

Opinions & Papers

CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH THE OTHER CONSUMERS IN MIND

November 2010

Brand development research is about understanding how you can motivate consumers to act. And the consumers you're trying to motivate aren't just the ones who pay money for what your company sells. They're also the people you work with. Everyone throughout an organization contributes to a brand's success, not just the ones who have "Brand" on their business cards. So it follows that everyone should be helped and spurred into action by brand research. They just may not think so, especially if they've ever sat through a research presentation facing a series of baffling charts.

The best brand research is clarifying and compelling. It bridges the gap that often exists among research data, business strategies, and action. And there are things you can do to make sure you get great brand research.

Make sure your internal consumers are part of the process at the beginning. You don't want to involve them in methodology, but in asking them the questions they want answered. And you may want to ask them to express those questions from a beyond-the-company-walls perspective. We've found that people throughout organizations are usually fantastic at putting their strategic questions into accessible language when prompted with something as straightforward as: "what would you ask consumers?" From sales to product development to pricing, everyone can make brand research more focused, more pointed, and more valuable.

When the research results are back, think of the presentation as a sales presentation rather than a research presentation. Many a well-designed research study has died a quick internal death because it wasn't synthesized and presented well. So what are you selling? The power of what's been learned and the value of using it. The presentation should have the answers to the questions internal consumers asked, data that comes to life in a fully human way, and a great presenter. Yup, a great presenter. A great brand research presentation should be as distinctive and as engaging as a great brand is. You want your internal consumers to want to use it. If they don't want to use it, they won't. And you'll never get back the good will you used by involving them. If the research results resolves their questions and the presentation is relevant to them and how they do their jobs, you will have done your brand one of the greatest services you can: making your other consumers—internal consumers—as passionate about the brand as you want external consumers to be.