From Insight to Influence

A Guide to Creating an Always-On Consumer Research Approach

SUZY

Demand for consumer insights grows

The way we live, shop, interact, and make decisions are changing quicker than ever. Consumers, and the people who study them, are now existing in a radically different world than the one they inhabited at the beginning of last year.

Long before 2021, the demand for rapid consumer insights had grown exponentially across business teams like research, marketing, product, innovation, and more. And most companies have long recognized the agility and productivity that leveraging digital technologies can help spur — from service providers that handle research from beginning to end to tech solutions that offer access to respondents in new ways to panel offerings that form the basis for the research itself.

But even the current insights model, which prioritizes speed and data and has become ubiquitous, isn't enough to keep up with the relentless, high-geared pace of change.

For the insights industry, the past 12 months have been a stark reminder that it's only by understanding consumer behavior that brands can effectively plan for their futures. It begs the question: As consumer habits and cultural conversations shift rapidly, what new approach to consumer insights will give brands a competitive advantage?

Making the most of consumer insights

In many ways, brands were blindsided by the last year. Years of theoretical digital transformation discussions and planned innovations were condensed into hectic months of countless product pivots and amplified adoption of agile market research tools.

While 2020 may have forced behavior changes and sped up business transformation efforts, brands will inevitably experience more waves of massive consumer change — and they need to be prepared.

At Suzy, we believe consumer research must address the dynamics of today and tomorrow.

The mark of a successful consumer insights strategy is not only the ability to quickly collect consumer feedback, but to close the gap that exists between what a consumer says they'll do and what a consumer actually does. Building the right insights program provides a sneak peek into the future, putting your brand in a position to recognize what's coming and plot a strategy for victory.

There are four key components of a <u>rapid</u>, <u>responsive</u>, and <u>robust</u> consumer insights program, one that will help brands get, keep, and grow their consumers:

1. Build a panel of consumers reflective of your brand's category.

2. Ask the right questions and begin to understand what drives these specific consumers.

3. Test and design solutions around the specific needs that you've uncovered.

4. Build a mechanism for tracking and measuring consumer feedback.

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With the right tool you can do the job better, faster, and more efficiently. The wrong tool for the wrong job, you fall behind. The ability to specialize the tools in our toolkits are what gives us a competitive advantage.

William Cimarosa
Suzy's SVP of Market Research

Increasing the volume of learning points

This consumer insights program framework pushes the market research boundaries beyond traditional models or agile approaches.

Traditional research still holds value as a way to deliver insights. However, it is limited in its capacity to understand key consumption moments or drive behavior change. And agile research, often cited as the solution to every research problem, is merely part of the solution.

When done right, each step of this insights framework directs brands and researchers to a different consumer preference, a different behavior, a different insight — revealing consumer truths.

In other words: The future-proof approach to consumer insights alters a brand's understanding of consumers and allows them to constantly identify emerging consumer trends as they're beginning to take shape and apply that consumer understanding to every area of their business.
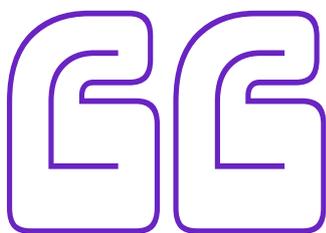
> There's more and more opportunity for learning, and it's up to us to use tools that allow rapid access.

Elliot Roazen
Unilever's Growth Marketer

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What we find interesting are the things that are on the cusp. We have a tendency of looking at things that are already entrenched. What you want to look at is the behavior that's trending in the niche areas, that may go somewhere or may not go somewhere.

Geoffrey Colon
Microsoft Advertising's Head of Brand Studio

How to build a consumer panel reflective of consumer needs

One of the biggest barriers to taking this always-on approach to consumer research is that most brands do not possess an on-demand sample that's tailored to their business category and ready to go at a moment's notice. Historically, research projects required teams to brief a research vendor or agency, or build and buy a sample over and over again every time teams wanted to interact with their consumers.

It's hard to be iterative or agile with this approach, because it requires recruiting and screening for fresh sample between research rounds.

What does traditional market research look like?

Project Initiation	**Project Set Up**	**Fieldwork**	**Final Analysis**
1-5 Days	**3-5 Days**	**10-14 Days**	**5-7 Days**
Research RFP Vendor Proposal	Survey Screener Survey QRE (Questionnaire) **3rd Party Survey Platforms (consumers)**	Survey Data File **3rd Party Providers (consumers)**	Final Report
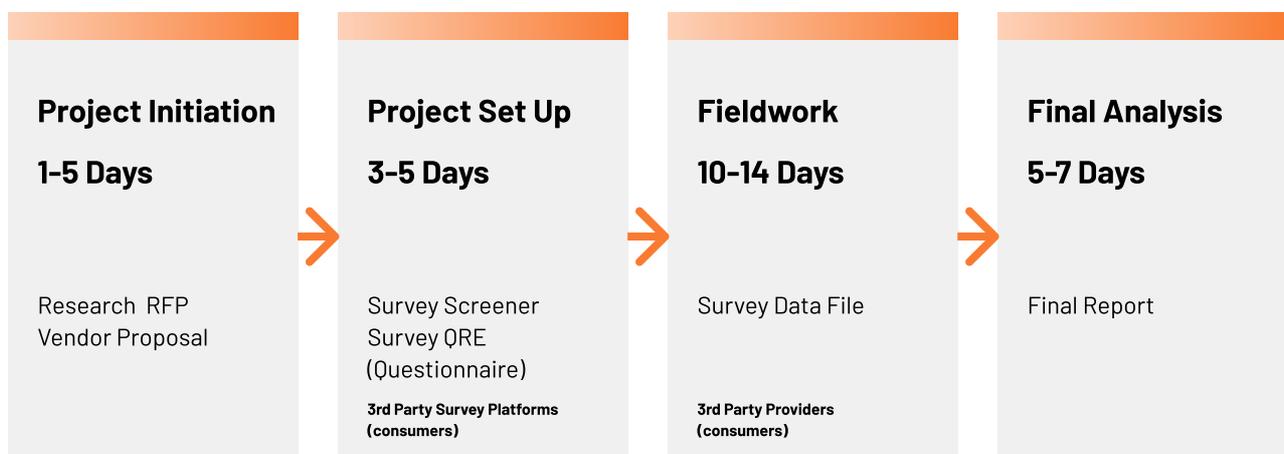
That's not always-on, nor is it cost-effective.

Knowing exactly who your consumers are is particularly important when behaviors and usage patterns are constantly changing.

To fully grasp business growth potential in your category, every single market research initiative must come down to the same question: Is this going to drive growth in household penetration, brand share, or consumption rates?'

How to build a consumer panel reflective of consumer needs

To answer that with any amount of confidence, your consumer sample must be grounded in the reality of the category your brand sells to or markets toward.

Meaning, whenever you facilitate any research or consumer interaction, your sample must (at a minimum) be reflective of the following key category dynamics:

◆ Demographics   ◆ Brand share

◆ Brand awareness   ◆ Brand consideration

◆ Brand usage   ◆ Retail channel interaction

Without all of this information, how can marketers or researchers expect to make an informed recommendation on growth opportunities?
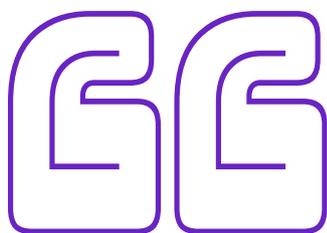
> As market researchers, our job is grounded in behavior change.

William Cimarosa
Suzy's SVP of Market Research

Understanding what drives these specific consumers

Now that you've built a sample that reflects the category space in which you play, you can continually access those consumers through agile research platforms. With Suzy, the consumer panel is built into the tool. We don't use third parties such as Cint and Lucid to buy responses, effectively cutting out two middlemen in the research stack: research providers and panel providers. It's fast, cost-efficient, and always-on.

The first thing to do once you have access to an always-on panel like Suzy's is understand what drives usage behavior among that group of people.

What are the most important experiences that impact brand satisfaction, perception, equity, and usage? That's where you'll find the category opportunities and consumers' unmet needs. Researchers should use a combination of qual, to identify these range of behaviors, and quant, to measure the importance of each.
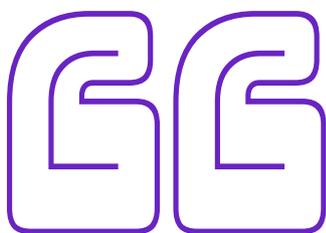
> It always comes back to really understanding who your consumer is.

Lori Herman
Mondelez International's Senior Manager of Research

Applying consumer understanding to every business area

With an understanding of target consumers and brand opportunities, researchers can inform other business teams, such as innovation, R&D, and product, on the key priorities for new products or services. Those teams are then able to evaluate early and late-stage ideas against specific consumer needs that the insights team has uncovered in their foundational research.

What does an agile market research engagement look like?

Project Initiation	**Project Set Up**	**Fieldwork**	**Final Analysis**
2 Clicks	**5 minutes**	**60 minutes**	**2 clicks**
Determine research objectives and survey needs	Select targeting audience using built-in panels; Draft survey questions or use pre-approved templates; If applicable, upload customer-facing stimuli	Launch surveys to target consumers	Export stat testing reports and editable graphs

Researchers should bridge quant and qual at this stage, too. Survey consumers to get their impressions on the products, and then conduct qual to learn whether or not it meets their needs. Put mockups in front of consumers, and keep iterating and testing until you hit that sweet spot.

The process is the same when you begin to develop campaigns. Tap into survey panels to identify the most effective ways to market these products, use qual to learn why, and take an iterative approach to creating the best performing campaign assets possible.

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Try, break, and repeat is my favorite approach. It's also the most fun in terms of getting your hands in, being able to play with methodologies, insights, and the overall approach.

Fran Guzman
Kraft Heinz's Insights & Strategy Lead

Building a measurement mechanism for tracking success

Once you've landed on messaging and campaigns, it's important to make sure what you're offering is constantly meeting those exact needs — especially after a product and the subsequent marketing campaign is in market.

Is the product and the campaign doing the job you designed them to do? Are they meeting the needs you designed them to meet? Is the campaign communicating the key messages you set up? Have any of their needs changed as a result of changing behaviors, preferences, or attitudes?

You can measure this by deploying standardized tracking surveys over time to your audiences, to measure brand perceptions and product satisfaction on an ongoing basis.

Project Phase	Traditional Model Timeframe	Agile Research Platforms Timeframe
Project Initation	1-5 Days	2 clicks
Project Set-Up	1-5 Days	5 minutes
Fieldwork	10-14 Days	60 minutes
Final Analysis	5-7 Days	2 clicks
Full Project	19-31 Days	~ 90 minutes
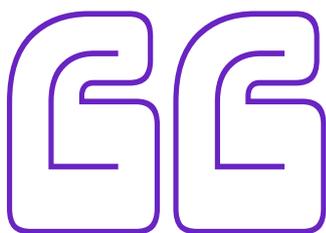
> With Suzy, I can say this is why we need to invest a certain way, to be more pinpointed, more efficient, with less waste.

Daniel Mandelbaum
Davos Brands' VP of Marketing

The new rules to market research in 2021

What are three factors to keep in mind as you look to translate consumer research into better consumer experiences in the coming months?

Double down on behavior change as an operating principle

Going forward, asking what it takes to change consumer behavior needs to be the central strategic focus for research teams. There's no debating that agile research tools solve for speed, but the true benefit of agile research will be realized once brands build a consumer sample that reflects the exact product category they sell to. It's only by understanding foundational truths about those consumers — usage drivers, need states, usage occasions, and brand perceptions — that research teams can develop standardized survey tools to quickly test and iterate early-stage ideas and concepts more effectively.

Embrace and integrate data science into your research toolkit

One egregious mistake that researchers often make is to rely on methodologies that were innovative decades ago. There are now a great number of new tools that can help identify and predict behavior changes. Data science tools provide researchers with frameworks for collecting, organizing, and analyzing growing data sets about their consumers. When you combine the insights from real-time research tools with insights from advanced data tools, brands can make smarter and quicker decisions based on predicted outcomes.

Continue emphasizing the shift to digital and online methods

While traditional research isn't going anywhere, and in-person solutions will come back sooner rather than later, remote and virtual research tools provide brands with data and insights faster (and safer) than ever before. Plus, online methods offer a more flexible and cost-effective way to integrate research into every aspect of the business, at the right moments.

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We have to become multi-dimensional and fuel better decision-making. Go find new tools, go find new data. You've got to be curious and willing to take risks and connect information.

Abby Finnis

PepsiCo's Head of Portfolio Insights & Analytics

Videos

Introducing Suzy Live

Podcasts

Suzy on Building the Future podcast
Suzy on Enterprise Podcast Network

Blog Posts

What Consumer-Led Change Will Come Next?
Five New Year's Resolutions for Brands to Live By In 2021
How RB Leverages Agile, Always-On Tools To Predict What's to Come
Brands Hook Into Real-Time Market Research for Agile Consumer Insights
Three Ways The Kraft Heinz Company Embraced Real-Time Research
How Mars Wrigley Boosted Consumer Connectivity with Agile Research
Three Major Brands Using Insights to Connect Directly With Consumers
Introducing Suzy Live, A Hybrid Quant & Qual Research Offering
How Chipotle Rapidly Enhanced Their Online Experience
How PepsiCo Optimized Agility in Market Research — and Emerged Stronger
How 3 Leading CPG & Food & Beverage Brands Are Rethinking Consumer Insights

Webinars

State of the Consumer: 2021 Predictions
State of the Consumer: Innovating Virtually
State of the Consumer: Bridging Quant & Qual
Quirk's Webinar: How Kraft Heinz is Innovating Market Research
State of the Consumer: How Leading Brands are Preparing for 2021

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
& READING

About Suzy

Suzy is an always-on insights platform that helps brands make better, faster, and more data-driven decisions. Whether you're a novice or an expert researcher, our platform combines advanced research tools with the highest-quality consumer audience to deliver trusted insights in minutes. Yes, minutes.

Interested in learning more?

Visit Suzy.com