

VISION

THE QUALITATIVE CHALLENGE AUTUMN 2011

WWW.INCITE.WS

THE TAILORED APPROACH

Jenni Welling explains how Incite gets the most from international qualitative research...

Managing qualitative projects in international markets can be a minefield. We have all got tales of the moderator who was rude to a client in a different language (not knowing the client was fluent!), or the problems of getting samples past a customs officer from Turkmenistan. Our approach is to treat each project as different. So, although like many agencies we have a trusted network of agencies and freelancers in different markets that we have used in the past, we always match their skills to the demands of the brief and cherry-pick the best local teams for each specific project before we pick up the phone. The one size fits all 'suits you sir' approach just doesn't work.

The one size fits all 'suits you sir' approach just doesn't work

Collaboration

Once we've got the team sorted out, we work collaboratively with the local moderators. This builds trust, giving the local teams permission to challenge us, from the proposed approach to the way the discussion guide aims to achieve specific objectives. Collaboration creates a dialogue and partnership around each project; ensuring moderators work with interest and passion, feel valued and behave like a key member of the research team rather than just a question monkey.

Collaboration means we use techniques that reflect the cultural nuances of consumers in each region. We adapt to them, rather than making them adapt to us. Of course, we weigh up the benefits

of potential approaches against the costs – for example, whilst running online communities can sometimes be the most appropriate methodology, an online approach can be far more expensive than face to face in developing markets.

We go there

We always brief, view and analyse the fieldwork in person, in market, to ensure the local moderator fully understands the issues and that we are absorbed in the research. This means we can also immerse ourselves in the local market and culture – watching people, speaking to people, reading the local papers, eating the local food. Fully understanding the local context is as important as the primary research, it gives us a head start in understanding the cultural differences and increases our ability to uncover cultural insights. Even in the UK we use other sources (such as dealers or shop keepers who sell to the consumers) as a means to contextualise and challenge what the consumer tells us - this becomes even more important on international projects.

Fully understanding the local context is as important as the primary research

Sometimes, even the best moderators and translators miss things; distance from the research in each market can lead to insights being lost in translation. We advocate spending as much time as possible with the local moderator discussing the sessions, brainstorming ideas and thoughts



between sessions and mining the local team for relevant cultural information to uncover and understand the richest insights.

Restricting travel budgets on a project can lead to a negative return on investment, leaving clients short changed on their output and insights. If we do not attend a market we risk receiving six separate reports from a six market study, each with a slightly different focus and tone and potentially lacking the depth needed. Attending research sessions and working closely with the local team ensures this doesn't happen and guarantees we get the most out of every market to help develop the strongest possible global solution.

We always brief, view and analyse the fieldwork in person, in market

Workshop it

Once the research has been completed, we run a rigorous analysis workshop back at our office in London, covering the findings from all markets in detail. Key stakeholders join us at these sessions, to get immersed in all the global issues. On some occasions, when there is a strong business case for doing so, we will invite the local research partners to attend this session to add depth and additional cultural context to the discussion. This also allows us to explore and identify solutions that will work across all markets.

Over the years, as more and more of our work is overseas (60% of our work last year, and counting), we have honed our approach. We have found that managing qual in this way means we deliver an impactful and actionable multi-market story in a concise and powerful way - which suits our clients very well.

Contact: jenni.welling@incite.ws

