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The current decline of traditional luxury brings us to the eve of a new humanism, rooted in human values. In turn, this triggers a new “slow life,” whose icon is idleness. As a consequence, living a slow life means performing slow research. Luigi Toiati, chairman of Focus Srl in Rome, explains how.

Leveraging the Qualitative Side of Neuromarketing

TRENDS: Neuromarketing for Dummies author Stephen Genco, writing here with Thom Noble, reveals how today’s qualitative insights go hand in hand with neuromarketing, which is far more advanced today than the “hidden motivations and desires” concepts of decades ago.

Slow Life and Slow Research

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT: The current decline of traditional luxury brings us to the eve of a new humanism, rooted in human values. In turn, this triggers a new “slow life,” whose icon is idleness. As a consequence, living a slow life means performing slow research. Luigi Toiati, chairman of Focus Srl in Rome, explains how.

Perspectives from the Corporate World...

An Interview with Elizabeth Latoracca, Global Insights Director, Pain Management, GlaxoSmithKline

LUMINARIES: W.E.S. Editor-in-Chief Laurie Tema-Lyn talks with Liz Latoracca about her role at one of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies and about some of the differences in managing research from an international versus U.S.-based perspective.

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TOOLBOX: Simply watching how people interact with products and/or each other is still a tried-and-true method for gleaning important consumer information. Here are four basic and effective techniques for doing low-tech, yet thoughtful and structured observational research.
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TOOLBOX: All panels are not created equal. The nature of how a panel is built and enhanced over time matters. Here, an industry insider shares valuable insights into how good panel providers validate the authenticity of their online panelists, thereby boosting your confidence in the quality of your results.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH MADE IN FRANCE

GLOBAL RESEARCH: Guided by a long heritage of psycho-sociological philosophy, QRCs in France prefer long, in-depth research methodologies. For respondents, too, time management is less important than their need to fully express themselves. The combination leads to exceptionally rich results for qualitative research à la Française.

FIVE TIPS FOR BETTER GLOBAL ONLINE QUALITATIVE

ONLINE QUAL: As the need for international insights has increased, powerful new technologies and approaches — like online qualitative research platforms and translation innovations — have allowed research firms of all sizes to take their work worldwide. These five tips will help make global research easy and effective for any QRC.

HOW TO FIND THE BEST CPA FIRM FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

BUSINESS MATTERS: With tax time just a few months away, perhaps you are pondering a switch to a different accounting firm to assist you. If so, keep these key considerations in mind as you evaluate your options.

TRAVEL WISE: The site for the 2014 AQR/QRCA Worldwide Conference of Qualitative Research, April 30 through May 2, Budapest boasts incredible architectural ambiance. You will not dream of escaping this “City of Baths,” bisected by the Danube River, until you have explored it for yourself.

BOOK REVIEWS: QRCA members give in-depth reviews of three books for qualitative researchers: • How Brands Grow: What Marketers Don’t Know, • Qualitative Health Research: Creating a New Discipline and • Autoethnography as Method.

From the Editor-in-Chief

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### COMMUNICATION

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<td>Writing &amp; Presenting Marketing Research Reports: Insights, Storytelling, Data Visualization $2,495</td>
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POSTED ON YouTube is an absolutely delightful video featuring a dozen charismatic pianists playing classical music. They take turns coming up to one Steinway grand piano, performing seamlessly as one organism, without missing a note or skipping a beat. It is brilliant and funny to watch as each pianist brings his or her own special twinkle to the pieces performed. Some approach the keyboard with soft, feathery fingers; others start with a mighty gesture 12 inches above the keyboard. Some strike or strum the inside strings of the piano, while others caress the keys. They smile and communicate with each other without words but with body language and attention. It is mesmerizing to watch and listen to (here is the link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS9SdWBzy6Q#at=122).

I find so many parallels in my professional world and in the culture we have created in the VIEWS editorial team. In earlier letters, I have introduced you to our members. This winter, we shuffle and re-cast the team. As I have completed my two years as Editor-In-Chief with this Winter issue of VIEWS, I pass on the baton to the very capable Kay Corry Aubrey. Kay has been a tireless Managing Editor, following her role as Toolbox Feature Editor. As a QRC who specializes in usability research, Kay will certainly bring fresh perspectives to maximizing our content for different audiences and platforms.

With Kay’s appointment, the VIEWS team engages in a bit of a circle dance. Starting with the Spring 2014 issue, taking over Kay’s role as Managing Editor is Jenifer Simson Hartt, who has been orchestrating our Toolbox articles. Susan Saurage-Altenloh moves from Schools of Thought to take Jen’s former role on Toolbox, and Suzanne Klein moves from Travel Wise to Susan’s former position on SOT. Deanna Manfredi, a newcomer to the team but not new to audiences with her excellent articles, will become the new Travel Wise Editor. Pat Sabena continues to gather fascinating stories from around the globe, and Shaili Bhatt will continue to bring us glimpses of what’s new and upcoming with Trends. Mike Carlon remains on Business Matters and Podcast, Ted Kendall still leads Tech Talk and Online, and George Sloan remains with Book Reviews. Joel Reish continues his dual role as co-Managing Editor with Jenifer, and he is also the Humor Feature Editor. I’m not leaving VIEWS entirely, as I will continue as Feature Editor of our new twice-yearly section, Luminaries.

If your head is spinning with our news of changes, I invite you to slow down a bit with this edition’s Schools of Thought article by Italian researcher Luigi Toiati. “Slow Life and Slow Research” is a poetic, meditative contemplation on culture and our industry. I think it will inspire reflection and conversation. From another international colleague, Winnie Carmo, we gather perspectives on qualitative research.
research “à la française,” which draws heavily from psychology, sociology and philosophy. Now, here’s a teaser for those of you thinking of attending the AQR-QRCA’s biannual conference to be held in the historic city of Budapest this spring. In Travel Wise, see why author Jozsef Meszaros describes Budapest as a city of Lions and Snugs. Read it, and you will certainly want to visit!

In my interview with Elizabeth Latoracca, a Global Insights Director at GlaxoSmithKline, I learned about some of the cultural challenges, as well as similarities, in conducting research around the world.

And there’s much more.

Have you been wondering what the buzz is about neuromarketing? Authors Stephen Genco and Thom Noble have made this world a bit more comprehensible in their informative primer that explains how studying brain processes (like measuring brainwaves and physiological signals) can be leveraged to derive qualitative insights.

Want tools you can put to use immediately? Go straight to Mike Youngblood’s “Four Bedrock Techniques for Observational Research.” With old-fashioned pencil and paper, a little time and focused attention, you can collect exceptionally rich data to enhance a project or even to help you in your proposal-writing stage. On the business-side of things, Larry Little offers plenty of down-to-earth, practical advice in “How to Find the Best CPA Firm for Your Small Business.”

If you have ever been concerned about how you can get good-quality respondents in your online panels, you will learn what goes on behind the scenes in Laura Livers’ “Real People: Verifying Your Online Panels.” An array of Book Reviews and a prelude personal letter from Kendall Nash, QRCA’s new President, on finding her rhythm, round out a very full and satisfying winter read!

At the risk of sounding cliché, it has been an honor and a privilege for me to lead the VIEWS editorial team for the past two years. I certainly have learned a tremendous amount about what it takes to run a magazine, and I am grateful for the savvy advice of our master proof-reader and publishing liaison, Liz Nutter, and the designers and professionals from Leading Edge Communications who make our magazine look so good.

Without further ado... it is time to pass the baton to Kay and the rest of this outstanding team of volunteers and professionals to continue to “make beautiful music” together.

Warm Regards,
Laurie
• FROM THE PRESIDENT •

FIND YOUR RHYTHM

There is a lesson here for me.

Two years ago, I had the good fortune of landing myself in a session at the Annual QRCA Conference in Las Vegas on the topic of Polarity Management®. As is often the case at this conference in particular, I had deliberated over the list of session options. So many sounded incredibly relevant and exciting, but this one had a certain intrigue and mystery that drew me into the room. Polariites are interdependent pairs that actually support each other, despite seeming to be opposites. Some of the most easily exemplified polarities are inhaling/exhaling and rest/work, but they extend even to art/science and thinking/doing. Liz Monroe-Cook talked that day about polarities in life and business: how to recognize, appreciate and ultimately optimize them. I left the conference, my mind reeling with new and exciting knowledge — and the dynamic tensions of polarities made it through the noise to find a place in my mind that I kept visiting for the months that followed.

Later that year, I heard a talk on the topic of rhythms in our lives — how rhythms are not only natural and necessary, but also the rewards we can realize when we invest in actually identifying and optimizing them. Sounding familiar? A lesson that particularly grabbed me is how often in our culture we are driven to work until we are exhausted, and then we rest purely out of necessity. In reality, we are designed to work from rest. There is a reason why creative thinking and solutions to business problems and world issues often show up when people are given space to think — be that a vacation, a walk in the middle of the day or creative outlets in the workplace. If we work from full batteries instead of simply recharging when there is absolutely nothing left to give, we are able to offer more to our clients and bring something better to everything we do and everyone we interact with. Consider the best golf swing, which results from the power and form of the backswing.

And so we seek out the rhythms that both exist or need to exist in our lives and try to strike a balance that allows us to be our best selves: our best as professionals, our best to our families and friends, our best as contributors to society — essentially our best whole being. Taking time to investigate these rhythms is certainly worth it, as it can guide us in where to direct our energy. The concept of polarities gives us a tool for assessing our own patterns, appreciating where we are on the curve and identifying where we might be able to make some changes in order to find our most effective rhythms.

I am thrilled to begin a new season of my life as I recently welcomed my second child (and remember what it feels like to have absolutely no rhythm!) and as I embark on my season as the president of QRCA. It is an honor to lead an amazing organization and to follow the footsteps of the incredible leaders before me. As qualitative research continues to evolve at lightning speed, let us balance our exhilaration over what is changing in the industry with the recognition that we also need to pause and reflect. At times, we need to slow down and give thought and space to the emerging tools and techniques available to us, the category learning we are so lucky to obtain through our profession and the faces we meet and interact with along the way.

May this begin a new season for you of finding your right rhythms and becoming your better you.
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Slow Life and Slow Research

By Luigi Toiati
Chairman • Focus Srl • Rome, Italy • luigi.toiati@focusresearch.it

Usually, when we read an article that is not coming straight to the point, we stop reading. So, let me summarize my ideas. My final objective is to draw a link between idleness as ultimate luxury and a new slow research.

The current decline of traditional luxury brings us to the eve of a new humanism, rooted in human values. In turn, this triggers a new “slow life,” whose icon is idleness. As a consequence, living a slow life means performing slow research.

For us humble bipeds living in a so-called post-capitalist society, luxury nowadays is still seen as synonymous with opulence. It is not about how much money a person gathers in his life, nor about his lifestyle, but mostly about how he wastes his money. What matters is the degree of extravagance — the WOW! factor — which defines some people as not merely rich, but rather opulent.

In the past, access was usually denied to the majority of people, which is why richness was flaunted by its holders. Nowadays, despite the economic crisis, the global village along with the growth of the middle and upper-middle classes allows a major participation in both wealth and luxury. And luxury might be seen as a kind of access to power. On one hand, business and mass media have created an affordable as showy luxury/opulence — jewels, designer dresses, second home and car, third and fourth TV and computer. The mirror neurons are socially used by communication to create aspirations and inspire emulation.

On the other hand, truly wealthy people are no longer eager to reveal their opulence — both out of concern for taxes as well as supposed danger to distance themselves from ordinary people — but prefer to own prestigious goods. While some prefer a yacht in view, the truly affluent prefer a Monet or a van Gogh secretly hidden in their own private galleries.

“Tocqueville said, in 1830: ‘... though there are rich men, the class of rich men does not exist; for these rich individuals have no feelings or purposes, no traditions or hopes, in common.’ The danger he saw was economic, arising from the increasingly hierarchical structure of business activity. Eventually, he feared, ‘the master and the workman have then no similarity, and... are connected only like the two rings at the extremities of a long chain.’ Many observers of America today think Tocqueville’s fears have become reality. The gap between ‘masters’ and ‘workmen’ has widened beyond anything he could have envisioned. And, in contrast to what Tocqueville observed in the still-new republic, today there certainly is a ‘class of rich men.’” (Benjamin M. Friedman)

But, I add, not a class of “exclusive-luxury men,” whose own deep wealth allows them exclusive privileges!

There is a third route, too, that my grandma used to claim: “What matters is a rose on your table, irrespective of your meal.” I am describing a private luxury — we may call it ‘privilege’ — a kind of cross-class, private luxury experience that does not require social approval and is even more enjoyable if kept secret: a rare collection or a walk taken only for one’s own pleasure. Both are basically the same, because their core luxury is spare time: “Time is the only good we really own.” (Seneca)
If slow life means being, and so must be, person-centered, slow research might become in turn person-centered.

In fact, the “true rich” person flying for business on his jet might envy a simple person spending his free time walking.

Luxury is an alibi of the mind, a “different where.” Besides its economic implications, it has today more to do with a sort of new self-discovery.

So, almost unintentionally, a new humanism of luxury is also creeping forward, a dialectical relationship between the good (in the sense of a privilege) and the entire lifestyle of the individual. This dialectic is, above all, private, personal.

Mass luxury has not meant a greater quality of life. This is why we are rediscovering the luxury in the experience of idling, enjoying time, forming our personal culture. In everyday life, luxury does not just mean traveling to the Caribbean, but it also may encompass living near a green area where you can take your children. It does not mean owning a Ferrari, but instead being able to walk to work or school (or, maybe, deciding to remain at home).

Idleness is the most modern version of luxury, a completely private type. Hence, idleness does not mean the root of all bad habits, but rather of slow living! But be careful. Lazing or not doing anything means passiveness, whereas idleness is total activity!

An idle simplicity of luxury not based on wealth but rather on mental well-being is taking the characteristics of a new post-capitalist humanism: a true Renaissance of the spirit of the individual, opposing the idea of public luxury. This is why I define idleness as the icon of slow life.

The current economic crisis may not be merely a source of trouble. It also prompts a new way of thinking and a new approach to consumption, because trouble is where our best emerges. As both researchers and human beings, we may nowadays learn how to enjoy common things.

“Frugal abundance” would be deeply related to voluntary simplicity, a simplified lifestyle out of the consumerism and the false ethics of forced labor. A new humanism, more or less hedonistic, but measured in an indisputable human scale: “As the trees cannot grow to the sky, so there is not — and cannot exist — endless growth. In the words of the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, the glue of the social fabric is in the spirit of the gift, not utilitarianism. And this opens the possibility that you look at the other… with different eyes. In this respect, the crisis is a great opportunity.” (Serge Latouche)

Thus, in qualitative research today, a new definition of the concept of group becomes necessary, no longer based on anything public, but rather on what is private, on what is chosen rather than suggested, on what is unpredictable rather than predictable. Imagine an oxymoron such as “social privacy,” where the research(er) too should no longer be different or distanced from respondents — as already happens in the new paradigm of self-ethnography.

Consequently, we should look at quantum theory not anymore as a theory, but as a practice: the observer becomes part of the observed system, is no longer external and neutral, but becomes in turn a part of observed reality. This marks the end of the neutrality of the experiment(er): different interpretations of the same phenomena, often in conflict with each other, mean that ultimate truth is… unknowable! What then would marketing do, if our actions would no longer interpret trends but instead enact individual attitudes?

According to quantum theory, the universe is nonsense, and the language simulates the image. We work with words, we listen, and, in turn, we tell both clients and respondents. We pretend to interpret the reality, but according to Wendy Doniger, “the reality is structured by language, by a representative network, so the words are fairly close to the images but by convention.”

This also fits the principle of indetermination, stating that the happening of a thing is submitted to pure chance. Many theories have arisen on the possibility we have to act on our fate. The list might include Bartlett’s “Matrix Energetics,” Murphy’s Law and Mauss, Pischinger and Oschman’s principles. All of these people agree that the universe is pure representation, with many opening “windows” or… sliding doors!

Far from my idle Latin mind is it to go into detail about these principles, nor do I propose New Age research or becoming a “Quali Jedi.” I simply invite you to accept the importance of new thoughts in our job.

After many years as a consultant working with Alzheimer patients, I have learned a lesson on dementia that can be applied to a new perspective of qualitative research: we must increase our awareness of what we have in common with people — our “humanity” — and reduce the importance we give to what makes us different. A person-centered behavior takes us away from the cognitive and brings us closer to the relational. (Tom Kitwood)

If slow life means being person-centered, slow research might become in turn person-centered. We may decide, like Calderon de la Barca, that life is a dream or that truth is just about here and now. But changing is up to us; we have this power.

Consider this example of how to turn qualitative research into slow research. If I receive an international discussion guide, I may reject it as inconsistent with my country and become bored, contrarian. But I may negotiate some points with the clients or interact with their guide, tailoring it to my needs. Briefly, I may modify my future either by acting passively or by interacting with the difficulties.

The point is that as long as I interact, I am in the flow and do not stop the energy. The more I believe in something,
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the more this happens. It is an old story, I know, but it works!

In conclusion, how to pursue slow qualitative research fitting a slow lifestyle? Here are my humble suggestions: maintain independent thinking, take little account of clichés, keep yourself for yourself, enjoy the fleeting moment and see your job as a slow, long-lasting enjoyment.

Obviously, this is not always possible, but when we face boring projects, we may find in our competence a good “sauce” to better “serve”… or “digest” them!

Keep a consultancy role, learn from your job and mistakes, and become a facsimile of a Renaissance “maestro” by studying and studying again.

Learn to look in transparency, read between the lines and try to catch the deeper meanings through your perception of signs not otherwise manifest to a purely exterior and superficial analysis. A quali can be a “Magic Trickster,” an “Alchemist” or a chameleon, able to predict the unpredictable, to develop his/her own sixth (seventh or eighth) sense, without ever losing the baggage of his/her own knowledge. Call it, if you like, talent. If a researcher is short of it, in my opinion, better to devote his/her future to farming! No school exists to fill the gap of a missing interior ear.

Do not oppose, but interact with chaos, ignorance, DIY, fast research and big data, and all the vagaries of web or e-siren calls of the moment. Learn “seire fas ac nefas” or how to distinguish right from wrong among those. A computer is not able to share or investigate respondents’ feelings. It can be a useful tool to help reasoning, but it is not the reasoning itself. Reasoning is up to us bipeds.

Slow qualitative research cannot grow without a slow lifestyle behind it. What do I mean? Be idle, not lazy. Take your time, keep your cool, think a lot, breathe, walk, have a cooling-off time, sit down and observe. Do what you want, not what you must. Follow your talent, your inspiration, our “heartland values” (as fellow researcher Lleat Racs calls them). The job is a long part of a short life, not the whole of it: change your perspective, and turn your job as qualitative researchers into a way of developing the taste of your life, not of demeaning it. Human beings are not only big data. Let the amateurs — clients or researchers — ride their favorite hobbyhorse, fast research.

Slow research does not mean spending three times more on research than usual. My clients usually ask for the report by the day before yesterday, and I usually provide it: therefore, it is not a matter of time. Slow research is an expert team supporting a competent researcher, skilled in many disciplines. It is competence that makes the difference between an expert and a know-it-all. We do not need to know how to clear a blocked drain — even if our partner would estimate such knowledge more significant than semiotics — but we do need to understand which kind of sensations a blocked drain triggers with interviewees, and why.

If we are able to see research as a challenge to our intelligence, and if we trust our competence, we will be able to dare exploring unknown territories, by improving or inventing on-the-spot techniques in order to solve whatever problem. We will be able to create tools tailored to the client’s needs or adapted to the socio-cultural background we are facing in a given situation. This is not a matter of experience or age, but of courage.

But slow research should avoid being offered to clients as the answer to their quest for a magic wand. We are still living on our past reputation of pulling the rabbit from the silk hat. We should instead talk honestly to clients, reveal our limits and never deceive clients on false premises. A real power is in our hands, minds and hearts, without need to claim superpowers! According to quantum mechanics, there exists a virtual ocean of possible solutions, and we are malleable to our focalized aim. (Henry Stapp)

False or true I do not know, but let me conclude with the words of Arianna Huffington: “The philosophy behind Less Stress, More Living is based on two truths: that we all have within us a centered place of harmony and balance, and that we all veer away from that place again and again. That’s the nature of life. In fact, we may be off-course more often than we are on-course. If we understand these two truths and prioritize reducing the destructive effects of stress in our lives, this can be the year we reconnect with our own creativity, wisdom and joy.”

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LEVERAGING the QUALITATIVE SIDE of NEUROMARKETING

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Neuromarketing shares with qualitative research an intense interest in understanding the mental processes that underlie consumer behavior. It shares a deep skepticism about consumers’ self-reporting skills. It shares the belief that human beings often do not say what they mean, nor mean what they say.

What Lurks Beneath the Surface?
Motivational research in the 1950s was built upon a psychoanalytical view of the human subconscious, emphasizing hidden motivations and desires as drivers of human behavior.

The basic idea, taken from the Freudian tradition, was that the subconscious is a realm of barely checked impulses that could be activated with the right cues in advertising and marketing. Nothing is what it seems to be. A convertible is a mistress, and a sedan is a wife. Baking is giving birth. And lipstick is... well... just what you would think it might be.

Vance Packard’s journalistic attack on motivational research in *The Hidden Persuaders* accepted this view that “our subconscious can be pretty wild and unruly” and popularized the belief that
We now know that the nonconscious drivers of judgment, choice and behavior are not the “wild and unruly” forces of the Freudian unconscious; instead, they are perceptual, emotional, evaluative and motivational mechanisms that make up what social psychologists call our “behavioral guidance systems.”

motivational research brought us into “the chilling world of George Orwell and his Big Brother.” Not surprisingly, Packard’s exposé had just the opposite effect than he intended on advertisers, who flocked to motivational researchers to get in on the action.

Notably, the terms “subconscious,” “unconscious” and “nonconscious” are from different schools of thought. The terms are not directly interchangeable, but all do generally reflect the idea that the mind can hold perceptions, beliefs and motivations and can make decisions on a level that the conscious mind is not aware of (these terms are used correctly throughout this article to match the context).

Motivational research began to lose its luster in the 1960s, not because of critics’ warnings about mind control but because its pronouncements, like those of Freudianism more generally, proved impossible to validate or refute scientifically.

But while the object of fear faded, the fear itself — the idea that our subconscious minds were susceptible to manipulation and even control by unscrupulous marketers — remained.

Today, that fear has found a new villain, neuromarketing. But does the science justify the worry?

Not Freud’s Unconscious

The modern view of the human mind, based on brain research that reached critical mass in the 1990s, is far advanced beyond the simple “hidden motivations and desires” picture of the 1950s. Much more has been learned about motivations and desires; also, scientific investigations have produced a much richer view of the role of the nonconscious across a wide variety of mental functions, from perception, evaluation and interpretation to choice and behavior.

Below are some things we know today that we did not know in the 1950s.

Neuroscience does not “read minds.” Measuring brainwaves and physiological signals with various kinds of sensors is not the same as reading thoughts. Neuroscience technologies can tell with some precision that a person is exhibiting certain physical states (like blood flow in the brain or facial muscle movement) that may be related to certain mental states (like being attentive, experiencing approach motivation or feeling confused), but none of these states are “thoughts” in the usual sense of that voice we hear in our conscious minds.

There is no “buy button” in the brain. The brain is a massively interconnected network, not a collection of “centers” that perform specific functions. The “buy button,” beloved by journalists, is a metaphor that mistakes a complex cognitive process for a physiological reflex. Making someone buy something is completely different from tapping them on the knee to make their leg bounce.

Marketing cannot make us do things that we do not want to do. Behavior can be activated in two ways. The first is conscious persuasion, the traditional method of marketing and advertising. The second is nonconscious triggering, or “priming,” through which our sensory environment can trigger thoughts that lead to behavior without conscious awareness. Priming is usually seen as the culprit that can make us do things that we do not want to do, but research shows that priming works only when we already feel positive about the behavior being primed and also feel a discrepancy between our current state and the primed end state. Essentially, marketing cannot prime smoking in someone who does not feel positive about smoking, and it cannot prime drinking in someone who is not thirsty.

One thing we know for sure: nonconscious processes play a much greater role in consumer behavior than previously realized. Consumers respond to products and brands in ways that are invisible to them. Some of these nonconscious responses are devoted to resisting persuasive messaging, not embracing it. Consumers use decision-making shortcuts and heuristics that they are unaware of using. And they have a sense of certainty about their motivations that is completely unjustified. All of this makes marketers’ jobs much harder, not easier.

A New Perspective on Nonconscious Processes

We now know that the nonconscious drivers of judgment, choice and behavior are not the “wild and unruly” forces of the Freudian unconscious; instead, they are perceptual, emotional, evaluative and motivational mechanisms that make up what social psychologists call our “behavioral guidance systems.” Here are three examples:

Processing fluency is the extent to which an object or situation is easy to understand or interpret. Our brains are “cognitive misers” that try to minimize mental effort, so we tend to be biased toward things we can process easily. Scientists have found processing fluency
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A major contributing factor to the higher percentage of votes for Obama is the fact that Columbus is home to The Ohio State University and other major universities. The university is the largest employer in Columbus and the second largest in Ohio, with over 30,000 employees. The university also has a large impact on the local economy, with over $10 billion in research and development funding. Columbus is home to many other major universities, including Capital University and Franklin University, which also contribute to the city's economy.

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Finally, the facility: Complete Research Connection offers a brand new, 8,000+ square foot facility which opened in 2011. Located just 3 miles from downtown and less than 15 minutes from the airport, the facility boasts four observation suites (one multi-purpose, two standard, and one IDI suite) that all offer digital recording and video streaming; two of the larger suites can accommodate ground viewing for approximately 30 observers each, but
to have a major impact on judgments and decisions, increasing the likelihood that statements are seen as true, objects are seen as beautiful, situations are seen as familiar, and actions are seen as safe. Many consumer preferences and actions can be ascribed to processing fluency, even though consumers are not aware of this effect.

Priming is the process by which sensory inputs nonconsciously influence our thinking and behavior. It occurs because our brains automatically activate associated ideas whenever a new idea comes to mind. Priming increases the accessibility of ideas related to the prime and plays a major role in determining what we think and do next. It is one of the main mechanisms by which marketing operates. It has been shown to significantly impact consumer attitudes, preferences, decisions, and behavior, all without any conscious awareness by the person being influenced.

Nonconscious goal pursuit is one of the most counter-intuitive discoveries to come out of social psychology in recent years. It would seem impossible to have a goal you are not aware of having, but that is exactly what nonconscious goals are. Extensive research has revealed them to be an important mechanism for connecting primes to consumer behavior. Consumers primed with a “thriftiness” goal, for example, can exhibit very different shopping behaviors than consumers primed with a “prestige” goal. These goals can be activated, pursued and achieved (or not) completely outside of conscious awareness, with very observable effects on people’s choices, behaviors, and moods.

These examples illustrate a more general point: nonconscious effects previously attributed to hidden motivations and desires are often simply functions of how the brain generates and accesses sequences of thoughts. What our imaginations used to conjure up as wild and unruly impulses are revealed to be more like machine operating routines.

Don’t Blind Me with Science: the Emergence of Qualitative Neuromarketing Consulting
In the past ten years, hundreds of commercial clients have conducted neuromarketing studies using a wide range of technologies — fMRI, EEG, eye tracking, facial coding, biometrics, implicit response studies, etc. — across a wide range of subject areas in almost every major business category.

Those who have become experienced users of neuromarketing are progressing beyond single, ad hoc studies in two ways:
• They are looking for patterns and actionable insights from their neuromarketing research.
• They are creating ongoing research programs to integrate their neuromarketing findings with traditional qualitative and quantitative research results.

Both processes are being facilitated by a new kind of neuromarketer, the neuromarketing consultant. These consultants often have worked for one or more neuromarketing vendors and have backgrounds in marketing or academic research. They assist client companies on a project or full-time basis, helping them navigate the scientific waters of different methodologies, evaluate vendors, interpret and integrate findings and develop actionable marketing insights from their research data.

Clients get many of the same benefits from neuromarketing consultants that they get from their best qualitative researchers. Exposure to brain-science findings and insights helps marketers develop a more intuitive view of their consumers. They begin to think differently about how they write creative briefs and critique creative solutions and plans. Greater familiarity with nonconscious processes leads to new marketing lexicons, new perspectives and fresh reference points for strategic and executional discussions, such as how to leverage priming and processing fluency, how to modulate approach-avoidance emotional responses and how to orchestrate multi-sensory cues.

While most neuromarketing vendors continue to emphasize quantitative studies and results, neuro-savvy planners and brand consultants are partnering with neuromarketing consultants to leverage research outputs more qualitatively. As Peter Laybourne, chairman of the U.K.’s Fathom International and co-founder of NeuroCo, described in a personal communication, “There are those whose everyday marketing lives are constrained and regimented by norms and benchmarks. Then there are others, less reliant on statistical minutiae, who seek greater inspiration and prescriptive insights, by exploring, altogether more directionally, the shapes, swings and triggers in neurological response.”

This perspective is achieving traction among planners like Laybourne in the creative, R&D, innovation and experimental research industries, where qual has often played a greater role due to the inability of traditional quant methodologies to deliver predictive results.

Leveraging the qualitative side of neuromarketing and the latest findings about the nonconscious can be a liberator of ideas, creativity and designs, providing creatives with a scientific rationale and language for more innovative, emotionally driven campaigns that may well have been assigned to the trash bin if measured by traditional quant methods alone.

“Leveraging the qualitative side of neuromarketing and the latest findings about the nonconscious can be a liberator of ideas, creativity and designs.”
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Liz: It has been a little over a year since I moved into the role of Global Insights Director, Pain Management. This is my first position within the global category team. Until then, my career focused on research within the U.S., so I’ve learned a lot this year! It’s really about looking at things through a different lens and understanding the capabilities and limitations around the world. I have realized how spoiled we are in the U.S. For example, now when I do studies in multiple markets, I have to account for whether they have online capabilities, which is something I’ve never had to do before.

Also, I have learned how much cultural biases play into business decisions. For example, we had an execution of an ad using a firefighter. While
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Perspectives from the Corporate World... CONTINUED

Laurie: I imagine that’s because they might be more clued into the cultural nuances than someone working out of the U.S.

Liz: Exactly. Here’s an example of that. We were putting together a screener for research in Asia and planned to segment by age, not gender. The local partner said, “No, we don’t do it that way in Asia.” Instead, common practice in Asia is to separate the male and female respondents. It would be very odd to our respondents if done otherwise.

Laurie: Can you tell us more about how you use qualitative research in different parts of the world? Are you doing focus groups, in-home work, online bulletin boards? What kinds of methods are most common in your usage these days, and what role does technology play?

Liz: Most often, we use focus groups. Our CEO is pushing us to become a “consumer first” organization, and we are focusing more on insight generation vs. validation. This was a big initiative in terms of planning for 2013. We are doing more exploratory work. I was part of a sub-team that we called “consumer immersion.” We developed a toolkit to roll out in the entire organization and asked each local market to set aside funding. It’s about trying to “walk in the shoes of the consumer.” This doesn’t apply just to insights or marketing but to everyone in the organization, especially someone in R&D who may not normally get exposure to that level of detail about who the target audience is and what they are looking for. Ethnography is also playing a key role. As you know, you can have hundreds of slides and presentations to try to get inside the consumer’s head, but a five-minute video can be eye-opening in terms of bringing that audience to life.

Laurie: Is this direction motivated by what role does technology play?

Liz: I think that motivation is the same... people are more alike than different. Their attitudes can be very similar, but the way they express them can be different. That is influenced by culture, and we have to take that into account when we do global research. In certain markets, there is a tendency to err on the side of the positive. I do a lot of research in Colombia, one of our key markets. In Colombia, they love everything, any new product. You must factor that in when you’re looking at new-product development. Other markets are just the opposite — everything is terrible. They underrate, so you must equalize for that. You can’t just say that in Colombia they love an idea and in India they hate it.

Laurie: Do you use a tool to help you understand that tendency to underrate or overrate?

Liz: It’s not necessarily a different tool, but a more discerning scale and interpretation.
**Laurie:** Are there other qual methods that you are embracing at this time?

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**Liz:** We recently did work using emotional inquiry, which we found very valuable. We have also formed a panel of super consumers, and that has been helpful in terms of insight generation. But these are small size samples, which we would never use for validating.

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**Laurie:** What about social media?

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**Liz:** Our online panel is set up through Facebook. It is a proprietary tool that is quick, and once it was set up, there were no additional costs. Of course, it has its limitations, but it has served us well thus far.

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**Laurie:** Do you have a nugget or word of advice for qualitative researchers who are interested in doing more global research?

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**Liz:** I had a conversation recently with one of my qualitative suppliers who asked, “What can we do to make things better?” I love that mindset, seeking continuous improvement. I appreciate and give my qual partners the permission to be bold and take risks with recommendations. I think there is sometimes a hesitancy to do this because, as an outsider, you don’t necessarily have the full business context. But I have found that very helpful because even if it is not something that we will move forward with, it helps our business and commercial team think about things differently. I think that is the kind of game-changing offering that a qualitative supplier can have.

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**Laurie:** So, you are urging us to be bold!

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**Liz:** Yes, exactly.
Observational research can take many different forms, but it needn’t be daunting. It is easy to get rich insights about social settings and behaviors from even a few minutes of watching what’s going on, as long as it is done in a thoughtful, structured manner. This article offers four basic but effective techniques for doing simple, structured observational research in your qualitative studies.

The techniques in this article all have a few things in common. First, they can be performed with low-tech, everyday tools. All you need to get started are a pencil, a tablet of paper and perhaps a wristwatch. Second, despite their simplicity, these techniques all add structure and focus to your observations. Structure and focus are critical aspects of observational research; they make the difference between merely looking at what’s going on and actually studying it. Third, the techniques enable analysis in real time, as you observe. This makes your insights more immediate than those that require plowing through video footage or a data feed hours or days later. Finally, these techniques are versatile and adaptable. I like to think of them as bedrock techniques because, once you have experimented with them a bit, you can easily build on them and combine them with other techniques to fit your particular needs.

Technique 1: COUNTING

One of the simplest and most useful observational techniques is the tally. What I like about tallies is that they are a quick way to cut through the noise and focus on specific occurrences in a complex setting. Tallies can be used to count and compare all sorts of phenomena — for example, the prevalence of specific types of people or things in a given place or situation, or how often a specific type of action occurs compared to other actions, or what kinds of people (young...
or old, male or female, customers or employees) perform different kinds of actions. There are lots of ways that you can set up a tally to cover several variables at once, but you are usually better off focusing on fewer variables rather than more. The goal is to train your observations on something specific and thought provoking rather than trying to count the whole world.

Here is one example from our research with a client who we will call “Acme Healthy Grocer.” In this project, we were helping Acme to better understand who its customers are, including their behavior, ideals, convictions and motivations. The core of the research plan was customer shop-alongs and home interviews, but before doing any of that, I spent several days observing customer behavior in Acme stores. The Acme management team thinks of its customers as people who strive for environmentally sustainable lifestyles; we decided to look for evidence of this. In one of our observational exercises, I watched customers at the checkout line to see how many carried their own reusable grocery bags. Figure 1 is an example of how I kept the tally.

What you see here are the first nine customers that I observed at checkout lane #3. The first customer purchased two bags of groceries and used his or her own bag for both. The second customer purchased three bags of groceries and used his or her own bag for one bagful and disposable store bags for the other two. And so on.

This notebook page is just one of many from my 20-minute observation session, but even from a single page, you can see that the tally offers some surprising insights. One of these is that most customers observed did not use their own bags, especially the apparent high-value customers who purchased larger quantities of groceries. It also raises some interesting questions. For example, do customers who bring their own bags tend to shop for smaller households? Or do they shop more frequently for smaller quantities each time (maybe because they walk or bike to the store rather than loading up an SUV)? Would my findings have been different at a different time of day, or on a different day of the week, or at a different Acme store in a different neighborhood? And, more strategically, what are the barriers that prevent customers from bringing their own bags, and what incentives could encourage this behavior? The value of a short tally like this is not the numerical data per se (which is too limited to have any statistical significance) but instead is in the qualitative insights and hypotheses that extend from a disciplined look at what is actually happening.

**Technique 2: TIMING**

Another nifty and super-simple way to structure observations is to clock the duration of things that you observe happening. For example, how much time do people spend performing specific tasks? How long do customers wait for service? How long does it take people to do one thing versus another thing? I like to use a wristwatch for this type of observation, but you may also be able to use a clock on the wall or the stopwatch on your smart phone or by simply rough-

![Figure 1](image-url)
ing out the time with a mental count (“One potato, two potato…”).

Figure 2 represents a page from my notes working with a national quick-serve restaurant chain that sought to increase the frequency of its customer visits. A significant characteristic of this chain is that it has an extensive and somewhat complicated menu. We suspected that customers might be inclined to visit more often if they sampled more of the menu, thereby thinking of the restaurant as a good choice for a broader range of occasions and food experiences.

To get an initial understanding of ordering behavior, I decided to sit inconspicuously at a table in a couple of our client’s restaurants and watch as customers examined (or not) the menu board above the counter and placed their order. I used an ordinary wrist-watch with a second hand, and I clocked the amount of time that customers spent looking at the menu before ordering. I also captured some other details about each customer, including the number of people in the party, their sex (M or F), guesstimated age and some brief notations about what they were doing during the observed time. For example, in the third line you see that a group of three people approached the counter, one male and two females, aged approximately 25, 25 and 45 respectively. They looked at the menu board for one minute and fifteen seconds, during which the older female (their mother?) pointed out some menu options that she recommended.

As in the tallying example, this is just the first page from my notes, but it points in directions that were consistent throughout several periods of observation. Unsurprisingly, some people spent little or no time looking at the menu, while others studied or discussed it with members of their party, and others sought assistance from the cashier. But we also noticed that individuals generally spent less time with the menu than groups.

These simple observations led to some interesting questions that we later explored in intercept interviews and customer dine-alongs. For example, if people spend little or no time looking at the menu, are they just ordering what looks familiar or what they had last time, without ever reading about other options? When people discuss the menu, is this because they find it exciting, or confusing, or is it for some other reason? And, as for groups, do they spend more time looking at the menu because it simply takes more time to coordinate a group order, or is there something about being in a group that makes it more comfortable to linger over the menu, compared to being there alone? All of these questions have direct implications for things like menu design and ways that staff could encourage and support menu exploration.

One thing to note here is that looking at a menu board is no guarantee that a customer is actually reading or considering the menu offerings, even though it is reasonable to assume that this is probably the case. Observation often requires that we draw inferential conclusions about what we are observing. But if we are doubtful, our inferences can themselves be explored in subsequent research. Maybe some customers are simply mesmerized by the menu’s color or typography!
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Technique 3: DIAGRAMMING SOCIAL INTERACTION

Another good technique that you can put to use right away is making social diagrams or “sociograms” of communication between two or more people. This type of observation is often useful for getting a grasp on the social dynamics within a particular setting. As with the other techniques that involve both observation and note-taking, the process of creating a sociogram is just as important as the final product. Patterns and insights will emerge along the way. Sociograms can shed light on interpersonal roles and relationships that are distinctive to different types of activities or settings. They can also reveal similarities or differences in interaction across different types of people or sizes of groups.

Recently, we were working with a client to understand how consumers of distilled spirits adopt specific brands as their “own” signature brand. Our client was particularly interested in brand impressions and information exchanges that occur at the point of sale. In preparation for designing a comprehensive research plan I spent a few hours in “Tom’s Bar,” observing conversational dynamics related to spirits. In this setting, it was easy to be inconspicuous; I simply sat at the end of the bar scrawling my notes in a notebook as if I was working on the great American novel.

Over the course of about 90 minutes, I observed a wide range of interactions, and I made dozens of sociograms. This sample page from my notes (shown in Figure 3) depicts one of them. In this case, we see two male-female couples seated side by side at the bar counter. On the other side of the counter is a female bartender, about 30 years old. In this observation, I set out to capture any and all audible snippets of conversation that were specifically about spirits brands — not the actual words spoken, but rather who interacted with whom and how often (represented by lines between people, with tallies on each line).

This one example (of many) hints at interaction dynamics that turned out to be pretty common at that bar. For instance, men and women were about equally likely to discuss spirits brands with the bartender, regardless of whether their bartender was male or female. It also appeared that customer-to-customer conversations about spirits were more common between women and couples than between men. This relatively low incidence of male-to-male conversation on the topic was a surprising pattern that turned out to be characteristic of “Tom’s Bar” but not of most of the other bars in which we conducted research. Observations such as these helped us to think in a more nuanced way about information exchanges at
the point of sale and helped us refine our approach to subsequent research.

There are lots of ways to innovate with sociograms. For example, one of the many things I did not capture in this case is who initiated each interaction. This was difficult to determine with any accuracy, given the noise level in the bar and the speed of the conversations, but in other projects and settings, I have used unidirectional arrows to show who is speaking and who is listening. This can work especially well in pre-arranged, consent-based observations such as big-ticket sales negotiations or doctor-patient consultations. Another thing that sometimes works well with sociograms is to annotate the diagram with other observational details, such as keywords from the actual conversation, facial expressions or whatever else helps you to create a picture of what is occurring.

One thing to keep in mind, however, is that you do not want to be a creepy eavesdropper. If people are talking loudly in a public space, or if they have consented to being observed, they should expect that they will be heard. But if you feel like you are craning your neck to listen in on a conversation that nobody wants you to hear, then it is probably time for you to pay attention to something else.

Technique 4:
MAPPING MOVEMENT

One more basic technique that I find really valuable is observing and mapping movement. This is sort of a variation on the sociogram, but it focuses instead on how people or things move through space. Movement mapping can be used effectively in any situation where some things are moving and other things are staying in place. It can be used, for example, to learn how objects move between people (for example, how a tray of food moves around a family dinner table in the course of a meal), how people move in relation to other people or how people move in relation to spatial features and objects.

One example of the latter is a project we conducted with a luxury automobile manufacturer. Our client asked us to help design an online experience for In unfamiliar settings, these techniques can help us get our heads around new things, places, behaviors and situations. But they also work well in familiar settings, where they can force us look more closely and challenge our deeply embedded assumptions.
FIGURE 4

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prospective customers that could mirror, as much as possible, the hands-on experience of being face to face with vehicles in a dealership. As part of the research, we spent some time in dealerships observing and diagramming the ways that people interact with the vehicles on display. Some of the first observations I made involved very simple diagrams, but they were still extremely revealing.

I used the 2x2 outlines in Figure 4 to represent a particular model of a four-door sedan, with the driver's side on the left. During an hour of discrete customer observations, we catalogued a number of different ways that people tried out the experience of sitting in the vehicle. While most customers began by sitting in the driver's seat, this was not always the case. Also, while some customers only sat in the driver's seat, most also tried out at least one of the passenger seats. This may seem obvious in hindsight, but this short bit of research underscored an important point for our client: drivers are intimately concerned about the passenger experience. From that insight, the opportunities for further exploration through customer interviews were tremendously rich.

**Putting It All to Use**
Observational research using variations on any of these four techniques can add value in a wide range of settings and at any point in a project life cycle. In unfamiliar settings, these techniques can help us get our heads around new things, places, behaviors and situations. But they also work well in familiar settings, where they can force us to look more closely and challenge our deeply embedded assumptions. Observation can be done at the front end of a project to raise new questions and topics to explore with other methods, or it can be conducted concurrent with focus groups and interviews to fill in information that respondents are unable to tell us, or we can use it sometime later to help to validate what we have heard.

The best part about simple, structured techniques like these, however, is that they require little or no preparation. Have a few minutes to spare? Try them out! And no matter when you try them, or for how long, they are bound to help you see something new.
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Internet scamming and data integrity rank among the greatest fears of many online researchers. If a researcher never gets to meet the panelists to read their body language and other non-verbal clues, how can he or she be confident that the answers were honest?

All panels are not created equal. The nature of how a panel is built and enhanced over time matters.

How Panel Recruiting Has Evolved
Let’s take a step back to the 1970s and ‘80s, when many of today’s panel providers were just starting to build their databases. Back then, we recruited new panelists the old-fashioned way: with pen and paper, index cards and Rolodexes. Recruiter Sally would call her friend Betsy and ask if she knew anyone who used Bell Atlantic telephone service. If Betsy did, she would pass along her friend’s contact information, and the referral would receive a personal phone call from Sally, inviting him or her to participate in the research.

There are a few factors at work here that make Sally’s new panelist authentic, a real person. First, the source: being recommended by a trusted friend lends credibility. Second, contact was made over the phone; the recruiter would ask questions and speak with the new panelist. Finally, this new panelist would eventually participate in person, giving the panel provider and researchers a chance to meet face to face. If cooperation fees were paid by check, the panel provider added another layer of security: a mailing address.

Flash forward 30 to 40 years to the present day. Personal referrals via word of mouth are still the most trustworthy method of recruitment.

Where sharing information used to happen over the phone and around kitchen tables, it now happens virtually. People no longer must leave their homes or even open their mouths to communicate with friends and family. Social media makes these day-to-day interactions possible over long distances and at off times. Now, instead of calling her friend Betsy, recruiter Sally might send Betsy a Facebook message or an email.

Respondent authenticity is verified in multiple ways. Panel providers use different verification methods, which vary depending on how the panel is built. Qualitative panels are built by inviting people to join, usually via a recruitment website, online advertisement, social-media outreach, phone call or flyer. Prospective panelists complete full demographic profiles that can give the panel provider and researchers deep insights...
into their habits before they ever participate in a study.

On the other hand, some quantitative panels are built without an explicit opt-in from a panelist. For example, quantitative panel providers might add new people to their database after respondents take a one-time survey or poll, via purchased sample, from client lists or by invitation through a third party. These panelists answer only a few baseline questions before providers add them to their database. Consequently, many panels lack the in-depth panelist profiles that help researchers target the best participants.

Quantitative panels are valuable for very large studies and for those studies that include wide-ranging geographical requirements. For smaller, targeted studies, however, they could be a riskier choice than a traditional qualitative panel since researchers cannot sort through potential panelists to the same degree of specificity. The verification processes used in most qualitative panels result in more relevant data points and more efficient targeting of respondents. This can translate into lower costs for researchers, an enhanced experience for panelists and higher participation rates.

Technical Verification Options

The internet has changed the game of marketing research recruitment, and largely positively. It is quicker than ever to complete a recruit, and most verification can be automated by technology without any loss of quality.

Technical verification involves using certain data provided by panelists to confirm that the rest of the information they provided is accurate. This is the most secure way to ensure panelist authenticity, and it can be done in numerous ways.

To instantly verify new panelists, panel builders can execute a skip trace. Skip tracing allows panel providers to add instant authentication on registration-form fields like name, phone number, email address, physical address and income. When a new panelist hits “Submit” on the registration form, the skip trace immediately reaches out to a number of third-party databases to check the information provided versus the information on file. Types of databases available include phone records, job applications, utility bills and public tax information.

The skip trace compares information provided by the prospective panelist to third-party databases and assigns the panelist a numerical rank based on the number of matches or mismatches found during the skip trace. Each panel provider chooses a threshold that accepts or rejects new panelists based on their rank.

Later, qualitative and quantitative providers can revisit individual panelists and the data they have provided. Computer-driven cleanup programs make it easy for panel providers to remove duplicate profiles based on identical email addresses, phone numbers or home addresses.

Panels can also match the demographic answers provided by qualitative panelists in their profiles with their responses to similar screener questions. If a panelist reports in his profile that he is 43, but records his age as 35 in a screener, the panel provider can remove the panelist from the database. As an additional check, some panel providers will ask the same question in two separate demographic sections and compare the results.

Predefined deletion criteria, like mismatched demographic information, can be run on any field of information provided by a panelist. A highly verified qualitative panel will have standards in place to instantly remove panelists based on mismatched data.

People-Powered Verification Options

Technology matters when it comes to authenticating panelists, but people-powered verification is still at the heart of the practice. These human-driven methods help ensure that panelists are honest.

A qualitative panel provider can request more information from panelists. For example, strong panel providers notify and will ask panelists to respond to the new questions in their profiles. Along the same lines, providers should regularly prompt panelists to review and update their profiles. The panel provider can then run reports on low-response demographic sections to make informed decisions on which panelists to remove from the database.

Panel providers have two other people-powered ways to verify panelist authenticity. First, instead of (or after a specified number of) emailed study invitations, a provider can speak by phone with each panelist to request his or her participation. Second, the panel provider can regularly pull a random sample of panelists and have an internal staff member use search engines and social networks to verify information. Running searches on an individual email address...
returns the most accurate results because every time a person puts his or her email address on the web (via a blog, website, social network, etc.), it will appear in a web search.

This type of proactive web searching can be very effective for B2B and health-care panelists when paired with LinkedIn searches. A study conducted at Cornell University in 2012 asked test subjects to create one of three types of resumes: a traditional resume, a private LinkedIn profile and a public LinkedIn profile. Traditional resumes saw the highest rate of lying, while public LinkedIn profiles were the most honest about employment history. Professionals who value their jobs will not take the risk of lying about past work experience publicly, much less in writing.

Panel providers that employ social-media verification match their findings against information provided by the panelist. If a serious discrepancy arises — such as a panelist who lists herself as employed full-time, but has a recently updated LinkedIn profile that says “looking for work” — the panel provider may choose to immediately remove the panelist from the database, verify the information with a phone call or request that the profile be updated with accurate information.

The Right Panel for Your Study
When researching panels that best fit your study, let me offer a few words of advice. Start during the research-design phase. Ask questions about how the provider makes sure that new panelists are real people, and not bots or individuals solely interested in a monetary reward. Request to see statistics on the number of active panelists in a database and how many of those panelists have complete profiles.

Just like building a panel takes time and effort, ensuring that the panel is verified should be a constant endeavor for providers. Verification is part of any strong, well-managed panel and leads to higher response rates. Similarly, the work you put in up front to pick a panel that best fits your study can help you identify potential challenges and solutions early, while adding confidence in the quality of your panelists.

CHOOSING A PANEL

Look for a panel provider that has robust demographic information available, especially valuable “exhaust” data from screeners. Focus on the provider’s recruitment techniques to find out how the panel is built, maintained and verified. Be sure to ask these questions.

GETTING TO KNOW THE PANEL

• How does the provider primarily recruit new panelists?
• Is the database primarily built for qualitative or quantitative research?
• How many active panelists are in the provider’s database? How many have complete profiles, and what constitutes a “complete” profile?
• What is the provider’s response rate for an average research invitation? What about for an invitation geared towards your research topic?
• What types of information does the provider collect via registration forms and demographic profiles about each of the panelists? What information do you have access to?

LEARNING HOW THE PANEL IS AUTHENTICATED AND MAINTAINED

• Does the provider regularly use computer-driven data cleanup processes? If so, what types of data points or profile fields does the provider use to eliminate bad data? Does the provider use skip tracing on its online registration forms?
• Does the provider ever meet panelists via face-to-face research? Does the provider use phone calls to request panelists’ participation in research?
• Does the provider proactively match data by searching for panelists on sites like Google or LinkedIn?
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French society is well known for its singular characteristics and pride in its national flag. Not surprisingly, the French way of doing qualitative research is entirely “nationalized.”

According to Christian Miquel, research director in CCCM Paris, this all began right after World War II, when “La Société de consommation” (Consumer Society) was birthed to analyze and make sense of the reasons underlying individual motivations towards consumer products. Later, in the 1960s, the development of human sciences in France set the main foundation for qualitative research “à la française,” using psychoanalysis, ethnography and anthropology to study consumers’ human behavior. Researchers in the United States and Anglo-Saxon countries also developed their own projective and psychographic techniques in order to increase insights. So, what still makes French qual research special?

What are the particularities of “Madame French Quali”? The answer to that question seems to be easy: what makes French qual research different is its psycho-sociological tradition.

Elisabeth Martine-Cosnefroy, founder and president of Equation MR, explains
that the roots of French qual research are a strong analytical culture — that is, the search for explicative solutions. French researchers have a preference for long and in-depth research methodologies in order to “reach the basic psychological patterns, trespass the boundaries of superficial responses and analyze individual mechanisms as well as the most unconscious reactions of the group.” This does not mean that researchers from other countries do not have analogous backgrounds, but somehow the French seem to go deeper, strongly guided by the depths of their heritage in psycho-sociological philosophy.

Anouc Allaert, research executive at Lb Qualitative Research, compares French qualitative research to jazz. As she says, “It’s about deeply understanding how people think. You need to find what song [methodology] best suits the participant and work with him on that. Qualitative research is not a science, but its art still demands discipline and has to be conducted carefully. In the end, when the results are presented, it is with our soul, our human side, with emotion, but still very serious.”

How do participants in France react? French focus groups are usually lengthier than in other countries, and discussion
“Five years ago, we’d only do focus groups for, let’s say, two days, and that would be it, whereas now we make use of different tools to get more valuable feedback from the consumer at different points of the research... All this, to explore the different facets of the consumer — that is, the participant as consumer, as buyer and as ambassador (somebody who spreads the word about a product).”

How have the French greeted new methodologies?
Thanks to technological advances, research today can be done at a distance, without compromising the quality of the results. Martine-Cosnefroy observes that “researchers prefer the proof in facts or observing live what they are studying, and images and videos provide that to them.” Consequently, it is possible to make real-time analysis and keep up with the means of communication of the present generation born into a world where communication depends 100% on technology. The fact that the research is done at a distance means that researchers must find more effective ways to attract participants, which mostly means higher honoraria. Qualitative research online in France may be as costly as offline, and it may even take longer. In fact, there is often much more information to process and analyze deeply.

Certainly, some changes have occurred in the stages of research. According to Boisier, “Five years ago, we’d only do focus groups for, let’s say, two days, and that would be it, whereas now we make use of different tools to get more valuable feedback from the consumer at different points of the research. For example, sometimes we send participants diaries with exercises for them to do before the focus group, or we give them a sample of the product to test and analyzed at home. Then come the focus groups, where respondents share their opinions with others. This gives us the chance to watch them and to read their body language, which helps us to understand their reactions more clearly. We might also add individual interviews, sometimes at participants’ homes, to watch them closely in their own space. All this, to explore the different facets of the consumer — that is, the participant as consumer, as buyer and as ambassador (somebody who spreads the word about a product). We became aware of the fact that the participant is much more than just a consumer, and we want to know her or him on all levels.”

What is the future of qualitative in France?
Despite being known for her unique personality, “Madame French Quali” still feels uneasy about adopting the shorter-faster modus operandi of Anglo-Saxon companies. Since resistance to consider their methodologies might affect her relationships with international clients, the French researcher is required to be flexible. French researchers manage to make use of innovative methodologies to succeed in their profession, but they strive to retain their psycho-sociological underpinnings to probe the unique French psyche.

Although the French may seem initially resistant to innovation, technology does not have a nationality. There do not appear to be boundaries in the adoption of new methodologies or new tools to do research. After all, our main aim is to conduct the investigation accurately and thoroughly and to make the client informed and receptive to that information. However, the larger pool of methodological choices does not necessarily make the job easier and tends to affect the client-researcher relationship when the client remains at a distance. We all hope it will be for the best because we care about it so deeply.
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Five Tips for Better GLOBAL ONLINE QUALITATIVE

By Isaac Rogers
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We live in a global economy and think on a global scale. Other cultures, countries and places beyond our physical reach affect our everyday business decisions. As anyone can attest, the research world is a different place than it was ten years ago. Not only have the Fortune 500’s needs for “global” research accelerated, but even smaller brands are looking for a global view on their customers.

Historically, only large, global research firms attempted multi-country qualitative studies. Their worldwide staff and infrastructure allowed them to effectively scope and simultaneously execute a study across multiple countries. Smaller agencies and independent consultants simply did not have the capabilities to meet such demands.

Today, all firms — from the largest research agencies to the smallest independent research shops — have access to powerful tools that allow for easier and faster global research. With online qualitative research platforms, you can now engage participants scattered across the globe without ever leaving the comfort of your office.

While the technology to host multinational online qualitative projects has advanced, many researchers without global experience still struggle with the logistics and setup required to kick off their first global study. Here are five key tips to help you successfully conduct online qualitative research on a global scale.

#1. Line up your resources.
One of the most daunting aspects of global research is managing a small team of dispersed researchers, fieldwork companies and technology providers. How do you find the resources needed for larger global projects, such as separate moderators and fieldwork agencies for each region?

In-Country Moderators
Two of our favorite recommendations for identifying an in-country researcher are the “Find A Researcher” system on QRCA.org and professional groups on LinkedIn. The QRCA tool is a focused way to identify experienced research consultants, as it allows you to search the QRCA network using several filters — for example, moderators located in certain geographies and with certain industry experiences. LinkedIn is also a great resource but takes a little more searching. You would be surprised at how many people are in your extended network just by searching for “Moderator France” or “Qualitative Research Russia.”

Managing Fieldwork
We often recommend looking for researchers who can both moderate/analyze and manage the in-country fieldwork. This will allow you to have a single point of contact for each country. Your in-country researchers will almost always be your best bet for identifying the best fieldwork firms.

Make sure you line up resources BEFORE the study begins, and communicate the research calendar clearly. There have been many cases where a researcher thought she knew someone in Germany, only to find out that he was on vacation or sick. It is a good idea to keep your global team up to speed on any potential timing changes, since your partners are likely managing their own local projects as well as assisting with your global study.

#2. Stay organized.
While time zones may seem like a small detail, it is one that is often overlooked. Managing a project across various time zones around the world can make even the best researcher want to pull out his hair. One of our most recommended tools is www.thetimezoneconverter.com. It is simple, effective and free to use.

Now that you have timing covered, how do you keep everyone on task and on target? Basecamp (www.basecamp.com) is a brilliant project-management tool that works well for managing a global team. In a few short minutes, you can set up a “team” of remote workers and assign each person a series of tasks to complete. As your global fieldwork partners update those tasks, everyone sees real-time status updates through the online portal. It even creates a shared calendar for everyone involved, and it handles file versions and updates exceptionally well; this is a huge benefit for the ever-changing screener or discussion guide.

It never hurts to double-check your cultural knowledge before dealing with international partners. A fantastic resource is www.culturecrossing.net. This website acts as a cultural knowledge base of business and social norms. With just a few clicks, you can review the basics of communication style, business norms and workplace expectations in a particular country or region. While no resource can capture every regional nuance, this tool does a great job of making the information easy to review and use.

#3. Stay in touch.
It can be tempting to rely on email to keep up with your team; however, sometimes it is best to communicate person to person. Many cultural nuances or research misunderstandings can be negated by conversation. While most of us have used Skype to keep in touch with family and friends, few think to use it to execute great global research. We often recommend that researchers invest in the Skype To Go feature to make international calls to fieldwork partners. It is cheap, easy and even works from your mobile device. Google offers a competing product in Google Hangouts (previously named Google Talk). While much less well known, it offers competitive rates for international calling.

Check with your technology platform provider about pre-session client calls and debriefs. Often, your webcam focus group providers can open up a “debrief line” or client dry run at quite competitive rates; not only does this simplify your technology needs, but it also exposes everyone on the research team to the platform before the study goes live.

#4. Be smart about execution.
Planning and logistics often eat up a huge percentage of the research calendar for a global project, which can leave researchers sprinting for the finish line after all the fieldwork has begun. While it can be tempting to allow your in-country resources to execute fieldwork as quickly as possible, a few tricks can smooth out the process and ensure a greater level of success.
Test your research design.

We cannot stress enough the concept of a “test market.” With multi-phase global projects, you can easily build in iterative learning. First, launch your easiest or least risky country as a “test market” of the design. Launching in your home country might make the most sense. Allow your global partners to observe this discussion, and bring everyone together towards the end to review learning and insights. This ensures a couple of things: first, that your in-country moderators have a shared expectation of quality, based on your example, and second, that any kinks in the discussion guide or process can be observed and fixed for other markets.

Set proper expectations.

Make sure that your clients enter into the project with proper expectations. Developed markets like the U.S., Canada and western Europe have plentiful access to the internet, meaning great-quality video streams for live focus groups or high-quality photos from smartphones. In more developing markets, average consumers might not have access to such luxuries, so at times their technical capabilities might limit how they participate. Your in-country fieldwork teams can usually help you understand the local-market capabilities of their participants.

Consider data protection and security.

Do not enter into a research design that assumes that what you will get to know about your participants will be available in all markets or that any kinks in the discussion guide or process can be observed and fixed for other markets.

#5. Have a strong finish.

Translations are often a huge and potentially costly component of running a global online qualitative project. Whether your project is an online discussion (which typically includes 1,000+ verbatims) or an online webcam interview (which includes both transcription and translation), these costs should not be ignored.

If you have not pre-arranged translations with your in-country resources, consider your technology providers for guidance. Today’s online research tools often include built-in transcription/translation capabilities, which are often faster and cheaper than third-party suppliers. You are often presented with a few options, including the ones below.

Machine Translation

This type of translation technology uses sophisticated computer processing to quickly translate content. While this level of translation is fast and cost effective, it is often far from perfect. As participants make typos or use slang or uncommon terminology, the translations become less accurate. Translation fidelity will be higher on moderator questions and probes because your in-country moderators will likely compose their questions with special attention to detail, grammar and sentence structure (making this a great way to keep tabs on your global team). This translation capability should rarely be used for analysis; instead, it is a great way to observe the research occurring in other languages in real time.

Human-Audited Translation

This type of translation comes in a number of varieties, but we normally see human-audited translations sold in one of two categories: general translation or specialist. General translation covers 90% of market research needs, as it relies on the everyday language most native speakers use. Most third-party translation companies, tools like QualTranslate™ and other embedded services often offer this level of translation as a default. Specialist translations are often industry specific, like medical, IT or accounting. Due to the specialized terms in these industries, you need specialized resources. These translations typically cost much more per word (as much as twice as costly) and often take many days to complete.

No matter the type of translation you decide to use, do not wait until the end of the project to figure it out. Be upfront with your clients at the beginning of the research design about how long it may take to deliver final analysis. If you do not build in time for translation, you may be scrambling at the end of your project to deliver.

Final Thoughts

With today’s technology tools and a lot of planning, global projects are now well within reach for most market research consultants. Without a doubt, developing local-market partnerships for moderation, fieldwork and analysis is the most challenging aspect of multi-country research; however, once your resources are in place, having the right tools in your toolkit can give you truly global capabilities. It is an exciting time for qualitative research, as old boundaries are being redrawn, allowing independent researchers and smaller firms to compete on a global scale.
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How to Find the BEST CPA Firm for Your Small Business

By Larry Little, CPA
The A.C.T. Group, Ltd. • Chicago, IL
larrylittle@actgroup.to

Now is the time of year when you should re-evaluate your accounting and tax-service provider. Your CPA should be your partner in business, guiding you toward prosperity and profitability, and he or she should be the first person you contact when you are considering a major purchase or experiencing a change in your business. Many small-business owners do not take advantage of the other services their CPA firm offers. It is important that you make use of the knowledge and expertise of your CPA firm and all of the services it provides.

The first thing I should mention is that if you are happy with your CPA firm, keep it. Do not change firms. The relationship between your CPA and you (the business owner) is essential, so if you are getting what you want at a reasonable price, stay put. I tell my potential new clients that if they are looking for someone just a bit cheaper than their current firm, to stay where they are — every firm raises its prices eventually. If you have not been happy with your CPA firm and are looking for a new relationship, however, below are some helpful hints.

Look for a qualified firm.
Do not hire a friend or family member to do your business taxes. I even think that you should not hire a non-CPA to do your business taxes. While many enrolled agents and accountants are qualified, the CPA designation is an important credential. Tax laws change constantly, and CPAs are the most qualified to handle the federal and state changes that happen throughout the year.

I also recommend hiring a firm, not a sole proprietor; small businesses need a team of professionals at their disposal.

So, how do you find a new firm? Start by asking for referrals from your colleagues, your fellow Chamber of Commerce members (if applicable) and your small-business neighbors. If you are still unsatisfied with the options available to you, go to the internet and check out local CPA firms in your area. You want a local firm so that you can easily visit it, if necessary. Or if the firm is not close, can you work with it remotely?

Check out each firm’s website, and look for a connection. Does the firm offer the services you want and need? Does it offer a secure website to upload your data? Does it have a client portal? Does the website have documents available for you to download? Remember, you want to work with someone who makes your life easier.

Interview the candidates.
Once you identify a number of alternative CPAs, interview them; qualitative professionals are quite skilled at asking questions, so put each potential firm through the ringer! Call or email each firm, and ask for a brief telephone interview. Mention the person who...
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How to Find the Best CPA Firm for Your Small Business

Consider their clients.
Check out the firm’s clients and the services it provides to them. You want a firm that mostly works with small businesses; if it works primarily with individuals, the firm might not be a good fit because its team might not have the expertise you need. In addition to compliance services, make sure that it also offers tax planning and business consulting.

Tax planning is done throughout the year and is important so that there are no surprises at year-end. If the firm offers tax planning (usually done in summer and fall), use it to help you do so — you will not regret it.

Business consulting is an important service if your business is growing or changing or if you are not profitable. Most CPA firms have the expertise to review your financial statements (after you have completed your bookkeeping) and provide you with some observations and suggestions about break-even points, price increases and product costs that could either save you money or bring in more revenue. Once again, if the firm you choose offers this service, USE IT.

Here is a short story to highlight this last point. Several years ago, I consulted on a new business venture, a concept restaurant. It was clear that the restaurateur knew cooking as well as the specific ins and outs of the hospitality industry. I pored through her business plan and proposed budget, and I found some serious issues. First, a simple calculation error was in her spreadsheet; it was a fixable problem, but a problem nonetheless. Beyond that, I soon noticed the absence of two typical budget-line items: there was no line item listed for her rental of the space, and even though she knew she would need to borrow money to get started, there was no budget line item listed for the service of that debt. Together, all of this made the cash-flow projections unrealistic. The numbers just did not add up, and the business, with these factors, could never be profitable.

Getting Started with Your New CPA Firm
Once you have decided on a new firm, make sure you have copies of your previous year’s tax returns and depreciation schedules. If you do not have them, you can call your previous CPA firm and ask for these. Then, also let them know that you are grateful for their years of service but are going in a different direction this year. As with any business relationship, you do not want to end the relationship with your previous firm poorly; you may need information from them later, and terminated clients usually go to the bottom of the list.

Finally, when tax time comes, be prepared when you meet with your new CPA, whether in person or remotely. You must do your part in this partnership: have your questions written down, and review the work that you (or your bookkeeper) send to the firm. And do not forget to review the work your CPA prepares for you. Remember, you are responsible for what you submit to the taxing authorities.

Your CPA can and should guide you through the good times and the bad, but he or she will not call you out of the blue. It is your job to engage the firm for the services it provides. In turn, its job is to provide you with quality, timely and reasonably priced services that will help make you prosperous and profitable.

 referred you (or if you found them on the internet).

In addition to considering the answers to your questions, you should consider the following:

• How responsive are they? How long does it take for them to call or email back? If they take days to return calls to a potential new client, imagine how they will treat you as a client of record.
• During the interview, assess whether or not you click with them. Are they speaking in a language that you can understand? Do they talk down to you? Do you have any common clients? Are they familiar with your line of work?
• Ask for a price range for services.
• Do not be afraid of candor during this conversation — you want to know that the CPA is not afraid to tell you important information. For example, inquire as to how the firm handles mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes; what matters is how the mistake is resolved.

Consider the following:

• How long does it take for services?
• Who are the firm’s other clients?
• Is the firm familiar with your industry?
• Does it offer services beyond tax compliance?
• Do you “click” with the firm?

FIRST
CONSIDERATIONS
for Making a Change

If you are happy with your current firm, do not switch just to save a few bucks.

If you want to find a new firm, ask for referrals from other people in your industry.

Find a firm in your local area, so you can easily visit your CPA.

Ask yourself how a new firm will make your life easier.

FIVE TIPS
for Interviewing Prospective CPA Firms

How long does it take the firm to return your call or email?

Is the firm familiar with your line of work?

Who are the firm’s other clients?

Does it offer services beyond tax compliance?

Do you “click” with the firm?
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“Snugs” refers to an intimate, cozy place, just one facet of Budapest that you will come to love. Once you arrive, you will not dream of escaping this beautiful city until you have explored it for yourself. Harry Houdini spent his early life here, and you will be captivated by Budapest’s magic as well.

Budapest has a complex and interesting history that goes back 3,000 years. The Hungarian capital is situated at a strategic ferry point on the Danube where the Buda hills meet the Hungarian plain, the Pest side. The city was most likely established by the Celts before becoming a Roman province. Its original name Aquincum refers to the “good water” provided by the River Danube and the numerous hot springs of the area.

Budapest’s thermal springs are said to be therapeutic. They provide 18.5 million gallons of hot water daily to power numerous spa baths in the city. Temperatures range from comfortable to hot enough to enjoy outdoors on a cold night. Take a tip from the locals — experience firsthand why Budapest is sometimes called “City of the Baths.”

Famous baths include the richly decorated art-nouveau Gellért and the classy Széchenyi, where you can play chess on a chessboard built into the basin. Immerse yourself in history, culture and architecture by visiting our Roman, Medieval and Turkish baths: Király, Lukács, Rác, Rudas and Veli Bej (popular, unique and very small; make reservations in advance).

On a pleasant spring evening, come out and enjoy the spectacular view of...
Budapest’s Lions and Snugs CONTINUED

the Royal Castle when you cross the Chain Bridge, a suspension bridge connecting both sides of the city. Built in 1849 in a cooperative effort between Hungarians and Scottish engineers, it was considered a marvel of modern engineering at the time. Take note of the lions at the abutments of the Chain Bridge; the sculptor was criticized at the time for the lions’ supposed lack of tongues. You can get closer to real lions at Budapest’s centrally located zoo. Built in 1866, it is one of the oldest in the world.

A Walk You Can’t Miss
The Hungarian capital is famous for its architecture. You can see a great deal of it on foot. Start your walk at Castle Hill along streets lined with tiny baroque buildings with well-preserved Gothic details. The easiest way to get there is the funicular railway (Sikló) starting from the Adam Clark circus. As the funicular rises, the city bursts upon your view. The castle district with the panoramic view of the city was recognized as a World Heritage Site in 2002.

On the Pest side in downtown, a long, pedestrian route starts at the Great Market Hall, much of which was restored in the 1990s to its former 19th century splendor. You will pass two famous churches (Kálvin tér and Egyetem tér). Then, you will see the buildings of the University and the Károlyi palace. Continue toward downtown, passing by the Ybl palace and the Franciscan church. Vörösmarty tér is a public square at the very heart of the downtown. Visit Gerbaud, a confectionary whose clients once included Queen Victoria and Kaiser Wilhelm.

If you continue your walk towards the north, you may reach the Design Terminal, originally a Bauhaus-style bus terminal but now an exhibition space for contemporary art. From that point, two dominant religious buildings can be seen, Europe’s largest synagogue and the largest Catholic church in Budapest, the neo-baroque Bazilika.

From here, you can pick up Andrássy Avenue, known as the Hungarian Champs-Élysées. This avenue is the most elegant street in Budapest, lined with spectacular neo-Renaissance mansions and townhouses featuring fine façades and interiors, and it is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Andrássy Avenue connects the downtown area with the City Park Városliget, which contains Heroes’ Square (Hősök tere); the 14 statues in the Pantheon are kings and national heroes. Underneath the avenue runs the Millennium Underground line, the second oldest in Europe, after London’s. It has been in continuous operation since 1896.

From Erzsébet Square to Oktogon (an octagonal intersection), you will find world-famous, luxury designer boutiques such as Prada, Ferré, Louis Vuitton, etc. Besides the haute-couture stores, you may enjoy the sight of the neo-Renaissance Opera House and Nagymező Street, “the Broadway of Pest.” Later, you can see more palaces with front yards, and close to the Hero’s Square are individual villas surrounded by gardens.

The Nyugati Pályaudvar (Western Railway Station on the Grand Boulevard) is one of Budapest’s landmarks, a soaring extravaganza of steel and glass, designed by engineers from Gustav Eiffel’s studio in the 1870s. The emperor’s lounge is worth a visit, as is a 16-mile (30km) trip to Gödöllő, one of the largest Baroque palaces in Europe. The other main railway station is the Keleti (Eastern Railway Station), which has an impressive neo-classicist façade with Watts’ and Stephenson’s monuments; we hope the reconstruction will be finished by the AQR/QRCA conference.

Another important landmark of the city is the building of the House of the Nation, the Hungarian Parliament. That is the second-largest parliamentary
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building on the globe (after Britain’s). The Gothic-revival building has 27 gates, 29 interior staircases and 13 personal and service elevators. Around 50 5-story apartment buildings could fit into the Parliament, which gives the visitor a notion of its size. Ninety statues and the coats-of-arms of various cities and counties adorn the exterior, while 152 statues and motifs of national fauna can be found on the inner walls. Eighty-eight pounds of 22- to 23-karat gold was used for decorations.

Green Spaces and Caves
Margitsziget (Margaret’s Island) is a beautiful green island in the heart of the city. The island was originally a hunting field for the nobles; then King Béla IV and his wife built a cloister for their daughter, who became Saint Margaret. Today, only medieval ruins remain, the rest destroyed during the Turkish occupation in the 16th and 17th centuries. Nowadays, the island is one of the largest public parks in the city, with antediluvian woods, the second-largest fountain (after Barcelona’s), the almost 200-year-old Palace hotel, a nice thermal spa and other attractions.

As Budapest is surrounded by hills and mountains, it has some lovely natural scenery to visit. Two hills are located practically downtown, Gellért-hegy and Sas-hegy. Both are natural reserves with protected species of animals and plants. You can enjoy views of the city from Szabadság-hegy or János-hegy. These can be easily reached by a variety of means, including bus, tram, light railway operated by children(!), cogwheel-rail or even chair-lift (Libegő). The area’s hot springs created not only baths but also some impressive caves. Without even leaving the city, you can see glistening stalagmites, stalactites and calcite crystals at Pál-völgyi barlang, Szemlő-hegyi barlang and Várbarlang.

If you want to venture farther away, I recommend taking a boat or train to the Danube bend where the big river takes a curve from eastward to southward among the mountains. Take in the breathtaking view from the citadel of Visegrád, and visit the nearby medieval royal castle with Gothic and Renaissance architecture.

Whirl of Gastronomic Pleasures
If you are looking for haute cuisine in Budapest, plan a visit to Onyx or Costes. Both have earned Michelin stars and have maintained them for years. Other innovative, top-notch restaurants are located in luxurious hotels such as Bock Bistro in the Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal on the Grand Boulevard. It is a beautiful venue for enjoying an
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impressive variety of national wines, Hungarian dishes with an international twist and plates of tapas — try the Mangalica pork evenly mottled by fat and the tobacco ice cream. Nobu Budapest is one of the latest additions to Chef Nobu Matsuhisa’s worldwide dining empire, conveniently located in the luxurious Corvinus Kempinski Hotel.

For those with special dietary requirements:
- **Napfényes** and **Mannatural** are good for vegetarians.
- **Halal** restaurants for Muslims are widely available, with many cuisines represented, including Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and Iranian.
- **There is a nice variety of kosher restaurants** as well. The best are **Rosenstein** (which provides a mix of Hungarian cuisine and kosher tradition), **Kőleves** (where sometimes you may enjoy jazz concerts) and **Spinoza Ház** (where you can hear klezmer music on Fridays or sometimes see a play). Tip from our local hosts: try the funky **Maceszhuzsár** and the homely **Yiddishe Mamma Mia**.

Budapest rivals Vienna as a capital of coffee houses. Here are some of the most famous or historical:
- **Centrál** was the intellectual center of the Hungarian elite. It was once a free university with a popular and lively social scene.
- **Múzeum Kávéház** was the meeting point of the political players in the 19th century.
- **New York Café** was the meeting place for financial magnates and bankers.
- **Alexandra Kávézó Book Café**, an impressive venue in a recently converted ballroom on Andrássy Avenue, with festive, live piano music.

**Night Out: Mixing with the Locals**

It is really important for a qualitative researcher to understand the local culture. In that spirit, if you would like to mix with locals, there are several types of places to go. Nightlife for the “young at heart” can be found in the former Jewish district (district VI and VII, in between the Grand Boulevard-Nagykörút and Small Boulevard-Kiskörút). This neighborhood has approximately 60 pubs and clubs. These are the so-called “ruin pubs” that use old, former residential buildings for their operation. If you prefer a less noisy venue, pedestrian streets are lined with sidewalk cafés such as **Váci utca**, **Ráday utca** and **Lővőház utca**.

**For More Information**

There are many websites to find information to prepare for your visit to Budapest, here are a few:
- [Budapest, travel](http://visitbudapest.travel)
- [www.budapest.com](http://www.budapest.com)
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How Brands Grow: What Marketers Don’t Know

Byron Sharp
Oxford University Press, 2010

Reviewed by Susan Abbott
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Despite my considerable training in the subject, marketing has often been a mystery to me. Once you get past the five P’s, it’s hard to find much of anything that looks like an accepted body of knowledge supported by hard evidence. Byron Sharp’s book, How Brands Grow: What Marketers Don’t Know, is a refreshing, tall drink of water in this desert.

How Brands Grow sets forth eleven principles — law-like patterns generalized from empirical evidence. Each chapter explains one of the principles and builds a case based on research evidence. This is a book designed for marketing practitioners. The writing is clear and down-to-earth, the examples are compelling, and QRCA members are likely to recognize many global brands in the research data.

Clearly supported by data, the laws discussed are patterns that occur repeatedly across many years and across many different brand categories. All have implications for our clients’ strategies, and Sharp makes practical suggestions about marketing implications.

The “Double Jeopardy” law is a good example: “Brands with less market share have far fewer buyers, and these buyers are slightly less loyal (in their buying and attitudes).” Clients that agonize over ways to build higher loyalty on a smaller customer base are unlikely to succeed. Instead, they need to focus on building the customer base. Cross-selling is another double-jeopardy-effect metric: brands with smaller market share have lower cross-sales, regardless of the effectiveness of their cross-selling programs.

The “Natural Monopoly” law says that larger brands tend to have a monopoly on light buyers: for example, if you buy only one soft drink during the course of a year, it is very likely to be a Coke.

The author is quite passionate about challenging what he sees as current marketing orthodoxies that are not supported by evidence. The notion of passionate brand loyalists comes under close scrutiny. Sharp argues that the loyalty that consumers show to brands is much more akin to habit, and nothing at all like the loyalty that sports fans show to their favorite teams.

Sharp suggests that the evidence presented should give us a foundation to shift our thinking about many accepted principles of marketing. Very few brands, he argues, have true differentiation; instead, they compete as “near lookalikes.” Instead of seeking to build differentiation, brands should focus on being distinctive, being memorable and having highly salient communications. Marketing success is more dependent on mental and physical availability. Mental availability has to do with the structure of our memories. A more available product has more memory associations and often more cues in the environment. Building brand salience means increasing “the quantity and quality of memory links to and from a brand.”

Reading this book is a bit like “taking the red pill” in the movie The Matrix, opening your mind to fact-based arguments that fly in the face of the ideas still firmly rooted in marketing practice. It is intellectually stimulating and highly relevant to our work.
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According to the author, “the most compelling reason to conduct qualitative health research is a moral one — in the name of social justice” and that the “social justice agenda of Qualitative Health Research is one that humanizes health care.” The essential aim of Qualitative Health Research is to “give voice” to the participants being studied, whether they are working parents seeking life balance, family caregivers to frail elderly or HIV specialists in a neighborhood clinic.

Although Qualitative Health Research: Creating a New Discipline has a broad scope, the field is defined by its focus on the health-illness continuum as well as on the individual and his or her support network (advocates, friends, family, community and government). The goal of Qualitative Health Research is to produce insights that result in changes that acknowledge patient dignity and enhance access to needed care. Being successful in this domain requires a thorough understanding of public policy and the specific context of care (I.C.U., nursing home, neighborhood clinic), as much as skills in a broad array of qualitative methods.

Seasoned researchers, as well as those new to the field, might be intrigued by the book’s case studies, whether or not they work in healthcare. Drawing from her own experience, Morse describes several studies that she has led, such as ethnographic work she conducted in the 1980s on nursing mothers in Fiji versus in the United States. Mothers in Fiji nurse indefinitely, whereas U.S. mothers quickly gave up nursing upon returning to work because of hostile attitudes and lack of accommodation.

This book would be a valuable read for any QRC wanting to work in healthcare, as it does a good job of explaining the field and the practical considerations of doing research within this industry.
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Autoethnography as Method

Heewon Chang
Left Coast Press, 2008

Reviewed by Kay Corry Aubrey
Usability Resources, Inc. • Bedford, MA • kay@usabilityresources.net

Autoethnography as Method by Heewon Chang is an engaging and thought-provoking book that details a variety of techniques for self-ethnography. While Chang created some of the approaches she describes, most are well known within the field of ethnography. Her focus is to help participants connect their personal history to the various cultures in which they live. The techniques are designed to help people define who they are from different points of view.

For example, the chapter on collecting personal memory data includes writing and drawing exercises to help identify the people who have had a major impact on one’s life and to explore patterns around life experiences and family rituals. Drawing from her own background as a Korean-American married to a German national, Chang illustrates how to construct a “Kin-Gram” to chart family relations that participants can reference as they each put together their personal story. In a chapter on collecting self-observational and self-reflective data, Chang uses her adult roles to show how to create a “culture gram,” which is a mind-map of her primary identities: Christian, female professor, multicultural, middle class and feminist.

The book includes sections on how to collect, analyze and report on ethnographic research, especially where the author describes ways to balance details with the macro-level insights. The advice offered is applicable to any type of qualitative data collection. A very large appendix contains an annotated bibliography of the most important material written on this field.

Although the book has an academic tone, it is practical, interesting and easy to read. It provides excellent background on the topic, providing new techniques that can be applied to one’s work, whether in ethnography or other areas of qualitative research.
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President’s Award
Pat Sabena
Sabena Qualitative Research Services

Awarded for her substantive and ongoing contributions to QRCA. This includes her service on the QRCA/AQR Conference Committee, Industry Relations Committee and frequent presentations at QRCA events.

Pat is the President of Sabena Qualitative Research Services in Fairfield, Connecticut. Pat specializes in gathering and interpreting insights from professionals (executives, physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, attorneys, educators) and consumers (women, men, patients, boomers, elderly, teens, kids) both in the US and in global qualitative research.

Maryanne Pflug Spirit Award
Farnaz Badie
The Thought Bubble, LLC

Awarded for her friendliness, creativity, commitment to QRCA, leadership, optimism, humor, mentorship, a passion for life, and unconditional positive regard for all.

Farnaz is the President and Founder of The Thought Bubble LLC in Omaha, Nebraska. Farnaz leads a dynamic brand consultancy that offers solid strategic marketing and ideation, coupled with a sharp focus on the consumer. Her business is built on understanding consumers in order to create better brands and innovations, and more effective communications.

Rising Star Award
Rachael Krupek
Qualitative Direction

Awarded for her impactful contributions to QRCA, including leading the Qcast Committee and serving on the 2013 Nominating Committee.

Rachael is the Owner of Qualitative Direction in Franklin, Tennessee. Rachael has more than 15 years of experience in the industry crafting the best research design, asking the right questions, uncovering insights, and telling the story to her clients. In addition to her in-person moderating experience, Rachael has been a pioneer in online qualitative research since 1999 and speaks regularly on this topic at industry gatherings.
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