

Qualitative Research - Industry Practice Guideline

This issue of WHYS Views is aimed at assisting research buyers in making the best use of qualitative research.

Value of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research cultivates an in-depth perspective of customer needs, desires and aspirations:

What motivates our customers? What's in their mind when it comes to making a choice? Why do people think and behave the way they do? What's behind the figures of a quantitative report...

The catalyst approach helps explore new grounds, seek insights and open up fresh ideas.

Choosing a Researcher

The choice of researcher is essential in your return on investment. Qualitative researchers are personally involved in all stages of your projects from design to results presentation. Two key components of qualitative research are fieldwork and analysis where the experience and skills of the researcher are critical to the outcome.

A good qualitative researcher does these at ease:

When interacting with your customers

- build trust and rapport
- be open, objective and non-leading
- listen
- observe non-verbal cues
- encourage individual expression of opinions
- clarify contradictions
- understand beyond the rational level
- probe into feelings, emotions and underlying motivators
- observe dynamics and intricacies
- use projective and enabling techniques to facilitate expression and enrich understanding of customer perspectives

Analysis

- link rational and behavioural statements to underlying emotions and values
- convert raw data into market intelligence and actionable findings

Applications

Amongst its many applications, here are some of the focal areas of qualitative research:

- New concept/ product development
- Customer satisfaction
 - General health check
 - Competitive assessment
 - Opportunity and gap revelation
- Brand/ corporate image
- Product relaunch
- Advertising pre-launch development and post-launch evaluation
- Communication development
- Community consultation

Preparing a Qualitative Project

A thorough and comprehensive briefing is fundamental to the research design and outcome.

Research Brief Coverage

- Research background and objectives
- How findings will be applied
- What decisions will come about
- What options are available
- Could these options be incorporated in the research
- Is quantitative data available
- Any hypotheses on customer behaviour and preference
- Specific areas of interest which require in-depth exploration
- Concepts and stimulus materials for specific and directional evaluation
- Target market definition
- Time and budget requirements

Action

- empower your staff with qualitative market intelligence
- take pride in owning and applying the knowledge

For further advice and enquiries, please contact **Betty Southgate, Director, WHYS Research.**

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