



## **Online market research**

*Insight managers and marketing research managers*

### **Lindridge:**

And what are the trends in, certainly the market research industry's movement away from calling people Market Research Managers, to Insight Managers, have you come across that?

### **Jackson:**

I'd say it's got to the point where they are all Insight Managers now. We very rarely meet a medium to large size company where what used to be the Market Research Manager is anything other than an Insight Manager.

### **Lindridge:**

So what is the difference then between an Insight Manager and a Marketing Research Manager?

### **Jackson:**

The answer's in the name. An Insight Manager is supposed to have insight, they're more of a consultant. In fact, reading a few articles before I met you, and doing my own little bit of research, there's a forecast in the Market Research Society Journal that more Management Consultants will come in and run Market Research Departments, that may already be happening. Although the people I'm meeting and dealing with my clients tend to be people who've come up through the market research route. Insight denotes consultancy, ability to see across the whole piece. I think what's changed most of all is that the people we deal with, who are Insight Managers, are handling the whole market intelligence field. Traditionally they might have bought qualitative or bought quantitative research, they're now almost certainly running internal data collection. They way well be in charge of the company's database of consumers or customers, they may be in charge of strategic thinking, they may be what, I always hate the term, Thought Leaders, they're asked to do a lot more in terms of strategic development, or thought development. They're doing a much wider job. They're doing qualitative, they're doing quantitative, they're doing internal data and the manipulation of that internal data.

**Lindridge:**

How does that correspond to the current economic climate, which is generally recession in Britain and in Europe and America's not doing particularly well, how is all of that affecting the marketing research industry?

**Jackson:**

I think what we're seeing, and again some of the journal information, some of the research magazine information seems to indicate that there are less projects, but they're bigger and they're more important, there's less room perhaps to play around with hunches. This is partly economic, but partly I think to do with bringing a more strategic way of thinking to bear on the business. So the days when, towards the end of the financial year, a market researcher might be rung up and said look, we've got a few pounds left over in the budget Peter, why don't we do something we've been thinking of doing about, which is looking at this tiny little bit of the market, or doing a bit of blue-skies thinking through market research.

**Lindridge:**

To sum up our podcast, what one piece of advice would you give then to a Marketing Manager, or manager anyway, who's going to buy in some marketing research or some customer insights?

**Jackson:**

I think the best way to do it, there are lots of best ways to do it, but I've grown, over the years, to be a, someone who thinks that a lot of market research should be done by walking about and tripping over the subject. Going and talking to your customer, going out and meeting the shopkeeper, if that's your channel of distribution, going out and meeting the wholesaler, going out and meeting your staff, if that's the way, learning a little bit for yourself. Being a market researcher's taught me something about finding out for yourself and I think going along, and we always encourage our, our clients to come along to every focus group we do, to come out with us when we're doing depth interviews, come out and perhaps do some of that research themselves and find out how difficult it is. One of the worst things you can do as a market researcher, one of the most difficult things is actually go and interview on the street, but you've got to do it once to find out how difficult it really is. So I think it's management by walking about and tripping over things, going into the research companies, by the same token. Going along with their interviewers and seeing how they collect and screen interview Jacksons. Going into the street and going into the shop and going into where the staff are operating and finding out things first hand. I think that's the starting point, and then building good relationships with your suppliers, whether they're qualitative or quantitative, and giving them a chance to tell you what they really think about what your brief is like, because quite often one of the biggest barriers we have is, I hope none of my clients are listening to this, I'm

sure they're not, they're writing briefs even as we speak, but dreadful briefs, somebody needs to tell them.

**Lindridge:**

And on that note I'd like to thank you Peter for coming into the Open University and taking your time to answer our questions.

**Jackson:**

Thank you Andrew, it's been a pleasure.