

Bring it to life

Little has been written about the merits for marketing professionals of selecting a research supplier that can produce a professional-quality video record of their qualitative research sessions. This article outlines the value of developing a video/market research partnership and describes some video deliverables possible through such an arrangement.

Expectations are increasing

The audiences for whom your research videotapes are intended are media savvy marketing professionals whose expectations regarding the technical aspects of video production are increasing. Therefore, they will expect to see programs that are similar in quality to current broadcast television programs. Competent video producers understand the range of factors that contribute to a broadcast-quality video, including shot composition, lighting, video and audio quality, audio level and pace of editing. They have the ability to gather usable video footage in a variety of situations including outdoor settings (for establishing shots or “man on the street” interviews), indoor product usability demonstrations (laboratory, pharmacy, physician’s office) and one-on-one testimonials or small-group discussions. They recognize the role of visual elements such as graphics and on-screen text in communicating information. By producing broadcast-quality video programming, you increase the chance that the eventual audiences for the videotape will be able to focus on the content of the program, not its technical features.

Another reason to gather professional-quality video footage is that the raw video material can be edited to produce many different programs. For example, video findings resulting from one project may be edited

into executive summaries for upper management, full-length programs for your market research clients and sales training tools for sales managers. Upon request, a professional video producer will catalogue and copy your footage onto a compact disc so that you can search and view individual segments. In addition, they will store the master tapes so that they are available for many years.

As an example, several years ago a qualitative research group at the University of Pennsylvania produced a videotape to educate injection drug users about the risks and benefits of participating in a government-sponsored clinical trial for a preventive HIV vaccine. Based on the recommendations of the participants, the program was shot in a talk show format, in which a studio audience of injection drug users asked unscripted questions of a panel of experts involved in the clinical trial. Although the edited program was used as originally intended — to educate injection

Use video to
enhance your
qualitative research



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drug users about trial participation — trial planners viewed the unedited footage of the injection drug users' questions to better understand the concerns of the injection drug using community. The knowledge was used to foster a more productive relationship between the trial planners and trial participants within the injection drug using community.

Insights into attitudes

As a market researcher, you should make the most of any opportunity to provide your internal marketing, sales and upper management clients with insights into the attitudes and behaviors of their customers. The better your internal clients understand their customers, the more equipped they should be to address their needs.

The strengths of video are different from the strengths of the written word. For example, although one is able to communicate detailed information with text alone, video conveys added emotion more effectively than does the written word. Therefore, consider using video in situations in which the emotion with which respondents express themselves about a topic provides unique insights to the viewer. In addition, in a case in which a customer's experience with a product would be more easily understood with a visual component, consider using video.

For example, it is not uncommon for a pharmaceutical or biotech company to request exploratory research that assists it in understanding the market potential within a particular therapy area. It may request that physicians be queried about the products they most typically use within a particular clinical setting (emergency room, dialysis unit, transplant unit). Video effectively captures how the physicians convey their knowledge and attitudes about particular therapy areas. Nonverbal cues may suggest excitement, exasperation or resigna-

tion with current or proposed treatment options. Further, visual images of the setting in which medical decisions are made could reveal important insights into possible attractions and barriers to use of the product. For example, the amount of staff activity and physical space within a dialysis center may present practical barriers to the use of a product that are different than those that exist in other settings. Medical professionals who work in these settings every day may not think to describe the dialysis center setting during an interview in a focus group facility. However, the images are part of the story included within a videotaped site visit. Video may be used to capture the procedures themselves with which physicians are engaged. Finally, through the use of text and animation within a video, technical information about a therapy area can be conveyed.

Video ethnography

Ethnographers recognize that customers are not always aware of the behavior they engage in when using a particular product. Therefore, much can be learned through direct observation of customers using the product. We recently completed a qualitative research study in which video was used to capture the ways in which families incorporated the use of a pediatric medical device into their lives. The project involved both loaning video cameras to families to shoot home videos of the use of the device as well as on-camera interviews with family members conducted by our staff ethnographer and video producer. The manufacturer gained a great deal of insight into the variety of ways parents and their children used the device. In addition, the manufacturer became sensitized to the amount of guilt and frustration experienced by the parents of children who suffer with the disease. Available to the marketing

team as a valuable market research deliverable, the raw video footage will be edited for sales training and motivational purposes.

Video is useful in documenting the development and evaluation of sales and promotional materials such as journal advertisements, sales aids and sales education tools. In iterative testing of promotional materials, video provides a record of the promotional material or sales aid as it evolves, as well as the reactions of the physicians at various stages. Further, video may be used for sales training purposes, to document sales representatives' presentations of finished promotional pieces to physicians in their offices.

Bring them to life

To bring research results to life, market researchers must devote the same level of energy to presenting the results to interested parties as they have traditionally devoted to selecting appropriate methodologies. The technology is available. The selection of a market research supplier capable of producing professional video deliverables will insure that the technology is used in the most cost-efficient and compelling manner possible.

When presented with certain strategic and tactical marketing challenges, more and more corporate marketing researchers and brand managers look to consultants who are skilled at blending professional video production with more traditional research solutions. Internal clients (marketing and sales managers) who are basing million-dollar decisions on their research findings find greater confidence and comfort because the professional video has that special touch of reality. Make it a point to investigate the benefits of working with a market research supplier that uses professional-quality video to provide another perspective on qualitative market research. | Q

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