

A MarketSearch *Brief*

In-Person Research Options: N-Sight Sessions

As the field of market research grows in sophistication each year, more specialized research techniques become necessary to augment or integrate the existing methodologies. Traditional methodologies, such as telephone surveys, mail surveys, and focus groups, are limited in that they provide either quantitative or qualitative data, but rarely both. In the 1990s MarketSearch introduced N-Sight Sessions. They are a unique research methodology that combines quantitative data collection with qualitative insights.

Typical N-Sight Scenario

In a typical N-Sight Session scenario, a minimum of 50 people, in groups of 25 at a time, participate in two-hour sessions. During these sessions, participants answer survey questions via hand-held electronic meters and participate in a modified focus group discussion. The groups are conducted in focus group facilities and a professional moderator is present.

Quantitative Portion

The first half of the session involves the completion of the quantitative survey. Questions are projected on a screen and all respondents answer each question simultaneously using hand-held electronic meters. To minimize the potential bias of group dynamics, these questions are asked prior to discussion and respondents are not allowed to converse during the process.

Results are immediately available to clients in the viewing room on a question-by-question basis (in aggregate form for the group as a whole). Because nearly an hour

can be devoted to survey questions during an N-Sight session, the length and depth of questioning allows the exploration of a wider variety of issues.

N-Sight sessions are ideal for the evaluation of products and/or materials, comparing and contrasting the relative strengths and weaknesses of each. In addition, they allow for the in-depth investigation of consumer motivations, priorities, trade-offs, and “gaps” between consumer expectations and performance.

Qualitative Portion

Once the quantitative portion of the session is completed, the moderator leads a group discussion, probing for information regarding attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and preferences. This technique enhances the usefulness of quantifiable data by enriching it with qualitative information obtained immediately afterward.

We are able to see how initial reactions and opinions change with discussion and the introduction of opposing viewpoints. The moderator attempts to draw everyone into the conversation, thus assuring that all viewpoints are heard.

Because the discussion lasts for approximately one hour, there is time to probe most subjects. The added value of the discussion in the N-Sight Sessions is that information and ideas not covered in the survey can surface freely.

Applications and Usefulness

We have used the N-Sights methodology successfully with a broad

N-Sight Sessions: What It Is and How It's Useful

range of companies, including:

- ✓ food and packaged goods companies, electric utilities,
- ✓ banks, and
- ✓ other retail service companies.

There are many instances in which a company would benefit from research gathered in a research setting such as N-Sight Sessions. Some specific applications include:

- ✓ Branding studies,
- ✓ Ad testing,
- ✓ Concept development,
- ✓ Name and label testing,
- ✓ New product development ,
- ✓ Taste testing,
- ✓ Packaging evaluations, and
- ✓ Jury research

N-Sights are also particularly useful in the final stages of product or creative development, where aspects such as certain features, pricing, size, color, etc. may be explored in detail.

Flexibility of N-Sights

Each of our N-Sights projects is custom-designed to meet the client's needs. This allows a great deal of flexibility in the research process. Depending on your particular needs, an N-Sight session may be designed to emphasize the qualitative or quantitative data collection. For example, we can limit the questions on the survey to allow for more discussion, or increase the number to augment the quantitative data collected.

It is also possible to choose an appropriate sample size to better suit the overall goal of the project. If qualitative

data is a high priority, we can limit the number of respondents to facilitate discussion. On the other hand, we can increase the number of respondents to emphasize quantitative data collection.

We have conducted countless N-Sight sessions across the country, in cities large and small, from urban California to rural South Carolina. The system's mobility is a key strength and a priority to us. We are better able to meet our client's particular needs and address varying interests because our system is small enough to transport and our full-time computer technician ensures that the system is operating correctly and smoothly.