

Communicating market research

A best practice guide

This guide has been written to assist marketing researchers in the communication and presentation of market research findings. The communication of research results can be tough as audiences are often difficult to please or have strongly held beliefs and opinions that are not easy to influence or change. This guide focuses on two important aspects of the research process: **planning** and **delivery** to help get the research message across.

Planning



“Communicate with the stakeholders - Keep everyone involved with progress throughout the research process. Make sure they take ownership of the research.”

Start at the end: clarify and agree the research objectives with the stakeholders and agree what the research should aim to achieve.

Put into context: understand the business background and context in which the research is being conducted.

Find a champion: have a senior champion on your side early on. Get them involved in the research design.

Understand your audience: establish a “client” relationship to help you find out exactly what is needed from the research results and what the preferences for information output will be.

Communicate: make sure you communicate with the stakeholders - Keep everyone involved with progress throughout the research process. Make sure they take ownership of the research.

Check the objectives: revisit the research objectives throughout the research process, to make sure you are asking the right questions.

Delivery

Present the findings in person: insist on a face to face meeting to present the findings. It will help the audience to better understand the results.

Jump right in: state the key findings at the start of the presentation.

Tell a story: build the presentation to tell a story with evidence and detail to support the story.

Be creative: use visuals, audio and images, but don't overdo it. Try to match the style of delivery to the audience.

Be interactive: make any presentation or de-brief session as interactive as possible.

Focus on implications and actions: encourage ownership of the findings. Make someone responsible for following up what needs to be done.

Use appropriate language: make sure it suits the audience, but avoid jargon. Make the findings simple to understand.



“Jump right into the key findings at the start of the presentation. Tell a story and give evidence and detail in support.”

Additional guidance on communicating research to difficult audiences

Planning

- **Understand the politics:** make sure you understand the politics and wider context in which the project is being conducted.
- **Meet with the senior stakeholders:** get to know them and understand them.
- **Brief your agency:** if you are using an external agency then make sure they have a clear view on the needs and expectations of the key stakeholders.
- **Challenge sacred cows:** don't be afraid to challenge any sacred cows. If the research doesn't support widely held beliefs then make sure you highlight that.
- **Involve a senior champion:** get a senior champion on board and involved in project planning (agency selection, questionnaire design).

Delivery

- **No surprises:** manage your audience expectations and publish preliminary findings.
- **Provide solutions:** your job is to interpret the findings and make recommendations.
- **Be bold:** state the findings and be confident in your explanation.
- **Be direct and dispassionate:** state the results are research findings not your opinion.
- **Leave no chinks in your armour:** be confident in the methodology.
- **Divide and conquer:** deliver the findings in small groups or even one to one.



Resources

Resource	Description
http://beyondbulletpoints.com/	Cliff Atkinson's website of the book
www.i-render.net/2010/05/50-examples-of-data-visualization-and-infographics/	Infographics examples
www.edwardtufte.com	Data visualisation guru
www.heathbrothers.com	Check out the sticky presentation guide
www.garrreynolds.com/	Presenting guru
www.presentationmagazine.com	Presentation magazine with lots of useful tips
www.mashable.com/2007/05/15/16-awesome-data-visualization-tools/	Data visualisation examples
http://www.lessig.org/	Lawrence Lessig's site
http://identity20.com/media/OSCON2005/	Dick Hardt presenting the Lessig way.
http://www.presentationzen.com/	Garr Reynold's blog on professional presentation design

Further Information

For more information on communicating research then contact Trevor Wilkinson: trevor@purplemr.co.uk , (07767) 607757 or John Clay : john@research4.co.uk, (07894) 716961.