



# The Changing Face of Research

Research Solutions for

# 2014

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The world of market research is evolving rapidly with an explosion of new ideas generated by advancements in technology and innovation. The pace of change is creating both opportunities and challenges in terms of how best to understand consumers.

Here at SPA Future Thinking we spend our time talking to businesses and consumers about the way they interact with research, the ever increasing need for time management, what influences their decisions and behaviours, the content they consume and what they want from the companies they deal with.

We've identified seven areas of research which we believe will grow in importance in 2014; from innovative ways to present data, to research solutions helping you to better understand and identify consumer behaviour.

1. Growth of micro surveys
2. Understanding brand connectors
3. The 4 V's of Big Data
4. Implicit decision making
5. The power of 3D visualisation
6. Understanding today's Shopper
7. Data visualisation - where next?







Is time up for the 30 minute survey? The need for shorter surveys is long overdue. Chunking has arrived and will continue to permeate the research industry over the coming year.

Chunking is the breaking up of surveys into bite-sized modules, delivering short, punchy questions sets, in sequence, to a single participant; or separating those modules and presenting them among a much wider sample. The reasons for the shift are simple:-

## Increasingly time-poor participants

In order to preserve high levels of data quality and maintain response rates, the research industry is moving towards a more collaborative approach with those that take part in research, rather than thinking of them as a commodity. By recognising they are time-poor and delivering short, engaging surveys in response, we maintain engagement.

## Switch to mobile

Mobile brings many advantages but by its nature means that participants are on the move and therefore not likely to have the time or attention span to complete long surveys.

## Linking observational data

Traditionally in research there has always been that long and rather tedious section at the end, the dreaded classification questions. By linking through to CRM systems or tracking through social media data we are able to link survey responses to a much richer source of personal information, reducing the need to ask questions and making the dreaded classification redundant

## How far will chunking go? In a world where we can gather so much observational data, when will the time come when the survey itself dies?

The rise of Google Consumer Surveys has made us focus our attention. The technology giant chunks 10 questions at a time, via its survey wall; add into this the fact that they are linking responses to the Android system means those 10 questions are suddenly much more valuable. We are currently conducting trials with the platform, we'll report back.

But the question is how far will chunking go? Will we get to the situation where we are always serving 30 second surveys to 60,000 people, rather than 30 minute surveys to 1000? Or is chunking the beginning of the end of surveys? In a world where we can gather so much observational data, will there be a time when the survey itself dies?

# Understanding brand connectors



Over recent years consumer expectations of brands have risen markedly, fuelled by an ever increasing number of brand touch points. Every day we are bombarded by content from numerous channels.

In addition a two way dialogue has developed, engaging consumers more directly with brands than ever before.

For brand teams there is the challenge of identifying what people's perceptions are, how they can influence these perceptions and who they need to target to change them; ultimately to keep consumers engaged.

Measuring brand equity to capture rational and emotional brand perceptions is pivotal to evaluating what consumers really think. By benchmarking performance over time a clear understanding of brand equity and where your brand is heading can be realised.

For any brand there will be those people who are more influential than others. Connectors are highly engaged with brands and are key in advocating brands to their peers; these consumers are integral to a brands success.

By detecting the key connectors it is possible to identify key brand drivers and map out how to influence them, determining brand performance and ultimately its in-market success.



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**Connectors:** The key influencers for your brand. Identify those key advocates for the category.



# The 4 V's of Big Data



In 2013 everywhere you turned there were references to Big Data. Data volumes are doubling every two years and whilst 23%\* of data is estimated to have value if analysed, only 0.5% actually is.

**Successful analysis of big data relies on the successful analysis of three V's:**

**Volume** - Dealing with massive data sets

**Variety** - Analysing multiple sources of unstructured data

**Velocity** - Evaluating constantly arriving data

Capturing these multiple streams of data helps businesses add **value** (our final 'V'); from forecasting performance, to aiding business decision making and providing strategic direction.

The role of multi-channel analytics is helping companies analyse multiple data sets to identify links between; how people behave, the way they spend their money, retention and customer loyalty, customer acquisition and the impact of marketing and innovation.

The value of Big Data in its ability to accelerate decision making across businesses can only continue to increase as analysis through improved segmentation and leveraging gets more sophisticated.



**The 4 V's of Big Data:  
Volume, variety, velocity and  
value**



Understanding consumer decision making is all about identifying unconscious influences on our seemingly rational decisions. To get a quick and basic understanding of implicit response please *click here*; it may just get you thinking!



Technology plays a key role in the implementation of timed response.

By using the length of time taken to respond to questions as well as the response itself, a more implicit measure of consumer perception can be gained.

Timed Response uses specially designed survey software which is simply incorporated into online surveys. It measures response times to the millisecond to give an understanding of which answers are automatic and which are rationalised.

By using key strokes rather than mouse clicks to maximise accuracy any responses that are faster than the brain can process or are very slow (over rationalised) are removed to avoid skewing the results.

**Timed Response measures response times to the millisecond to give an understanding of which answers are automatic and which are rationalised**

This method is increasingly being used across the research industry to provide a greater understanding of perceptions of brand packaging, measuring and understanding advertising effectiveness of sponsorship campaigns as well as brand tracking.

In addition the role of user response based facial recognition will gain momentum as a research solution. Through the use of a web camera respondent's facial expressions are tracked to record key emotional states in real-time, to deliver an implicit understanding of each second of an advert or animated concept.



# The power of 3D visualisation



How can we maximise reality in an online research environment? Whilst the benefits of CGI development are illustrated in films like Gravity and The Hobbit, not everyone has realised their implications for research.

These 3D CGI visualisations are increasingly allowing researchers to recreate the wildest ideas of marketer's and designers and bring them to life for consumers.

This gives access to infinite mock-ups that are perfect every time, cost effective to produce and can be transported anywhere in the world immediately via a click. They can be interactive models consumers interact with or be an animation demonstrating functionality in exactly the same way for each consumer viewing.

For those wanting to understand consumer reactions to innovative packaging ideas or the most complex technical concepts, 3D visualisation offers a more efficient and creatively-limitless route to insight.

Additionally, virtual simulations let researchers manipulate both the environment and respondents' interaction with it; alleviating variables (weather, stock, competitor activity) that can affect real world tests.



3D CGI visualisations are cost-effective, flexible and provide researchers with increased control

# Understanding today's Shopper



The path to purchase has changed in recent years with the rise of the multi-channel shopper and greater competition. Price sensitive, tech savvy consumers have altered their shopping journey and now shop in a completely different way to their parents.

Where previously there has been a stigma attached to certain retailers and channels, shoppers have now shed any inhibitions they may have had towards them.

Discount retailers Lidl and Aldi both recorded record 2013 Christmases, further increasing the pressure on Britain's big four supermarkets. Similarly you just have to see how Poundland, whose sales rose to £780m in 2013 up by nearly 20%, is now being imitated with the likes of 99p stores and B&M to see how the high street has changed.

As a result integrating consumer insight with an understanding of the dynamic path to purchase and Shoppers' changing needs has become increasingly important for brands.

For businesses to gain a deeper understanding of the mind-set and influencing factors behind specific shoppe behaviours there are numerous options.

**Integrating consumer insight with an understanding of the dynamic path to purchase and Shoppers' changing needs is increasingly important for brands**

Quantified longitudinal ethnographic studies encompassing everything from, online, mobile in-the-moment, social media and Shopper communities can all assist in understanding how groups shop, to the purchase decisions they make.





# Data visualisation - where next?



There is no excuse for dull research findings. Providing visually stimulating and engaging content is a key element of reporting. By using the very latest technology a wide range of creative reporting solutions (from simple dashboards to interactive portals) are available to showcase results in a way that can be easily interpreted, saving time and energy.

Fortunately research findings have evolved dramatically over the years. In the same way that technology has helped deliver new research solutions, so technology has helped deliver research findings. This can be traced back to the very early days of acetate to the entrenchment and over reliance of PowerPoint; just how many clients have researchers bored to tears by PowerPoint over the years?

In terms of content delivered we have seen increased levels of sophistication, from reportage to insight and more recently the role of storytelling. There is though a new limitation to the effectiveness of reports; the small matter of time. Time to deliver inspirational findings and time to engage time-pressured clients.

Delivering storyboarded actionable insight in multichannel formats for time poor execs is now a key consideration. These need to be carefully crafted memorable insight-led deliverables, which must resonate with the audience and provide clear commercial strategic direction.

The format can take many forms: from traditional one pagers (dare I say PowerPoint), Prezi, video, infographics, text alerts and portals; with solutions tailored to clients' needs and availability. New ways to engage clients are constantly being developed as we look to inspire clients. Whether it's pod casts or insight TV finding that perfect solution for clients is now a real challenge.



# Our business



## Quantum Lab

To help capture the current 'explosion' of new ideas in the market research world and to keep our creative juices flowing we developed our in-house think tank, Quantum Lab. It enables us to provide a range of customised approaches and new research solutions that deliver state of the art thinking tailored to our client's needs.

[www.spafuturethinking.com/quantum-lab](http://www.spafuturethinking.com/quantum-lab)



## About the Author

### Jan Worsley, Head of Quantum Lab

Jan heads up the Quantum Lab team developing creative insight solutions that get to the very heart of business questions and deliver greater consumer understanding. His expertise includes the use of analytics, behavioural economics and gamification. Prior to joining us Jan was head of customer insights at innocent drinks.



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**SPA Future Thinking** has developed to become one of the fastest growing and largest independent market research companies in Europe, with 180 employees across offices in the UK, France and Italy and a partner network in 38 countries worldwide.

With combined industry experience of over 40 years we offer thought leadership across a wide range of specialisms and we provide genuine expertise and understanding across a wide range of industry sectors.

We provide strategic research and actionable insights to a wide range of leading companies; offering both bespoke solutions, analytics and proprietary techniques to help guide the decisions that you make in areas like, market development, new product development, innovation, customer satisfaction and experience, brand, communications, buying behaviour and more.

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