



QRCA

INSPIRATION AND RESOURCES  
FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

# VIEWS

SPRING 2013  
VOLUME 11 • NUMBER 3

## *How FOCUS FACILITIES Are* **REINVENTING THEMSELVES**

*PLUS:*  
**RUNNING WITH CRAYONS**

**TRANCE... A TOOL TO DIG DEEPER**  
*CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN MEXICO:*  
**THE WHOLE ENCHILADA**



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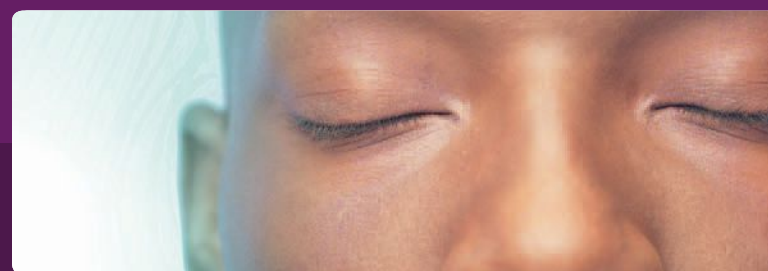
## *How FOCUS FACILITIES Are* **REINVENTING THEMSELVES**

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**By Laurie Tema-Lyn**  
Practical Imagination Enterprises  
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laurie@practical-imagination.com

*VIEWS* is a quarterly magazine business, where we are constantly living in the future, as it takes many months to create each issue. So, as we are dealing with snow and New Year's resolutions, we also are putting finishing touches on a magazine that you will see at the end of March.

# THE SPRING RENEWAL

**As** I write this letter during the last days of December, a fresh blanket of snow glistens outside. We are barely into winter, and I dream of spring, my personal time of renewal (aligning with my March birthday and the planting of my vegetable garden).

*VIEWS* is a quarterly magazine business, where we are constantly living in the future, as it takes many months to create each issue. So, as we are dealing with snow and New Year's resolutions, we also are putting finishing touches on a magazine that you will see at the end of March. I thought it might be interesting to use this letter to share a bit of what goes on behind the scenes to bring each issue of *VIEWS* to you.

We have an amazing team working on this magazine — twelve volunteer Feature Editors from QRCA, plus an excellent editorial and design team at our publishing firm, Leading Edge Communications, with whom we interface on a regular basis. We also have great support from QRCA's management team at Ewald.

Each Feature Editor is responsible for sourcing outstanding articles for his or her area, utilizing art, science and persistence to find material that will be informative, lively and well written, as well as contribute value to readers and still be timely when it appears several months hence! Our *VIEWS* editorial team meets quarterly by teleconference to debrief the issue that is wrapping up and to plan for the next one by offering suggestions about topics and potential authors. While sometimes an author comes to us with an idea, we generally seek out contributors based on their noteworthy presentations, articles, books or blogs.

Once a potential author agrees to write an article, the Feature Editor works closely with the author to make sure the product is high quality and meets our specs. Most articles go through a back-and-forth process as content is reviewed and tweaked. When the article passes muster with the Feature Editor, the author's agreements are in place and accompanying graphics or suggestions are gathered, then the article goes on to one of the Managing Editors to review. Again, some polishing occurs to make sure the article communicates well, is engaging, is not "salesy" and is not a topic that has been overdone. Then as EIC, I read everything, review each article in light of the issue's overall needs and parameters and, sometimes, do further editorial polishing.

I forward the content to Liz Nutter, a master editor and our editorial liaison with our publisher. While Liz does everything in her power to make our magazine look good, she also gets input from the advertising side of the publishing team. Bottom line: if an issue is light in advertising, we have to tighten the editorial.



Sometimes that can be easy, with a bit of editing or removal of a few visual elements. Other times, we must make difficult choices and hold back articles for a later edition. (If it was not clear in the past, we are beholden to our advertiser sponsors. A great big “THANK YOU!” to QRCA VIEWS sponsors who make this magazine possible!)

When the articles reach Liz’s desk, she begins an intense cycle of carefully proofing each submission, allocating space and working closely with the magazine designers at Leading Edge. We continue our dialogue to identify the cover story and other matters. When the issue is finally put together, the Managing Editors and I scrutinize the proof, marking necessary changes. After our changes are made and advertising is placed, the issue goes to print and is also prepared for our popular digital editions.

The road from “concept” to hard copy is about a five-month journey, with many helping hands along the way. It is amazing the amount of talent, dedication and time that goes into each and every issue!

Now, what do we have in store for your Spring Renewal? An excellent roster, I think.

- Managing Editor Joel Reish surveyed a variety of traditional and “non-traditional” research venues to discover “How Focus Group Facilities Are Reinventing Themselves.”
- “Trance: A Tool to Dig Deeper” describes the use of a controversial technique. Lisa Morgan shows how hypnosis-style explorations help respondents uncover unconscious associations and generate ideas.
- Rebecca Bryant’s “Running with Crayons” is chock full of specific techniques to harness individual and social crea-

tivity for generating new product ideas.

- Isabel Aneyba discusses why the Mexican market is a critical one for researchers, and she offers cultural cues and tips to be successful when working with Mexican consumers.
- Martha Guidry’s findings from researchers around the globe tell us that “Short Reports Are It!”
- To foster better dialogue and dynamics between research consultants and client/agency team “creatives,” see Bruce Miller’s article, “How Moderators and Creatives Can Become Better Partners in Driving Their Clients’ Business Forward.”
- You will also find reviews of two fascinating books, plus a little interactive fun with a humorous cross-word puzzle.

Plenty of food for thought, suggestions for action and inspiration for renewal. Enjoy! 📧

# We’d like to give you a hand



“QRCA moderators are those that go beyond the question on the page and produce the insights that make research come alive. It results in better research, and in turn better products, better companies, and sustains our industry.

**Thank you!”**

*- Jerry Carter, President*



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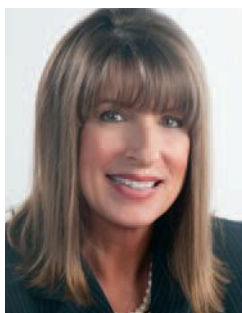
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**By Susan Saurage-Altenloh**  
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Spend more time achieving goals and less time worrying about whether you are capable of doing so. Explore new ideas by connecting with others in the business via QRCA's members-only Forum or public Qualitative Research Discussion LinkedIn group.

# INSPIRATION AND MOTIVATION

**It's** that time of year when first-quarter resolutions and goals have taken a back seat to the demands of the business world. Our aspirational selves have quietly slipped away, replaced by our career-committed, determined **workhorse selves**. Yes, now is the time to be gently reminded of the greater purpose of working in this business, of the reasons we so industriously apply our expertise to the jobs at hand.

In searching for personal inspiration, I found a plethora of wisdom (and motivation) in the form of quotes. Reading through hundreds of these, it was immediately evident that QRCA serves as a deep and complex resource of tools to help marketing and insights professionals achieve their objectives.

## Be inspired.

Look to your peers for support, suggestions, resources and different perspectives. Qcasts, *QRCA VIEWS* and podcasts, and QRCA's Annual Conference overflow with stimuli to keep you inspired.

"Cherish your visions and your dreams, as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements."

*Napoleon Hill*

"A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer; it sings because it has a song."

*Maya Angelou*

"Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes, the swing in your gait. The grip of your hand and the irresistible surge of will and energy to execute your ideas."

*Henry Ford*

"The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud."

*Coco Chanel*

## Aim high.

Breathing time on the blue planet is relatively short. Go for it... all the way and with all that you have.

"Good is not enough. You've got to be great."

*Simon Cowell*

"The beginning is the most important part of the work."

*Plato*

"There are two mistakes one can make along the road to truth... not going all the way, and not starting."

*Buddha*

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other."

*Abraham Lincoln*

"Achievement seems to be connected with action. Successful men and women keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit."

*Conrad Hilton*

## Stay focused.

Know where you are, where you are going and how you are going to get there. QRCA's *Professional Competencies* documents, as well as selected white papers, serve to help focus.

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

*Theodore Roosevelt*

"The key to success is to focus our conscious mind on things we desire, not things we fear."

*Brian Tracy*



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"Singleness of purpose is essential for success in life."

*John D. Rockefeller*

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

"If you hear a voice within you saying 'you are not a painter,' then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced."

*Vincent Van Gogh*

### Have faith in yourself.

Spend more time achieving goals and less time worrying about whether you are capable of doing so. Explore new ideas by connecting with others in the business via QRCA's members-only Forum or public Qualitative Research Discussion LinkedIn group.

"You have everything you need to build something far bigger than yourself."

*Seth Godin*

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us."

*Helen Keller*

"We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden."

*Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*

"My will shall shape the future. Whether I fail or succeed shall be no man's doing but my own. I am the force: I can clear any obstacle before me or I can be lost in the maze. My choice, my responsibility; win or lose, only I hold the key to my destiny."

*Elaine Maxwell*

### Stay the course.

Willpower is an amazing, intangible, yet influential element of success. The research professional's ability to persevere — to press on — ensures actionable findings and genuinely successful results. If only we could patent that persistence!

"Sheer persistence is the difference between success and failure."

*Donald Trump*

"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

*Harriet Beecher Stowe*

"Press on. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

*Ray Kroc* 



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# SHORT REPORTS ARE IT!

The Rite Concept ■ Avon, CT  
martha@theriteconcept.com

Curious, though, to know what others provide and why, I did my research. I posted the question on a variety of LinkedIn market research website groups and conducted informal interviews with my clients. With feedback from around the world, my conclusion is that reporting is changing, and if you are still writing long reports, you need to catch up!

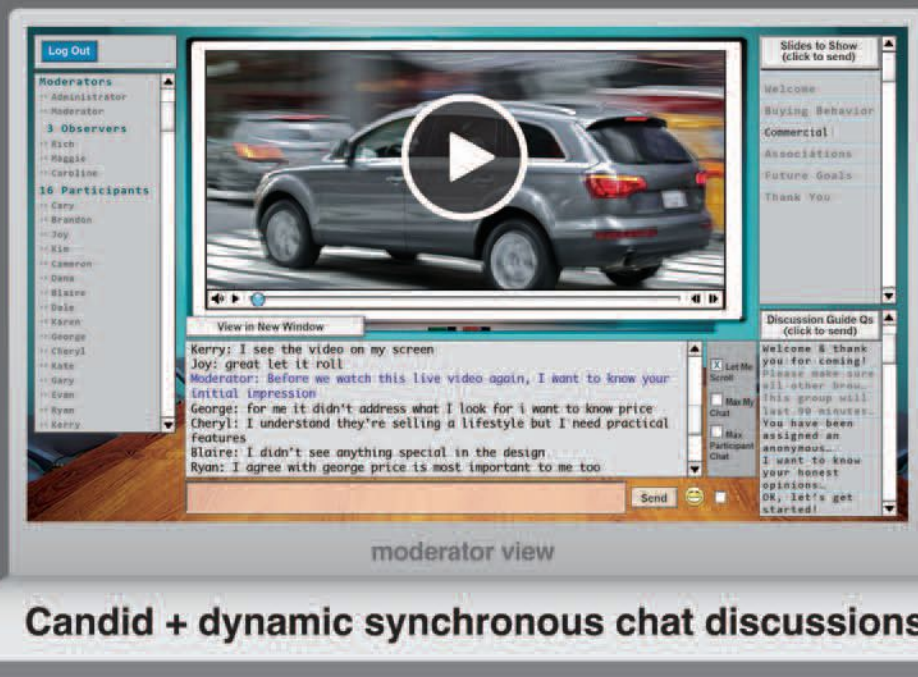
As Susan, a Toronto-based researcher, stated, the report length “depends a great deal on the topic and objectives.” If the research is purely for understanding

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and not action, the long report is probably essential. It often “boils down to what the client wants,” said Terri from Philadelphia. Yes, we generally do what the client requests.

Interestingly, many researchers felt that they put a lot of “fluff” in a PowerPoint to make it look pretty. Fluff, though, is not helpful. Latina from India pointed out, “The typical PowerPoint adornments [graphics and color] distract from what is really being said.”

The client demand for many quotes can also really expand a presentation, yet many researchers felt this was also completely unnecessary. Instead, Terry from Iowa explained, “Clients can misuse quotes and use them to support hasty generalizations.”

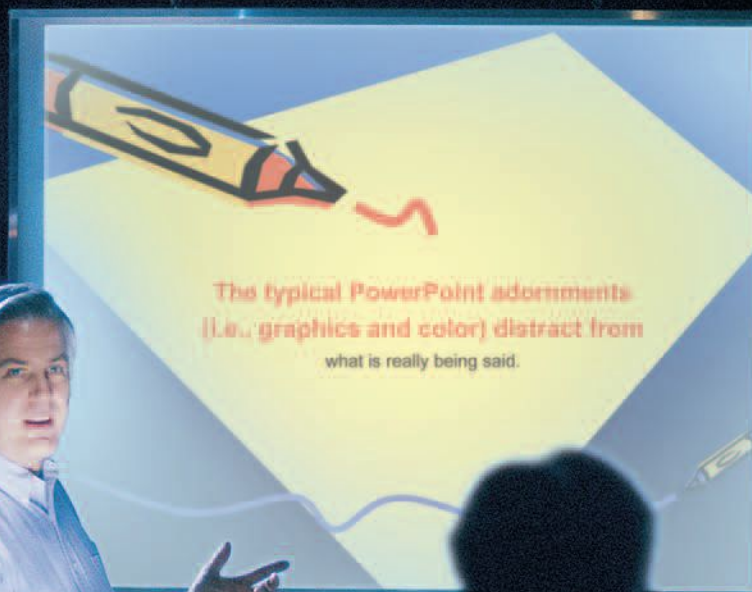
A few folks felt that a long report is ideal for bringing a less-knowledgeable/new employee up to speed, when the qualitative is final research with no follow-up quant or when an in-person

presentation is requested. Still, I can tell you this — the 100-page PowerPoint is a goner for qualitative. Those responding to my post said that clients have demanded that the qualitative reports be under 50 pages and preferably shorter. And here’s why.

Business decisions are made in days, not weeks. Twenty years ago, I worked as an assistant brand manager for Procter & Gamble, and it was my job to summarize qualitative findings in less than 24 hours. Even back then, decisions for next steps and actions were decided by the day after a qualitative study. Given that the pace of today’s work has sped up with technology tools, I highly doubt that decision-making has slowed. And, by the way, the P&G way is that if you cannot say it in one page, you are not thinking clearly.

When I spoke to a director of consumer insights at a major U.S. fast-food

The typical PowerPoint adornments (i.e., graphics and color) distract from what is really being said.





chain, he said, "Retail is always anxious for the decisions. We have to make decisions fast to keep up with the pace of business."

Global researchers also agreed. Mary, a researcher in Kenya, stated that "the short reports enable [clients] to digest findings faster and stay ahead of the competition."

### Qualitative Researchers Are Paid to Think, Not Regurgitate

We are no longer in high school where, as students, we are rewarded for "parrot-ing" back the teacher's information. Instead, we are paid to bring insight and to digest action from what we learn.

Celeste, a researcher from Missouri, commented, "Getting all the findings down to just five pages is far more work than the fifty-page ramble!" She is right. Think about it. Perhaps you pay a person to write your reports under

some broad conclusions that you provide. That person listens to the DVD and loosely transcribes all the information into a "report," which then often rambles on like a conversation rather than concisely communicating the primary points and highlighting the most insightful and actionable nuggets.

Communicating the key messages to the client is of utmost importance. Mike in Singapore boldly stated, "Long reports are written defensively for the clients who think they get value by the pound." None of us, however, wants to be thought of as a slab of deli meat, with our value measured in weight of report rather than content.

### Senior Managers Prefer a Short Report

According to a client, senior management "forces us all to get right to the point." In fact, a manager stated, "Sen-

ior managers just want WINK — What I Need to Know — nothing more, nothing less." As qualitative researchers, we provide an invaluable service to our clients by creating a brief summary for them; they do not want to slog through a giant PowerPoint. At the end of the day, your ability to get hired for more research depends on your research buyer being rewarded for your deliverables. It is purely common sense to make the report work for the buyer's ultimate end client (and the one who funds the budget).

### Fast-Turnaround Reports Control Misinformation

Clearly, the market research client does not want wrong conclusions — positive or negative — to leak out ahead of time. This often happens when a team member or senior manager swings by for just one group and decides to bet the farm

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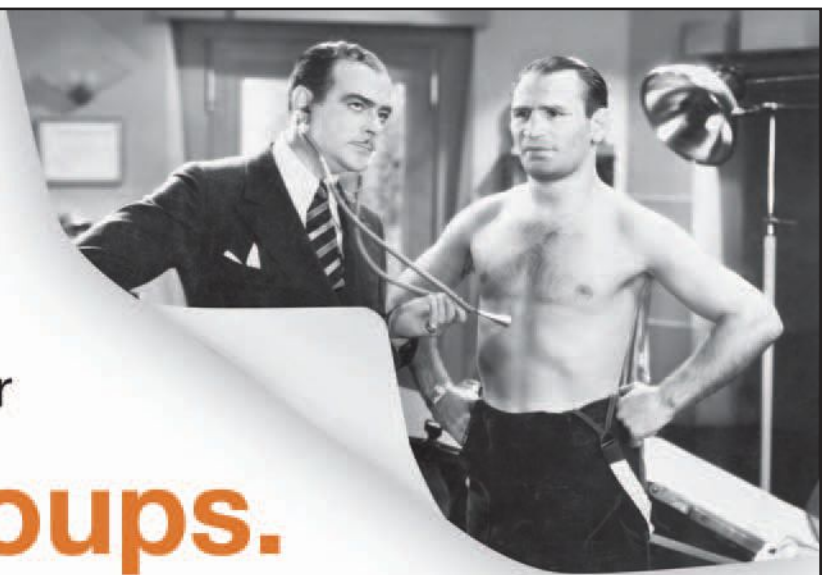


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Think like a business owner or manager, not like a researcher. A manager wants to make a sound decision and have strong reasons for that choice.

because he heard what he wanted to hear, neglecting to incorporate the learning from the other seven sessions.

The qualitative researcher provides an unbiased ear. She can absorb the information shared in the research without filtering or preconceived notions. As such, a solid end-of-evening debrief coupled with a one- or two-day report turnaround can nip in the bud any circulating misinformation. One story, one conclusion and one message are sent to the decision-makers so the correct next steps are taken. A report delivered in two weeks completely misses the mark and actually encourages information trickle.

### Lacking Time, Clients Desire Simplicity

Clients are stressed to make decisions and just do not have time to waste. London-based Fernando stated that her clients want simple solutions to their problems and that the researcher must make the entire client interaction easier, "from the beginning all the way to the presentation of findings, solutions and recommendations." A short, concise report is simply logical.

Nancy from North Carolina said that when a researcher presents a long report, clients often get lost because of information overload. At a certain point, they stop listening and will remember only a bunch of pictures and pretty colors. In front of clients, you want to make every minute count, not put them to sleep.

### A Shorter Report Is More Affordable for the Client and the Research Consultant

In the overall scheme of some studies, the price of the report is small. If you were the client, however, and knew that the \$3,000 to 5,000 report could have been spent on more of the *actual* research, you might make a different decision. Jeff, a Minnesota researcher, offers his clients

two options: a short report in Word and a long one in PowerPoint. "Some clients really like the nitty-gritty detail, and they like lots of quotes," he said. "If that's the case, they pay for that."

In my case, I charge the client materially less for a short, actionable report that they get in 24 hours than for a full PowerPoint. While some colleagues think I should charge more for the fast turnaround, I disagree. When I complete a report, get it billed and move on to the next project in less than two days, I *save* time, which ultimately saves me money. In addition, the lower price generally incents the client to pick a short report — a win/win for everyone!

### Steps to Shorter, Actionable Reports

- Think like a business owner or manager, not like a researcher. A manager wants to make a sound decision and have strong reasons for that choice. This will help you frame your reporting by thinking about your ultimate target audience.
- Always revisit the research objectives, and make sure each area is addressed. These are called "objectives" for a reason, so answer the issues that were set up. Anything ancillary should be in the appendix as "interesting to know" but not a primary focus of the business needs.

- Convey the three most critical sound bites that resonated from the qual. Research has shown that, over time, people will remember three things about anything they are exposed to. This should be the focal point of your reporting. If you believe that everything is important, you are not thinking like a manager. Use the 80/20 rule (based on the Pareto principle) where 80% of the decisions are made on 20% of the information. You must try to live with this line of thinking, regardless of how counter it is to the researcher mindset.
- Edit your work judiciously. Make every word count, and do not fill your report with fluff. Write your report, walk away, and revisit it with a red pencil to sharpen it up. While this actually takes more work than you would think, the benefits of crisp, clear communication are well worth it.

### Dare to be Bold

Step up your game. Offer a short, crisp report that is ready for action, and see what happens. At a minimum, give your clients two options: the short, fast, actionable report at an economical price in 36 hours and the long, detailed report in 2 weeks for a substantial premium. You may be surprised with what they select. ■



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# *How FOCUS FACILITIES Are* **REINVENTING THEMSELVES**

By Joel Reish

Next Level Research ■ Atlanta, GA ■ [joel@nextlevelresearch.com](mailto:joel@nextlevelresearch.com)

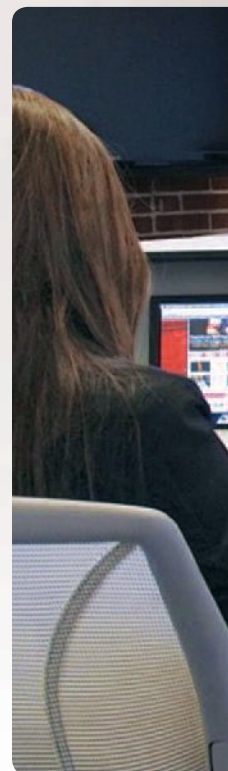
**The** focus group facility industry has seen a lot of changes over the years. At first, there was not even a facility industry at all; instead, focus groups were conducted in spare conference rooms in advertising agencies. Recruiting evolved from rounding up folks around the office to methods for proactively identifying and inviting people who met key criteria. Eventually, independent qualitative researchers began inviting people into their own homes for group discussions (i.e., the original living-room setup). Then, qualitative field companies moved into dedicated space in office buildings with research rooms with one-way mirrors and observation rooms for clients.

The industry both expanded and consolidated: expanded as more and more facilities opened up, but also consolidated as ownership and management moved

from a “mom-and-pop” approach to a true business/corporate model. Facilities came together in networks and alliances to provide efficiencies and economies of scale across multiple markets, offering clients the potential for a one-stop field-service shop.

Today, many industry observers feel that focus facilities need to reinvent themselves once again. And reinventing they are. Certainly, we all know that many facilities now offer the option to swap out the standard conference-table furniture arrangement, but focus facilities are also reinventing themselves in many other ways.

In fact, no specific model or template represents what this reinvention looks like. Some facilities are trying ideas that others are not, and inevitably some of these ideas will not make the final cut. Great and lasting ideas, however, are







Schlesinger Associates



Catalyst Ranch



Fieldwork Inc., Orange County



Catalyst Ranch



Ingather Research



coming out of this experimentation, and some general trends with focus facilities today give us a hint of the future of the industry.

I recently spoke with a number of facility owners and managers about trends in the facility business. From these conversations, I have identified four major areas in which facilities are reinventing themselves today:

- The focus facility industry may be experiencing a contraction, with some facilities closing. Everyone I spoke with, though, feels that **the focus facility is here to stay**. None feels that focus facilities are going the way of the dinosaur — face-to-face research provides
- unique benefits that will continue to be utilized, and facilities will be there to serve that need. Right now represents a shakeout that ultimately will leave the industry with stronger players that are better able to handle the increasingly complex and demanding needs of clients.
- Changes are being made to the **physical space** within focus facilities: room layout, furniture, client amenities, etc.
- In order to be more efficient and effective research partners for clients, facilities have been moving rapidly to **expand their service offerings**.
- Also, many changes “**behind the scenes**” will provide benefits for clients

The need for face-to-face qualitative research is not going away, so focus facilities will not go away either. They do need to adapt, though, to changing business climates, societal trends, research methodologies and client needs.

and the industry, even if these changes are not obvious when you walk in the door.

### Face-to-Face Qualitative Research Is Here to Stay

First off, it is true that clients and researchers are recognizing the valid benefits of technology to enhance marketing research. Today's world puts technology literally in the majority of people's hands, together with an explosion of emerging technological applications designed to monitor and interact with the public, creating a seeming research “perfect storm.”

At the same time, it is also true that these same clients and researchers understand that, for all the wow and wonder that the new technologies provide, face-to-face interviews and discussions also have their unique benefits for research. Now that mobile and online research are fairly well established, many clients and researchers have a base of experience from which to see more clearly some of the inherent flaws and limitations of purely technological approaches. As a result, **Charlene Randall** of L&E Research is seeing “a renewed appreciation of the value of traditional qualitative research.” And of course, certain types of research, whether qual or quant, can be done *only* in person.

Therefore, the need for face-to-face qualitative research is not going away, so focus facilities will not go away either. They do need to adapt, though, to changing business climates, societal trends, research methodologies and client needs. “The signs point to a new age in the facility business,” says **Jim Bryson** of 20/20 Research.

### Fewer Facilities?

While there always have been some facilities opening and others closing, the net effect at the moment seems to be a reduction in the total number of facilities. Even more concerning for the industry are rumors that many more closings are imminent, with owners keeping the doors open only while they wait out the expiration on their office-space lease. Will it happen? Well, my crystal ball is a little fuzzy on that one, but we must remember that every industry is subject to occasional fits of expansion or contrac-

20/20 Research, Charlotte





tion, so seeing a few facilities close does not necessarily mean the start of a long-term trend.

Jay White of Baltimore Research points out, “The volatility of business over these past few years has forced the constant review and subsequent revision of [focus facility] business models. And that’s a good thing.” So, yes, some facilities have closed, and the result, Jay feels, is a Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest situation that advances the industry with “the stronger, more research-savvy facilities” not only surviving but also better positioned to invest in facility enhancements, technology and personnel to execute projects with greater accuracy, speed and efficiencies. My discussions with these facility owners and managers bear this out, as most are highly optimistic and are investing assertively in their facilities — with both financial and intellectual capital — to meet the demands of the future.

### The Physical Facility

The most obvious place to see how facilities are reinventing themselves is the physical facility itself. Some facilities have created adaptable, flexible spaces that can be configured any number of ways, such as a living room that actually looks and feels like a living room rather than just a conference room with different furniture. It goes beyond that, though, to setups that feel like a sports bar, a courtroom, a home kitchen and other environments.

Some facilities are progressing down this path even further, with entire residential houses retooled into focus facilities that do not just *resemble* homes — they *are* homes. Bret Agre of Ingather Research says that his facility is “trying to bring realism back to the focus group



Baltimore Research



Ingather Research

The closing of some focus facilities has created a Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest situation that advances the industry, with the stronger, more research-savvy facilities not only surviving but also better positioned to invest in facility enhancements, technology and personnel to execute projects with greater accuracy, speed and efficiencies.



experience.” Basically, his idea is that the “traditional” focus facility (i.e., in an office building, with a conference-room setup and large mirror in the wall) does not recreate the environment in which real conversations take place, such as what women would say about a product as they talk casually gathered in someone’s kitchen. For that, he feels, research is best conducted in a real kitchen in a real home. “It’s all about making respondents feel comfortable and less like they are being judged or are guinea pigs,” he says.

Eva Niewiadomski of Catalyst Ranch also attests to the growing demand to

explore alternative venues, noting that her facility is “a creative meeting and event space that kept getting requests to hold focus groups in our rooms.”

Physical space for clients has been changing as well. Some facilities are dedicating less space for clients to passively observe and more space for them to actively participate in the research process and engage with respondents. Other facilities are giving clients *more* space and amenities, such as separate lounges for observation, food and phone calls.

Facilities also are remodeling with expressions of unique style. Uniformity and generic neutral tones have been giv-

ing way to colors, patterns and textures, bestowing on each facility (and even each room within a facility) a unique look.

### Service Offerings

Additionally, focus facilities are expanding their service offerings. The common wisdom seems to be that qualitative research in the future will include more and more assignments that incorporate multiple methodological approaches within each project and more coordination of technological tools, and clients will prefer the streamlining and potential cost efficiencies of working with one research partner adept at meeting all of their needs.

For this, focus facilities are well positioned to take the lead. Facilities are moving away from being just a collection of focus group suites with a recruiting room in the back and instead are becoming broader field operations for many kinds of research — and not just qualitative but also quantitative research that requires or benefits from in-person interviewing. Today’s evolving facilities can offer the best choice and ideal environment for clients who want a single partner for conducting emerging hybrid methodologies that might mix quant with qual, online with face-to-face, observational with dialogue.

So, facilities are investing in being able to offer services such as their own video-streaming solutions, proprietary online-research platforms, in-house turn-key usability testing, eye-tracking capabilities, biometrics, nationwide recruiting and even a mobile focus-group-in-a-suitcase unit to allow clients to conduct in-person research anywhere.

There is a flip side, though, to all of this expansion of services, observes Jay Shelton of IndyFocus. As facilities broaden their offerings, they also begin to compete with each other, not just in the same market as expected but also across markets. So, even if the number of facilities declines, the competition among facility companies could go up.

Facilities also are expanding their services for clients. Many are developing a client portal that will allow clients to see a dashboard summary and easy access to all aspects of their project.

Several people I spoke with referenced that they are becoming hyper-focused on

Catalyst Ranch



Today’s evolving facilities can offer the best choice and ideal environment for clients who want a single partner for conducting emerging hybrid methodologies that might mix quant with qual, online with face-to-face, observational with dialogue.



client service in general. It is no longer enough anymore to just greet arriving clients with a warm smile at the door; now facilities are remembering each client's unique preferences (i.e., this one always likes two water bottles on the table, that one does not eat meat) and ensuring they can provide a customized experience to make each client at ease.

### Behind the Scenes

Some of the ways focus facilities are reinventing themselves may not be as obvious at first glance, but many of these changes represent the "backbone" to support the other changes already noted. The biggest of these behind-the-scenes changes is technology.

Just a few years ago, the "tech geek" at a focus facility was the person who knew how to un-jam the VCR, but today focus facilities have IT directors, and some larger facility companies have entire IT departments. **Barbara Gassaway** of Observation Baltimore notes, "Clients expect that you will have expertise in all technology areas, even when it's the client's equipment."

For many of the broader service options that facilities can now provide, technology is fundamental, so there is a constant need at the facility for expertise in internet connectivity, website development, database conversion, social-media platforms, integrated systems, client setup, etc. Some facilities have developed proprietary facility-management software designed to improve their operational efficiency specifically by uniting all the facility's data and programs into a single system and interface.

Also, many facilities are reflecting greater concern for the environment. Some have moved to paperless or reduced-paper systems. All are recycling, and many will use only recycled goods when possible. Most facilities have reviewed everything, from light bulbs to the packaging of the client snacks, to see where they can reduce waste, keep costs down for clients and help the environment.

A truly major behind-the-scenes change that is taking place with many facilities and recruiters is the use of social media as part of the recruiting effort. Most of the people I spoke with said that they are using social media in

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recruiting to some extent, but many were quick to add that they do so only with the client's permission. In general,

however, it seems that these facility owners and managers see a future in which the use of social media for recruit-


ing is inevitable: there is no other way to service clients' attempts at laser-targeting low-incidence populations with longer and longer screeners that include complex algorithms and super-specific criteria, all in shorter timeframes than ever before and, of course, for the lowest cost.

Used properly and with care, though, social media can be a good thing for recruiting, perhaps even its salvation. **Stephen Turner** of Fieldwork Inc. points out that the use of social media in recruiting not only gives a greater reach but also gives the recruiting effort what amounts to a wider time window. "Used to be, we recruited largely from 6 to 9 p.m.," he points out. "Today, we can recruit day and night."

### The New Focus Facility

Focus facilities are reinventing themselves in many ways, on many different levels. Facility companies are broadening their position in the research supplier marketplace, migrating their service offerings away from a compartmentalized mentality ("This one is a focus facility company, and this one is an online provider...") to being a more broad-based qualitative and in-person field partner. Facility owners are not just sitting still, watching their traditional business erode; they have specific game plans for positioning their companies for the future.

And many of these owners are enthusiastic at the prospects. **Debby Schlesinger** of Schlesinger Associates observes, "We need to try new tools, use social media wisely and keep our minds open to exciting ideas that will keep the industry relevant."

In a way, it seems that everything old is new again. Years ago, focus groups were held in someone's home, and one of the hot new trends today is a focus facility in a home. Industry observers ask if focus facilities are reinventing themselves, but have they not always done that? Haven't facilities always been adapting and reinventing themselves? So, you could say that focus facilities do not need to reinvent themselves at all, that they just need to keep doing what they have always done — adapt to an ever-changing environment and be ready to take care of clients' needs. 

*Fieldwork Inc., Chicago – Downtown*



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# TRANCE...

## A TOOL TO DIG DEEPER

By Lisa Morgan

Future Seeing Ltd. ■ Ulverston, Cumbria, U.K. ■ [lisa@futureseeing.com](mailto:lisa@futureseeing.com)

“**lose your eyes, take a slow deep breath, and focus on the pictures in your mind’s eye... Take yourself back to when you last drank your favorite brand of coffee — what images do you see? What are you feeling?**”

Helping people to relax and open up and encouraging them to use their imaginative powers are core qualitative research competences. Many researchers are already adept at using various projective techniques to stimulate people’s memories and reveal their unconscious imagery for products and brands. Even so, most would shy away from any suggestion that they start to use hypnosis to induce trance so that their respondents go deeper still.

This article explains how hypnosis can be helpful as a research tool. It describes how to induce a light trance to take respondents deeper, and it outlines ways to help them become more involved with

the thoughts behind their thoughts and the feelings that surround them. It also suggests which research topics benefit from the use of hypnosis and explains the ethical issues for qualitative researchers who choose to develop this approach.

### A Little about Hypnosis

First, though, let’s bite the bullet. Hypnosis has long had a bad press. Not only are there the weird antics of stage hypnotists that sensationalize the results of hypnotic trance, but also, to make matters worse, hypnosis is regularly inserted into narrative plots to provide a rationale for devilish deeds.

Here is the nub of the issue: many people believe hypnosis is about mind control. Such a belief hides a simple truth — trance is a commonplace, everyday occurrence. We all go in and out of trance many times in any day, most significantly (for market researchers) when







Beneath the conscious mind is a more expressively emotional one, and trance can give us access to this emotional and sensory data that directs consumers' attitudes and behavior.

we are doing repetitive tasks like eating or shopping the aisles of the supermarket, or when "tuning out" in a half-dream (aka hypnagogic) state during TV commercials.

The notion of mind control derives from a core aspect of hypnosis practice: the art of suggestion. A trained hypnotist becomes adept at framing suggestions appropriately to induce trance and, if working therapeutically, to suggest to the client desired changes in behavior. Let's be clear — it is not only hypnotists who employ suggestion to achieve objectives; *all* human discourse is rife with suggestion. The difference between hypnotists and everyone else is that hypnotists have studied suggestion and learned what works.

Neuroscience is fast changing our understanding of how our minds work, and in particular, it is demonstrating the importance of unconscious processing (compared with conscious processing) in determining our attitudes, emotional responses and behavior. The unconscious mind is more clever than we know, with its lightning-fast and sophisticated processing of information and its forward planning. Our unconscious minds are forever assessing alternatives and forging the decisions we make. As creatures of habit, we process information unconsciously unless something forces us to think about it.

### Why Use Trance?

Hypnosis is emerging as a potent tool for researching consumers' unconscious processing. The nature of the trance experience, in which the conscious rational mind is quieted, lends itself to going below the surface to explore underlying thoughts and their associated feelings. William J. MacDonald of Hofstra University used hypnosis to investigate consumer decision-making and altered

states of consciousness. He found that people in trance use more emotional and sensual language to describe their experiences than when they are conscious. His research substantiates that beneath the conscious mind is a more expressively emotional one and that trance can give us access to this emotional and sensory data that directs consumers' attitudes and behavior.

The focused attention that trance requires takes respondents into an unconscious world where information is processed differently than from the conscious mind. Our unconscious establishes links, making associations through sensations, emotions, imagery, analogy, symbolism and metaphor. This symbolic network is the "vocabulary" of the unconscious and is familiar to all of us who work qualitatively to understand consumer relationships with their brands. Trance accesses these associations directly and enables us to work our way through these cognitive webs.

There is another reason that trance is such a useful research tool. We are all familiar with a key feature of our conscious minds, the inner critic or our voice of judgment. For market researchers, that voice within consumers often blocks genuinely honest responses. Trance research offers a way to bypass people's critical judgment. As respondents have reported at the end of their trance sessions:

*"I felt I could say anything, and no one was judging me.... What I said did not have to be logical."*

*"I did not filter what I said. I spoke without thinking."*

### When to Use Trance

I like to use hypnosis as a research tool in principally two ways: either in one-

to-one depth interviews, where the lion's share of the session is conducted in trance, or in workshops (including workshop-like focus groups), where I use hypnotic-style inductions with groups of consumers or clients to stimulate inner searches for their unconscious associations of brands and product categories or to generate ideas. We capture the results by asking participants to draw their trance experiences or to work together to synthesize their collective output of visions and ideas in a shared drawing. The participants use crayons, felt-tip markers and paint (skill is unimportant). The act of drawing helps keep people in a non-linear state of mind, which facilitates our capture of potentially useful nuances. In these group sessions, I intersperse trance explorations with other more "conscious" exercises and teamwork.

Trance is a most useful methodology when the research objectives are strategic and directional, rather than fine-tuning of execution details such as copy points. If a client seeks understanding of market dynamics, then trance helps investigate consumers' cognitive webs of associations, memories, metaphors, moods and affiliations to behaviors, brands, products and categories.

If the aim is to understand decision-making, trance enables respondents to access their state of mind at point of purchase and retrace their consideration steps in detail. Over the past two years, I have been researching purchase choices in supermarkets with Judith Wardle (Wardle McLean). We have used matched samples for two methodologies: trance interviews and accompanied shop-alongs. We have found it most effective to start the project with trance interviews and develop hypotheses. We then ratify them in the accompanied shopping phase.



## Recruiting Criteria

The recruitment criteria for workshops are broad, with participants required only to be willing to participate in “imagination exercises.” The design of these hypnosis-style explorations does not necessarily demand that individuals go into trance, so workshop participants can “stay conscious” if they prefer.

For the depth interviews, however, where the objectives are specifically to examine the consumers’ unconscious network of attitudes, beliefs, associations and imagery, a willingness to experience hypnosis is specified in the recruitment criteria. Respondents are fully informed of what the sessions entail before they are recruited.

In the U.K., trance interviews are conducted according to the principles of the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct. We sought guidance from the MRS, which advised that we ensure that respondents are reminded at the beginning of the session that they can withdraw at any point. As they are in only a light trance for the duration of the interview, in the unlikely event that they feel unwilling to continue, they are quite capable of expressing a desire to stop. (I work with people only in a light trance; if they go too deep, they may not feel the need to say anything at all throughout the whole interview!)

## How to Use Trance

In a moment, I will offer a script that you can use with your respondents to induce a light trance and then encourage regression back to the purchase of your brand. This is all that is usually required to help people who are being asked to describe their recall of buying behavior and to explore the network of associations they have about brands.

Introduce the exercise by explaining to the respondent that the aim is to explore the images in their mind’s eye and that just a light trance is called for. Conversationally, you may compare the process to looking at images in the mind’s eye just before sleep. Then say, keeping pace with the respondent’s breathing rate and then leading them through your own breath to slow down... (The ellipses “...” in the script serve as reminders to pause as you read.):



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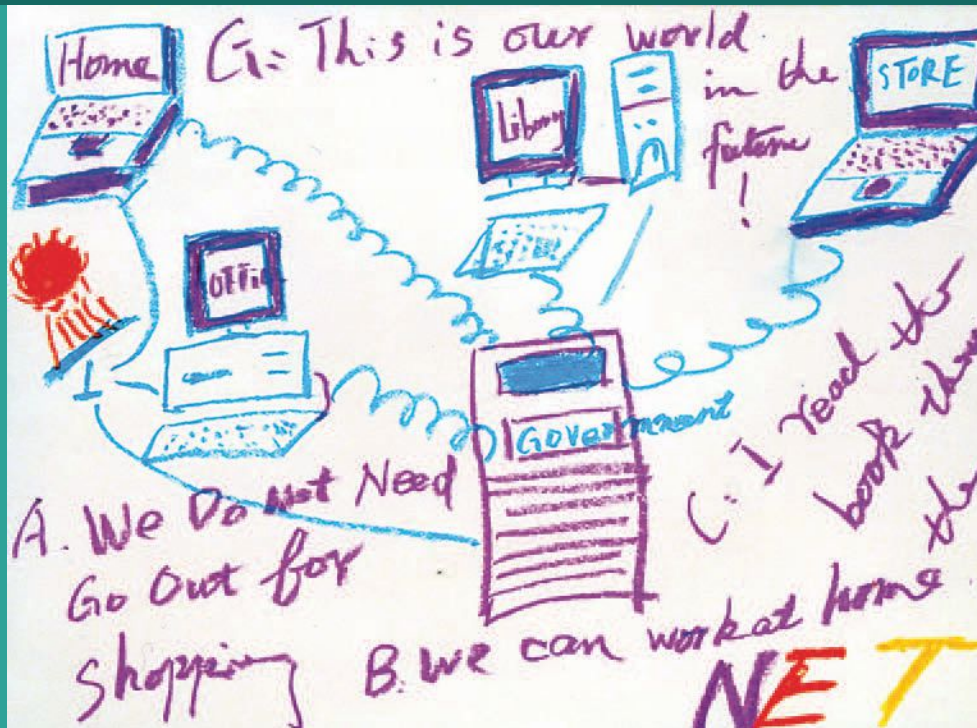
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During one research session in 2000, respondents were asked to imagine the future in their "mind's eye" while in a trance state. One young woman saw a park for children that was domed and sealed off from the city, where the air was pure and children could play safely.



In the same session, a young Asian man saw this future, long before internet use was the norm (note the dominance of the government's computer).



"The easiest way to go into a light trance is to just focus on your breathing... Every breath you take, helping you to become more relaxed and helping you take your attention inside. Each breath you breathe in, just helping you focus your attention inside. So, just follow your breath, breathing in and going inside... And every breath you breathe in takes you inside, and every one you breathe out lets go of any cares or concerns you have... Breathing in and becoming more relaxed with every breath you take... Breathing out all the cares and concerns... Watching them drift away, perhaps like clouds on a warm summer's afternoon... And you may already find it easy to picture the images in your mind's eye, and by just allowing your eyelids to lower a little, you'll get in touch with all the pictures, thoughts, sensations, sounds, smells, tastes, deep inside, in your unconscious mind... And as you take your attention inside, you can take your mind back to the last time you [insert focus of research topic, such as 'were at the supermarket']. Just describe what's going on inside your mind as you remember back."

At this point, the respondents will probably have slowed their breathing and turned their attention inward. It works well to encourage everyone to close their eyes, as this serves to absorb them in their inner thoughts.

As a practicing hypnotist for almost 20 years, I have built up a repertoire of trance-induction techniques, from gentle relaxation to strong assertive approaches. The one described here is a simple directive and works reliably with most people. Any qualitative researcher with good rapport skills can use it and achieve a light trance with most respondents. Even if your subjects do not seem to go into a trance, you can still have them explore their inner thoughts just by asking them to close their eyes.

Rarely do I work with someone who has volunteered for this research who stays conscious throughout and resists going into an altered state. Just the action of closing their eyes changes people's



responses sufficiently. They disconnect and focus on themselves rather than on communicating with the researcher. By becoming absorbed in his or her own inner processes, virtually everyone goes into a light trance state. For example, one young woman reported (with some glee) at the end of a recent session that she had not noticed me doing anything to hypnotize her and had doubted that she was in trance: "But I tried to open my eyes three times during [the exercise], and I couldn't!"

Achieving a light trance is just the beginning. In order for respondents to sustain their trance state, your questioning needs to work in rapport with their unconscious processes. It is best to follow the respondent rather than lead the conversation — tracking along with his or her experiences and exploring the imagery, sensations and associations as the respondent describes them, without judgment. The style of questioning to adopt can be described as like a stylus on a turntable, just helping to amplify the respondent's experiences as they happen. So, for example, "Where are you? What can you see around you? What are you thinking as you see that? And what are you hearing? What are you doing as you hear that?"

Recent research on memory has revealed the importance of "state" of mind and emotion in determining whether and what we remember. Simply, something experienced in one state is better recalled when a person is back in the same or similar state. You can try this yourself; it is hard to recall being irritated when you are in a happy state of mind, and vice versa. Trance research has revealed just how pivotal state is in determining how people receive and then recall brand communication. (The implications of this for advertisers are considerable.) Encouraging the respondent to recall and reconnect with his or her state of mind and emotion is important if the task is to recover sensory and attitudinal information on a specific behavior or brand activity.

To keep respondents inwardly focused, make your enquiries "artfully vague," to quote hypnotherapist Milton Erickson. Use open-ended, non-directive queries such as, "How's that?" Take your time in exploring all the sensory data:

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imagery, taste, texture, colors, sounds, tastes, smell and feelings involved in the consumer experience. In this way, you may well discover the unexpected. Avoid asking “Why?” — that question takes respondents into their rational (“rationale”) mind.

While this questioning approach may sound like classic qualitative research, if you guide the respondents to focus their awareness deep inside, they do change their state of consciousness. You can tell if they go into a light trance by observable shifts in their physiology: slow breathing, relaxed facial muscles, thickened lips and slouched body.

At the end of each trance interview, I ask respondents to open their eyes and to reflect upon the experience. All describe it positively, often claiming it was relaxing, pleasant and illuminating.

### Trance Revelations

Because people in trance access their underlying emotions, they reveal emotional hooks that bond them to brands. An example of such a hook is the feeling of pleasurable expectation that a McDonald’s burger customer described at the sight and touch of the restaurant’s clean, white tabletop. Some of these “feeling hooks” serve as convincers and can be vital parts of the brand-consumer relationship, yet there is a likelihood that respondents will self-censor such seemingly insignificant feelings in any conventional interview.

When you want to explore the potential impact of new products and propositions, ask your consumers (while in a trance state) to imagine themselves forward to a place and time where they are using the new product or perhaps to when the product has achieved popularity. The trance state facilitates their

## WHEN TO USE TRANCE

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Understand the decision-making process.

Identify the consumer dynamics of a product category or brand.

Develop emotional convincers to associate with a brand.

Generate ideas and solve problems to seemingly intractable solutions.

Test and develop new product concepts.

### TRANCE TIPS

Use trance early to develop hypotheses on the consideration steps.

Track the cognitive web of associations, memories, metaphors, moods and affiliations.

Listen for details that respondents might judge insignificant in a conventional interview.

Connect diverse factors and attributes in fresh ways.

Imagine forward in a non-linear fashion to explore potential.

unconscious minds in making non-linear connections in ways that can be very useful to the researcher.

Another use of trance is for idea generation and for finding solutions to problems that are seemingly intractable when considered consciously. The unconscious mind has the capacity to connect diverse factors in fresh ways, and trance helps stimulate this capacity. Recent research points to how this might happen. Work by Mark Beeman and Jon

Kounios indicates that creative breakthroughs occur when there is a surge of gamma waves in the brain, while several studies have shown that meditation, a form of trance, acts to increase such gamma waves.

As experts in projective techniques, qualitative researchers already use several tools of trance. If we equip ourselves with hypnosis skills, too, we can delve deeper into the fertile territories of the consumer unconscious. ■



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# Running with Crayons

By Rebecca Bryant

Bryant Research, LLC ■ Knoxville, TN  
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**B**ased on a challenging client directive, my firm developed a process to generate new-product ideas, integrating individual and social creativity by using online interviews, kindergarten art supplies and traditional focus groups. Easily replicable, this process may be useful for one of your own future qualitative projects.

## The Basic Premise

Everyone is creative. Everyone.

By extension, every consumer brings uniquely creative points of view to the research process. The difference between those termed “creative” and those labeled as not-quite-so-gifted is often two-fold: having the ability to capture ideas, and having a safe and supportive context where they can explore their ideas with others.

## Individual and Social Creativity Defined

Individual creativity: a solitary endeavor that draws on a single person’s experiences, intuition and imagination to ultimately yield novel vision or ideas.

Social creativity: sharing individuals’ ideas in a group context where others can serve as a sounding board and contribute their own perspectives, effectively building on, shaping and reshaping ideas.

“Creativity does not happen inside people’s heads, but in the interaction between a person’s thoughts and a socio-cultural context.”

*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 1996*

Consumers’ creativity can flourish when individuals come together in a social context that supports the creative process. Gerhard Fischer notes that “a tension exists between creativity and organization. A defining characteristic of social creativity is that it transcends individual creativity and thus requires some form of organization.” This is where qualitative researchers really add value to the process. We know how to organize processes where individuals can share their thoughts with others.

## Challenges that Spurred Our Process

Our process evolved in the context of an unbudgeted mandate. Our client needed

to fill the product pipeline, yesterday. We had a 45- to 60-day window to design a process, recruit respondents and complete the research. Importantly, the research needed to generate both near-term, easy-to-execute ideas as well as future-market ideas.

The company had no formal new-product development process. Whatever we did, it had to be replicable. We were charged with creating a standard.

Our client also had a long, confident and frankly successful history of “how things have always been done.” It is hard to argue with success. Recent focus groups, however, had shown that some of the consumer truths driving product development were inaccurate. So, it was extremely important to design the work in a way that gave key marketing staff a front-seat role in the process so that they could hear, see and internalize consumer points of view.

## Structuring the Marketing Team for Maximum Benefit

During the data-collection process, members of the marketing staff were given specific tasks designed both to facilitate the research and to focus back-room attention. They were also directed to take notes in a very specific way. Each idea that they heard from participants was recorded on a separate note card, making it much easier to sort ideas into categories after the sessions. This also facilitated bucketing-related content that surfaced (e.g., product positioning and marketing ideas). Observers also were encouraged to note their own ideas on the cards, giving note-takers the opportunity to springboard from consumers’ ideas in real time.

## Screening for “Creative Consumers”

The working assumption that everyone is creative streamlined the screening process. The question then became not so much who was creative, but how to get the right type of problem solver.

We thought about the four main types of problem solvers and used this to structure a key screen-out question.

- The Now-Let-Me-Understand-This-Better Folks — those who ask a lot of questions.

- The “What Iffers” — those who like to come up with lots of ideas.
- The Here’s-How-It-Would-Work People — those who like to work on the “how-to” details of a solution.
- The Executives — those who enjoy executing the solution.

To be included in our research, a respondent had to self-identify as a “What Iffer.” However, we decided that those who only saw themselves as Executives would not be appropriate at this stage of the process. The judgment here was that for the person whose native and only self-identified approach to problem solving would be to take charge of managing the solution, the amount of ambiguity in the research design would prove frustrating. The following question is the one used in the screener to populate the sessions.

For each one, tell me if each is very true, somewhat true or not usually true about how you, personally, approach problem-solving.

\_\_\_ I like to ask a lot of questions to clarify the issue so that the problem can be solved.

Very True   Somewhat True   Not Usually True

\_\_\_ I like to come up with a lot of ideas about how to solve the problem.

Very True   Somewhat True   Not Usually True

[ THANK, TERMINATE AND TALLY  
IF THE RESPONDENT SAYS  
“NOT USUALLY TRUE.” ]

\_\_\_ I like to work on developing the solutions that will work.

Very True   Somewhat True   Not Usually True

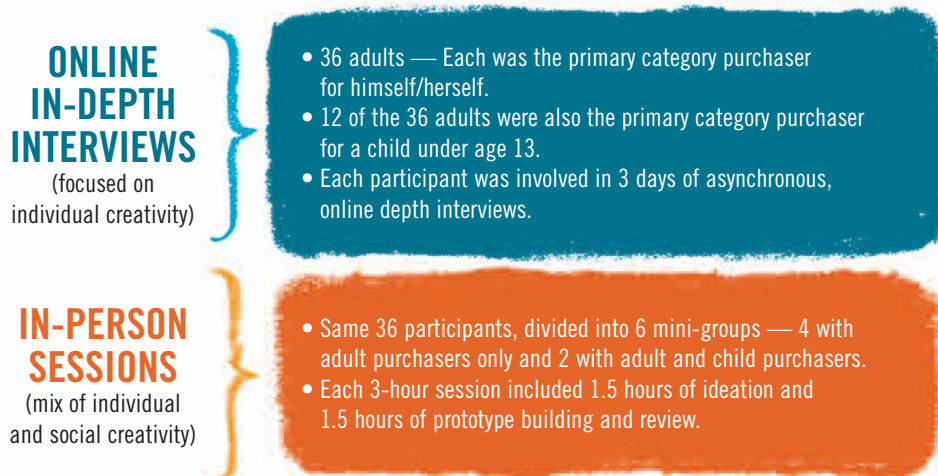
\_\_\_ I like to implement the solutions once those have been identified

Very True   Somewhat True   Not Usually True

[ THANK, TERMINATE AND TALLY  
IF THIS IS THE ONLY APPROACH THAT  
THE PARTICIPANT INDICATES IS TRUE. ]

## Overview of the Research Design

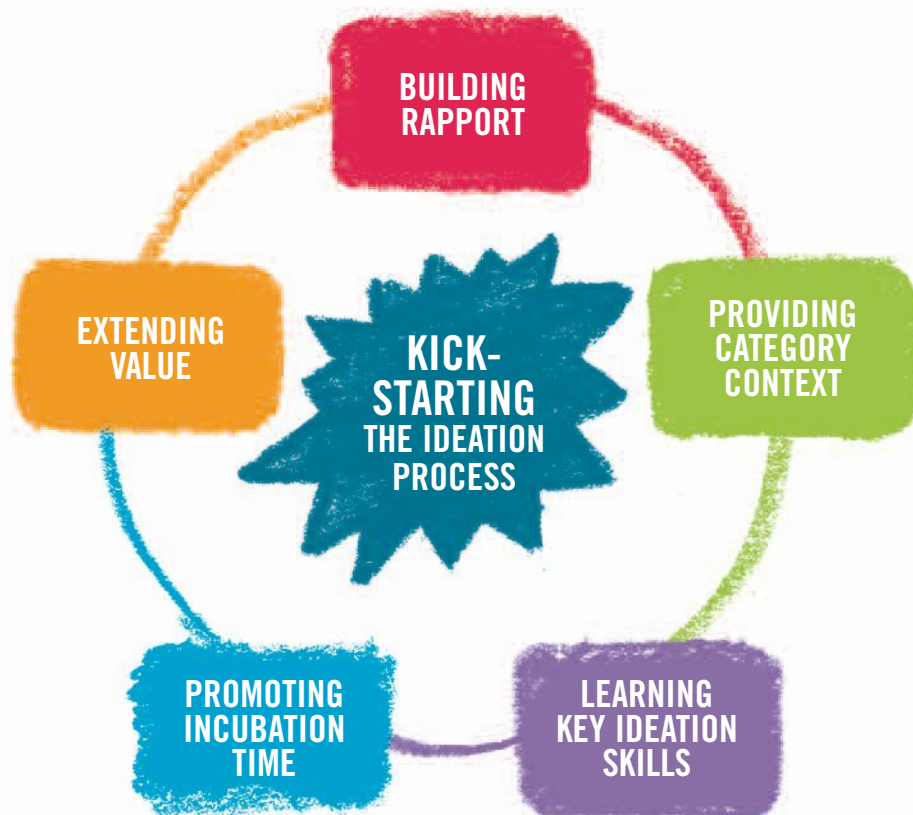
Figure 1.



## Kick-Starting the Ideation Process

To kick-start the ideation process, we used three days of online one-on-one interviews. As Figure 2 shows, the online environment was selected to accomplish multiple objectives.

Figure 2.



## Building Rapport and Confidence

The online interviews provided a time for the researcher to establish a rapport with each participant. It also helped to:

- Build a common understanding of purpose.
- Establish the safe environment so essential to promoting free-flowing ideation.
- Prepare participants so that they came to the subsequent face-to-face session ready to work.

On Day 1, participants were welcomed, and the online script immediately reinforced the expectation that each of them was creative. The script then provided specific and simple instructions about how to start capturing ideas. A snippet of the Day 1 online script follows.

*Research shows that everyone is creative. Everyone. The biggest difference between those who come up with a lot of new ideas and those who don't is often (1) practice and (2) having a way to capture the ideas when they surface.*

*So, take a piece of paper, and at the top, write down this:*

*My ideas for new ways to \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in, based on your client's objectives]*

*For the next three days, keep this piece of paper and a pen with you. Place it by your bed before you go to sleep, and read it before going to bed at night. As ideas occur to you, jot them down. Remember, there are no bad ideas. All ideas present possibilities. Avoid second-guessing yourself. The less critical you are of your ideas, the more ideas you will have.*

## Providing a Category Context

Also on Day 1, each participant received a Category Overview Document that showed the different types of existing products in the category. Even though participants were screened for selected product-purchase and product-use behaviors, category information was provided to:

- Make sure that each participant had the same information.
- Avoid "inventing" an existing product.
- Provide a springboard for the online ideation.



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## Learning Key Ideation Skills

In addition to having respondents use the notepaper for capturing ideas, we started using Michalko's SCAMPER online. Michael Michalko developed a series of "idea-spurring questions," and Bob Eberle arranged these into the following mnemonic. SCAMPER outlines key question areas that spur thinking about a product, process or service differently. The questions are:

- Can you Substitute something?
- Can you Combine it with something else?
- Can you Adapt something to it?
- Can you Modify or Magnify it?
- Can you Put it to some other use?
- Can you Eliminate something?
- Can you Reverse or Rearrange it?

In using SCAMPER, it is important to probe, asking "how-can" and "what-else-might-work" questions. In our work, we started by instructing participants to look at the Category Overview Document and then note what products they would combine to create a new product that they would like even better than what they were already using.

## Promoting Incubation Time

Individual creativity benefits from think time. People generate more ideas when they have time to think about ideas and to process problems subconsciously. The creative process benefits from literally "sleeping on it."

Our research design purposely incorporated incubation time and provided participants guidance regarding how to capture ideas using the notepaper. This maximized the time spent online and helped prepare participants for their face-to-face session.

## Extending Value

The online bulletin board also presented the opportunity for parents to include children in the ideation process. Parents were encouraged to interact with their children about the category and to think about product ideas for their children as well as themselves. So, even though the budget would not accommodate groups with children, we did start the conversation.

## Creating a Context for Social Creativity

After participating in the online sessions board, participants came to a focus group facility for a three-hour focus group. This research design employed six mini groups, with six participants in each group. Groups were divided into two, one-and-a-half-hour sessions. The first hour and a half was used to continue the ideation started online. An outline of the face-to-face session follows, along with the purpose and rationale for each activity.

### Icebreaker

Purpose: to provide quick activities that everyone can complete successfully.  
Rationale: Gives participants' time to

start forming as a group in a fun and non-threatening way, and kick-starts the group process.

### Forness® Thinking — language that lets us communicate what we are for, without shutting down others' ideas

Purpose: to provide construct, rationale and language for participants (and the back-room team) to use that will spur ideation and keep negative thinking from slowing the process.

Rationale: to establish a social context that both promotes ideation and builds on all kinds of ideas.

(I learned the *Forness® Thinking* approach from Ideas to Go in Minneapolis, Minnesota.)

## To generate Forness® Thinking, USE THIS EXERCISE:

1

Have participants divide into pairs. Instruct participants to plan a trip with their partner by volleying ideas back and forth and saying "Yes, and..." as they add ideas to the trip plan.

- For example, your partner might say, "I think we could go to the beach."
- You might say, "Yes, and we could find great seafood restaurants."

2

Avoid any negative reactions or statements. Let the role-playing go for a minute or two. Then, get participants to share:

- How many ideas they generated.
- What it felt like to work in this manner.

3

Repeat the role-playing, but this time instruct participants to precede their suggestions with, "Yes, but..." as they add to their partner's ideas. Let the role-playing go for a minute or two. Then, get participants to share:

- How many ideas they generated this time
- What this approach felt like.

Typically, participants produce notably fewer ideas, and they comment on how criticized and even adversarial the interaction feels when their partner precedes everything with, "Yes, but..."

4

All participants now have a shared experience in which they understand the importance that language plays in the success of the session. Encourage participants to do the following:

- Talk in terms of what they are looking for by saying, "I wish..."
- Look for solutions by asking, "How can we...?"



WE REALIZE THAT IT'S  
"LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION."  
SO WHICH LOCATION DO YOU PREFER?

- (A) THE CONVENIENT DOWNTOWN CHICAGO LOCATION
- (B) THE ORIGINAL OAK PARK FACILITY
- (C) THE NEWEST OAK BROOK FACILITY



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## Sharing of Personal Product Experience

Purpose: to start creating a context of sharing focused on the product category, which requires low vulnerability.

Rationale: fairly non-threatening way for participants to start to reinforce the group experience as safe.

## Exercises Used to Nurture Social Creativity

Purpose: to provide participants with the opportunity to manipulate various aspects of the current product (or service) so that they can see new possibilities.

Rationale: Most new things spring from

what already exists. This series of activities gives consumers ways that they can look at existing products and think of new ideas.

In these sessions, we used SCAMPER, “Building on That” and “Slice and Dice” exercises. “Building on That” in these sessions was a simple and exhaustive round robin where participants were instructed to quickly add an idea to what others said. Figure 3 shows the worksheet used for “Slice and Dice.” After participants filled in the worksheet, putting a different aspect of the product in each box, we used the “cell addresses” to refer them to one or more product characteristic.

The worksheet is a useful tool to deconstruct the product so that participants have a concrete springboard for constructing something new. It works equally well for deconstructing (or pulling apart) different aspects of a process or service. The idea is to deconstruct something into its many different parts and to then look for new ways to put it back together.

For example, the moderator might instruct individuals in the group to think of as many alternatives to what they have in square 1A as they possibly can. The quick list that follows illustrates other ways to use the worksheet. NOTE: Many of these cues come directly from SCAMPER.

- Quickly combine the aspects in squares 3C and 2D to create a new product (or service or process).
- What if the product did not include the aspect in square B4? How could this improve the product?
- Look at the aspect in square 3B. What if the “new product” had more of this?
- Make the aspect in square 2D the bottom of the product (or last step in the process). What happens?

**Figure 3.** “Slice and Dice” worksheet instructions: write the different attributes of this product in each of the squares below, being sure to write only one characteristic per block. (The example below shows how a participant might start to fill a “Slice and Dice” worksheet about cell phones.)

	1	2	3	4
A	Small	Black	Has number keys	Has letter keys
B	Rings	Lights up	Personal	Stores pictures
C	Find restaurants	Fits in purse		
D				

## Creating Ideas for the Shelf

After the first half of the session, participants were given a 10-minute break and re-entered the focus group room to sit at a table filled with kindergarten art supplies. We intentionally chose kindergarten art supplies for several reasons, including:

- Wide availability.
- Familiarity — most everyone knows how to use blunt-ended scissors, crayons, construction paper and glue sticks.
- Ease of use — to paraphrase a bit, “Most everything I needed to know about creating art, I learned in kindergarten.”

We started the second half of the session with an individual pen-and-paper exercise, and then moved to making product prototypes.

## Taking Stock — a pen-and-paper exercise

Purpose: to provide participants with the opportunity to sift back through the session, evaluate the ideas and



note what each participant found most appealing and why.

**Rationale:** gives participants the chance to get grounded by thinking, evaluating and internalizing information from others.

Instructions in the moderator guide read in part: Thinking back over our group's conversation, write down at least two product ideas that you personally would buy. Using this worksheet, describe each idea in detail. Then, using the supplies you see here, make a prototype.

It is important at this point for participants to have individual think time, so moderators need to instruct participants that the room will be quiet for them to focus on their individual ideas. Moderators could turn on music, as long as it is background music. In our sessions, we choose quiet mood music.

#### **Making Prototypes**

**Purpose:** to give participants the opportunity to make a physical representation of their product idea(s).

**Rationale:** provides each participant with individual "creative" time and the opportunity to turn their ideas into tangible product idea(s).

As mentioned earlier, we chose to provide simple kindergarten art supplies. We also included materials similar to product-parts descriptions that had been captured during the online portion of the work.

#### **Reviewing Prototypes**

**Purposes:** to showcase each participant's creation, to capture the product description (as well as the participant's rationales for the product idea) and to get additional ideas from other group members.

**Rationale:** logical culmination activity that celebrated each invention, provided opportunity for social creativity and produced a three-dimensional record of the product, the reason(s) the product is of value and consumer positioning statements.

Instructions for this portion of the groups were straight forward and akin to "show and tell" in the classroom. Each participant showed his or her product to the group, while explaining its materials, functionality and features. Then, he or she took questions from others, including

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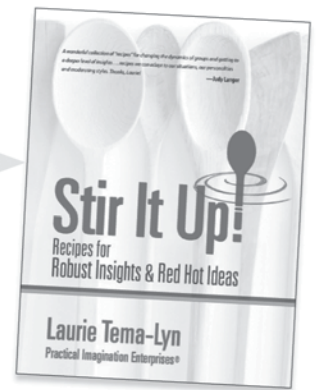
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the moderator. Finally, the participant was instructed to invite others to quickly build on the idea.

Groups concluded with each participant making a personal recommendation

to the manufacturer. This underscored the importance of each participant's point of view and provided a concise summary of individual and social creativity, as well as a constructive activity for the "false

close" so that the moderator could confer with client before the end of group.

### The Result?

The process yielded 231 discreet product ideas — 187 for adults and 44 for children. These were boiled down to 45 concepts, 30 of which went on to concept testing. As an added bonus, the client also received ideas that impacted sales distribution, marketing positioning and messaging. 



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"Creativity is contagious.  
Pass it on."

*Albert Einstein*

"You can't use up creativity.  
The more you use, the  
more you have."

*Maya Angelou*

"Creativity comes from trust.  
Trust your instincts. And  
never hope more than  
you work."

*Rita Mae Brown*

"Don't think. Thinking is  
the enemy of creativity. It's  
self-conscious, and anything  
self-conscious is lousy. You  
can't try to do things. You  
simply must do things."

*Ray Bradbury*



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*Conducting STRATEGIC QUALITATIVE RESEARCH in Mexico:*

# THE WHOLE ENCHILADA

By Isabel Aneyba

COMARKA Consulting & Marketing ■ Austin, TX ■ [ianeyba@comarka.com](mailto:ianeyba@comarka.com)

**For** the past couple of years, Mexico has been attracting new international investors because its labor costs are competitive with China's rising labor costs. Companies with high transportation expenses prefer Mexico for its proximity to both the north and south markets of the Americas. This country is the world's largest exporter of flat-screen TVs and the fifth-largest vehicle exporter. Mexico's

industrial production rose 3.7% over the past 12 months (annual average index) and stands at the highest level on record.

Several demographic factors make Mexico an increasingly attractive Latino country for qualitative research. For instance, the country's gross national income — USD \$1,012.32 billion — was the second highest in Latin America (after Brazil). This firmly establishes Mexico as an upper-middle-income coun-

try. In Mexican cities larger than 50,000 people, 31.6% of the population is of medium and medium-high income. Finally, 50% of Mexico's total population of 112 million is under the age of 26, which helps generate a stable demand for consumer products.

## **Mexico's Recent Consumer Drivers**

Over the past ten years, Mexico has been evolving and becoming a modern

Over the past ten years, Mexico has been evolving and becoming a modern market that values convenience, product variety, low-price products and virtual communication.





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#### *Convenience*

Mexico's growing divorce rate has changed the family dynamic and lifestyle. In 2000, the divorce rate in Mexico was 7%; in 2010, the divorce rate rose to 15%. Also, cities in the north (such as Monterrey, Chihuahua and Tijuana) have greater divorce rates than other cities (23% to 24%). Consequently, more Mexican women are working and feeling empowered to raise their families on their own. They obviously have less time to cook, and they want to spend quality time with their children. Not surprisingly, ready-to-eat and frozen-food categories are growing in popularity for breakfast and dinner. For example, yogurts, milk beverages with cereal and ready-to-eat prepared foods such as "Chicharron in Salsa Verde" from Isadora Brand

are often in Mexicans' pantries and refrigerators.

#### *Product Variety*

Mexican consumers are increasingly placing more value on being able to choose from a variety of consumer products. Convenience stores and grocery stores are gaining market share at the expense of traditional mom-and-pop stores. For instance, 7-Eleven now has 1,429 stores throughout Mexico; Walmart has opened 1,700 stores in Mexico; and H-E-B Supermarket operates 43 stores in northern Mexico.

#### *Low-Price Products*

Mexican consumers are demanding low-cost products. As a way to compete in the marketplace, companies with low growth categories pass on packaging savings to consumers. This is done by using more-economical refill packs for cooking oil, cleaning products, etc.

#### *Virtual Communication*

Virtual communication through social media is emerging as a powerful source for keeping 40.9 million Mexican internet users in touch with family and friends. Mexico is a socially driven culture. Mexicans are using Facebook groups to keep in touch with high school and college friends and to organize reunions. The people who use social media more frequently are generally under 35 years of age. In the northern states of Mexico, fear of crime has pushed Mexicans to go out with their families and friends during the day and early evening, socializing at night mainly at home.

#### *Consider Key Cities Beyond Mexico City*

Some U.S. and international clients think that if they conduct research in Mexico City, they will understand the needs of all Mexicans. In other words, if a



concept or product does not work in Mexico City, it will not work in other cities in Mexico. This is not true. Mexico City cannot represent the lifestyles

and values of all Mexicans. If the target segment is concentrated in Mexico City, it would make sense to research Mexico City only. If not, the client should con-

sider also researching other key cities. Important cities that represent Mexico's main regions in the north, center and south are Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico City.

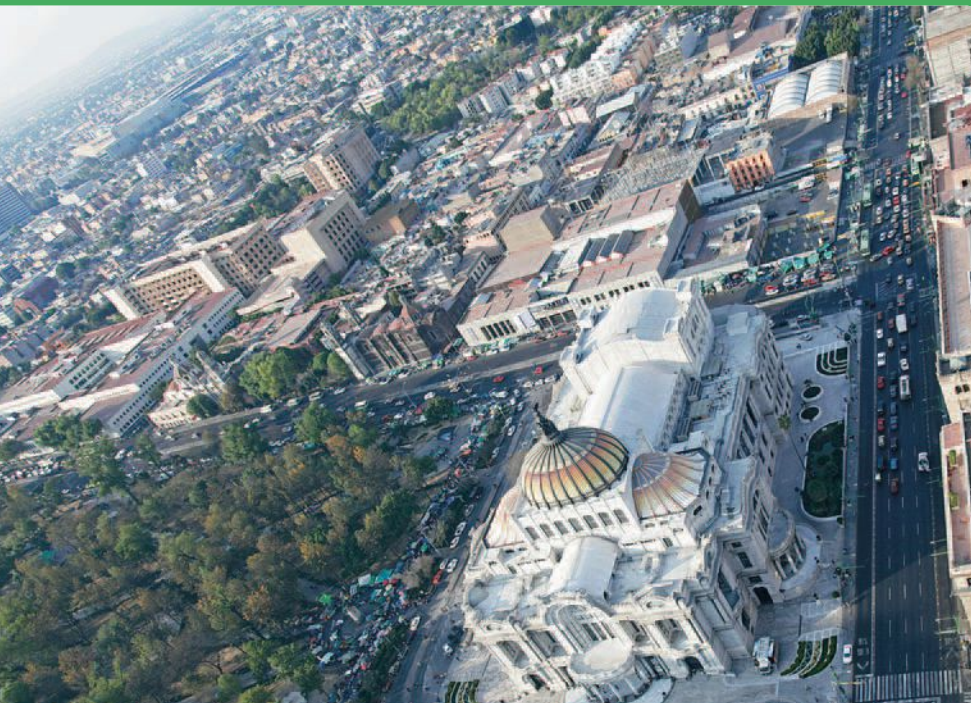


### *Monterrey*

Founded in 1596, Monterrey (and its metropolitan area) is regarded as a highly developed city, with the highest per capita income in the nation and a population of 3.5 million. This city is considered to be the most Americanized city in Mexico. Monterrey's people, called "Regios," have aspirations to be U.S. Americans. In the past five years, though, they have visited Texas less frequently, due to the lack of security on highways. Instead, they now shop for American brands in numerous commercial centers and malls that have been built in many neighborhoods. A growing variety of U.S. American restaurants allow "Regios" to feel that they are in the U.S. Fear of crime has pushed "Regios" to socialize less frequently in public places, especially at night. So, they socialize more frequently through Facebook and Skype.

### *Guadalajara*

Guadalajara, founded in 1542, has a population of 4.4 million. It is a city with traditional Catholic values and where the Mariachis were born. "Tapatios," Guadalajara's people, are centered in its traditions and are proud of their cultural orientation and sophistication. Guadalajara has 21 museums and has been the cradle and home of distinguished poets, writers, painters, actors, film directors and representatives of the arts.



### *Mexico City*

Founded in 1521, Mexico City is the most populated urban area in Mexico, with 20 million people. A culturally diverse city, Mexico City is also home to an estimated that 600,000 U.S. Americans. Most people spend the majority of their time outside of the home, since heavy traffic makes commute times anywhere from one to two hours. Besides hosting Mexico's federal government and many company headquarters, Mexico City has a variety of art and historical museums and historical sites.



“Capitalinos,” people from Mexico City, frequently attend cultural events and eat out at restaurants that offer a great variety of food and wine. They have a sophisticated and culturally oriented lifestyle.

### Best Qualitative Research Methods in Mexico

Knowing that Mexican consumer habits are gradually changing (along with their lifestyles), clients are more eager to be active players in market research. Clients want to discover the emerging needs and the main benefits sought by the country's consumers, as well as how their companies can serve these needs with product and marketing innovation. Because Mexicans' social culture tends to accommodate other people's expectations in order to be accepted, what people say in focus groups might not be the total reality of what they actually do.

Recognizing this cultural opportunity, researchers have found the following three major methodologies to be successful in finding need gaps and market opportunities.

#### #1. In-Person Focus Groups and In-Home Interviews

Group interviews with friends or family help with gaining real insights, since family and friends tend to ensure that what is said is accurate. This technique has been especially successful with the youth segment, as youths are the best interpreters of their own culture.

In family groups, moms frequently help provide insight about who the child is and what the child's relationship is with the product. For example, we have sent video cameras to the consumers' homes prior to interviews and asked moms and children to record their use of a product. Clients, present during the interviews, particularly enjoy listening to debriefs of the moms, especially related to the insights they provide about their children's product preferences. This helps clients generate strategies for brand positioning, especially in TV ads that will connect the brand with young children and their mothers.

#### #2. Online Immersive Methodologies or Online Diaries

These are helpful in pinpointing consumers' needs when using specific

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products. This methodology is particularly important for studies where consumers are quite unaware of their usage behaviors. In a study about refrigerators, for instance, the online methodology gave Mexican respondents time to realize their needs when placing groceries in their refrigerator and when searching their refrigerator for foods to cook or snack on. Additional advantages of online methodologies include studying more than one city simultaneously, avoiding security issues and travel costs and allowing clients to discover the study findings as these emerge through the platform.

### #3. *Consumer Co-Creation Camp™*


A hybrid approach of focus groups and ethnographies is preferred by time-sensitive, highly experienced clients. Clients who desire deep understanding and empathy with their consumers favor this method to explore whether a product concept or new brand has enough of a compelling need to justify an important future investment. For these clients, we created the Consumer Co-Creation Camp™ where consumers and clients are the protagonists of the research, interacting in a face-to-face study. During the course of three days, consumers share their lifestyles and category needs, create concepts for new products and brands, and evaluate the concepts through focus groups, interpreted by a highly skilled client team and its advertising firm.

In one study, clients not only listened to consumers in a focus group but also observed how they behaved in a bar using the new product, thereby developing a deeper understanding of consum-

ers' interactions with the product. They were able to talk insightfully about who their consumers really were, their motivations, how they relate to friends and, most important, how the product allows them to fulfill their self-expression and social needs. Since the clients contributed to the generation of insights, through moderated client debriefings, the whole eighteen-member client team was aligned with the research findings. Alignment, which is often quite difficult to achieve in international research projects with many stakeholders, was exceptionally important for this client team.

At the end of the Consumer Camp, the main client stated, "I feel we clearly know what we need to do to make this product a success in the marketplace."

### **In Summary**

Mexico presents new and varied market opportunities for companies. Strategic qualitative research consists of discovering who Mexican consumers really are, holistically, through their words and behaviors, and empowering clients to discover this same consumer truth, thus generating insights for successful product and market strategies. 







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# *Evolution of* PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

By Caroline Volpe

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**C**ompletion, association, selection/arrangement, expression and construction. These form the basis of projective techniques that QRCs have used for decades to assist them in eliciting non-rational or emotional drivers of attitudes and behaviors. For many of us, if not all, these techniques are critical tools in our technique portfolio. In addition, new technologies — such as bulletin boards, MROCs, Facebook, Pinterest

and online focus groups — have opened up our methodology options.

As the old world meets the new, the question has come up for QRCs: can we take our projective techniques with us?

To answer that question, our firm undertook a small research study to see how well projective techniques commonly used in traditional focus groups would translate into a bulletin-board setting. We picked bulletin boards

because, of all the online qualitative methods, these seem to elicit the most rational, logical responses from participants. So, this would prove a real test of migrating techniques aimed at eliciting the non-rational out of participants.

We conducted a three-day bulletin board with eight oncologists and seven oncology nurses to discuss the use of chemotherapy in maternal cancers. The real purpose of the discussion was not

As the old world meets the new, the question has come up for QRCs: can we take our projective techniques with us?





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As respondents were more comfortable with the exercises, they naturally provided us with more details.

to learn about the use of chemotherapy, but instead to try out projective techniques and see how they translated into a bulletin board. Each day we had two sessions: In the first session, we explored the topic of the day using a series of projective techniques. In the second session, we asked the nurses and physicians for feedback on the projective exercises.

### Projective Techniques Used

The projective techniques we used (and the context in which they were used) included:

- Say, Think, Feel: Thinking about the last time a woman who was slated to receive chemotherapy came to you to tell you she was pregnant, what was the first thing that came to your mind? How did you feel? What did you say?
- Archetypes (from a provided selection): Which would you most identify with, currently, when faced with the prospect of treating a pregnant woman with chemotherapy? Which archetype would you most identify with in the future?
- Collage (with provided images): Build a collage that reflects your reactions to this article in *The Lancet Oncology*.
- Word Association: Select up to three words that describe your reactions to *The Lancet Oncology* article.
- Sentence Completion: Complete several sentences that discuss the future treatment of maternal cancers and the impact of *The Lancet Oncology* article.
- Time Traveler: How will the treatment of maternal cancers evolve over the next two years. The next five years?
- Color Wheel: Select the color that best represents how you will feel about treating maternal cancers and using chemotherapy in pregnant women in the future.

### What We Learned

Overall, the respondents enjoyed the exercises because they facilitated self-

exploration and allowed them to compare their thoughts and feelings with those of their peers.

#### Minimizes Discomfort

Physicians' and nurses' comfort level with projective techniques can vary greatly when the techniques are executed in person. They are more comfortable with the rational-based exercises, such as sentence completion and word association. The more creative exercises, such as collage and color wheel, tend to be met with reluctance.

This discomfort was not as apparent in the online responses, however, as it can be in an in-person setting. About the color wheel exercise: "I liked this activity. Strange — I have never used color in this way to express myself."

Respondents not only completed the exercises but also provided useful feedback on why they felt or thought a particular way. On the Say, Think, Feel exercise, one physician responded, "I'd say to her... 'It is not uncharted territory, in that there are several cases of pregnant women having cancer.' I am thinking of the medical/legal issues and what trimester is she in." The same theme carried through to this physician's response to which archetype he would identify with, when he selected the Gambler, because "I am treating my patient's cancer while gambling with whether or not I will affect the fetus or [face] possible litigation."

#### Delayed Probing

The delayed probing, an inherent part of the asynchronous nature of a bulletin board, was a downside for our projective techniques. Although we were on the board every few hours, there were times when we probed a respondent a couple of hours after he or she posted, and then the respondent did not see our probe until a few hours after that.

Also, some respondents had difficulty remembering their original train of thought. For example, the following interchange occurred between a nurse and us:

Us: "If you could have selected any words that you wanted, what words would you have selected? What words were you looking for?"

Nurse: "I am at a loss. I did think of writing them after the words that were posted. But, I did pick some that were close in meaning."

This delay in probes led to responses that did not always provide us with the level of detail we wanted.

We found, however, that we did not have to probe as often as we might have to in a synchronous setting. We believe there are two key factors contributing to this:

- As respondents were more comfortable with the exercises, they naturally provided us with more details.
- Since respondents could respond at a time that was convenient for them, they could take the time to think through the exercise, which also increased the level of detail that was received.

#### Time to Think

The fact that bulletin boards give the respondents time to think has its pluses and minuses. From the respondents' perspective, it is a positive. They like that they are able to think about the question and/or exercise and their responses. "I loved this exercise. It made me think longer and harder about what it is I felt or did. Also, it made me evaluate the effectiveness of that in hindsight."

The downside, though, is that we as researchers may not receive respondents' immediate, gut reactions. The level of immediate reaction is respondent



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dependent. You will have some respondents who will respond immediately and instinctually to the question or exercise, but others may take quite a bit of time to respond. In normal question patterns, we can account for this, but projective techniques also need to do so. So often, a projective technique relies on top-of-mind response and not over-thinking. This can be a drawback to this context, compared to in person.

### **Detailed Instructions Required**

When conducting real-time research, we QRCs strive to provide clear instructions for our projective exercises, and we can provide further explanation if respondents do not understand our instructions. This same opportunity is not as readily available during bulletin boards. As the researcher, you can always update the instructions if you see respondents struggling, but this effort is lost on those who have already responded to the question. It is crucial that the instructions are as clear as possible at the outset.

We also found that the more detailed the instructions, the more difficult it was for respondents to complete the task. For example, many of the tasks were simple to explain (e.g., word association, color wheel) and, as a result, easy for the respondents to complete. On the other hand, the collage, which required extensive instructions to execute the task, resulted in more difficulties. A number of respondents struggled with this task: "It took me three tries before I got [it] down that you must save your work before you click on done." One physician had to be walked through the exercise step-by-step over the phone.

### **Technical Competence of the Audience**

In incorporating techniques, we found that it is important to consider the technical competence of the audience. From our experience in executing web-assisted telephone interviews and online surveys, we know that the technical competence of physicians and nurses can vary widely. It does not mean that we will not include the more technically complex tasks in the future, but we will balance them with easy tasks during that session or possibly make a complicated exercise the only task/question completed during that

In addition to the research objectives, it will become more critical for QRCs to take the methodology into consideration as we select which specific projective techniques to incorporate into our research.



session. This also speaks to the need to provide clear instructions to ensure that any lack of technical competence does not interfere with the respondent's ability to complete the task.

### **Capabilities of Selected Platform**

Given the variety of platforms available to QRCs, it is important to determine what projective techniques you want to employ and to then select the platform that will allow you to incorporate those techniques in the most user-friendly manner for both you and the respondents.

### **Final Thoughts**

Projective techniques will continue to be an inherent part of the QRC's toolkit. As we adapt to newer technologies

and methodologies, however, we will need to acclimate to using these techniques. In addition to considering the research objectives, it will become more critical for QRCs to consider methodology as we select which specific projective techniques to incorporate into our research.

In the end, we found that projective techniques can be effectively translated into a bulletin-board platform. The success of migrating your favorite projective techniques into this platform depends on adjusting the technique to fit the new context, including considerations for how you instruct participants, what they can do within the platform and the impact of the platform on their reactions to your questions. ■



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# How MODERATORS and CREATIVES Can Become Better Partners in Driving Their Clients' Businesses Forward

By **Bruce Miller** ■ Bruce Miller Creative  
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**T**his may be the first article ever written with the words “moderators” and “creatives” together in the same headline, never mind suggesting that there could possibly be a strengthening of a “partnership” between the two. Partnership? What partnership? After all, hasn’t it been known for decades that research types and creative types are such different breeds that, without a brand planner as an interpreter between the two, they might not even be able to communicate?

Having been a creative for the past 25 years (first in advertising, then as a creative director in a product-develop-

ment firm), I still chuckle at the perception of our two species being such polar opposites. Hey, some of my best friends are moderators! In fact, my wife is a former research director at the ad agency where we met. How’s that for opposites attracting?

All kidding aside, by the nature of the business, there does seem to be a bit of a buffer zone between moderators and creatives. There are very few “planned” points of direct interaction between the two. Think about the typical advertising or new-product-development project flow. Moderators usually prepare and spec the research in conjunction

with agency planners and/or client consumer-insights counterparts. During the research, a creative may be present, but if so, he or she is usually sequestered in the back room, munching on Peanut M&Ms and glued to a smartphone. Post-research, the “findings report” gets funneled back to the planner and client. That report then gets turned into a creative brief, which *finally* gets passed along to the creative department.

This common scenario creates a huge missed opportunity, especially for moderators who would benefit greatly by more closely connecting themselves to the final creative output, thus exhibiting





Most creatives (at least, good ones) are surprisingly strategic and, for better or for worse, are usually ten steps ahead in the problem-solving process. Talk to them.

more value and worth to their client and agency counterparts. A closer moderator/creative relationship also benefits the creative who, by becoming more immersed in the consumer-learning process, can develop more strategically grounded creative solutions. Such solutions are much more likely to drive business and make for happy clients. And happy clients are repeat clients. By the way, that is the not-so-secret intention of this article, to help you get repeat business.

Okay, so now that we can agree that closing the chasm between moderators and creatives would likely have a positive impact on your clients' businesses and, in turn, your business, what are some of the steps you can take to develop these stronger partnerships? To answer that question, let's take a look at the two most common qualitative phases.

### The Formative Phase

Since the goal of this phase is to gather the learning and insights that will lay the strongest possible strategic foundation for the new advertising strategy/campaign or new-product exploratory, this is a natural collaboration touch point. The only problem is that the formative research process can often be a bit cumbersome and tedious for restless creative souls. Here are a few suggestions to encourage collaboration.

#### ***Be the icebreaker.***

Walking into a facility or ethnography, most creatives understand that they have not benefited from the direct contact that their agency planners, account teams and clients have had with the moderator. Be the first to reach out and close that gap. Remind them that a major part of your role is to help give them the learning and insights that will help them in their creative role.

#### ***Reiterate the research objectives.***

Chances are, the creatives were *not* on any of the client/agency research calls, nor had they likely seen the discussion guide until the day of the research. The more they understand about the research, the methodology and the objectives, the more they can glean from it. Allow them to ask questions without fear of intimidation.

#### ***Ditch the "kooky creative" stereotype.***

Sure, creatives can be a tad eccentric at times and may brandish one too many offensive tattoos, but do not let that make you think they are all coming to the party with a blank slate for a brain. Most creatives (at least, good ones) are surprisingly strategic and, for better or for worse, are usually ten steps ahead in the problem-solving process. Talk to them. Listen to any hypotheses they may have rolling around in their heads because, chances are, they have plenty. They may lead you to probes or questions that could unearth some surprisingly new and valuable insights.

#### ***Learn to interpret "creative speak."***

Although creative types tend to speak in "executional" terms, try to keep your mind open as to how what they say might translate into a solid strategic insight or a directional platform.

#### ***Debrief with "ahas," "now whats" and implications.***

This sounds so obvious, but you would not believe how many debriefs I have attended that are more of a regurgitation of the past few hours or days of consumer verbatims, as opposed to an intelligent distillation of the learning. A quality debrief benefits everyone, but we creatives especially thrive on finding the "handle" that a more thoughtful discussion can help uncover.

### The Validation Phase

At some point in the process, the creative work is likely to be put to the qualitative test in the form of validation research. In this phase, the creatives are a bit more involved and have a lot more at stake, having been the ones to develop the stimulus in the form of advertising or product concepts, packaging, etc. Therefore, the partnership that develops in this phase requires a slightly different tact than the formative phase, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the creative output. Here are some thoughts and suggestions going into validation.

#### ***Remain objective.***

Again, sounds like Moderator 101, but since there is more than one way to execute a creative brief, you are likely to see just as many bad creative executions as good ones. The moment creatives even sense that you have become the slightest bit judgmental about their work, you have lost their trust and any chance you had to create a productive working relationship. Do not forget that you are dealing with their creative "baby." Let the respondents be the "bad guys."

#### ***Reassure them of the validation intent.***

Remind them that the main goal of validation is not to "kill" ideas, but to solicit feedback from the respondents that could potentially help optimize and strengthen the concepts (after all, this is qual, not quant). And, as moderator, you will do everything in your power to solicit productive feedback. Of course, you and the creatives very well know that you must take the good with the bad and that negative comments are an unavoidable, yet equally important part of the learning process, as long as they are not malicious in intent.

### Create "Touch Points" between interviews.

Most moderators take this time to speak with their direct client/agency insights contacts to make sure that they are

getting what they need from the respondents. If possible, take a few moments at this point to also chat directly with the creative(s) one on one. Since they are the ones who must ultimately carry the

ball over the goal line, they could use all the support they can get to develop a stronger offensive strategy. To add a little more substance to the remaining interviews, this is the perfect time to toss around some partially formulated conclusions that you or they may have.

### Debrief to win.

Even though the main goal of validation, as stated above, is not to "kill" ideas but to optimize and strengthen them, there typically will be obvious losers in the bunch. By this point, everyone in the room knows which ones they are, so there is no sense in beating a dead horse. It would be much more productive (and be much more appreciated by the creatives) if you took this time to shift the focus of the group's attention to the ideas that have winning potential.

### Go beyond the "likes" and "dislikes."

Most creatives are more eager to find ways to improve upon their concept or idea rather than re-hashing what the respondents did not like about it. Be prepared to offer up some optimization thought starters based on what you heard. Just be careful to phrase them as "directional suggestions" and not dictates. Nobody, not even a moderator, likes being told exactly how to do his or her job. Think more along the lines of voicing suggestions such as "Have you considered...?" or "Would you consider...?" as opposed to "I think you should...." Don't be concerned with "optimization ownership." If the client sees an optimization in the final creative that came from a suggestion you made in the debrief, he or she will know who it came from.

### Wrap Up

I hope this has given you some thoughts on how to build and strengthen your relationship with the creative partners on your projects. Again, in doing so, you will create a working situation that is better suited to developing more powerful creative solutions for your clients and their businesses, while garnering more respect and repeat business for you from both agencies and clients. It is a win-win-win situation for all involved. ■



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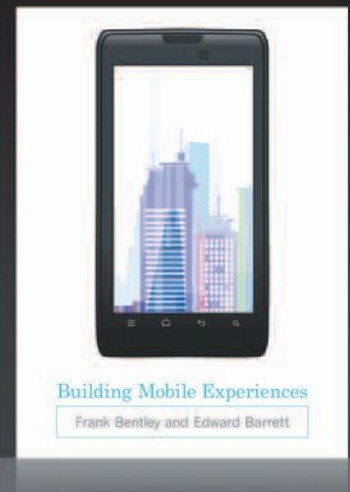
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# Building Mobile User Experiences

Frank Bentley and Edward Barrett  
MIT Press, 2012

Reviewed by Kay Corry Aubrey

Usability Resources Inc. ■ Bedford, MA ■ [kay@usabilityresources.net](mailto:kay@usabilityresources.net)



**In** *Building Mobile User Experiences*, authors Frank Bentley and Edward Barrett seek to develop mobile products that bring joy, connect people in new ways and fit gracefully into the user's world. In a concise and accessible way, they describe what you need to know to research, prototype and test successful mobile services. Their process has grown out of a class they teach at MIT in mobile design, along with more than a decade of product development at Motorola.

*Building Mobile User Experiences* is full of case studies that illustrate their approach. One service they have developed is "Serendipitous Family Stories," which allows people within the same social network to create videos connected to a particular geographic location. For example, grandparents can use this app to make short videos about the places where they met, worked and lived, and then tag each video to its geographic landmark (for instance, dance hall, factory and house). As their grandchildren drive by the landmark, their phone will vibrate, which is a cue to watch the video that is connected to it. In this way, the grandchildren learn about that location's importance to their family history.

The authors' research methods combine anthropology, usability, design and computer science. They seek to gain an understanding of how people adopt new technology in their lives by directly observing their behavior through ethnographies, semi-structured interviews, task walkthroughs and photo and written diaries. Their most valuable insights come from qualitative research, but they also collect usage data as they develop and evaluate product ideas. The authors came up with the idea for Serendipitous Family Stories through ethnographies and interviews and by analyzing phone conversations. They asked respondents to store their phone conversations to a memory card, which they submitted at the end of each week. The team listened to the calls, searching for specific themes in the social interactions, such as references to family and how families talked about locations with each other.

Each study produces hundreds of ideas. The challenge is narrowing the field down to the ones that can be patented, are implementable and have market potential. One chapter describes the winnowing and evaluation process, which leverages affinity diagramming against raw data. The next set of challenges involves turning the best ideas

into crude working prototypes to put into users' hands. The authors describe an iterative beta process that can go on for several months and involves collecting usage data and running more qualitative research studies to see how people use the product over time.

In an interesting and engaging way, Bentley and Barrett describe the technical compromises that need to be made when designing a mobile service. For example, if you are trying to create an application that relies on sensing the mobile user's location, such as Yelp, your service will quickly drain the user's battery if it provides street-level vs. zip-code level accuracy. Technical limitations play a major role in mobile user interface design, so it is important to have a practical grasp of what these are.

QRCS should find value in this book on several levels. It details a novel but tried-and-true approach to doing qualitative research in the mobile realm. It also provides an easy-to-understand education on everything you need to know to turn an idea into a successful mobile service. Finally, *Building Mobile User Experiences* offers an opportunity to gain a ground-level understanding of what user-experience research and design are all about. ■

Bentley and Barrett seek to develop mobile products that bring joy, connect people in new ways and fit gracefully into the user's world.



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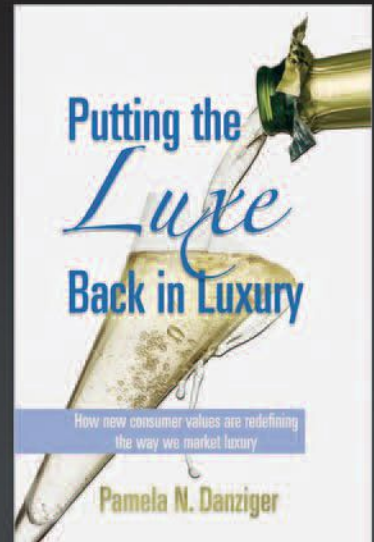
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# Putting the Luxe Back in Luxury: How New Consumer Values Are Redefining the Way We Market Luxury

Pamela N. Danziger  
Paramount Market Publishing, 2011

Reviewed by Susan Saurage-Altenloh  
Saurage Research, Inc. ■ Houston, TX ■ [ssaurage@saurageresearch.com](mailto:ssaurage@saurageresearch.com)



**The** premise for this book, written by the author of *Shopping: Why We Love It and How Retailers Can Create the Ultimate Customer Experience* (Kaplan Publishing, 2006) and *Why People Buy Things They Don't Need: Understanding and Predicting Consumer Behavior* (Dearborn Trade Publishing, 2004), is that the U.S. luxury consumer market has changed dramatically since the go-go years of the early 21st century. Further, it will continue to slow for the next decade, driven by demographics, purchase behavior and psychographics.

The author's work is "intended to strip away the illusions and fantasies many marketers hold about the luxury consumer marketplace." Instead of retaining these beliefs, the reader is encouraged to focus on learning who luxury consumers are and what they want in order to successfully tap their potential in ways that matter. For researchers, understanding how the market has changed and how corresponding marketing strategies must be reorganized is critical to developing strong research constructs to deliver insights that resonate.

Danziger reminds us also that we cannot be "caught up in our own aspirations. We must strip away the aspirational to get to the fundamentals of marketing luxury to customers who have different desires than... just a few short years ago." It is appropriate advice to marketers and researchers, both of whom

must immerse themselves in their customers' roles and walk the consumer walk, as it were.

The new challenge, Danziger charges, is to recognize the enlightened, increasingly post-materialistic values of today's luxury consumer. "It is no surprise that Merriam-Webster named *austerity* Word of the Year for 2010. The old luxury model based on image status, conspicuous consumption and spendthrift indulgence is now tarnished and dull."

Danziger covers in detail three key areas of understanding that must be conquered by the savvy luxury-goods marketer (and, subsequently, the research team working for the brand) before developing a successful strategy.

## 1. *Luxury customer demographics.*

While demographics are explored in detail, with revealing findings, the differences of in-store behavior show that affluent consumers are not as alike as the numbers suggest. Shoppers are smarter, and they have redefined value for themselves. And those values differ by — you guessed it — various demographic strata within the larger luxe market.

## 2. *Consumer purchase behavior.*

Not only is it key to understand what consumers buy, but also clarifying where they buy and how they allocate their dollars is part of the set of primary metrics. A fascinating look at how purchase patterns have changed (consider Simply Vera Vera Wang and

Zappos.com, or an increased investment in gourmet cooking tools, or experiential luxuries like travel) reveals the market through new eyes.

## 3. *Psychographics.*

Here, we learn how consumers make their purchase decisions in this age of "new austerity." Danziger also provides a segmentation of the luxury market and identifies how each segment's values come into play in the decision-making and product-acquisition process.

The author suggests that the present-day luxury "drought" is a perfect storm from which marketers and brands can benefit... if they reconsider their strategy. This short but profound book ends with eight clearly defined rules to consider if one is to succeed at "rainmaking in the luxury drought."

1. Enhance the quality of people's lives.
2. Sell to a doubly bifurcated market.
3. Create great expectations to support price premiums.
4. Speak the new language of value.
5. Master 21st century technology tools.
6. Raise corporate social responsibility.
7. Look to emerging markets.
8. Evolve your luxe brand, or risk extinction.

Bottom line: This is a strong, swift read full of advice and key thinking points that you will revisit as you consider research to address the affluent market, a luxury brand or the opportunity to reach well-to-do customers with a deliverable that has value... in their eyes. 📖





I just gave *Bridesmaids* five stars on Netflix so I could see my new "top 10," left feedback for an eBay seller, asking her to give me good marks as a buyer, too, Facebook - "liked" *The Body Shop* to get a free coupon, LinkedIn a recommendation for a colleague who'd just done the same, and Tweeted my girlfriend a Groupon I thought she'd like (plus I get mine free.)

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# The *VIEWS* Qualitative Crossword Puzzle

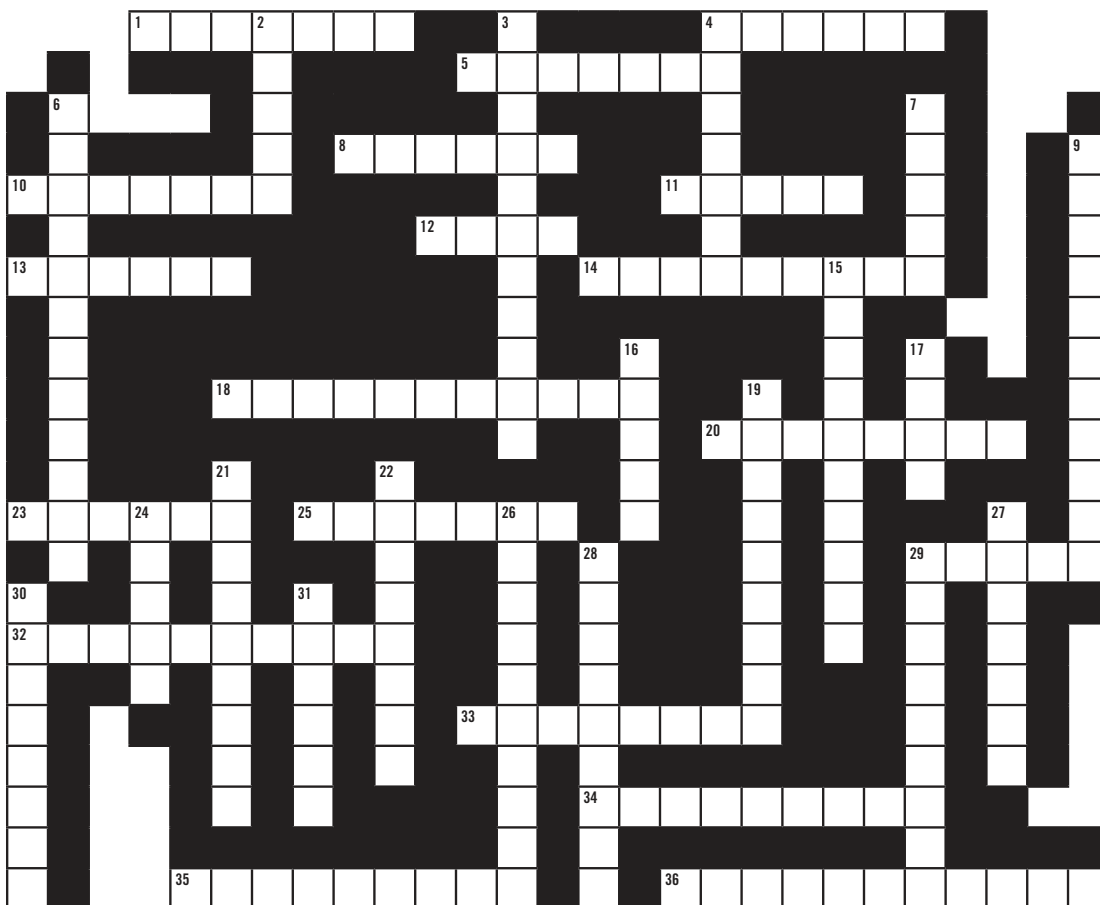
By Joel Reish

Next Level Research ■ Atlanta, GA ■ joel@nextlevelresearch.com

**Do you like crosswords? Do you like qualitative research? Oh boy, then do we have a puzzle for you!**

Here are the instructions: It is a crossword puzzle. You know what to do.

Just remember that all of the answers to this puzzle have something to do with qualitative research. But, unlike qualitative research, this puzzle has only one right answer (found on page 70). Good luck! 🍀



## ACROSS

1. Place moderators are often found
4. \_\_\_\_\_ media; people sharing thoughts.
5. A qualitative job to do.
8. Buyer of qualitative research.
10. Artful expression of an idea.
11. Discussion \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Organization that brings you this magazine.
13. The final deliverable.
14. Things you collect in an ethnography.
18. Not quantitative.
20. Not just for after school.
23. Favorite client snack (spell it out).
25. What gets tested.
29. Seeing double.
32. Goin' fishing.
33. How to know who qualifies.
34. Questioning people who walk by, or an American football turnover.
35. Monetary motivation.
36. Getting down in the culture.

## DOWN

2. Explore deeper; something sent to Mars.
3. What did they say? In detail.
4. Stuff we test.
6. Kind of respondent you don't want to have.
7. Name of this magazine.
9. Moderated discussions with several respondents (2 words).
15. QRCA members gather and hug.
16. IDI middle word.
17. Expressing yourself in a weblog.
19. You see mostly the back of this person's head.
21. Hands-on approach; \_\_\_\_\_ testing
22. Opposite of outwards.
24. Keep a log.
26. An illuminating technique.
27. Relating well with respondents.
28. Climbing to emotional benefits.
29. One-word antonym for "shy, quiet one."
30. Even a cow gets this.
31. ICU but not the other way around.



Why choose Columbus as a Midwestern market over Chicago or other Midwest markets for marketing research studies? This can be answered in three parts: the city, the team, and the facility.

First, the city: Columbus, the capital of Ohio, is the largest city in Ohio and the 15th largest city in the United States. It is the Midwest's third fastest growing major metropolitan area with increasing demographic and cultural diversity.

Columbus is headquarters for many large corporations, including Wendy's International, Cardinal Health, Nationwide, The Gap, Victoria's Secret, American Express, Lowe's, Big Lots, White Castle Systems, Inc. & Body Works, and White Barn Coffee Co., which helps provide depth in types of industries represented in the client base.

When it comes to politics, Columbus is a far more politically mixed market vs. Chicago (according to the Pew Research Center for the Politics and Public Life, *Conservative and Liberal Cities in the Midwest*, Chicago has 18.72% Conservative percent of total vote and 81.28% Liberal percent of total vote compared to Columbus 37.65% Conservative percent of total vote and 62.35% Liberal percent of total vote.)

When viewing the Census Bureau's 2000 census information about education attainment in the Midwest region's percent of those with a high school diploma or higher is 84.4%. Illinois has only 81.4% versus Ohio's 84.4%.

A major contributing factor to the higher educational attainment percentages is The Ohio State University main campus (boasting one of the largest enrollments of all colleges in the country), making Columbus a perfect choice to find "typical" Midwest marketing research respondents!

Next, the team: market research is only as good as the company that does the data collection! Complete Research Connection's (CRC) senior research team utilizes their many years of expertise, skill, and education to serve you and your clients.

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Our personnel, rated highest among all Top Rated facilities in Columbus in the *Impulse Survey of Focus Group Facilities 2011*, is assembled with one goal in mind: superior customer service.

Finally, the facility: Complete Research Connection offers a brand new, 8,000+ square foot facility which opened in 2011. Located just 10 miles from downtown and less than 15 minutes from the airport, the facility boasts four research suites (one multi-purpose, two standard focus group, and one IDI suite) that all offer digital recording and streaming; two of the larger suites also offer around viewing for approximately 30 people. The facility is just

one of the many facilities in the Focus Coast to Coast alliance. This alliance of independently owned and operated, *Impulse Survey* "Top Rated" facilities, allows our clients to make just one call to CRC and be offered estimates and even field management for projects across the U.S. and abroad.

So what other interesting facts are available about Columbus? According to the 2010 Census, the age distribution is: 18-24=24.2%, 25-34=14%, 35-44=21%, 45-64=17.9%, and 65+=11.9%. The median age was 31 years. For every 100 females there were 94.6 males. The median income for a household in the city was \$27,000. The Columbus metropoli-

tan area has experienced several waves of immigration and into the city from China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan, Australia, India, and ongoing immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Many other countries of origin are represented as well, with much of this represented in the international draw of The Ohio State University. 2008 estimates indicate roughly 116,000 of the city's residents are foreign-born, accounting for 82% of the new residents between 2000-2006 at a rate of 1.6 per week. 40% of the immigrants have come from Asia, 23% from Africa, 22% from Latin

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# Check Out Our Newest Podcast with **FRANK BENTLEY**

**O**ver the past four years, QRCA has brought you more than two-dozen podcasts of interviews conducted by QRCA members with influential leaders from qualitative research, strategic consulting, academia and other relevant fields. You can listen to these interviews right on the QRCA website as streaming audio, or you can download the mp3 file to your laptop or portable player for listening on the go. You will find the podcasts under the Publications link at [www.qrca.org](http://www.qrca.org).

Our latest podcast is with Frank Bentley, who co-wrote (with Edward Barrett) *Building Mobile User Experi-*

*ences*, a book recently published by the MIT Press that describes the qualitative and quantitative research process that Frank's teams at MIT and Motorola use to create unique and successful mobile products (see our Book Review on page 64). Frank's research centers on building new mobile experiences to strengthen social relationships and to bring joy and delight to consumers.

The techniques outlined in *Building Mobile User Experiences* have evolved over the past 10 years and draw from anthropology, Human-Computer Interaction, design, computer science and business. Frank is a Principal Staff

Research Scientist in the Core Research Group at Motorola Mobility, and he teaches within MIT's Department of Comparative Media Studies. In our *QRCA VIEWS* podcast, he is interviewed by *QRCA VIEWS* Managing Editor, Kay Cory Aubrey.

Find this informative new podcast — as well as interviews with Bill Abrams, Andrew Ballenthin, Mary Ellen Bates, Scott Berkun, Ilse Bunan, Bill Buxton, Sean Campbell and Scott Swigart, Dorey Clark, Stephen Covey, Paul Gillin, Judith Glaser, Kenneth Gronbach, J. Robert Harris, Bill Hartman, Naomi Henderson, John Hlinko, Jackie Huba and Ben McConnell, Andrew Kent, Jim Loretta, Dr. G. Clotaire Rapaille, Dave Siegel, Jean D. Sifleet, Susan Spiegel Solovay and Barbara Newman, Laurie Tema-Lyn, Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, Liz Van Patten and David Vinjamuri — all at [www.qrca.org](http://www.qrca.org). 

## Humor... CONTINUED

Use the key below to check your answers to the crossword puzzle on page 68:




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 Focusscope (Downtown)  
 Focusscope (Oak Brook)  
 Focusscope (Oak Park)  
 Murray Hill Center  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Downtown)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (O'Hare)  
 Smith Research  
 (Deerfield)

Smith Research  
 (Downtown)  
 Smith Research  
 (Oakbrook)  
 The Energy Annex  
 (Downtown)

### CONNECTICUT

MarketView (Danbury)  
 New England Marketing  
 Research (Norwalk)  
 Performance Plus  
 (Enfield)  
 Razor Focus (Stamford)

### DENVER

Fieldwork Denver  
 Plaza Research

### FLORIDA

Concepts in Focus  
 (Jacksonville)  
 L&E Research (Tampa)  
 MARS Research  
 (Ft. Lauderdale)  
 National Opinion  
 Research (Miami)  
 Plaza Research  
 (Ft. Lauderdale)  
 Plaza Research (Tampa)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Orlando)  
 Superior Research  
 (Tampa)  
 WAC  
 (Ft. Lauderdale, Miami)

### LAS VEGAS

Plaza Research

### LOS ANGELES

AIM (Los Angeles,  
 Costa Mesa, Long Beach)  
 Adept Consumer Testing  
 (Beverly Hills, Encino)  
 Adler Weiner  
 (Los Angeles, Irvine)  
 Advanced Marketing  
 Perspectives  
 Fieldwork LA (Irvine)  
 Focus & Testing  
 Focus Pointe Global

House of Marketing  
 Research (Pasadena)  
 Meczka Marketing  
 Research  
 Murray Hill Center  
 Plaza Research  
 Q-Insights  
 Schlesinger Associates

### MINNESOTA

Ascendancy Research  
 (Minneapolis)  
 Delve (Minneapolis)  
 Fieldwork Minneapolis  
 (Edina)  
 Focus Market Research  
 (Minneapolis)  
 Focus Market Research  
 (Edina)  
 FRS Research Group  
 (St. Paul)

### MISSOURI

Delve (Kansas City)  
 Delve (St. Louis)  
 Hatch Research  
 (St. Louis)  
 Peters Marketing  
 Research (St. Louis)

### NEW YORK

Fieldwork New York  
 (Westchester)  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Focus Suites  
 Innovative Concepts  
 (Long Island)  
 JRA (White Plains, NY)  
 MarketView (Tarrytown)  
 Murray Hill Center  
 New York Consumer Ctr  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 The Focus Room  
 The Focus Room  
 (Westchester)

### NEW JERSEY/ NEW YORK (Metro Area)

AIM (Hackensack)  
 AIM (Morristown)

Fieldwork East  
 (Ft Lee, NJ)  
 Focus Crossroads  
 (East Rutherford, NJ)  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 (Teaneck, NJ)  
 Focus World Int'l  
 (Holmdel, NJ)  
 Meadowlands Consumer  
 Center (Secaucus, NJ)  
 Plaza Research  
 (Paramus, NJ)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Iselin, NJ)

### NORTH CAROLINA

L&E Research (Raleigh)

### OHIO

AIM (Cincinnati)  
 AIM (Columbus)  
 Delve (Columbus)  
 Opinions, Ltd.  
 (Cleveland)  
 QFact Marketing  
 Research (Cincinnati)

### OREGON

Gilmore Research  
 (Portland)

### PHILADELPHIA (Metro Area)

Plaza Research  
 (Marlton, NJ)  
 JRA (Montgomeryville, PA)  
 JRA (Mount Laurel, NJ)

### PHILADELPHIA

Delve  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 (Center City, Bala Cynwyd)  
 Focus Suites (Bala Cynwyd)  
 JRA  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Center City, Bala Cynwyd)

### PHOENIX

Delve (Tempe)  
 Fieldwork Phoenix  
 (Scottsdale)

Fieldwork Phoenix  
 (South Mountain)  
 Focus Market Research  
 (Scottsdale)  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates

### RHODE ISLAND

Performance Plus  
 (Providence)

### SAN DIEGO

Plaza Research  
 Taylor Research

### SAN FRANCISCO

Fieldwork San Francisco  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates

### SEATTLE

Fieldwork Seattle  
 (Downtown)  
 Fieldwork Seattle  
 (Kirkland)  
 Gilmore Research  
 (Downtown)

### TEXAS

Austin Market Research  
 (Austin)  
 Delve (Dallas)  
 Fieldwork Dallas  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 (Dallas)  
 Murray Hill Center  
 (Dallas)  
 Plaza Research (Dallas)  
 Plaza Research (Houston)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Dallas)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Houston)  
 Think Group Austin  
 (Austin)

### VIRGINIA

Alan Newman Research  
 (Richmond)

## WASHINGTON, D.C. (Metro Area)

OMR (Greenbelt, MD)  
 OMR (Washington, DC)  
 Shugoll Research  
 (Alexandria, VA)  
 Shugoll Research  
 (Bethesda, MD)  
 Shugoll Research  
 (Fairfax, VA)

## WISCONSIN

Delve (Appleton)  
 JRA (Milwaukee)

## UNITED KINGDOM

Aspect in the City  
 (Manchester)  
 Aspect Viewing Facilities  
 (South Manchester)  
 Field Facts Worldwide/  
 Focus Pointe (London)  
 London Focus (London)  
 Shoreditch Studios  
 (London)  
 The Research House  
 (London)  
 The Research House  
 (Wimbledon)

## CANADA

Consumer Vision  
 (Toronto)  
 Research House  
 (Toronto)

## FRANCE

ConsuMed Research  
 (Paris)  
 Passerelles (Paris)

## GERMANY

Schmiedl Marktforschung  
 (Berlin)  
 Schmiedl Marktforschung  
 (Frankfurt)  
 Schmiedl Marktforschung  
 (Munich)

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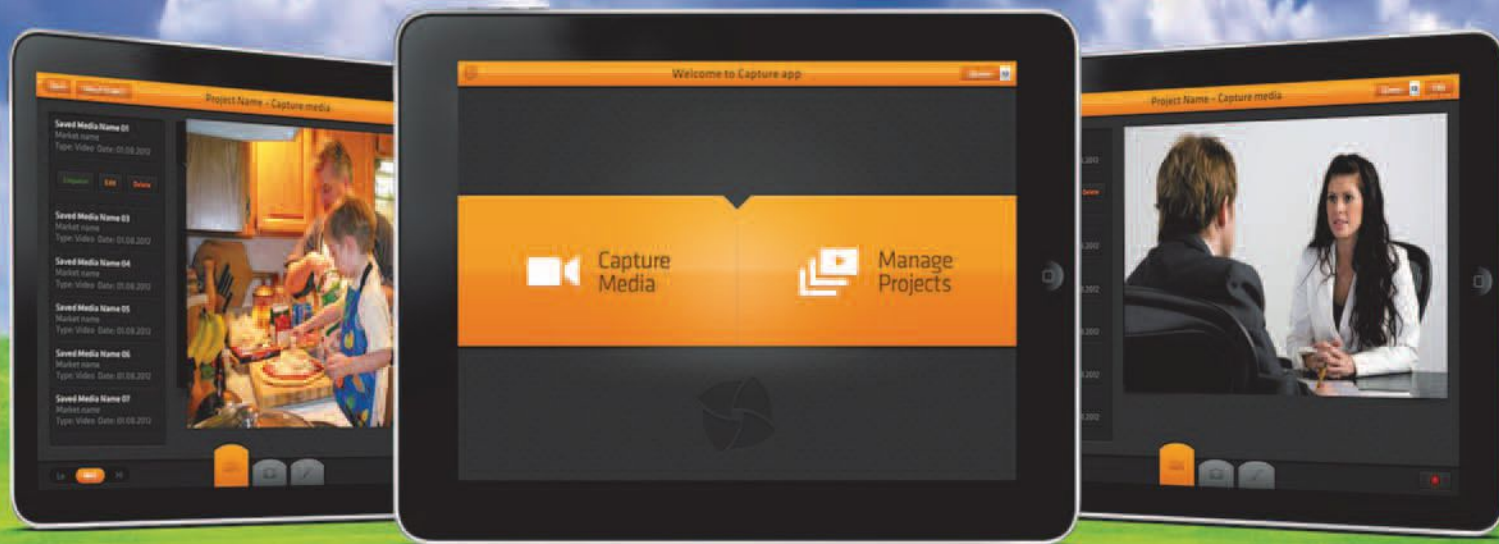




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