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What Food Stimuli Tell Us About Brands
Actually, it is like brain surgery

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Are We Really What We Eat?

**TOOLBOX:** Food is not just sustenance, it is a strong part of our identity and how we perceive others. So, food makes for interesting and productive stimuli in projective techniques as an entry point to insights regarding the self, others and, ultimately, brands.

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The Art of the (Travel) Deal

**TRAVEL WISE:** Like to save money on travel? Who doesn’t! Here’s an incredible compilation of strategies and tips for helping you find the best travel deals.

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How Researchers Can Stimulate “Thinking with All Senses” in Qualitative Research

**TOOLBOX:** Learn about Multi-Sensory Sculpting®, designed to help understand the multi-sensory and unconscious nature of consumer (brand) knowledge. See how this method gains insights into the multi-sensory meaning behind brands and can be used to explore the hidden thoughts and ideas behind abstract concepts.

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Pokémon Go Is a Game-Changer, and Why We’ve #Gottacatchemall

**TRENDS:** The augmented reality of Pokémon Go is a global phenomenon and offers implications for how shoppers might engage with products before they purchase.
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Are you enjoying VIEWS magazine? We certainly hope so, and we strive for every issue to provide a compelling, useful, and easy-reading collection of articles that keep our readers on the forefront of the qualitative research industry. In sum, we try to live up to the standards of any professional magazine. And I am very proud to feel that we do meet this standard with every issue.

Which is all the more remarkable because VIEWS is not a professional magazine. In fact, the editorial content of the magazine is created entirely by volunteers. All of the authors, the Feature Editors, the Managing Editors, and I are finding time and inspiration to put this content together for you in between all the really important things we handle in our businesses and our lives. I am incredibly proud of this team and the passion they express, the dedication they bring, and the professional-grade magazine they create each quarter.

So as you enjoy this issue of VIEWS, please take a moment to look at the author credits of each article and the editorial staff masthead on page 6. I hope you are inspired to think the same thought I always do: thank you!

Now, here’s a round-up of this issue of VIEWS...

Get ready for the QRCA Annual Conference, January 18-20 in Los Angeles. Our conference preview has all the key info you need to register, review the session presentations, see the action-packed schedule, and plan your trip.

Our trio of Toolbox articles includes our cover story in which Rebecca Bryant, Tone Graaten and Ilka Kuhagen set out to discover if food can be used as stimuli in projective techniques, and I promise that their answer will leave you with a lot to digest. Then, for your in-person qualitative work, do you have a multi-sensory toolkit? Maria Kreuzer presents a fascinating exploration of stimulating respondents across multiple senses for richer insights and the tools to help you do that. And David F. Harris submits a practical guide to writing better screeners, recognizing that screeners must adhere to the same standards of clarity as any other research questionnaire.

Are you playing Pokémon Go? Well apparently everyone on the planet is, and in our Trends column Shaili Bhatt walks us through the game experience and how retailers and marketers are responding to this global phenomenon. In Travel Wise, Deanna Manfredi serves up a smörgåsbord of incredibly useful tips and strategies for getting the best deals on travel costs.

Oana Popa Rengle authors our Global column, showing how the history of Romania impacts culture and values towards products that present special challenges for researchers. Daniel Berkal and Tory Gentes enliven our Schools of Thought column by showing how exploring secrets will make you question everything. In our Tech Talk article, Raji Bonala and Priyam Chawla demonstrate how “the sticky factor” is an important metric for testing mobile apps...and anything else. And in Business Matters, Gigi Verrey and Jack Craven show how examining and adapting to the communication styles of your team can lead to win-win solutions.

And we have another fine shelf full of Book Reviews for you this issue. Peter Switzer reviews Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age by Sherry Turkle, who shines a light on the darker side of technology-enabled communication. Robin Wedewer takes a look at a framework for making better decisions in Decision Quality: Value Creation from Better Business Decisions by Carl Spetzler, Hannah Winter and Jennifer Meyer. Caroline Volpe brings us a review of Small Data: The Tiny Clues That Uncover Huge Trends by Martin Lindstrom, which shows how even in the age of Big Data, qualitative research is better suited to uncover the one small insight that may be the most important ingredient of all. And in A Nation of Numbers: The Development of Marketing Research in America by Paul A. Scipione, reviewer Steve Schlesinger finds a historical review of our industry’s early development and evolution into what it has become today.

Lastly, our newest Podcast features Marc Engel and Pascal Patenaude on applying the art of improv in qualitative marketing research.

Please enjoy this last issue for 2016, and Happy Holidays!
Clarity

What is the purpose of research? The questions we all ask are similar but we ask them to gain a clearer view, a way of understanding.

Clarity.

See your way clear to call us with your next research assignment. You’ll see.

QRCA Announces 2016-2017 Board of Directors

In September, QRCA installed the Board of Directors for the 2016-2017 term. Manny Schrager is the Association’s President, Jay Zaltzman assumes the role of Vice President, Tom Rich serves as Treasurer, and new Board member Regina Szysztkiewicz is Secretary. Also newly elected to the Board this year are Kelly Healty, Ilka Kuhagen and Janet Standen. They are joined by Kathy Doyle and Laurie Tema-Lyn, who are continuing their Board terms, to round out this year’s Board of Directors. The Association further recognizes Daniel Berkal, Shaili Bhatt, Corette Haf and Monica Zinchiak, who completed their Board service this Fall.
Who’s On Your Team?

First of all, I want to thank the QRCA membership for allowing me to head up the team for this year. It’s humbling to have responsibility for an organization where everyone is not only brilliant, but also a terrific dinner companion (if you’re lucky like me, you could even be married to one).

I want to especially thank our past president, Monica Zinchiak, for being such a dedicated force on the board for the past five years. When you’re signed into a WebEx with Monica, her sign-in always includes “I love QRCA,” and she certainly showed that passion, continuously thinking about the best ways to move our organization forward. She will be a tough act to follow, but I have her number on speed dial.

I’m looking forward to a year of continued communications improvement. Our website keeps getting better virtually every time you open it. We have embarked on an SEO program, making our site pop more for potential clients and members alike. We are communicating better, both with newer members through our Touchpoint program, and with all members through more diverse educational offerings, which are spearheaded by our Content Committee working closely with our chapters and Special Interest Groups (SIGs). We are also working diligently to improve our marketing messaging, headed up by our Marketing Committee with the assistance of our long-time support organization, Ewald Consulting.

QRCA relies heavily on member involvement. And, like anything else, the more you put in, the more you get back. Be a volunteer. Perhaps you’ll pick up some new marketing tips, become more techy, or even find other members with whom you may wind up collaborating on client projects. Which brings me back to the headline, “Who’s on your team?”

When I first started out in marketing research, many clients had large MR departments. One financial institution client had over 50 people in MR for its credit card group alone. A few folks would handle the upfront brainstorming sessions, pass it off to others on the qualitative (focus group) team, and from there on to the quantitative specialists. Each team hired its own consultants/moderators for its particular phase of a project. So for a moderator, you only had to be good at one thing: face-to-face research.

Then, one day, that 50-person department had 40 empty chairs. The 10 remaining researchers tried to maintain the old methods, with multiple vendors each working within their specialty. However, as the workloads grew larger, and the departments continued to shrink, many research buyers started looking for more one-stop-shopping alternatives: people or companies that could take them through to their ultimate objectives and not just leave them with a report to be translated for the next phase.

As I watched the industry evolve, I realized that I wanted to be the go-to guy when my clients were considering research. This meant I had to learn more about the phases that might precede and follow qualitative—or sometimes let clients know that qualitative research would not get them the type of useful information they were looking for.

Importantly, our company has formed affiliations with a variety of other QRCs, quantitative researchers, agencies, digital strategists and others we can partner with to get our clients the answers they need. We’ve done this by asking clients and other researchers who they’ve used or partnered with, reading articles (and yes, advertising) in trade publications highlighting useful methodologies and tools, and becoming part of a consortium of companies in allied areas where we have gotten to know each other and can readily recommend our colleagues to each other’s clients.

So, who’s on your team?
Fielding research in far-off countries is like tackling a global jigsaw puzzle. All the pieces of methodologies, facilities, recruiting, moderation, time zones, languages, translations and more have to fit together or you’ll never get the true solution. That’s why researchers turn to Fieldwork Network International. Our specialty is managing projects that span continents. We’re right at home with different cultures, customs, and currencies. And our field partners provide rich databases and local market expertise in every corner of the planet.

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No matter how much of an open book we want to be, and no matter how much we reveal of ourselves, there are always certain things that we selectively share with others. Secrets. We all have them. Think carefully about it. What’s the deepest, darkest secret that you have? Consider why you’ve chosen not to make this information public. Who have you shared it with? Does anybody know? Why or why not?
Is it something that you’re ashamed of? Is it something that people wouldn't expect from you? Is it something that’s still relevant to you? Could there be unpleasant reactions if your secret surfaced? There’s probably some rationale behind your controlled silence.

It’s a fascinating thing to think about. It’s not just about the secrets that we keep. In order for something to really be considered a secret, it has to be something that often someone else knows. What’s most interesting about some secrets is that we only feel comfortable confiding in particular people and in specific situations.

Some we share and some we don’t. We make these determinations on which secrets we can share and which ones we can't. In doing so, we make split-second decisions about others and our relationships with them. Is he a trustworthy person? Will she make negative judgments about me or my character? What will the consequences be if I tell?

We all keep secrets. We periodically and selectively reveal them. Secrets are an interesting manifestation of our honest inside voice.

So how does one gain permission to get access to these guarded thoughts?

That’s where this all gets really interesting for researchers. What people will say out loud can be completely different than what they’re actually thinking, which, unfortunately, provides a skewed indicator of how they’ll react in a specific situation. So our obsession with learning secrets is not a purely voyeuristic endeavor. We seek to learn how to do our jobs better by understanding the reasons why people hold their thoughts back and to learn some methods to make sharing internal thoughts easier.

Deep understanding of human behavior is the core of the qualitative business. We’re looking to speak with a participant’s inside voice, but that voice is often hidden beneath layers of facade. It’s incredibly difficult to strip away those protective layers, particularly within a limited time with a complete stranger.

We set out to tackle this beast head on.

**An Exploration into Secrets**

Our goal was to learn how to ask questions in a more relevant and understanding manner. Our team travelled across the U.S., interacting with a wide variety of people in a staggering number of situations in order to hear what people conceal and to understand why they conceal certain things. We opened our sessions with a simple request, “Tell me a secret.” This led us down a path of discovery that had actionable insight for practitioners of qualitative research.

We didn’t really know what we were looking for, but we were fairly certain that we knew how to find it. The cross-country methodology was a good way to both introduce natural geographic variety to the mix and also provide an introduction story to participants. It made the whole “tell me a secret” thing less creepy. We interlaced the timing of this project to fall during the downtime for other work.

“Simply put, sharing feels good. It helps build value for the person sharing because they’re able to remove psychological weight, hear their own inner voice, and immediately affect their surrounding environment.”
“The key in getting people to open up is to minimize the judgment that causes participant anxiety, while maximizing the joy that is inherent in sharing.”

We varied our approach to participants. We varied the time of day. We varied location. We varied who was asking the questions, using both male and female interviewers. We wanted to gain an understanding of what the elements were that caused people to share.

We videorecorded many of these interactions and utilized them with permission.

“Tell Me a Secret.
What Did We Learn?

We observed how people revealed their secrets. The way in which they shared often illuminated elements of their personality that they wanted us to see in order for us to better understand their personal narrative. The simple act of inquiring about one's secrets opened up a whole new avenue of understanding for us. Secrets form the lens through which we view and respond to the world. As listeners, we could not only capture the content but also delve into a stream of consciousness that is controlled in its delivery, allowing us to grasp both the content and the person's rationale behind sharing it.

Basically, we were able to build a framework to look at the secrets that one keeps. The framework is a scale with three sections, and every secret seemed to rest on this scale. On one end, there are those secrets that could be considered “white lies”: secrets that are essentially trivial and are kept only to avoid hurting someone's feelings. These are not of much interest to us. On the other extreme, there are secrets that are considered “to the grave”: things that could never be revealed because they would compromise one's sense of self. These are out of reach for casual conversation.

Then there's that gray area in between these two extremes. The majority of secrets exist in this space, and that's the area that's really interesting to us from a research point of view. These are the secrets that trigger a mental process that figures out the risk of sharing. Cognitive filters go into play. We ask ourselves about the threat of judgment. We question our timing, whether it's safe now to reveal our secret.

Many of the secrets we were told started with “I used to…” or “In the past…”. We found that people are very concerned with the currency and immediate relevance of their secrets. “Is this secret current?” appears to be at the top of one's internal dialogue. This wasn't just temporal in nature—time wasn't the determining factor. The interval in time didn't seem to be the determinant, but rather a corollary to the idea that the less hold a secret has on one today, then the easier it is to share. We postulated that the time passed also tacitly showed the listener the value in working through a hardship. There becomes this apparent sense of accomplishment in which people take pride.

Another area of interest came up when we realized that many of the secrets that we heard were presented in the context of one's social group. “My friends think…” and “Most people don't know that…” were the prefixes to these phrases. By presenting thoughts in this manner, secret keepers let us in on not only their perception of self and of their social group, but also in their perception of their hierarchy within a social community. Secrets help maintain social perception, and by letting us in on them, the people we talked with allowed us to understand them within the context of their immediate community.

We were surprised to find out that people actually wanted to share their secrets, particularly with a person whom they perceived as a stranger. They seemed to enjoy the process and eagerly opened up when asked. Simply put, sharing feels good. It helps build value for the person sharing because they're able to remove psychological weight, hear their own inner voice, and immediately affect their surrounding environment. There are inherent theatrics associated with the shock value that certain revelations bring. This allows people to build social capital as they receive affirmation.

We also observed the powerful role of timing in making revelations. When you tell a secret often can be as important as what the secret is. Telling a group of strangers that you secretly love someone has a certain value, but that is exponentially raised if you reveal that secret at that person's wedding.

How people reveal their secrets fascinated us as researchers, as being able to fine-tune this exposure would allow us to optimize the positive value in sharing.

We basically saw two variables in the equation: 1) risk of judgment and 2) strength of relationship. Being aware of both of these is crucial in optimizing the force of stranger danger. When we walk into a research setting, we can use the anonymity and intimate space to our advantage and create a setting that truly presents a safe sharing environment.

It's important to always be aware of the mirror effect. People will react to
you as an interviewer with the same face you show to them. If you appear shocked or afraid by what you’re hearing, their guard will instantly go up. We’ve always been aware that the presentation of empathy is important, but we’ve become aware of how interviewer presentation can actually serve as a guiding tool for participant discovery.

Simply put, the key in getting people to open up is to minimize the judgment that causes participant anxiety, while maximizing the joy that is inherent in sharing.

---------

**Ideas to Minimize Judgment and Maximize Joy**

Let’s see how we can put this to use, whether in focus groups or IDIs—a guide to minimizing judgment and maximizing joy.

**Don’t react.** What you may hear from respondents may occasionally be shocking to you, but you should never react to it in a negative manner. It shuts people down and creates an environment of discouragement.

**Be aware of your surroundings.** By acknowledging or exposing elements in the room like the mirror and camera, we can do our best to minimize the perception of stranger danger. Tell them exactly who’s listening and who’s not. Address their fears.

**Build social intimacy.** The classic lean-in move. It also works to share something personal about yourself, a manner of priming the pump for honest disclosure.

**Control the metronome.** Fluctuating the rate and rhythm of the conversation can make it appear more natural. It’s about both speeding up at first and slowing down when revelation occurs. You slow down the tempo once you’re hearing deeper thoughts, literally rewarding your interviewee with time to tell more.

**Build permissions.** You start by asking an incredibly non-personal question in a personal manner. “Excuse me, would you mind if I sat here?” or “Excuse me, do you mind if I ask you where you’re from?” You proceed to ask increasingly personal questions over time in this manner in a way that doesn’t alarm the participant. By building a non-wavering sequence of positive reactions in their answers, you help the respondent to feel less threatened about sharing.

**Speak with your eyes.** In situations where the conversation becomes deeper, the last thing you want to do is to interrupt. You can effectively guide a question period using just facial motions and eye movements. It helps eliminate the staccato mechanic of back-and-forth. It also helps to reward the participant for sharing.

**Realize the reflection.** Unfortunately, the one-way mirrors in focus group rooms also happen to be mirrors. The issue here is that respondents can see themselves and gauge their presentation style based on what they see as their reflection.

**Share something yourself.** Walk into interview scenarios with the ability to share an element of yourself with the participant. It should be something personal and unexpected. Ideally, it is topically related to what you’re trying to find out. As interviewers, we can use our vulnerability as one way of creating a space where participants feel safe enough to risk sharing intimate information.

**Subtly reward.** When a participant exhibits a behavior that you find positive, like sharing a secret, reward that participant with a small token gesture or smile. The reinforcing power of positive stimuli should never be undervalued.

**Turn the camera off.** The presence of a camera can immediately raise concern for respondents. This is especially true in the YouTube age. It can be beneficial to tell the respondent that you’re turning the camera off. It can have the same effect on honesty as when journalists go off the record with sources. The information is still being captured, but it doesn’t feel as attributable.

When you set up the communications just right, it becomes easier and more rewarding for a person to share. Use caution while exercising these techniques; keep a fine focus on areas of interest to avoid opening the confessional floodgates.

Please tell no one. Keep this a secret.

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“Our secrets form the lens from which we view and respond to the world.”
GLOBAL

By Oana Popa Rengle
- Innovation Research Director
- Mappers Consult
- Bucharest, Romania
- oana@anamnesis.ro
A Bit of Romania’s History
Many Romanians today, especially the X Generation (our own baby boomers) and their parents’ generation, have an unconscious craving for abundance and quantity when it comes to consumables, especially, but not only, food! This has a lot to do with the austerity policies in the communist ’80s when President Ceausescu was focused on repaying Romania’s external debt at any cost, leading to chronic food shortages. The only foods that were easily available were bread and something people knew as “Vietnamese shrimp chips,” which had nothing to do with actual shrimp.

For almost everything else there was a ration card or at least three to four hours of standing in queue—often from 4:00 a.m. on—just to be sure of getting something. I myself, as a young child, spent countless hours standing in line for eggs, meat or oranges. It was one of the biggest triumphs of my childhood to be able to notice a queue forming at the local food store and to manage to save a spot for my parents!

A Case Study in Point
Considering our history, we shouldn’t have been surprised during innovation testing research conducted for Hochland (a German cheese producer) to notice that Romanian consumers were consistently over-using a spreadable cheese variety by creating a small “mountain of cheese” on a little slice of bread. It was not how the producer intended the product to be used. After years of starvation and deprivation, the Romanian tendency to use too much of a good thing was hurting the look and taste of meals made with Hochland cheese.

It was very important for Hochland to learn about this phenomenon and to be able to address such misuse via all available vehicles, from product shots on the package to communications during sampling done in-store. But would the client have learned of this risk if we did not give consumers a chance to try the products in their home, in their own kitchen, preparing it themselves, with no one watching over their shoulders?

Testing Innovation Productively
This article is not only about Romanians’ relationship with food, but also about finding a framework for innovation testing that does not rely on merely asking people to express opinions and make verbal predictions. There is a lot of evidence now—from behavioral economics to neuropsychology—that people are poor predictors of their own behavior. They make confi-
dent but false predictions about their future actions, especially when presented with a new and unfamiliar idea, product, or design. This is due to the huge difference between imagining using something and actually using it. Therefore, especially when testing innovations, we should always remember that “it is not about what people say, it is about what they do.” We, as qualitative researchers, know very well how to go around what people say. When exploring needs or opportunities (a phase that design-thinking calls empathy), we do not simply ask people what they need. Rather, we try to empathize with them, encourage them to express their unspoken needs and tensions (for example, with projective techniques), analyze other cultural cues (say, via semiotics) and sometimes observe them in ethnographic approaches. These efforts are also needed later in the testing phase, instead of showing concepts in focus groups, to create an experience that can be observed.

Specifically, we recommend an approach that allows people to interact in a realistic setting with the products or ideas being tested. This enables all their cultural influences and automated habits (and many other elements) to reveal themselves in the process of evaluation.

Three Key Principles
So how do we create an experience that can be observed while researching something that does not actually exist? At Mappers Consult, we try to apply the following principles:

1. Create a context for the research as close as possible to the real context where people would actually use that innovation.
2. Give people something to do and experiment with. This often involves providing a prototype of the innovation being tested and asking people to do something with it, to experiment with it. If a more advanced prototype is not available from the client, then we make a very basic one. For example, once we grated some cheese and taped a small package of it to a bottle of pizza sauce, just to suggest a complete “set for pizza.” Creating any type of hands-on experience is better for improving predictions than creating no experience at all.

But sometimes even this is not enough, because it is still research constrained by several factors. One important factor is time. Psychology shows it takes 66 days to instill a new habit. Often we get far less time than that for our respondents to interact with new products or ideas, and we cannot emulate a 100% real life experience. We need to cut some corners.

3. This is why we bring in the experts: people who may have better foresight around the category than the regular consumer. In our Hochland cheese study, we used food journalists and bloggers in our expert pool.

“There is a lot of evidence now—from behavioral economics to neuropsychology—that people are poor predictors of their own behavior. They make confident but false predictions...due to the huge difference between imagining using something and actually using it.”
How to Apply These Principles

We use our online community platform, which allows a mix of mobile ethnography; there is a diary that can be accessed via smart phone, tablet or computer, plus a community space where people can interact on topics proposed by us or begun by them. We invite 50 people, including experts, for two to three weeks, place products or prototypes of the products with them, and have lots of visual activities and discussion together online and sometimes offline as well. How does this deliver on:

**Context?** People test the products in their real-life homes and kitchens, using their own dishes and appliances, and tweaking the recipes with their own seasonings or condiments.

**Experiment?** People get to try the products over a period of time rather than once, in an arbitrary moment, as they would in a focus group or central location. They are able to experiment with the products in multiple ways. They get to learn what works better for each product, on which occasions it fits better, what benefits to expect, how members of the family interact with it, and who wouldn’t. It becomes less about predicting blindly and more about acquiring experience with the product that allows better predictions for the future.

**Experts?** Involving experts in the research is not a new idea, but doing this in an online platform makes it much easier and more time efficient and quite exciting (interacting with other experts, for example). In our experience, these experts actually stay involved throughout the three weeks of a study.

We give our experts their own separate mini-community within the larger consumer community. They get to experiment with the ideas or products in their own contexts, which adds significantly to a study’s insight and feedback.

We also give our experts access to consumers’ spaces and what they are sharing about topics covered. We ask them to put on an “analyst’s hat” to explain or predict consumer behavior through the lens of their particular expertise. In the Hochland cheese study, we asked them not only to provide feedback on the products as they were, but also to imagine how these products might evolve in the future. We asked them to create complex recipes using the cheese products.

As a result of the Hochland study, the German company rolled out new package shots, in-store displays, and advertising communications in a major effort to showcase how Romanian consumers should expect their spreadable cheese dishes to look and taste when they use the Hochland product at home.

In summary, insights can be enriched by an approach that allows people to evaluate products by interacting with them in a realistic setting. This can be especially challenging when testing products that do not yet exist. To create an experience while researching something that hasn’t been made or done yet, apply the three principles: create a context, give people something hands-on to experiment with, and bring in experts.

“Creating any type of hands-on experience is better for improving predictions than creating no experience at all. Create an experience that you as a researcher can later observe.”
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Grow Your Business
Whether you’re relatively new or a decades-long practitioner, you’re sure to be wowed by the hands-on workshops and info-packed sessions. Expect to come away with items you can use—knowledge that lasts.

Outside Speakers too
Professionals in fields outside of qual have been invited to share how some of their skills match ours, and how we can learn from them.

Abundant Collegiality
First-timers are often stunned by the amount of sharing that happens at this conference. We may be “competitors,” but we are all interested in raising the level of professionalism in our industry.

Exposure to Vendors
Serving Our Industry
The Marketplace offers a wide range of exhibitors, showcasing the latest tools and top-rated facilities. Meet them face-to-face. BONUS: Demo Connections—presentations by a select group of new product/service providers, to learn about the latest and greatest.

Have Fun too!
It’s not all business, there’s lots of fun as well. Multiple social events, Marketplace door prizes, and our gala party will let you unwind and have fun.

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This conference has been carefully curated to provide a beginning, middle, and end for all attendees. But you need to stay till the end to appreciate this immersive full-circle experience.

We will kick off and conclude with sessions that highlight perspectives from outside of our professional bubble. We start with inspiration from Teen Press organizers and students, and we end with lessons from Urban Confessional, which specializes in the magic of “Free Listening.” Consider these two sessions the “bookends” of this perspective-challenging conference.

Capping things off at the very end, there will even be a workshop that will enable all attendees to harness the insights and energy from these three intense days into nuggets that will fuel our re-entry into the post-conference real world.

So, if you’re wondering whether you should stay till the very end, the answer is clear — yes, YES, YES!
11:45AM - 12:45PM
Breakout Sessions:
• Are You “Insta-Cool” Enough for Millennials? Reclaiming the Attention of a Distracted Generation
• New Perspective on Technology: Call Me Gumby—Molding 21st Century Tools into Your “Genuinely You” Offering
• Neuro-Research: Brilliance or BS?

12:45PM - 2:10PM
Lunch & Awards

2:15PM - 3:30PM
Breakout Sessions:
• A Framework that Works: Design-Thinking + Montessori Mindsets to Elevate Your Practice
• Stylin’ & Profilin’: Managing Audience Perception through (Efficient) Communication
• Listening as an Act of Love: What We Can Learn from Others Who Listen and Observe for a Living

3:30PM - 4:30PM
Break—FINAL Marketplace Opening

4:30PM - 5:30PM
Breakout Sessions:
• In Their Eyes: How Respondents’ Perceptions Can Help Us Improve the Research Process
• Rethinking the Question
• Think You Aren’t a Designer? Practical Tips to Give Your Reports More Visual Appeal

7:00PM
Thursday Night Event: Party at the Mixing Room

Conveniently located on the lobby level of our conference hotel, The Mixing Room maintains a spirit rooted in warmth, hospitality and a sense of fun. Join us for interactive games and dancing as a DJ spins the tunes, plus sip classic cocktails reinvented for a modern audience.

Friday, January 20

7:30AM - 4:00PM
Registration Open

7:30AM - 8:30AM
Healthy Connections

8:00AM - 9:00AM
Breakfast / Optional Chapter Meetings

9:00AM - 9:50AM
Roundtable Discussions #1

10:00AM - 11:30AM
Breakout Sessions:
• Delaying Objectivity for Deeper Empathy
• Double Header:
  – Shoestring Global: A Guide to Conquering Global Research with More Flair and Less Dinero
  – Research Blindspots: Understanding the Impact of Culture and Literacy Levels
• Signature Phrases a Good Moderator Should Never Say: Moderating through the Lens of Language

11:30AM - 12:20PM
Roundtable Discussions #2

12:30PM - 1:30PM
Lunch

1:30PM - 2:30PM
Breakout Sessions:
• 2050: A Qual Odyssey
• The Canary in the Political Coalmine
• Listening Between the Lines

2:30PM - 3:00PM
Break

3:00PM - 4:45PM
Plenary Sessions:
• Liquor Stores, Card Board Signs, and Actors: Why Radical Listening Matters
• Now What? Ready, Set…Plan of Action!

4:45PM - 5:00PM
Closing Remarks

7:00PM
Dine-Arounds

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Trying to find the best deal when booking travel can be a daunting task. Whether you are booking a plane, train, hotel or rental car, these tips can help you get the best deal when planning trips for business or pleasure.

Deals on Airfare

1. Set Alerts and Check for Deals
   Set alerts on Google Flights, Kayak, and Hopper for trips you know you’ll be taking but haven’t booked flights for yet, and look for deals on theflightdeal.com.
   - Hopper will alert you if there is a deal.
   - Google Flights will tell you when prices drop.

2. Check Twitter, Facebook & Travelzoo Newsflash Email
   Follow your favorite airlines on social media, follow Travelzoo and Fly.com, and sign up for Travelzoo Newsflash emails. By doing so, you’ll have access to deals that airlines can’t advertise directly.

3. Know When to Travel
   Traveling at the right time of year will always result in the best deals.
   - Google Flights provides information on how flight prices rise and fall week to week so you can plan your travels around low season fares (or manage your expectations if you can’t control when you need to travel).
   - Setting alerts on Hopper will warn you if prices are about to climb or tell you to wait if prices are about to go down.

4. Search for Tickets One at a Time
   Airlines usually sell multiple fare classes at different prices, with a couple of...
of seats in each class. If there's only one seat left in the lowest fare class and you search for four seats, most automated systems will show you the higher fare class for all four tickets together. Instead, try searching one ticket at a time, just in case there are limited seats on sale. This way, you'll rest assured that at least some, if not all, of your tickets were purchased for the lowest possible price.

5. Search for Flights Midweek
Airlines tend to launch their sales on Tuesdays and end them on Thursdays, so don't limit your searches to the weekends. Advertised fare sales generally target the next two or three months of travel and have 14- to 21-day advance purchase requirements.

6. Try to Fly at Least One Leg of Your Trip on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday
Because planes are least full on these days of the week, these flights usually have the lowest fares.

7. Search for Two One-Way Fares, Even on Different Airlines
While some airlines charge extra for a one-way fare, it can pay to compare.

8. Look into Alternate Airports
Fly.com automatically notifies you of a lower fare from a nearby airport — just make sure the difference in parking or transportation to the alternate airport isn't more than the savings.

9. Embrace the Layover
Even though a nonstop is usually preferred, you can sometimes save several hundred dollars by incorporating a layover. Some airlines, like Icelandair, also offer free stopovers — meaning you can extend your stay in the layover city and make it part of your vacation.

10. Try Booking on a Foreign Site
If you're flying internationally, check the foreign counterparts of the websites you normally use to book your travel. For example, if your travel plans include Italy, you may want to use www.kayak.it instead of www.kayak.com. This strategy can be particularly rewarding when booking in countries with an exchange rate significantly lower than that of the U.S.

11. Consider Booking a Package
If you need a hotel in addition to your flight, it may be cheaper to buy a flight-and-hotel package than to book each separately. Many hotels take this opportunity to hide a very aggressive discount within a packaged price versus discounting the hotel alone. This is a great opportunity to find deals at big brands that are hesitant to have a low price next to their name.

12. Plan a Trip by Budget
For those occasions when you are more concerned about staying within a budget than getting to a specific destination, there are sites that will let you pick where you're going based off of the airfares.

• Adioso lets you search for airfares going “somewhere warm” or to “South America,” for example, all within a specific budget.
• Kayak has a map of the world that shows you how much it costs to fly just about anywhere.
• Google's new Destinations on Google toolbar gives you suggestions for where to go within any continent, all based on your budgetary restrictions.

13. Enlist the Help of an Expert
If you don't have the time to do all this bargain hunting yourself, services like FlightFox are there to help. You can ask one of their travel experts to help you plan your trip and they will hunt for deals for you. You only pay for the service if they find a better deal than you were able to find on your own. It can be particularly helpful for multi-leg itineraries, far-flung destinations, and complicated trips.

**Deals on Hotels, Trains & Rental Cars**

1. **Try Using Trivago.com**
   Trivago aggregates prices from various online travel agencies, revealing just how widely rates can vary.

2. **Subscribe to Trip Hound Daily Email Alerts**
   Trip Hound aggregates the best currently available deals for hotels, airfares and rental cars by city.

3. **Consider Airbnb as an Alternative to Chain Hotels**
   With over 1,500,000 listings in 34,000 cities and 191 countries, chances are there's an Airbnb anywhere you want to go and chances are it will be a lot cheaper than a chain hotel.

4. **Buy Early on Amtrak**
   Recently implemented pricing policies mean booking at least a month in advance can bring significant savings and last-minute bookings can mean real pain. For special rates and other offers, visit the Deals section on the website, which features everyday discounts and promotions.

5. **Try Hotwire for Rental Car Deals**
   For rental cars, check out Hotwire.com's “Hot Rate” option, where you aren't told which company you're booking with until after you book.

6. **When Flying Might Not Be the Best Option**
   Flying isn't always the best way to get from Point A to Point B. Rome2Rio.com is particularly helpful for travel within Europe where train connections are plentiful and affordable. It will tell you every possible way to travel between two destinations, including price and time estimates for your cab fare to the airport or train station.

   Next time you're planning a trip, try doing a little extra leg work, and it could pay off big.

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Does this sound familiar to you? A meeting is starting. Someone is telling a long story about his or her weekend. Half the team listens enthusiastically while others are checking their emails or staring out into space. Later, some team members are considered rude because they are continually cutting off others mid-sentence. The meeting ends. Then the “meeting after the meeting” begins. This meeting’s agenda is juicy gossip about what each person really thought about the meeting that just ended. The chatter may continue for months about issues that are never directly addressed or resolved.

Bottom line, these issues that produce gossip take up time, money and energy from a business perspective. Yet, these issues are easily mitigated with two simple steps:

• Step 1: Understand the communication style of each person on your team.
• Step 2: Be conscious to separate the Facts from the Stories as you seek win-win solutions.

In this article, we’ll give you tips and techniques on how to excel within each step to improve team communication and end gossip.

**STEP 1:**
Understand the Communication Style of Each Person on Your Team
Knowing a person’s communication style helps you—and others on your team—to better understand how to best offer and receive communication from that individual.

There are four primary communication styles that one could have: Goal Setting, Lifestyle, Information, or Stability. For each of these communication styles, there are preferences around how an individual best internalizes communication, who is most likely to express themselves in communication, and how others—seeking their alignment and support—should seek to connect with them.

- **Goal-Setting Communicators** need to discuss an issue. These individuals can be identified by their direct and candid communication style. At times, they are abrupt and may have a tendency to interrupt. The best way to connect with a Goal-Setter is to provide options and get to the bottom line quickly.

- **Lifestyle Communicators** need to see the issue. These folks are open and engaging. At times, they may be too transparent and uninhibited. The best way to bond with a Lifestyle personality is to express your views verbally and openly. Be sure to provide broad facts.

- **Information Communicators** need to read about the issue. Information types need specifics and detail. They are often serious and more modest when compared to other communication styles. The best way to connect with an Information Communicator is to use facts and demonstrate transparency.

- **Stability Communicators** need to feel the issue. It is important to show empathy and warmth with Stability types. They may compromise too much and be too diplomatic. Keep conversations with Stability types relaxed, speak softly, and share your feelings.

So, which communication style are you? Take the Communication DNA Test to find out at qrca.org/VIEWS-019. Communication DNA is a 12-question, 3-minute, online forced-choice assessment based on validated science. It is a DNA Behavioral Assessment, not a personality test.

According to Leon Morales, Chief Relationship Officer at DNA Behavior International, Inc., personality assessments categorize the personality presented by a person to the world at a particular time in their life or circumstance. DNA Behavioral tests are different in that they accurately reveal inherent behaviors (including thoughts and feelings) that represent the core behavior of who a person is throughout his or her lifetime. Put another way, DNA behaviors are hard-wired into an individual’s brain based on genetics and a person’s early experiences in the first three years of life.

“Research shows that the neural pathways in the brain become substantially set by the time a person is three years old, and this is when their natural instinctive communication style is set.”
Research shows that the neural pathways in the brain become substantially set by the time a person is three years old, and this is when their natural instinctive communication style is set. Of course, a person’s behavior in particular circumstances may change or be adapted based on experiences, education, values, or situational context. However, such temporary behavioral shifts will be based on situational modification and are not hard-wired and instinctive to that individual.

Why is this research so important? We’ll turn that question back onto you! What if you knew each of your team members’ communication styles? How might that help you in your next conversation? It’s precisely these two questions that have inspired our workshops.

Before each team communication workshop, we assess each team member’s communication style. This provides a broad-stroke understanding of 1) how balanced the team is in its Communication DNA and 2) where communication pitfalls are likely to be found. In the workshop, we probe to diagnose the source of key issues inflicting the team.

Let’s put this all into context with an example. Recently we facilitated a workshop with a company that was heavily weighted with Information Communicators (who prefer reading and writing their communication). We asked in the workshop if there were any communication issues at the office that were causing hurt feelings. Several hands were raised.

The Stability and Goal-Setter Communicators didn’t feel heard or connected to their colleagues. Imagine…Stability Communicators need to feel communication. Goal-Setter Communicators need to discuss communication. Yet, Information Communicators prefer the written word to any verbal or physical communication at all. It’s no surprise, then, that feelings of disconnection were eroding the sense of trust and thus team spirit among the team.

Communication preferences were also causing irritation and disconnection between an employee and her boss, who were, ironically, the same communication style—Information. Typically, an Information Communicator communicates through the written word: email, Slack, IM chat, etc. Yet, this employee’s boss would routinely talk across the office to give instructions about something he wanted her to do. This irritated her, yet she had never expressed this fact to her boss. Her preference was for her boss to email instructions rather than verbally communicate over the cubicles. When we dug a bit deeper, we learned that her boss was making an express effort to communicate verbally to her, thinking it was helpful to the development of their relationship. In fact, it would have better served them both had he been
true to both his and her Information Communication style and their collective preference for the written word.

You can see how knowledge of a person’s communication style literally can empower understanding and create the inroads for empathy on a team. Yet that alone does not provide the insight on how to resolve legacy issues that result in recurring team gossip. For that, Step 2 to improving team communication needs to be engaged.

**STEP 2:**
**Be Conscious to Separate the Facts from the Stories as You Seek Win-Win Solutions**

This step requires that your team shift from being defensive and “right” to being open and curious. We become defensive when our egos feel threatened. We get triggered because our egos need to be “right.” We can also experience fear when there is a threat to our being right. The fear could tie to being wrong, creating a perceived confrontation with another co-worker with a different opinion, or how others might perceive you. Bottom line, when we are in the mental state of needing to be “right,” we are not interested in learning or compromising.

A peek into a team’s Communication DNA offers a map for how to avoid or overcome this “dig in my heels” type of moment. Let’s demonstrate this by way of example.

In another Team Communication Workshop, we asked the team if there were any elephant-in-the-room issues plaguing the team. There were. The top issue was whether to celebrate each employee’s birthday with a cake purchased by the company or not. The owners were wanting the company to pay for a cake, and some did not. The story was the judgment tied to the importance of that cake. Some employees (mainly Stability Communicators who feel communicators) felt that the lack of a cake was a message from the company. No cake said, “I don’t appreciate or value you.” This was far from the truth from an owner perspective. No cake from their perspective meant, “Cost savings here provide better salary opportunities for you there.”

So, who is “right?” Neither party. Perspective is truth, or a version of it. To change your truth, you must shift your perspective. This team was able to do that by separating the Facts from the Story. With this exercise, the team became more open and curious. The team communicated about this issue in a respectful way. Everyone had the opportunity to be heard and listened to. And, most importantly, this conversation stopped the birthday cake gossip in the company.

You can see how a change in context—moving from being defensive and “right” to being open and curious—can allow for new possibilities and outcomes to emerge. When that happens, team energy rises.

Both sides were operating from a closed and defensive posture. They were each interested in being “right.”

To support the team in getting beyond this legacy issue, we helped them understand the concept of Fact vs. Story, per The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership by Jim Dethmer, Diana Chapman, and Kaley Warner Klemp. The fact was that some people wanted the company to pay for a cake, and some did not. The story was the judgment tied to the importance of that cake. Some employees (mainly Stability Communicators who feel communication) felt that the lack of a cake was a message from the company. No cake said, “I don’t appreciate or value you.” This was far from the truth from an owner perspective. No cake from their perspective meant, “Cost savings here provide better salary opportunities for you there.”

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**Your Challenge Going Forward …**

We challenge you to consider the following question: What’s a recurring issue at your company? If you can’t think of one, ask your team. Find out how much time and energy they are spending complaining about this issue (i.e., over email, in person at the water cooler, at happy hour). This issue is indeed impacting team morale, health, and productivity.

Now, imagine if you went through the process just described. It could end the team gossip around that recurring issue and open the door to better team communication overall.

Your first step is to understand each person’s communication style. Have your team take the assessment at qrca.org/VIEWS-019.

An awareness of each other’s communication styles will lead to better listening and understanding within your team. As a result, your team will be better aligned and focused. Employees will relate to each other better and will feel they have been heard. This awareness will also improve the dynamic within the team and thus your clients.

The second step is to address team issues directly and from a place of openness and curiosity (context). Separate the facts from the stories to keep this conversation objective and not emotional. This objectiveness will support the creation of win-win outcomes for everyone. After all, wouldn’t you rather have a single meeting searching for a win-win outcome than deal with elephant-in-the-room issues and meetings after the meetings where nothing ever gets solved? ☹️
A whole body of work exists regarding food and identity. According to the French sociologist and anthropologist Claude Fischler:

“Food is central to our sense of identity. The way any given human group eats helps it assert its diversity, hierarchy and organization, but also, at the same time, both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently. Food is also central to individual identity, in that any given human individual is constructed, biologically, psychologically and socially by the foods he/she chooses to incorporate.”

Based on this, we wondered: How might food work as projective stimuli?

By definition, projective techniques help us shine a light on the individual’s internal perspectives. We use ambiguous stimuli to:

- Evoke emotions
- Uncover beliefs
- Reveal attitudes
- Unmask motivations

So, we hypothesized that food might work as projective stimuli.

Setting the Table (Our Design Approach)

Phase I — Starters: We began with individual interviews between each respondent and the researcher from her country. Initial
This main course was in English.

**Phase III — Dessert:** Researchers reconvened with the participants from their own country to debrief. In addition to getting participants’ summary comments, we used this phase to test food as projective stimuli in a group setting (dessert conversation was in participants’ native language).

**Dining Experience (Our Findings)**

**Starters**

Here, we got our first glimpse at how quickly food helped participants tap into personal values. We were encouraged, but would it work in dyads?

**Over Entrées**

We asked the pairs to introduce themselves by giving each other a video tour of their kitchens. In less than two minutes of video, a picture of each participant started to form. As they were getting to know each other, we learned about them. The table was set.

Next, we introduced participants to a smorgasbord of projective techniques, including:
- Sentence completions
- Word associations
- Picture associations
- Stereotyping

Here is an example of a sentence completion we used on Valentine’s Day:

“When I cook (a)_______, he knows I love him and have been cooking with him in mind, because (b)_______.”

Very quickly these young women texted each other about specific foods, and as the following quotes show, many revealed the heart of the matter for them: the belief that love is putting someone else—and their food preferences—first.

We tested word associations and found that value-laden words like “proud” quickly evoked food associations and often stirred up very rich, emotional memories:

“My grandmother’s chicken salad. Everyone loves it and she served it at my bridal luncheon and made me very proud.” (U.S.)

“Spaetzle because my mother is from Württemberg and it is a traditional food there and I am proud while eating it :)” (Norway)

“Salmon — because a lot of salmon comes from Norway. And I am proud while eating it :)” (Norway)

We also wondered what a person’s food choices might communicate to others, if anything. Here, we asked participants to tell us what they would know, if anything, about a person if they saw certain items on her grocery shopping list. We were pleasantly surprised at how quickly this rather random selection of food images elicited stereotypes about others as well as insights regarding participants’ views of themselves.

Keep in mind, we did not specifically ask participants to share personal infor-
mation. In some cases, it just spilled out of them—all in a single text! For example, participants clearly made judgments about people who had asparagus on their shopping list, seeing them as healthy, sophisticated and/or able to make expensive purchases. Some then went on to reveal a bit about themselves, like this U.S. respondent who said:

“When I see asparagus I think that person is being healthy. I always feel healthy and happy after I eat asparagus so that’s why I think that.” (U.S.)

We saw it again when we used an image of frozen vegetables (Figure 2). Participants made assumptions about the other person, and some very quickly shared something about themselves:

“Someone who is too lazy to slice vegetables by himself or a single person, because I prefer fresh ones and for a family it makes sense to buy fresh.” (Germany)

Potato chips were clearly judged as unhealthy by most, but this image also prompted participants to reveal more about themselves and their own rationalizations, as the following quote shows:

“That this person is a little bit unhealthy, or that it’s the weekend. I feel like crisps are allowed during the weekend, so if I saw someone shopping them on a Monday I’d think they were unhealthy, but if it was a Friday I would think it was the average Norwegian.” (Norway)

Associations with bread differed quite a bit by country. Participants held strong opinions when shown two types of bread. Rationales reflected participants’ food traditions and provided a peek into how culture may form and sustain strong—almost impenetrable—beliefs. For a number of Americans, white bread was “normal.” Brown bread is super healthy, but not necessarily the staple. Conversely, European participants viewed white bread with disdain, judging it as very unhealthy, unless it was being eaten with shrimp and mayonnaise in Norway. This would be normal. Otherwise, for them, bread needed to be brown.

Next, we turned our attention to that staple projective query posed by many: If this brand was an animal, what kind of animal would it be? How, we wondered, might food work in this type of projective query?

Food very quickly served up points of view regarding brand. For example, with Uber, we see it as easy, convenient and practical. It’s tempting. It makes sense, but perhaps it’s just a bit on the edge of being okay. These feelings can be connected to perceptions of food:

“I would have to go with fast food, or something convenient, or delivery since that’s kind of what Uber is. Easy to use, and it comes right to you, just like convenient fast food is dropped on you when you drive through.” (U.S.)

“Like steak—because Uber, like steak, isn’t something completely ‘legal,’ yet you want it, as a guilty pleasure.” (Norway)

“Chocolate. This is new and practical and a temptation to use it like with chocolate.” (Germany)

We were having fun at this point and decided to test food groups! Let’s look at what vegetables served up. We asked, “If your country was a vegetable …” and participants quickly named a vegetable and provided succinct rationales for their choice.

“I said carrots and celery, because carrots and celery get used as a base for a lot of recipes, and they mix in with everything else, and make for a good … meal.” (U.S.)

“Rutabaga, because it is solid and boring and traditional. It had to be a root vegetable.” (Norway)

“Potato. We are easy, versatile and practical…down to earth and practical.” (Germany)

Well, if vegetables would work, what about fruit? Participants in each country quickly characterized top American political candidates in terms of fruits, and again, importantly provided succinct rationales for their choices.

Dessert: A Sweet Ending to Our Meal

Food really works as projective stimuli. It was easy and safe for participants to talk about food.

As Fischler noted, and we concur, food is central to our identity. We use the foods we choose to eat to express who we are. Food is integral to defining groups and, by extension, the members of those groups. We use food to help create our understanding of others. Naturally, food provided a rich and savory projective exercise approach.

No Reservations Required (In Closing)

Food helped our participants to quickly connect with each other and with their inner selves. We recommend using it as an icebreaker. We further recommend employing food to reveal insights about:

• The essence of a brand
• Individual or group aspirations
• Values and attitudes driving purchase or defining target markets

The food projective also works in a mobile environment. We plan to incorporate this method into future client work.
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How to Write Better Screeners: MAKING QUESTIONS CLEAR

By David F. Harris
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- Durham, NC
- david@davidfharris.com
Have you ever had problems with your screeners? Writing a high-quality screener is critical for qualitative research, as each respondent is enormously valuable. The cost of having a few “bad respondents” is high—to the study, our reputation, and our bottom line.

Screeners are actually short questionnaires. To write better screeners, we need to be well-versed in the art and science of questionnaire design. The good news is that writing better screeners is well within our grasp. We just have to study and practice well-established guidelines for writing questionnaires.

The unfortunate news is that the marketing research industry does a poor job of questionnaire design. Few in the industry who write questionnaires have read any books on the topic, have any significant training, or could cite any of the many hundreds of studies on the topic.

In my book, *The Complete Guide to Writing Questionnaires: How to Get Better Information for Better Decisions*, I present a framework of guidelines. Figure 1 shows the framework, adapted slightly for screeners.

Next, Figure 2 sets forth eight guidelines on how to make questions clear. Please beware that knowing the guidelines and applying these guidelines are two different things. I can't count the number of times people tell me, “We already know these guidelines.” Yet when I look at their work, they have dozens of problems. It is like a golf swing. Most golfers would say they know how to swing a golf club. Yet watching our golf swings on film and seeing where the ball goes are different matters! Getting our questions right in screeners is equally challenging, even if we think we know what we are doing.

Consider the following variety of questions from real screeners, disguised to protect the innocent. Please read each question and think about it before reading my comments on what might be wrong with the question.

**Q1:** Are you currently taking any maintenance medications for a chronic condition?

**Commentary:** Some respondents arrived to the interviews and were not on prescription maintenance medications. It turns out the client wanted people on prescription medications. We also found that respondents were unsure what we mean by maintenance, and there are people who do not understand what is meant by chronic. These issues point to the guidelines: Use the vocabulary of respondents (Clear #2), and use precise words and phrases (Clear #3). On top of that, respondents in families often interpret the word “you” as including a child or meaning the entire family. To be clear, we should specify “you yourself” (Clear #4).

**Q2:** When determining which car to purchase, were you at least 50% involved in the research that led to your final selection?

a) Yes, I was the primary decision maker
b) Yes, it was a shared decision
c) No

**Commentary:** The problem with this question is that there is a mismatch between the question stem and the answer choices (Clear #7). The question stem asks about how much of the research you did, yet the answer choices ask about who was the primary decision-maker. No wonder some of the respondents were not who the clients
The problem with this question is that the denominator is ill-defined. Some people might use an eight-hour work day, others a ten-hour work day, others a 24-hour time frame. It is best to state a unit of measurement such as: how many hours, and state a time frame that people can remember. Another approach is to specify the denominator.

**Q5:** In a typical month, about how many patients do you treat for blepharospasm?

**Commentary:** We used this question to recruit ophthalmologists who treat a condition that is characterized by muscle spasms around the eye. One of the treatments is injections of botulinum neurotoxin to disrupt the muscle spasms. So what went wrong? Well, several of the ophthalmologists we interviewed said they treated the condition, but during the interview they told us they do not do the injection. They treat by writing the order, but they have an injection specialist come in and do the injections every other week. Oops, we wanted the injectors! This situation points to the guideline to use precise terms and phrases (Clear #3). We should have asked, “In a typical month, about how many patients do you yourself inject with botulinum neurotoxin for blepharospasm?”

**Q6:** Do you routinely read the labels for packaged food items to know the ingredients?

**Commentary:** Do you see that this question is asking about two different things? As a respondent, I might say to myself, “Well, I routinely read the labels, but not to know the ingredients. I read the labels for calories and fat content.” Again, we need to make sure the question is really only asking one question (Clear #5). Whether respondents read the labels is one thing, and their motivation is another. We also have the problem of differing interpretations of the term “routinely.” I would prefer to ask for a unit of measurement (Clear #1) to ensure we get the right respondents.

Writing effective screeners is more challenging than meets the eye. Referring back to the framework for writing screeners, we have guidelines on how to make questions clear, answerable, easy, and unbiased. We also have guidelines on how to ask respondents to select from a list, rate things on scales, and answer open-ended questions. Why not learn them and apply them?

Finally, an additional and necessary step for improving questions is to conduct proper pretesting (sometimes referred to as cognitive interviewing). Proper pretesting is when we review questions with respondents and ask them to tell us what each question means to them, how they came up with their answer, how sure they are of their answer, what each term or phrase in the question means to them, etc.

Over many years of practicing both qualitative and quantitative research, I have come to appreciate the enormous challenge of asking what seems like a simple question. Study of the art and science of screener and questionnaire design is critical for getting the right respondents into our research. You will be surprised at how the study of questionnaire design improves the art and science of qualitative questioning and probing as well.
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— Cory, Ministry of Culture
HOW RESEARCHERS CAN STIMULATE “THINKING WITH ALL SENSES” IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

How it Started

It all began in 2008. While working on my dissertation, I discovered the work of Lawrence Barsalou, a U.S. psychologist and cognitive scientist, writing on human perception and embodied cognition. Compared to former ideas of how people process, store and retrieve information, Barsalou proposed that human senses, the motor system, and the introspective system (which is responsible for motivation, emotions and cognitive operation), influence human thinking. Thus, our thinking and cognitive processes are fundamentally grounded in our senses, and we store our daily experiences in an unconscious and modality-specific (sound, flavors, pictures, etc.) format in our brain.

Retrieving multi-sensory, unconscious knowledge requires two preconditions: first, a stimulation of senses that were involved in the original experience; and second, the possibility to express this knowledge via verbal and non-verbal metaphors. This is, in a nutshell, the theoretical foundation of Multi-Sensory Sculpting®.
I started talking about Barsalou’s perspective on human information processing with Sylvia, who was also very busy with her PhD at that time. We had numerous long discussions on the ideas of embodied cognition theory (even during jogging sessions) and finally arrived at the question: What does embodied cognition theory mean for consumer and brand research?

We came up with a quite bizarre idea of having a "brand suitcase" filled with abstract objects and materials aiming to elicit embodied brand knowledge. We were scanning academic literature in that area to figure out what was already there. We could find a few projective techniques (e.g., Collage Building, Zaltman Metaphorical Elicitation Technique, Autodriving) that visually stimulate consumers by either asking them to collect their own pictures about what a brand means to them or by providing them with pictures from which to choose. While these techniques focus on the direct stimulation of vision via visual material only, other sensory feedback is elicited only via verbal questioning.

We recognized that people have problems expressing multi-sensory thoughts verbally and that there was room for something new. We started experimenting and were enthusiastic about filling our suitcase. After several trial and error sessions, which were sometimes quite frustrating, we learned that our suitcase needed to contain abstract objects and materials that support intuitive, unconscious processes during data collection.

"Thinking with all senses" was our approach. We started with an intense brainstorming process in which we first thought about the different characteristics each single-sensory modality can have. For example, touch can relate to hard, soft, tender, cold, sharp and smooth perceptions; taste can include perceptions of spiciness, sweetness, saltiness or sourness. Then we reflected about specific abstract materials and objects that satisfy these single sensory characteristics. To stimulate and elicit tactile experiences, our Multi-Sensory Sculpting toolkit includes cotton, wax, fur, plasticine, sand, powder, silk, stones, metal, and pieces of glass, amongst other materials. We repeated this step for each single-sensory modality until we ended up with a comprehensive collection of very different materials aiming to stimulate visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, proprioceptive and emotional brand experiences and aiming to support consumers in metaphorically expressing embodied brand knowledge (see Table 1 MSS toolkit).

We believe the main advantages of using a pre-defined toolkit are to a) ensure that all participants have the same abstract selection of materials, b) ensure that the toolkit’s materials aim to stimulate various senses directly (not only vision as visual projective techniques do), and c) stimulate unconscious cognitive processes (with a spontaneous method such as this, respondents are forced to avoid the longer-term “rational thought and choice process” of other methods). For instance, in this latter case, other projective techniques (e.g., ZMET or Autodriving) require respondents to search for visual materials some days before the actual interview, which can lead to increased rational thinking.
We use our toolkit and the mix of single materials for all of our projects. This means we do not adapt our toolkit or material for single projects or a brand’s specific positioning.

**How the Typical Multi-Sensory Sculpting® Works**

To date, we have conducted about 20 Multi-Sensory Sculpting® sessions for brands from different industries and stakeholder groups (e.g., consumers, employees, managers), collecting data either on an individual or group level (depending on the purpose of the study and resources available).

**The Steps:**
1. The Multi-Sensory Sculpting® process starts by asking respondents to freely explore the toolkit materials with all senses and thus familiarize themselves with the materials.

2. In the second step, participants get a simple task description: “Please build a sculpture that represents what the brand means to you by using the materials available in this room.” Researchers do not provide further information or instructions. Participants have as much time as they need to build their sculpture. The resulting brand sculptures consist of multi-sensory materials that are non-verbal, metaphorical expressions of multi-sensory brand knowledge and experiences.

3. The last step of the data-gathering process is an unstructured one-on-one interview. The brand sculpture (non-verbal metaphor) serves as stimulus for projective interviewing. Non-directive grand-tour questions encourage respondents to verbally describe their sculpture, the meanings of different materials, and the overall composition of materials. Participants are encouraged to answer each question in an exploratory and unstructured manner to preserve the open-ended nature of the interview.

4. Interviews are audio-recorded and literally transcribed. Data analysis focuses on identifying verbal and non-verbal metaphors and related meanings. At least two researchers separately analyze the interview transcripts and the corresponding brand sculpture (picture) and then meet to discuss their findings to create more robust findings and implications. Findings include core themes, meanings, and metaphors as well as connections between core themes and can, for example, be visualized in a so-called brand concept map.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senses stimulated</th>
<th>Examples of object characteristics</th>
<th>Examples of objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>touch</strong></td>
<td>soft, tender</td>
<td>cotton, wax, fur, plasticine, sand, powder, silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>stone, metal, glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coarse</td>
<td>sandpaper, stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taste</strong></td>
<td>spicy</td>
<td>wasabi nuts, chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sweet</td>
<td>sugar, chocolate, jelly beans, different sweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hot/cold</td>
<td>different drinks and food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fruity scent</td>
<td>fruit aromas (e.g., strawberry, vanilla), fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>smell</strong></td>
<td>nature scent</td>
<td>natural aromas (e.g., forest, flowers, ocean) and materials (e.g., wood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aromatic spicy scent</td>
<td>spices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>auditory</strong></td>
<td>music</td>
<td>iPods with different music genres (e.g., rock, pop, classical music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>natural (sounds)</td>
<td>iPods with different nature sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>human (sounds)</strong></td>
<td>colorful</td>
<td>iPods with different human sounds (e.g., yawning, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vision</strong></td>
<td>bright/glaring</td>
<td>different materials with different colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>glimmering</td>
<td>crystal, glass, fire, materials with bright colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>introspection</strong></td>
<td>frightening</td>
<td>different sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>emotion</strong></td>
<td>disgusting</td>
<td>slime, different food or spices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>funny</td>
<td>different toys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Highlights from a Touch-Point Design Project

For a major sports brand, participants used the Multi-Sensory Sculpting® procedure to create a sculpture of their ideal store for the brand. Findings covered several (even contradictory) key meanings that participants shared: they associated the brand with “dynamic stability” and “compatible contrast.” In effect, respondents described the brand as having very strong historic and traditional roots, as advancing via innovation and new product introduction, and as being able to cover a wide range of diverse product categories within one brand position statement.

In expressing “dynamic stability,” participants used a combination of very grounded (e.g., stones, wood, bark, clay, dark or intense colors) and very light and progressive (e.g., feathers, wool, paper, light and sparkling colors) materials. Some participants incorporated the logo of the company within their sculptures, which provides structure and coherence for them. Additionally, the form of the logo supports the perceived simplicity for many participants and is an important aesthetic design element in the sculpture. As one participant explains, “For me it was crucial that my sculpture has three parts. There are three different and dynamic parts that become blurred and build a whole. It should simulate diversity, coupled with movement and entirety.”

Leveraging findings into implications: In enacting the brand meaning “dynamic stability,” interior designers could work with dynamic and stable elements. Expressive and bold materials, design elements, contours, and colors can express “dynamics” and stand in sharp but compatible contrast to materials that should symbolize “stability.”

Table 2: A Comparison Between Uni-Sensory and Multi-Sensory Methods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Picture Elicitation as Uni-Sensory Method</th>
<th>Multi-Sensory Sculpting® as Multi-Sensory Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Eliciting visual and metaphorical knowledge</td>
<td>• Eliciting multi-sensory, emotional and metaphorical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uncovering unconscious hidden thoughts</td>
<td>• Uncovering unconscious hidden thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overcoming communication barriers and social desirable answers</td>
<td>• Overcoming communication barriers and social desirable answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected fields of application</td>
<td>• Understanding consumer visual brand experiences and related knowledge</td>
<td>• Understanding consumer multi-sensory brand experiences and related knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding the meaning behind abstract concepts (e.g., love, fear, happiness)</td>
<td>• Brand touch-point design (e.g., ideal store design)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Brand identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding the meaning behind abstract concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizational change projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senses stimulated directly</td>
<td>• Only vision, neglecting—or only verbally stimulating—other senses</td>
<td>• Vision, taste, hearing, smell, touch, emotional experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of resources needed</td>
<td>• Medium</td>
<td>• High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pictures, visual material, trained researchers, time!</td>
<td>• Multi-sensory material, trained researchers, time!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of intuition and play character</td>
<td>• Low to medium</td>
<td>• High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multi-Sensory Sculpting® and its Broad Application Area

We have used Multi-Sensory Sculpting® for different applications in the field of consumer research and strategic branding. The method’s primary aim is understanding the multi-sensory and unconscious nature of consumer (brand) knowledge. We used the method to understand the multi-sensory meaning (e.g., associations, values, key themes, emotions) behind brands, and to learn more about the hidden thoughts and ideas behind abstract concepts such as “What does mental health mean in tourist organizations?” and “How do consumers experience trust in the context of banking?” We have also used Multi-Sensory Sculpting® in strategic branding projects in which members of the project team had to build a sculpture of the future of the company. Finally, we have used Multi-Sensory Sculpting® for brand touch-point design projects.

Reflecting on the development process of Multi-Sensory Sculpting®, the scientific publication and all the work with Sylvia, I can say it was definitely worth the effort. The greatest light-bulb moment I had was when I tested the method myself as part of an introspective experience; I went to places I wasn’t aware that I could go on my own.

I highly recommend that all qualitative researchers interested in going beyond verbal exercises create their own toolkit and experience what it really is to see respondents thinking with all senses.
Pokémon Go Is a Game-Changer, and Why We’ve #Gottacatchemall

In the first two weeks after being publicly released in the U.S., Pokémon Go topped Twitter’s daily users, and people spent more time playing the game than browsing Facebook. Hitting the world by storm, Pokémon Go sets a new standard for gaming and social connectivity for players of all ages and skill levels. It is the fun of geocaching, without the stress of having to give anything away.

Pokémon Go is a spin-off app game based on the hit Pokémon television series—following the former popularity of the deck-building card game. The premise is simple: players battle the creatures (“pocket monsters”) by throwing special Pokéballs to capture them in the process of trying to become the greatest Pokémon trainer in the world.

Let’s talk about what makes this game particularly noteworthy.

The renewed novelty and appeal of augmented reality.

Many of us have no doubt scanned our faces to explore Snapchat’s filters, and theme parks and museums have been using augmented reality (AR) apps like Aurasma to jazz up special events and exhibits.

Yet, AR technology and holograms have been repeatedly diminished to the allure of virtual reality. The “wow” factor of virtual reality largely stems from the more immersive experiences (“you feel like you’re there”) provided by elaborate, and often expensive, wearable headsets like Oculus Rift, Microsoft HoloLens, Samsung Gear or their more affordable counterpart, Google Cardboard.

In contrast to the bulk and high cost of VR wearables, augmented reality experiences like Pokémon Go are now taking place on pocket-sized devices that the majority of us already own and carry. With AR like Aurasma or Pokémon Go, everything is viewed on the phone’s screen. With Aurasma, for example, familiar attractions or exhibits

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“In the future, shoppers could perhaps even interact or engage with products through the app as they would in reality to get a better feel for the product before they buy something.”

enhance the entertainment value for guests by overlaying an engaging video and audio, or even a lifelike 3D animation, whenever a particular trigger image (e.g., a part of the exhibit) is scanned with the app. For example, Chicago’s Field Museum used it to make Sue the Dinosaur come alive, and Walt Disney World used it to make popular Star Wars and Frozen characters come to life on special backdrops when guests snapped pictures through the app.

Augmented reality brilliantly overlays digital imagery over real-time, real-world imagery. And thanks to the compelling Pokémon Go narrative of capturing digital monsters in our world, this technology has finally arrived in a big way. Who doesn't want to see their home from an attacking Pokémon? Or their co-worker from impending doom in an elevator? These stories are numerous, but for casual players and onlookers-in-the-know, laughs are sure to follow. (Note: Personally, I like to use the slider in the top right corner of the game to toggle AR “off” and “on” depending on my phone’s battery or where I'm playing. And speaking of battery drain, an external battery charger is highly recommended for playing longer sessions of Pokémon Go.)

I’ve heard cries from younger gamers that Pokémon Go doesn’t work on devices without a gyroscope—which is not found on cheaper or basic phones. While Wi-Fi only devices can play Pokémon Go, this is a frustrating option, because you’re only able to play it in Wi-Fi hotspots. This is not ideal for a highly location-based game that requires walking; an LTE data connection is recommended. This immediate need to own a smartphone with an LTE data connection must be music to the ears of major phone carriers.

Bringing video games into the real world.

Pokémon Go is bringing people together in new ways. When first downloaded, the game offers very few instructions. Part of the game is the initial struggle to figure out how to play, let alone form a strategy; it’s even faster when you are working together with someone—and Googling a few tips doesn’t hurt.

PokéStops and “gyms” are always open, with 24/7 destinations mapped at conveniently familiar landmarks such as public parks, libraries, transit stops, historic monuments, churches, restaurants and other local retailers.

Upon physically arriving at any PokéStop, players use the app to spin a photo disc to virtually collect more PokéBalls (a minimum of three balls, essential for capturing more Pokémon), gather more experience points, and find special items, such as eggs.

Players at Level 5 or higher can visit “gyms” to meet and battle fellow players, and/or turn over a gym to one of three teams: Team Mystic (allegedly the largest and most popular), Team Instinct, or Team Valor. Once players start leveling up, the creatures and other items available to them at PokéStops get more special.

The game has fostered a sense of community around popular PokéStops, including those in malls and urban landmarks—the Adler Planetarium in Chicago is one such popular spot. Players can meet each other face-to-face, as the frantic swiping on their glowing screens is a tell-tale indicator of gameplay.

When possible, players are physically walking and traveling with others from their team to help secure and “train” their Pokémon at local gyms that they’ve conquered.

This is our new Pokéconomy.

The ease of entry is high for this free game available in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store—all you really need is a smartphone with a data plan for this new augmented reality experience.

The game has gone global. You may have seen the startling video of a horde of players stampeding through the streets of Taipei to catch a rare Snorlax Pokémon, and, in effect, creating a “snorlax” of traffic.

For those who choose to play, PokéCoins are the in-game currency that will unlock special items within the game, which can be collected without a credit card/real money. Lure modules are helpful for attracting extra Pokémon creatures (sometimes rare ones) that any local players can see and catch for 30 minutes; these spots are indicated on the map with festive pink confetti floating around the PokéStop icon. Nevertheless, for those with the combined financial means and lack of patience, it is also possible to buy PokéCoins, starting as low as $0.99 USD, which will get you 20 PokéBalls or a lure.

Local restaurants have already started serving deals to members of specific Pokémon Go teams (e.g., 10% discount for Team Mystic), partly in jest. This permanent self-selection of a team occurs at Level 5, which is fairly easy to obtain with a week or two of regular gameplay.

The widespread adoption and comfort with augmented reality will inevitably have implications for the way we shop in the future. Lowe’s Innovation Labs’ Holoroom is already merging several visualization technologies via virtual reality and augmented reality to help shoppers to identify home improvement and design solutions for their home.
Instead of imagining how big something is, shoppers can overlay the 3D item into their real-world environment, to make anywhere the new showroom.

In the future, shoppers could perhaps even interact or engage with products through the app as they would in reality to get a better feel for the product before they buy something. In this way, these visualization technologies could be especially helpful for easing customers’ mind-sets to make big-ticket decisions or to try something new.

Notably, tourist destinations like local zoos and museums have been advertising the sheer number of PokéStops per exhibit on property via social media and email communications to encourage players—even those who might not be the usual demographics—to consider making a visit.

There is also an ongoing social movement for generous players to drop extra lure modules near children’s hospitals, for those who cannot walk around to be able to join the fun of capturing these pocket monsters.

In addition, since this game overrides traditional players’ demographics, for market research purposes, there may be an opportunity to offer PokéCoins in exchange for opinions. If the game continues to be as big as it has been, this type of incentivizing may already be happening by the time of publication.

While it’s something that Pokémon Go players probably don’t think about with more than a passing thought, the game requires constant in-game tracking to determine the player’s location, speed, and distance walked. Now, if you’re like me, you don’t have a lot of apps on your phone that track where you go. With Pokémon Go, it’s almost as if we are welcoming this intrusion of privacy in order to play the game. A whole era of Pokémon Go players is growing comfortable with tracking—or is willing to trade tracking for their personal entertainment and reward. In terms of research, this could make it a lot easier for us to gain participants’ acceptance for location-based projects like shopping missions that could benefit from having access to geo-location data.

Do I think this is the best game ever made? No. And who knows how long this craze will last? But in the summer of 2016, Pokémon Go is seamlessly merging the digital world with reality, engaging the hearts and imaginations of both new and experienced gamers the world over, and for that, it is to be applauded.

At time of submitting this article, I am approaching Level 22, and my highest CP Pokémon is the elusive blue dragon, Gyarados, that appears on the game’s loading screen.

“Lowe’s Innovation Labs’ Holoroom is already merging several visualization technologies via virtual reality and augmented reality to help shoppers to identify home improvement and design solutions.”
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Leading the Conversation in Qualitative
With roughly 1.5 million apps available in the major app stores, app developers are facing tough competition. Overwhelmed with choices, users abandon more than half the apps they download. In fact, an average user has 36 apps installed but uses only 26% of these apps daily. Thus, app developers have two challenges: one, to ensure that the app gets installed, and two, to build a habit that makes users keep coming back. We offer a method to help you and your clients pinpoint what is working with your app, what is not and how to solve these problems.

Our approach is called “The Sticky Factor,” and we base it on Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey and Nir Eval’s Hook Model. “The Sticky Factor” is a model that can be used specifically for research with apps or websites to understand what makes the users come back to the app, what the needs and need gaps are, and what the hooks are that can be added to the app to build a habit among the users. The model will help not just in analyzing the data but also in designing the research with the app users.
The Sticky Factor traces the consumer’s decision-making journey of downloading and using the app along the lines of the Hero’s Journey (the softer, or Yin, aspect). Furthermore, it allows us to evaluate how the app is performing on the different phases of the Hook model and diagnose where the problems lie (the Yang, or business side of the equation).

The Hero’s Journey describes a narrative pattern at the heart of all stories/myths. Epics like The Odyssey, Lord of The Rings, Star Wars, and Harry Potter may have different characters and different stories/plots, but they have the same underlying pattern! This pattern largely involves three main stages—the hero’s departure, initiation and return. Each stage could be seen as representing a step in the consumer decision-making process when it comes to app adoption. Let’s examine how.

The “Departure” stage introduces the hero in his or her ordinary world. The ball is set rolling by a conflict that calls the hero to start a journey full of adventure and challenges in the hope of a reward. But the hero has some reservations about the journey, which could be inner doubts or extrinsic concerns. The hero may even refuse the call at first. Imagine becoming aware of a new app, the anticipation of experiencing it, the apprehensions of investing time and resources in it, and the fear of making the wrong choice.

During the Departure, the hero meets the mentor who persuades him to undertake the journey by explaining the merits of doing so. Think of something that convinced you to finally download the app or use the service—a recommendation from a friend, reviews from other users, or an expert opinion.

The next stage of “Initiation” is the crucial part of the story where the hero faces trials and tribulations, makes friends and faces the demons (intrinsic and extrinsic) with their help. Having fought the enemies, having escaped death, the hero finds what he or she came looking for. Receiving that right swipe, beating your friend’s running record, or receiving discount coupons could be the rewards gained by using the app or service.

Now, on the last leg of the journey, the hero has to “Return” home with the treasure. This journey back is not always easy. After facing challenges, the hero finally returns, bringing an elixir or treasure that can be used for the betterment and transformation of the world. The Return phase equates to recommending the app to your friends, feeling confident about yourself and your sexuality or being able to use the app platform to make your voice heard. Through these stages, the Hero’s journey gives us the Yin of our model by helping us get a nuanced and rich understanding of the consumers’ journey of using the app. As it is easily understood by all, it allows us to develop engaging questioning techniques that can be applied for any culture, category or target group.
We ask our participants to describe their early experiences with an app using a specially designed comic book that combines the Hero’s journey with games. Figure 2 shows an example from one project we did involving Pinterest. Each strip of the comic book, with questions and images, corresponded to a particular stage of the Hero/consumer’s decision-making journey. Users were asked to fill in information around the sources of awareness about the app, their concerns before downloading it, the experience of using the app, the benefits, and the impact it had on their life.

The comic book enables us to:
- Engage consumers at a deeper level
- Bypass rationality and go beyond the obvious with images and the storytelling technique
- Conduct research remotely
- Use it as an anchor point for more probing
- Present the findings with interesting show-and-tell material

While the Hero’s Journey provides a means to collect data, the Hook model brings the Yang to The Sticky Factor. The Hook model focuses on how to design habit-forming products that work on a sub-conscious level. According to the Hook model, any behavior starts with a Trigger that could either be external, internal or both.

Generally, habit-forming products start with an external trigger. This trigger has the information that tells the consumer what to do next and is present in the environment in some form, such as an email that asks you to click a button to download an app, a person telling you about the app, reading about an app online or getting an invite from a friend. The trigger is really the first step and pushes a consumer to download an app or to buy a product or service.

An internal trigger doesn’t need prompting from the outside and is stronger than the external ones. Imagine a person who feels bored or lonely and immediately opens Facebook to occupy and distract themselves. This negative emotion driving the person to use Facebook is an internal trigger. On the other hand, when someone opens Pinterest to upload a DIY trick from a desire to share it with the world, he or she is being driven by a positive emotion.

The aim of any company is to convert external triggers to internal triggers, so that the user doesn’t need prompting from the outside. As users go through consecutive cycles of the Hook model, and form a habit, more internal triggers cue them.

We found in our study that some of our users came across Pinterest in Google search results while searching for an app. While a trigger cues a user about the product or the service, it is only when the user actually takes an action that a habit can be formed. Nir Eyal talks about how the user needs to be motivated to take the action and also must know how to perform the action. Taking action needs to be easy. With our Pinterest study, users mentioned that the app was easy to download and use. They found it intuitive—entering their email ID automatically saved their pins/content from the web platform, ensuring they didn’t lose any data. The platform’s usability saved time/effort and increased the ability of the user to perform the action—leading to higher chances of moving to the next stage.

When you reward consumers by solving their problems or fulfilling their needs, the reward reinforces the action taken. Drawing from the principles of Skinner’s Operant Conditioning, the Hook model explains how a variable reward ensures that the user is left want-
As per the Hook Model, before a user can form an intrinsic mental association with the app, he or she needs to invest in the product or service. Users invested in the Pinterest app by sharing and uploading content or by creating personalized boards on the basis of their interest. It is these small investments in the product or service that increase the anticipation of rewards and increase the sense of commitment to the app or service. This leads to higher chances of passing through the Hook cycle, thereby making the trigger more intrinsic. Now, every time they feel bored or have an urge to explore, they log on to the app.

Our analysis using the Hook model enabled us to understand the “sticky factor” of Pinterest and how the app can further leverage its strength to make sure that the users stay hooked to it.

In the case of apps that are not doing well, overlaying the stages of the Hero’s journey onto the Hook Model can help discover the “non-sticky” element—the exact phase of the Hook model where the app might be falling short. Is it a lack of a powerful external trigger, is the action too complex to take or does the app fail to make you invest in it? This provides clear direction for fixing the app.

Key takeaways for Researchers—Using the Model Can Help:
- Develop universally applicable techniques
- Figure out the stage of the Hook model where consumers fall off the wagon for a particular app or other services
- Offer actionable solutions based on consumer insights, e.g. the type of reward that needs to be offered for an app or a service.

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Listen in as QRCA VIEWS Podcast Editor Mike Carlon interviews Marc Engel and Pascal Patenaude on applying the art of improv in qualitative marketing research.

Marc has been in two improv/sketch comedy troupes in L.A. with a name you might recognize: Kristin Wiig. He is also a standup comic. Pascal studied improv as part of his training at the National Theatre School of Canada. Listen as they discuss the practical applications of improv in the qualitative process, including role-playing in workshops, reliving experiences with a product or brand, and ideation.

You will walk away with the knowledge that at the heart of improv is the willingness to embrace things that many of us find discomforting, including making mistakes, taking risks, and opening oneself up to vulnerability. Kind of sounds like what we do as moderators! Also, consider that great qualitative researchers are those who are full of wonder, have a passion for following their noses, and generally enjoy pursuing some kind of truth. These same characteristics are also true of successful improvisers. As such, the idea of a marriage between improv and qualitative marketing research may not sound so strange after all.
The market research industry in the United States today currently exceeds $24 billion a year and employs more than 150,000 Americans. A Nation of Numbers provides a fascinating historical telling and perspective on the growth of the market research industry in the U.S., and Paul Scipione is uniquely qualified to write this history.

Dr. Scipione, a retired consumer psychologist, had a 40+ year career in marketing research during which he was involved in many different types of research, including the first ever nationwide survey of the Baby Boom Generation. Scipione also brings the added perspective of having worked on many sides of the market research industry—supplier (GfK), advertising agency (N.W. Ayer) and academic (SUNY and Montclair State University).

In A Nation of Numbers, Scipione provides us with a deep exploration of the early stages of the U.S. market research industry beginning in the early 1900s, and then allows us to see the developments that helped shape the industry into what it has become in the 21st century. This book is a great resource for those across the market research industry, from industry veterans to the students and young professionals coming up through the ranks, all of whom could find great value in Scipione’s account of the world of marketing research.

I first met Dr. Scipione when I was a teenager. He was a client, colleague and friend of my mother, Sarah Schlesinger. She started a recruiting business, initially run from her kitchen table, that was the genesis of what would become Schlesinger Associates. From that first meeting to today, Dr. Scipione has always expressed a great interest in the evolution of marketing research, its historical significance and its contributions to business. He has done a great job of capturing just that in A Nation of Numbers.

One of the great values of Dr. Scipione’s historical account of the research industry is his way of showing us “America’s obsession with numbers,” how it relates to the work we do as research professionals and the contributions we make toward this obsession. He covers topics such as the development of quantitative and qualitative techniques; our goal of understanding media; how we look at data in the past, present and possibly in the future; the impact of the internet on our industry; and an appreciation of all those who have paved the path to what marketing research is today.

I personally enjoyed his commentary on so many of the industry luminaries whom I have admired over the years. The author not only describes his role in our industry but also sprinkles in some great stories related to his contributions. I particularly enjoyed the accounts of what marketing research looked like prior to 1930.

It is a true pleasure to take this journey through Scipione’s lens and get a far greater understanding of an industry that I so love. His account of the marketing research industry from the early 1900s through today will be the basis of learning for researchers to come, as well as creating plenty of smiles for all of us who have lived through many of these developments over the years.
We do it hundreds of times a day—we decide what to wear to work, what goes on the top of our daily task list, whether to pick up sushi or Italian for dinner. Many of these decisions are inconsequential and require little thought. But other decisions are of a different magnitude altogether. Deciding whether to accept a new job offer, buy a new house or how to deal with a major client problem—these types of decisions are complex. And although they can have weighty implications on our work and lives, most of us were never taught how to work through higher-order decisions. If we learn decision-making skills at all, we learn them on the job, through observation or through painful trial and error.

While many of us are muddling through with our legal pad pro and con lists, there is a whole industry of consultants who have carved out niches in shepherding companies through major decision-making. These decision pros have developed systems and tools to help clients improve the quality of their decisions. Now, three authors from one of these boutique consulting groups share their approach to decision-making in Decision Quality: Value Creation from Better Business Decisions. They have an impressive portfolio of credentials for teaching better decision-making, with clients as diverse as world health organizations, Fortune 500 companies, cities and even members of the fashion industry.

The authors say that most people don’t make as many good decisions as they think they do, but that we can learn to make better decisions in both our work and personal lives by using the approach they describe. Decision Quality is logically organized into four parts. In part one, the authors introduce the reader to the decision quality framework. Part two expands on the six elements required for good decision-making: an appropriate frame, creative alternatives, relevant and reliable information, clear values and tradeoffs, sound reasoning and commitment to action. Part three explores biases and traps that undermine decision quality and introduces some basic decision-making processes. Part four offers some extended case studies and discussion of the decision quality journey.

Although the requirements for good decision-making may seem obvious, the authors offer lucid explanations for how to improve the quality of each of these elements. For example, an element I encounter frequently in my own consulting practice is helping clients reach the appropriate frame, which identifies the exact problem the client needs to make a decision about. We must get the proper frame to avoid solving the wrong problem. Unfortunately, the frame is often fuzzied with a lack of clarity about what the client wants to achieve, internal politics, narrow perspectives on the problem—a whole host of issues that can compromise the research.

To help us improve the quality of the frame, the authors identify three components of quality framing—purpose, perspective and scope. To help define the scope of the decision they provide a decision hierarchy, which groups decisions into those that are already made or taken as given, those that must be focused on now and those that can be made later or decided separately. They then put the decision hierarchy to work with an example of a house purchase decision. This model, along with the important questions the authors offer to help reach the appropriate frame, is a useful guide to a common problem. The authors analyze each of the other requirements for good decision-making with equal clarity.

Decision Quality describes the decision-making process, rather than focusing on decision-making tools. It is not, however, an academic text about decision theory. It is very accessible and easy reading. The authors provide both real-world and hypothetical examples to illustrate their points. Useful diagrams help to explain some of the concepts. A handy set of bulleted “Key Points to Remember” rounds out the end of each chapter. Sections on things that can go wrong identify common mistakes and pitfalls so that we can learn to avoid them.

You can breeze through reading this book in an afternoon. But if you are new to more structured systems of decision-making, you may want to take the time to read more slowly, take notes and consider how the ideas described can be applied to your own personal and work-related decisions. Decision Quality offers an excellent introduction to decision-making with a practical framework for to how to organize our thinking and behavior so that we can increase the number of good decisions we make and reduce the number of bad ones.
Can We Talk?” This was a question the late comedienne Joan Rivers frequently asked. It was a well-worn piece of shtick used whenever her monologue—or dialogue—was about to take a more interesting turn.

While reading Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age, this question frequently came to mind, but more from the perspective of asking: are we still physically able—and emotionally willing—to conduct meaningful one-on-one conversations, or has our ongoing reliance and dependence on digital interaction diminished this vital skill?

Sherry Turkle, sociologist and clinical psychologist, has devoted the last 30 years to studying the psychology of people's relationships with technology and digital culture.

The basic premise: while technology has made it easier (and more addictive) to stay connected, technology has also made it easier to self-edit and manage these connections in a manner that impedes spontaneity, creativity, authenticity and empathy.

Through compelling stories and illustrations across a broad spectrum of people, professions, and situations, Turkle shines a light on the darker side of technology-enabled communication. Millennials fear face-to-face meetings or spontaneous phone conversations. Parents bemoan the inability to have meaningful conversations with their children during dinner, despite the fact that they are emailing or texting as well. Managers complain about corporate email cultures that support computer-delivered messages from 50 feet versus a quick one-on-one face-to-face. People realize they are leading lives without self-reflection but are uncomfortable re-connecting with their authentic selves, because doing so requires disconnection from the constant—and often desirable—hum of digital noise.

Throughout the narrative, a very important question continues to surface: are we losing our physical and emotional ability to have meaningful, intimate and empathic personal conversations without the security of digital screens?

Along with issues of physical and emotional availability come the challenges of conversation substance. Turkle illustrates a variety of situations where the presence of smart phones becomes the in-person conversation enabler versus merely the longer distance dialogue facilitator. Don’t know what to talk about? Show us your new app! Feeling the in-person conversation is getting a bit too heavy? Check your phone and hope there’s a text to provide an easy disconnection point.

Yet people are starting to realize how texts, tweets, emails and the like have created multiple conflicts: wanting to be more engaged but feeling less connected. Needing some occasional alone time to process the daily barrage but being fearful of missing out. Craving empathy from others but being wary of too much vulnerability and personal imperfection. These realizations are providing consideration of, and experimentation with, different methods of reintegration into real communication, be it device-free meetings, mini-technological “vacations” or encouraging informal, spontaneous conversations versus scheduled, structured discussions.

So, there is some positive perspective, and hopefully this seed of technological awareness—and wariness—will continue to facilitate a considered return to more personal, empathic, context-rich conversations, where the risk of being more vulnerable and less perfect is better compensated by more meaning and authenticity between real people versus digital screens.

For qualitative researchers, rich conversations are our stock and trade. Clients who commission qualitative research want to hear those rich conversations. Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age provides much food for thought—from making sure your online people not only are who they say they are but also how they feel is a true reflection of them versus their online persona to reinforcing a face-to-face environment where participants are totally comfortable being their complete, spontaneous selves without having to rehearse or pre-plan.

The book is also a great reminder that when we begin a discussion, it is important to consider the notion that our participants, despite the many ways we screen for articulation, may approach conversations from a more digital and less personal perspective, thus offering more challenges and opportunities to create and reinforce an environment of in-the-moment comfort, creativity and candor.

Best of all, Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age is written in a style that is more conversational than clinical, more empathic than dispassionate, and overall very thought-provoking.
Small Data: The Tiny Clues that Uncover Huge Trends

Martin Lindstrom, St. Martin Press, 2016

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The Small Data title caught my attention, and then the Amazon description solidified my interest, in particular the one-sentence overviews of the case studies, including: How a worn down sneaker discovered in the home of an 11-year-old German boy led to LEGO’s incredible turnaround.

The qualitative research industry seems inundated with talk about big data and the death of qualitative research, so I was curious to see if this book would help validate the value and importance of qualitative research. Small Data: The Tiny Clues that Uncover Huge Trends not only illustrates that qualitative research is not dead but also shows how that one piece of insight, that one small observation that qualitative research is generally much better than quantitative research in delivering, can be the linchpin in solving the business issue. However, the real power is in the combination of big data and small data, or, as Lindstrom says, “Big data and small data are partners in a dance, a shared quest for balance.”

Lindstrom uses case studies from a variety of countries and cultures to demonstrate how to use small data to answer subsequent business questions. For example, he writes, “My work with Trollbeads gave me a part of a solution that might strengthen brand loyalty among Jenny Craig dieters. Another missing piece came from work I’d done in Dubai, Oman, Beirut and Bahrain that confirmed my observations about the importance of beads…”

As a researcher who works on global projects, I found interesting his perspectives on different countries’ cultures that were embedded throughout the case studies. One example: “It wasn’t surprising to find that UK residents had the highest ratio of ‘winking’ emojis, a means, perhaps, of compensating for their usual reserve.”

Another idea that struck me was his argument that a stranger to the culture, country or product will have different insights. I hesitate to say better insights, as he didn’t use that exact word, but I think it could be argued. He even talked about how, when working with Pepsi, he distanced himself from the product for months to have a clearer view and to better see the small data needed to solve problems. He explains his rationale by saying, “I can almost guarantee that a local team will miss something. … Our Kulturbrille (“cultural glasses”) allows us to make sense of the culture we inhabit, but the same glasses can blind us to things outsiders pick up immediately.” I found this interesting, as I had always felt strongly that using local moderators was the best approach. But, this had me thinking...are there times when it might be appropriate—even better—to use a moderator from a different country, e.g., have an American moderator moderate in the UK?

In the final pages of the book, Lindstrom takes you through each of the 7 Cs of subtext research: collecting, clues, connecting, causation, correlation, compensation and concept. He provides an overview of each step and ties it back to the case studies that he has shared. Small Data lived up to my expectations, making a strong argument that qualitative research and small data play very important roles. I found Small Data: The Tiny Clues that Uncover Huge Trends to be an entertaining and very interesting read.
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Research in the field of anthropology shows people use food to define themselves as individuals, in the context of their "tribe," and also as they define others. The speakers explored using food as projective stimuli and were rewarded to find out that it worked quite well. The project was also a bit of a cross-cultural exploration. Young women were recruited from the U.S., Norway and Germany, each paired with someone from a country other than her own. Learn more about the intriguing findings and the methods used.

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