



Research Voice Become part of the solution

Mission

Reconnecting people and research

Research Voice, an industry-wide initiative launched by SSI, invites everyone involved in research to come together and develop innovative ways to preserve and grow the pool of research participants. Research Voice members are exploring progressive, interactive research environments which people will find more satisfying than today's outmoded survey model. The millions of blogs that exist on the Internet suggest that people do want to share their opinions. They just want to do so in a way that fits into their lifestyle.

Research Voice builds on past research-on-research and seeks continued research on engagement, participation, and quality issues. In this way, we will learn how to:

- encourage and motivate people to take part in research;
- engage people how and when they want to be engaged;
- design questionnaires and methodologies that energize people, and;
- give people the respect they are due as this industry's core clients.

In support of this movement, SSI has launched www.research-voice.com, a dynamic forum where suppliers, researchers, end-clients, academia, consultants, associations, and research participants can meet and share ideas.

Whether we are engaging people in surveys, asking them to take part in ethnographic exercises, observing their behavior, or merely listening to them as they talk among themselves, we must ensure that they emerge intrigued, delighted, satisfied, and willing to do it all over again.

We're all responsible for making change happen. For our industry to prosper, everyone in the industry must transform their relationship with the people who participate in research.

Background

Research Voice is a full-scale program to preserve and grow the pool of people wanting to participate in market, opinion, and social research by providing them with a rich and enjoyable participant experience. It aims to educate, support, and inspire those involved in the marketing research industry to place people who give their time and opinions front and center. It is these people who, by sharing their insights, experiences, and opinions, help businesses stay informed and reduce risk in decision-making.

For many years, the available pool of people willing to participate in surveys has been shrinking. However, evidence strongly suggests that this is not indicative of people not wanting to have their opinions heard.

Quite the contrary: the 92 million blogs that exist on the Internet would suggest that there is an extraordinarily robust conversation going on and that people do want to be heard. They just want to do so under their own rules.

Why is this? It's partly a societal change – people are less automatically subservient to authority; partly technological – Web 2.0 has opened up a whole new way for people to interact; and partly environmental – people are used to a rich and satisfying experience and shy away from poorly designed and presented questionnaires (especially online).

Market research has been very slow to adapt to these changes. It is inherently authoritarian and interrogatory; does not allow for interaction (it's a one-way conversation); and presents participants with an environment (the questionnaire) that is arid and unsatisfying. As a result, marketing research's most important resource – high quality data from engaged participants – is under threat. The main sources of poor-quality responses are fatigue, boredom, poorly designed surveys, inappropriate rewards, and an overall failure to make the survey-taking experience one that most people would find appealing.

Research Participation Initiative

The Research Participation Initiative is one of Research Voice's initial movements. People who take surveys are our industry's clients. The Initiative proposes that we listen to what people tell us about their experiences with research exercises. Based on their preferences, we must transform the research relationship and provide better engagement methods, questionnaires that are designed with the participant in mind, environments that are richer and more satisfying, and compensation that is meaningful and relevant.

The Research Participation Initiative aims, through collaboration, joint experimentation, and knowledge sharing, to transform the research experience and so grow the pool of people willing and wanting to participate in research.

Benefits of Membership

Research Voice (www.research-voice.com) is a dynamic, interactive forum where all members of the research community – suppliers, researchers, end-clients, academia, consultants, associations, and research participants themselves – can meet, discuss, research, refer, promote, and learn.

Through research-voice.com, all members can download and upload papers. Members are encouraged to initiate conversations and post comments on a dedicated blog within the site; research participants can share what they did and did not enjoy about their previous research experiences.

Meet and discuss: research-voice.com is a community of like-minded members who will be able to participate in one-to-one and one-to-many communication and discussion, both moderated and not moderated.

Research: all members are encouraged to post their research-on-research findings on the site as well as to participate in and contribute to new research studies on participant engagement and best practices.

Refer: members are encouraged to refer other members to sources, materials, suppliers, and other resources that they feel embody best practices.

Learn: the site houses a library of research-on-research, public studies, and academic findings with which to promote learning and best practices. This includes a transparent database of participant satisfaction data contributed by members.

As a member of Research Voice, you will:

- Be the first to learn about new research-on-research into participant issues;
- Help shape research-on-research projects on research participation issues;
- Gain easy access to resources on best practices in questionnaire design, the latest thinking on rewards, the opinions of participants, and information on many other participant-related topics;
- Network among other researchers who care about quality research and the participant experience;
- Engage in debate on issues impacting the quality of research; and
- Have a voice in setting the right industry standards to preserve our key assets.

FAQs

How were members of the Advisory Board chosen?

Members of the Research Voice Advisory Board are industry leaders who demonstrate a commitment to serve as respondent advocates as well as a desire to work with a group of like organizations to change the participant experience and preserve the pool of survey participants.

Does any organization have to contribute financially?

Research Voice encourages member-sponsored research-on-research. There will be opportunities to contribute in various ways, including financially, but this is not a requirement for membership.

Is this SSI's initiative?

SSI spearheaded the initiative but it is run by industry leaders. SSI is sponsoring a website and will be contributing financially, along with other members of the industry, to the program of research-on-research.

How is this different from all the other quality initiatives being undertaken by associations?

Research Voice is different from other industry quality initiatives in that it focuses on the belief that high quality research can only be achieved by providing people with a satisfying experience when they give their opinions. It is the only forum that invites all members of the Marketing Research chain – suppliers, researchers, end clients, consultants, associations, and participants themselves – to share and discuss their perspectives.

Research Voice's Research Participation Initiative focuses on ensuring a positive participant experience rather than blaming participants for poor data quality. Listening to, respecting, and appreciating people makes them feel valued and ultimately results in good data quality.

If I join, what exactly am I committing to?

Research Voice members commit to exploration and debate, along with industry colleagues, of issues of participant experience and data quality; working with other members of the industry to understand research from the participant's perspective, and enhancing the participant experience, thereby ensuring a strong opinion research industry.

What action has SSI taken to support the Research Voice mission?

SSI has conducted research-on-research on data quality and the participant experience, and is sharing the

results through Webinars, White Papers, and industry presentations.

Are industry associations involved?

All associations are strongly encouraged to join.

Are panel providers involved?

All panel providers are strongly encouraged to join.

Who should join the movement?

Marketing research suppliers, researchers, end-clients, academia, consultants, associations, and research participants themselves are encouraged to join Research Voice.

Research Engagement guidelines:

- **Give people a research experience they can complete when they're ready.** Through effective profiling and careful screening, minimize the number of rejection (e.g., screenout and over quota) experiences for participants.
- **Respect people's time and goodwill.** Create a research exercise which answers the research question in as short a time as possible.
- **Provide an enjoyable research experience.** Ensure language is respectful and clear, routing is correct, technical errors are minimized, and design is effective. Provide a contemporary online experience that reflects the current Internet environment. If by telephone, ensure that interviewers are trained in best practices of customer engagement.
- **Respect preferences.** Contact people when and how they want (e.g., by expanding the field time as much as possible). Give prompt, helpful responses when people comment on the exercise or ask questions.
- **Give appropriate rewards.** Respect people's preferences.
- **Explain what's going on.** Market research shouldn't be a mystery. Give people context; explain why surveys look the way they do and how they impact business and society.
- **Respect people's interest level.** Offer a convenient way for people to communicate that the research topic is of no interest, or that they want to pause or quit a research exercise.
- **Do not nag.** Avoid repetitive reminders and wording like "last chance," which makes people feel guilty and harassed.
- **Treat participants like clients.** Take care over their experience: no broken links, wrong languages, or typos.

Advisory Board Members

Anderson Analytics, LLC, Tom H. C. Anderson, Managing Partner
Bernett Research, Andrew Hayes, Managing Director
Brainjuicer, John Kearon, Founder and Chief Juicer
Cambiar Consulting, Simon Chadwick, Partner
GfK NOP, Mike Cooke, Global Director: Online Development
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Nielsen, Christine Le brun, Global DA Governance-CPS Recruitment & Retention Leader
Nielsen, Raphael Prout, Europe Product Leadership, Practice Area Leader-Segmentation & Targeting
SSI, Kees de Jong, CEO
YouGov Polimetrix, Douglas Rivers, Ph.D., President and CEO

Bloggers

The Advisory Board Members plus

Pete Cape, SSI Global Knowledge Director
Jackie Lorch, SSI Vice President, Global Knowledge Management