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BOOK REVIEW: Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice introduces the Jobs to Be Done Theory as a tool for successful innovation.

BOOK REVIEW: Creative Thinker’s Exercise Book is a hands-on workbook to enhance your creativity.

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Beyond the Usual

Welcome to our first issue of 2018. This issue is jam-packed with new strategies and techniques to elicit information, connect the dots and structure reports that go beyond the usual.

In our cover story, Betty Adamou shows how researchers can understand and guess at future behaviors, not by asking questions but by crafting games that reflect real-world environments. For example, how might consumers’ purchases change when a store’s ambient noise increases or a favorite product is temporarily unavailable?

Toolbox authors Sam Evans and Kinsey Gimbel reveal strategies on how to encourage young children and teens to open up when discussing underage drinking, sexual assault, and other sensitive topics. The authors describe how to set the stage, work with clients, and frame the discussion in ways that create safety for participants and engagement.

In another insightful Toolbox article, Kunyi Mangalam and Antonella Fabri disclose how ethnographers use a wide lens to capture the otherwise “invisible web of meanings that individuals use to express or position themselves” and to find patterns and insights by deeply observing small numbers of people.

Our Book Review articles give away key nuggets that researchers can apply. For those who want to further deepen their ethnographic expertise, check out George Sloan’s book review of Watching Closely—a Guide to Ethnographic Observation.

Pat Sabena’s review of The Power of Moments: Why Certain Moments Have Extraordinary Impact moved me to consider where and how I might create defining and meaningful moments with my grown children and husband. This book transcends its business roots and invites readers to create experiences “both memorable and meaningful” in and outside of work.

In her review of Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice, Jennifer Larsen argues for a much deeper understanding of why consumers make choices so that our clients have what they need to come up with innovative solutions. Jennifer highlights the parts of the book most useful to qualitative researchers as well as the chapters to skim.

For those of you who want to make connections and surface insights faster and more intuitively, Ilka Kuhagen outlines a couple of the many creativity enhancing exercises in Creative Thinker’s Exercise Book. Qualitative researchers can apply the exercises to boost their own creativity or to help prepare a group for a brainstorming exercise.

Our beyond-the-usual theme continues with three articles that address market opportunities for qualitative consultants. In Luminaries, Kay Aubrey interviews John Maeda – a brilliant thinker behind WordPress’ market success – on how his company approaches research. Fascinating. Trends author Burk Kalweit talks about how Baby Boomers are choosing to age in place and identifies industry opportunities for researchers who understand Boomers’ concerns. In Business Matters, Steve August inspired me to rethink what I want my qualitative business (and my life) to be like. The VIEWS team would love to hear what happens when you set conditions for your business and begin to put them into practice. Email me!

Before you go, treat yourself to some laughs with Joel Reish in Humor. Wishing you all a fabulous, happy 2018.
Clarity

What is the purpose of research?
The questions we all ask are similar but we ask them to gain a clearer view, a way of understanding.
Clarity.
See your way clear to call us with your next research assignment. You’ll see.
I Love You Guys!

As I was reading the last issue of VIEWS, I was reminded yet again why I love my fellow QRCA members. An article by my friend and colleague Chris Kann (“How a Twisted Fork Made Me Question Everything”) talked about better, more effective ways to ask questions. I’ve been conducting qualitative research for a long time, and I think I’m pretty good at it, but before I have a chance to get too cocky, I’ll learn something from my colleagues that shows me there’s always room for improvement. Just like Chris’s article. Chris doesn’t only talk in generalities about how we should look for ways to get greater depth from participants, she gives concrete examples. Here’s one: instead of asking if anything is confusing about a product, she suggests asking, “What questions would you ask the people who designed this product so that you understood it better?” As soon as I read that, I realized I could get so much more from research participants by asking the question that way.

It’s this kind of sharing that impressed me about the QRCA from the very beginning. Our members truly believe that “a rising tide lifts all boats” and want to help fellow members do better work. I’ve benefitted from that kind of advice from fellow members many times, whether it’s in VIEWS, our annual conference, local chapter meetings or the online forum. Some examples:

• Years ago, based on advice from another member, I changed my focus group intro to specifically tell participants that I want to try to “keep things even” and ask them to hold back if they notice they go first a few times in a row. The change in participant behavior was immediate—I had much less of a problem with “dominators.”

• I’ve benefitted from the “hive mind” on our online forum countless times when I’ve been looking for ideas for the best way to answer a research question or have had a question about a research method.

• I’ve been able to really improve the quality of the graphics in my reports based on techniques that I learned attending meetings of my Southern California chapter.

• I’ve found the courage to try new approaches and techniques after learning about them and seeing them in action at our national and international conferences.

That reminds me: an upcoming opportunity for YOU to experience that kind of sharing is at our joint conference with the AQR, the Worldwide Conference on Qualitative Research, which will take place in Valencia, May 16-18. Go to www.qualconference.com to register. I hope to see you there!
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Beyond Lost in Translation

After 25 years living and travelling abroad, translating and interpreting for international market research projects in Spain and facilitating cross-cultural synergy for individuals and companies, I have found that researchers often miss more through lack of awareness than what might be also lost in translation. Language issues are the simplest examples of a lack of cultural sensitivity, but they are only the tip of the cultural competence iceberg.

Heightening Awareness & Sensitivity in Market Research:

Unless one approaches other cultures with a heightened sense of awareness and sensitivity, true cross-cultural competence and understanding are unattainable. It is precisely cross-cultural competence that not only helps position some brands above the rest on the international market, but also can prepare individuals and teams with the tools they need to thrive in this arena.

Anyone with foreign travel experience has struggled at times with undiscernible translations on menus, storefront windows or tourist shops. Sometimes the translations are funny, other times they might as well be hieroglyphs, and occasionally they can be downright rude. The confused traveler is baffled that businesses do not invest the time and resources necessary to translate correctly and communicate effectively with their consumers. Their bottom line depends on effective communication with foreigners and yet they seem to translate as an afterthought. Market
opinions back to international researchers. Most researchers who work in foreign countries understand this most basic element of intercultural communication in executing research abroad, yet somehow major international marketing blunders still abound. For example, the now defunct Braniff International Airways promised comfort on its first-class flights by stating “Fly in leather.” This was translated literally as “Vuela en cuero” which is a little too close to “Vuela en cueros” or fly in the nude! In 2009, HSBC Bank launched what had been a successful US campaign overseas. “Assume Nothing” was translated in many languages as “Do Nothing,” leading the bank to eventually spend millions of dollars to change its tagline to “The world’s private bank.” Chevy Nova was launched in Mexico with the same name, therein boasting to consumers that the car was a lemon as “No va” in Spanish means “no go” in English. These blunders not only reveal a lack of thorough market research, but also a need for heightened cultural awareness.

Through Real Blunders
Translating texts for market research projects and interpreting for focus groups and interviews puts me on the frontline of the effort to get a brand’s point across in a foreign language and effectively communicate consumers’

researchers, on the other hand, are very aware of the pitfalls of bad translations, but are sometimes not so cognizant of the need to be culturally aware.

Developing Cross-Cultural Sensitivity and Competence
All strategically effective communication starts with awareness, not just marketing language. As sensitivity can help us communicate more effectively with our loved ones, sensitivity coupled with awareness drive effective intercultural communication. The very goal of international market research is to study and learn about consumers in other cultures to facilitate effective marketing communications, design viable products, tweak services to make them more appealing to local markets, etc. Decades of behavioral research findings have shown that initially developing a deep awareness of one’s own Culture (with a capital “C”) makes gaining insight into foreign cultures easier and the findings more reliable. A multitude of tools are available to provide cultural knowledge and help navigate cultural divides. Pioneering behavioral scientists like Gert Hofstede, Edward T. Hall, and Urie Bronfenbrenner have produced models that are employed the world over to understand cultural differences. These models can and should be applied to international marketing, marketing research, and cross-cultural adaptation.

The Gert Hofstede Model
Gert Hofstede’s Six Cultural Dimensions model is often used by consultants and trainers working with international companies. It helps employees first to understand their own thinking and behavior, and later to contrast this with the similarities and differences of others in different cultural contexts.

Hofstede’s extensive quantitative research in 1980 included more than 115,000 questionnaires and was conducted in over 50 countries. This research basically created the quantitative map of culture. Cross-cultural trainers use the six dimensions in the graphic above together with the country comparisons to help people function more effectively in foreign cultures. Consultants can tease out different situations specific to two or more cultures boiled down into these six dimen-
tions such that anyone working in a foreign culture can go into different situations armed with knowledge about how someone from this culture might typically behave. Despite some critiques and detractions, the findings from this research have been cited and employed the world over and this model is still arguably the most comprehensive and relevant comparative intercultural research.

The Edward T. Hall Model

Another renowned researcher and pre-eminent expert on inter-cultural communication, Edward T. Hall, spent an entire career teaching inter-cultural communication skills and is considered the founding father of this field of study. One of his contributions is a model of high vs. low context continuum to help navigate cultural orientations. This tool reminds the cross-cultural operator that in Low Context cultures such as the US, UK, Germany or Switzerland, one must get down to business first and negotiate quickly, avoiding “analysis paralysis.” Conversely, in Asian, Arabian or even Southern European cultures such as Spain, one must first establish social trust and be ready for slow and ritualistic negotiations where general trust is more important than expertise.

Like countless cross-cultural researchers, Hofstede and Hall stress the import of cross-cultural sensitivity and provide valuable tools to increase cultural competence in international relations. In fact, Hall says “…the single greatest barrier to business success is the one erected by culture.” Yet both renowned researchers admit the limitations of their models. Despite its success and wide acceptance, Hofstede himself agrees with some critics that using national cultural dimensions are not sufficient in measuring cultural nuance and that it should not be the only research tool utilized. Moreover, he feels that generalizing from country to individual is inappropriate. He says, “There is hardly an individual who answers each question exactly by the mean score of his or her group: the ‘average person’ from a country does not exist.”

Likewise, after an entire career spanning seven decades, studying cross-cultural issues and helping companies, organizations and individuals bridge the culture gap, Hall concluded that understanding one’s own culture is the “real job.” He says “Culture hides more than it reveals and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own.”

The Urie Bronfenbrenner Model

Urie Bronfenbrenner, the widely cited Russian-born American developmental psychologist, has shown us through his ecological systems theory that we create culture as much as we absorb it. We all develop in multiple ecologies or environments, from the most intimate home environment to the larger school system and neighborhood and finally the “Macrosystem” of societal attitudes and cultural ideologies. Not only are we directly influenced by our schools, families, peers and neighborhoods, but we also influence each of these areas with whatever we bring to them. Likewise, all the elements in the other levels influence each other in a bi-directional manner. Initially from genetics and then from the immedi-
ate influences on our individual culture at the nucleus of the circle, moving outwards through the Micro, Meso, Exo, Macro and Chronosystems, there is a bidirectional relationship of influence that creates culture in a dynamic way. Note that the entire Bronfenbrenner diagram is bolstered in the Chronosystem or sociohistorical time frame.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory

Finally, Bronfenbrenner offers a tool that not only reveals the bidirectional nature of culture, but also helps shed light on the cultural self-awareness that the others point to as a precursor to cultural awareness and competence.

Applying Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory to international market research, the researcher must approach projects aware of his/her own culture of origin. Whether as project coordinator managing documents and timelines, on-site fieldwork manager dealing with local partners and observing in the backroom, or moderator in the front room with respondents, striving for cultural competence through awareness and sensitivity yields better results. Astute market researchers know that they must be keenly self-aware to avoid biasing focus groups or depth interviews, regardless of where the research is performed. We cannot take ourselves completely out of the equation, as gender, age, etc. (the core of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system) are evident regardless, but becoming aware of these and the other levels, and our relationship to them will allow us to be truly present with the interviewee or the focus group. We must know what we bring to the interview if we are to limit our influence and communicate effectively. If the researcher is managing the project, the same is true of his/her relationship with local partners or international research teams.

Think Global, but Always Act Local

The first step in organizing successful international research is choosing local partners who understand the local culture, together with experienced interpreters and translators who can bridge the language gap between the local partner and the research firm. However, it is equally important to approach international projects with eagerness to learn, sensitivity about local cultural differences, and moreover, a heightened awareness of oneself and one’s own cultural perspective. Over the last 20 years, I have worked with researchers on both extremes of the awareness spectrum, and nowhere is this more apparent than in-home interviews. Ethnographic research in Spanish homes with unaware researchers who are not sensitive to local customs and pleasantries or who do not listen actively to their local partners produces questionable results at best.

Conversely, in-home interviews with aware and sensitive researchers, local partners, and interpreters can create cross-cultural synergy that produces truly meaningful and enriching research results.

If research companies make awareness on all levels a constant goal of every project, and cultural synergy one of the ultimate goals of international projects, it opens up the research to new possibilities. Brand managers, for example, might consider redefining the concept of brand awareness. Brand awareness is normally defined as a function of the consumer’s consciousness of a company, but what about the company’s consciousness of itself? How aware are brands of the consumers they try to attract? Moreover, how self-aware are our brands? The most self-aware brands are the most successful abroad; they commit fewer marketing blunders and are open to new and innovative ways of doing things. They celebrate cultural differences and incorporate them, creating new products, services and process through the synergy they nurture. And the international researcher can be the catalyst. The more self-aware the researcher becomes, the more cross-culturally aware he/she will be, and this awareness coupled with sensitivity is the key to cross-cultural competence and synergy—and ultimately to the success of international research.

“It is precisely cross-cultural competence that not only helps position some brands above the rest on the international market, but also can prepare individuals and teams with the tools they need to thrive in this arena.”
“I feel like the industry is changing. It seems to be getting harder and harder. Clients increasingly see me more as a set of hired hands versus a trusted partner valued for my expertise and experience. I’m getting fewer projects that are satisfying, yet I feel like I’m working harder than ever on more challenging projects for less reward.”

I’ve had many variations of this conversation, both in my career as a researcher/tech entrepreneur and more recently as a business coach. Many aspects of the market research industry are becoming increasingly commoditized and transactional. Technology and automation are having profound impacts on how customer insights are gathered and...
interpreted. In short, there are very real external factors at work that are impacting qualitative research consultants.

And yet, there are research and innovation consultants who are getting satisfying work and attracting highly engaged clients. To be sure, they still work extremely hard, and clients will always be demanding, but working hard in the service of a client who treats you as a partner is a much different proposition than working hard for a client who just wants your skills and experience as cheaply as possible. The question is how these consultants and companies make that happen.

More importantly, if you feel a little stuck and a bit powerless in the face of this change, how do you change the game? One of the keys is to establish your conditions.

**Figuring out Your Conditions**

Your conditions aren’t goals and milestones, but simply an expression of how you want to live your life or run your business. Here’s how to figure out your conditions:

1. Take a piece of paper.
2. Fold it in half, and then fold it in half again, so you have four quadrants.
3. Label the top left quadrant “Must Have.”
4. Label the top right quadrant “Can’t Have/Won’t Do.”
5. Label the bottom left quadrant “Nice to Have.”
6. Label the bottom right quadrant “Will Accept.”

Now, here’s the part where you need to do some deep thinking. In each quadrant, write a list of the things in your life and business according to the label of the quadrant:

1. **Must Haves** are what must absolutely be part of your life or your business. You will work actively to make sure they happen, and will not settle if they do not exist.
2. **Can’t Have/Won’t Do** are your deal breakers. If these things are present, you’re out.
3. **Nice to Haves** are the things that, if you did get them, would make you grin ear to ear, but that you can live without as well.
4. **Will Accepts** are the things that you’d prefer not to deal with, but will accept to get where you want to go if need be.

As you do this exercise, be mindful of what you put where, especially what you establish as Must Haves and Can’t Haves. Your Must Haves and Can’t Haves become the starting point for designing your life. The things you put in those quadrants have a tremendous amount of power to shape how you experience the world around you.

Your conditions give you a framework from which to design your life. They often aren’t specific goals or deadlines. Also, they aren’t prescriptive in terms of how you achieve them. You can make them happen through a variety of different means and contexts.

For example, if having more downtime was one of your Must Haves, you could make that condition happen a number of ways depending on what best fits for you. You could create 4-day workweeks. You could take one 4-day weekend every quarter. Or, you could close the office from December 20 through the New Year’s holiday.

**How to Put Conditions into Practice — Lessons from a Black Belt**

At a recent coaching intensive I attended, I had the pleasure of meeting Hayley Carr. When you initially meet Hayley, she comes across as your classic laid-back Aussie. But Hayley also happens to be a former seven-time world karate champion. Hayley shared the best advice she ever received from one of her coaches. She was told, “To become a black belt, you need to train like a black belt. You can’t train like a yellow belt to become a black belt. You’ll just become the best yellow belt you can be. It’s not the belt that makes a black belt. It’s the behaviors that get you the belt.”

A black belt organizes his/her life first around the Must Haves to be a black belt—the necessary training and conditioning. If they don’t do that, and try to squeeze it in after everything else, it doesn’t happen.

This is true for nearly everything in life and business. It’s our behaviors, often more than the results we achieve, that determine who we are and what our world looks like. Fortunately, we have control over our behaviors, regardless of whatever is happening externally. To that end, it’s really important to interrogate our behaviors. We have a choice in whether to keep doing them.

So, what does this mean to you as a qualitative researcher and more specifically, your business? You can step back into the driver’s seat of your business
versus feeling as though you’re victim to an increasingly transactional, commoditizing market research industry.

Let’s say one of your Nice to Have conditions is to have high engagement clients who work in the spirit of partnership and respect of each other’s knowledge.

Interesting things start to happen if you move that requirement into a Must Have slot in your conditions map, and move purely transactional price motivated clients to the Can’t Have slot. Let’s hypothetically imagine you will only accept work with high engagement clients who work in the spirit of partnership and respect your skills and experience. You have no other options. All other gigs are off the table.

Now you need to orient your business around reaching, appealing to and serving high engagement clients. How does a research consultant who only takes on highly-engaged, good-paying clients make that happen?

First, you need to define what a highly engaged client means for you (which may be different from other researchers you know). Is it the client’s willingness to discuss methodology during proposal stage? Do they give you enough background information? Are they responsive? Is it that they pay on time? The more specific you can be in defining what a highly engaged client means for you, the better.

Looking back over your past engagements through this lens of “highly engaged client” is a great starting point. If one of your favorite clients fits the profile, delineate what specifically about them makes them a satisfying client to work with from your perspective. You might even set up a conversation with the client to go deeper from their perspective. What are you bringing to the table that makes them go with you versus someone else? What kinds of projects require the level of engagement you want of this client? Why does someone really need a highly engaged skilled researcher? What financial and emotional benefits do they get from having a trusted partner? What’s their ideal engagement experience? What’s their ideal deliverable? What do they wish they could get from a research partner, but can’t get now? What are their constraints and to whom are they selling up? Do they want their research partner to help with interpretation and strategy? How do they find and decide on their partners?

In other words, you do your research and then build a very clear picture of your ideal client, including typical titles, size of companies, industry verticals, etc. You have a very specific person you are looking for and the kinds of projects that require engagement. And then you build your offerings and marketing around that, speaking specifically to the experience and emotional and financial benefits of a highly engaged working relationship.

From that ideal client vision, you hinge everything else. Related to your offerings, you look for where your core research skills and experience support you to deliver on the high engagement criteria expressed by your ideal client. You also look for where you may need to create new add-ons to your offering (i.e. a unique way to deliver reporting).

Your website is updated to talk about the benefits of the unique experience you offer a client through this high engagement model, and your marketing pieces always talk about the financial and emotional benefits of your work. Your client testimonials speak to the relationships you build and the impact you make. Your case studies, articles and conference presentations reinforce those benefits.

You also will want to take that ideal client text and leverage it as an assessment tool when beginning conversations with new clients. What behavioral traits does a new client need to exhibit at the proposal stage to screen as a potential “highly engaged” client for you? Also, what behavioral traits, if exhibited, would result in your declining the opportunity to work with this client, knowing—with confidence—that they do not represent the profile of a highly engaged client and thus are not a good fit for you?

Essentially you fly the flag that your ideal, highly engaged customer will see and respond to. Every action you take helps you attract and serve highly engaged clients, and you are disciplined about saying no to actions and distractions that don’t. In other words, you start behaving as if you are already someone who only works with highly engaged clients.

I’ve been around the research industry long enough to know that the above statement might sound idealistic. In certain periods of your life, and in the very early stages of your business, there can be a tangible financial reality in how choosy you can be about your clients. I’ve also been around business long enough to know that, counter-intuitively, the more specific and targeted you are with your target clients, the more you are able to do the things to attract and create them.

This is the true power of setting your conditions. When you establish your Must Haves and Can’t Haves/Won’t Dos, and then actively set your behaviors to match, you will be able to make most anything happen. Most importantly, you step back into a power position within your own business—driving your business in the direction that feels best for you.
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There’s a brilliant scene in the movie *The Matrix* where Neo and Morpheus are contemplating whether Neo is “the one.” For those of you who have yet to see this cinematic brilliance by the Wachowski siblings, it doesn’t spoil anything to say that Neo (played by Keanu Reeves) enters the Matrix (the “real” reality) and Morpheus (his mentor) believes Neo is the one to save the world (from Agent Smith and his pals), though Neo needs some convincing. Their exchange in this scene goes something like this:

**Neo:** “What are you trying to tell me? That I can dodge bullets?”

**Morpheus:** “No, Neo. I’m trying to tell you that when you’re ready, you won’t have to.”

I think of this scene when I’m asked if games and/or gamification can help make research questions more fun. My answer is, “No, researcher. I’m trying to tell you that when you’re ready, you won’t need questions.”
Qualitative Research consultants association

has helped to build a games culture where fan art, fan fiction, and memes are voluntarily made. They encourage people to dress up as their favorite game characters, spend money on game magazines and merchandise, and, quite literally, generate terabytes of voluntary text and content outside of direct gameplay.

Now let’s think about gamification. My simple definition of gamification is “repurposing games to make things that are not games as engaging as games.”

It is this factor—the engagement factor—that is the critical advantage of games-based research. Using games allows us to transform the traditional extrinsic engagement tactics of incentives to the intrinsic engagement that is a natural part of play. Increased productivity and voluntary positive action are among the benefits of intrinsic engagement. Play also stimulates the mind, encourages collaboration, boosts creativity, and increases our problem-solving skills, among a host of other advantages.

Encouraging play with intrinsically engaged participants is not just useful for research, it’s crucial.

Simulation and Emotion-Based Research—Online Qual

There is another layer of value in using game-based research. This layer goes beyond engagement and play, and into the ability to observe behaviors in context while driving emotion to see what people think, feel, and what they will do in ways unattainable through traditional research methods. Through in-game simulations we can observe reactions to different contexts and build algorithms for predictive modeling. It is here that the full, powerful potential of games-as-research—method is realized—and it’s already happening! We see game simulations being used as insight tools for myriad industries, from military defense to economics and biology—even the housing market industries.

Such simulations are crucial and valuable because they are contextual and emotive. When we play certain types of digital games, we move through virtual environments where a wealth of things are going on: background music, a ticking timer, all while a player is trying to solve puzzles and overcome obstacles with an end-goal in mind, such as collecting coins or experience points as rewards. In short, these worlds are heavily endowed with stimuli and context.

While these games are played, the player feels a myriad of emotions: urgency, joy, sadness, frustration, and empathy, to name a few.

But how are context and emotion useful in research?

Let’s imagine we’ve created a research game to understand why someone makes choices about a product. We place the participant in a virtual environment. Our participant can move around. Here,
we can create an environment to encourage state-dependent recall (if recall is required) through scenarios reflective of real-world experiences. We can use music and sound effects to help recall too. But more than that, we can create environments to observe state-dependent behaviors and choices.

It is here, Neo, that we don’t need questions—but instead set the scene and observe how participants play out the game narrative. For instance, what would participants be likely to do in given situations if they are feeling anxious? Calm? Angry? Frustrated? Surprised? What if they had limited time versus all the time in the world to go about their business? What if they had large amounts of money to spend? Or very little?

Build in the ability for participants to replay the simulations within a research game and you’ll find out how participants play out the game narrative. For instance, what would participants be likely to do in given situations if they are feeling anxious? Calm? Angry? Frustrated? Surprised? What if they had limited time versus all the time in the world to go about their business? What if they had large amounts of money to spend? Or very little?

Build in the ability for participants to replay the simulations within a research game and you’ll find out how participants might react to real world changes, giving researchers additional “what if” information. As such, research starts to become more future-focused rather than mostly retrospective. Bingo! You have a fully game-based online qual conjoint study!

It’s important to note that when discussing game-based approaches in online qual, I’m not talking about virtual supermarkets. This is about using games to transport participants from response-mode to a platform that’s more reflective of people’s lives. The approach is an experiential one, where we can use realistic or even more conceptual environments to understand the thinking behind choices—to understand what drives us.

We can make games and simulations for any subject; we are only limited by our imagination. We can use these methods for seeing how people might access governmental services, donate to charitable causes, buy new gadgets, or how they might live their lives as an elderly person.

Indeed, there is a fantastic arcade game at the Southwold Pier in Suffolk in the UK (search for Tim Hunkin arcades), which tasks the player to cross the street with a walking frame. Each player can set the difficulty from high to low. High is 90 years old. Low is 70 years old. Players must avoid getting hit by a car as they cross the street. Talk about an immersive experience! Now, if I were watching a player interact with this arcade game for

Note how engaging a picture with items to choose from can be. In this screen-grab from the TESSA Undercover Agents ResearchGame (2012), what could have been a drop-down menu or grid question in a traditional survey is now transformed as a visually engaging set-up where participants are given an instruction, and we watch their behavior and choices.

**How changing contexts or stimuli gives us the why**

Games give us constructs in which we make decisions, and those constructs are answerable for the “why.” The why comes when we see what contexts and other stimuli drive choice.

Why did the participant choose X, Y and Z? Was it a specific budget, limit on time, or even being immersed in a relevant narrative which spurred a relevant emotional state? These would be the whys behind the whats.

Research tells us that humans can be appalling at articulating the reasons why we do things. We are irrational creatures, after all. As such, some researchers do away completely with the need to make participants post-rationalize their decisions. In a research game, sure, you can prompt participants to post-rationalize, but the whole benefit of observing behaviors in context is so that you don’t have to.

**Pointers for...**

Start by practicing. Storyboard real research projects as games. Stick men drawings are okay! Pointers include:

1. **Ensure you have solid foundations.** Before applying gamification, make sure that the basics are done correctly. Use font styles and sizes that are readable on large and small screens. Ensure that the experience is device-agnostic. Make the wording/tone conversational. Ensure there is a seamless user journey from the initial contact through to completion and beyond. For advice on this area, Annie Pettit’s book *People Aren't Robots: A Practical Guide to the Psychology and Technique of Questionnaire Design* is a great read.

2. **Start with the four game ingredients and add narrative.** Use goals, opportunities for autonomy, feedback, and rules with a story. Think: What storyline can I create that’s relevant to the research content? What feedback will I give to the participant? What can/can’t the partici-
research purposes, I could gain insight into how that scenario made participants feel, and what the key challenges were, amongst other insights.

While using games this way might sound marvelous, complex, or downright far-fetched, you might be wondering how you would go about creating your own research games.

When you have a moment, open your smartphone app store and search for the app “Episode” (Episode Interactive LLC). Choose one of the games. Each game is a story. Characters are put in different scenarios and based on their behavior and choices, the story moves in different directions.

If we stop thinking about this as a game, and start thinking of it as a platform for game-based online qual, we start to see how powerful a tool this can be for data collection. Essentially, this is exactly how we can use existing research software to create more natural conversations with participants. Episode shows us how games can offer research experiences that feel more true and reflective to our real lives.

Other Benefits of Games-Based Research

In the games I’ve produced for research clients, it is common to expect a study to finish earlier than the field expects because of the increased levels of response and completion rates. This saves time and money for everyone involved.

Participants often ask to play more of our ResearchGames and make voluntary comments about engagement—this one from a game blogger who participated in one study: “I was significantly more invested in this process than I have ever been in market research.” In our partici-

For Designing Research Games

3. Build harmony. Your game, its story, and the rewards must marry harmoniously with the research content. If you’ve done it right, you shouldn’t really be able to differentiate the research parts and the game parts. The game design must be driven by the research topic and objectives. Do not design for design’s sake.

4. Offer meaningful rewards that are reflective of effort. You may design your game-based research using levels, in which case, there should be a reward after each level. Rewards can be in-game rewards and do not have to be cash or gift certificates although you may still wish to provide your regular incentives for taking part. Such in-game rewards should be harmonious with the game and research content. Be inspired by real digital games to see what kinds of reward systems work and how they are unified with the game world.

One way in-game rewards work well is when they help progress the narrative or help the participant overcome other challenges in later levels. Also, in-game rewards should hold the same weight to the time, effort, and complexity of the scenarios and/or questions that the participant answered. For example, offer personalized downloadable certificates to reflect how the participant has “levelled up,” through to rewarding via promotion. A participant who started the game as a marketing intern might level up to the president of marketing. You could also give badges and points, but remember that the rewards should reflect the wider narrative and relate to your research content.

5. Build in emotion and use simulations—with care. Relevant emotional contexts can be constructed through music, imagery, color, narrative, countdown timers, or all the above combined. Using these methods—and getting it right—requires practice, atten-

Summarizing the rewards participants have collected throughout is another way of recognizing efforts and providing feedback. This participant levelled up from marketing intern to president of marketing in under seven minutes.
Encouraging play with intrinsically engaged participants is not just useful for research, it’s crucial.

participant feedback, “Thank you” is by far the most frequently used term. Clients often comment on how much more insightful the data derived from our ResearchGames are compared to that from traditional research. In one recent project, game-derived insights were translated into product development for a clothing brand. In other studies, insights have helped design new concepts for how we identify ourselves, launch new food products and help education institutions communicate better with students. Game-based approaches lend themselves to a diverse range of subjects and business needs.

But if it’s Not Broke, Don’t Fix it

As I was preparing this article, I took stock of what is currently going on in online qual. I looked at marketing research online communities (MROCs), one of the most popular methodologies of research. Dub, a company based in London and that specializes in MROCs, showed me a case study where participants were asked to give their thoughts and feelings around what is a sensitive health related subject.

What I saw astounded me; there was a great deal of intrinsic engagement and emotion, not to mention a tremendous participant response and empathy from the moderators. These participants were having a research experience, not just taking part for an incentive. If one of the key outcomes for using games is intrinsic engagement, and you already have that, then why change something that’s working? For subjects or audiences where activity-based approaches and empathetic moderators are not enough, consider adding game-based techniques. The boost in engagement through gaming could lead to quality insights.

We might not be able to dodge bullets like Neo, but with immersive, experiential game-based approaches, your research can gain all the richness, emotion, observation, intricacies, and nuances of qualitative research, but to a quantitative scale.

Questions? You Won’t Need Them with Game-based Research CONTINUED

We can make games and simulations for any research subject; we are truly only limited by our imagination.
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How Using Empathy in Research Makes for Powerful Storytelling

I want you to imagine that you are at a baseball game. You and your friend were able to land great seats right behind third base and you find yourself closer to the action than you’ve ever experienced at any professional sporting event. The game is in the fourth inning and your team is down by a run. As the pitcher for the opposing team takes the mound, you hear the crowd start to jeer, heckle, and shout the occasional obscenity. You find yourself getting caught up in the groupthink of the crowd, resonating at some level with their anxiety and desire for a big offensive inning from the home team.

The pitcher quickly throws 2 strikes… your frustration begins to grow. Almost another man out; another lost chance at a run. You hear the guy behind you lament, “C’mon man, swing the damn bat!” Then you watch the pitcher wind up and deliver a fast ball in the middle of the strike zone at 96 mph and without time to think, you experience something that literally causes you to gasp, moan, and cringe all at the same time. The batter swings and shoots a rocket straight back at the opposing pitcher. It comes at him so hard and so fast he doesn’t have time to react. You hear the ball crack him in
Only then does a heightened sense of concern roll over the crowd producing silence as everyone leans in to see if the pitcher is alright.

As you read this story, what are you experiencing in your head and in your body? Do you find yourself cringing? Leaning in? Wondering if the pitcher is alright? Do you find yourself experiencing the pain that you imagine the pitcher is feeling? Do you try to avoid the feelings that have been stirred up in you while watching this happen?

This same thing happens when we watch and observe and identify with someone steeped in a tense situation. It’s why we cry when we watch a romantic comedy, or cover our eyes when we watch a scary movie. It’s why we lean toward the end zone when the running back of our favorite team is trying to cross a goal line in a close football game. It’s why we laugh when we watch a baby laugh on YouTube. It’s why we get uncomfortable while watching an episode of The Office every time Dwight Schrute or Michael Scott start talking.

Think about this for just a second. Do your tears, laughter, leaning, or covering your eyes have any impact on the outcome of that story or game?

The answer is no, but for some reason we still find ourselves, mostly subconsciously, taking on the action and emotions of the people in the stories. Why? It’s this innate, powerful, yet greatly misunderstood tool within all of us. It’s Empathy!

Empathy: Empathy is allowing the condition of another person (emotional or physical) to inhabit us and allow us to feel or experience what the other person is feeling or experiencing—without losing our own identity in the process.

Exploring the Feeling of Empathy

Stories make us feel something. Our brains are wired for stories. They are authentic human experiences that engage our imagination and help us to connect with one another empathetically. Data only begin to have meaning when being used in support of a real person’s story. Effective storytelling can transform the brand-to-consumer relationship into a human-to-human relationship.

When we are presented with facts and figures, only the language processing part of the brain is engaged. We naturally start to process the facts and question their validity rather than care about the people being represented. When we hear a story, our whole brain goes to work creating images and empathic connections. Empathy is an innate problem-solving mechanism. We can solve other people’s problems by allowing ourselves to be encoded by their emotions as if those emotions were our own. We call this full-body problem solving.

Head, Heart and Gut

While empathy is a tool for understanding people, it is so much more than that and there is an incredible amount of science behind how it works. In fact, as time goes on, we continue to become more and more knowledgeable about the
problem-solving capabilities that exist in our brains and in our bodies, that are mostly unconscious. Scientists are constantly uncovering pathways and mechanisms that exist to help us solve problems and in many cases, survive. Let me show you how this works with an example.

Understanding Emily

Let’s say you’re working with a pharmaceutical company and their team wants to understand why young moms with kids resist taking insulin, particularly in the evenings.

You need to tell the story of these women who don’t take their medicine so that the company can innovate and create ways to remind them that they need to take their medicine. You put together a nice graphic that explains everything you found out about them through data and conversations so that everyone is on board and ready to innovate solutions for these women. Maybe your chart looks something like Figure A.

You can see that the target is typically 35-44 with young kids. You can see all the reasons that she says she doesn’t take her medicine. The next likely step would be to create things that help her remember to take her medicine...right? Actually...no...this isn’t right.

The fact is, we heard all the same things that other research firms heard in their research. The difference comes when we apply empathy to our observation.

While we were in the homes of these women, we noticed that they were busy and had a lot of things to do during the throes of the evening. They were coming home from work a little frazzled, or picking kids up from practice, making dinner, getting their hustle on for their side business, and so on. During all of this, we noticed that they didn’t take their medicine, so we asked them (verbally), “why didn’t you take your medicine?” The answer was standard across almost every one of them. “It’s hectic, it’s busy, I forget!”

Here’s the problem...

Only 7 percent of feeling or attitudinal communication is conveyed verbally. The other 93 percent comes in the form of body language and tone of voice. (Mehrabian’s Communication Theory, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mehrabian) Someone from the team spoke up and said, “Hey, I noticed that every one of these women had the same body language and same tone with their families. Most have shoulders turned down which indicates shame and most of them roll their eyes, which indicates contempt, and most have a very sharp tone with their kids, indicating frustration. Something else is going on here...she is not just forgetting to take her medicine. Can we explore this further?”

Through the use of story and metaphors, we realized that the reason she doesn’t take her insulin in this particular part of the day is because of the following...

“Every time I put that needle in my arm, I am reminded I’m broken, and I...”
The Way of Empathy

If time was taken to slow down and understand her empathically as a human being, it would position the company to create products that are more seamless and discreet. Think of ideas like the patch or the pump and the impact they are making in the marketplace. Or, what about time-release delivery systems in alternative shapes and forms, which allow her to take her insulin less often.

Also, if time was taken to slow down and understand Emily, the company could create campaign messaging to empower her, make her the conqueror of the disease. As a brand, it may have the power to come alongside her and make her the hero versus the broken Mom.

Game Dynamic

Brands have such power, but companies don’t always take the time to position them in a way that puts the consumers they are trying to serve truly at the center of their efforts. In many ways, it’s very similar to the baseball story that I shared earlier. In most companies, we spend our time “doing our jobs.” We continue to run around the bases, catch the ball, throw the ball, scoop up grounders, and run after the base hits, but we forget about the hurting pitcher in the center of our diamond.

We call this the game dynamic.

This is when we continue to gather data left and right. We commission the next quantitative study or qualitative focus group. We sit in back rooms and interview people one after another for an hour each and hear the same traditional insights over and over without applying an empathic lens to what they are really saying to us.

Don’t get me wrong. Data are important, and we should always be collecting information about the people we are trying to serve. I am not knocking that at all. In fact, I cut my teeth as a moderator conducting focus groups for years. All data collection has a purpose and limitations.

I encourage you to slow down and take the time to understand the person in the center of your diamond. Once you land on the big empathic, human truths that really guide the decisions of the people you are trying to serve, you can speed up your idea pipeline because you and your company are compelled to solve the real and deeper issues that exist below the surface.

Resonance

What if companies, brands, and individuals took an empathic approach to gain the trust of the people they are trying to serve? Those people would trust the companies, brands, and individuals who took the time to slow down and listen. Leaning in and discovering the deep truths that make us all human is a fascinating thing.

The answer lies in this little known or talked about tool called Resonance.

You need to resonate with the people you are connecting with in your research. Now, their situations may not be exactly the same as the events in your life, but if you found yourself leaning into their story, then you are resonating through an empathic connection with the individual.

When you understand empathy at this level, you begin to see people differently. In fact, you begin to see people who are different than you on the surface in a unique way that allows you to understand who they are and where they are coming from without judgment or contempt.

The Beauty of Bias

As a researcher, I was classically trained to be completely unbiased in my approach to understanding other human beings. Nowhere is this more profoundly displayed than in the focus group room. You are well aware of the fact that mod-
operators are hired because the client is too close to the work and will bring a bias to the research, while an independent moderator, who is not attached to the initiative, will ask questions without any thoughts of his or her own coming into the discussion.

Can I challenge that for a second? At the risk of ruffling feathers, I would like to introduce something that is critical and central to the power of empathy. It is not possible to connect to another person empathically without bringing your own story/experience into the equation. By the very definition of resonance, I must draw from my own experiences and how those experiences affected me and caused me to feel in order to experience and feel what another person is going through. In other words, bias is a necessary tool to draw me into a deep empathic connection with another person. If I don’t draw from my own experiences, then I cannot relate to what the other person is going through. And if I cannot connect at that level, I cannot begin to create solutions to solve for the deeper needs.

While bias can get in the way in a traditional research setting, it is at the very core of empathic understanding, eventual innovation, and problem solving. Said another way, if I can resonate and feel what the other person is feeling or experiencing, I am compelled to act on his or her behalf which forces and compels me to innovate and solve the problem. If I am just taking in data and trying to rationalize the issue from an unbiased standpoint, then I am going to innovate from an unbiased position.

Think of the diabetes example that I shared with you earlier. What if we didn’t bring bias to the table in that situation? What if we only took the information available on the data slide and went with our unbiased response? We would be where many companies end up, producing a lot of data response ideas like a reminder app for her phone or a buzzer on the package, etc., when in fact, we needed to draw from a biased response that would allow our team to feel broken like she did. To take it personally and at some level be so compelled to solve it that we can’t sleep at night until we know we’ve innovated thoughtfully and fixed the problem for her. This is the power of empathy. As researchers, marketers, salespeople, planners, creatives, and small business owners, it is not just our job but our responsibility to show the world the power empathy has to change the marketplace and each of us for the better.

From Bias to Empathy to Messaging Innovation:
I was in an immersion interview in Spanish Harlem talking to a young man about body wash. As I began the interview, I looked around and saw drug needles and pipes on the windowsill. Then his 2-year-old walks across the kitchen in a full diaper that needed to be changed. My implicit bias, “This guy is a drug addict and he has a child that he can’t take care of.”

Then I decided to empathically connect. It turned out that his girlfriend was in rehab, and he was left with their 2-year-old son. Through his body language, his tone of voice, and a storytelling exercise, I found myself connected at a deep level with a young dad who was doing everything he could to break the generational curses of poverty and drug abuse in his family. While I don’t have as difficult a story personally (raised in a lower middle-class home), I do remember how incapable I felt as a new dad, not having a clue how to raise a child with the generational curses that live in my family. Not the same curses, but similar challenges. Thus, the empathic connection.

This led to messaging innovation that would help define what it means to be a good father and a good man.
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Best New Travel Apps

A career in market research goes hand-in-hand with a ton of time on the road and lots of last-minute travel needs. Fortunately, for the road warriors among us, there are now dozens of new apps to help with everything from same-day flight and hotel bookings to helping you find a reasonably priced parking spot. Read on for some of the best new travel apps of the year. I use a lot of these and absolutely love them! Unless noted, all apps are free and available for Android and iOS.

**Apps for Flying**

**GTFO (Get the Flight Out)**

If you’re looking to book a flight tonight or tomorrow, this app from flight tracker Hopper is your go-to helper. The inventory is from major airlines as well as low-cost carriers, and the prices are always favorable.

**Dealray**

The $9.99 per month members-only airfare tracker finds low-cost flight deals and sends notifications when it detects massive price drops, error fares, or flash sales. iOS only.

**Grab**

If you’ve only got a few minutes for a meal before boarding a flight, Grab will let you look at airport restaurant menus ahead of time, map them in the terminal, and in some locations, order in advance and pick up your food on the way to the gate. The app currently serves 174 eateries at 17 airports in the US.

**AirHelp**

Get paid for your canceled, delayed, or overbooked flights. AirHelp goes to bat trying to help get disrupted travelers money for their woes: the average reimbursement is more than $500 per claim, and the company takes a 25 percent cut.

**Apps for Lodging**

**AsYouStay**

A typical hotel stay has you checking in around 3 p.m. and checking out by noon. This new last-minute-travel app is looking to upend that tradition by giving guests more flexibility to choose when they arrive and depart. AsYouStay has partnered with more than 50 properties in New York City and a dozen hotels in Miami’s South Beach, with properties in Chicago and San Francisco coming later this year.

**Chatnbook**

It’s like Tinder for hotels. After you’ve entered your destination, dates, and preferences, the app presents a series of property profiles with photos. Tap on the green thumbs-up or the red thumbs-down and you’ll later be contacted by the hotels you’ve “liked” with their best rates.

**Dayuse.com**

Extra-long layover? Use this app to book a hotel room for a few hours to grab a shower, take a nap, or just freshen up after a red-eye. Dayuse offers hotel rooms for up to 75 percent off regular nightly rates at 3,000 hotels around the world.

**One:Night**

Similar to Hotel Tonight, the new app from the operator of Standard Hotels offers same-day stays at more than a dozen luxury hotels in New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, and Austin, Texas. Every day at 3 p.m., the app unveils discounts for that evening.

**Roomer**

Use this app to get deep discounts on hotel rooms from people who have had to cancel their trips, and save 30 to 80 percent. Likewise, if you’ve prepaid for a...
nonrefundable room, you can sell your reservation on the app.

**TripHappy**

This browser-based customizable search tool uses big-data analytics to comb through 37 million user reviews to determine the best places and neighborhoods to stay in. Sort results by price or rating.

**Vacasa**

This vacation rental manager recently expanded to 15 states in the US and it now also offers apartments and homes in Latin America, Italy, and Spain. Unlike VRBO or Airbnb, the properties are cleaned and managed by Vacasa, so you’re not dealing with the owner.

**Streetography**

For anyone missing the recently retired Maps feature on Instagram comes this new service that allows you to preview neighborhoods with user-generated photos. Want to check out an area before you book an Airbnb stay? With better photos than Google Maps, Streetography covers most major cities in the US, Canada, the UK, France, Russia, and Australia.

### APPS FOR TRIP PLANNING

**PlanChat**

Great for group travel, PlanChat lets connected travelers construct their own itineraries. Add restaurants, activities, and sightseeing ideas, plus keep track of expenses. You can also use it to share photos and videos with the group.

**ItsEasy**

Passport renewal has never been so easy. This app will e-mail you the forms you need and turn your phone into a passport photo camera. Print the forms, mail them to ItsEasy using the trackable USPS priority overnight air bill provided by the company, and you’ll get your new documents in two to three weeks. The $29.95 service charge and government renewal fees can be paid via the app.

**Wego**

The metasearch travel site’s upgraded app lets you scour more than 700 sites at once to give you the lowest prices currently available for airfare and lodging, sometimes with better pricing results than Kayak or Momondo.

**Trip.com**

This app is loaded with suggestions for dining, activities, and events, which you can search based on your travel preferences. It also offers savings on hotel rooms that average around 25 percent off published rates.

This list is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to travel oriented apps. With so many options at your fingertips, there is no excuse to overpay for last-minute trips and no reason not to take advantage of all the perks that business travel has to offer.
Aging in Place: HOW THE BOOMERS WILL RETIRE

On New Year’s Day 2011, a momentous thing happened that initially went unnoticed. On that January 1st, roughly 10,000 Boomers reached the age of retirement. And on the following day, another 10,000 Boomers turned 65. And we will continue to see 10,000 people a day turning 65 for the next 20 years!

This is the generation that defied convention. Boomers believe that 60 is the new 40. They have seen the average life expectancy increase by 15 years during their lifetime, and they intend to capture every minute of their “golden years” doing something interesting and enjoyable, crammed full of life experiences unencumbered by nuisances like declining health or a decrease in mobility.

Their expectation is that retirement means you live a life where the primary change is that there is no need to go to work every day. The three legs of the Boomers’ retirement stool consist of good health, a good income supplemented by savings, and a good home. It is this last leg, a good home, that this article will examine.

Aging in Place

According to AARP, roughly 70% of the Baby Boom generation intend to live out their lives in a style called “aging in place,” remaining in their homes and living a full life. The future they foresee does not include retirement homes, assisted living facilities, or nursing care. Many Boomers have been in their current homes for years and are now mortgage free and established members of their local communities, plus it’s common that most of their family lives within 100 miles of their home.

Put these factors together and it’s obvious why the Boomers are reluctant to move. Everything that’s important in life, whether working or retired, is right there, readily accessible, and comfortably familiar. This holds true for the local bake-shop, car mechanic, or favorite doctor. For these and other reasons, aging in place is clearly the preferred option.
However, when we start to look at what the trend toward aging in place really means, we find that there are multiple definitions and degrees of complexity for developing what might be termed an optimal aging-in-place solution for Boomers. In fact, the entire construct of aging in place is a moving target because the needs of those who are living an aging-in-place solution may change dramatically over time.

The simple fact is that few people are as capable of taking care of themselves completely at age 80 as they are at age 60. Experts predict that more than half the population will develop a disability after retirement age so severe they’ll need assistance. Different people require different types of assistance as a function of their physical health and cognitive abilities. It’s not unusual to see someone who is quite robust physically dealing with the mental ravages of Alzheimer’s disease. At the other end of the scale are people who suffer from a degenerative disease or condition but are mentally sharp; they are physically quite limited in what they can do.

Those are the extreme cases and the most challenging for aging in place. But in the great bell curve of life, the majority of those seeking to age in place will be relatively healthy, mentally adroit, and physically fit enough to handle the vast majority of tasks that they need to do daily.

**Example of a Common Profile**

The challenge for those seeking to provide services in the aging-in-place phenomenon is to develop profiles of people for whom an aging-in-place solution can be developed in the context of a multitude of defining factors. Let’s start with a simple example, Bob and Alice and their mother, Connie. They all reside in the suburbs of a top-20 urban center. Connie is 71 and widowed. She lives not far from Bob and Alice, in the same three-bedroom single-story house she has lived in for 37 years. She has a comfortable pension. The house is paid for. She socializes with a broad circle of friends in the neighborhood and in the extended community. She is in good shape physically, taking daily walks and participating in a senior swim program twice a week.

But, Bob and Alice are concerned because Mom has fallen three times in the past year. Fortunately, she was not badly hurt, but they are concerned about the next time. They sit down with Mom and suggest that she might start thinking about selling the house and moving into an assisted living facility. Not surprisingly, this suggestion is not well received, with Mom stating categorically that she is able to take care of herself and that Bob and Alice are nearby to help her if she needs it.

Reluctant to draw a line in the sand, Bob and Alice take the path of least resistance, focusing on their biggest safety and security concerns—not just her recent falls but also that living in the house by herself makes her a ripe target for fraud or home invasion.

Bob and Alice gravitate toward a technology-oriented solution. The house could be monitored via a security system that includes standard entry sensors as well as interior and exterior cameras, all monitored by a security center that would inform the local police in case of an incident. This seems like a good solution to Bob and Alice. It gives them the ability to secure the house while also ensuring that Mom is okay. And it provides Mom the independence she wants. In case of emergency, she could call out a preprogrammed phrase to be picked up by sound sensors in each room, alerting Alice or Bob or 911 if needed.

Bob and Alice are delighted. While not ideal, this sort of technology offers a basic level of physical security as well as the peace of mind that things are under control, or controllable, in the event of an accident or other emergency. Both Alice and Bob feel relieved that they have developed a workable solution.

Unfortunately, that relief does not last long—when the three of them get together to discuss this technology approach, Bob and Alice are taken aback by Mom’s reaction, something along the lines of “over my dead body.” She grudgingly accepts the idea of cameras outside the house, but tells them, “I don’t want a bunch of gizmos watching me inside my own house. I don’t need some computer thing taking movies of me or telling you of my every move. I can’t believe you two would even suggest this! I admit I need some help with certain things, but I don’t need a babysitter or some kind of spy...
thing. If this is the best answer, then I don’t want it!”

Bob and Alice are thrown for a loop. They had expected some technology aversion, but they assumed that a bit of education and explanation of the benefits would sway Mom’s thinking. They were so confident of the value of the proposed solution that they had not even prepared a Plan B. So, back to the drawing board.

**The Need for Customizable Solutions**

Various permutations of this scenario are happening daily to those 10,000 Boomers who turn 65 every day. As people search for a “magic bullet” that enables them to remain at home, it becomes clear that the solution is far more difficult and diverse than it may seem at first. Here we are addressing Boomers as if they are a homogeneous group, with their needs defined by the simple numeric identifier of being age 65 or older. It’s not quite that simple.

For example, what kinds of aging-in-place solutions address the needs of people in multiunit dwellings versus those in single-family dwellings? What are the infrastructure differences that affect one’s ability to install security systems and other technology? Think about people who live in rural areas—how do you go about installing a security system when there are no system vendors within 100 miles? How do these solutions adapt to needs over a decades-long retirement?

There is some really great technology available for people looking for devices and systems that improve their ability to retire in place. However, the appropriate solution is frequently a collection of bits and pieces that are pulled together to satisfy the unique needs of each individual. These customized technology solutions are extraordinarily difficult to develop and sell.

**Implications for Marketing and Research**

What providers of aging-in-place solutions need is a package that has broad coverage capability for the widest possible audience of Boomers. This package approach needs to be open-ended so that it can migrate its functionality over time to accommodate system owners’ needs as they get older and require more assistance. This will require an extraordinary amount of work to develop.

The potential market for aging-in-place technologies and services is huge. What’s becoming evident is that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach.

With such a huge market driving innovation, companies, government, and other organizations will need to interview those retiring at home to figure out what they need and respond to. Welcome to a whole new frontier of products and services that must be conceived, tested, and rolled out. There will be tremendous need for research on products and services from every aspect of the economy and markets—architecture, health care, furniture, appliances, technology, food services, financial services, transportation, manufacturing, retail, entertainment, government, and more.

Research is needed to craft solutions around many retirees’ technophobia. What are the defining factors around someone’s willingness to attempt to live with technologies that are new and complex? Can related devices be made more user-friendly? Again, market researchers can be called on to help mine insights to better understand this elusive issue.

Solution providers will need to explore the changes in family and social dynamics that might occur as adoption of solutions grows and becomes more commonplace. Will there be a change in receptivity if the packages are offered as a way to stay connected with friends, family, neighbors, social acquaintances, and the world of people and places that are outside of one’s current network? Are there early adopters in this emerging market who will be able to influence their friends to work these new ways of doing things into their current lifestyle?

**And Even Deeper Questions**

All of this is just beginning to scratch the surface of our understanding of the aging-in-place phenomenon and its potential to revolutionize the way society interacts with senior citizens. What we need to do is take a deep dive into all the factors that go into someone choosing to implement an in-home solution. We are reasonably familiar with all the positive benefits that could be derived from such systems. But we’ve also seen examples of seniors rebelling against the aging-in-place silver bullet. What we don’t have yet is a nuanced understanding of what might drive rejection of aging-in-place solutions. Without that, we have no chance of defining and understanding how to answer objections that are currently being raised. We’re back to basic market segmentation questions—why are the people over there more than happy to accept what I’m offering while the people over here are openly hostile to the very same notion?

The people who can get the answers to those questions stand to do very well in the marketplace. The market is very real, and the opportunities are enormous. Those clever enough to find and understand the motivations for accepting or not accepting enablers of aging in place will be sought after by many potential suppliers to this industry. Best of luck to those willing to take on this challenge.
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I recently worked on two major journey-mapping projects for a client who asked for my best ideas about innovating the insights. I was delighted when they agreed to try having the major deliverable be a website that would house all the multimedia files as well as the analysis and project artifacts. The final result delighted the client, and has led to some significant re-thinking about how team members conduct and report deep-dive qualitative research. The purpose of this article is to give you some insights into how to produce such a deliverable yourself.

**Key Advantages**

Let me start by telling you why I believe this type of reporting makes sense for qualitative.

---

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**Creating Immersive Qualitative Reports**

No matter how strong your PowerPoint skills are, the richness of today’s immersive qualitative projects cannot be fully captured in slides. Slides are too linear. The addition of hi-resolution images (collages, journey maps, still photos), audio, and video clips make for large files that are not easily shared. And we still need text, often lots of it, to present a nuanced analysis.

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**EXHIBIT 2**

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**TOOlBOX**

No matter how strong your PowerPoint skills are, the richness of today’s immersive qualitative projects cannot be fully captured in slides. Slides are too linear. The addition of hi-resolution images (collages, journey maps, still photos), audio, and video clips make for large files that are not easily shared. And we still need text, often lots of it, to present a nuanced analysis.
1. Website reports can be immersive, engaging and shared widely. I strongly believe that qualitative insights can drive innovation and competitive advantage in an organization, but only when these insights are shared. Putting our work into a format that can be easily shared and that is engaging and immersive is a goal we should be pursuing as an industry.

2. Storytelling can take on deeper dimensions. A collection of media and artifacts in a Dropbox-type library will never have the impact of the curated storytelling we now create in PowerPoint and Word. We want to build on this type of storytelling in new report forms. While clients may value an organized archive of media across multiple projects, that is a library, not a report.

3. The insights stay alive and accessible. Insights gathering is near the start of the innovation process. It may be years—literally—before the customer experience, product, or technology changes we recommend come to full fruition. This means that a great many people will work on the project who have not been involved in the insights process. The farther away from the insights the development team gets, the more likely they are to lose sight of the customer. An interactive archive that allows team members to browse the material and dip into relevant videos can help the team stay close to the insights.

Web Architecture Is Well Suited to Meeting a Variety of Audience Needs

Every qualitative report serves multiple audiences:

- Executives who want quick access to the key findings, but also love a bit of video
- Managers who want more depth to develop well-articulated plans
- Agencies that want emotional tone, use of language, and all the wonderful squishy data that video can provide
- Digital experience designers who want granular detail about sequencing, irritants, and touch-points

We can plan web-based architectures that offer a pathway for each of these audiences, putting the user in control.

Options for Creating a Website Deliverable

You have multiple options for creating a website deliverable.

1. Collaborate with an Internet Services Provider (ISP) or web-design firm. I chose to work with an established business relationship, the ISP that has created and hosted our websites (Snap360). Writing a brief helped me clarify what I wanted, and gave the Snap360 team enough information to give me a proposal, a wireframe diagram (shown in Exhibit 1), costs and timelines.

   Once I gave them the go-ahead, they created a home page, navigation structure, and page templates (shown in Exhibit 2). These templates waited like a wedding dress, unused for several weeks while we were in field. Once the analysis was underway, I populated most of the pages with text and images myself. The designers also created some interactive features for the home page.

2. Outsource more. No one can write the words for you or identify the themes in your report. But you could ask the web designer to populate the site for you, using the words you have created.

3. Use online tools to create the site on your own. Many excellent tools are now available that make website creation relatively straightforward. You choose a provider, select a price plan, buy a domain, select page templates, and populate them with data and images.

You can do this with WordPress, Weebly, Squarespace, PageCloud, or many other DIY tools.

Hosting the Site

You will need to have a plan for hosting the site during creation of your website report, and after it is finished. Your client will want to see report drafts, and possibly suggest changes, so you will need to be able to grant them access with a login and password.

A key decision is where the site will be hosted once the project is complete. You could roll the site up and put it on a portable hard drive. You could transfer all the files to the client, so they can host the site themselves on an internal server. Or you can continue hosting the site for the client.

You will want to decide whether to store a backup of the site, and determine if this is going to come with a cost.

Think about Workflow: Video

The more you use a bricolage or triangulation approach, the more elements of the workflow you need to manage. Adding a new element to the deliverables just adds more to the complexity of the work plan.

The most challenging part of the workflow, from my perspective, is creating the video vignettes. For a discovery-oriented research project, you can easily generate more than a dozen themes, each of which you can illustrate with a short video.

Our workflow follows these steps:

- Strip the audio file from the video, and have the audio transcribed
- Select verbatims from the transcripts and organize these into themes, noting the source and time code for all clips
- Have the video team compile the clips, add music and titles
• Once finished, send video vignettes to the ISP for upload into the site.

We treated French-Canadian clips the same way, but asked our partner Qualitative Research Consultant (QRC) to select clips that went along with our themes, and provide a translation that would be added as an overlay.

We were fortunate to be working with a skilled video producer recommended by another QRC, who was able to work on tight timelines. Even so, close collaboration as the schedule evolves is important. The video producer needs to be considered part of the research team and brought into discussions before fieldwork starts. They need a clear vision of what the final product is to look like, and they need access to any brand graphics well in advance.

More Cooks in the Kitchen

The potential for clients to enter into the creative process with the report is very high with this approach. You will have to decide how much input to allow, and at what points of the process. Changes late in the project will be more complex, and potentially costlier than just re-organizing your slide deck.

Security Considerations

With so much confidential data on the Internet, we wanted strong security, and elected to put the site on HTTPS, the secure site protocol. This created unexpected difficulties.

Large corporate clients that manage personal data have very advanced firewalls. It may surprise you to know that these firewalls give far more scrutiny to a site that is HTTPS secured than to one that is not. Here’s a good way to understand this—if you talk to someone at your front door through an intercom, you know you are secure, and have no need to worry. This is akin to the insecure HTTP situation—the firewall never “opens the door.”

If you plan to let someone inside your house, however, you want to be sure you are dealing with a safe person. You may ask to see ID. You may call a supervisor to confirm the individual. This is the HTTPS situation, and these are the kinds of checks the firewall runs on any site that says it is secure before it “opens the door.”

Consequently, our decision to put HTTPS security on the report site created a few access issues for the client that were not straightforward to resolve and far outside our knowledge base. We relied on our strong relationship with the ISP to see us through these challenges.

Legal and Privacy Considerations

With more people handling the data, especially the video, you need to be very confident of the privacy standards in place at each step. Having the parties sign on to the right agreements is essential.

There is little doubt that it is difficult, if not impossible, to prevent a determined hack. But many of us are comfortable using cloud-based file storage and backup. A web-based report is not that much different, even though it feels quite risky. Over time, we will learn to navigate these challenges.

Takeaway?

A purpose-built website may not be our final destination, but it offers wonderful possibilities for bringing the client into the customers’ world.

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Leading the Conversation in Qualitative
Moderating qualitative sessions with kids and teens presents unique challenges, and this is particularly true when the topic at hand is sensitive, such as medical experiences or conditions, underage substance use, sexual harassment or assault, or sexual orientation. Topics that feel more personal or are less socially acceptable to discuss amongst peers are more likely to make young participants uncomfortable. In this article, we offer some recommendations for planning and executing qualitative data collection with younger populations when you need to talk about sensitive topics.

Am I the Right Moderator for the Job?
The first step is to decide if you feel like the right person for the job. If you are uncomfortable discussing the topic at hand, chances are you will have a hard time making your participants feel comfortable. This is especially true with kids and teens. Although adults might be willing to push through some conversational awkwardness, younger people will look to the moderator—as the adult in the room—to tell them what is okay to discuss. For a focus group project involving teens and the topics of sexual harassment and assault, our moderators ran mock trials with each other to
experience asking the questions aloud. This helped identify ways to make the 
moderators and participants more com-
fortable—for example, we needed to 
provide participants with the legal defi-
nition of assault, but rather than having 
the moderators read the definition 
 aloud, we had participants review a 
written definition.

Setting the Stage

Once you have a moderator, the next 
step is to ensure that your data collec-
tion environment will make kids and 
teens feel safe discussing sensitive top-
ics. An important question we often get 
is who can and will hear individual 
participant responses? In other words, 
"Are my parents or teachers watching?" 
Make sure to be very clear at the begin-
ing of the study—both with kids and 
parents—about what will be discussed, 
how the data will be used, and to what 
extent parents, teachers, or other adults 
will have access.

For some projects, we have con-
ducted focus groups and interviews in 
schools and in kids’ homes. Although 
this allows us access to a more natural 
environment, it can also present addi-
tional challenges. Young participants 
may feel uncomfortable discussing 
certain topics, such as smoking or 
drinking, in school or at home, 
where they worry their parents or 
siblings could be listening. In these 
situations, be sure you are collecting 
data in an area where it is obvious to 
the kids they will not be observed. 
Additionally, assuring students at 
multiple touch points (recruitment, 
assent forms, session introduction) 
that their discussion will not be 
shared with their parents or anyone 
at their school has helped us coun- 
teract their fear of opening up.

Sometimes our clients have insisted 
on observing sessions in schools or 
homes that lacked a viewing room. In 
these cases, we sit the client out of the 
participants’ line of sight and make it 
clear that observers will not be partic-
ipating in the conversation. When 
conducting research with adults, we 
might simply say, “Some of my col-
leagues are observing in the back.” 
But when talking to kids about some-
thing sensitive, we think it is best to 
have observers introduce themselves 
by name and explain their role on the 
project (taking notes, running a cam-
era) to diffuse any sense of authority 
emanating from the back of the room.

Another strategy we have used to 
establish comfort is to have participants 
choose a pseudonym at the beginning 
of the session. This helps ensure anony-
mity, allowing participants to refer to 
each other without real names ever 
coming into play. We prefer providing 
participants with predetermined names 
to choose from because coming up 
with a new name on the spot could be 
stressful or even embarrassing, particu-
larly for younger participants. In the 
past, we have had good luck using clas-
sic celebrity names (James Dean, Audrey Hepburn), as these tend to be less common, which mitigates the risk that participants will end up with their own name. In addition to ensuring anonymity, this method can serve as a pressure release in a delicate conversation. We once had a pretty tense moment diffused when a participant referenced Shirley Temple's previous comment. Just be prepared that younger participants might not know who any of the celebrities are!

Let’s Talk about the Adult in the Room

The research environment is a stark contrast to that of a typical school or home environment in which kids are used to deferring to adults as authority figures. Younger participants look to adults to have the right answers and may expect the moderator to be looking for specific responses. You will need to set the stage, making it clear that the discussion is different from the classroom setting. We often say something like:

“I know you all are used to being in an environment where the teacher asks you a question, you raise your hand to answer, and there’s a lot of pressure to have the RIGHT answer. This is nothing like that. I want you to jump into the conversation as you see fit. I am not looking for specific responses; I want to get your perspective and hear what you think or what you have experienced.”

Additionally, when you are dealing with sensitive topics, you may want to consider not calling on participants for responses, even though this is a common practice to encourage participation. In focus groups we conducted on sexual harassment and assault, we decided upfront with the client that we would not put any pressure on participants and that it was fine if a participant never said a word. We were then able to tell participants, “Normally, in a focus group, I might call on you if you haven’t said much, but I am not going to call on anyone today—the only things you have to say are things you want to volunteer.”

Framing the Discussion and Maintaining Engagement

As you approach your more sensitive probes, we recommend reiterating your awareness of the topic’s sensitivity, the purpose of the research overall, and the voluntary nature of their participation:

“Okay. So this next set of questions might feel a bit personal or you might feel uncomfortable speaking up at first. That’s totally normal, since we aren’t really used to discussing these topics with others. But, this is a very important discussion to have, so I am going to ask you to be patient. If these questions feel too personal, please let me know, and we can try to tackle it in a different way.”

You may also want to be very clear about what it means for the research to be voluntary. We sometimes remind people at the beginning that they are free to get up and leave at any point or to say something like, “I don’t want to answer that.” Although you want your participants to actually participate, providing kids and teens with explicit instructions on what to do if they feel uncomfortable can actually encourage participation by giving them control of the situation.

Sometimes we offer our young participants strategies to help them discuss their experiences without revealing personal information or claiming the experiences as their own. For example, we have told participants it was fine to talk from a third-person perspective (“A friend of mine had this happen to him.”). Doing so relieves pressure participants may feel in admitting they have done or experienced something, while allowing them to share information.

Final Thoughts

Moderating sensitive topics can be tricky. Ensuring a sense of security among participants becomes hard when you are discussing something uncomfortable, even more so when your participants are kids and teenagers. Some of the suggestions we have made may differ from common practice, but we believe they will help you successfully collect data on sensitive topics from younger respondents while treating them with respect.
Qualitative Research has moved out of focus group rooms. The influence of Design Thinking, CX, and UX can move us into people’s environments. And technology lets us see into and be in people’s lives. This is great; conducting interviews in-context is beneficial in so many ways, but this alone does not qualify the approach as ethnography. This article provides a brief introduction to ethnographic research and gives direction to help QRCs incorporate some aspects of an ethnographic approach into their studies.

Ethnographic Versus in-context Research

Ethnographic research is different from conducting research in-context; it is a way of noticing—of framing—the research, of analyzing and synthesizing observations.

Much of the North American ethos rests on an individualistic context. We tend to focus on what an individual does or says, and on an individual’s beliefs and emotions. Ethnography adopts a cultural context, focusing on things that are socially shared and constructed and that form the backdrop for behavior and meaning. The focus is on participants within their culture.

Ethnography emphasizes Problem Space research rather than Solution Space research. An example might be helpful. A Problem Space scope might be: “How do people take care of their clothes? What role does this chore play in the family dynamic? What language is used to express their feelings?” A Solution Space scope might be: “What detergent messaging and package design is most relevant to consumers?” Solutions (tools, products) will still be part of the conversation, but the focus will be on the person in their environment.
The ethnographer lens is wider than the individual; it is the sphere of interaction, looking at the invisible web of meanings that individuals use to express or to position themselves.

Conducting ethnographies is like a weaving process, making a whole out of small instances. It entails going back and forth around observations, dissecting and reconstituting while simultaneously looking at the pieces and the lines that connect the pieces.

Ethnographic endeavor is based on immersion into people’s lives to understand their culture. It encourages the research team to really stand in the participant’s shoes, almost becoming part of their world in a way that can be frowned upon in traditional market research.

**What You Need for Ethnographies**

**Time to marinate:** Ethnography requires brewing time to collect ideas and let them marinate until a common thread or several connecting themes are found. A post from an anthropologist and creator of a mobile qualitative platform put it this way: “We could watch video again and again. And again, and again and again. If you’re not repeat viewing video, you’re not doing ethnographic research. What you are doing instead is qualitative research with a video camera.”

Another ethnographer noted, “A one-hour, in-home interview is not going to cut it. Everything is data; get into it. It’s not a topline mentality.” In practical terms, this means that interactions are more like 4-6 hours, rather than the shorter length of time spent in a focus group or in-depth interview.

**The blessing to re-frame:** In ethnography we start with a research scope, and with supporting assumptions—we need to start somewhere. But sometimes assumptions turn out to be wrong, so we need clients’ blessing to re-frame the premise, our understanding and the implications.

**Comfort with an inch wide and a mile deep:** Ethnography develops insight and meaning from observations from a small number of people (eight to ten people per market). It is made up of building patterns from a series of instances, observations, and happenings.

**Building an Ethnographic Style into Your Approach**

Here are some ideas to incorporate an ethnographic style:

**Cast a big net and note when something is interesting.**

One of the main characteristics of ethnography is to purposefully look around the immediate focus of interest. QRCs are experts at noticing, but sometimes the client scope narrows the focus to what’s in the brief. Notice anyway. Weave it into your synthesis. It might be as an aside or on a page of additional observations. It might not be directly germane to the research scope, but will add to the richness and value of your output.

**Incorporate clients into the team.**

Reflection and triangulation is an important piece of ethnography. Having clients as team members can be useful. Their subject matter expertise can enhance observation and analysis.

Ethnography is iterative, and clients need be part of making decisions about where to turn next. Last, an ethnographic approach can result in surprising outcomes, sometimes even re-framing the original premise. Clients need to be in the process so they are not surprised.

**Develop a framework through which to see and experience.**

If you are new to a slightly different way of seeing, here is a starting frame to consider. (This compendium is unabashedly and appreciatively summarized from Hy Mariampolski’s book *Ethnography for Marketers: A Guide to Consumer Immersion*).

**Cultural Behaviors: A Way to Observe**

- Rituals are patterned behaviors ingrained in our culture.
- Roles are observed through behavior and represent the meaning of a relationship.
• Practical activities: how someone accomplishes a goal with a product or brand; the steps, rituals, beliefs, habits, and skills involved provide a well of information.

• Performances: Lots of activities are done for other people, often as a way of fulfilling a role (e.g., holding someone’s coat for them).

• Games and diversions: What is beyond the fun aspect of the game or activity: bonding, education, etc.?

Cultural Meanings—emotions, ideas, and ideas attached to objects, ideas, or behaviors.

• Symbols are things that stand for other things.

• Signs help to orient us and, as such, affect our emotions and structure our behavior.

• Language, jargon, and slang are tools that people use to communicate with certain people and this use of language reflects local knowledge.

• Beliefs and values are the filters through which people govern themselves and help to make sense of the world.

• Attitudes, preferences, and opinions: These are driven by underlying meaning.

• Interpretation is about what people understand; it depends on experiences, beliefs, values, etc.

• Emotions and feelings are the inner reaction to what’s happening around us.

• Relationships are ties between people, institutions, and things. Focus on linkages and their meaning and benefit.

Cultural Tools—ideas and devices.

• Physical space relates how we arrange things (and how things are arranged for us).

• Technology often means revealing people’s mental models for how something should work.

• Norms are the framework that govern social organizations and processes.

They can be overt and formal or informal and understood.

• Techniques describe how something gets done and exist almost on a continuum: they can be rule-like or be more like short-cut tips.

The preceding is not a formula; it is a starting point for what you might want to attend to. And in the time of digital, self-reported data, it can help inform your instructions to participants of what to tell and show you.

Make sure you observe in person.

Self-reports are edited, and participants control what we see and the context in which we see it. Participants may not intend to conceal, but they don’t know what we are interested in. It’s the difference between being shown a messy fridge, but missing that the stove and counters are spotless, So, keep the following in mind when conducting ethnography:

• Make sure you spend time in people’s natural environment.

• Ensure self-report instructions capture the swaths of lives that you would want to observe in person.

Include problem space inquiry for context.

Even if the project scope is in the Solution space, part of the inquiry could be conducted in the Problem Space. It doesn’t have to be all or nothing. You may get pushback from clients, but you can help them see that they will have more insight for current and future decisions.

Ways to do this:

• Include 20 minutes or so for conversation in the problem space; it’s a good warm up and you’ll learn from what people tell others. For example, if the topic is about packaged stuffing, ask people to tell you about the last time they cooked a celebratory dinner.

• Conduct a few sessions that are in the problem space first to give context.

Make room for follow up.

In the analysis stage, you might find there are aspects you need to follow up on. Let participants know beforehand that you might need a phone call or a second visit. As well, let them know that if they have further observations, those thoughts would be welcome.

Consider including an ethnographer in the research team.

Consider getting expert help to scope a project or look over what you’ve planned. What you might pay in fees, you will more than earn back by gaining a sound approach, in learning what to observe, and in richer, more robust outcomes.

References:

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Qualitative Research Consultants Association was thrilled to have the winners of its 2018 Young Professionals Grant (YPG) program at the Annual Conference in Phoenix! Congratulations to the 2018 Young Professional Grantees.

- Philippe Boutros, Cascade Insights
- Warren Ciabattoni, 7th Sense Research
- Elizabeth Dengal, Fucrum Research Group
- Aimée Douglas, PhD, Bain & Company
- Jessica Fennell, Northstar Research Partners
- Reece Jones, Buzzback
- Anne Lee Groves, Lee Groves Consulting
- Marlena Mattei, KUDZU Research & Insights
- Amye Parker, Northstar Research Partners
- Jeannie Penn, Cello Health Insight
- Meagan Peters, Solution Partners Consulting
- Angel Requena, InsightsNow
- Andrew Russell, Sylver Consulting
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Leading the Conversation in Qualitative
Wired magazine has said that John Maeda is to design what Warren Buffett is to finance. Forbes named him one of the most influential people of the 21st century and millions have watched his TED talks. John is an MIT-trained engineer who became an artist in his mid-twenties and is known for his tech-enabled art, some of which is in the permanent collection at MOMA. He’s won several top design awards in Japan and the United States and has written best-selling books on design and business, including The Laws of Simplicity, which outlines interaction design principles for products and services. John was a professor at the MIT Media Lab and served as the president of the Rhode Island School of Design. He believes that art and design will transform our economy in the 21st century like science and technology did in the last century. Today he runs the design team at Automattic, the creators of WordPress, an open-source platform on which a quarter of the world’s websites are built. I caught up with John for this interview at MITX’s 2017 FutureM conference in Boston.

Kay: What kind of work you do at Automattic?

John: I have a long title—I am the Global Head of Computational Design and Inclusion. What does that mean? Well, Global—I’m in a company that is across 60 countries with 600 people, all working remotely. There’s no headquarters. And “Computational Design”—I’m interested in design that has been affected by Moore’s Law. Any type of computing-related design is my interest, which today is almost all kinds of design. And “Inclusion”—meaning that you can’t
Researchers who are inclusive of other disciplines are the ones that will have the longer career arc versus those who try to hold on to the way things used to be with kind of a shield around them.

That’s fun to watch by bringing in actual stakeholders who make this stuff. Some people thought that we were competing in the website market, like WordPress versus other different platforms. There’s tons of platforms out there but over time, I realized that the competition isn’t other website builders; it’s brochures. Little shop cards. Little things that you can hand out are bigger competition when you’re working with these small, local businesses because the need for the Internet isn’t as high.

So I just carry a collection of these things around and say, “This is our competition.” Like a Crocodile Dundee episode, “That’s not a knife. This is a knife.” This is our competition.

Kay: In your research process, you go where the users are and bring the makers with you.

John: Yeah. It’s part of a philosophy I developed. I realized a simple design principle that Bill Moggridge—one of the co-founders of IDEO—pointed out, design really isn’t about the making. It’s about the people. The design principle is how to get people to work together. It’s everybody. That’s my design philosophy.

Kay: Are you methodical and systematic in the way you do your research?

John: I think if you were in a super-large company, did a lot of roles and you’re working with a life-or-death product, like a nuclear reactor or some kind life-threatening thing, you do need those kinds of controls. But I think for general products that are more lifestyle products, more nice-to-have, versus essential-to-have, the kind of people who are working those systems tend to be less rules-oriented. You have to find a way to kind of nudge the system to produce an outcome.

I think that the fallacy of people who hold on to expertise is that they prevent more permeation of the skills. So I think that the researchers who are inclusive of other disciplines are the ones who will have the longer career arc versus those who try to hold on to the way things used to be with kind of a shield around them. That shield is breaking now, especially given the trajectory of computing and machine intelligence. If someone asked me, “When do you think it’ll happen?” I think three years from now. I think computers are going to be disturbingly capable. They already are but we forget that computing time is not linear. It’s exponential. So in three years, computers will be four times as fast as we consider them now versus like, you know, one point two (1.2) times better. And four times better is going to be pretty amazing.

Kay: With machine intelligence, how will companies gain intelligence about their customers?

John: Oh, they’ll be using primarily the rich data sources that exist, which is a huge problem because they’re filled with bias. Qualitative researchers need to recognize that the world is going to be even more numerically inclined because the processing power will be there and the data will be there. And why should I believe you, lone person, when these data say this? Qualitative researchers have to fight even harder, not because of self-preservation, but
Qualitative researchers have to fight even harder, not because of self-preservation, but because the products will be very poor to serve people who are outside that band of what is normal.

because the products will be very poor to serve people who are outside that band of what is normal.

Let me give you an example with Google Translate. Research at Princeton showed that if you try to ask Google Translate to translate the Turkish phrase “He is a doctor. He is a nurse,” it comes back as “He is a doctor. She is a nurse” because the statistical inclination of past data will say that more women were nurses. But if you update it to today, there’s probably more men, but the data lag the reality, right? Or in the United States, it might be easier to sentence people using past sentencing data which are biased towards people who are poorer, live in bad neighborhoods, and tend to be African American. Now you’ve biased an entire machine intelligence to sentence someone who’s from one of those regions. Right?

Kay: How should qualitative researchers work with AI?

John: I would advise them that they stay on top of machine intelligence—research Tensor Flow from Google. It’s a winning algorithm right now. And just be aware that this is all coming and not to be afraid of it. I mean, the worst thing to do is be afraid of something. Usually you’re afraid because you just don’t understand it. So my advice would be to learn the most advanced quantitative methods sitting out there. Use them. Try them out. Research their flaws. And research how they’re better than existing qualitative methods. And that kind of person is going to be resilient for the future.

Kay: In The Laws of Simplicity, which you wrote in 2006, you described your worries around privacy and the volume of data that is being collected on us. Today the problem is so much worse and because the user interfaces are so simple, we don’t see the data that’s being collected or where that data’s going. How do you feel about this issue ten years later?

John: I don’t know. I definitely don’t like it because I have a fairly good understanding of what’s happening. That said, I give in to the convenience of giving away privacy because I know it can do so much for me. Like if you told me not to use Google Maps anymore, I’d get lost all the time. Do I like the fact that Google knows where I am and where I’ve been because of it? Not at all. Do I like that I use Gmail and Google can mine all my past thoughts? I don’t like all these things. But I have to do it. So I worry more about those who don’t know anything about what this is. That’s why I appreciate the Europeans. The Europeans have a much more stringent data collection policy. You get all those notices. The Europeans are working very hard to prevent themselves from being monitored. They remember what can happen if that happens.

Facebook feels so good. Slack feels so good because they’re not open source systems. They’re paid for to be made perfect to gather all that information. Whereas open source software isn’t like that. But if open source software were to be made to feel good, to work well, and people used it, they would no longer be giving out their data to be parcel and resold. Facebook is like Disney World. I’m sure you’ve noticed that you can’t go into Disney World or Disneyland with your own food. You have to buy theirs.

Kay: Yes, they frisk you at the entrance.

John: It’s to monetize their existence inside of that wonderful world. So I think that we’re giving up so much of our time and freedom in these systems that are optimized to take from us. Whereas with open source, the philosophy is they don’t take. It’s for you to keep your own data. The podcast you make isn’t kept; it’s your data. The post you make is yours. But the other platforms, they take it and you can’t easily take it out of there.

Kay: Right. Because it’s somewhere out in the ocean now.

John: It’s in the ocean—yeah. And they’ll say “Yeah, we’ll help you take it out,” but they have no interest because they want you to stay there.

My advice would be to learn the most advanced quantitative methods out there. Use them. Try them out. Research their flaws. And research how they’re better than existing qualitative methods. And that kind of person is going to be resilient for the future.
QRCA continues to conduct and record interviews with thought leaders in the qualitative research industry. These podcasts shed light on subjects of great interest to those whose work involves qualitative research. Podcasts of these interviews are available at the QRCA website (www.qrca.org) under the Publications link as streaming audio and can also be downloaded to your laptop or portable listening device as an MP3 file.

In the latest episode, QRCA VIEWS Podcast Editor Foster Winter interviews Missy Carvin from New Directions Consulting, Inc., about her experiences using the World Café process for finding deeper connections with others. Recalling a presentation of this technique at a QRCA conference, Foster called on Missy’s expertise to assist him with the development of several successful client workshops during the past year. The World Café is a fascinating approach to holding conversations with meaning. In this structured but flexible methodology, participants are able to explore Questions That Matter, whether those questions are related to great social change, uncovering consumer motivations, or planning for the future of a group or organization. Missy has successfully facilitated several World Café conversations for a range of not-for-profit organizations. The World Café podcast just may whet your appetite for the use of this technique. Join us at podcast.qrca.org.

Check Out Our Newest Podcast with MISSY CARVIN from New Directions Consulting, Inc.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2018 QRCA GLOBAL OUTREACH SCHOLARSHIP

Watch for information on applying for the 2019 scholarships in the months ahead.

MPHO MPOFU, South Africa
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Leading the Conversation in Qualitative
I love going to the movies, don’t you? It’s a great way to get away from the everyday world of our ordinary lives. But the movies don’t always provide the same escape for me—many movies remind me too closely of the qualitative research world we all live in. Have you ever felt the same way? Maybe not, but see if you still feel that way after reviewing a sampling of hit movies...

**When Interviewer Met Respondent: An IDI Love Story**

Sally is a young qualitative research consultant who conducts an IDI with Harry, an annoyingly likable respondent. They bump into each other time and again over the years as they search for true love. Their friendship blossoms with an undeniable romantic tension that neither of them can deny, so they are confronted with a dilemma: can a man and a woman be friends, without marketing insights getting in the way?

**Indiana Jones and the Product Concept of Doom**

In this globe-trotting, swashbuckling tale, Indiana Jones is hired to test a new product concept. Besieged by local natives, rival researchers, and the evil advertising firm The Nazis Agency, Indiana forges valiantly ahead on his quest for the holy grail of product concept testing—uncovering at least one unique attribute of value to the target audience. But respondents hate the concept, and Indy is forced to face the reality that the treasure he briefly had in his hands will elude him forever.

**Jaws: The Respondent Who Won’t Shut Up**

Fear grips a focus group in a New England beach community as a mysterious respondent from the deep terrorizes other group participants, the moderator, and clients alike. Who will be the next victim? Roy Scheider and Richard Dreyfuss lead an all-star cast that leaves you squirming in your seat with unease as the gore unfolds...and the respondent just won’t shut up.
Star Trek Qualitative: The Wrath of Clients

The crew of the qualitative research company U.S.S. Enterprise faces its toughest challenge yet as a former client, Khan, escapes from a 15-year exile to take revenge on Kirk, the dashing qualitative research consultant. Our hero prevails in the exciting climax, but can the client relationship be saved?

Snow White and The Seven Dominators

Snow White is the fairest moderator of them all. Mrs. Queen, the senior partner in their research firm, looks into the mirror of a focus group facility and sees that Snow White has surpassed her talents, driving the senior partner mad with jealousy. She banishes Snow White to manage dull career-killing tracking studies. But the client on the tracking studies is impressed and, unbeknownst to the senior partner, engages Snow White to moderate a focus group. The group contains The Seven Dominators, but Snow White befriends and handles them all with aplomb. The evil senior partner hears of this and disguises herself as a client, firing Snow White from the project. The Seven Dominators mourn the loss of Snow White, but they rejoice in the end when the real client returns and rehires Snow White.

2001: A Qualitative Odyssey

The project that people are still talking about 50 years after the final report was released. Tracing qualitative research from the earliest primitive questioning to contemporary multimodal techniques, and into the distant future with artificial intelligence and behavioral economics, 2001 sets the gold standard for how insights are uncovered, codified, and implemented as marketing strategies. The dazzling final scenes portray various respondent collages that underscore the point not by revealing insights at all, but rather by showing the humanity found in even the most far-reaching technologies. After seeing this film you will never moderate the same again.

One-Way Rear Window

In one of Hitchcock’s best films, Jeff, an adventurous videographer, is confined to a wheelchair after an accident. While recuperating in a focus group facility, he witnesses a murder through the focus group mirror. The police can’t find any evidence of wrongdoing, so Jeff tries using projective techniques to provoke the murderer to reveal his dastardly crime. But the plan backfires, and the murderer comes after Jeff, pushing him through the one-way mirror! This taut thriller is guaranteed to keep clients from falling asleep in the observation room.

Guardians of the Facility

After seeing strange answers on several respondents’ re-screeners, a ragtag band of focus facility employees realizes they must stop group participants from destroying the facility’s recruiting database, which would send chaos throughout the galaxy. After saving the facility, the team answers a higher calling and collaborates to fight off evil and save facilities everywhere.

Groundhog Group

In this twisted farce, a moderator wakes up every day to lead the same focus group over and over again. No matter what she tries, she cannot escape her bizarre fate. After memorizing every respondent’s answers, manipulating clients, and even stealing all of the incentive money, nothing breaks the cycle until finally she learns the true meaning of life and awakens to a fresh new day of moderating.

Home Alone: Solo Ethnography

After an in-home ethnography just before Christmas, the research team accidentally leaves an apprentice researcher behind. At first frightened, she learns to gather insights by herself and to fend off a pair of “cheaters and repeaters” who try to infiltrate the home. This warm comedy will tug at the heartstrings of every client and research practitioner who has ever had to conduct a project over the Christmas holidays.

The Lyin’ King

Simba is a young man destined to become president of his father’s market research company. The company president’s jealous younger brother, Scar, plots to take over the firm by lying to clients about Simba and by pretending to be a respondent. Simba flees in shame, while Scar learns to lie so well that he becomes a credible respondent in every focus group the firm conducts and undermines the quality of all findings. As Simba grows up he realizes what Scar is doing. Simba creates a new research company and cleverly engineers a merger with the company his father founded and that Scar is now running. His partners and investors celebrate the synergies the newly-merged company will provide with its integrated vertical portfolio of research and consulting services. Once the merger is complete, Simba builds a coalition among the Board of Directors to oust Scar and restore dignity to his father’s firm as its rightful leader.

National Recruiting’s Animal House

The respondents have taken over the facility! In this raucous comedy, the Delta House is a poorly-run focus facility in town. But who wants to run a research company when you can have a party? Delta House is shunned by all the other facilities and put on double secret probation by the stern head of the local research association. Unfazed, the Deltas recruit an onsite toga party, with beer taste-tests, “personal products” workshops, and some usability testing too crude to be mentioned in this column. The local research association holds a mock trial to hold Delta accountable and expel them from the association, but the Deltas walk out and concoct a plan to disrupt the research association’s annual awards dinner.

35
Brothers and bestselling authors Chip Heath and Dan Heath (Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard; Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die; and Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work) have crafted another business book that joyfully leaps out way beyond the confines of the stereotypical business book template. This is definitely a book you should read and would enjoy reading.

The Power of Moments: Why Certain Moments Have Extraordinary Impact resonates on a deeply personal level. The authors ask and answer archetypal questions, e.g., "Why do certain moments influence us so strongly?" "How does it happen in a moment that something changes the course of your life?" "How is it that people can become lifetime friends after a brief conversation?" Not only do the premises and research of this book testify to such defining moments, but they also encourage our ability to look back on key moments in our own lives and to look forward to how we stay aware in the future to important flashes of impact.

The thesis of the book identifies defining moments as short experiences that are "both memorable and meaningful." They speculate that "there may be a dozen moments in your life that capture who you are" in big defining moments. But they believe that there are smaller defining moments within, say, the context of a trip abroad or in a product experience, and that businesses and organizations and, yes, individuals can actually proactively create these. In other words, despite what most people think, you don’t have to wait for small defining moments to happen. You actually have the ability to create these moments.

This book offers a brilliant map of the electrifying currents in our lives and how we can shape more.

The research behind this book shows that defining moments are "created" from one or more critical elements, and sometimes all four elements at once. The first element is elevation. These are extraordinary moments that "boost sensory pleasure," often with "surprise." Interestingly, they believe that many of life’s most memorable experiences occur when we are in our teens or twenties!

The second element is insight. I bet we have all experienced defining moments that “rewire our understanding of ourselves or the world.” It’s when we suddenly see things (good or bad) as they are. Another way of saying that is we “trip over the truth.”

The third element is pride. Think of the high we register in instances of achievement or in times of courage. Conversely, there are negative defining moments too, such as embarrassment, bitterness, betrayal, or trauma that impact pride, but this book focuses on the positive and shares resources for grief or trauma in its appendix.

The fourth element is connection. Often these occur during the social, religious, or work celebratory events of our lives that we share with others. But there are bonds that seal relationships in a matter of minutes when an intimate revelation by one person encourages another to risk his or her own intimate revelation.

Perhaps because I’m getting on in life, I found this book, its principles, its fascinating stories, and its impressive research to be remarkably inspirational and affirming. I discovered myself, even more than usual, thinking about the defining moments of my career, my childhood, my family, my personal relationships, and my own need to exchange intimate details to create a bond with someone I’d just met. I reviewed in my mind’s eye the moments in client relationships and qualitative projects where one or more of the four elements made or missed the mark. So far I haven’t resorted to making a list, but that wouldn’t be a bad idea.

There is so much more to this book than this review can capture. The specific case studies and other insights are very interesting and immensely helpful in understanding how moments are created. I urge you to read this book, not only to recall memorable and meaningful moments in your own life and work, but also to create a few more in the future.

The Power of Moments
Chip Heath & Dan Heath, Simon & Schuster, 2017
Reviewed by Pat Sabena
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Watching Closely: A Guide to Ethnographic Observation

Christena Nippert-Eng, Oxford University Press, 2015

Reviewed by George Sloan
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Christena Nippert-Eng’s Watching Closely: A Guide to Ethnographic Observation provides a clear, fresh, and crisp perspective on the role of an ethnographer and is as relevant today as it was when first published in 2015. Nippert-Eng, as a professor of Informatics at Indiana Bloomington University, uses the pointers in this book to teach her students ethnography from a practical perspective.

When she was a sociology PhD student, Nippert-Eng realized that nearly all of the available ethnography books focused on an ivory tower academic approach, which was not particularly practical for real world situations. Watching Closely was written to address these concerns and help ethnographers develop their observation muscles. In her book, Nippert-Eng closes the gap between academia and the actual practice of ethnography. The methods she uses are timeless, and can be utilized by ethnographers regardless of the observational subject.

There are numerous ideas contained in Watching Closely that will ensure that any reader will be able to learn new observational skills and/or hone their existing skills. The information provided is bolstered by Nippert-Eng’s strong background concerning the role of an ethnographer, details on the approach an ethnographer needs to take throughout the observation, and what needs to be done during the initial preparation for their fieldwork.

Nippert-Eng’s viewpoint on the best way to prepare for a fieldwork trip is helpful and practical. The book contains a total of nine exercises designed to train the mind of the fieldworker and sets the reader up to carry out hour-long observations with different goals on topics for the ethnographer to learn. By the final chapter, the reader will be able to move forward using much of Nippert-Eng’s advice.

By following through with the exercises in the second part of the book, the reader will begin to have a more in-depth view of observational skills to use in ethnography, a considerable understanding of what is being shared, and Nippert-Eng’s breadth of knowledge as an ethnographer. Each of the exercises has a full discussion about what is intended during that exercise, how it could be used, and what some of Nippert-Eng’s students have learned from the exercises. A companion website includes sample responses from students who practiced by observing zoo gorillas.

On a personal note, in my consultancy as an ethnographer, I observe humans, so my only complaint about the book is that the website used examples of animal observations and did not include examples on observing humans. However, most of the discussion for each exercise talks about humanistic encounters, so this lack of human observation examples does not impede the reader from understanding the practical and interactive aspect of the exercises.

There are nine exercises in this second part of the book, and the goal of these exercises is to strengthen the ethnographer’s observation muscles and teach the reader skills to become a better observer, and tell a better story of those observations. The book accomplishes that, and reinforces it through the sharing of ethnographic data on the associated website; the student participation provides examples of ethnographic observation.

Temporal Mapping I and II, and Spatio-Temporal Mapping II were the most interesting chapters. In these chapters, rather than simply observing what happens, the reader is guided to add time to the observation, and to observe what initiates an action and how others fit into that action. The exercises include many creative and practical skills for observation and analyzing data; each exercise builds on the lessons taught in the previous exercises. By utilizing these exercises, the ethnographer will see a complete picture of the observation. As Nippert-Eng says: “Think like a choreographer.”

Watching Closely is not a dry textbook. Instead, it is an in-depth and captivating read about how to become a better ethnographer. The goal of each exercise in the book is to strengthen the ethnographer’s observation muscles, teach skills to become a better observer, and to become a better storyteller of those observations.

This book is highly recommended for those who conduct actual ethnography (rather than in-home interviews), and want to improve their craft as an ethnographer. After reading this book, and applying information learned from this read, my observation muscles strengthened. By using the tools provided in this book, ethnographers will enjoy applying the new skills they learned from Watching Closely.
Innovation that is based on proven data can often fail, causing loss of millions of dollars. In Competing Against Luck, the authors—Taddy Hall, Karen Dillon, and David S. Duncan—surmise that the failure is often due to too much focus on data without enough understanding of the emotional reasons people make purchase choices. Their book outlines their Jobs Be Done theory which puts the focus on truly understanding why a consumer buys/uses a product/service, i.e., what is the job that needs to be done.

The authors make a strong argument against the current push that focuses primarily on data points of a particular customer segment. Instead they advocate the Jobs Be Done theory which puts the focus on truly understanding why a consumer buys/uses a product/service, i.e., what is the job that needs to be done.

The book is divided into three parts: an introduction to the theory; how to apply it in research/consumer observations; and the roadblocks an organization faces implementing this theory internally. While the third part of the book was a good reminder of the challenges end clients face, I found it less pertinent to qualitative research, so you can skim or altogether skip Part 3.

Competing Against Luck mentions storyboarding, ethnographic research, etc., as methodologies that can be used to identify and examine a job to be done. However, the book recommends a mindset shift rather than a particular approach, so qualitative researchers and users of qualitative research have the freedom to choose a methodology that works best for the project at hand, as long as it examines the key components of a job.

To identify and understand a job to be done, one must closely observe a consumer with a beginner’s mindset and remember that while consumers can’t always tell you what they want, they can tell you about and even show you their current usage habits, struggles and compensating behavior. In addition, a job needs to be understood within its specific context, including functional, social and emotional needs that surround the circumstance in which a consumer is trying to make this progress.

If one truly views a job this broadly, it becomes clear that a product’s competitive frame goes far beyond the traditional and expected. For example, if a consumer is hiring Netflix to help them relax, then Netflix isn’t just competing with Amazon Prime and Redbox, but also competing with video games, board games, and even a bottle of wine. When a consumer has an issue or a struggle, they can choose to address it any number of ways: adapting a current product, firing one product and hiring another, stepping into a different category completely, or simply doing nothing. It is only when we come to understand all these factors that the job to be done can be fully understood and innovated against.

Qualitative research is the ideal way to gain this deep understanding. And it’s important to remember that qualitative research, in many instances, is used to help innovate successfully. The Jobs Be Done theory can not only breathe new life into the qualitative discussion, but it also makes qualitative researchers an invaluable partner in helping clients meet their goals. My next job will be exploring the wealth of information out there on this theory and applying Jobs Be Done theory to my own thinking moving forward.
Creative thinking is an important component of qualitative research. Researchers need to be creative in how they approach research challenges. Participants in workshops or focus groups need to use their creativity to help innovate or improve concepts. The latest neuroscience suggests that creative thinking can be trained—that the brain works like a muscle and, if trained regularly, more creative connections will be created.

Highly creative people are good at seeing connections, but not everyone is a creative thinker. Creative Thinker’s Exercise Book, by Dorte Nielsen and Katrine Granholm, is a spin-off of Nielsen’s book The Secret of the Highly Creative Thinker. It is less of a traditional book you would read and more of a workbook filled with a multitude of creativity exercises, templates and examples on how to quickly boost your creativity, and help train your brain so you can make connections faster and more intuitively. Nielsen, who took the lead in this book, is a creativity author and speaker and Granholm is an advertising creative who created a mobile app for concept development and ideation.

The exercises are fun and fast paced, and in many cases, feel like playing games. These exercises can be done alone or with colleagues or even with friends or family. In a professional setting, the researcher or facilitator of a workshop can use selected examples to boost attendees’ creativity and prepare a group for a brainstorming session. The aim is to get people’s minds focused on connection-making. Great examples are given for visual connection-making, word associations and even storytelling.

In the introduction, Nielson explains why it is so important to be able to make connections. While a librarian brain only thinks very straight, a well-trained conductor brain would open up and connect to all sorts of ideas and juggle new combinations to come up with many new words around one single item. For example, when asked to make associations with the word “cat,” the librarian would think about a cat as an animal, but a conductor might bring up cat food, catastrophe, catfish … and thus allow for wild ideas. This all can be trained and Nielson offers templates to exercise the brain.

Two examples are “Word Chain” and “Inventions by Combinations.” With the Word Chain, you build your own chain of words to help become a conductor instead of a librarian. Take any word and add to it either before or after some new words that can conjure up many more new words. A drop could thus become a Dropbox as well as a raindrop, but there could be also a dropout, cough drop, temperature drop, etc. Making such connections will allow for an open mind in a creative session. As a native speaker of German, this example especially resonated with me because in the German language, you create new words by connecting two or more individual words to make up a new word with a new meaning. I found this to be a very fun exercise.

The second example, “Inventions by Combinations” has you thinking of two different normal items and putting them together to create something new and unusual, which can help lead to innovations. The author shows images of things and asks readers to combine them in new and imaginative ways. For example, the user is asked to combine an umbrella and a shoe and draw something that would include a shoe and an umbrella. With the umbrella fixed at the heel of the shoe to brake and make it slower, it could thus become an anti-stress shoe. With tasks like this, the brain gets used to letting go and creating fresh ideas and wild combinations. This makes for a great training exercise to prepare a group for coming up with new ideas or to increase idea production in an ideation setting.

Templates for alternative use, contradiction or rethinking the object support the brain to change perspective and open up for new ideas. Do as Dorte Nielson suggests and take your brain to the gym.
RESEARCH METHODS

RM01 - Practical Marketing Research: $2,795
- New York: Jan 23-25
- Chicago: Mar 5-7
- Nashville: Apr 17-19
- Las Vegas: June 5-7
- New York: July 23-25
- Cincinnati: Sept 11-13
- Miami: Oct 23-25
- Phoenix: Dec 3-5

RM03 - Designing Effective Questionnaires: $2,795
- Washington DC: Feb 6-8
- Cincinnati: May 1-3
- Philadelphia: June 19-21
- Chicago: Aug 28-30
- Las Vegas: Nov 6-8

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- Chicago: Mar 8-9
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- Cincinnati: July 10-12
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- Cincinnati: June 12-15
- Cincinnati: Aug 14-17
- Cincinnati: Oct 2-5
- Cincinnati: Dec 4-7

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- Cincinnati: June 26-29
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