

Techniques

● Below are some of the research techniques we make use of in our work. Which we select depend on who and what we're trying to understand – each brief is different and we tailor our approach to fit. We combine techniques to look at issues from different angles. And, if we don't think there's a method that suits, we'll invent one!

Group discussions and consumer workshops

Friendship groups, conflict groups, triads, mini-groups, standard groups and activity filled workshops are oldies, but still as useful as ever. Getting in front of people, observing their interactions and encouraging them to explore subjects through detailed discussion with their peers remain ideal for exploring issues and co-creating through the generation, evolution and evaluation of ideas.

The key to their success is thinking carefully about their makeup, their structure, the homework we ask people to do before and after and the projective techniques we use to help dig a little deeper. We often follow up on responses afterwards via email or 'phone when the dust has settled on new ideas and of course, we combine them with other methods to keep 'group think' in check.

Depth interviews

When we want to understand individual behavior and attitudes, decision making, consumer journeys and sensitive areas of people's lives, we get them on their own.

We also combine them with ethnographic approaches – spending time with people at home, when they're out and about, and when they're online - to observe and explore their routines, relationships and decision-making. Then we can really get to the nitty gritty of their lives and explore the implications for our clients' businesses.

Shadowing

We learn a lot from watching people. We've joined them on nights out and as they make decisions about their next mobile 'phone or their brand of teabag. We also look over their shoulders as they search, surf and buy online. Shadowing is perfect for understanding actual vs reported behavior, and exploring customer experience of key service and brand touchpoints – and understanding how to influence them – in-store, online, offline, and above and below the line.

We've also started to use new technology to help us shadow people unobtrusively and in real time. Recording their feelings about what they see around them - and what they're doing in response - in images and words on their smartphones and tablets, give us a really rich and immediate picture of people's thoughts, reactions and behaviour. And blogging and tweeting – if they're part of their world – also helps us capture their thoughts – and see what others are saying in response!

Pop-ups

For a few hours or even a few days, we station ourselves somewhere where our target audience 'is' and catch them for quick 10-15 minute chats.

Pop-ups are ideal for getting quick reactions to comms - short, sharp feedback on emerging ideas or helping to tweak 'nearly there' ones. We also use them to take the temperature on issues in the news or to get a snapshot of current brand and comms perceptions.

We can do these just about anywhere – shopping centres, cafés, car dealerships, music festivals, mum and toddler groups, farmers' markets – wherever our 'people' are!

Digital and new media

Twitter and Facebook sweeps, smartphone-enabled diaries, netnography, accompanied online searches and shops – we're embracing all the methods that our brave new world offers. Our thinking is evolving in this area – as is consumer behavior – and as ever, we choose and develop methods that enable us to genuinely shed light and deliver real insight vs look good in proposals?