L&E research

EMERGING METHODS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY

LANDING A FULL 360 DEGREE VIEW OF THE CONSUMER

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INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOLOGY FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A full 360 degree view of the consumer means taking advantage of the forward-looking technology behind new and enhanced methods of qualitative research. Whether the research is derived from a small qualitative research consultant, or a large client-side researcher, the quality of the insight can be greatly improved by the right technology behind the qualitative tools.

Technology is speeding up insight and bringing researchers, stakeholders, and brands closer than ever to the consumer. No matter the magnitude of your project, or the depth of your team, you need to provide the same magnitude of impact from your research project. This means you can't afford to fall behind on advancements in qualitative research technology. But with all the claims behind technology partners and suppliers, who can you trust to provide the most reputable technology to power your project?

This paper will detail the key areas under development, why they're important, and which suppliers you should trust with your valued insight.

KEY AREAS UNDER DEVELOPMENT (AND WHY THEY'RE IMPORTANT)

Within the qualitative space there are five key areas making an impact:

- NEUROMARKETING
- VIRTUAL REALITY
- 360° STREAMING
- VIDEO ANALYTICS
- IN-THE-MOMENT ONLINE TOOLS

NEUROMARKETING

Understanding consumer behavior at a conscious and rational level is great, but quality insight into consumer behavior goes much farther with a deep understanding of subconscious, non-rational and automated processes.

Understanding which emotions play what role is crucial to understanding consumer behavior. This requires a deep understanding of consumers' behavioral, cognitive and affective responses. This is the gateway to identifying the unconscious drivers for decision making, and how we can tap into the part of the brain that is influencing that decision. Neuromarketing reveals the truth, similar to a lie detector test, whereas a questionnaire might only provide conscious and therefore inaccurate data.

Only 17% of researchers/research companies currently use neuromarketing according to the 2016 GRIT Report. Those who aren't taking advantage of neuromarketing are missing a key element within the consumer decision making process.

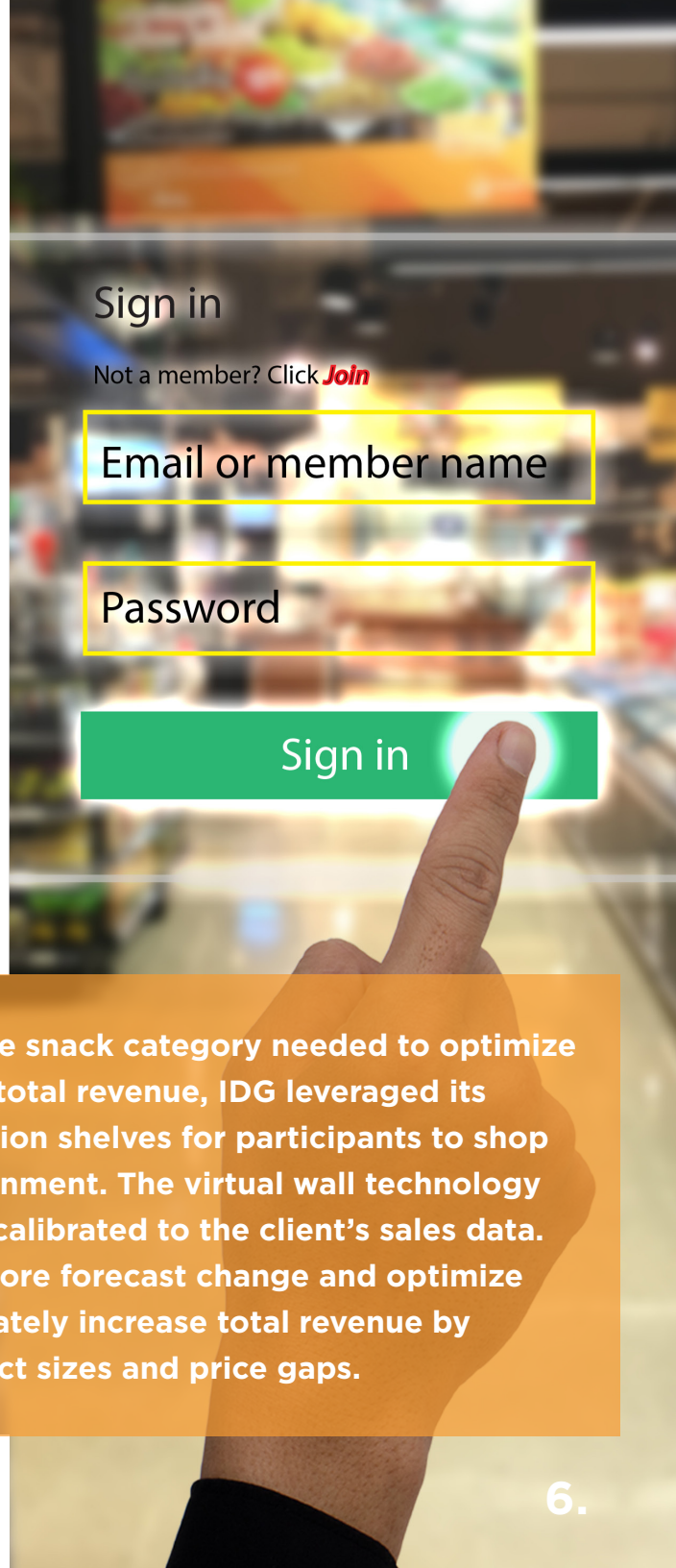
New methods in neuromarketing provide significantly more value when integrated into traditional research. Research no longer relies only on recall and stated intent or perceptions, and is instead becoming truly behavioral and evidence-based.

But the fact is that right now, only 17% of researchers/research companies currently use neuromarketing according to the 2016 GRIT Report. Those who aren't taking advantage of neuromarketing are missing a key element within the consumer decision making process.

The technology behind neuromarketing is only getting stronger. Studies have found that the correlation between what shoppers recall they looked at and what they actually looked at was a mere .096, meaning recall alone is not a quality

measurement. So now, new hybrid models of neuromarketing are increasing impact using electroencephalography (EEG) and eye tracking. According to Informed Decisions Group, if a brand can increase viewing time by even one second, the likelihood of purchase is increased by up to 5x. Eye tracking can identify what is working and what isn't in order to optimize consumer experience and maximize attention to the product in a shopping environment. EEG provides added value to eye tracking in showing stakeholders and brands how to tap into the subconscious to elicit the desired response from packaging, signage, websites, application or advertisements.

Independent consultants and corporate researchers alike now have access to this technology, as companies like IDG (Informed Decision Group) are actively enhancing and developing their neuromarketing and eye tracking technology. Using the most advanced methods, the insight from eye tracking is heightened with the new technology to produce a life-sized virtual conjoint. Earlier online conjoint models often failed to show realistic stimuli to reflect real-life respondent answers, which often led to inaccurate insight into shoppers' buying behavior. But now virtual wall technology can reveal data that is much more accurate. For example, when a CPG client in the snack category needed to optimize product sizes and prices to increase total revenue, IDG leveraged its virtual aisle to create 20 high resolution shelves for participants to shop in a portable, life-sized virtual environment. The virtual wall technology produced a stimulator tool that was calibrated to the client's sales data. The realistic simulations could therefore forecast change and optimize the CPG client's shelf lineup to ultimately increase total revenue by moving forward with the ideal product sizes and price gaps.



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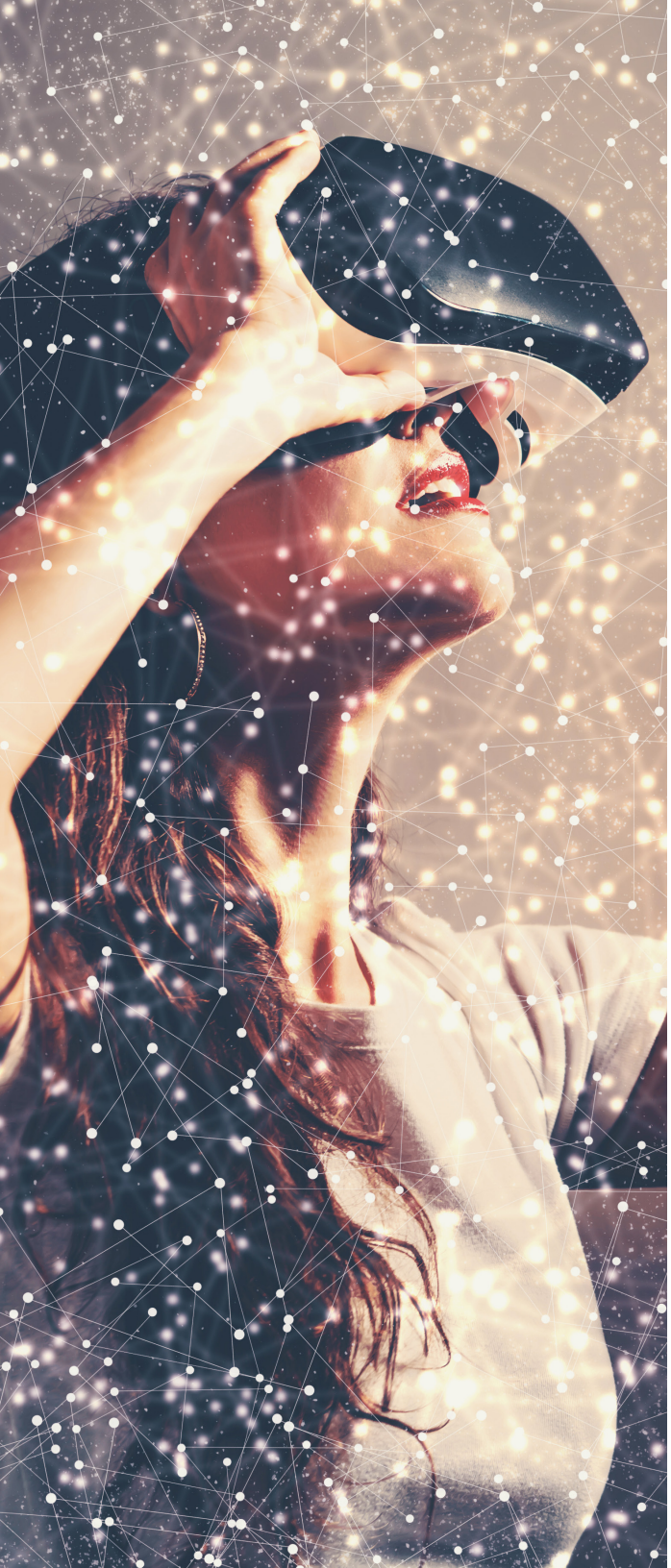

VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality provides a 3D, interactive, immersive experience. It's difficult to deny the potential VR has for making an impact in research. It takes a costly, potentially unheard of, qualitative project, and significantly reduces the price, time and accessibility.

Do you want to understand how consumers experience your brand in a virtual environment, such as a new store layout, but don't want to send consumers from around the world to one physical store? Do you need to understand how customers will experience a new hotel room, without constructing the physical hotel? If you need to place those hard-to-reach respondents in a particular environment, VR is the solution for affordable qualitative research with unrestricted reach. So why are only 14% of respondents using VR according to the 2016 GRIT Report?

The primary barrier has been the failure to provide an adequate testing protocol. Traditional testing methods fall short. Asking a VR user to explain step-by-step what they're doing is inherently rational, not emotional, and would greatly interrupt the VR experience. The point of VR is that it transports the user into a different reality. So when you openly discuss the VR user's involvement, it breaks the experience. Traditional copy testing approaches also fail. While the cost of producing VR experiences is elastic, it is too expensive to create test versions for A/B splits. This kind of testing also measures overly rational variables like purchase intent. Most importantly, this testing can't identify key moments that cause delight or frustration. VR needs a second-by-second readout. Even standard biometrics fail to measure emotion in VR, and facial coding doesn't work because the webcam can't see most of the user's face under the VR headset. Designating areas of interest for eye tracking is difficult in an open-ended, dynamic 3D environment, where users explore at their own pace and

direction. And inputs like body language and posture are critical to understanding what a user is thinking and feeling.

So then how do we access and maximize the value of this technology? Companies such as Isobar provide new programming tools and improved hardware to allow researchers to apply VR to their projects, both large and small. Isobar uses a biometric research platform - an objective, non-intrusive, reliable software to measure human emotional response to visual stimuli. The platform integrates eye tracking, electroencephalography (EEG), galvanic skin response (GSR), electrocardiography (ECG), and facial electromyography (EMG). Users engaged with VR show changes in the electrical resistance of their skin, a physiochemical signal of emotional arousal. On their faces, muscle fibers contract and generate tiny electrical impulses. Heat maps follow what they do and where they go. It permits passive measurement of immersive experiences so the natural flow isn't interrupted, and provides moment-to-moment sensing that lets developers pinpoint elements that enhance or detract from the experience.

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360° STREAMING

One of the best ways to improve the quality and efficiency of qualitative research is to consider those traditional methods made better by technology.

While there have been considerable advancements in new technology to deliver a whole new suite of tools to researchers, some technologies are focused on making what we know today significantly better. Focus groups and other in-person research methodologies are incredibly valuable and remain the “go to” methodologies for qualitative research, but clients unable to attend often list poor video quality of web streaming and lack of stakeholder and brand engagement as detractors of this format. But now new technology delivers live streaming in HD and via 360° view cameras, with better analysis and collaboration tools, to give clients the ability to keep travel teams and expenses minimal while still offering an engaging and collaborative viewing platform to the larger team.

L&E Research has built its own 360° streaming solution and upgraded all of its locations to HD video quality. The platform can be used as an in-house HD camera for vastly improved static camera viewing, or the 360° streaming can be employed using the latest Polycom 5500 camera and audio technology, putting the viewer in the middle of the research. Coupled with tools such as video analysis and speech to text, improved collaboration and engagement from stakeholders anywhere in the world is not only possible, but enhanced to improve analysis and provide key insight for actionable next steps. The 360° streaming solution is also built directly into L&E’s Client Portal making it convenient for clients to access research and videos in one easy, secure place. Clients can find live 24/7 recruiting updates, easy grid download, complete project file storage, video marking and editing tools for their live research making L&E’s Client Portal another facet of technology useful for the researcher.

VIDEO ANALYTICS

Of course, video is the ultimate storytelling medium. It can engage respondents, stakeholders and brands, powering actionable insights for informed business decisions.

And how do you do this at scale? The answer is video analytics. Video analytics allows you to unlock the wealth of data stored within video content, translating real human behavior into insight with speech, actions, and sentiment. It allows you to extract the information needed from rich media on a large scale and at a global level.

Video capture and intelligence platforms from companies such as LivingLens unlock the power of video for insight. The video content is transcribed and analyzed so it becomes searchable, meaning you can quickly find the story and easily navigate to the moments that matter. The video analytics technology can provide insight across a huge range of use cases and methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative. These include consumer behavior through ethnography, ad testing via video interviews, product innovation focus groups, customer experience surveys and much more.

Video research is being used across all sectors, from consumer packages goods (CPG) to telecommunications. Consumers are comfortable in providing video feedback through their own devices, even on sensitive subjects such as healthcare. Health is a hugely personal subject and video can be used to reveal a wealth of data that would be hard to access otherwise. For example, in home diary studies can reveal how consumers feel and what challenges they face in managing their care - right down to how their medicine cabinet is arranged. Feedback can even provide insight into particular pain points or activities in detail, such as something most of us would take for granted, like going upstairs. Being able to see and hear real consumers provides a deeper understanding of how they interact with their environment, and how this makes them feel, which can transform the quality of insight gained from this type of research. This emerging technology means that video research is not only insightful, but practical and cost effective as well.

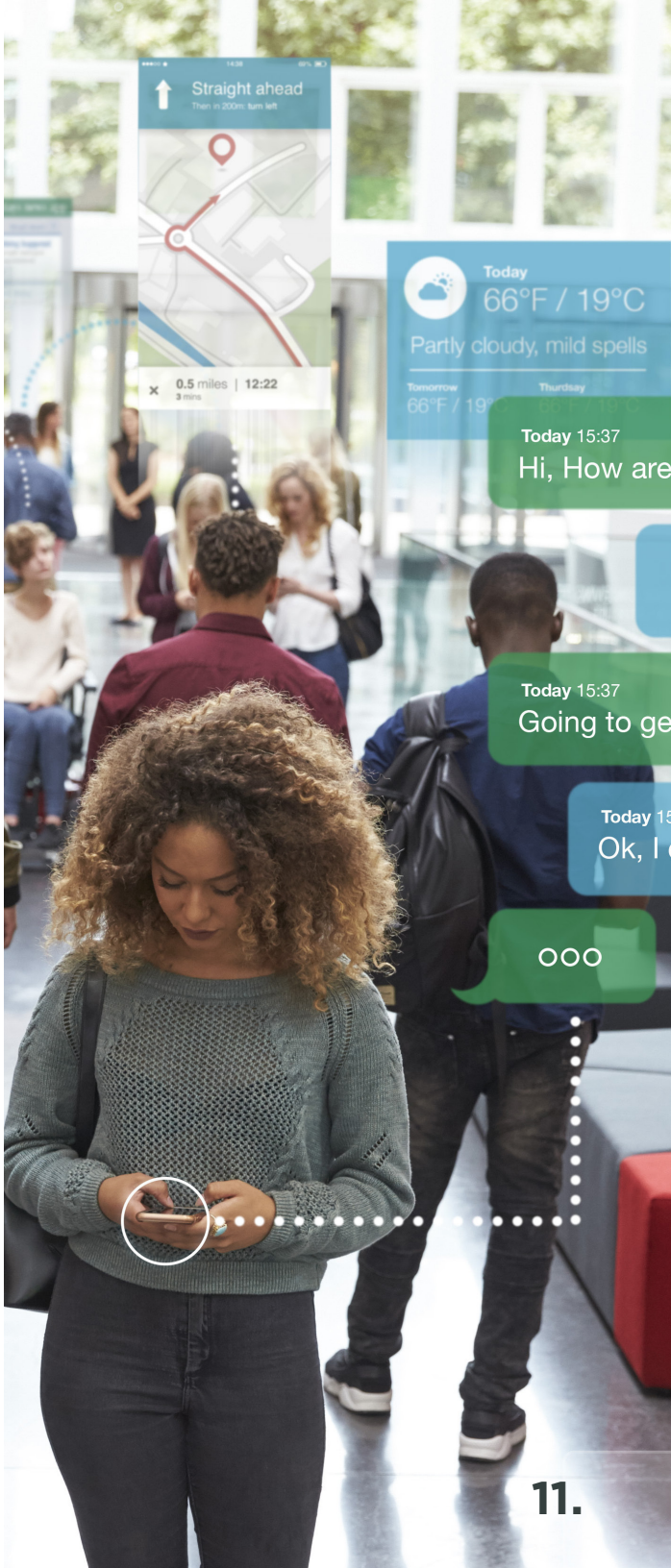
IN-THE-MOMENT ONLINE TOOLS

In order to create engaging data to share with the client or stakeholder, you first need to create engaging studies for the respondents.

Online platforms have changed qualitative research by offering respondents in-the-moment access through mobile and social media, making reach much more cost effective for qualitative research. Many of the tools needed for respondents to fully participate in a study have turned mobile, placing online qual in the hands of consumers to reach across borders and into the consumer's environment.

Online platforms increase accessibility in qualitative research with fast, real-time access to respondent-driven insight. The technology behind online tools offers pre-built and customized activities to engage respondents from start to finish. Online qual platforms such as Aha! incorporate these tools on one simple platform to guarantee an improved respondent experience (which in turn means significantly improved insight).

Collaborative projects and tools are in the hands of the respondent. The platform is engaging and community-oriented which offers customized, collaborative project activities and discussions, ideation, storytelling templates, collage tools, perpetual mapping tools, bulletin boards, video uploads, concept testing, and more, all available online or in a mobile app. Once the data is collected, the platform offers management and analysis tools to drive a compelling story to get the most out of the data.



CONCLUSION – HOW L&E CAN HELP

New technology is inspiring researchers to utilize multiple data points to introduce a 360 degree view of the consumer, offering a solution for the demand for faster, more cost-effective research with more actionable insight on which to base decisions.

L&E's unique team of Research Design Engineers (RDEs) are trained in the latest qualitative research methodologies, and the latest technologies used to execute them, to help guide clients toward finding the right answers to solve their business problems. We know a combination of technology and qualitative approaches will deliver more valuable insight than any approach alone.

So at L&E, we partner with the most reliable, forward-thinking companies to access the latest technology. You'll find the best solutions for your business needs all in one place. We work closely with our partners to provide you with optimal insight led by new research techniques such as neuromarketing, virtual reality, 360° streaming, video analytics and in-the-moment online platforms.

L&E's partnerships offer a one-stop shop to provide the best price and ultimate business convenience, such as handling all procurement and financial requirements to execute a project. Our partners give resource to a combination of new techniques for qualitative research that capitalizes on scale, reach, cost, depth and speed for any project.

L&E research

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