market. However, key stakeholders often don't get the specific data they need fast enough. Sharing brand insights is easier said than done when you're dealing with dense agency reports, complex analysis tools or clunky dashboards.

A common complaint from insights teams is that they often find themselves in "reactive mode," responding to low-value, ad hoc data requests from stakeholders and producing numerous manual reports.

Sound familiar? If so, you need a way to make brand tracking data more engaging and easier to use. You need Enlyta Insights.



Spend time creating insight, rather than reacting to data requests

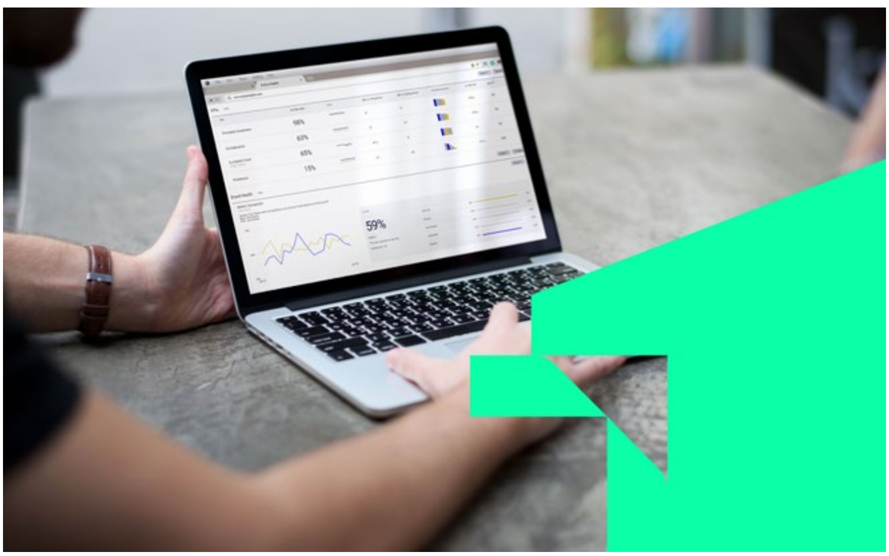
Enlyta is a brand intelligence platform that lets busy brand and marketing teams – from analysts to CMOs – easily get the data they need when they need it. With Enlyta's templated brand health dashboards, they see trends and competitive comparisons and learn about key audiences in a few clicks. Features like statistical significance testing, automatic brand rankings and low base-size suppression help teams avoid rabbit holes and focus on accurate, meaningful data.

For more customized analysis, Enlyta allows users to create and save charts that automatically update whenever new data is available. These charts can then be exported into editable PowerPoint presentations in your company templates.

Promote insights with storytelling tools that increase your reach and influence

Don't let your insights go unread. Enlyta's storytelling tools make it easy for them to be seen (and used). These tools let insight teams write engaging and digestible insight stories enriched with charts, images, videos and quotes. Track and measure your impact with engagement analytics.

> *"Having Enlyta has saved so much time. Whereas before stakeholders asked for numbers, now they do it themselves. When they do come to us, they now ask for the WHY, not the WHAT, which is the job we're supposed to be doing."*
> *– Global head, insights, food delivery app*



Transform your brand tracking into a strategic asset

Discover how Enlyta can elevate your insights and enlighten your decisions at enlyta-insights.com.

enlyta-insights.com

QUIRK'S IN FOCUS

A digest of survey findings and new insights for researchers

environmental research

Being sustainable...sometimes

Consumers still wary of greenwashing

Consumers say it is important to align purchasing decisions with sustainability, however this alignment applies more to some product categories than others, finds digital supply chain company Blue Yonder. While consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable, routinely purchased products such as food, beverage, beauty and cleaning products, they are not as willing to do so for higher-cost occasional purchases like electronics and automobiles.

Seventy-eight percent of consumers say that sustainability considerations are somewhat or very important when choosing to purchase a product. These considerations are especially important in younger generations like Gen Z (88%) and Millennials (86%) compared to Gen X (77%) and Baby Boomers (66%). From a regional standpoint, this sentiment is most popular in France (86%) followed by Germany (79%), the U.K. (78%), Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) (75%) and the U.S. (74%).

Despite consumers' best intentions, they may be unwilling or unable to live these values in practice. Consumers face several barriers in aligning their purchasing behaviors with sustainability, chief of which is the higher cost of sustainable products (54%). Consumers seem willing to face the cost of sustainable shopping for some purchases but not others. When asked which product categories they've focused their sustainability efforts in, consumers cited food and beverage (48%), cleaning products (37%), personal care and beauty (30%) and clothing and footwear (26%) the most. More expensive categories like appliances (20%), consumer electronics (19%) and automotive (19%) proved less popular.

Sixty-five percent of consumers say that they are prepared to increase their spending, with 47% reporting a willingness to spend an additional 5% to 9.9% more on sustainable products, most notably among Gen Z (52%) and Millennials (50%). An additional 14% of consumers are willing to spend 10% to 19.9% more, while 4% are willing to spend more than 20%. Just over one-third (36%) are not willing to spend more on sustainable products, which is especially true among Baby Boomers (52%) and regions including ANZ (42%), the U.K. (39%) and the U.S. (38%).

Sustainability continues to be incorporated into corporate messaging yet only 20% of consumers believe that brands are accurately communicating their sustainability initiatives in their ads and marketing. The trust is highest in France (25%), followed by the U.S. (23%), Germany (22%), the U.K. (17%) and ANZ (13%). However, U.S. consumers have grown more trusting of these claims in the past year, increasing from 17% in 2024.

In contrast, one-quarter (25%) of consumers feel they cannot trust a brand's sustainability claims, with 17% saying they feel the need to do additional research and 9% saying they feel brands capitalize on sustainability as a trend regardless of whether their actions are authentic or not. However, the majority (55%) of consumers feel they can sometimes trust brands' sustainability claims, depending on the message, brand or history. Opinions vary on who bears primary responsibility for upholding sustainability efforts. One-third (33%) say the onus is on brands and corporations, 28% say it should be government agencies and policymakers and 32% say everyone has a role to play. Only 8% say environmental nonprofits and advocacy groups bear responsibility.

Consumers are willing to increase delivery timeframes for sustainable purchases, with 30% willing to delay one to two days and 36% willing to wait up to five days. Fifteen percent of consumers are willing to wait up to one week for their deliveries if it means being more sustainable. Consumers are split on the role AI will play in sustainability. One-third (33%) of respondents are optimistic that the technology could lead to new innovations and more sustainable outcomes, but an equal share (33%) say they are unaware of how it might be beneficial while 12% do not believe it will have a significant effect on sustainability. The remaining 22% of consumers are concerned about the increased environmental impact of AI and data centers.

The Blue Yonder 2025 Sustainability Survey was fielded by a third-party provider in February 2025. It surveyed 5,000+ consumers across Australia and New Zealand, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.

••• consumer insights

A fresh start

'Tis the season for spring cleaning

Cleaning in spring will be in full swing as 80% of Americans plan to participate in the annual deep-clean routine. The American Cleaning Institute found that among spring cleaners, nearly half (45%) say they anticipate they'll clean or organize more than usual this year.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents believe cleaning and hygiene are very important for public health and the health of their community. Fifty-two percent strongly agree and 39% somewhat agree that cleaning has a positive effect on physical health while 46% strongly agree and 38% somewhat agree that it has a positive effect on mental health.

To stay healthy, respondents say they prioritize washing their hands frequently (61%), cleaning the toilet and shower (56%), disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (47%), doing laundry (47%) and washing the sheets (40%), dusting surfaces (22%) and cleaning hard to reach places (19%).

Eighty percent of respondents say they engage in spring cleaning at least once a year, 9% participate every other year, 5% say every three to four years and 3% say they never spring clean. Of all 2025 participants who spring clean, most anticipate cleaning more than usual, 6% will clean less than usual and 49% anticipate cleaning the same as previous years.

When evaluating cleaning products, respondents say effectiveness (39%) is the most important factor, followed by cost (18%) and the ability to get multiple jobs done (13%). Others say brand (9%), the scent or fragrance (6%) and sustainability benefits (5%) are the most important factors.

Spring cleaning is also a time to target areas in the home that tend to be overlooked in daily and weekly cleaning routines. The top areas Americans plan to tackle include floors/baseboards (80%), behind furniture (76%), storage spaces including the garage, attic, basement, shed and closets (75%), windows (75%) and their appliances (73%).

The American Cleaning Institute Spring Cleaning Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 1,000 nationally representative U.S. adults from February 10-18.

••• small business research

Optimism in-store

Confidence surges among small business owners

While inflation and rising costs are still causing concern for small business owners, they are approaching the future with more confidence than ever. After a couple years of unpredictability, small business owners had no choice but to adapt, finds banking platform Bluevine. Unlike larger corporations, small and midsize businesses have had to adjust in real time – learning how to operate lean, stay agile and keep moving forward despite headwinds.

Optimism among small business owners is higher than ever, with 79% expressing confidence in their overall business outlook, up from 73% found in the Mid-Year BOSS Report. Expectations for profitability have risen from 72% to 77% and revenue forecasts have increased from 70% to 76%. More than half (57%) of small business owners finished 2024 better than they expected.

Small and midsize businesses don't have the luxury of waiting to see what happens with changing economic conditions – like inflation or interest rates – they make real-world moves because they have to. Forty-one percent of small business owners adjusted their 2025 spending plans due to the economic landscape of 2024 – an uptick from 35% in mid-2024. Payroll remains the largest expense, followed by materials, supplies and rent. Material costs have become a much bigger concern for solo business owners, with 56% now listing it as a top concern, up from 43%.

Nearly half (45%) of small business owners have raised prices on certain products or services while 20% have raised prices across the board. Inflation continues to be a significant challenge, with 64% naming it as a top concern. Taxes and fees are also on the radar for 55% of small business owners. Particularly noteworthy is the rise in concern over tariffs, which jumped from just 5% in mid-2024 to 13% today.

Access to capital remains crucial for small business owners, with growth and expansion (52%) and working capital (47%) topping the list of reasons to seek new funds. Bank loans continue to be the preferred choice, with three out of four small business owners opting for traditional bank loans. Roughly half (45%) of small businesses plan to keep spending the same, 15% expect to increase spending and 41% plan to cut spending.

While optimism is high, business owners still hesitate to make new hires. Sixteen percent have paused hiring or reduced headcount in 2024 and 18% say they have hired freelancers instead of full-time employees to control costs. Fifty-five percent don't expect to make changes when it comes to hiring plans, 20% will hire more employees than planned and 25% will hire less people than planned.

Research firm Bredin conducted this study with 1,200 small business owners from November 14-27, 2024.

••• family research

The things we do for love

Parents address stressors and life changes

Parents manage a complex web of responsibilities, with the average parent indicating they are responsible for five loved ones including their children, aging parents and pets. Care.com finds that nearly half (48%) of parents say they don't have enough help. The emotional and mental load is staggering, with 90% of parents losing sleep, feeling burnt out (90%), sacrificing other goals in life (85%) and crying (80%, increasing to 90% for moms). Others say they have felt isolated/alone (78%), a sense of dread (75%) and 71% have experienced health issues.

Finding care isn't a one-and-done affair. Parents have to find new care solutions for reasons like schedule changes (31%), budget changes (26%) and needing one-time help (18%). Each search is time-consuming, with more than half (52%) of surveyed parents taking two months or more to find the right caregiver. For daycare in particular, waitlists plague more than half (57%) of parents, with 55% facing a wait of four months or longer. As a result, 52% of parents report being very to extremely stressed when they need to find a new caregiving solution.

The average parent spends 22% of their household income on childcare and 18% on the care of older loved ones, pets and the home. To pay for these expenses, 33% have tapped into their savings, with the average parent spending one third (29%) of their savings on childcare alone.

The average parent has just three hours a day to themselves, moms report only having two hours, and parents miss out on 34 important life commitments per year (2.8 per month), on average, due to challenges of finding care. This includes travel (37%), birthdays (34%), holidays (33%), weddings (21%), baby showers (15%) and funerals (14%). The challenges of finding and affording care also takes a toll on personal relationships. Fifty-two percent say they miss out on spending time with friends and 46% say they lack quality time with their significant other.

Almost all (89%) respondents say they or their partner have had to make at least one major change to their work, life or finances to afford care last year, such as reducing spending on entertainment and leisure activities (40%), delaying major purchases (32%), taking on multiple jobs (24%) and even going into debt (20%). Others have moved closer to family (14%), changed jobs (13%), left the workforce (7%) and 6% have quit their studies.

This sample of 3,000 U.S. adults was surveyed between November 11-20, 2024.

••• travel research

When getting away is no vacation

Tech fixes travel woes

Despite the encouraging traveler volumes seen in many markets, travelers continue to be affected by a range of frustrations while on a journey, according to travel and tourism technology company Amadeus. When asked where friction originates while on a trip, U.S. travelers point to dealing with delays/cancellations (68%), the combined cost of traveling (50%), coordinating travel between multiple people (47%), navigating security and border control at an airport (46%) and finding suitable accommodations (38%).

When segmented by type of traveler, business travelers generally experienced more friction than those traveling for leisure. A higher number of business travelers say comparing prices across sites (44% vs. 39%), understanding fees and taxes (42% vs. 36%) and finding suitable accommodation options (45% vs. 33%) are more distressing than leisure travelers. U.S. travelers experience the most distress at airport security (49%), airport check-in (45%) and while navigating the airport (45%).

Further differences were identified when comparing different age demographics, income levels and familiarity with traveling. A surprising 49% of Gen Z travelers say finding the correct routes and schedule for a trip is distressing, compared to only 35% of those 65+. Forty-six percent of younger travelers find sourcing accommodation distressing while others worry about figuring out what to do once they arrive at their destination (35%). Fifty-six percent of young travelers, 33% of those 55-64-years-old and 30% of those 65+ have actively avoided taking a trip due to anticipated obstacles or disruptions.

Forty-five percent of respondents reporting an annual household income of $30,000 or less say finding suitable accommodation is either very or somewhat distressing, and 67% find delays very or somewhat distressing, compared to 75% of respondents reporting an annual household income of more than $150,000.

Technology can have the biggest effect in overcoming the gaps that currently exist in the traveler experience. When asked how helpful technology is at reducing travel-related distress, mobile apps for planning (89%), automatic rebooking for delays (86%), digital bags/baggage tracking (86%), integrated travel booking across airlines and hotels (86%) and fully digital identification and travel documents (86%) were cited as useful by most travelers. Others found personalized travel recommendations (80%), biometric screening (80%), virtual assistants for travel queries (77%) and augmented reality (75%) helpful.

While tech is important, travelers want more human interactions throughout airport security and border control (44%) and at hotel or accommodation check-in and checkout (43%). Leisure travelers also see a significant role for human input when it comes to planning almost any type of journey, led by family trips, where 47% of respondents want more human interaction. This is followed by accessibility-focused trips (47%), cruises (46%) and solo (43%) and group (40%) trips.

Amadeus commissioned Mercury Analytics to survey a total of 1,013 U.S.-based travelers during the third quarter of 2024.

••• advertising research

No, you may not track me

Americans unsettled by personalized ads

As ad personalization increases, so does the feeling of unease. A majority (54%) of Americans say they are creeped out when they see advertisements that are personalized based on their online behavior. According to YouGov, U.S. consumers are the least comfortable with personalized advertising while consumers in Hong Kong, India and the United Arab Emirates are the most comfortable with them.

Discomfort with personalized advertising increases with age. Fifty percent of Gen Z and Millennials say it makes them uncomfortable, while 62% of Gen X and Baby Boomers feel creeped out. Fifteen percent of Gen X and Baby Boomers and 22% of Gen Z and Millennials say they are comfortable with companies using online behaviors for ad personalization. Four percent of Gen X and Baby Boomers and 7% of Gen Z and Millennials are unsure of how they feel.

Ads served based on browsing history are viewed as the most invasive, with 59% of Americans calling them out. Others say ads based on social media behavior (48%), purchase history (42%) and location-based ads (35%) and retargeted ads (30%) are invasive. Nine percent of Gen X and Baby Boomers and 13% of Gen Z and Millennials say none of these are invasive.

Over half of Americans (56%) and Brits (56%) are uncomfortable with companies using online behavior to personalize advertising, higher compared to other countries including France (51%), Sweden (50%), Canada (45%), Germany (47%), Spain (48%) and Australia (41%).

The option to opt out (52%) of personalized ads topped the list of factors that would make many U.S. consumers more comfortable with personalized ads. Thirty-five percent say they would be more comfortable if they could opt for a minimal data collection option. Others would be more comfortable with personalized ads if they had clear privacy policies (33%) or only used anonymized data (30%). Forty-four percent of Americans have an ad blocker always running on their web browser or phone to combat ad targeting.

Twenty-seven percent of Americans agree that personalized ads are helpful for discovering new products, with this percentage increasing to 30% for Gen Z and Millennial consumers. Thirty-three percent of Gen Z and Millennials and 45% of Gen X and Baby Boomers disagree that personalized advertising is helpful for finding new products. Other countries including Australia (47%), India (67%), Mexico (55%) and Singapore (44%) agree that personalized ads are helpful.

The insights were sourced from YouGov Surveys. The survey was conducted from December 16, 2024, to January 2, 2025, with 1,502 respondents in the U.S.

••• special advertising section

10 TOP PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, TESTING AND POSITIONING RESEARCH COMPANIES

While product development and testing sound like two straightforward steps, it's never quite that simple. To develop a high-quality product that truly sticks, companies must consult a range of factors, such as consumer interest, pricing, packaging and more.

These companies offer a range of methodologies and facilities for every part of the product development, testing and positioning processes, with offerings such as in-home usage tests, consumer panels, test kitchen and survey software. For insight into your next research project, consider these specialized research companies.

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Founded 1989 | 40-45 employees
John Mitchell, President and Managing Principal

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Founded 1976 | 100+ employees
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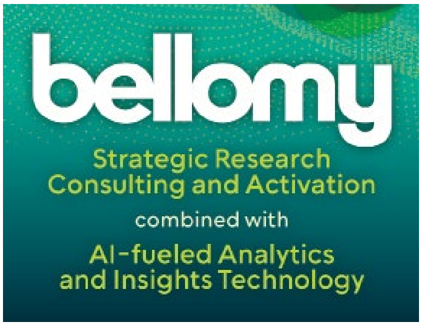

Bellomy offers a comprehensive suite of innovation research capabilities, specializing in product development, testing and positioning research for Fortune 1000 companies. Whether your organization embraces a fail-fast approach or a more structured stage-and-gate process, we tailor our solutions to fit your needs at every stage of the product life cycle. With our Adoption Curve Intelligence™, you can increase adoption by targeting those most likely to try your product, while our insights technology and AI-driven tools help you analyze data and make informed decisions. Contact Justin Bailey at justin.bailey@bellomy.com to learn how Bellomy can support your initiatives.

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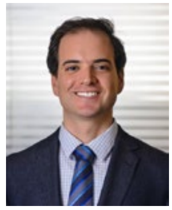
Felipe Viyella, CEO



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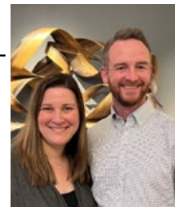

Catapult Insights is an outcomes-focused consultancy that uses research as a foundational tool to help brands grow, evolve and future-proof their business. Our mission is to shape tomorrow through the voices of today and that starts with understanding people at their core – their needs, motivations and behaviors and lending a view into the future. Our strength is helping our clients bring innovative and award-winning products to market through our research. We craft custom approaches focusing on key points in the NPD journey such as whitespace identification, ideation, concept testing, home use tests, pricing, positioning, messaging and developing go-to-market strategies.

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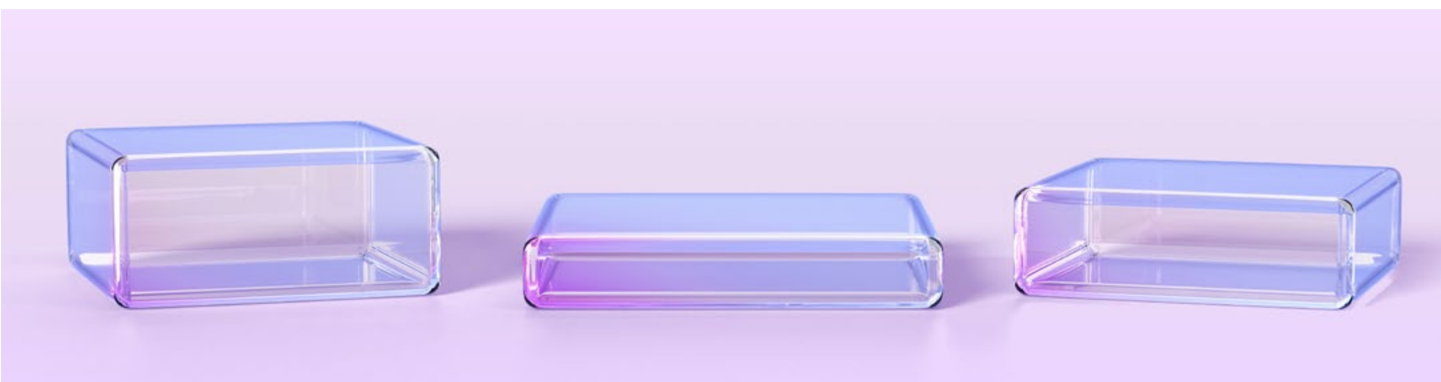

Decision Analyst

Founded 1978 | 100 employees
Bonnie Janzen, President
Felicia Rogers, Corporate Executive Vice President


Decision Analyst offers customized research and analytical services to help our clients improve existing products and create new products. New product development is a major focus, including ideation and brainstorming, concept development, concept testing, IHUTs, package testing, name testing, advertising research and new product sales forecasting. We own and operate consumer panels for IHUTs and have our own facilities for on-site labeling, packaging and shipping of test products. Our expertise allows us to help companies uncover and capitalize on opportunities through strategic marketing research and analytics. Moreover, we pride ourselves on effectively delivering action-driven implications and recommendations, enabling companies to make informed decisions to move their business forward. We deliver a synergistic blend of primary research, analytical consulting and modeling. Our ultimate goal is to help companies build and sustain a winning business model.

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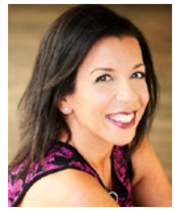
Human Branding

Founded 2006 | 34 employees
Johanna Faigelman, CEO



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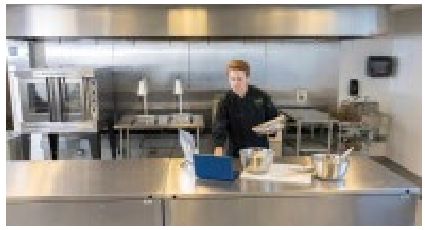

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Don't overlook employees' role in achieving customer satisfaction

A sometimes forgotten component of customer satisfaction is the part your employees play in building – or destroying – goodwill among customers. Especially in this era of viral outrage, when anyone with a phone and a social media account can lay waste to an entire company based on one employee's alleged misstep or misbehavior, strengthening your frontline is one of the most effective ways of strengthening your bottom line. In his October 14, 2013 e-newsletter article, "Why employee research is critical to customer satisfaction," **Michael Vigeant** offered a quick overview for companies wondering what to cover in employee research.

When employees are happy, driven and empowered, customers sense these traits and respond favorably. If the customer service representative can go above and beyond to provide issue-resolution immediately without having to go through several other managerial channels, the customer is the ultimate winner. When an employee sits down each morning with a smile before reaching out to clients, his optimistic outlook becomes a company trait.

So how do you assure employees are putting their best face forward? Research. Ask them what is working, understand their pain points and respond. Utilizing employee satisfaction surveys, companies can gauge internal potential for both success and decline. Employee satisfaction data measures the following components:

Key motivators. Maybe money is not what your employees need for validation. Other options might be growth, company culture, encouragement, leadership or education. Without asking what drives these individuals, how can you ever meet or exceed their expectations?

Levels of empowerment. Employees who feel armed to help customers are much more likely to follow through. When employees feel confident they can handle situations, customers get immediate results and validation that the organization wants to help.

Company education. A broad look at what employees know about the organization and offerings will provide insight into additional skills or information needed and highlight employees or departments best prepared for next steps and responsibilities.

Basic needs. When employees feel well-equipped, they can provide for customers more quickly. Whether office supplies or training, knowing what employees lack allows management to respond.

Communication preferences. The HR department spends hours a month on the internal newsletter – is anyone reading it? What about the Friday reminders from accounting? Understanding how and when to reach out to employees allows your organization to cut out costly ancillary tasks and focus on efficiency.

Is there a topic that you'd like to see featured here? Reach out to Quirk's Editor Joe Rydholm at joe@quirks.com.

How to help customers avoid death by a thousand surveys

Though their article, "Researchers, has your company become CSM crazy?," is from 2009, **Doug Pruden** and **Terry Vavra**'s argument that companies are over-surveying their customers is probably truer now than ever, given the proliferation of mobile phones and other digital ways for companies to solicit feedback after every interaction, no matter how small. They offered four issues to consider before hitting the send button on that survey.

We believe that it's time to establish some better rules for when – and to whom – to administer a CSM survey. As a start we think management should address four key issues:

Determine the rationale behind your information need. We've always advocated there are at least two distinct types of satisfaction surveys: transaction-driven (a follow-up to a specific action or process in which the customer has participated) and an annual assessment (a periodic pulse-read on the general customer base seeking their overall satisfaction with the relationship they've established with the organization). Each of these survey types deserves its own guidelines dictating when and to whom questionnaires should be distributed. In other words, thought should be invested in the process before the questionnaires are unleashed.

Drive your CSM efforts with a database. One of the root causes for the plethora of CSM invitations we all receive is the relatively mindless way invitations are distributed. All CSM efforts should be coordinated with a database of customers. This means that annual or periodic assessments will not be conducted as a census activity but rather with a specifically identified sample of customers.

Assuming the number of identified customers is relatively large, we suggest cycling through the customer base so that customers are only contacted once every two, three or four years. Most corporations have a large enough base of customers to allow split-sampling, tri-sampling or an even greater division of the customer base so as not to sample the same customers year-in and year-out.

Customers can be segmented so that specific groups of customers (high-value customers, newly acquired customers or declining-activity customers) are targeted in a specific year's invitations. A controlling database needs to be maintained from year to year with previous years' invitees and respondents flagged. This system can serve to protect customers from being oversurveyed.

Don't treat all interactions equally. Another action we'd encourage is to urge companies to reserve CSM follow-ups for significant interactions. For example, a customer's simple request – one that should be easy to fulfill in under two minutes – probably shouldn't trigger a survey invitation. Unless the experience was a complete disaster, nothing useful will be learned. Sending an invitation for such a minor interaction might suggest to the customer a lack of concern for their time and as a result be detrimental to the relationship with the customer.

Respect your customers' time – don't ask for known information! Far too many CSM surveys these days are retrieval missions for information that corporations already know and could easily link to customers' records. But, rather than enhancing databases and appending the known information, they often take the lazy solution and rely on their customers to volunteer the information. This is often the result of siloed information and activities.

Equip managers with what they need to act on satisfaction data

Echoing the earlier entry about the critical role that employees have in delivering a top-notch customer experience, an October 2011 article by **T.J. Andre** and **Jeff McKenna** ("Line managers explain why they don't see much value in satisfaction measurement programs") made the case for giving managers the right rationales and tools to implement the findings from customer research.

Over the past several years, in hundreds of conversations across industries and sectors, we have heard the same thing consistently: Line managers are unable to use their customer experience measurement results to improve business outcomes.

Step back and think about that for a second. Thousands of companies spend tens, hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars to collect, analyze and distribute the results of customer experience measurement programs. And then, line managers across those organizations say these programs don't help them take action to improve the business. Ouch!

These aren't just informal observations either – they echo a more formal study we conducted with 150 line managers in a cross-section of companies and industries. In the study, we asked managers at all levels of organizations about their experiences using customer satisfaction results – what problems they experienced, how frequently and, for each of the problems they cited, how bothersome it was when they occurred. The results validated the common and very painful realities we have been hearing in conversations with the managers who use customer feedback programs.

More specifically, they complain that: they have no clear idea of what needs to be improved and no clear idea of how to improve; it's hard to identify the most important information; senior managers are unable to apply information to decisions; frontline staff is unable to apply information to decisions; and frontline staff is unable to understand the results.

Why so much pain and so much money wasted on deliverables that go unused? In a nutshell, it's because traditional programs are good at keeping score but bad at providing the support and tools that help managers act on the insights gained.

The source of this problem can be traced to the different mind-sets that companies bring to their customer experience measurement programs and the strengths and shortcomings associated with those mind-sets. You can categorize customer experience measurement programs as analytic/data-centric or customer transaction-oriented.

The analytic or data-centric group is focused primarily on keeping score and the diagnostic analysis of data to make comparisons and identify trends. Programs that serve this mind-set tend to provide lots of data, both to staff analysts and to mid-level and frontline managers. Often managers find the information they get from these programs to be overwhelming. It's both the sheer volume of data and the need for additional analysis that hinders managers from finding the meaningful conclusions. Further, they struggle to directly connect the data to actions that will drive improvement within their spheres of influence and responsibility.

The customer transaction mind-set, in contrast, focuses primarily on customer relationship management at the individual or location level. Their programs tend to be focused on identifying and closing the loop on individual customer service failures. They are characterized by a sense of urgency and action to maintain strong individual customer relationships through proactive service recovery. These programs tend to be much weaker at enabling diagnostic analysis of systemic problems, whether at a branch, regional, departmental or corporate level. This can lead to a management dynamic of addressing individual symptoms over and over while the underlying diseases go undiagnosed and untreated.

What is needed are tools that help line managers at every level act on the insights gained and enable senior managers to (fairly) hold their employees accountable for taking the actions that will have the most impact. The ideal customer experience measurement and management program would combine the strengths of each of these mind-sets while overcoming the weaknesses. Such a program would be characterized by a real-time close-the-loop service recovery system while also providing the analytical horsepower and tools to allow managers to easily see, diagnose, prioritize, plan and act on systemic customer experience issues.

Is having such a program even possible? And if so, can it be implemented at a reasonable cost? The answer to both of these questions is, fortunately, yes. So if the elements of the solution exist and can be combined cost-effectively, why is there still so much widespread pain around the lack of usefulness of customer satisfaction measurement programs? Once again, it comes down to mind-set. Many customer satisfaction programs are built and managed by third-party vendors or by internal market research teams. These folks, despite their marketing jargon and positioning as "business partners," are in fact in the data business. And if you're in the data business you deliver data. It may be very impressively packaged and displayed, but it's still just data.

Those who understand and, most importantly, commit themselves to combining measurement techniques with technology to build tools that directly facilitate and support management action are the ones who will change the game.

Get execs' attention by explaining CX findings in monetary terms

In his October 2019 article, "Getting the most from your CX marketing research," frequent Quirk's contributor **John Goodman** served up 10 best practices to apply across all forms of customer satisfaction or customer experience research. Many of them urged readers to tie the findings and accompanying recommendations to some tangible financial cost or benefit, as a way to ground action or inaction in the kind of monetary terms that seem to make management sit up and take notice.

Create an economic imperative that the CFO accepts. The monthly cost of inaction on each CX priority should be quantified, according to the market-at-risk approach, which enables you to prioritize problems for correction based on the portion of the customer base that may be lost. It considers frequency and damage as measured by impact on loyalty, increased risk and negative word of mouth. The market-at-risk methodology and the customer value should be validated in advance with the CFO or the resident financial cynic. Remember that CFO buy-in significantly increases the VOC impact on customer satisfaction improvement.

Package the survey results for ease of use by executives. CX survey results should be tailored to each audience and describe the top issues in no more than one to two pages. Complicated data tables that require study and analysis (e.g., top 10 complaints by top 15 products, giving the reader 150 data points to analyze) are a barrier to consumption of the results. When using data tables and graphs, proactively conduct the analysis for the reader and list the four key problems that most need attention. For maximum impact, estimate the monthly cost of inaction for each key issue and provide a suggested action plan with process metrics to measure impact.

Present data in a positive tone and with creative ideas. While we noted in the first best practice that the CX survey audience should always be prepared for constructive bad news, the survey results should strive for balance and also highlight positive accomplishments. For example, point out where previous initiatives had a positive impact or show how a process metric has improved. Blame should not be assigned to individual units but dissatisfaction and its accompanying financial opportunity can be associated with particular cross-functional processes. Communicate to the operating manager, "You are doing well but look how much more money you are leaving on the table that you would accrue if you did X." By nature, processes are cross-functional and therefore less threatening. Also, if you add creative ideas suggested by customers and your customer service representatives, the report is repositioned as an idea source. One company's customer service department had a section of the satisfaction tracking report titled "The Wacky Ideas Section." The marketing, brand and product development departments viewed the section as an innovation source.

Prepare the internal audience for constructive bad news. One way to lose your audience is to unpleasantly surprise them with data that they find counterintuitive to their own experience or that is threatening. The following are critical to properly setting the audience's expectations in advance: stress that research often produces counterintuitive surprises and will surface some unhappy customers; show that negative results highlight the causes of price sensitivity which, when identified, can be used to facilitate better margins; couple each negative result with a quantification of the upside revenue opportunity; assume that the findings will focus on process issues instead of affixing blame to a particular unit.

How to create effective journey maps from qualitative research

| By Cecelia Stewart and Allison Tippery

abstract

A case study example explores five steps for developing journey maps for a health care organization and its patients and family members.

Market Decisions Research (MDR) was contracted by the Vibrant ONE Accountable Health Community to produce two journey maps chronicling the path that patients in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom region need to embark on when engaging with mental health and substance use care.

Vibrant ONE already knew there were gaps and pain points within the mental health and substance use system of care. The research objective for this engagement was to collect qualitative data from patients to understand how they navigate the system of care, from their own point of view as well as through the point of view of stakeholders (case managers, therapists, physicians, etc.). The creation of two journey maps – one from the patient perspective and one from the stakeholder perspective – was a way to provide a visual representation of the current mental health and substance use system of care landscape. Visualizations of complex stories are often more digestible for various audiences as compared to formal reports.

Unique to this engagement was that the Vibrant ONE team requested journey maps as final deliverables. Due to the client's familiarity with journey maps, MDR's focus was to make the most effective and impactful journey maps possible, while acknowledging the complexity of mental health and substance use systems of care.

MDR engaged in five essential steps to create meaningful journey maps for Vibrant ONE.

MEANINGFUL DATA COLLECTION

MDR collaborated with Vibrant ONE to develop discussion guides. Engagement with the client on these materials guaranteed that the questions asked were relevant to the overall research objectives. MDR staff conducted informed data collection online, a modality that was chosen based on the target population.

How to implement in your projects. Encourage client involvement in creation of data collection tools. This helps integrate research objectives directly into data collection tools, yielding aligned, meaningful data collection. Some clients do not want to be involved in the creation of these tools. If that is the case, focus on familiarizing yourself with research objectives into data collection tools and have the client review before finalization.

CLIENT ALIGNMENT AND BRAINSTORMING

Once data was collected, we shared topline reports with Vibrant ONE to highlight key themes and findings. We spent many hours talking with Vibrant ONE and relevant stakeholders about journey map logistics such as layout, aesthetics, audience and purpose. This was the most essential aspect of creating effective journey maps. To ensure alignment, a few essential questions were asked: Who are your target audiences? What visual elements do you want included? What are some must-have elements within these maps?

How to implement in your projects. From the beginning, speak with your client about how collaboration will enhance the effectiveness of journey maps. Ask the three questions above to work towards alignment on map expectations.

AUDIENCE ACCESSIBILITY

One map was meant to be consumed by patients and family members as well as the public. Vibrant ONE mentioned wanting to hang this journey map in doctors' offices. The other map was meant to be used by stakeholders to understand the mental health and substance use system of care from the perspective of the patients. Vibrant ONE stated that stakeholders would use their journey map as guidance for how to improve care for patients. We focused on how to make the journey maps digestible to said audiences. For patients and the public, we opted to use imagery familiar to Vermonters (mountains), avoid medical jargon and include as many patient perspectives as possible. For the stakeholders, we used a more technical format with medical terminology and focused on the pain points patients experience during their journeys.

How to implement in your projects. If you aren't familiar with the target audience(s), do some background research or speak with your client about who the audience is. Be creative with how to reach and engage them. Focus on appropriate language, what type of learner the audience is and where the journey map will be displayed.

INFORMED CREATION

With the information we had gathered, we started creating mockups in Canva Pro, focusing on “movement through a system” as a lens for the map. The use of arrows was important to symbolize flow and various appropriate symbols were needed to illustrate system exits, barriers and pain points.

How to implement in your projects. Use the journey map creation tool that works for you. AI may be something that you consider leveraging to enhance your map-making.

INCORPORATING FEEDBACK AND FINISHING TOUCHES

It was important that Vibrant ONE saw the creation of the journey maps in real time. For these reasons, we shared drafts and gathered feedback for inclusion in the maps. Feedback included color preferences, clarification around map elements that were confusing and the inclusion of a supplementary document for the stakeholder journey map.

How to implement in your projects. Make sure you circle back with your client to show them drafts of the journey map as they will likely have feedback and questions. Be sure to incorporate feedback as necessary (this helps to make the client feel heard!). Complete any finishing touches to the aesthetic pieces of the map.

Drive real change

The creation of the two journey maps helped to inform recommendations for Vibrant ONE about how to improve the mental health and substance use system of care. Journey maps are powerful tools that can translate complex systems into accessible and visual narratives. By grounding our process in meaningful data collection, client collaboration, audience accessibility and informed creation, MDR was able to construct journey maps that resonate with both patients and stakeholders in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Whether you're creating journey maps for health care, policy or other fields, a thoughtful, client-centered approach will lead to impactful results that drive real change in the world.

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consumer panel
analysis
quantitative research
Expectations
exceeded.
The Most
Seamless
IHUT
Platform
In Research
Jay Mace
Senior Vice President
Mindfield
"This solution has been ground breaking for clients who struggled with successful and profitable in-home product research."
800.969.9235
Mindfield
mindfieldtech.com
jmace@mindfieldtech.com

We're not order-takers, either

Vendors open up about their relationships with clients

| By Joseph Rydholm

THE Q REPORT
CORPORATE RESEARCHER REPORT

Findings from the Q Report, an independent study, written for and developed with the help of client-side marketing research and insights professionals

abstract

A Q Report survey question aimed at vendors drew some candid thoughts on how both sides of the supplier/client equation can get more out of their work together.

While the focus of our annual Q Report survey is nominally on the perspectives of client-side researchers, we do try to check in with the vendor or agency-side readers with some regularity to get their side of the story. After all, the client-siders have had plenty of opportunities over the years to vent some of their frustrations so it's only fair to give the vendors a crack. So in the most recent Q Report survey we posed this open-end to the vendors: What are two or three things you wish your in-house/corporate researcher clients better understood about your job?

The most prevalent theme in supplier responses centered on the old "better, faster, cheaper" dream. As one respondent bluntly put it: "Cheap – fast – good – pick 2 out of the 3."

Research suppliers consistently express frustration with clients who expect premium-quality research delivered quickly at bargain prices. Many suppliers want clients to recognize that quality work requires adequate time and appropriate budgeting. As one supplier noted, "Quality has its price and quality often needs time."

The responses highlight that corporate researchers often fail to appreciate the complexity and labor involved in executing research projects. This includes the time required for thoughtful analysis, the effort needed for quality recruitment and the specialized expertise that delivers actionable insights rather than just data.

One supplier summarized this dynamic effectively: "Faster and less-expensive are opposite poles and you usually can't get both." Another respondent added, "Research will answer their objectives only," warning against adding unnecessary information that ignores the main objectives.

Suppliers also wish clients better understood that the research landscape has changed. "It's important for clients to recognize that the costs associated with conducting research have increased over time," noted one respondent. Factors like inflation, rising operational expenses and increased technology costs have pushed up the cost of quality research. Yet suppliers report that many clients still expect pre-inflation pricing.

COMPLEXITY AND EFFORT

The second major theme is that clients often underestimate the complexity and effort involved in executing research projects. This includes everything from programming surveys and managing field operations to quality control, analysis and reporting.

The misunderstanding of research complexity manifests in several ways:

Underestimated timeline requirements: Suppliers wish clients understood "the time it takes to get something done" and "the complexity of a project and consideration to make it more manageable." When clients expect immediate turnarounds, they're often unaware of the intensive effort required behind the scenes.

Impact of scope changes: "Change in scope after the project is quoted and signed off on will lead to changes in price and/or extended timeline. It's not realistic or fair to think otherwise," said one supplier. Several respondents expressed frustration about clients who make "can you just" requests without recognizing how even small changes affect the entire project timeline, resource allocation, and budget.

The ripple effect of delays: "When there are delays on their side, the entire project timeline then has to be pushed that same amount of time." This frustration was echoed repeatedly, with suppliers noting that client delays don't simply compress the supplier's timeline – they create scheduling conflicts across multiple projects and teams.

Research is not a button press: "Despite advances in AI and automation, getting to good insights takes time. Research is not a button I push that spits out a report for you. Well, it CAN be that, but that's not what you want." Multiple suppliers emphasized that meaningful insights require thoughtful human analysis.

PARTNERS, NOT JUST SUPPLIERS

Perhaps the most emotionally resonant theme in the responses was the desire for true partnership rather than a transactional vendor relationship. "I wish that they trusted us as a partner more than just a supplier," wrote one respondent. "It is so beneficial to work on a brand throughout its lifetime vs a one-off project. I also wish they understood that we are here to help them best we can and we want to be along the process with them."

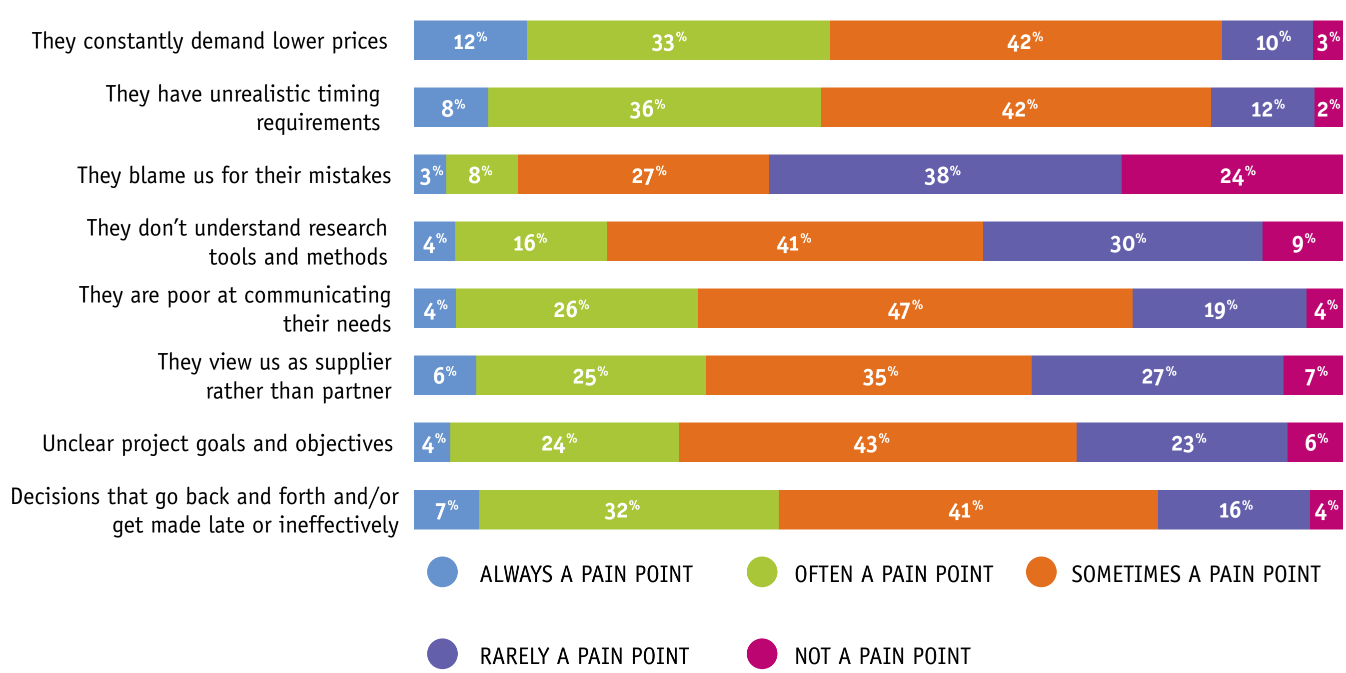
Several elements comprise this partnership theme:

Sharing context and business objectives: Suppliers frequently mentioned that clients withhold critical information that would help them deliver better insights. "We will better meet their needs if they share their real objectives," explained one supplier. Another added, "The more information they share with us about their objectives and how they will use the research, the better we are able to craft a research solution tailored to their specific needs."

Trusting supplier expertise: "We are experienced in what we do," offered one supplier, reflecting a common sentiment that clients often fail to leverage the deep expertise suppliers bring. Several mentioned clients dictating methodologies rather than sharing problems and allowing suppliers to recommend the best approaches.

Recognizing mutual success: "Our job is to enlighten them on a new approach which could help them with their current role, save time, money and increase the level of insights so they can make better decisions for the organization." Many responses emphasized that suppliers want their clients to succeed and see their relationship as collaborative rather than adversarial.

What are some challenges or pain points in dealing with in-house/corporate researcher clients?



THE HUMAN ELEMENTS

The fourth major theme revolves around the human elements of research operations that clients often overlook. From managing multiple competing priorities to understanding the realities of field work and recruitment, suppliers wish clients had better appreciation for the human side of research execution.

Multiple clients and competing priorities: "That we work on multiple projects at one time" was a frequent refrain. Suppliers want clients to understand they aren't on-call resources working exclusively on a single client's projects. As one put it, "Please allow us at least an hour to respond."

Field realities and respondent dynamics: "We are dealing with human people and not with robots esp. when we are talking with respondents." Many suppliers highlighted that clients often have unrealistic expectations about research participants – from assuming respondents will complete lengthy surveys to expecting immediate recruitment of specialized segments.

Respondent experience matters: "Respondents are people and not just numbers." Several suppliers emphasized the importance of respecting participant time and experience, noting that poor survey design leads to poor data quality. One advised, "If you won't sit and go through endless grids, a respondent will not either and they will click through at random."

BASIC PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

Underlying many responses was a call for basic professional respect. Suppliers described challenging client behavior that affects their work-life balance and professional dignity:

After-hours demands: "The primary issue is how their delay in reviewing and approving materials, such as questionnaires and stimuli to be tested, impacts project deadlines. As vendors, we often have to go to great lengths to deliver results on time, which can sometimes have negative impacts on our personal lives. This is particularly frustrating given that these delays come from companies that heavily emphasize 'work-life balance.'"

Communication expectations: Multiple suppliers mentioned clients who expect immediate responses but then go silent themselves. One noted, "I wish they would remember that the majority of what we produce (and what they appreciate the most) comes from our brain matter. We don't push a button and have some machine spit it out on the other side."

Professional courtesy: "When you ask for a complex brief and it takes us a week to write you a proposal, please let us know that you have received it and the outcome. It is basic common courtesy and is often not done by our clients."

THE PATH FORWARD

The responses reveal a clear desire from suppliers for stronger, more collaborative relationships with their corporate research clients. Based on the feedback, several recommendations emerge for improving these partnerships:

1. **Recognize the value equation:** Understand the realities of the time-cost-quality triangle. Be realistic about what's achievable within budget and timeline constraints.
2. **Communicate objectives, not just specifications:** Share business context and how research will be used, not just methodological requirements.
3. **Involve suppliers early:** Bring research partners into the process at the planning stage rather than after decisions are made.
4. **Respect expertise:** Trust suppliers' methodological recommendations and feedback on feasibility.
5. **Plan for adequate timelines:** Allow sufficient time for proper recruitment, fieldwork, analysis and reporting.
6. **Anticipate the ripple effects:** Understand how delays and changes impact the entire project schedule, not just the immediate task.
7. **Respect professional boundaries:** Maintain reasonable expectations about response times and after-hours availability.

DELIVER SUPERIOR OUTCOMES

The collective wisdom from these supplier responses points to a significant opportunity: transforming research supplier relationships from transactional vendor interactions to strategic partnerships that deliver superior business outcomes.

At the core, suppliers want clients to understand that they're invested in mutual success. As one respondent put it, "We are here to make them look good – but we need information and support to let us do that."

By developing greater understanding of supplier constraints, challenges and capabilities, corporate researchers can build stronger relationships that ultimately deliver more meaningful insights. When corporate researchers treat suppliers as true partners rather than interchangeable vendors, they unlock the full value of external expertise while creating more productive and satisfying professional relationships.

The fundamental message from suppliers is clear: They want to be partners in solving business problems, not just executors of tactical research. With greater mutual understanding and respect, both sides can achieve better outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

The Q Report work life and salary and compensation study of end-client/corporate researchers is based on data gathered from an invite-only online survey sent to pre-qualified marketing research subscribers of Quirk's. The survey was fielded from June 17 to July 23, 2024. In total we received 1,504 usable qualified responses, of which 502 were from end-client researchers with 126 respondents indicating they were unemployed. (Not all respondents answered all questions.)

Clients truly appreciate the value in pure in-context research to understand the 'why'. Researchers definitely love the closer rapport and ability to observe or pick up on nuances they don't get over a video call. The insights delivered are 'more alive' and build even more compelling findings to our clients.
Jon Ward, VP of Sales at EMEA

While online tools are impactful in achieving many Qualitative research objectives, there is just nothing like having the face-to face interaction with our consumers and clients – something that online just cannot replicate. The interaction between Moderator and Respondent becomes more immersive and natural – body language is key when tapping into the System 1 which is integral in a lot of the work we do. Finally, the back room and client engagement is just as important – bringing key stakeholders together to workshop live during research is unmatched and super effective.
Paul Markovic, Director of Behaviorally

I have enjoyed helping clients return to in-person research. You can see the excitement as they leave, re-energized with a very enthusiastic "We'll be back!" I think this is something we are all experiencing in our lives as we also return to more social gatherings, making more interpersonal connections face to face. I have been very grateful for technology through the pandemic, but what once seemed like a suitable substitute now pales in comparison to the real thing.
Megan Pollard, President of Fieldwork Network

The rich and robust nature of in person research is the best avenue for much of the qualitative work to be conducted. We are fortunate to see this back to its full potential with questions answered, ideas generated and collaboration amongst so many. As the conversations flow, we are gaining the much needed information to move ideas, products and plans forward.
Debby Schlesinger

#facetofacemrx

Research mirrors society: something gets lost when our only form of communication is on a computer screen or telephone. Of course there are the three senses...taste, touch and smell...that cannot be replicated online. But there's also the fact that humans are social creatures, and make decisions based upon social influences. People behave differently when you meet them in-person versus how they respond on a FaceBook neighborhood group post, do they not? Research is no different.

Smart companies know new products and ideas cannot be tested solely online: they need to be exposed "in the real world", with people interacting together. Much can be learned from what people do and react, versus solely about what they say...just like the real world, researchers are remembering the value of in-person research, and the incredible learning.
Brett Watkins, CEO of L&E Research

10 YEARS

Celebrating 10 years of promoting children's education with the Marketing Research Education Foundation (MREF)

2015
The Marketing Research Education Foundation begins its mission.

2016
Grants go to Operation Spark, Success Centers of San Francisco, The Children of Hope Haiti, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow and Bricolage Academy.

2017
The Joseph School receives a grant of $13,680. Researchers visit the school during an MREF-sponsored vision trip to Haiti.

2018
The MREF continues its support of The Joseph School and Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow.

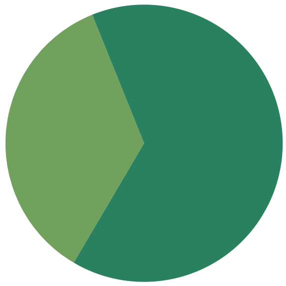
2019
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Literature For All of Us and The Maywood Fine Arts Association receive one-time educational grants.

MREF 10th ANNIVERSARY Marketing Research Education Foundation

IMPACT

$1,042,833
lifetime giving since 2015

$405,622
domestic



$637,211
international

33
organizations granted aid

MISSION

The mission of the Marketing Research Education Foundation (MREF) is to unify, inspire and activate the marketing research community to focus its collective resources to educate children and youth worldwide.

2020

MREF grants $60,000 to Support Feeding America and Food Banks Canada. Backpack Challenge's inaugural year brings in nearly $58,000.

2021

The Race Around the World for Education launches with more than 1,100 participants and 35 sponsors raising $100,000+.

2022

The 2022 Race Around the World for Education supports Ukrainian refugee children. MREF donates $45,000 to provide backpacks to youth in the U.S. and Canada and provides famine aid in Ethiopia and Somalia.

2023

The third annual Race Around the World for Education raises $90,000. The MREF works with KINF to provide $38,500 in school supplies for kids across the U.S. The industry gives additional $10,650 to support children in crisis.

2024

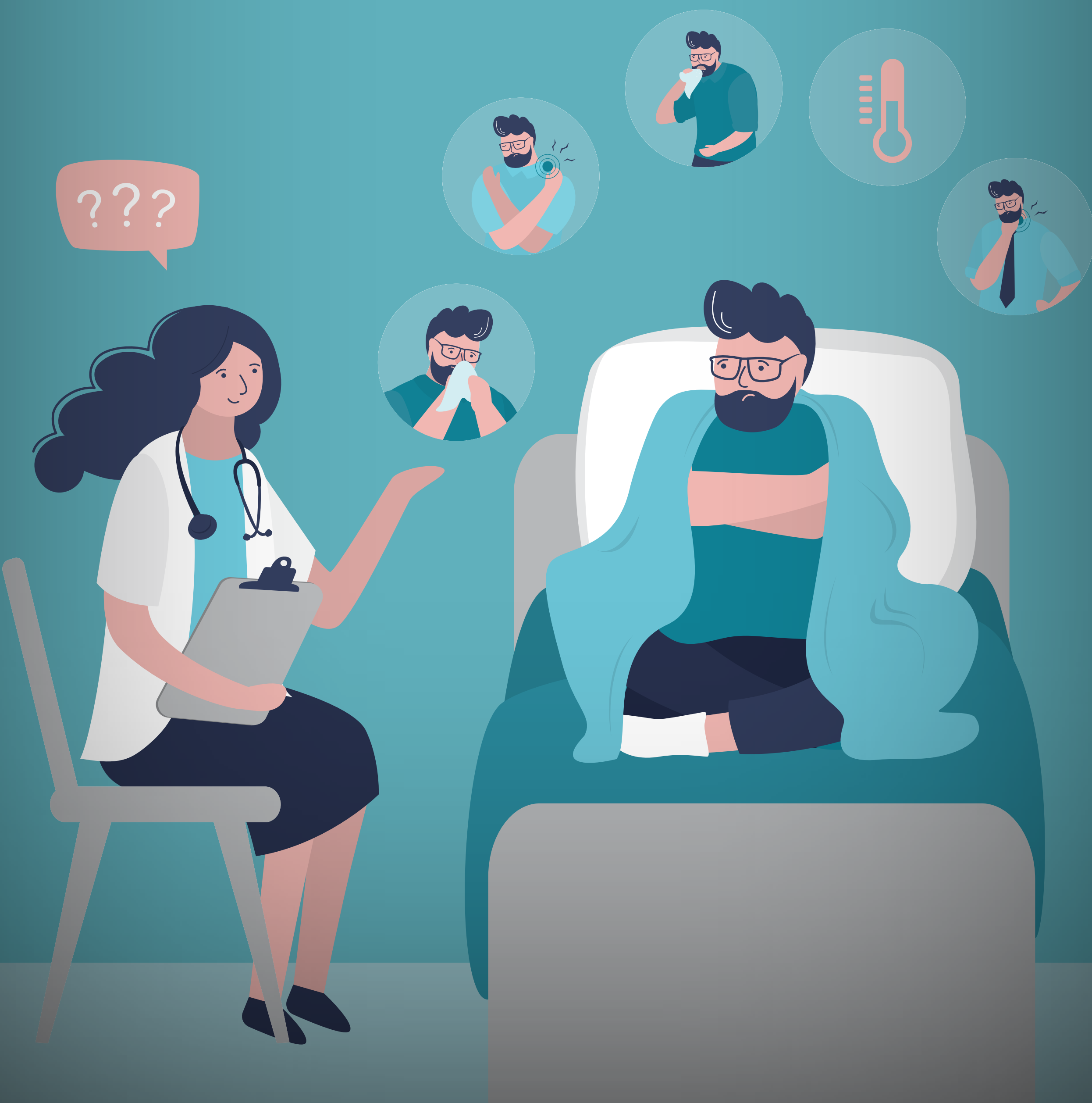
The MREF has given $986,833 over its lifetime. Urban Sprouts Child Development Center receives $14,000 to inspire curiosity and learning in kids. MREF raises $15,000 to send school supplies to children in need.

The heart of the matter

Communicating with limited-English-proficiency patients in U.S. emergency rooms

A study of ER doctors and nurses in regions across a range of income levels netted concrete recommendations and actionable steps for caregivers serving patients with limited English proficiency.

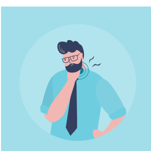
By Tom Donnelly, Barbara Haimowitz, Tatiana Barakshina, Kinshuk Sahni and Heaven Russell



Clear health communications are critical in the emergency room (ER) setting, in which timely treatment can potentially make a lifesaving difference. Any delay in treatment could lead to adverse health outcomes, morbidity and mortality.

Treatment is initiated based on correct triaging, an in-depth clinical understanding of symptoms, an evaluation of lab values and other measurements and the patient's overall disease presentation. This process from triaging to treatment is driven to a great degree by doctor-patient communications and the mutual interpretation of these interactions. An optimal ER treatment and follow-up necessitates that the patient and their provider understand each other, in all circumstances, either directly or through translation, regardless of health literacy level.

In a previous study,[1] we found that doctors and other health care providers (HCPs) are often inaccurate in identifying the health literacy levels of their patients, especially in patients with limited English proficiency (LEP), prompting the need for simple explanations to be used with all the patients, regardless of their health literacy status.



High levels of clarity needed

We began to think about treating LEP patients and considered where communication between patients and HCPs needed high levels of clarity, singling out the ER as the place where clear health communication is critical. To narrow our research more, we asked the HCPs about their experiences with cardiovascular disease (CVD) patients. Patients with coronary artery disease, ischemic heart disease or a history of myocardial infarction account for 6.4% of ER visits indicated on the medical records. CVD events are scary, can occur out of nowhere, create emotional upheaval and sometimes require immediate treatment to save lives.

There are many negative outcomes due to language barriers[2] in general and these issues are applicable to approximately 8.6% of the U.S. population, classified as people with LEP: larger surgery delays; fewer health screenings; higher central line infections; more falls; less-accessible health care; longer stays in the hospital; and more medication management issues.

With an objective to minimize or completely avoid these negative outcomes, we wondered:

- How can language differences be overcome?
- How long does it take to get help if a language gap exists?
- What aspects of the process are most challenging during an ER visit?
- What strategies do HCPs use to ensure the dialogue with the patient goes smoothly?

In this study we have looked at several meaningful ways to segment participants to achieve deeper insight in the communication needs and challenges with LEP patients.

- Specialty: Doctors vs. nurses
- HCPs from low-, medium- and high-resource areas – defined by a U.S. county's percent of people lower than federal poverty level (%FPL)
- HCPs with patients who have limited English proficiency (HCPs with ≤60% or >60% patients whose primary language is English)

SAMPLE AND METHODS

We conducted a 15-minute online survey with n=93 emergency department HCPs. The study was executed with the support of Sago. Fifty-eight percent of the HCP survey participants were male and 42% were female. The emergency department MDs had an average of 17 years in practice, while the emergency department nurses or certified emergency nurses had an average work experience of 12 years. Additionally, MDs typically saw an average of 376 patients in the ER every month, whereas nurses saw an average of 242 patients. We achieved representation of each of the three geographic segments – low-resource (n=15), medium-resource (n=45) and high-resource (n=33) areas – although getting participants from the low-resource area was particularly challenging due to a lower representation of physicians from these areas in the traditional research panels. Thirty-nine percent of providers were classified as "low-English-proficiency barrier" segment (since they work with >60% of patients with English as their primary language), while the remaining 61% of providers fell into "high-English-proficiency-barrier" segment, with ≤60% of their patients fluent in English.

RESULTS

Our research revealed a number of intriguing and potentially impactful findings. On average, it takes about 11 minutes until language assistance arrives for LEP patients. The wait time increases to almost 45 minutes in low-resource areas. Imagine what this wait time means for a cardiovascular patient in need of immediate help.

HCPs say that the topics that are most difficult to understand for LEP patients are how to reduce stress and how and when to take medications. Nurses echo this finding, stating that LEP patients find it somewhat to very difficult to understand how and when to take medications. The nurses mentioned medication management significantly more than the MDs because they are directly involved in ensuring that the patients stay adherent. The nurses are also instrumental in the discharge instructions.

On average, it takes about 11 minutes until language assistance arrives for LEP patients. The wait time increases to almost 45 minutes in low-resource areas. Imagine what this wait time means for a cardiovascular patient in need of immediate help.

Similar trends are also seen among HCPs treating high-language-barrier patients. About half of all HCPs use a virtual interpreter. More MDs use them than nurses and one-third use a wearable HIPAA-compliant device.

To aid our mission to bring increased awareness of health literacy among HCPs, we created a summary of clear health communication techniques that physicians and nurses can use both inside and outside of the ER. We came up with three categories to organize these techniques into: verbal, nonverbal and aids and materials (Figure 1). Our team feels passionately about a few of these techniques, including using plain language when explaining things to patients and using everyday examples to illustrate a medical term.

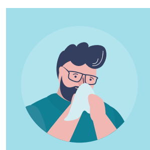
Clear health communication techniques

In our study, nurses indicated a significantly higher use of clear communication techniques (compared to physicians), including the use of plain language, to ensure that their CVD patients understand their instructions. Physicians, on the other hand, are more reserved when it comes to self-reporting the use of these techniques. MDs use them when the situation calls for them or only occasionally. Very few MDs are mindful of body language, position and eye contact as ancillary drivers of achieving clear communication goals with their patients.

In our study, nurses indicated a significantly higher use of clear communication techniques (compared to physicians), including the use of plain language, to ensure that their CVD patients understand their instructions.

We observed, as noted in Figure 2, significant differences in the techniques providers find effective when working with patients fluent in English compared to those with LEP. For instance, with LEP patients, HCPs frequently use printed materials, conduct frequent check-ins to confirm understanding and simplify sentences by keeping them short. In contrast, techniques such as using everyday words instead of medical terms and confirming patients' understanding are applied more consistently to all patients, regardless of language proficiency.

Our study revealed a notable gap in the application of shared decision-making (SDM) principles – a collaborative process in which patients and health care providers jointly make decisions, considering the best-available evidence alongside the patient's values and preferences.[3] These principles are more frequently deployed with English-proficient patients compared to those with LEP. We identified three key areas in which the SDM gap exists between these groups (according to providers' self-report of the application of these techniques). The following techniques are applied less frequently by providers while consulting patients with LEP: assessing patient preferences regarding treatment; incorporating patient preferences into the discussion; and explaining the rationale behind the proposed treatment to patients. This highlights a potential challenge in ensuring equitable patient-provider exchanges.



Actionable steps

Our research highlights a number of actionable steps to enhance communication with patients with limited English proficiency. Based on feedback from health care providers we identified three key areas for improvement:

First, we confirmed that the availability of timely and accurate interpreter services is crucial. Providers currently rely on live interpreters, video interpreters and translation services but improvements are needed, especially with CVD patients in the ER. Increasing the availability of inter-

FIGURE 1

Clear health communication techniques

VERBAL COMMUNICATION
LANGUAGE CLARITY
• Short and simple sentences
• Use plain language
EFFECTIVE INTERPRETER
• Engage with the interpreter
• Speak slowly
RELATABLE LANGUAGE
• Everyday words instead of medical terms
• Everyday examples to illustrate a point
COMPREHENSION CHECKS
• Confirm with the patient that they understand
• Use simpler language when understanding is lacking
• Ask the patient to repeat information in their own words
• Repeat what the patient said if there is a misunderstanding

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION
• Eye contact with the patient
• No interruptions
• Exhibit patience by pausing at key points
• Mindful of body language, position and eye contact
• Awareness of patient's cultural beliefs

AIDS AND MATERIALS
• Visual aids, such as sketches and models
• Printed materials in English
• Printed materials in the patient's native language

FIGURE 2

Top five most effective techniques for improving communication with CVD patients

TECHNIQUES USED MOST WITH FLUENT ENGLISH SPEAKERS	TECHNIQUES USED MOST WITH LEP PATIENTS
Use of everyday words instead of medical terms: 66%	Using printed materials in patient's native language: 68%
Confirming understanding with patients: 51%	Using interpreter: 60%
Using plain language: 47%	Confirming understanding with patients: 51%
Using printed materials in English: 40%	Use of everyday words instead of medical terms: 42%
Using simpler language when lack of understanding noticed: 39%	Keeping sentences short and simple: 37%

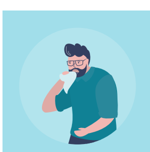
preters, expanding video-interpreter services and ensuring interpreters are easily accessible – whether in person or virtually – can significantly reduce waiting times. This improvement would establish a basis for more meaningful and effective interactions between providers and LEP patients.

Second, building awareness among ER providers about effective patient engagement strategies is essential. These engagement strategies include using plain language, spending additional time with patients, involving family members in discussions and ensuring follow-up care, thereby increasing the likelihood of treatment and medication adherence. Repeated explanations and frequent assessments of patient comprehension and asking patients to repeat the HCP's instructions in their own words are critical to fostering understanding and trust, both for LEP patients and those fluent in English.

Third, strengthening training and educational materials was repeatedly mentioned. For hospital staff, this includes offering training on collaborating with interpreters and hiring more bilingual or multilingual staff. For patients, particularly in areas with high LEP populations, providing educational materials such as videos, handouts and written resources in multiple languages can help explain disease processes, treatment options and care expectations. This is especially important as patients transition to their community HCP after discharge from the ER.

These initiatives can bridge communication gaps and improve care outcomes for LEP patients.

A note on sampling in the low-resource areas: While conducting this research, it was challenging to recruit in counties with a high percentage of population below the federal poverty level (the segment we referred to as "low-resource area" in this study). This happened specifically in states such as South Dakota, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. HCPs in low-resource areas are hard to contact and often don't participate in research studies. Web panels don't always reach into these underserved areas. Social determinants of health/health inequity factors also pose significant concerns. It is important that we, as market researchers, get an unbiased handle on health literacy around the entire country, not just in the bicoastal areas and the Midwest. Physicians and patients in low-resource areas grapple with unique issues and deserve to be included in marketing research. We need to establish match rates for high-/medium-/low-resource areas. It will be important to work with the American Medical Association, which supplies NPI information to its selected vendors.



Learnings emerged

From a research planning and implementation perspective, several important learnings emerged.

- When conducting quantitative health care research with patients or providers, it is essential to ensure representation from populations with low health literacy and those with limited English proficiency.
- Adopt a mixed-method recruitment strategy to effectively reach low-resource areas. Collaborate proactively with panel providers to identify potential gaps, set realistic client expectations and build in an additional two to three weeks to ensure adequate representation.
- Finally, consider potential differences in communication strategies between physicians and nurses when interacting with patients, as these may influence research findings.

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••• packaging research

Treasure awaits

Packaging redesign aimed to emphasize continuity along with sustainability

| By Marlen Ramirez

abstract

Expanding into the retail space, family wellness brand NATPAT knew its product packaging would have a different job to do. Previously sold online in shipping-friendly formats, NATPAT's patches and stickers would now need to pop on crowded shelves along with achieving the brand's sustainability aims.

When walking down the store aisle, we are often drawn to colorful, unique products in distinctive packaging. A challenge some brands face when transitioning into retail stores is successfully redesigning a product's packaging to create a fresh look for a broader audience while maintaining its relationship with existing customers and ensuring their brand essence and messaging remains consistent. For its expansion into retail, Australian family wellness brand NATPAT used research to help design new product packaging – which ended up taking the form of a reusable treasure box in its final iteration.

NATPAT offers patches and stickers that are infused with natural essential oils to boost focus, sleep, mood and more. The original packaging – small and lightweight – was a direct-to-consumer product optimized for shipping. When the opportunity to sell the product in stores like Target arrived, the team understood there were different considerations to prioritize and decided it was time for a packaging rethink. The goal for the new container was to improve its retail presence and reflect the brand's commitment to sustainability while offering new and existing customers a fun and functional experience.

Selling a product in the digital space is, of course, different than selling in-store. Online, a brand can communicate with its customers through accompanying videos, text and graphics; the packaging is almost secondary. In a retail environment, different factors must be considered. How will the customer discover the product? Will they be looking in the market category for something similar or will they stumble upon it? "We had to address everything from what the lighting could be like in the store to whether people could read what was on the package as they pass it, to the touch and feel of it, the excitement, the sort of magic of it," says Michael Jankie, co-founder and CEO of NATPAT.

Maintain consistency

Of utmost importance was maintaining the brand's uniqueness and staying consistent across its different products while making an in-store experience as exciting as the already established web experience. "We wanted the new packaging visually to echo the existing versions," says Jankie.

NATPAT Co-Founder Andrei Safonau argues that the shape of the patch is the brand's strongest differentiator. At the beginning of the brainstorming process, the team had to address how to communicate the shape from a distance in a store and ultimately decided the package would need to be in a hard case design showing the unique product configuration.

While different packaging features were considered, a key part was the brand's ability to capture shoppers' attention. Getting new eyes on their products was important but equally so was not alienating existing audiences. Current customers had to be able to recognize the product on the shelf and understand that it was from the same company but with a fresh look.

During brainstorming, sustainability was a leading factor. The original package was a single-use plastic sleeve which, as mentioned, worked well for shipping but a goal for the new package was the potential for use after purchase as a toy or as a storage container, etc. "We started to update the packaging to make it a bit more reusable, as a brand we really are trying to commit to practices that are more sustainable," says Safonau.

Seeing the waste from their production lines from items like stickers and backing sheets, the company investigated to see what could be recycled and repurposed.

Provide more value

With little control over how products would be displayed in larger stores, the team decided to prioritize on-shelf differentiation. "Our idea was to create a more sustainable package and provide a bit more value. When we go into a retail environment, which is very competitive, we want to stand out on the shelves more than anyone else," says Safonau.

The team considered various factors including lighting, how products would be grouped together or whether they would be standing alone in different sections of the store. Creating a unique product, whether it be in size, color or shape, was crucial to increasing its perceived value.

The team considered a number of different directions for the final package – tubes, rolls, cases and sleeves. To narrow down their options, they debated the pros and cons, gauged their effectiveness in a retail setting, determined any aspects needing improvement and whether products were economically viable. The team conducted research around the unboxing experience to understand how children and parents felt about the products and see which features were preferred or simply wouldn't work.

The team gathered feedback from family members, friends and other staff. They sent people images to ask for their preferences to get a sense of what they generally liked. Designs were tested among kids of different ages to determine which features were too complex for the final product. For example, if a lid was too tight, intricate or unnatural to open, it would be discarded. Safonau recalls that different levels of force had to be applied to different product variations, including a twist-to-open lid which was ruled out. "Insights came at the beginning where people actually didn't know how to open [the case] in the first place, so it took us time to refine that," he says.

To avoid any interference, the product was given to participants and they were left to naturally figure out what to do. The team would "watch and see what the interaction is and then get the feedback, either visually or by speaking to them afterwards," Jankie says. The goal was to replicate a real-life scenario instead of offering any prompts or giving any background information before testers handled the product.

First-iteration sample cases were taken to Expo West, a natural products trade show in

The original packaging – small and lightweight – was designed to be a direct-to-consumer product and was optimized for shipping. The updated reusable treasure box better reflected its unique branding when expanding into a retail space.

the U.S., where the team was able to observe how attendees interacted with the product. They determined their excitement or frustration levels by watching their movements and facial expressions as they tried to open the package. Being able to get the physical product in the hands of thousands of people and seeing firsthand how they responded was beneficial. "It wasn't structured research, but that was real life," says Jankie.

Trust yourself

The team learned the importance of trusting yourself and your understanding of your customers and what they will enjoy, acknowledging that the numerous packaging iterations were probably not necessary when they were fairly confident at the beginning how the packaging would look. "We could have got this to market probably six months earlier had we actually just trusted what we started with," Jankie says.

In the future, the NATPAT team will focus on making smaller adjustments when they are needed, rather than undertaking larger projects. This won't be the last change made to the packaging but future versions will be implemented gradually using feedback from existing customers.

Something the team did not expect was that people were eager to help throughout the redesign process. Being one of the first to try a product, and offer feedback that could be implemented before an official launch, was exciting, the participants told them.

Conducting a product packaging rebrand and ensuring that the final product aligns with, and boosts, company presence is a challenge. But when clear goals are established, and when customer feedback and research is considered, a product that stands out in retail stores can be successfully created. NATPAT's final treasure box design is a durable, airtight case that children can use long after the product runs out. It's a keepsake that transforms packaging from waste into an integral part of the consumer's experience.

••• research communities

It's all about connection

Lessons from 25 years of building insight communities

| By Zoë Carter

abstract

To stay relevant, insight communities must evolve alongside changing demographics, reflecting the increasing diversity of consumers while maintaining their role as a cornerstone of customer-centricity.

Human connection matters in business. You know this. Your competitors know this. But for a laundry list of reasons, it can be easy to lose sight of that truth in the complexity of a modern organization. Ever-evolving demands, information overload and the expectation to think, say and act faster are all barriers.

Relationships, on the other hand, are difficult. They take time to build and maintain. They demand compromises, lateral thinking and bravery. But the payoff for harnessing the power of relationships is enormous.

In the 25 years since C Space pioneered insight communities, our experiences have made one thing crystal clear: The only way that brands will grow is by listening to – and genuinely understanding – their customers. Today's consumers have more influence, greater agency and higher expectations of the brands they choose. One in eight say they must trust a brand before they consider a purchase. And almost two-thirds (64%) prefer to buy from companies that tailor experiences to their needs.

Insight communities create direct connections between brands and people. They bring leadership closer to customers, helping businesses uncover motivations, understand behaviors, anticipate change and act with confidence.

Here are some key lessons we've learned about maximizing their value.

Evolve your approach to research methods. Insight communities aren't static platforms. They adapt to support wide-ranging business objectives by balancing speed with depth, tactical decisions with foundational understanding and creativity with robustness.

They serve as springboards for versatility, employing multiple tools and techniques – both online and off – to address a wide array of present, evolving and future needs.

Building in regular moments for adaptation and evolution – such as refreshing your sample regularly by bringing in new participants, perspectives and voices – allows insight communities to mirror business cycles, from “hibernation” periods during quieter times to sprint cycles during product development processes.

Embrace your future customers. Future planning can feel like a complex balancing act. Focus too much on the present and you risk falling behind; rely too heavily on trends and predictions and risk wasting resources tackling problems that may never materialize. The challenge is in anticipating change before it arrives.

When brands design their insight communities with proactivity in mind, they can be more than research tools, they can be early-detection systems. Enriching insight communities with “future” customers – whether that’s Gen Z, early adopters or even those who reject a brand’s offerings – can provide indicators of emerging behaviors. Creating spaces where these participants initiate discussions instead of always responding to structured prompts can surface insights that traditional methods might miss.

Beyond direct exchanges, tools such as projective exercises, longitudinal studies and digital ethnography can uncover deeper motivations, revealing patterns that extend across industries and audience demographics. Understanding the underlying shifts driving trends and consumer behavior can help brands turn insight into foresight.

Meet your audience where they are. The most valuable voices are often those that brands have yet to hear from. Bringing these voices into the conversation means moving beyond the general population to engage people and perspectives that are frequently overlooked – whether that’s younger generations, specific consumer groups or professionals in specialized fields. These audiences may be harder to reach but their influence can be outsized.

How can brands engage these groups? Connecting with niche and next-generation consumers isn’t as simple as “build it and they will come.” Brands need to meet them where they are and that requires that we, as insight professionals, think deeply about who these audiences are, what they value and how they communicate.

Specialist recruitment partners can offer the expertise to help brands tailor sources and strategies to a given audience. Meanwhile, native moderators in global markets provide the linguistic and cultural intelligence to communicate effectively. Engagement tactics should feel natural, aligning with how, when and where these audiences interact organically. The more authentic the experience, the more genuine and relevant the insights will be.

Bridge the say-do gap with authentic insight. Any insight professional can attest to the fact that what customers say and what they do sometimes don’t align. People don’t always have the language to express what they think – or they may not feel comfortable doing so. And sometimes, they simply don’t know. Getting to the heart of authentic insight isn’t as simple as asking the right questions; it requires a nuanced, psychological approach to consumer research.

To get past surface-level responses, brands should create research activities that feel natural and intuitive. Diary studies and lifelogging capture in-the-moment, unfiltered experiences, reducing reliance on community member recall. Equally important is leveraging knowledge built over time to provide context and uncover underlying patterns.

Authentic insight isn’t a one-time snapshot; it’s an evolving narrative. The power of longitudinal research lies in its ability to track how sentiment shifts over time. Regular pulse activities provide a 360-degree view

Rather than treating an insight community provider as a supplier, brands should view them as a genuine collaborator – one that helps center the customer's voice in every business decision.

of customer behaviors and feelings, helping brands make decisions that are not just data-driven but deeply human.

Lead with humanity. We have more data at our fingertips than ever before and it's easy to assume that more information equates to better understanding. But data alone can't foster empathy. It can tell us what's happening but not always why it matters. To truly connect, businesses must approach research by thinking about customers as actual people – both in how they collect insights and how they act on them.

This starts with thoughtful engagement: designing activities that fit seamlessly into people's lives. That could mean prioritizing mobile-first experiences, creating intuitive UX/UI or using well-timed push notifications in place of e-mails. In other contexts, it might mean letting users contribute anonymously in discussions that touch on sensitive topics. Whatever the format, brands need to show that they value community members' perspectives, bringing them into the problem-solving process and sharing how their input influences the company's outcomes.

Empathy isn't a metric, but it can be felt – when customers see their perspectives reflected in real-world decisions and when researchers take the time to connect, listen and lead with genuine curiosity.

Balance AI with human intuition. The insight industry is rapidly adapting to AI and automation, seeking the right balance between technological efficiency and human intuition. AI excels at processing large datasets, automating repetitive tasks, synthesizing information and speeding workflows. But human expertise remains essential for interpreting nuanced behavior and emotional drivers within insight communities.

Customers and insight professionals alike get frustrated by low-quality automated interactions in online spaces. While speed matters, meaningful insights come from thoughtful moderation and analysis of community data. The most effective approach uses human-led moderation while deploying AI for practical tasks like clarifying instructions or handling routine communications. This allows facilitators to focus on deeper community engagement.

Ultimately, business decisions have to be made by humans, for humans. Our research methodologies should reflect that.

Use storytelling to turn data points into impact. Insights can't drive change on their own – it's what you do with them that matters. The most effective insight communities connect data, people and perspectives to translate understanding into impact. True customer-centricity means insights don't live in isolation. They should be woven into an organization's DNA, shaping not just what teams know but what they do.

How do you make the leap from insight to action? Data alone rarely provokes action but narratives do. Human beings are hardwired to find meaning in storytelling. Stories shift brain chemistry, evoke emotion and drive decision-making. Insight professionals can – and should – tap into this. Packaging insights in compelling ways – through print, digital, multimedia and live immersive experiences – can turn them from data points into decision drivers. When findings are delivered in the right format for the right audience, they don't just resonate, they take hold.

Building on this, brands shouldn't limit an insight community's potential by keeping it siloed. Instead, they should integrate it with other data sources, thought leadership and previous studies so it fits seamlessly within existing workflows. And rather than treating an insight community provider as a supplier, brands should view them as a genuine collaborator, one that helps center the customer's voice in every business decision.

Reflect reality

The insight communities of the future will look and behave differently from those of the past. Their evolution isn't just about technology or design – it's about keeping pace with the changing demographics they represent. Gen Z is ushering in a new era of diversity, setting the stage for Gen Alpha to be the first majority-minority generation in the U.S. To stay relevant, insight communities will need to reflect this reality, not only in who they engage with but in how they foster connection, conversation and understanding.

However, while there is no question that insight communities must adapt alongside consumers, it is also clear that they will continue to be a cornerstone of customer-centricity for businesses. In a landscape overwhelmed by passive data, bots and misinformation, insight communities stand apart as a rare, safe space for real, unfiltered human conversation. Rather than relying on fragmented, surface-level data, they capture the rich, multidimensional realities of people's lives, reflecting their authentic experiences and evolving needs over time.

The insight communities of the future must be incubators for innovation – spaces that break free of the rigid constraints of automated research and standardized studies to spark creativity, unlock human potential and generate breakthrough ideas. At their best, these communities will cut through the noise, bringing customers and businesses into true conversation. They will act as a central conduit of understanding, creating a real-time view of the customers that brands serve – not as study participants or data points but as people.

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••• customer satisfaction research

Listen and earn

How customer-defined metrics deliver better financial results than arbitrary goals

| By Greg Ryan

abstract

Companies that listen to their customers outperform those focused solely on financial metrics by conducting research that pinpoints customer needs and pain points and then developing products and services that help solve them.

Most companies are in a constant struggle to grow their bottom line. Of course, maintaining a healthy balance sheet is absolutely essential for any business but problems arise when the focus on revenues, profits, stock price and earnings-per-share overshadows the needs of the customer.

A perfect example is Kodak. Kodak was a leader in the film business for many years. Then along came a new technology called digital photography. Rather than researching the needs and desires of its customers around the new technology, Kodak decided to focus on the lucrative short-term revenues and profits generated by its (soon-to-be-outdated) technology. Of course, interest in digital photography skyrocketed and Kodak ended up filing for bankruptcy.

The legendary failure of the Ford Edsel is another excellent instance of a company that could have avoided a catastrophic loss of $3 billion (in today's dollars). Ford chose to ignore customer feedback on the Edsel's exterior design and the rest is history. Think for a moment about what the actual cost to conduct customer feedback research would have been versus a $3 billion loss!

In today's world, numerous marketing jobs are entirely focused on generating revenues/profits (e.g., lead generation, data mining, web page visits, web history, competitive analysis) rather than measuring customer satisfaction. Even some seemingly customer-oriented marketing jobs like customer success manager are more likely to focus on sales. For example, ads for customer success managers typically list the job functions as: "Expand our revenue in accounts through cross-sell and upsell, influence future lifetime value through higher product adoption." The job title, which should really be changed to revenue success manager, is an insult to the savvy marketing and marketing research people who actually do strive for customer success.

The customer should be perceived as more important than stockholders, presidents and executives. Any company can function without some of these groups but it can't exist without customers.

The impact to the bottom line from higher customer satisfaction drives numerous vital benefits including: increased revenues; greater portfolio penetration; better attach/renewal rates; hitting the target on market requirements; more efficiencies; avoiding wasting time and money developing poor products and services; more repeat/loyal buyers; a better pipeline of new products/services; and an increase in share of wallet over competitors.

Experiment and evolve

I have devoted most of my career exclusively to customer satisfaction research. Early on, I worked as a consultant for J.D. Power and Associates (regarded as the pioneers of customer satisfaction research). I've also held various customer satisfaction consulting positions at Cisco Systems, Kaiser Permanente and Nissan Motor Corporation. After working for several different industries and companies I have been able to experiment and evolve my questions and methodology to move the needle and demonstrate the ROI for the cost of my customer research.

My intention with this article is to present a practical and strategic argument for using customer research to deliver that ROI. To start, we need to step back and look at the foundation of marketing. It is essentially based on "the marketing concept," which author Philip Kotler defined as "determining the needs and wants of the target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors."

With this in mind, let's explore the ways in which researchers can really help companies focus on delivering those "desired satisfactions" more effectively while impacting revenues and profits.

Conducting research that genuinely pinpoints both customer needs and pain points is definitely one of the most effective strategies. In determining the needs or pain points of the customer, many researchers often overlook key questions and/or analyses. For example, the most revealing question I have ever asked customers is to list the top three changes or improvements they would like to see (to a product or service). In my opinion, this single question is paramount and akin to asking "If you had three wishes, what would they be?"

I've found the answers to this question to be illuminating for almost any survey. It is also the question that I look at first when analyzing the survey data because the answers to it inevitably end up being the bellwether for most of the results.

Fortunately, customers are generally not unreasonable in their suggestions. In fact, the requests are often quite basic, workable and consistent. Like many open-ended questions, it takes some work for the researcher to create good categories (buckets) for the responses to be grouped into. But the rewards are significant. I have told many researchers that if I could only ask customers one question this would be it.

An important note: This question should be asked at the end of the survey. Doing so lets respondents answer other questions first, warming up their mind-set and allowing them to mentally process and recall their priorties and all the issues they face.

Another often overlooked method of determining and prioritizing customer satisfaction research is conducting a gap analysis to measure satisfaction with a battery of attributes while also asking about their importance. I've learned that this is critical for helping marketing teams prioritize and develop action plans. Of course, doing a conjoint analysis to find the implied importance of attributes versus using a scale in a survey to determine stated importance is a good method to use (when appropriate).

In addition to satisfaction levels, it is key to measure loyalty levels. An excellent method for this is asking a customer if they will repurchase the product or service. The Net Promoter Score's

(NPS) assessment of the likelihood to recommend has a slew of very serious flaws – a main reason why many experienced researchers do not support it. (For more about the problems with NPS please read my article "Get your metric right" in the September/October 2022 issue of Quirk's.)

Wrap it around a larger program

Researchers often overlook the need to link a customer satisfaction program to their customer satisfaction research in order to impact the bottom line. In fact, no customer satisfaction research is complete without wrapping it around a larger program. The key to any successful program and research includes the following aspects:

- Using customer-defined vs. company-defined metrics. Customer-defined means that the customer actually decides how and by which metrics their satisfaction should be measured. Most companies fail terribly in this area, using factors or features dictated by company executives, R&D or marketing to define the metrics.
- Setting realistic customer satisfaction score goals (e.g., using percent of possible index; see sidebar) vs. arbitrary or unrealistic goals defined by the company.
- Clear, measurable satisfaction goals and metrics that are tied to compensation, especially at the executive level. As an example, in each of my 12 years at Cisco Systems, both employee and executive bonuses were tied to an annual customer satisfaction survey score.
- Executive sponsors of the program who have influence.
- Placing customer champions and evangelists in key positions.
- Baking satisfaction into all phases of the customer lifecycle. Hewlett Packard developed a great list of lifecycle phases that includes (in order): awareness, consideration, preference, order, deliver, install/integrate, learn, use/operate, support, evaluate, upgrade/optimize.
- Satisfaction research covering all aspects of the business (e.g., brokers/distributors, partners, sales, help desk, customer service, etc.).
- A closed-loop process where customers are informed of the improvements that result from their input.

Many researchers overlook placing questions in surveys that ask what new products or services the customers desire. Sometimes this information can be derived from the "top three changes or improvements" question mentioned earlier. But it is better to pose this question separately.

Furthermore, asking customers about their business environment yields valuable – and sometimes previously unknown – information about their world that helps put the researcher in their shoes. Including questions in the following areas can elicit and uncover important information:

- current and future business needs and problems;
- current or future changes occurring within their industry and company;
- regulations impacting their business;
- growth opportunities;
- what can be done to save customers (or their customers) time or money;
- barriers to buying more products or services;
- reasons for purchasing competitive products or services and perceptions of value;
- suggested changes to pricing structures and/or ordering.

Also, researchers sometimes leave out the current or future needs of distributors/resellers or brokers but if you want to maintain a competitive advantage and market share, those constituencies need to be listened to as well.

When it comes to pricing questions, rating "value for the money" versus simply asking to rate pricing is key – especially with higher-end products or services. In other words, you might find that customers believe your product or service is priced too high but the value for the money is good. In those cases, a price drop might be the wrong decision. Asking perceptions about the competition's value for the money can also provide useful information.

When analyzing survey data, the top-two boxes (e.g., 4s and 5s from a five-point scale) should be used versus averages (e.g., 1 through 5) because averages distort data.

Here is an example of how to calculate percent of possible index (PPI) when setting satisfaction metric goals:

In a 2024 satisfaction survey the top-two box score for overall satisfaction was 7.2 on a 10-point scale. In 2025 the satisfaction survey score was 7.9. The difference between the two scores is .7. So PPI is calculated by .7/2.8 (2.8 is the difference between 10 and 7.2) = .25. In order to set the goal for 2026 (10-7.9 = 2.1 x .25 = .53+7.9=8.4. Therefore, the customer satisfaction goal for 2026 should be set for 8.4.

Let them dictate

Make your research successful by providing evidence of a strong ROI and impact on the bottom line. Help your clients understand that the customer is at the top of the hierarchy. Keep a focus on customer needs and desires and let them dictate the metrics by which they want to measure their satisfaction or loyalty (versus arbitrary or flavor-of-the-month measures set by executives).

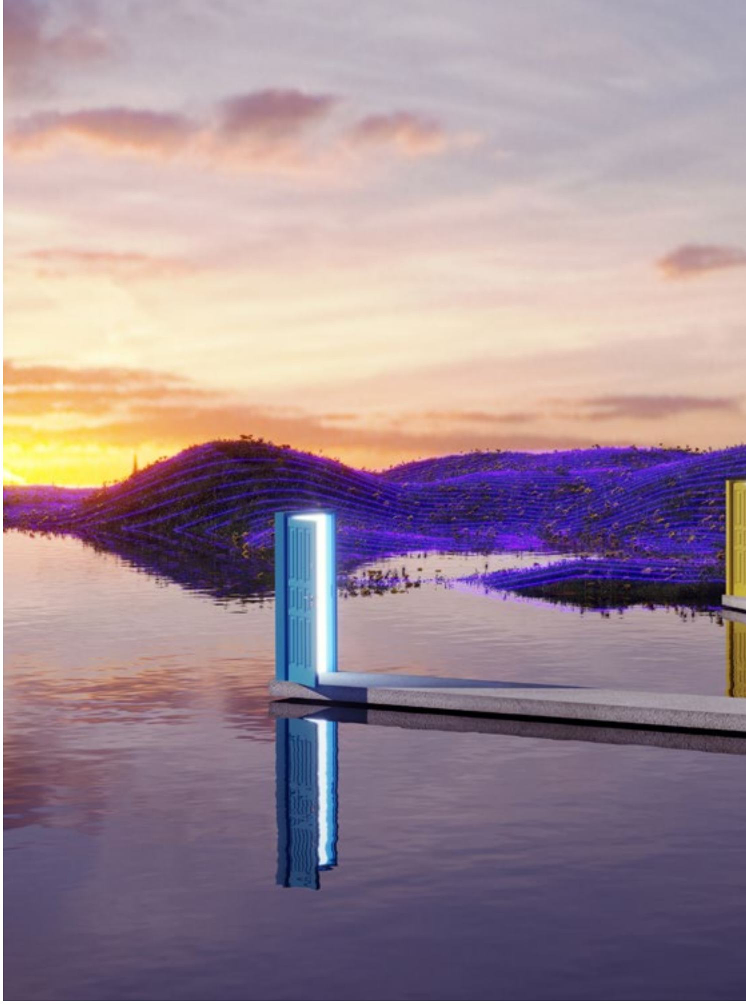
Conduct proper customer satisfaction research using the right metrics, questions and goals encompassing the customer life cycle and tie results to a customer satisfaction program and employee compensation for long-term success.

Immerse yourself in the customer's world by finding out about their problems and challenges and structure your research so the results will solve some of them and make their life easier. Don't forget to include research on all business-related customers (e.g. resellers).

Try out the "top three changes or improvements" question and see the results for yourself.

And always be an evangelist for customer feedback and support that position by reminding internal clients of the many ways that listening to customers can boost the bottom line.

Greg Ryan is owner of Ryan Consulting. He can be reached at ryan.greg@comcast.net.



••• the basics of research

From concept to consumer

The critical path to accurate durable-goods sales projections

| By Jerry W. Thomas

abstract

How methods such as qualitative research, product clinics and choice modeling can help manufacturers reduce the substantial financial risks inherent in bringing new durable goods to market.

Most of the books and articles on new product sales forecasting published over the last 50 to 60 years have focused on consumer packaged goods (CPG). These are the packaged foods, beverages, health and beauty aids, soaps and cleaners, over-the-counter drugs, etc., sold in supermarkets, grocery stores, drugstores and mass merchandisers such as Walmart, Target and Amazon.

While the lessons from forecasting sales of new CPG products might give us some clues to forecasting the sales of new durable goods, for the most part the CPG new product forecasting models and methods are ineffective when it comes to forecasting new durable goods sales.

Consumer packaged goods tend to be used up or consumed quickly and purchased frequently (typically multiple times per year), whereas durable goods tend to last a very long time (a minimum of three years, according to the Bureau of Economic Research). Washing machines, refrigerators, lawn mowers, chainsaws, automobiles, computers and power tools, etc., are examples of common durable goods. As these examples suggest, durable goods tend to be:

- Physical, tangible products.
- Long-lasting (three or more years).
- Non-consumable (that is, they are not used up or consumed in the short run; these products can be used over and over again).
- Tools or machines. Most durable goods can be thought of as "tools" or "machines" to help the human race do work, accomplish tasks, store things or move things.
- Expensive, compared to CPG products. Most CPG products cost a few dollars, whereas durable goods often cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

Within the broad and complicated world called durable goods, there are tens of thousands of major companies, each with different strengths and weaknesses. There is no one best-practices paradigm that makes sense for all of these disparate companies. Accordingly, the following suggestions are a rough guide and the guidelines must be tailored to each company and its unique characteristics and situation.

- Constantly evolving. For example, if a manufacturer launches a new electric lawn mower, that lawn mower will likely undergo annual updates and improvements, so the product gets better and better year after year.

Given the characteristics of durable goods, how can a manufacturer go about forecasting sales of these products with some hope of reasonable success? Let's begin with a confession and a little humility. Accurate durable-goods forecasting is extremely difficult and the longer the time horizon, the less accurate the forecast will be. No mathematical model, no artificial intelligence or machine learning model, no soothsayer or industry expert can sit in an ivory tower and accurately predict sales of a new durable-goods product. Sales forecasts must be based on evidence and facts from the likely purchasers of that new product.

Typically, a new durable good is very expensive to develop, manufacture and take to market. The costs include: millions of dollars in product design, development and engineering; millions of dollars in tools, machines and production lines to manufacture the new product; millions of dollars in sales, marketing and distribution costs to take the new product to market.

First, with so much money at risk, a reasonably accurate sales forecast will help the manufacturer make an informed and educated decision about whether the new product makes any sense. Second, the disciplines and thinking involved in developing a good forecast will identify ways to reduce risks and increase chances of success. Third, the analytics and research involved in the forecasting will help develop the long-term evolutionary plan for keeping the new product relevant and competitive in the future.

Struggle to identify

Some companies are very creative and have lots of new product ideas to evaluate, while others struggle to identify viable opportunities. Regardless, the process of developing new durable-goods ideas can generally benefit from:

- In-depth qualitative research. Focus groups and in-depth interviews among target-market groups can be invaluable. If we can develop a detailed, in-depth understanding of the target audience, their motivations and wishes, their fears and failures, their frustrations and struggles, we may discover new product opportunities. We can't ask a target audience what new products they need (they don't know), but if we truly understand their emotions, behaviors, and frustrations related to a product category, we may see or infer new product possibilities.
- Ideation and brainstorming. Once we know something about the physical and psychological needs of our target audiences, we can use ideation and brainstorming sessions to create new product ideas to solve the problems or frustrations and seize the opportunities identified. These same ideation methods can be used with in-house teams from new product development, marketing, sales and engineering, to help guide the new product development process and create new products that address target-market opportunities.

EVALUATING EARLY-STAGE NEW PRODUCT IDEAS

Once you have some new product ideas to evaluate, marketing research techniques can be applied. If you have 20, 30 or more ideas, then we would recommend new product screening studies to identify the ideas with the greatest market potential. Typically, such screening studies can be conducted at modest costs.

Once we have identified the better new product opportunities, we can do volumetric concept tests to give us an approximation of the sales volume potential represented by each of the top-rated new product ideas. The concept test with volumetric questions gives us multiple ways to assess market potential and determine which of the new product concepts warrant further development. Since each new product concept is evaluated monadically (that is, evaluated by an independent sample of target-market consumers), the cost per new product concept is somewhat expensive – but much cheaper than a failed new product.

EVALUATING LATE-STAGE NEW PRODUCT IDEAS

This is where it gets difficult. We must have some type of model or prototype of the new product so that we can get accurate feedback from target-market users. If it's too expensive to build a prototype, then a demonstration video might be a solution so that all the details of the new product can be fully communicated to the target market. We must be able to fully communicate what the new product is and how it works, so that accurate measurement of market potential is possible. The more realistic the presentation of the new product prototype, the more accurate the marketing research will be.

In most instances, some type of product clinic is the next step. Target-market users are recruited to come to a central-location facility where a model or video of the new product concept can be shown and demonstrated to potential purchasers. This process might begin by only showing the new product model or video demonstration to get initial consumer feedback. Then, the model or video presentation itself would be tweaked and refined.

Then, if there is a well-defined product category, major competitive products would be introduced into the product-clinic mix, so that potential purchasers are evaluating the new product in comparison to competitive brands. Potential purchasers would be asked what they like and do not like about the new product, relative to competitive brands. They would be asked how likely they would be to purchase the new product, if it were available, and they would be asked about current product features, plus potential new features that could be added in the future, styling, pricing expectations, etc.

If budgets permit, the product clinic is a wonderful opportunity to learn much more. Choice modeling is a powerful technique that can be used to optimize design, functionality, features and pricing of the new product. In choice modeling, participants are asked to select which of the products in the clinic they would be most likely to buy, given a set of features, prices and functionality for each brand (called a scenario).

Once a choice is made, then the variables change for each brand (creating a new scenario), and participants are asked to choose which one they would buy in this new scenario. This process is repeated following an experimental design until six to 10 scenarios are completed. The experimental design allows decision scientists to infer the importance of different features, functions and prices for each brand, including the new product.

Choice modeling provides a reliable way to predict how well the new product will sell once it's introduced into the market, given a set of features, functions, prices and competitive brands. The equations derived from the choice modeling results are then used to create a decision simulator, so that analysts can play "what-if" games on the simulator. What would the new product's market share be at the end of the first year, given a particular set of features, functions, price, distribution level, competitive assumptions and estimated brand awareness? Choice modeling provides a solid basis for forecasting a new product's first-year sales volume. Second-year forecasts can also be estimated by the simulator but the accuracy goes down as the time horizon stretches into the future.

Qualitative investigations

Given the challenges of forecasting sales of new durable goods, it's often a good idea to include qualitative investigations as a part of the product clinic. The depth of understanding that comes from good qualitative research can help refine the sales forecasts produced by the simulator.

Another really important factor for durable goods is the nature of the distribution system. For example, power tools may be distributed through large retailers like Home Depot, Lowe's and Amazon but a small manufacturer of lawn mowers may go to market via a hodgepodge of small dealers scattered across several states. The simulator forecast must be adjusted for these types of distribution variances. The role of advertising varies greatly from product to product. Apple Computer may spend $100 million on advertising to introduce a new computer, while the small lawn mower manufacturer may spend $100,000. The sales forecast must take into account the length and strength of media advertising.

New product sales forecasting is expensive but it can dramatically reduce the risks of failure and increase the likelihood of long-term success.

Jerry W. Thomas is CEO of Decision Analyst. He can be reached at jthomas@decisionanalyst.com.

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Identity: The hidden key to enabling exceptional customer experience and loyalty

Ping Identity Corporation

Identity is more than a security measure – it's the gateway to delivering seamless customer experiences and fostering loyalty. In this session, we'll dive into how identity and access management (IAM) serves as the foundation for trust and engagement in an increasingly complex global digital environment. By enabling frictionless access, safeguarding sensitive data and streamlining interactions, IAM plays a critical role in creating consistent, measurable customer experiences.

This session will provide actionable insights into the business value of IAM, offering attendees a roadmap to measure success, overcome challenges and deliver exceptional customer experiences that build lasting loyalty in an increasingly competitive digital world.

Inclusive insights – Shaping the future of accessible research

Tamman, Inc.

Blending methods, building stories: Telling consumer-driven stories for food ingredient innovation

Kerry and Matrix Sciences

Smooth sailing: Using qualitative research for improved brand tracking

New Leafe Research, Carnival Cruise Line

– Session curated by QRCA

The evolution of fandom: How 30 years of insights help ESPN engage multiple generations of fans

ESPN and SSRS

Visit thequirksevent.com to view more sessions.

How the powerful intersection of consumer insights and consumer experience can drive decision-making

First Horizon

First Horizon Bank, a super-regional bank located throughout the Southeastern U.S., has served its customers and communities for over 160 years. In a new push towards data-driven decision-making, the company stood up a combined consumer experience and insights (CX&I) organization within marketing in 2022. Since its inception, CX&I has demonstrated the competitive advantage these two disciplines provide through effective and efficient partnerships, streamlined research efforts and strategic prioritization. Join us to learn what led us to combine insights and experience, what hurdles we faced and how we overcame them and what's next on our journey.

Join us to learn how First Horizon Bank is using a combined insights and CX/UX function to drive effective and efficient organization-wide decision-making.

The Next Normal 2025

Paramount

This presentation brings to life important findings from the latest iteration of The Next Normal, a unique global study which has been monitoring the thoughts, feelings, hopes and fears of people around the world since 2012.

The world is changing fast. In the last six years alone, a multitude of events – such as the Covid-19 pandemic; shifting politics in the U.S. and other countries; natural disasters such as the earthquake in Indonesia and wildfires in the U.S. and Australia; outbreaks of war in Europe and the Middle East – have had a huge global impact, transforming the way people live.

Amid this constant state of uncertainty, how are people responding? Has there been any change to their happiness, stress levels, personal relationships and plans for the future? What can we all learn to ensure we stay in tune with consumers around the world?

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Quirk's is proud to introduce the latest event technology – Badgee! These interactive electronic badges allow for easy and fast networking in a touch-free environment. Attendees in close proximity can quickly exchange information simply by both pressing the bottom of the badge.

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cocktails WITH QUIRK'S

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Sing your heart out, sip on delectable cocktails and create unforgettable memories with your fellow researchers.

Wednesday, July 23, at Stout NYC – 133 W 33rd St, New York

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The sessions might be finished but that doesn't mean you have to be done networking! Enjoy a beer or wine as you finish up conversations with fellow researchers in the Registration Foyer.

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For the first time, Quirk's is offering roundtables to provide client-side researchers with unique networking and learning opportunities with peers. Engage fellow in-house researchers each morning at the Quirk's Event in insightful roundtable discussions near the Expo Hall, complete with a light breakfast.

When registering for the Quirk's Event, simply select the option to participate in the In-House/End-Client Roundtables. These discussions are exclusively for in-house/end-client researchers and are offered at no additional cost.

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19 TOP DATA COLLECTION COMPANIES

Data collection is central to the market research function. Having reliable and secure ways of collecting insightful data is essential to any successful research project. To make informed, effective decisions, you must be confident in your data collection methodology and data processing.

Companies specializing in data collection can offer a variety of different but effective ways to gather the information you need for your research project. Whether you're looking to gain a deeper understanding of your consumers or are planning to launch a new product, data collection is necessary.

American Directions Research Group

Founded 1987 | 250 employees
Kevin M. Kelly, CEO
Jerry Karson, CMO


With nearly four decades of experience, American Directions Research Group has become a leader in state-of-the-art survey data collection. Blending proven methods with cutting-edge techniques, such as phone, text and full multimodal online, ADRG's nationwide network excels at locating precise target audiences in studies ranging from public policy to customer satisfaction. ADRG offers more than just survey data collection with a full suite of research services, including access to robust online panel resources, data processing, coding, analytics and reporting. Renowned for innovation and reliability, ADRG continues to provide dependable, high-quality data, making it a trusted partner for organizations seeking actionable insights.

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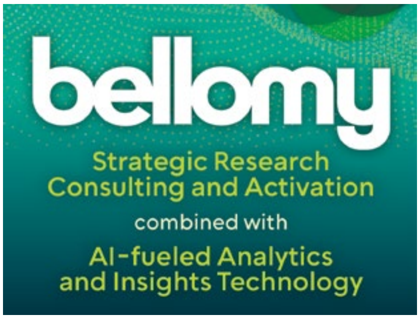

Bellomy manages data collection for Fortune 1000 companies, but we also collaborate with our clients on research design, analysis and reporting. Data collection includes tracking and ongoing customer experience measurement as well as ad hoc projects. We deliver surveys via apps, websites, IVR, e-mail, SMS, telephone, mail and in-person methods, employing rigorous data quality practices. Our proprietary technology platform includes dashboards, analyst tools, AI analytics for text and other AI-driven tools, along with API integrations with other systems. Our insights empower stakeholders to confidently make decisions and forge stronger relationships with customers. Contact Justin Bailey (justin.bailey@bellomy.com) to learn more.

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Founded 2025 | 50 global employees
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Founded 2021 | 8 employees
Brandon Johnson, CEO

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Full Circle Research

Founded 2013 | 30 employees
Adam Weinstein and Nate Lynch, Co-CEOs

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Founded 2009 | 125 employees
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Founded 2017 | 300 employees
Brad Larson, CEO and Founder

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Kantar

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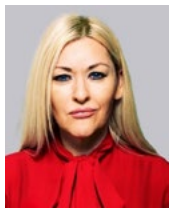

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Murray Hill National

Founded 2013 | 35 employees
Susan Owens, COO

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Precision Research, Inc.

Founded 1959 | 25-49 employees
Scott Adleman, President

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Progresso Research

Founded 2018 | 25 employees
Vikram Nayar, CEO

Progresso Research excels in market research with extensive global respondent access through proprietary panels. Their expertise spans consumer, B2B and health care sectors, providing deep insights into behavior, trends and market dynamics. They recruit high-quality panels using rigorous methods, ensuring accurate and reliable data. Advanced technologies and methodologies enhance their research processes, delivering quick and actionable insights. Their global reach allows for cross-cultural research, aiding businesses in market expansion. Committed to ethical practices, Progresso Research ensures data privacy and integrity, making them a trusted partner for comprehensive and reliable market research.

Phone 1-201-345-6045
progresso-research.com

QuantifyAI

Founded 2024 | 10-15 employees
Adam Stephenson, CEO

At QuantifyAI, we don't just collect data – we're setting a new standard for getting the insights you can trust. Our proprietary panel, Opinion Elite, utilizes LinkedIn and Facebook verification with cutting-edge AI and behavioral analysis to validate respondent identities. No more bots, no more fraud – just real, engaged participants. We specialize in data collection for both B2B and B2C audiences globally. For B2C, we provide access to large-scale, nationally representative samples as well as more targeted segments. For B2B, we recruit verified professionals across all industries, company sizes and functions, ensuring you connect with the right decision makers. Your research deserves better – your insight, our expertise.

E-mail adam@quantifyai.co
Phone 1-858-692-1325
www.quantifyai.co

Questionlab

Founded 2016 | 50+ employees
Scott Jones, CEO

Questionlab is a global quantitative market research company with a U.S.-based team that specializes in delivering high-quality B2B and consumer sample across North America, EMEA, LATAM and APAC countries. We offer in-house programming, a proprietary sample management system and access to quality respondents across hundreds of different profiles. Our proprietary, validated and engaged online panels give you access to millions of consumers and business professionals allowing you to go after the most niche audiences. We are very easy to work with, do not charge any project minimum or setup fee, have 24-hour support including weekends/holidays and use in-house quality applications to provide some of the lowest toss-out rates among the industry. Please reach out to sales@questionlab.com with any request and we will get you a quick turnaround with competitive costs.

E-mail sales@questionlab.com
Phone 1-480-340-1721
www.questionlab.com

Quest Mindshare

Founded 2003 | 130 employees
Greg Matheson, Co-CEO
Joe Farrell, Co-CEO


Launched in 2003 to meet the needs of technology companies, Quest began survey operations to 45,000 persons employed in technical fields. With fast-growing panels and a focus on utilizing the greatest survey security technology, Quest Mindshare is now well-known to provide the most extensive and flexible groups of online panel assets for every B2B and consumer need. Quest's largest panels reside in North America and Europe but our project management team can superbly tackle your projects anywhere in the world. Let Quest know what your hard-to-find audience is (from ITDMs, financial DMs, web developers to moms with babies, music ratings and everything in between) and the team of market research experts and professionals will either offer support through the diverse panel assets or recommend ways to achieve your target.

E-mail sales@questmindshare.com
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ReconMR

Founded 1994 | 1,000+ employees
Michelle Vrudhula, COO

ReconMR is a full-service research and analytics firm with in-house data collection, insights and analytics capabilities servicing commercial, government, public policy and social science research entities around the world. ReconMR is the largest and most experienced data collection provider in North America. Additionally, ReconMR has a uniquely qualified insights and analytics division with experienced statisticians, methodologists and program managers on staff. For over 30 years we have been conducting government mandated health care studies including national CAHPS and BRFSS surveys and state and local health care surveillance studies. We work with some of the largest names in the health care industry offering multimodal options to contact hard-to-reach audiences. As a SOC2- and HIPAA-certified organization, all data are secure as well as accurate.

E-mail info@reconmr.com
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www.ReconMR.com

Symmetric, A Decision Analyst Company

Founded 2016 | 25+ employees
Jason Thomas, CEO
Arianne Larimer, President


Symmetric owns and operates American Consumer Opinion®, a worldwide online panel that reaches millions of consumers in 200+ countries and territories, spanning North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia. Consumers can sign up to become members in one of 11 languages, and complete demographic profiles are maintained for each household. Symmetric also operates five B2B worldwide online panels: Physicians Advisory Council®, Medical Advisory Board®, Executive Advisory Board®, Contractor Advisory Board® and Technology Advisory Board®. Symmetric places a high value on representative samples, scientific sampling methods and advanced fraud-detection systems. Our online panels are carefully balanced, continually refreshed and systematically cleaned. Non-responders, speedsters and cheaters are continually purged. Symmetric provides sample for quantitative and qualitative research and online and offline projects. Additional services include programming, hosting, online communities, tabulation, coding and IHUT mailing.

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www.symmetricsampling.com/panels

QUIRK'S TIME CAPSULE

Facts and findings from nearly 40 years of Quirk's

Enhancing e-mail invitations

Researchers in 2003 greatly debated the role e-mail invitations would play in gaining participant cooperation for web-based surveys. People often confused survey invitations for spam, which is still a common issue. In the July/August 2003 article "10 steps to greater web survey response rates," Bill MacElroy offered some ways to improve e-mail invitation success.

"Familiarity with the sender is a prime influencer of the decision to participate," wrote MacElroy. E-mail invitations should be recognizable and should avoid keywords that spam filters tend to pick up. Some of these words included: free, cash, promo and offer. Along with this, populated BCC fields tended to be marked as spam as well as e-mails sent in bulk. Like today, navigating e-mail filters was an issue that needed to be understood and worked around.

The e-mail subject line was a crucial factor in e-mail invitations. Three subject-line components (the sponsor, topic and survey) should be carefully considered before hitting send. "Several industry association and academic studies indicate that the sponsor of the survey and the general topic area of inquiry are very important considerations in the critical three-second window for the recipient's decision as to whether or not to open the e-mail and review it," said MacElroy. While a good subject line gets a foot in the door, the importance of the first sentence in an e-mail invitation can't be overstated. Like today, receivers tended to skim e-mails. An effective introduction would encourage receivers to participate in studies. An example of an introduction was included, which is still applicable today: This invitation is to take part in a survey project and is not a sales solicitation.

2003

Checks were on the decline, debit gains on the upswing

While consumer behavior continues to change rapidly, the banking industry had to better understand consumer purchase preferences in 2003. A study conducted by Unisys Corporation, Global Concepts and Jim Moore of Talson Associates found that while checks were on the decline, debit cards were on the rise, growing at twice the rate of credit cards and were expected to grow faster than any other payment method for in-store purchases within the next two years. The Survey Monitor entry "Debit cards rapidly becoming payment method of choice," found that electronic point-of-sale payments were expected to increase substantially and while 64% of billers had yet to look at offering web-based billing options, 7% were already offering them.

Internet, PC use in 2003

In 2003, the U.S. had the largest internet population, accounting for 30% of global internet access, according to research from Nielsen//NetRatings. The U.S. was followed by Europe (24%), Asia-Pacific (13%) and Latin America (2%). The Survey Monitor entry "Internet access numbers still climbing," found that Germany, the U.K. and Italy had the largest number of people with internet access via a home PC. Modems were being replaced by high-speed internet access and all countries had an increase in the percentage of households with broadband connection since Q1 2002, except for Italy and Germany.

Scan to access all Quirk's back issues.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

●●● can't-miss activities

Merlien Institute will host UX360 Germany on **May 14-15**. Visit www.eu.ux360summit.com.

WBR will host eTail Asia on **May 14-15**. Visit https://etailasia.wbresearch.com.

Strategy Institute will host its Annual Customer Experience Strategies Summit on **May 14-15** in **Toronto**. Visit www.customerexperiencecanada.com.

Market Research Society will host the MRS Equality Summit on **May 15**. Visit www.mrs.org.uk/event/call-for-contributions/mrs-equality-summit-2025.

QRCA will host its Worldwide Conference on **May 14-16** in **Berlin**. Visit www.qrca.org/page/2025-worldwide-conference-central.

AAPOR will host the AAPOR/WAPOR Annual Conference in **St. Louis** on **May 13-17**. Visit https://www-archive.aapor.org/Conference-Events/Upcoming-Conferences.aspx.

MSPA will host MSPA ShopperFest on **May 16-19**. Visit https://members.mspa-americas.org/ap/Events/Register/YEF6lKkuNCzCK.

IQPC will host CX BFSI USA Exchange on **May 19-20**. Visit www.cxnetwork.com/events-customer-experience-exchange-bfsi-usa.

WBR will host eTail Nordic Connect on **May 20-21**. Visit https://etailnordicconnect.wbresearch.com.

Informa Connect will host Front End of Innovation on **May 19-21** in **Boston**. Visit https://allthingsinnovation.com/event/fei-front-end-of-innovation-2025/.

My Digital Shelf will host the Digital Grocery Summit on **May 21** in **Chicago**. Visit www.digitalgrocerysummit.com.

Gartner will host the Gartner Data & Analytics Summit on **May 20-22** in **Tokyo**. Visit www.gartner.com/jp/conferences/apac/data-analytics-japan.

MSPA will host MSPA EA Conference on **May 20-22**. Visit https://mspa-ea.org/en_GB/events/eventitem/34-mspa-ea-conference-20-22-may-2025-tallinn-estonia.html.

GIA Global Group will host the World Data Summit on **May 21-23**. Visit https://worlddatasummit.com/europe/.

Canadian Research Insights Council will host CRIC Conference on **May 27-28**. Visit www.canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/event/cric-conference-2025-save-the-date.

Forrester Research will host the CX Summit EMEA on **June 2-4** in **London**. Visit www.forrester.com/event/cx-emea.

Corinium Global Intelligence will host CDAO Mexico on **June 3-4** in **Mexico City**. Visit https://cdao-mx.coriniumintelligence.com.

WBR will host Future Stores on **June 3-5**. Visit https://futurestores.wbresearch.com.

Strategy Institute will host the Big Data and Analytics Summit Canada on **June 4-5**. Visit www.bigdatasummitcanada.com.

IQPC will host CX Healthcare West Exchange on **June 4-5**. Visit www.cxnetwork.com/events-cx-healthcare-exchange-west.

Quirk's Media will host Quirk's Virtual – DIY Research on **June 11**. Visit www.quirks.com/events/quirks-virtual-diy-research-2025.

Pharma Market Research Conference will host its Bay Area event on **June 11-12**. Visit http://pharmamarketresearchconference.com/bay-area/.

Customer Management Practice will host Customer Contact Week Las Vegas on **June 9-12**. Visit www.customercontactweek.com/ccw-lasvegas.

Quirk's Media will host The Quirk's Event – New York on **July 23-24**. Visit https://thequirksevent.com.

Event details as of March 20, 2025. Please see websites for more details.

To submit information on your upcoming conference or event for possible inclusion in our print and online calendar, e-mail info@quirks.com. For a more complete list of upcoming events visit www.quirks.com/events.

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10 minutes with...

Sue Davis

Director, Customer Experience and Insights, Dentsply Sirona

"Mine your prior research as there can be some great insights that might not have been the primary subject but could answer your current needs."

Do you have any advice for researchers facing budget cuts in the coming year?

It's time to get creative! Here are some things you could try:

Trying smaller sample sizes, with fewer target groups, is always a good place to start. Mine your prior research as there can be some great insights that might not have been the primary subject but could answer your current needs.

If you don't have the budget for a large quant study, a qual study leveraging key customer profiles might have to be good enough to at least make directional decisions.

Try out some DIY platforms. While it puts more of a workload on your internal team, if you have people but not dollars, this might be a necessary switch. AI tools can be really helpful in crafting/editing survey questions.

Finally, if you have nonconfidential, general learning needs, look for agencies that offer omnibus-type studies where you could add a few questions for a small cost rather than running an independent study.

What has had the biggest impact on your career?

The pandemic. After 20+ years on the agency side, being laid off during the pandemic gave me the time to step back and look at what I liked about what I was doing versus what I was missing. I took the opportunity to move over to the client side and I love it. While I'm focused on one industry, I am getting to do a much wider range of research than I have in the past so I'm still learning every day, which is important to me.

Scan to read the full article at www.Quirks.com.