6 STEPS TO PERFECT QUAL
The L&E trust guide to ensure the success of your project

STEP 5
INSIGHT COMMUNICATION

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STEP FIVE: INSIGHT COMMUNICATION

In a world focused on 'how much,' it's qualitative research that digs deep to uncover the truth in consumer behavior. If the goal of qual is to explore rather than confirm, then the best qualitative research is in the art of asking the right questions, with the right people, and sharing the journey they take you on, in order to result in true insight.

Our series of six white papers and webinars is designed to support you every step along the way in your project—to provide a guide to the key elements that will drive success and how we at L&E can help you. Step 5 will guide you through practical tips and tricks to successfully communicate your research to your audience.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATING QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Qualitative research is a powerful link between brands and consumers, putting the true voice of consumer at the heart of a company. But, ultimately no matter how brilliant or insightful the data, qualitative research is only as good as its outputs in terms of deliverables. Done right, communicating qualitative insight can put the client team and stakeholders right into the shoes of their consumers. Done wrong and it's just another dusty report.

Therefore, once qualitative data has been collected, it is crucial to employ the most effective communication methods in order to ensure your insights reach the greater teams and stakeholders—and ultimately support and inspire the decision makers.

> **Even more than with quantitative data, it is important to consider the story you're trying to tell and the technology available to support the storytelling process.**

Of course, since qualitative research relies on language and emotions instead of numbers, your story cannot be summarized with statistics. So, it is particularly necessary with qualitative research results to consider the range of communication choices in order to get your story across. Even more than with quantitative data, it is important to consider the story you're trying to tell and the technology available to support the storytelling process, from software such as PowerPoint and video. Exploring these simple techniques will provide you with a higher rate of success in delivering the right message to your audience.

BUILDING IMPACTFUL COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH STORYTELLING

(WITH PRACTICAL ADVICE IN FINDING THE GOLDEN THREAD IN THE INFORMATION)

Although we live in a world dominated by statistics and numbers that help inform our understanding, in reality, humans are far more often driven by pure emotions. As behavioral economist and Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman said "No one ever made a decision because of a number. They need a story".

Stories are the perfect tool for engaging an audience with a complicated topic, as they have historically been used to share important information while inspiring emotional responses at the same time. In simple terms, they make people care about a topic. Data and insights can be confusing to those who are not perhaps as data-literate as researchers themselves, so storytelling helps to make sense of this complicated material. Just as qualitative research searches for motivations, meanings and opinions in human decisions, humans are designed to search for and consume meaning within the information they are provided. Straight forward,

direct statements or messages are therefore often ineffective because humans don't like being told what to do, and prefer instead to decipher meaning from their own emotional response.

Although the audience is left to interpret the meaning and develop their own emotional response to the story you provide, it does not mean the audience can be left to do all the work. Stories should be elegantly composed to ensure the correct meaning is taken away. To communicate a story effectively and stir the desired emotions, you need a golden thread—a solid structure that weaves its way through your content, holding it together and creating a coherent pathway through the narrative. Think of your content as a map, and plan out your audience's route through the information you want to provide. The structure of the story is important; in most cases it's best to start off with the main insight, or the 'hero', to instantly engage viewers, then work backwards to

explain why the information was important, rather than lead the audience on a circuitous path to a final 'reveal'. With no sense of destination they will often have lost interest along the way

Stories should inform, move and give pleasure to those receiving them. Think about 'massaging' an emotional response out of your audience rather than directly 'messaging' them. Qualitative research explores the complexities of human character and emotion, so when communicating you must remember these intricacies involved in feeling.

Here are some useful tips to consider when creating stories:

» Know and sustain the main point and don't overload the audience with too much information. Be ruthless! If the data does not support the main story, put it in an appendix.

» Understand the audience and what is appropriate for them—How much time do they have to listen to the story? How much context do they need? How much experience of this or similar projects?

» Keep in mind the audience level of expertise—communicate using terminology they understand, but don't lecture them with the knowledge they already have.

» Grab attention with a good headline.

» What you're saying is important, but the personality of the story is just as important.

» Think about visualizing your story so as to make the visual part of the flow, rather than an afterthought

» There are only seven story narratives—think about where your story fits and how to use that as a framework

THE SEVEN STORY NARRATIVES

COMEDY
Plenty of setbacks and mistakes—but happy ending for the hero despite it all!

QUEST
The hero undertakes a difficult journey to achieve a huge goal.

REBIRTH
By facing up to their mistakes, the hero is put on a path to redemption.

RAGS TO RICHES
The hero begins with nothing, but achieves huge success.

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER
The hero must defeat a great obstacle or enemy to set the world to rights.

JOURNEY AND RETURN
Hero travels to faraway or magical places and brings home their secrets

TRAGEDY
The hero falls from grace, thanks mostly to their own flaws.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF COMMUNICATING INSIGHT USING TECHNOLOGY

Of course, technology has improved communication greatly, and although quantitative research is perhaps more widely encompassed by technology, the communication of qualitative information has also been enhanced by technological and digital advancements.

For example, video is often referred to as the ultimate storytelling medium, facilitating one of the most effective ways of communicating not only with participants, but also with clients and stakeholders. Video is a powerful tool because it allows an authenticity that cannot be achieved in writing, and a sense of emotion that impacts the viewer's response. Forbes recently reported that 59% of chief executives would rather watch a video than read text-based alternatives, suggesting that video is a

great way to get research heard by those in key positions. Putting a face to the research allows the process and results to be more relatable and personable, humanizing both the participants and the researchers. Viewers then become more involved in the process.

Word clouds are another effective method of communicating qualitative insights using technology. A word cloud provides a low-cost, easy way to find patterns within data by looking at the frequency of words used. The words used most frequently appear the biggest in the cloud, offering an immediate reaction to the predominant ideas. The diagrams are engaging and allow patterns to be explored where previously they may have been difficult or time consuming to spot. They are an effective communication tool

because they are easy to understand, easy to share and make a big impact. The word cloud tools are very user friendly. There are several websites available to create word clouds, but one of the most common is Worldle.

New technology is also moving fast in the area of audio-to-text, and even potentially video-to-text. This offers researchers new opportunities for communicating data in different formats.

59% of chief executives would rather watch a video than read text-based alternatives.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF DELIVERABLES SUCH AS POWERPOINT

The tool most commonly used for communicating insights is still PowerPoint. But your PowerPoint need not be boring or ugly! With so many options for style and design, making the most of all of the tools available on software such as PowerPoint can seem slightly unmanageable. But mastering good PowerPoint skills can greatly improve your ability to communicate with the audience you're trying to reach.

Here are some tips for getting the most from your PowerPoint presentation:

Keep it simple. The key to good communication both visually and verbally is keeping it simple and getting straight to the point. Make sure you only include the information that needs to be communicated in order to make your point, and pare back visual clutter on slides as much as possible. Make sure your research sticks with the audience by limiting each key point to its own slide.

Cater to your audience. Try to put yourself in the shoes of your audience. What is their level of expertise level? Are they C-suite? Do they need a short top-line presentation or a more in-depth explanation? Then tailor your output to suit your audience.

> " **Mastering good Powerpoint skills can greatly improve your ability. to communicate with the audience you're trying to reach.**

Tell a story using the information in your PowerPoint. Create a hook and weave a golden thread throughout.

Be consistent. Be very consistent throughout the entire presentation. Try to use similar colors, font sizes, and positioning on every slide. Fonts can be tricky; the chosen font needs to be appropriate for the way in which the PowerPoint will be used. For example, if the client plans to use the presentation as a report, smaller fonts are acceptable, but bear in mind it must be easy to read and consistent throughout. In addition, many fancy fonts cannot be used unless they are on the recipient's computer, so make sure to PDF the report or presentation before sending.

Involve the brand. Bear in mind the brand of the company template you are using. Try to stick to the corporate colors, style and fonts.

Don't overlook the layout. Considering the slide layout is a crucial aspect of PowerPoint design. The slides must be simple. Avoid cluttering the information, and allow the slide some white space so that it doesn't feel overwhelming to the viewer.

Take advantage of icons. Use icons consistently as way markers throughout your presentation, but never scatter them randomly and always stick to the same style within the presentation. The Noun Project is an icon library that allows you to select and color icons to be consistent with your design. Icons should be used to identify and flag specific points of information. For example, you might use a banknote icon to flag 'value for money' or a heart icon for 'love the brand'. Using consistent icons, the audience will become familiar with the icons, such as relating a heart to brand love.

Tell your story. Tell a story using the information, create a hook and weave a golden thread throughout. A contents page will give an overview of your presentation and help to maintain the golden thread throughout, sector dividers can also really help with signposting.

Support it with visuals. Visuals are important and if chosen carefully can help tell the story. The chosen visuals should support the story, rather than distract. Decide which visuals tell the story best. A great free resource is Pexels.

Videos for authenticity. As discussed, the use of videos within presentations and reports will make the research more authentic, but be aware of the technical limitations and ensure you test (and test again) to ensure they work.

IMPACTFUL CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS AND DELIVERABLES: HOW L&E CAN HELP

It's important to create engaging deliverables so the recipients become involved in the research and you don't waste time and money—or other valuable resources.

If a client is engaged, they will be inspired to listen to your research and make informed decisions based on fully understanding their consumers. And they will come back for more! The technology and software available make it easy to create these engaging deliverables from videos and PowerPoints. These tools help you to weave in effective storytelling to inspire imagination and emotional responses, ultimately wowing audiences and allowing them to recognize the true worth of the data they're receiving.

L&E Research holds the power to 360° cameras, the most advanced video streaming and analytics platforms, high quality transcription services, and easy-to-use online portals to help qualitative researchers source the information they need, and quickly find the optimal story to share it with their client in an engaging way. Whether it's through the use of humanizing video, or valuable insight from recorded interviews, L&E's technology will help qualitative research consultants communicate the best story to engage stakeholders.

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