

SIX WAYS RESEARCH IS FAILING MARKETERS

By some metrics, the research industry is thriving. With global revenue above \$70bb, the sector has more than doubled since 2008—and with new technology, research is faster and easier than ever before.

But these new approaches aren't delivering better insights. If it were, we wouldn't see so many high-profile, well-researched failures: blockbusters that flop at the box office, well-funded incumbents who lose elections, and new products languishing on the shelves.

Why? Despite the technology, most research still relies on the question-and-answer techniques that have been used for nearly a century. These old methods bring with them old failings—first among them is that consumers' responses to questions aren't effective at predicting future behavior.

These methodologies and their shortcomings haven't changed. What has changed is that modern neuroscience has given us the tools to understand why traditional research is failing:

01



IT ONLY MEASURES THE CONSCIOUS MIND

It measures only conscious response when 90% of decision-making is subconscious. David Ogilvy noted that consumers “Don't say what they think, and they don't do what they say.” Modern neuroscience proves him right: most purchase decisions are made deep in the subconscious. But question-and-answer research relies on conscious responses—rationale explanations that respondents provide to explain their decision making. These responses may have nothing to do with what's happening in the subconscious.

02



IT RELIES ON SELF-REPORTED DATA

It relies on self-reported data. Contextual and social effects also distort self-reported data—studies of group dynamics show that individual respondents often tailor their answers to agree with the larger group's mood (social desirability bias) or what they intuit as the research's desired response (confirmation bias). Even without these effects, not all slightly agrees are created equal—one respondent may use 3 on a 1-5 scale to express their satisfaction, another to mark a need for improvement.

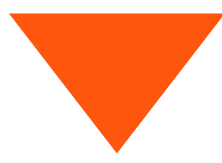
03



IT MISSES BREAKTHROUGHS

It can miss the power of breakthrough ideas. Henry Ford memorably joked that “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.” He was right—since traditional research often uses isolated single-exposure tests, that can underrate the potential of breakthrough ideas. Products like the Model T or iPhone—which created new worlds instead of fitting into existing patterns—can be underappreciated in traditional research.

04

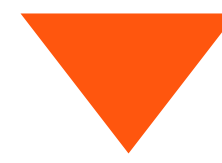


IT ONLY MEASURES POST-EXPERIENCE

It collects data post-exposure. Most traditional research asks respondents for reactions immediately after exposure to an experience. There is no information on what's happening during the experience or how each element affects response.

Post-exposure research relies on respondents' short-term memory. But most decisions are based on long-term memory, and modern neuroscience shows that conscious short-term memory has little predictive value for long-term memory—even when carried out perfectly, conventional research is often simply measuring the wrong signal.

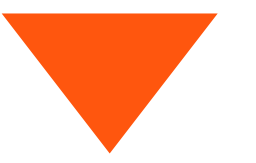
05



IT IGNORES CONTEXT

It ignores the importance of context. Convenience dictates that much traditional research is fielded outside of a real-world context—instead of testing television spots during actual shows and on the devices where they might air, traditional research often uses mobile-device sampling or clutter reels in focus-group facilities. While these scenarios make researchers' jobs easier, the brain's extraordinary sensitivity to context means that convenience often comes at the cost of accuracy—will testing a Super Bowl commercial outside of the game produce reliable results?

06



IT DOES NOT OPTIMIZE

It gives no optimization recommendations. If an advertisement or product isn't working, what should change? Traditional research often struggles to provide insight and actionable next steps. Should an underperforming item be scrapped? Changed according to specific comments by respondents? Which respondents? Which comments? Since traditional research often assesses the entire unit at once, it can rarely provide granular feedback on exactly which elements should be changed.

Despite all these shortcomings, many organizations continue to rely on traditional research—arguing that simple deliverables, past benchmarks, or sheer force of habit are good enough reasons not to seek better options.

Fortunately, the same neuroscientific advances that have helped understand the failings of traditional research can also offer better options. Neuro-marketing draws on the latest scientific advances to enable marketers to access consumers' subconscious —improving insights, decisions, and results.

Neuro-Insight is the world's preeminent neuro-marketing firm. We use patented technology to test the brain's response to stimuli presented in realistic market contexts—and deliver second-by-second analysis of different neural centers' responses, helping our clients make precise optimization choices. Our tools offer the neuromarketing industry's most accurate measurements and largest database of long-term memory reporting, with a proven 86% correlation between key metrics and in-market sales.

To learn more, visit our website at neuro-insight.com—or get in touch at:

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