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Making the Leap from Findings to Strategy—Thoughts for New Professionals

Sharon Wolf reflects on a changed environment among research buyers and offers young professionals advice for building strategic thinking skills.

Consumer Insights Department, Strategy & Research Department, Strategy and Innovation Group.

Sound familiar? Over the past few years, client companies have been reorganizing and renaming their former research units to reflect the value top management is now assigning to strategy as an outcome of market intelligence and analysis. Another reflection of this trend is that many major corporations have hired chief marketing officers who sit on executive boards and participate in top-level corporate decision making.

The managers in these newly reorganized departments do not want to buy "groups" or "in-depth interviews." When client companies engage qualitative researchers these days, they expect the study’s outcomes to deliver strategy recommendations to help guide decision-making against their company’s or category’s business goals and objectives. Of course, they are also buying sound research design carried out by skilled moderators and insightful analysts. These factors, in turn, contribute to managers’ confidence that the study’s outcomes will generate the requisite marketing strategies.

Strategic thinking is a skill that can be honed. It requires taking a mental leap from describing findings to discovering solutions to marketing problems and opportunities uncovered by qualitative research studies. Client managers are inundated with data, and after commissioning custom qualitative research they are not interested simply in findings as a deliverable. They must know the marketing implications of findings in light of the study's objectives.

Building and refining strategic thinking skills requires a solid grounding in marketing principles as well as deep knowledge of your client's industry, category, and business threats and opportunities. Spending a few minutes using Google to search for specific industry and category trends and developments can yield a wealth of information from a variety of sources ranging from industry and trade magazines to Census Bureau reports. You can add value to proposals and during the project’s start-up phase by interpreting this secondary research data and uncovering emerging trends that are relevant to your clients’ business and marketing issues. Ultimately, knowledge of industry and category trends and developments frames strategy development.

A solid grounding in creative problem-solving techniques taught by organizations such as the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) is also essential for being able to make creative leaps from data to strategy. (See the Industry Calendar on page 79 for a link to information about CPSI’s 50th anniversary annual conference).

QRCA’s Educational Resource Library is a goldmine for finding concrete advice on such topics as holding client debriefing workshops following fieldwork, creating impactful presentations, and strategy. (Go to “Reading Room” at www.qrca.org and select “Educational Resource Center”). Based largely on presentations given at past QRCA conferences and at local and regional chapter meetings, you can purchase audiobooks, presentation handouts, and in some cases, video tapes. While browsing through the Resource Center, I located a conference workshop audiobook, “Concept and Strategy Development from the Client’s Perspective” by Kathryn Alexander. This presentation examines the various stages of concept/strategy development and offers insights from the clients’ point of view. If you want to hone your strategy development skills, Alexander’s guidance is a good starting point.

There is no shortage of books that offer guidance for developing marketing strategies. In fact, a quick Amazon search on the topic, “marketing strategy” yielded 37,627 titles! Taking the time to read two or three classic books on the subject will be well worth the investment over the long run.

Last but not least, you will notice that most articles selected for publication in Views include case studies where the authors explain how research findings were translated into marketing strategy. In this issue, you will find valuable case studies in “Embracing the Hip-Hop Generation” by William Juzang (pages 58-64) and in the International feature by Peter Lovett, “Redefining Utilities in the UK” (pages 50-56). Ideas for strengthening services marketing strategy are typically the outcome of the application of the Cobrey-M undt M odel of Consumer Experience as explained in “The Evolution of Consumer Relationships: A Model for Marketing Research” (pages 22-28). Finally, don’t miss the lead article in this issue of Views, “O Once Upon a Time: Storytelling As a Qualitative Tool” (pages 14-20). Savvy analysts can make creative leaps for generating marketing strategy by using the deep insights that can be gleaned by interpreting the meaning inherent in study participants’ stories.

In short, you don’t need a Harvard MBA to be a strategist. But to survive in today’s competitive business environment, you must be highly skilled as a strategist and confident enough to take the leaps necessary to arrive at strategy. The resources are out there, use them!
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What’s Your USP?

In a quest to define his areas of specialty, Jeff Walkowski shares what he has learned.

Little did I expect that my last column would be the beginning of a mini-odyssey of sorts as I try to grow my qualitative research practice. To those who’ve already completed a similar quest, read along and smile. To those who are currently going through a variation of the trip, know that you are not alone. And to those who have never thought about what I am about to relate, hopefully this will spark some thinking on your part.

In the last issue, I commented that the qualitative research profession has evolved. I suggested that there are probably fewer generalists amongst QRCA members today than when the organization was founded 20 years ago. This makes perfect sense; we all learned in Economics 101 that as industries mature, there is a high probability that sellers will differentiate themselves from each other. When I wrote that column in late September 2003, those were my observations at the time, but I hadn’t really thought about how those observations apply to my own practice.

Then there was the QRCA Conference in October 2003. I attended the Saturday workshop led by Sharon Livingston and Glenn Livingston. The purpose of the workshop was to provide tips on how to more effectively market our services. Sharon and Glenn introduced a concept of the USP—Unique Selling Proposition. I’d heard about USPs umpteen times before. In fact, several of my clients use the term in explaining their new concepts. I, however, had never internalized how I could adapt the concept of a USP to my own business.

Basically, in our field of qualitative research, a USP should help differentiate one QRC from all others. It was rather breathtaking, actually, when I was paired up with a member from Germany and together we solved the riddle of her USP. Although we ran out of time before we could reach the same breakthrough with mine, the groundwork was laid for me to finish it on my own. Still, I left the workshop with the sense that this was a fun, intellectual exercise that was of no particular importance to me.

Then, in mid-January, I received an email from a QRCA member. He was responding to my previous column and agreed with my statement that specialization in our field is probably more prevalent than ever. He explained that his niche is with a particular demographic group, and asked for my candid appraisal of the extent to which his firm’s website conveys this expertise. I agreed to look it over, and frankly, I was amazed at the stunning clarity of his site in communicating his niche. Everywhere I turned, not only was I reminded of it, but I was shown proof of this expertise in the form of professional background, case studies, client lists, downloadable publications, and testimonials. If I were a client looking for a research partner on issues pertaining to this demographic group, the site led me to conclude that this firm must be in my consideration set. That’s when a bell went off in my head, reminding me that the idea of any marketing material is to convince the prospective client that they should at least give you a chance to submit a proposal to them. That left me to question the effectiveness of my marketing materials and my website, in particular.

Finally, at my local QRCA Minnesota Chapter meeting in late January, there were a few new faces, so one of the attendees asked everybody to introduce themselves and talk briefly about what they’d been doing lately. When it was my turn, I told the above story, and by publicly articulating it, I admitted that I have a lot of strategic work to do for my practice. As I listened to the others, it was clearer to me than ever before that whether each of us realizes it or not, we each have our own particular...
What’s Your USP? CONTINUED

niche—be it a research technique, an industry focus, or an affinity to work with a particular demographic group.

The self-realization part of my mini-odyssey is over. It’s now time for me to finalize my USP and then review my marketing plans and all marketing materials and adjust them as necessary to be more consistent with my USP. I realize that any time and money I put into this effort will take time away from pursuing and doing projects. Furthermore, I realize that to thrive in this industry, spending this time and money now is a wise investment in the future of my practice.

I must confess that part of me bristles at this whole USP business. Isn’t it rather confining? The last thing I want to do is back myself into a corner and do only one thing for the rest of my career as a QRC. One of the great things about being a generalist is that it satisfies my personal need for variety in my work life. Why would I want to give that up?

The easy answer is that USPs do not need to be confining. For example, I have expertise in a method that reduces the need for client and moderator travel. But I miss the travel of classic qualitative data collection methods! In hindsight, perhaps I’ve resisted embracing my specialty because subconsciously I believe that doing so would further reduce the amount of travel that I do for work. I’m now realizing that to satisfy my need for travel within a USP that limits project travel, perhaps I should consider focusing on travel for maintaining client relationships and developing new ones. It seems so obvious to me now, but until I understood that a USP does not need to be confining, I have resisted adopting one.

To those who label themselves generalists, I challenge you to reconsider this belief. Try this exercise: Assume that you are not a generalist but, in fact, a specialist. Define your specialty. Still having trouble seeing yourself as a specialist? Compare yourself to a peer who also considers himself or herself to be a generalist. Unless you are clones of each other, you must be different in some ways. Brainstorm about how those differences can be leveraged to your advantage.

To those of you who already espouse the USP principles and have either the natural talent or the discipline to develop marketing programs that leverage your USP, I challenge you to offer advice to inquiring peers about how you went through the process. Discovering one’s USP is not necessarily an easy process; offer solace and advice to those who are struggling to find their USP.

I truly believe that while there will always be room for the true generalists in our field, there will be an ever-increasing demand for specialists. At a Minnesota Chapter meeting last fall, a panel of research buyers suggested that they do not expect any single QRC to handle all of their qualitative work and that they identify each QRC’s expertise and hire them when that area of expertise is needed. This suggests that research buyers are expecting practitioners to self-identify their own USPs; if we don’t do it, our clients may do it for us!

Wish me luck as I pursue the completion of my USP journey. I wish you much fun on yours!
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A man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were telling a story.

—Jean-Paul Sartre
Once upon a time, there was a moderator—a qualitative research consultant—who had been in the business a long time. She was adept at getting information relevant to her clients’ objectives and at managing the process—creating the environment where people could speak their minds; getting the quiet people to talk more and the dominant ones to talk less; getting people to the point by asking: “Can you headline that for me?” “And the main point you are making is...?” “And the thing you are saying about XYZ is...?” “We don’t have time for the whole story, can you just tell me...?”

“Ahh, the whole story. If allowed to tell it, what would the whole story be?” she wondered. “If participants told their stories, what could clients learn?”
Once Upon a Time CONTINUED

A Natural Way of Interacting
Storytelling is a natural way of communicating with others. It is common in our everyday interactions. Think about it: Family members recap their day’s events through stories, new friends and lovers get to know each other by sharing life stories, people tell stories that keep the memory of loved ones alive. Storytelling is current, and it is as old as the hills; it is unique to the individual and universal to all cultures. With stories so much a part of human interaction, perhaps it is something that we, as qualitative researchers, should embrace.

When asking for story, the researcher encourages self-examination, reconstruction of memory, and construction of meaning, all of which yield the depth of response we researchers hunger for.

The Tradition of Narrative
Narrative, the telling of stories, has a long and rich tradition across many disciplines. Religion and philosophy make use of stories to teach about life’s lessons. History is all about the tales of the past. Today, oral histories are created about topics from the WPA to the history of the blues and race relations in the 20th century. Additionally, an Internet search shows that oral histories are moving from the exclusive purview of historians to that of everyday people as families are encouraged to create their own. Education, psychology, and sociology make use of narrative as an essential tool for understanding the human condition as well.

The use of narrative in psychology is particularly germane to qualitative researchers. Story has become increasingly significant as a research tool in psychology as the theory of social construction has gained acceptance. This theory holds that there is no objective truth. Rather, truth is seen as subjective. According to social construction theory, individuals create their own realities, including their sense of self, based on their own unique experiences. One way that researchers can learn how people construct their worlds, according to psychologists, is to ask them to tell their stories, in their own way and with their own language.

Storytelling: What Is It?
Asking people to tell their stories and then really listening to them is the essence of storytelling in qualitative research. It is as simple as that—end of story, right? Well, not quite. There are a few embellishments to be made to this plot.

There are a number of key elements that go into making a story:
- Context, a setting
- Characters
- Plot, or action
- Passing of time

Additionally, there is typically a beginning, an initiating event, actions and reactions, consequences and more actions, conflict and resolution, and, of course, the end.

Why Story in Qualitative Research?
All of these elements add up to making a story what it is—an engaging and complete recounting of an experience. This explains why we should consider story as a tool in qualitative research.
Once Upon a Time CONTINUED

Stories at their best offer us the full monty, the whole enchilada, the big picture. When we hear a good story, we get context, depth of meaning, emotion, and detail. We learn about events and processes over time, who is involved, and what is important. We understand an experience from the individual’s point of view and we hear their words as they tell it. Most importantly, we, and our clients, connect with the storyteller.

**Writing a story, and in the process reconstructing a memory, takes time.**

Allowing participants to tell their tales offers something else to the research process; it allows the participant the opportunity to reconstruct the experience in question. In recounting a narrative, individuals put the pieces together for themselves, and in doing so, make meaning from the experience. This is appropriate because it is consistent with how psychologists think that memory works. Rather than reaching into our memory bank for intact memories, it is believed that we reconstruct our memories, creating our own individual perception of an event. When asking for a story, the researcher encourages self-examination, reconstruction of memory, and construction of meaning, all of which yield the depth of response we researchers hunger for. None of this is likely to happen for a respondent who is merely asked to provide a sound bite response.

**When to Use Storytelling**

Stories are appropriate only when depth and detail are needed. There are many occasions when we do not want the full story.

For example, if the primary focus of a study is to obtain reactions to advertising or concepts, then background information may be solicited only briefly, as warm-up to the main discussion. The richness acquired with storytelling is probably not needed.

There are, however, many occasions when we want more. Think about the work you have done in the past six months. What types of topics might have benefited from some storytelling? When were you looking for the treasures provided by a story?

Anytime you want to hear how consumers live, act, think, or feel in their lives may be a good time for a story. Research objectives that may have added depth and insight because of storytelling include:

- Understanding a specific experience and the impact of that experience on the individual
- Understanding a process that happens over time, e.g., a decision-making process, the sequence of events during a specific time of day, the process of doing a routine chore
- Gaining a big-picture understanding of the consumer (asking for a recounting of an experience in story form may be a great way to open up the conversation)

Writing a story, and in the process reconstructing a memory, takes time.
Once Upon a Time CONTINUED

We constantly construct and reconstruct ourselves to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and we do so with the guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future. Telling oneself about oneself is like making up a story about who and what we are, what’s happened, and why we’re doing what we’re doing.”

- Jerome Bruner

- Understanding a general theme or concept, e.g., organization and disorganization, beauty, parent-child interaction, vacation
- Exploring a comparison, e.g., before and after, then and now, what is real and what I wish, how I do things vs. how my spouse does them
- Exploring a relationship between people, a person and an institution, or a person and a product or brand

Some Tips on Using Stories in Research

There are many ways that research participants could be asked to create a story. The suggestions offered here are not meant to limit your use of storytelling, but to get your creative juices flowing.

Writing a story, and in the process reconstructing a memory, takes time. When

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feasible, the researcher may want to give the story-writing task to participants as a pre-work assignment. Homework may not be the only way to deal with the time issue, however. Participants could be asked to write their stories in the waiting room while eating dinner. Alternatively, they could be asked to create a quick story outline while in the group or interview, and tell their stories spontaneously using the outline as a springboard.

What form should a story take? Here again, there is much opportunity for creative thinking. We could ask participants to:

- Handwrite or type their stories
- Illustrate their stories with drawings, symbols, magazine clippings, or actual photos taken of the people and places involved
- Create their stories in storyboard format
- Audiotape, or as technologies evolve, perhaps videotape their tales
- Co-author a story, perhaps with a child, friend, or partner

Whatever form the story takes, it is often helpful to remind participants of the key elements that make up a story. Ask them to consider who is involved, what led up to the events described, what the setting is, what was said and done, whether there is conflict, any reactions and feelings that they may have had, and so on. Prompting respondents with these elements will encourage them to write a fuller, richer narrative. Additionally, it can be helpful to give them license to play with the creation of their stories. Tell participants that this is an opportunity for them to exercise their creative muscle.

In the context of the group discussion or interview, ask participants to read their stories and show any illustrations. This honors the work that they have put into creating them. More importantly for the purposes of the research, the accounts will be more emotional and more detailed when read than if
Once Upon a Time CONTINUED

respondents simply tell you about the story they have written.
In a group setting, use the stories as a springboard for further discussion. Ask, for example, what themes came up as people told their stories. Tailor specific questions to the objectives of the research, perhaps asking:

- What picture did these stories give of their lives as young mothers?
- What words did they use when describing product X?
- What needs did they have in the situation?
- What elements are in the decision process under consideration?

Analysis
The analysis, of course, will also be determined by the study objectives. Some elements to pull from stories might include:

- The use of a product and the context in which it is used
- The apparent meaning that a product has in people’s lives
- The steps in a process
- A precipitating event
- The quality of a significant interaction, like a doctor-patient interaction, the interaction between a college admissions department and the applicant, or the way in which a job applicant has been treated
- The tone of stories, which paint a picture of the consumers’ lives
- The emotions that are common across stories.

Summing It Up
Storytelling has the potential for helping us as qualitative research consultants to gather data that is richer, fuller, and more in-depth. It provides context and detail, told in respondents’ own ways with their own language, thus revealing their own unique perspectives on meaning and understanding. It takes time, but in this case, time is a good thing since it allows people to better reconstruct memories and assign meaning. So the next time you and your clients are looking for more, consider turning your participants into storytellers. Just sit back and listen as they tell the tales of their lives.
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The Evolution of Consumer Relationships: A Model for Marketing Research

JoNel Mundt, Ph.D., and Robin Cobbey, Ph.D., share their model for assessing and building consumer relationships and explain how to use it.

By Robin Cobbey, Ph.D.
Cobbey & Associates • San Francisco, CA • cobbey@cobbey.com
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This article introduces a model of consumer relationships that applies in both business-to-consumer and business-to-business markets. The model depicts these relationships as developing over time and consisting of a range of behaviors and emotions, and in total, comprising the consumer experience. Below we discuss the development and foundation of the model from a research perspective and show how to use it to measure, analyze, and understand the consumer relationship. With this understanding, marketers can influence the consumer experience and develop the relationship.

Relationship implies a process that consists of multiple transactions. These repeat transactions take place because perceived costs are lower than perceived benefits, from each party’s perspective.
Conceptualizing Relationships
For more than a decade, relationships, as opposed to transactions, have been espoused as one goal—and perhaps the goal—of marketing efforts. But what is a relationship? How can its existence or effectiveness be evaluated? To get answers we need a way to measure relationships and the process by which they develop.

Relationship implies a process that consists of multiple transactions. These repeat transactions take place because perceived costs are lower than perceived benefits, from each party’s perspective. Relationships are often predicated on trust, implicit and explicit rules and standards of behavior and of doing business, and enjoy a level of commitment that is above and beyond mere repeat-purchase behavior.

The concept of externalities—the costs/benefits that are not accounted for in a discrete exchange transaction—are rarely discussed in the context of relationships. It is highly likely that parties will continue to engage in a relationship if the externalities average out over time in terms of the extras—unanticipated costs and unanticipated benefits. For example, our dry cleaner may ruin an article of our clothing. If we have had a satisfactory or even superlative experience with that dry cleaner for years past, however, we will tend to forgive the unexpected cost of a ruined piece of clothing more than we will if we are engaging in a one-time transaction with that service provider.

Finally, most recently, marketers have promoted the concept of the consumer experience as a precursor to most satisfactory relationships. We believe that we are not just providing a product; instead, we are providing the experience of the performance of that product, as well as of the purchase process itself.

Analyzing Relationships
Our research over the past several years shows much about relationships: their existence, value,
characteristics, etc. More should be done to incorporate the consumer experience into relationship discussions, however. Our goal is to create a deeper understanding of how relationships are played out in the lives of consumers. We need a tool to help conceptualize the process of relationship development within the consumer experience and operationalize those concepts as a means to measure and track it. Our model is the result of a number of years studying the consumer experience and the consumer-product relationship.

Our theoretical study of exchange relationships, the consumer experience, and the consumer-product relationship provides an understanding of some constructs of interest, but also suggests a need for further interpretation. The model is thus a combination of generally accepted knowledge plus propositions designed to assist researchers and strategists. Our model includes the following underlying premises:

- A relationship is a combination of emotions and resulting or correlating behaviors.
- The consumer experience is fundamental to a product’s adoption and incorporation into a person’s life.
- The consumer experience is a linear movement of learning, relationship-building, and behavioral change.
- The marketer’s goal is product embeddedness, an emotional and behavioral state in which the product has become fully incorporated into the consumer’s personal world.

Simply, as emotions and behaviors with the product increase via the experience, the consumer’s relationship with the product increases, until the product is firmly embedded into what we call the consumer’s lifespace—their activities, emotions, circumstances, lifestyle, and all those products that support it. Your brand or service or product becomes primary to their lives, and they highly relate their well-being to the utility they receive from you.

In its simplest form, the model shows that Non-Customers become Buyers when they purchase a product based on a favorable or even neutral impression. As consumers experience the product (or service or brand or store, etc.), they build a positive attitude toward it and later may engage in...
repeat purchases. Their continued satisfactory experience, in terms of emotions and behaviors, and their repeat use and purchase moves them from Buyer to User.

The marketer’s goal is product embeddedness, an emotional and behavioral state in which the product has become fully incorporated into the consumer’s personal world. They begin to tell others about the product, build fond memories of the purchase, give the product as a gift, and engage in other more embedded behaviors. In essence, the Buyer becomes a Proponent of the product. At the most embedded state, they create such an attachment to the product that they cannot imagine a life without it. At that point, they flaunt their affiliation through membership in clubs, attendance at events, purchase of branded complementary goods, and other visible actions. They are a Participant of the product experience and the product is a participant in their lives. There is also reciprocity. Emotionally and behaviorally, highly embedded consumers will have conviction and will not accept substitute products or brands.

The model suggests that the consumer experience is critical to relationship-building and suggests that companies can enable that relationship-building by providing opportunities for consumers to participate more and more with the product through relationship marketing programs. These can be frequency programs, newsletters or periodic communications, clubs, complementary branded goods, or other means of expressing loyalty. Among the companies that have highly embedded

A merica’s ethnic communities are rapidly expanding, and as they grow, they’re making substantial impacts on virtually every consumer market, from automobiles to sportswear, real estate to fast food. But who are they? How much purchasing power do they wield, and what does it mean to your business? Most importantly, how do you best make your mark among them?

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customers are Harley-Davidson, Mercedes-Benz, Gibson Guitars, and Airstream. In this list, there are notable similarities:

- High-quality products leading to high-quality consumption experiences
- Strong brand image
- Strong brand support via complementary branded products, clubs, and other vehicles for consumers to act on their brand loyalty
- Strong communication from producer to consumer, in various forms
- Strong word-of-mouth support by existing customers; high brand preference
- Strong consumer ties to the product/brand; correlation with self-identity; a sense of community and membership.

The Consumer Experience model is effective in large organizations and start-ups, big budgets and small. Experience shows any organization can create embeddedness among their consumers through very simple and often inexpensive tactics.

**Measuring Relationships**

This model is valuable to marketing researchers for several reasons:

- **It is generalizable.** The model can be applied to any industry and address any relationship constituency: consumers, customers, employees, suppliers. To do so, the list of behaviors may need reanalyzing and rewording for the particular situation it is being applied to. The underlying premises of increasing behaviors, however, will likely remain the same. Behaviors may increase in frequency and/or in intensity and type.

The model provides a company a visual representation of their end goal: to be a large part of individual consumers’ lives, hearts, and minds. Further, it provides a road map for that journey and helps us to understand our own internal processes as consumers. For example, from the perspective of a consumer, don’t I want to be perceived as important by my service provider or by my favorite retailer? And in that sense, what can that firm do to make me feel valuable and to increase its space in my life? What will keep me from switching? What experience will create such an emotionally positive response that I will think to tell friends (i.e., positive word-of-mouth)? As a businessperson, what can I do to become firmly embedded in the needs and activities of the firms with which I consult? And as market researchers, the model provides us with a visual guide to measure and analyze consumers’ reactions and subsequent actions and emotions towards particular brands, products, services, or experiences.

The model provides the foundation for much of the marketing research related to relationships. Findings from several of our studies on media use provide good examples. The objective of one study was to determine how to improve an Internet marketing piece, an e-flyer, so it would play a bigger role in developing the customer’s relationship with a home improvement store. The model directed us to look at the behaviors and emotions in the relationship with the store and to determine where the e-
flyer fit and how its impact on the relationship could be increased.

A multi-method approach made use of focus groups, usability testing, and surveys with customers of the store. We measured behaviors, emotions, perceptions, and use regarding the store and its advertising. A number of recommendations were evident in our findings. They ranged from improving overall access to the e-flyer and accommodating certain information-seeking behavior to branding and usability issues. These helped to maximize the e-flyer’s utility to the customer, resulting in a deeper relationship.

In another on-going study of media use by age cohorts, we used the model to examine the different ways people approach newspaper reading. Working from the model, we developed an inventory of the uses, gratifications, behaviors, beliefs, emotions, associations, and rationales associated with using a daily newspaper. A series of focus groups with a number of reader groups helped us to confirm and expand our list. In total, this inventory represented the range of ways people think about and react to newspapers. We used these findings to build profiles of readers and reader groups and to understand the different dynamics that lead to readership. We then developed strategies to improve the newspaper reading experience for various reader segments.

This inventory was used in another study involving Gen Xers and Baby Boomers. Our goal was to determine
significant differences in the ways these groups think about and use newspapers. We used Q Methodology, which combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research traditions. It is a method that helps reveal the subjectivity involved in people's opinions, emotions, and behaviors. Requiring relatively small samples, it makes use of factor analysis to reveal patterns of response recognized by clustering together individuals with similar opinions and behaviors.

Our Q analysis resulted in two distinct factors, one composed totally of Gen Xers and one of Baby Boomers. These factors reveal the distinct ways in which each group thinks about, reacts to, and uses newspapers. Clearly newspaper use is more embedded in the Boomers' lifespace. It is a routine behavior providing many utilitarian and emotional benefits. Boomers derive pleasure and identity from being a newspaper reader; they find value in the product and would miss it if they couldn't get it. According to our model, Boomers are Proponents and Participants of newspapers.

For Gen Xers, the opposite is true. They have no loyalty to a publisher or preference for a particular paper. Instead, they read when they have a specific need. Reading is sporadic, often driven by an event or circumstance. They don't have time for newspaper reading and it is not a part of their daily routine. They are Buyers and Users, according to our model. Again, the editorial strategies were developed to meet expectations and improve the experience.

From these examples, we hope that readers will see the benefit of using the model as a framework for marketing studies that focus on the customer relationship as it evolves from the larger arena of the consumer experience. Once you have identified where an individual or group is in the relationship process, you can develop strategies to move them along.

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Automating Analysis: Selecting and Using Qualitative Analysis Software

William Han outlines the benefits of using qualitative analysis software and reviews popular software packages.

By William Han
QualiData Research Inc • San Francisco, CA • william@qualidataresearch.com

If you have not tried using software customized for qualitative analysis, you may not be convinced that it can help with transcript coding and report writing. Findings from qualitative research, after all, require creative and individualized interpretation based on the researcher’s experience, knowledge and intuition. My experience as a user, however, has convinced me that qualitative analysis software can speed up the analysis and reduce some of the more laborious steps in the analytic process without putting a damper on creativity.

With the help of qualitative software, coding is no longer a tedious job; instead, the process can be fun.
This article provides an overview of the features and benefits of qualitative analysis software, tips for using it and a comparison of five popular software packages.

**Fast and Fun**
Not only can you replace your markers, pens, pencils, and pads with a mouse, you can also set up a list of key words and let the software do searching, coding, and retrieval tasks in just a few minutes. With the help of qualitative software, coding is no longer a tedious job; instead, the process can be fun.

After you categorize quotations by topics to build up a quotation library, you can select and insert appropriate quotations into your report or presentation draft by simply cutting and pasting.

**Edit Multimedia**
The software allows you to view various fieldwork materials such as video, audio, and laptop notes, all at once. This unique benefit enables you to look for relationships, synthesize ideas, and generate findings. With the assistance of multimedia editing functions, you can make your report and your presentation more vivid and convincing.

**Facilitate Teamwork**
A single transcript can be split electronically so that more than one person can analyze it at the same time. This speeds up the analysis process, especially for large studies that involve many groups or dozens of in-depth interviews or ethnographic site visits. In addition, this capability enables people working remotely to share work for the same project with colleagues at the office.

**Basic Analysis Software Features**

**Importing Data.** The first thing to do before using qualitative analysis software is to reformat your original data or transcripts into a software-compatible format. Since most analysis software currently requires imports to be formatted in plain text or ASCII text, you may have to reformat your original transcripts from MS Word to ASCII text. This is a simple “Save as” operation.

**Coding/Retrieving.** After importing the data, select key sentences or paragraphs by highlighting them just as you would in the coding process for paper transcripts. These target sentences or paragraphs are then allocated into different topic categories. At this stage, you are building a quotation warehouse where these quotes will be stored by topic. For example, in a beverage consumer study transcript (Figure 1), we used ATLAS software to code those quotes that relate to purchasing location. These steps are similar to those used in all the software packages.

**Exporting Quotes to a Text File.** Most qualitative analysis software codes transcripts in formats specific to their own program, not in Word. Consequently, when you compile your report draft...
you have to export the quotations from the analysis software in an ASCII text file, which is readable by most word processing programs. You can then insert the text file into your report document or save it to insert later. Figure 2 illustrates a text file coded for Purchasing Location in the ATLAS program.

**Advanced Features**

**Auto-Coding.** A question exploring purchasing behavior in the soft drinks category might be framed as “Where do you usually go to buy your soft drinks?” When study participants answer the moderator’s question, they typically use a family of similar verbs or nouns in their responses. For example (see Figure 3), when respondents use the word “go” or “drive” or “drove” they are talking about destinations. Consequently, if you type the word “go”, “drive” or “drove” into a search box in the Auto Coding Dialog window, the software will automatically put all phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs that include the words “go” or “drive” into your code category Purchasing Location, allowing you to code a category in just a few seconds. This enables you to get a quick clustering of keywords from the original transcript. Similarly, you can build up your own keyword sets on any subject and use the same function to automatically generate quotations.

**Multimedia.** The latest versions of analysis software have new functions that allow researchers to incorporate multimedia such as audio and video. Downloading with the aid of a digital tape recorder, for example, we can import the focus group audio file (.wav or .mps format) into products such as NVivo, ATLAS or HyperRESEARCH, in the same way we imported the text.
transcript. During the analysis process, you can play the audio, pause and select useful audio clips, and save them into target code category. Thus, we not only create text quotations, we also have audio quotations on hand for use in the final report or presentation.

What Is the Best Software?
Currently, there are about 20 analysis software programs on the market. I have tested, used, and compared the five most popular programs—NVivo, ATLAS, HyperRESEARCH, MAXqda, and The Ethnograph—and summarized my findings in the chart below. Ratings are based on ease of use and range of features. Prices range from $370 to $745 for a single-user license.

Buying Tips
Do some research! Go to the product manufacturer’s websites and read product descriptions and reviews.

Use a trial version first. Most software publishers offer free downloads. Even though there might be some limitations in a trial version (e.g., limited quotation quantity or multimedia application), most allow the analysis of a single transcript. For novice users, a trial version is enough to begin to get

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familiar with analysis software and its capabilities. Most importantly, everything in this stage is free. **Learn the simple programs first.** For novice users, the priority is simplicity and usability, since software with a shorter learning curve will help you maintain your enthusiasm. The software does not need to have fancy functions such as 3-D modeling or HTML publishing. Instead, go for software with fundamental functions, e.g., quotation coding, text export, and theory building. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>NVivo 2.0</th>
<th>ATLAS.ti 4.2</th>
<th>HyperRESEARCH 2.6</th>
<th>MAXqda</th>
<th>The Ethnograph v5.0</th>
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<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>QSR International</td>
<td>Scientific Software Development</td>
<td>ResearchWare, Inc.</td>
<td>VERBI GmbH Marburg</td>
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| Unique Features | • Strong right-click menu  
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                    • Convenient browsers  
                    • Visualized theory building  
                    • Multimedia import  
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                    • Auto-coding  
                    • Detailed right-click menu  
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                    • XML data import/export  
                    • Multimedia coding | • "Point and Click" interface  
                    • Multimedia import  
                    • Code annotation (Memoing)  
                    • Case card feature  
                    • Expanded auto-coding  
                    • Code mapping  
                    • Hypothesis testing | • Online text drag,drop interface  
                    • Word frequency statistics  
                    • Coding weight score  
                    • Memo manager  
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| Support | • User group  
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         • Email support | • Workshop  
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Research on Research—
Listening to Our Customers

Rick Weitzer and members of the Chicago and St. Louis QRCA chapters stop to listen to our clients’ expectations.

BY RICK WEITZER
The Prell Organization • St. Louis, MO • rweitzer@prellorg.com

Why does legend have it that the shoemaker’s children often go without shoes? Are they saving the leather for their customers? Or are they too busy fixing other people’s shoes to have the time or inclination to repair their own family’s shoes? As researchers, we are often so busy helping other companies listen to their customers that we forget to listen to our own customers.

Members of the St. Louis and Chicago chapters of the QRCA decided to rectify this situation by conducting a pilot qualitative study among research buyers. We conducted one focus group at a suburban St. Louis facility (which was generously donated by Delve) in April 2003. The group consisted of a mix of seven research buyers from agencies and client-side companies.

This research was designed to better understand how the organizations use qualitative research, the value of focus groups, perceptions of moderators, preferences for deliverables, and the future of qualitative research.
This research was designed to better understand how the organizations use qualitative research, the value of focus groups, perceptions of moderators, preferences for deliverables, and the future of qualitative research. Here’s what we learned.

**How Focus Groups Are Used**

Many research buyers are very sophisticated, using focus groups strategically to develop customer-focused initiatives, while others need to sell the benefits of qualitative research internally—especially if the organization is not marketing-driven and/or they have small research budgets.

“Qualitative is emotional and it deals with people. Sophisticated clients understand it’s not what you put into a communication, it’s what the target takes away. They’re going to get it.”

“When you can’t translate the cost of focus groups into an increase in patients, they don’t really understand… It requires some selling on our part.”

It is important to persuade key decision-makers to attend as many sessions as possible to get them excited about the power of qualitative research and to force them to dig deeper to understand the drivers of consumer behavior. Research buyers think that hearing directly from the mouths of your customers is more influential and makes their jobs easier. They agree that reading a report is less impactful compared to actually seeing and hearing participants through the mirror in the observation room.

**The Value of Focus Groups**

It is often difficult for end users to get a concrete sense of how much qualitative research can return on its investment because the insights generated by the study are often later embedded into marketing and communications strategies. Since the work that qualitative research does is—and should be—transparent to most people, it becomes difficult to justify the expense, especially to non-marketing management.

“It’s all a return on investment. If you are dealing with a CFO, they want to see results and they want to make sure their investment gets a high return.”

“I think it is pretty expensive, but I do like it. I defend it, but it is hard to justify sometimes.”

The biggest obstacle to getting the recognition is that the benefits of qualitative research are usually transparent to the casual viewer. This transparency, however, is also the main asset of qualitative research because it simplifies the complex. The solution may be in managing the expectations of what the various stakeholders should expect.

“Focus groups will lead you to simplify the proposition you’ve got on the table. And when you present it sometimes they don’t see how you took a very complex problem and simplified it. That may be the reason why it’s hard to convince certain people of the value of qualitative research.”

Respondents explain that their expectations of focus groups and how they should be used needs to be addressed by educating the end users of research. They suggest that QRCA and its members could help by educating brand and marketing management—the people who will be using the findings to inform their decision making.

**Perceptions of Moderators**

Independent moderators bring interpersonal skills to the table that may be in short supply internally, such as the ability to put people at ease, good listening skills, and the insight that can come only from an outsider. Being on the outside gives moderators special insight and the perspective to push back when the client wants to do too much.

“Sometimes we’re asking for the world and a good moderator will pull you back down and go, ‘this is too much to do.’”

“We like moderators that bring something to the table. Sometimes a moderator has better insight than our agency does.”

On the other hand, some buyers may hesitate to use outside moderators who do not have specific industry knowledge because, as one respondent told us, it takes so much to bring them up to speed. This means that a QRC who already knows a client’s business may have a large advantage over generalists, as well as internal resources.
In addition, QRCs need to be convincing in their ability to be familiar with the particular ways people in specific industries think. Clients tend to reuse QRCs who have solid familiarity with their business.

**Focus Group Deliverables**

Research buyers want reports that are brief, packed with insights and turned around quickly because all too often their clients have moved on to other issues by the time a final report has been issued. In this case, short means a page or two for each area of inquiry.

“They want that instantaneous gratification. Tell us what you learned, not what you went through to get there.”

For better or worse, PowerPoint has become the de facto corporate standard for all types of reporting because of its ubiquity and brevity. This is especially true for managers who have to present the research internally.

“We like PowerPoint. I don’t remember the last time I got a regular big Word report. I don’t want have to turn it around and make it a presentation.”

Timelines are getting compressed because the speed of corporate decision-making has been hastened. Tighter deadlines add pressure to our work but that is what clients are demanding.

Continued on page 41
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“The time of the entire project is compressed more and more. Where it used to be six weeks, now let’s get it done in three weeks. Everything is moving faster.”

Several respondents have used digital video clips to help findings come alive but they have not been completely satisfied with the results.

“We have been working very hard to develop the process of taking our focus group tapes and putting it on digital video—including clips in PowerPoint. That’s what we would like to move to because it’s so much more powerful ... We haven’t been successful at that.”

**Online Qualitative Research**

Online focus groups have become the solution for studies that must be conducted among special populations or geographically dispersed respondents, but this methodology is frightening to some buyers who need and want face-to-face interactions.

“Online groups are a cheap way to do it on a national basis, but you’re not getting the body chemistry or any facial expressions.”

“You are not going to bring those 12 physicians in, it’s just cost-prohibited, you are going to use the Internet technology.”
Conclusions and Implications for QRCs

1. The benefits of qualitative research are often transparent to the casual viewer, making it difficult to show its return on investment. This means that QRCs have to work harder at selling the value-added benefits of their work, namely, insights and marketing strategies that are the outcomes of well-designed qualitative studies.

2. Internal clients often need help selling research to other stakeholders inside their organizations. QRCs should stand ready to provide that help.

3. Research buyers want reports—in PowerPoint—that are brief—”the shorter the better” because that has become the corporate standard. Make sure your PowerPoint presentations are succinct and focus on key findings and recommendations. Presentations should also be visually impactful by taking advantage of digital photos and video clips.

4. Fast turn-around for reports is expected and often required. If your report lags by a couple of weeks, the users of the research may have moved on to other things—and will forget about the outcomes of your hard work.

5. Research buyers are interested in new technologies—such as online groups and digital video—but are still wary about their usefulness. If you’ve had success with online groups, share your experiences with clients and prospects who haven’t tried this approach yet.

Since these findings are based on a single focus group, the findings reported here should be considered preliminary. We encourage other QRCA chapters to extend this study to their local markets. We will be pleased to make our discussion guide and full report available to any chapter, upon request.
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Digital Photography in Qualitative Research, Part III: Transform Mediocre Images into Dazzling Ones

Gina Thorne concludes her series on digital photography with tips on editing your photographs to tell the story you want.

By Gina Thorne
gthorne@NewThinkInc.net

Few things seem to last as long as viewing 500 pictures from someone’s vacation. Why? Because most of the pictures are awful. The landscape scenes are too distant, the group pictures squeeze so many people in that you can’t recognize the faces, and often, an image is so busy and cluttered that the photographer can’t remember why he took it. And that’s only the content! Often the photos are fuzzy, under- or over-exposed, and show people with red eyes.

The same can be true for research reports that use digital images. Researchers with less than stellar photographic skills often foist confusing or poor-quality images on clients in an attempt to appear cutting edge. What usually happens, however, is that the images fail to help tell the researcher’s story, and confuse rather than enlighten.

Digital photography has brought to those with little knowledge of picture-taking and minimal experience with technology, tools that were formerly familiar only to professionals.
Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread
Digital photography has brought to those with little knowledge of picture-taking and minimal experience with technology, tools that were formerly familiar only to professionals. With digital cameras and editing software, many believe that high-tech photography is a snap. With practice, it can be, but the conventions and protocols of photography used by professionals still apply. A strong image communicates clearly whether taken with a conventional or digital camera. Conversely, a weak photograph confuses the viewer, regardless of the fancy technology used to create it. Remember: People take the photos; the camera is only a tool.

Qualitative researchers typically use digital photography to aid in communicating a point or enhancing a presentation of findings. While a researcher does not have to be proficient in photography to do this, it helps to know a few tricks of the trade to avoid miscommunication or worse, client confusion. When putting together the report or presentation, the images must clearly support the findings. This can be tricky if

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the images have too many subjects, lack a focus of interest, or require the viewer to search for the meaning in the images.

By simply using the software that comes with the camera, you can strengthen a less-than-perfect exposure and correct some common errors. Those who are familiar with black-and-white photography and developing images in a darkroom will be on familiar ground with the functions of editing software. The rest of us, however, have to learn as we go.

Getting in Focus

We have generally discussed the capabilities of editing software in the first two parts of the series. Now we focus specifically on strengthening images and correcting three errors commonly made by novice photographers:

- Standing too far away from the subject
- Including too many objects or people in one image
- Having a background that interferes with the center of interest

While these errors may not sound particularly important, if left uncorrected the images may be more of a hindrance to communication than an aid and the researcher may appear somewhat amateurish in the eyes of his or her audience.

I have included several images to illustrate some of my points. These are not photos from my research projects since my agreement with respondents does not include use of their images in any publication other than a report.

Standing too far away. Most new photographers stand much too far away from their subjects. As a result, their photographs appear to lack a center of interest. We see this in ethnographic projects where
the photographer attempts to include an entire room in one photo. This requires the photographer to stand far back to include everything, which results in a loss of the details of the room. It would be more effective to take smaller close-ups of the room and present them sequentially. This would preserve the details that are important in the study.

Distance in a photo only serves to reduce detail. If there is one rule in photography for novices, it is get much, much closer to your subjects. If getting close is not possible, photo editing software will allow you to crop the picture, honing in and removing everything that does not specifically relate to the subject. This makes the subject larger and the image have more of an impact. Cropping can truly turn a mediocre image into a good photograph. Learn to crop your pictures and you will produce targeted images that support your points clearly. (See Photo 2 & Photo 3)

If you find that one or more of your images contain too many people or objects, use your editing software to either crop out the background or crop out the people.

Including too many people or objects in an image. (See Photo 1 on page 44) This is probably the greatest sin committed by novice photographers. You can see it in many home photos as well as researcher reports. The picture taker wants several people in the image along with a full shot of an impressive background. The result is an image that is neither good of the people nor of the background. Photography, digital or otherwise, is about making choices concerning what to depict. You can’t get everything into one photograph.

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Digital Photography in Qualitative Research CONTINUED

Don’t try. Take one photo of the people and another of the background (and remember to get closer to each one).

As a general rule of thumb, a good image virtually fills the entire frame with its subject, whether it’s people, objects, or scenery. Encompassing a variety of subjects weakens the image and weakens the message conveyed by the image by losing focus.

The word focus in photography has several meanings. First, to focus an image means to adjust the settings for sharpness, and secondly, it also means to pick out one aspect of a scene and draw attention only to that aspect. Lack of focus in an image is as serious as lack of focus in a report. An unfocused report or image is not clear, and probably, it is not interesting. Let your images be as clear as your words.

If you find that one or more of your images contain too many people or objects, use your editing software to either crop out the background or crop out the people. Either way, the image will be strengthened, and will focus on a single point.

Having a background that interferes with the center of interest. This is closely akin to cramming too much into an image. The difference, however, is that the center of interest often does not stand out from the background—the eye doesn’t know where to go. With adjustable cameras, we can actually blur the background so that only the center of interest is in focus. With digital point-and-shoot cameras this may be difficult to do, but with software you can blur the background by creating what’s called a watercolor effect.

Strengthening Your Images

Getting good photos usually comes by taking a lot of them without worrying too much about techniques. Afterward, using editing software, it is very easy to correct less-than-perfect images. Assuming the images are in focus and clear (covered in previous two parts of the series), one of the easiest ways to strengthen images is to use the crop tool. This can bring a subject closer, single out what is important, and completely eliminate unnecessary elements of a photo. Another way to strengthen a photo is to blur the background and eliminate interference with the main subject. And finally, if all else fails and the image appears to have no identifiable focus, create one by zooming in on one aspect of an image—a face, a gesture, an object—and cropping out everything else, making that one element the focal point of the image.

These are basic and simple guidelines to make your images more powerful, more interesting, and more supportive of the findings in your report.

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Redefining Utilities in the UK: How a Relatively Simple Study Can Crystallize and Guide Decision-Making

Peter Lovett offers a case study that illustrates how a creative study design led to powerful repositioning strategies for commodity services in the UK's utility industry.

By Peter Lovett
Profile Group • Oxford, UK • Peter@PROFILE-GROUP.com

Earlier this year, Consumer Profile, a mid-sized UK research agency, was invited to conduct research that would help to determine whether there would be demand for a multi-utility offering among current customers of United Utilities, a UK utility company.

Assuming there is demand, the objectives were to identify the customer segments to which such an offering would be of most interest and to understand the types of packages that would appeal to each of the identified segments.

The client's management style opened opportunities for creativity rather than shutting them down.
What made this project particularly satisfying and successful was the extent to which Consumer Profile was able to work in partnership with an enlightened client to modify the approach, develop creative materials, and ultimately come to a conclusion that felt instinctively right to all parties. In addition, the recruitment, which was based on a previously conducted segmentation of the customer base, was absolutely predictive of attitudes and responses to the sector.

The Background
The UK utilities market has been through a vast number of changes in recent years. Until 10-12 years ago, gas, water, electricity, and telephones (not to mention trains and airlines) were all nationalized industries. This was a situation that some idealists believed should have continued. In order to introduce competition to the marketplace and to raise massive funds for the government coffers, the utility companies were denationalized and traded on the stock exchange.

Over the years that followed, numerous companies, both traditional utility companies and a range of non-traditional businesses—including Virgin and Tesco, the UK’s largest supermarket chain—began to compete aggressively for electricity, gas, and telephone business. Therefore, there was the inevitable thinning out of competition through mergers, takeovers, and bankruptcies. Domestic water and wastewater services, however, remained the province of the traditional regional suppliers.

The client, United Utilities, formerly North West Water, is the sole supplier of water and wastewater services to almost three million people in northwest England. This business is regulated to...
ensure that customers are offered good services at fair prices. As its name suggests, the company also has a number of non-regulated activities relating to other utilities. These include owning and managing the electricity supply network for northwest England, and operating invoicing systems and customer service centers for themselves and a number of other utility businesses through its subsidiary, Vertex.

As a provider of essential services to homes in the Northwest, United Utilities believed there was an opportunity to add further value to customers by offering other utility-related products and services. Before embarking on such a potentially expensive venture, however, United Utilities needed to gain a clear understanding of whether such a service would be required and, if so, how it should be presented to a customer base that is increasingly frustrated by the aggressive sales techniques that the utility industry has been using lately.

The Study Design

The study was designed to be fielded in three phases.

**Phase One**—exploratory research—consisted of six extended groups. Each group was comprised of one of four previously validated segments, recruited by means of a small battery of agree/disagree statements. More of these will follow later in the article.

In the couple of weeks between phase one and two, United Utilities and Consumer Profile had several extended meetings during which a number of potential multi-utility packages were defined on the basis of the interpretation of the first six groups.

**Phase Two**—evaluative research—consisted of four, 90-minute groups conducted among each of the identified segments. These groups explored which of the service packages was most promising and the most promising ones were further developed in some detail.

A planned **Phase Three**—simulated test market quantitative evaluation—is currently under consideration.

**So What Did We Learn?**

It quickly became apparent that there is a strong opportunity in the UK to reframe the way in which utilities are presented to customers. Although there has been much activity and switching behavior among customers, there was a consistent perception that the focus has always been on price, and there has been no significant innovation or intimation from suppliers that there could be any other way of looking at the market.

The four attitudinal segments, as shown in Figure 1, from which the qualitative research was recruited were:

1. **Risk Takers**
2. **Swingers**
3. **Cynics**
4. **Traditionalists**

The first stage of the research gave very clear insights into the nature of these segments.

**Risk Takers**—characterized as hermit crabs moving from shell to shell (even tin cans occasionally) without discrimination—displayed low involvement in the category and relied on rational judgments.

“I’ve changed 4 times—if someone offers me a better deal, I say fine and change. There’s no loyalty at all.”

These are the types of people who make research in the financial category a misery—focusing purely on price and refusing to acknowledge other motivations.

Needless to say, groups with Risk Takers tended to be quite dry—with the advantage that other groups, where they were excluded, had much greater involvement and participation.

The clear conclusion about this segment is that they do not form a core customer target, because it is unlikely that loyalty can ever be engendered without maintaining a price strategy that would ultimately prove unprofitable.
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**Swingers**—characterized as carrier pigeons who fly from one destination to another with little personal control—showed high emotion and high involvement. They were confused about the marketing and logistics of the supply of utilities and may well have shifted from the traditional companies, but have yet to find brands or offerings that can engender the trust and security they seek.

“To be honest, I find it all a bit confusing.”

The self-doubt that characterized these respondents resulted in groups in which people exposed their deepest fears and concerns about the utilities category.

It was perhaps not surprising that Swingers were the most open to a multi-utility package that they hoped would simplify and resolve their confusion. The initial stage of research indicated that they could become loyal and valuable customers if some of their concerns could be met.

**Cynics** were an interesting group and fairly close in attitude to the Swingers. Their response to the new competition in the marketplace, however, was marked by suspicion—both of the established companies, who they felt had let them down, and of the new companies, who they felt were opportunistic. The Cynics were illustrated as owls in Figure 1, because they were seemingly knowledgeable about the marketplace and the companies currently operating, but felt severely
let down that deregulation had not led to the hoped-for improvements.

Cynics quickly become enthusiasts if an appropriate and innovative package is offered to them and, therefore, they were identified as a key customer segment for a multi-utility offering.

**Traditionalists**, the friendly dogs in Figure 1, have remained loyal through the upheaval in the category. They are cautious about making changes, believe they should only deal with companies who are specialists, and, most importantly, express some pride at the length of time they have been customers of their utility companies. Traditionalists were, in effect, extremely suspicious of new suppliers and did not appear to form a key target segment.

“You’re talking about things you need to survive—gas, water, electricity. You need to know it isn’t going to let you down.”

The findings from the first round of research indicated that it would be possible to shift perceptions of utilities—given the right offering—from sales-led (snake oil) businesses to customer-focused businesses. The big questions were: (1) what the offerings should be and (2) whether the company would be prepared to make such a journey.
With regard to the first question, the first stage of research had given many indications relating to what would be motivating to the different segments. These included:

- A true multi-utility offering, with integrated billing
- Fixed-price tariffs that would allow customers to plan their expenditures at the beginning of the year
- A single contact number for all problems with any utilities
- Tariffs that took customers' lifestyles into account
- Avoidance of the hard-sell tonality that accompanies other utility companies' approaches

Prior to stage two of the research, United Utilities and Consumer Profile developed a number of possible tariff routes that would have potential. These are confidential at the moment, but there would appear to be at least three approaches that have the potential to revolutionize this marketplace.

In Conclusion
This case study demonstrates that traditional techniques used with a highly cooperative client who is willing to partner with research providers can yield valuable insights. The client gave our team support and encouragement that ensured the project could be conducted with flexibility. This management style opened opportunities for creativity rather than shutting them down. Moreover, the client's positive attitude was apparent all the way up to the executive board level and, therefore, offered the potential for research to influence the fundamental strategy of the company.
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Embracing the Hip-Hop Generation

William Juzang explains why it is important for mainstream marketers to reach out and understand urban youth’s hip-hop culture.

By William Juzang II
MEE Productions Inc. • Philadelphia, PA • wjuzang@meeproductions.com

Rap is something you do; hip-hop is something you live and I live it. It’s like a tribe of people who relate to one another. We bop our heads the same way, to the same beats. We wear a certain kind of clothing and we go to the same kind of places. Hip-hop is music, hip-hop is graffiti, hip-hop is dancing, hip-hop is MC-ing, hip-hop is spoken word. It’s what B-Bop was to Thelonious Monk.

- Erykah Badu, Electronic Urban Report
We couldn’t have said it better ourselves. Hip-hop music, fashion, and attitudes have gone mainstream. Need proof? You can actually take college courses that study hip-hop and you can mail your letters with hip-hop stamps. Even the Oxford English Dictionary added an entry for “bling bling” (meaning flashy jewelry) in June 2003.

Members of Generation Y—also known in the mainstream as the Millennial Generation, Echo Boomers, and Generation N et—were born between 1980 and 1995. At 60 million strong, they are the biggest group since the Baby Boomers and may turn out to be the largest teen population in U.S. history. While most adults are still trying to figure out exactly what it is they stand for, it’s inevitable that young hip-hoppers will, just like the Baby Boomers and Generation Xers before them, make an impact on our society.

Important to the cultural and economic trends of this country, many in this new generation, regardless of race, embrace the hip-hop phenomenon and its continued growth makes it a critical market for many of the most trendy products and services. While the sales potential is enormous, this customer base is not as easy to target as the Baby Boomer or Gen X consumer. Determining the shopping habits of hip-hop customers takes authentic, culturally sensitive research that must begin with the most influential of the hip-hop generation—urban youth.

The Urban Youth Market

Many marketers believe that the urban youth market is not worth a great deal of their attention; however, urban youth are a powerful consumer market. They make a big impact in two ways. Based on their relative size, they disproportionately influence entertainment and fashion consumption patterns in this country. While African Americans make up about 12% of the nation’s total population, they buy 25% of the movie theater tickets sold. In addition, as trendsetters for larger mainstream markets, they strongly influence buying patterns among teens across the spectrum. Look no further than hip-hop music, which was born in America’s toughest inner-cities and continues to be created overwhelmingly by urban African Americans. Yet three out of every four hip-hop CDs sold are purchased by suburban white youth.

Why Do Urban Youth Set the Cultural Trends?

Urban youth have historically proven to be a hard-to-reach population. For a marketing or communications professional without adequate experience and background, it is difficult to communicate with them in a way that resonates with their real thoughts, feelings, and dreams.

As with any potential target audience, it is crucial to get inside the heads of urban youth before you can successfully market to them. That is why the advertising campaign design model for the TV program, 3rd Rock from the Sun (see case on page 62) includes looking at both the traditional internal cultural and external variables that impact young Americans. All factors contributing to today’s realities must be effectively blended in order to create useful and effective advertising campaigns.
Let’s explain the model using hip-hop and its surrounding subculture as an example. African-American culture has traditionally been one of oral communication. Storytelling held an exalted place in African cultures and the griot (or storyteller) has always been given a place of honor and respect. Today’s urban youth have many stories to tell, both within their communities and to the larger society. They are telling those stories through hip-hop music lyrics.

Tips for Marketers Targeting the Urban Youth Market

For many product categories and social issues, urban audiences truly define “cool.” If a marketer’s message hits the mark for this audience, it will greatly increase the chance of broadening their product’s appeal to a much wider audience.

- Use scenarios that feature the experiences of the average youth. For example, marketing campaigns that show characters engaged in activities on college campuses will leave behind a substantial number of youth, for whom post-high-school education is either an unfulfilled dream or seen as a waste of time. However, most young people have attended high school. Even those who have gone to college remember what their high school days were like. By finding the common denominator, which reflects the lives of both the regular guy/working class and the upwardly mobile, a marketer has increased their chances for success.

- Focus on relationships, especially intimate ones. As more young people become disenchanted with society in general, they focus their attention on the people they can count on: their friends, boyfriends/girlfriends, and family.

- Create campaigns by and for youth of color. Today’s youth want to see themselves and their lives reflected in messages intended for them. Include the insider’s perspective provided by youth themselves when devising communication strategies. Use hip-hop music and high-energy production because that appeals to youth. Music remains a universal language for

Even the youngest members of the hip-hop nation are media-wise, sophisticated, and influential trendsetters.

Teens of all cultures, who are innately rebellious, can relate to the angst, frustrations, and values of urban youth culture. Whether they live in the mall-centered suburbs or small towns in rural America, the lives of many teens are touched by similar difficulties and triumphs. These non-urban youth look at the environment that their urban counterparts must survive in and can feel a similar struggle in emotion, if not in their experiences.

Hip-hop culture is the best manifestation of urban youth culture in America. As we have seen, its popularity has resonated with an ever-broadening segment of the population and many of its icons have been appropriated by mainstream society.
communicating with young people, and it serves as a guide to consumer decision-making.

- Create a consistent, positive corporate presence in the community. No matter how many catchy, creative national ads a company runs, their product and company won’t be seen as authentic unless it touches youth in the communities where they live. Grassroots activities and sponsorship of community programs create an ongoing sense of goodwill and buy-in.

Athletic apparel companies Nike and AND 1 have done a solid job of establishing their brands in the heart of urban youth by embracing the culture and frequently contributing money or product to youth athletic programs in urban centers.

These tips are first steps in the right direction. However, it is a mistake to take this group for granted or your efforts will backfire. These young people are already suspicious of mainstream media messages and are savvy enough to see through attempts to co-opt their culture. Without careful research and preparation on your part, a botched campaign could leave you in a worse position than when you started. Authenticity and respect for the culture are keys to success in reaching this audience. Anything less will be rejected out of hand.
Case Study

In 2002, Carsey-Werner Distribution commissioned MEE Productions to create a three-city marketing campaign for their television program, 3rd Rock from the Sun. MEE's campaign objectives were to: 1) introduce 3rd Rock from the Sun to an African-American audience that was unaware of the program despite its many years of success; 2) generate awareness and exposure at critical access points in the urban community; and 3) penetrate new urban markets with 3rd Rock from the Sun marketing messages. Focus groups were used to test and develop each element of the campaign, including the print materials and radio advertisements.

Continued on page 64

Murray Hill Center Isn't One of the Best Focus Group Facilities in America...

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The most important aspect of the campaign was to find a way to make 3rd Rock from the Sun, a predominately mainstream show, resonate with African-American viewers. To achieve that end, MEE developed a campaign that was centered on the slogan “Make My Rock the 3rd Rock,” borrowing the melody from Parliament’s “Make My Funk the P-Funk.” The slogan was used on all print materials and was turned into a song that was the basis for the radio ads.

The campaign consisted of the following amalgamation of traditional and non-traditional promotional activities to enhance interest among African-American viewers in 3rd Rock from the Sun:
- Radio ads on stations that were the most popular with African Americans
- Radio promotions with disc jockeys
- Viewing parties at nightclubs where the target audience would come and enjoy a festive evening of food, raffles, prizes, and an episode of 3rd Rock from the Sun
Mailings of promotional materials to community-based organizations

Street outreach in targeted communities and retail locations.

Evaluation of the campaign showed that 3rd Rock from the Sun received a 50% increase in its Nielsen ratings in the three cities where the campaign took place. To put that into perspective, there was either no change or a decline in the show's Nielsen ratings in the two control cities where no campaign was implemented.

While the flavor and personality of hip-hop culture may evolve, it will continue to seep into mainstream life...

Looking to the Future

The youngest members of Generation Y are just under 10 years old. And while the flavor and personality of hip-hop culture may evolve, it will continue to seep into mainstream life and affect how teens and young adults make their purchasing decisions. The more we do to understand the values, needs and expectations of urban hip-hoppers, the more we can target our messages, products and services to resonate among them and their mainstream cohorts.

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Considered by many to be the antidote to stress, a good spa may be just around the corner. Major cities abound with day spas and retreats that can be enjoyed for a few hours of serenity, offering diverse packages and a la carte treatments to suit specific needs and budgets. For those with more time and a true desire to unwind, “natural” destinations offer a complete escape and spa experience. Both types of spas can be quickly located using websites such as www.spafinder.com or www.citysearch.com.

A Day of Indulgence
Choosing a good day spa is like choosing a good restaurant: It depends on what you are in the mood to experience. Environments inside top-rated spas are invariably serene, but can range in decor from outdoor-woody to urban-modern to Asian-Zen. Treatments and services can be single-focused (i.e., massage only) or wide-ranging (various massage and body treatments, combined with facial, nail, and salon services).
With that in mind, here are some of the best of the best in four of the largest research markets—Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. To enjoy a day (or at least a few hours) of indulgence, book services in advance. Ask about packages and specials, as many spas offer specialties and introduce new treatments on a regular basis. Prices for a 50-minute massage range from $60 to $125.

**BOSTON**

**Bella Sante**  
38 Newbury St., Suite 2, Boston  
Phone: (617) 424-9930  
www.bellasante.com  
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**Giuliano Day Spa**  
338 Newbury St., Boston  
Phone: (617) 262-2220  
www.giulianodayspa.com  
With a goal of one-stop shopping for personal beauty needs, this clean, upscale, and expansive spa offers dozens of packages including both spa and salon services.

**CHICAGO**

**Spa Space**  
161 N. Canal St. (at Randolph St.), Chicago  
Phone: (312) 466-9585  
“Buff and drench” in an exfoliating, moisturizing body wrap, or indulge in the perfect manicure-pedicure at this soothing, downtown spa.

**Tiffani Kim Institute**  
310 W. Superior St., Chicago  
Phone: (312) 943-8777  
www.tiffanikimstitute.com  
Linking beauty and wellness together, Tiffani Kim offers the Four Hands Massage as well as spa packages incorporating highly praised skincare and body treatments.

**Urban Oasis**  
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Phone: (312) 587-3500  
www.urbanoasis.biz  
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**Kinara Spa**  
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www.kinaraspa.com  
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**Spa Mystique**  
2025 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles  
Phone: (310) 556-2256  
www.spamystique.com  
Asian accents cast a luxurious spell over Century City’s full-service day spa, offering top facilities along with the services.

**Aqua Day Spa**  
1422 2nd St., Santa Monica  
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www.aquadayspa.com  
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**NEW YORK CITY**

**Graceful Services**  
1097 2nd Ave., NYC  
Phone: (212) 593-9904  
www.ianlebowitz.com/graceful  
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**Heaven Day Spa at the Manning Institute and Spirit**  
530 W. 27th St. (Chelsea), 47 West St. (Downtown), NYC  
Phone: (212) 785-0440  
The institute offers a relaxed, upbeat one-stop shop for holistic healing with health services, skin treatments, and gourmet natural foods.

**Haven**  
150 Mercer St., (Soho) NYC  
Phone: (212) 343-3515  
As the name suggests, Haven is a peaceful Soho spa with candlelit decor and an inventive menu of services.

**Metamorphosis Day Spa**  
127 E. 56th St., 5th Floor, (Midtown) NYC  
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www.metspa.com  
Intimate, effective, and attentive, this spa specializes in innovative facials and massage. One hour massages cost $85.
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Arizona attracts resort enthusiasts for good reason, and should be in the consideration set for those planning a destination spa vacation. Easy-to-reach Phoenix is the ideal jumping off point for some of the finest destination spas in the country.

In fact, Travel + Leisure magazine's 2003 reader poll revealed that three of the top spas in the world are in Arizona, all within a two-hour drive of Phoenix. Those three, Miraval, Canyon Ranch, and Mii Amo, are listed below with other top Arizona resorts.

Miraval, Life in Balance
Catalina
Phone: (800) 232-3969 or (520) 825-4000
www.miravalresort.com
Partway between Phoenix and Tucson, Miraval may be the top destination spa in the country. Rated highest for ambiance, treatment and value, this resort is like none other. A diverse and exhilarating range of activities, pampering guest services, and innovative cuisine along with an internationally recognized spa, allow guests to experience the ultimate in a resort destination. A daily massage, consultation, or round of golf is included in each vacation package.

Canyon Ranch Health Resort
Tucson
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Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life by Paul Ekman

Hy Mariampolski reviews the latest book by Paul Ekman, America's leading authority on decoding the meaning of facial expressions.

By Hy Mariampolski, Ph.D.
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Qualitative researchers should have no trouble agreeing with Paul Ekman’s central assertion that “Emotion motivates all the important choices we make.” In one way or another, we know that emotions also play a role in numerous mid- to low-level choices—what kind of car to drive, breakfast cereal to eat, and laundry detergent to use. Whether it involves major life choices or the consumer marketplace, behavioral researchers are convinced that we organize our lives to maximize the experience of positive emotions and eliminate the negative ones.

Going far beyond this basic premise, Ekman’s latest work proposes several breakthrough ideas on emotions and how they are expressed (Times Books, 2003). For one, he argues that we have inherent ways of exhibiting emotions to the outside world and that educated observers can do a highly reliable job of interpreting these emotional messages. In this respect, he differs substantially from other theorists of body language such as Edward Hall and Ray Birdwhistle, who emphasize the cultural grounding of both displays and interpretation of outward signals of the inner experience. In contrast, Ekman asserts that facial signals are hard-wired into the structure of our brains and are essentially the same whether our emotions take place in Brooklyn, Berlin, or Borneo. Although the gestures of emotion, such as shaking one’s head to say “no,” are patterned by one’s culture, the facial expression of emotion is physiological and, therefore, consistent across cultures.

Practical Advantages
Ekman also insists that understanding subtle emotional signals can have unlimited practical advantages. It can assist us to better interpret what others are really saying and can help us become better communicators as
well. While he does not explicitly demonstrate advantages to the practice of qualitative research, Emotions Revealed and Ekman’s other studies on the communication of truth and lies have become the gospel for law enforcement and diplomatic negotiators. Our profession would do well to study his ideas and apply them in our work.

Many readers will find Ekman’s controversial stands versus other intellectual paradigms highly compelling. Freudians, for example, may be tempted to argue that human drives have some priority over emotions. Ekman handily dismisses this idea by pointing out that emotion trumps drives in extreme situations. People override any survival instincts and not eat if they believe that the only food available to them is disgusting or unfit for consumption.

Qualitative researchers will find Ekman’s ideas useful and practical—capable of being applied for interview and observational situations. Best of all, he insists and proves that reading body language, particularly the facial expression of emotion, is something that can be learned and mastered. The main reason for carefully studying the book is the enormous list of guidelines for seeing what people are feeling while they are carrying on with life.

Ekman asserts that facial signals are hard-wired into the structure of our brains and are essentially the same whether our emotions take place in Brooklyn, Berlin, or Borneo. Micro-Expressions

Basic to the author’s approach is understanding that subtle facial expressions of emotion are more common than demonstrative gestures. Emotional signals usually register as micro-expressions lasting one-fifth of a second or less. In many situations, emotions are communicated only partially because there are

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pressures to conform outwardly or otherwise to repress true emotions. There are unconscious culturally based display rules that require us to suppress, mask, or exaggerate what we are really feeling. We all know how difficult orderly social life would be if people displayed their real feelings in all situations.

Language has only a limited capacity for communicating underlying emotions. Words are merely representations of emotion—not an emotional expression in themselves. An emotion is a process in Ekman’s view, an “automatic appraisal... in which we sense that something important to our welfare is occurring.” Consequently, Emotions Revealed posits that words cannot be fully trusted as communicators of emotion. We need to look at faces carefully as well as listen to what people are saying.

Ordinarily, a face is capable of making more than 10,000 expressions. Ekman and his students, after conducting extensive studies of anatomical musculature, have developed the Facial Action Coding System (FACS), which facilitates an empirical analysis of physiological expressions and their underlying emotional correlates. Facial micro-expressions are an important source of leakage particularly when untruths are being betrayed. Ekman suggests that lies can be detected when an expression is “very slightly asymmetrical” or when it “lacks smoothness in the way it flows on and off the face.”

Interestingly, Ekman demonstrates how tightly emotion and physiology are connected. He presents evidence that people can be induced to experience distinct feelings after they assume the facial musculature associated with a particular emotion. His argument proves that looking happy can eventually make you happy; an angry expression will eventually leave you feeling grumpy.

The expression of emotion has great consequential variability. We are not in the grip of emotions all the time; they come and go as our daily experience proceeds. Ekman recognizes that some people are more emotional than others, or more prone to displaying inappropriate emotions by sending the wrong signals, expressing things out of proportion to the underlying event or by feeling the wrong emotion altogether. Thus, some people may shut down into neutrality when they feel angry, for example, or they may experience fear when it is not justified.

Reacting Inappropriately
Proceeding in a strongly humanistic direction, Ekman proposes that the world could be a better place if we all took a better measure of how we react to other people and situations and

Continued on page 74
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Emotions Revealed CONTINUED

better modulate our responses. Understanding what stimulates one's own emotions, he argues, encourages proper reactions or keeps them from going off inappropriately.

Emotional triggers become hard-wired into the structure of our brains, Ekman insists, through “cell assemblies” that become activated when an emotion is provoked.

Interactions normally trigger recollections or associations with other experiences; consequently, when a client is critical of an assertion in one of our reports, for example, our reaction may actually spring forth in relation to a cruel and arbitrary third-grade teacher or a hypercritical father rather than the person in front of us. Thus, if we recoil in fear or start shouting at our antagonist, we may actually be enacting an imprinted scenario that has no relevance to the actual situation. Personal effectiveness grows, this book reassures us, when we recognize and control the emotions we are experiencing and express only those that lead to desirable ends.

Emotional triggers become hard-wired into the structure of our brains, Ekman insists, through “cell assemblies” that become activated when an emotion is provoked. Our nervous system does not make it easy to change things. The earlier that an emotional trigger is learned, the harder it is to weaken. Furthermore, we all seem to have emotional styles that are registered as components of our personalities. Some of us end up as simply more sensitive, easy to bruise, or hot-headed.

Thus far the author has given us a pretty good explanation of why people react the way they do. But, where can we take this? How can we
actually weaken emotional triggers? How can we leverage all this and become better listeners and observers? How can we improve our communication skills? Ekman addresses these issues by enlarging our understanding of how emotions are formed and displayed.

**Reading Emotions**

To begin with, *Emotions Revealed* carefully distinguishes between emotions and moods—which he describes as longer in duration and which set up a predisposition to certain emotions. Moods are brought about by some dense emotional experience—conscious or unconscious—that keeps us at the ready for more. Most of the time, moods do not seem to help us achieve goals; they just seem to confound our own emotions and other people’s reactions to us.

Ekman also warns that emotions cannot be turned off altogether because people will perceive you as either detached or indifferent. In fact, intense control in and of itself may represent an emotional cue. So, how does someone maintain the correct balance of emotional expression as opposed to containment in their own reactions? How can the observer distinguish between these various categories of emotional representation?

Like Hall and Birdwhistle, Ekman recognizes that reading body language involves deciphering a wide range of concurrent signals. Our facial musculature changes whenever an emotion begins and, even though our evolutionary heritage has granted us a “refractory period” for reflection and moderating a response, signals get sent. Someone calling to cancel an appointment, for example, may momentarily provoke an angry expression in the listener but one’s impulse to shout back in disapproval is calmed by an explanation and reassurance of a future meeting. One’s reaction is a response to complex feelings and associated memories. It is difficult to interpret the source of an expressed emotion from the expression itself.

There are also vocal emotional signals. Someone’s tone of voice may betray unease; their pitch may go up an octave or two to signal surprise or delight. Beyond that, there are other impulses to physical action that correlate with emotions; for example, freezing in your tracks in reaction to fear.

Even though these behaviors may be easier to suppress than changes in facial musculature, they also appear to be cultural universals that are subject to quick interpretation.

Ekman invokes the Buddhist concept of mindfulness to suggest ways to control and appropriately channel our own feelings, and maintain an empathetic understanding of others.

Emotions also stimulate changes in various functions of the autonomic nervous system. Some of these are visible to the observer, such as sweating, blushing, and changes in the pace of respiration; others are invisible such as cardiac activity and skin temperature. Anger, for example, appears to be associated with increased blood flow to the hands—an evolutionary adaptation that at some point prepared us to strike back at the source of provocation. Emotional control and channeling occur with the onset of an emotion; these patterns of regulation appear to be learned and cultural.

In some places, for example, funerals may be marked by a certain stoicism and reserve while in others shrieks, wailing, and self-flagellation will greet the very same stimulus. Ekman posits the existence of an “affect program”—an inherited central mechanism that directs emotional behavior. There are numerous potential programs for each emotion. These are open and changeable as a result of cultural direction and experience. Affect programs run until they are contained or the source of the emotion shifts. Social learning...
allows us to culturally change or adapt this programming. Consequently, for example, even though social expectation may require emotional suppression at funerals, we are capable of making choices in the direction of overt mourning—letting it all out, so to speak.

Ekman invokes the Buddhist concept of mindfulness to suggest ways to control and appropriately channel our own feelings, and maintain an empathetic understanding of others. As he says, “In order for us to be able to moderate our own emotional behavior, to choose what we say or do, we have to be able to know when we have become or, better still, are becoming emotional.”

**Reading Faces**

The majority of Ekman’s book is taken up with describing how major emotions—sadness and agony, anger, surprise and fear, disgust and contempt, and several positive emotions—are registered on people’s faces, how the emotions themselves are intermingled, and how they correlate with other physical manifestations of underlying feelings. He provides quite a few interesting answers to perpetually perplexing questions. For example, why do people seem to exhibit facial expressions of agony, complete with tears a la Miss America, when they hear wonderful news? It seems that intense joy can overwhelm the emotional system and that exceptionally strong emotion of any kind might produce moments of true agony.

Unfortunately, Ekman’s discussion of positive emotions seems hurried and does not receive the attention tendered to the negative side. There seem to be a wide range of expressions correlating to happiness but, in the end, Ekman leaves the reader with little besides a sensitive understanding of the Yiddish concept of naches—the feeling of pride experienced in seeing the success of one’s offspring.

Although he mentions it briefly, Ekman also does not provide very much depth on the subject of gender and emotion. It is clear that men tend toward emotional reserve—no doubt a result of
Emotions Revealed CONTINUED

genetic, cultural, and personal factors. Nevertheless, what do we make of this? Are men’s micro-expressions easier or harder to read? Should allowances be made for the reactions of men vs. women?

Emotions Revealed is very clear, however, about how emotions can sometimes spin out of control and yield to mental disorder. Losing the ability to restrain emotions and having them interfere with and dominate our lives, for example when sadness turns uncontrollable and becomes depression, is a force that needs careful monitoring. Ekman warns that self-scrutiny and judgment are required to avoid abrogating emotional control.

Ekman’s work is stimulating for its review of the latest knowledge relating to emotion and its facial expression. The author’s catalog of faces should energize many readers coming from a background in qualitative research where the ability to get a sense of what respondents are feeling before or while they express themselves is at a premium. Being able to read micro-expressions of contempt or disgust, for example, actually may help us to become more perceptive when respondents are reviewing concepts in focus groups or individual interview settings. Overall, this book takes us a long way in our understanding of body language, but is not the last word on integrating facial recognition analysis into research practice.

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