



the CROW Chronicle

And so the holiday season draws to a close and as we return to work, most marketeers are struck by the same thought: *why don't I become a pool cleaner and then I can be on holiday the whole year around?* For most of us, this is swiftly followed by the realisation that we don't know anything about cleaning swimming pools and so instead we focus on two very important tasks: planning the big projects that are going to step-change brand performance and planning the next family holiday to a pool somewhere sunny. Yet we go about them in very different ways. Why? The subject for this **research edition** of The Crow Chronicle*...



The Nest and the Egg

Let's face it, as we get our feet back under the table at work, the holiday planning takes precedence and we immerse ourselves in the research for it. Every source and anyone of value to the decision is engaged: friends and family, consumer reviews, pricing comparisons –the lot. By using them, we **maximise our chances** of finding the perfect holiday and minimise the risk of disappointment and wasted money.

Yet ironically, and increasingly, for big marketing projects research is questioned. It may be because of experience of researching a project to death (which inevitably leads to inaction) or receiving an overly researchy, non-commercial answer (which often leads to a recommendation to do more research!) or just a general sense that the research has merely *described the past*. It's so easy to listen to the research naysayers who belittle its value and instead advocate riding with the white knights of 'big data', off-the-shelf industry reports, or frankly, personal intuition and a survey cobbled together on Twitter.

At The Crow Flies we're not curmudgeons, advocating that you should simply do what you've always done and damn the consequences. But at its best, we see the value in well constructed research, when engaged consumers and engaged clients are brought together over the right questions to uncover commercial solutions to commercial opportunities.

The Crow approach to managing research powerfully is to think about The Nest and The Egg. '**The Nest**' is the research framework. Neither too broad in scope nor too shallow in depth and focused on fuelling decision making. '**The Egg**' is how research participants and client stakeholders are immersed, involved and fully engaged in incubating the project to deliver results that can be leveraged with scale and impact.

Get this balance right and research can **significantly increase your chance of delivering commercial success** on those next big projects before you head off on that very well researched family holiday...

The Nest – focused, usable, scalable

1. The critical 5%

Research is typically around 5% of your budget – but it's the most critical 5%, everything else hangs off it. Give it focus; give it attention and it will deliver.

2. Ask for your answer

Too many research projects don't go far enough. Uncovering consumers' unmet needs is only the start. Finding out how your brand can solve them should be the output - which brings us on to...

3. ...focus on the interface

Brands are not built on research, strategy, planning or innovation...they are built **at the interface** of the four. Set-up your research and all the parties involved to ensure the outputs directly inform action.

4. Methodology blah blah

We know people find new research techniques exciting but often they promise more than they deliver. Focus your brief first and foremost on finding the unmet consumer needs that unlock commercial success and don't fret about the technique

5. Usable utility

Elaborate videos & complex segmentation models are of no use if they don't build shared understanding & uncover new, usable insights. Prioritise outputs that will help the marketing team to make decisions and the sales team to scale up your brands, profitably

For a different approach to market research and brand building that maximises your chances of delivering commercial success, get in touch

The Egg – immersive, informal, impactful

1. De-objectify the process

Consumers are real people. They'll only tell you what they really think if they feel comfortable & relaxed. Informal is the new formal and releases real truths.

2. Go long

Longitudinal and dialogue techniques will cast light on how consumers actually behave over time. These fresh perspectives can unlock real value.

3. Get engaged

Time is short & attention spans ever shorter. Put engagement at the heart of the process – give quant studies personality, reduce the length of interviews. Focus on what's essential to learn.

4. Raw not just scrambled

There's a role for the formal debrief but raw can be better. 'Live' debriefs the night of research, open dialogue & discussion for big opportunities at pace.

5. Sunny side up

Consumers are marketing savvy and love to get creative. Don't just ask them to tell you their frustrations, involve them in creating the solutions. It's amazing what they come up with

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