THE NOT-SO OBVIOUS BENEFITS OF MARKET RESEARCH ONLINE COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNICATIONS

Co-Creation
Communities

When tasked with developing a new product for your target customer, it should be expected that qualitative research will play a role.

Qualitative research allows you to understand who your customers are, not just what they may want by asking probing, open questions that provide deeper insights into your target audience.

In previous years qualitative research could be costly, time-consuming and difficult to coordinate due to its in-person nature. Online research tools make these impediments to qualitative research a thing of the past. It's no secret that a hybrid approach of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies greatly enhances and informs product development.

Market research online communities are the perfect vehicle to conduct ongoing qualitative research. A co-creation community, in particular, can be used throughout the entire development cycle – from product ideation, through prototyping and evaluation. It can enable brands to interact and collaborate with their customers to bring products inspired directly by customers to life. Plus, it provides an environment where brands can study their customers' long term and truly understand their target audience.

Let Your Customers Inspire and Guide You Throughout the Development Cycle

With a market research online community, brands can create an ongoing product development loop where they can **tap into the wisdom of their customers for inspiration and insights.** Within a co-creation community, brands can ideate with customers to come up with new products and services, then they can collaborate with them on prototypes as they go from concept to market. Once a product is launched, the cycle can begin again.

The ongoing environment creates a space where customers feel empowered to help their favorite brands to create products that they will want to purchase as these products are created with the customers' ideas, behaviors and preferences in mind. Co-creation communities give customers a stake in the product, **which ultimately adds to its success.**

Since market research online communities are non-linear, you can have ongoing conversations throughout the development process with your customers, incorporating them into every aspect of product design. Multiple stakeholders throughout your company can have access to the community, connecting them to customers as they work together in a collaborative partnership to develop each new product.

Market Research Online Communities are Both Agile and Iterative

Agile iteration is a huge trend in research. It seems that suddenly everyone wants their research to be both agile and iterative...in other words, fast but evolutionary. But mostly just fast. **With a marketing research online community, this is exactly what you get.**

A market research online community consists of members who want to participate in ongoing research and who are ready at a moment's notice to provide feedback and insights on any number of topics. A brand can create a prototype of a product and put it in the community for feedback, can revise the prototype based on that feedback and can go back to the community to test the revised prototype. This can go on for as many iterations as needed.

The community members are ready and waiting to share their insights on the next iteration and even evaluate the finished product.

They are there for the entire product cycle, to offer insights and inspiration on how to ensure that the product can be successful. The community members are used to visiting the community often and have been trained to keep an eye out for new studies and activities. They jump at the chance to participate and often within the first few hours of a study you can get a read on results. This type of product development allows for continual development through the entire collaborative process.

Longitudinal Nature Lets You Get to Know Your Customers Well

A major benefit of qualitative research is that it allows you to understand the emotional connection driving a buyer's behavior. Within a co-creation community, you can study your customers long-term to understand these behaviors, preferences, how they do things, etc. You can learn why your customers do the things they do and understand how your audience feels about a product. You can then use these insights to inform product development and marketing messages. Ultimately you learn who your customer is, not just what they purchase.

This, in turn, makes your customers feel appreciated – they have a stake in the brand and are loyal to it.

Not only are you incorporating their feedback and inspiration into the product development process, but you are also taking the time to get to know them as individuals rather than just a demographic group. They are not just consumers to you but partners in product development. Ultimately, by creating an ongoing co-creation community you are talking to a vibrant, insights-driven group of loyal representatives for your brand.

The bottom line? If you want to incorporate the wisdom and inspiration of the customers who know and love your brand to develop products that they will buy, an online co-creation community may be right for you. Working alongside a research provider to establish a robust community of consumers will prove to be invaluable. It will provide real-time insights into the true needs of any organization's consumer base.

In addition to including them in every aspect of product development from beginning to end, you will be getting to know your customers and be able to understand not only what they want, but **who they are and why they do the things they do.**