White Paper

Understanding Respondent Motivation

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Introduction

As an industry, we understand little about why people take part in research and, perhaps more importantly, why they do not. We pride ourselves on being able to formulate questions and research studies to describe and explain the manner of consumer activities and behaviours. However, regarding the key issue of why people will not take part in research, we are hamstrung by our own methods – we simply cannot force someone to answer a survey who has no desire to participate in marketing research.

The more general use of online access panels to conduct research brings this question into sharp relief. Panels, by their nature, are made up of people willing and able to participate in research. If we do not learn from history regarding response rates, we may be forced to repeat them with online panels, with disastrous consequences.

Therefore, we need to look to other disciplines to better understand this aspect of consumer behaviour and to adapt our industry where needed in order to increase response rates.

Summary

The decline of online response rates can be slowed with a dedicated effort to improve the respondent experience. By understanding the psychology of the online interview, researchers can present respondents with questionnaires that increase their satisfaction. Both the initial approach and the end of the interview must foster positive emotions by including words and phrases that encourage feelings of autonomy, competence, relatedness, and value. It is vital that the use of these forms of speech becomes second nature to researchers using online methodology.

Our Knowledge of Human Motivation

Psychology concerns itself with "the study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behaviour in a given context" (Oxford English Dictionary). Most people in marketing related occupations will have some knowledge of the history of psychology and its more famous practitioners, experiments, and theories. The maxim, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," could never be more apposite as we in the marketing research business attempt to manipulate motivation to both increase response and improve data quality.

Psychology is a relatively new science, born out of the great tradition of Philosophy. It emerged in the late 1800s with the establishment of the first psychology laboratories in 1875 in Leipzig by Wilhelm Wundt and in the same year at Harvard by William James.

James' students at Harvard included Edward Thorndike whose later experiments (1898) with cats and puzzle boxes lead to the formulation of the 'law of effect,' which holds that responses to stimuli producing a satisfying or pleasant "state of affairs" in a particular situation are more likely to occur again in the situation. Conversely, responses that produce a discomforting, annoying, or unpleasant effect are less likely to occur again in the situation.

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At the same time, Ivan Pavlov (a Russian physiologist; not a psychologist) had been researching the physiology of digestion – specifically the salivation of dogs in the presence of food. His experiments with associative stimuli (the ringing of a bell in conjunction with the presentation of food, and later the ringing of the bell alone still resulting in salivation) led him to create a science of conditioned reflexes. This work, although justly famous now, did not become widely known outside scientific circles until the 1920s.

The Behaviourist School, as it became known, would go on to dominate the field for the first half of the 20th century.

Preeminent amongst the Behaviourists is the work of BF Skinner. His experiments were built on the 'classical conditioning' of stimulus-response as described by Pavlov, and expanded on Thorndike's law of effect. Skinner experimented with rats and pigeons, using what has come to be known as the Skinner Box. Within the box, behaviours such as pressing a lever, are met with a series of consequences such as the delivery of food. Operant Conditioning, the term used by Skinner to describe the consequential effects of a particular behavior on the future occurrence of that behavior, has five types:

Positive reinforcement – a behaviour is strengthened by the consequence of experiencing a positive condition.
Negative reinforcement - a behaviour is strengthened by the consequence of stopping a negative condition.
Positive punishment – a behaviour is weakened by the consequence of experiencing an aversive condition.
Negative punishment – a behaviour is weakened by the consequence of experiencing the removal of a positive condition.
Extinction – occurs when a previously re-enforced behavior is no longer effective, positive reinforcement is absent, or negative reinforcement or punishment occurs.

Behaviourist experiments continued to demonstrate operant conditioning working in practice with both animals (it is how animals are trained to this day) and with human subjects. Many of these experiments with humans would be considered unethical now. The case of Albert B. is probably the most famous behaviourist experiment. Albert B. was the child of a worker at the clinic of John B. Watson and Rosalie Rayner. At the age of nine months, Albert was exposed briefly, and for the first time, to a number of stimuli to check his emotional response. Exposure to a white rat, a rabbit, a dog, a monkey, masks with and without hair, cotton wool, and burning newspapers produced no fear in Albert (as they would not in any normal nine month old). Albert was then encouraged to show fear by the striking of a metal bar with a hammer producing a loud noise. As would be expected of a child of this age, the loud sudden sound produced a fear reaction in Albert.

At the age of 11 months, further experiments with Albert were enacted. A white rat was introduced to Albert and, as he reached forward to touch the animal, the metal bar was struck again. Albert's reaction was one of fear. The experiment was repeated a week later with the same reaction and then, as the white rat was introduced to Albert (without the accompanying loud sound), he showed fear. Some days later, the rat was presented, again alone, to Albert and he showed fear.

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As the experiments continued, Albert transferred his fear response to a number of other objects: a rabbit, a dog, a fur coat, and even Watson himself wearing a Santa Claus mask!

As a final note: Albert B. was removed from the hospital before any re-conditioning (to remove the conditioned responses) could be undertaken. Speculation as to his future psychological state continues to this day whilst James B. Watson went on to have a distinguished career in advertising with J Walter Thompson!

The largely mechanistic view of the Behaviourists contrasted sharply with the tradition of thought coming from Philosophy and would most likely have been unrecognizable to Wundt.

The Cognitive Approach to psychology re-introduced a more human dimension. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory all bought human needs and desires back into the equation.

Maslow's Hierarchy is probably the best known theory to non-psychologists and is usually presented in the form of a pyramid. It posits that humans have needs in which they seek to satisfy and these needs have a rank order starting with the physiological (food, water, air, and sleep); moving through safety and security (structure, order, security, and predictability); then love and belonging (friends and companions, a supportive family, identification with a group, and an intimate relationship); to esteem (recognition from other people that results in feelings of prestige, acceptance and status, and self-esteem that results in feelings of adequacy, competence, and confidence). All these needs are deemed "D-needs" or "deficiency needs." An absence of D-needs causes anxiety (and requires them to be met) but once satisfied, the individual feels nothing.

At the top of the pyramid is the need for self-actualisation (personal growth and fulfillment); these needs are not deficiency needs.

In 1970, Maslow revised his hierarchy to include the desire to "know and understand" and the "aesthetic" needs. He placed these needs above self-actualisation. Most textbooks and management theories ignore this revision or mis-order these needs.

At this point, one would contend that the preceding description is the extent of marketing researcher's knowledge of psychological and human motivation.

How does this (Lack of) Knowledge inform the way we treat respondents?

In common with other sciences, marketing researchers rarely refer to the people who fill out our surveys as people – we call them respondents. (Some) psychologists call people "organisms," and philosophers refer to people as "agents." This de-humanising would seem to imply that we are more squarely in the behaviourist camp than the cognitive.

Behaviourism would suggest that in order to elicit a response we need to produce a stimulus and for the stimulus to be effective on an ongoing basis, it needs to be re- enforced. We, however, have generally been loath to offer incentives for surveys based on the premise, "if we pay this time, we

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will have to pay every time, and they will want more!" – a purely behaviourist view of the world. In addition, most traditional research practitioners are not particularly concerned with the re-enforcing aspect, wanting a "fresh" sample for each research project.

We cannot then be operating within a pure operant conditioning model.

Research has worked by trying to appeal to esteem needs within the Maslow hierarchy – interviewers ask for "help" with this "important" survey and they tell respondents that they have been "chosen" to take part in this research. Marketing research associations have marketed the industry in terms of "your opinion counts" and political opinion polls are given great credence in the media. Respondents are supposed to receive "esteem" in return for giving us their opinions.

Thanks, however, to the Internet along with other media, and in no small part to our own actions, the myth of esteem is being broken. The public now knows that marketing research is conducted for commercial reasons and our clients spend billions with us, little of which ends up in the hands of the people giving up their time and effort to supply us with knowledge. Examples are easy to find:

> **"Get paid cash" online survey companies** have been around on the Internet for a long time, but very few have paid people for their valuable time properly. We've reviewed all the offers below and have found these get paid for online surveys offers to be some of the best around – you can begin to earn cash today!

> Every year companies in the United States and abroad spend literally billions of dollars on market research from people just like you. Why? Good question... It's really a very simple and lucrative concept when you think about it. Companies that market products or services need to know what the consumer wants and needs. They need to know what will entice the consumer to go out and purchase their products or services. Without this input, these companies would have a very small chance to succeed. And this is why your opinion is so valuable.

People understanding this reality may need more than a vague promise of esteem to participate in a market research survey. We as an industry have also attempted to convince respondents that they may learn something about themselves by taking part in research – appealing to the levels above 'self-actualization.' Given the subject matter of a great deal of research conducted I would contend that in many cases, a promise of esteem is an empty promise.

If we only view the world in these psychological terms, then we will struggle to reverse the current decline in response rates within the confines of our current business model.

Newer thinking in Psychology

Festinger's Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (1956) allows us to get closer to the issues surrounding choices and how they are made on an individual basis. Every person approached for interview of course has the free choice to take part or not.

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Dissonance is a psychological anxiety, an uncomfortable state of mind. Rational humans will seek to reduce dissonance. Dissonance occurs when two cognitions (elements of knowledge) are relevant to each other and opposite/contradictory to each other. An example might be a smoker who enjoys cigarettes but is also aware of the damage cigarette smoking is doing to his health.

Dissonance can be reduced by either reducing the importance of the conflicting beliefs, acquiring new beliefs that change the balance, or removing the conflicting attitude or behavior. For the dissonant smoker, he may also believe that smoking suppresses appetite and that being over-weight is a greater threat to health than smoking.

Alternatively, he may discount some of the health warnings as bad science or point to a 95 year old smoker as a role model.

One model within the theory will be familiar to most researchers – the Free Choice paradigm. In this paradigm, once a free choice has been made then dissonance will occur. All of the negative cognitions about the chosen object and all of the positive cognitions of the rejected ones will be in conflict. People reduce the dissonance by increasing the positive cognitions about the chosen object and making the rejected ones less positive. In research terms we call this "Post Purchase Justification" and it will be very familiar to anyone involved in Automotive research for example.

J. Brehm (1956) conducted an experiment to test the Free Choice paradigm. Under the guise of market research (the first example of "psyugging" perhaps?), Housewives were asked to rate a number of appliances on desirability. They were then asked to choose an appliance for themselves. Post choice, the desirability ratings were taken once more. The chosen appliance was rated more highly than it had been before, and the rejected ones less highly rated. This effect was more marked where the two choices had originally been more closely and highly rated (i.e. it was a difficult choice) than if there was greater distance between them. This is a classic example of post purchase justification and an explanation as to why it seldom occurs with purchasing a box of matches!

However, Cognitive Dissonance Theory, as an overall theory of motivation and behaviour (which it does not purport to be), is lacking. People are viewed as almost bouncing from choice to choice seeking stasis in their psyche rather than moving towards some higher or future goal.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is one of the latest theories that seeks a more generalised approach. The major proponents of SDT are Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan of the University of Rochester. The theory assumes that "people are active organisms, with innate tendencies toward psychological growth and development," who, "strive to master ongoing challenges and to integrate their experiences into a coherent sense of self." It "requires ongoing nutriments and supports from the social environment in order to function effectively," that is to say, "the social context can either support or thwart the natural tendencies toward active engagement and psychological growth."

SDT distinguishes between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action. The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome.

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Tasks completed with intrinsic motivation are characterised by high quality, creativity, and enjoyment on the part of the doer.

It is interesting to note that extrinsic motivation covers any kind of separable outcome including peer approval or an altruistic act, which are often referred to as intrinsic motivation within marketing research.

Motivation then depends on the person, the task, and the social context. People do not have a "single" motivation nor does the same task have the same level of motivation for an individual each time it is performed.

Motivation is viewed, under SDT, as a continuum that is neither hierarchical nor uni- directional.

Amotivation		Lacking an intention to act. Activity has no value, Person feels non-competent, No belief a desired outcome will be achieved
Extrinsic Motivation	External Regulation	Performed to satisfy an external demand To obtain an externally imposed reward
	Introjection	Performed under pressure To enhance or maintain esteem
	Identification	Accepting the value of the action
	Integration	Act is congruent with beliefs and values
Intrinsic Motivation		Action will be undertaken in the absence of any reward

Performance of a given task is seen to improve (both from an output perspective and from the performer's well-being) as motivation moves "up" the scale.

A key point on the continuum is the step between Introjection and Identification. At Identification, the person has identified with the personal importance of a behaviour and comes to accept it as their own. The final stage of extrinsic motivation (Integration) shares many qualities with Intrinsic motivation; both are autonomous and no conflict (dissonance) occurs.

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A person's position on the continuum for any given task will depend on their prior experience and their current social situation (context). Movement along the continuum is not dependent on the task itself but more about externalizing or internalizing the focus of causality ("they are making me do this" versus "I am doing this myself"), the relative autonomy ("I am free to do this task") and perceived competence ("I performed that task really well").

One extremely interesting finding of SDT research is that rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation, because rewards undermine autonomy. This is a complete contradiction of what behaviourist psychology would predict. The effect is shown to be more pronounced when linked to a person's individual performance.

What The Newer Theories Imply for Market Research

Cognitive Dissonance theory usefully helps us understand the process leading to a choice (to do the survey or not). By recognizing that people have knowledge (cognition) of marketing research and other related cognitions, we can seek to reduce dissonance in our invitations and personal approaches. Knowing, however, that post behaviour revaluation of cognitions takes place means that we need to ensure that the experience of doing research is in line with or exceeds the pre-existing cognition.

SDT has interesting implications for how research should be positioned both before and perhaps more importantly, after interview. We know that feelings of autonomy need to be fostered to help "internalize the regulation" (i.e. make the respondent want to take part in research of their own free will) and that perceived competence must be encouraged. The end of the survey process has tended to consist of too much of a thank-you and a "if you have any doubts about our bona fides please call" – actions almost guaranteed to produce feelings of discomfort. Feedback on survey performance is something we may have to learn to give and develop the appropriate mechanisms and language for giving it.

Research is (probably) positioned in the main at the External Regulation and Introjection points on the continuum although there is evidence (Comley and others) of people reporting that they do surveys because "they like giving their opinion." To what extent this is a self-serving re-evaluation of a cognition rather than a strongly held belief is open to debate. We approach respondents with the offer of a reward (often small) or subtly pressurize the respondent into taking part by appealing to their sense of altruism (Pro- Social behaviour) or politeness (Politeness Theory).

We certainly need to stop thinking of respondents as an infinite resource that we can plunder for our own ends without concern for the future of the industry. We must develop new techniques in order to re-engage respondents. These techniques must meet the needs of both the respondents themselves as well as the research industry.

Why does this Matter So Much to An Online Access Panle Company?

As an online access panel provider we are responsible for providing respondents to surveys. We have little or no control over what the panelist is exposed to yet the commercial reality is that we have to deliver interviews.

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Unlike traditional research methods, we are particularly interested in the reinforcing of (research) behaviour. We have a finite resource, which cost money to build and develop, and the industry as a whole is forcing down revenues per interview. The more we can do to motivate our panelists, the easier they will be to recruit and retain.

The knee-jerk (behaviourist?) reaction is to offer monetary rewards for undertaking surveys. SDT tells us that this may have a detrimental effect on motivation. Cognitive Dissonance tells us that the amount of the reward (often quite small) may cause dissonance ("you want my valuable opinion and you offer me this?") that may be difficult to overcome whilst remaining a panelist.

If we can move people along the SDT motivation continuum towards intrinsic motivation, then the result should be better response rates to surveys (therefore less email invitation 'intrusion') and more enjoyment, effort, and creativity on the part of the panelist leading to better quality research.

We already try to foster competence and autonomy through the community aspects of our panel and the web space they share. We recognize that we can do more in this area. The most important missed information is an individual's motivational state.

Our latest internal research is aimed at gaining a fuller understanding of panelist motivation with the ultimate aim of designing an incentive scheme, which will work to foster motivation on an individual basis.

The Research

The first point to note is, like any research project, this one also has a response rate – those that respond to the research will be motivated to do so, those that don't respond won't. Since we are not attempting to segment the panelists into motivational typologies based on the prior knowledge we hold on them, this should not be an issue.

The invitation was made as attractive as possible and appealed to the panelists' sense of community and the importance of the research, stressing that they will be helping to shape the future direction of the entire panel; the "value" of the research to the panelist was made pre-eminent. Since the research was not under client deadline pressure, we were also able to hold the survey open for a longer fieldwork period than would normally be allowed to give the best possible response rate. A total of 1,423 interviews were conducted across all age ranges and both genders.

The research itself took the form of a classic NPD demand study. Four potential future reward schemes were tested along with our existing charity and prize draw mix. The four cash-based schemes were:

- Points towards redeemable vouchers
- Points towards a cash reward
- Points to spend in our own online shop
- Actual cash payments per survey

The actual value of each scheme was kept consistent for each interview length tested, increasing as the theoretical interview length increased.

Four interview lengths were tested, respondents being randomly assigned to an interview length group.

5 minute interview	£0.30 reward	10 points
15 minute interview	£1.00 reward	30 points
25 minute interview	£1.60 reward	50 points
35 minute interview	£2.00 reward	70 points

In simulation, panelists first reduced their consideration set by rejecting any cash reward mechanisms they found personally unappealing. Remaining invitation/reward types were presented and ranked by choice. At all stages of the ranking process, the respondent was free to choose "none of these" (i.e. would not do the survey in exchange for any of the incentives on offer).

SSI's OpinionWorld panels currently pay donations to charity on behalf of panelists and offer sweepstakes for cash and prizes. The panel does not suffer unduly in terms of response rates for not offering one-on-one cash payments. We might expect panelists to actively reject cash (or cash proxies such as points). We did not find this to be the case. Almost all (barring a very small minority) professed themselves attracted by one or more of the cash rewards on offer in the survey.

The option for a pure cash payment was the most popular (62% interested) with the closest proxy (points for cash) the second most popular option (52% interested). Approximately 82% of panelists were attracted by either one or both of these options.

Should all five options be applied to the panel, our expected uptake would be:

Pure cash	40%
Points for cash	27%
Charity/prize draw	13%
Points for vouchers	13%
Online shop	7%

From the two analyses above, it is clear that "one size" does indeed not "fit all" and that some panelists, albeit a tiny minority, do not want any kind of cash reward to take part in surveys. This is unsurprising; many surveys on panelist motivation have reported that one of the key driving factors for joining panels, and doing surveys, is the enjoyment of taking part in surveys. The high preference for cash itself over "pseudo- cash" is also not surprising. Classic economics tells us that cash is the most efficient mechanism for giving people what they want.

Saliency of rewards was tested by asking if the reward scheme needed to change (in advance of asking about the potential changes of course) and also by asking to what extent rewards are considered before taking surveys. In total over half (58%) of those questioned did not see the need for any changes. There were marked differences when this question was examined with reference to Intrinsic

Motivation. Those with the highest level of intrinsic motivation were less clamorous for change – only 39% wanted to see changes. Those least motivated were more demanding of change – over half (52%) wanted to see some change. For the second question, only 30% claim to "usually" or "often" consider the value of any rewards before choosing to take part. We conclude that there is some strong demand for change although this is not universal and that actual rewards are secondary in the decision process to participate or not on an individual basis. Another question in the survey, which examined reasons for not taking part in surveys, found that "too busy" (21%) and the survey end-by date had passed (26%) were the most popular reasons cited and low rewards mentioned by only one in ten.

The choice of reward mechanism varies only slightly by length of interview. As interview length increased (and the cash reward on offer rose), people would tend to switch from cash points to 'real' cash. Other mechanisms remained reasonably stable across all the interview lengths tested.

By allowing respondents to select "none of these" at any scenario, we were able to see how cooperation rates might change if a range of suitable reward schemes were offered. Interview length per se plays some part in reducing uptake although it was not marked until the 35 minute survey was reached. Only around 17% of panelists would not respond to the survey invitation if at least one of the reward schemes to which they were attracted was offered. Whilst this cannot be taken as a prediction of 80% plus response rates, we would conclude that some improvement in response rates could be expected if we were to offer a wider range of reward schemes.

A range of reward schemes, rather than just changing to a single "most preferred" scheme, is almost certainly required. We asked those who would like a change to identify their likely response under two potential situations. If the reward scheme were changed to something they didn't like, just under half (49%) said they would do less surveys. Conversely, if the scheme changed to something they did like, 83% said they would do more surveys.

A key question for the research was to try to understand panelists motivational state in an SDT sense. In particular, since we do not currently offer one-on-one payments or individual rewards, we were interested to test the potential negative effect on intrinsic motivation should such rewards be offered to those intrinsically motivated.

SDT predicts that measures of feelings of the "value" of a task will be a positive predictor of intrinsic motivation. It further predicts that measures of feelings of "autonomy" in doing the task will be positively related to intrinsic motivation.

At the end of the research study, we presented the panelist with a standard Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) questionnaire. This question set covers interest/enjoyment, value/usefulness and perceived choice while performing a given activity (completing a market research survey in this case). The measure of perceived choice (autonomy) generally scored highly - as one might expect from an online survey. It is, however, positively correlated with intrinsic motivation.
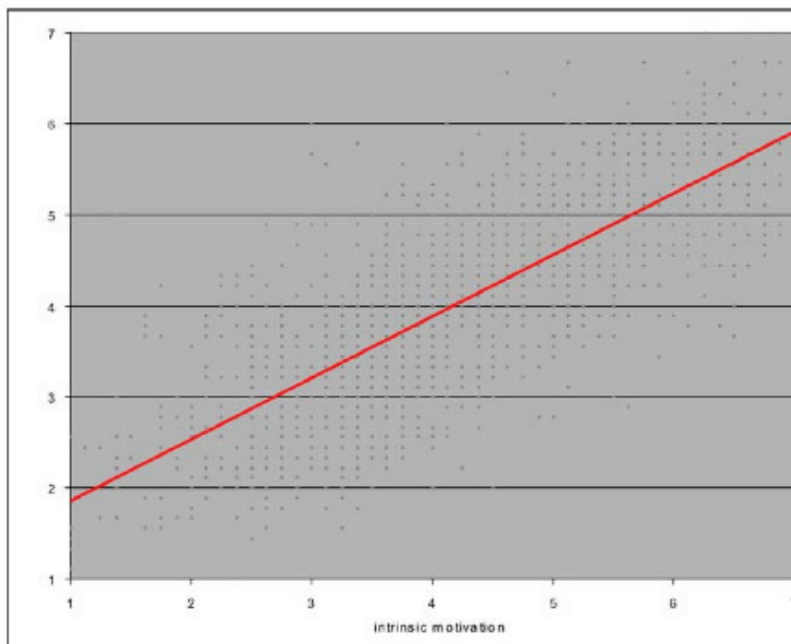
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Autonomy VS. Intrinsic Motivation
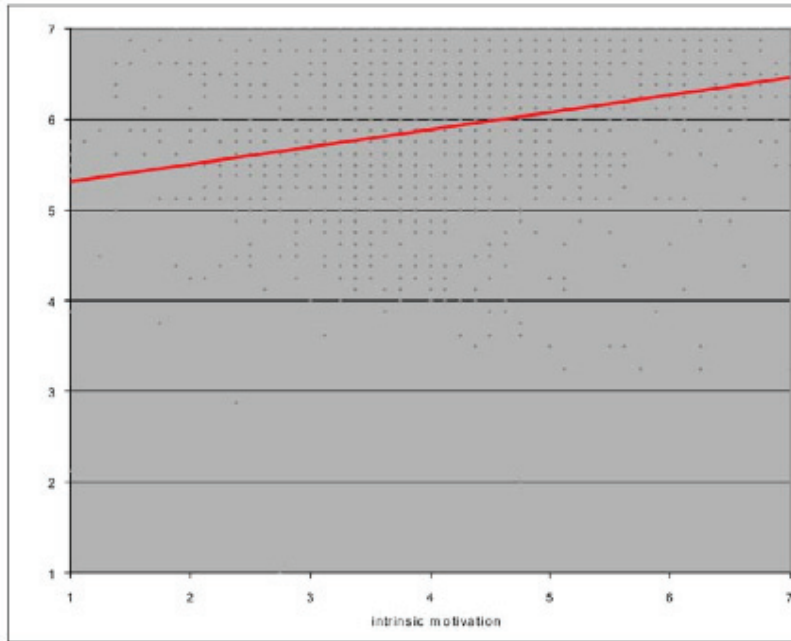
The measure of value/usefulness is more clearly correlated to intrinsic motivation and produces scores across the range.

Value VS. Intrinsic Motivation

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This finding offers great potential to increase intrinsic motivation by demonstrating the value of the research, either personally, to others, or to the sponsoring company. Feedback as to the uses the research could further entrench feelings of value and therefore intrinsic motivation. Naturally, any promise of usefulness must be backed up by reality, autonomy supported and, where necessary, competence and relatedness also stressed. Naturally, the survey instruments themselves must be of sufficient quality so as not to undermine any conception of usefulness.

Having attempted to foster a sense of value, competence, and autonomy in the questionnaire, a randomly selected half sample was then given an extrinsic reward – an entry into that month's prize draw. An incentive had not been offered to anyone to start the survey. The IMI question battery was then immediately put to the respondent. SDT theory would predict that this rewarded group should be less intrinsically motivated than the group that received no reward. This was indeed found to be the case as this simple analysis shows.

Intrinsic Motivation	Not rewarded	Rewarded
Low	13%	20%
Medium	73%	68%
High	14%	12%

All these movements, although relatively small, are statistically significant and entirely due to the insertion of the sentence, "For doing this survey we will give you an entry into the monthly prize draw" into this paragraph:

"Thank you very much for choosing to complete this important survey for OpinionWorld. We appreciate that some surveys can be quite difficult to do, and that this one took some effort.
Your opinions will be closely considered as we assess whether or not to change the rewards scheme."
This finding alone clearly demonstrates the need for a greater understanding of the psychology of survey-taking and a greater appreciation of what we as researchers might be unwittingly doing to respondents with our survey approaches, questionnaire designs, and rewards.

Conclusion

It is obvious to all that we cannot allow response rates to decline still further, risking losing the marketing research industry altogether. Online research using online access panels is no panacea. We have seen reductions in response in the few short years that online research has been a viable methodology that can match what the whole industry took over 50 years to achieve.

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A greater understanding of the psychology of the interview situation can perhaps help inform us of where we may have been going wrong, of particular relevance are the newer theories of motivation. These already suggest – without experimentation – areas where we can improve the respondent experience. Specifically at the initial approach and, in a new way, how we might end the interview on a more positive note. Effective application of these principles should lead to increased motivation towards marketing research in the future.

For any researcher wanting to offer incentives to respondents, a clear understanding of their longer term effect is vital. Our research will help point the way to what those effects might be. With careful application of these principals, online panel research should become more efficient and data quality should improve. SSI has formed a Respondent Experience (REX) team to review questionnaires submitted for research projects. The team offers survey researchers advice and suggestions to improve questionnaire design in order to increase panelist satisfaction.

Implications for Survey Researchers

The emergence of online research, a self-completion mode of interviewing, has forced researchers to re-visit questionnaire design skills long unused or, in many instances, never learnt. As a large proportion of online research has been ported directly from telephone or face-to-face work, researchers have had to struggle with the conflicting demands of consistency over time and best practice for the mode.

Without an interviewer present, the questionnaire remains the only means of communication between researcher and respondent. All the small encouragements an interviewer might once have given the respondent need now be present in the script. Self Determination Theory tells us that to shift motivation towards Identification and Integration, we need to foster certain feelings within the respondent and that this can be done with words alone. Examples of phrases used within this particular survey are given below (emphasis has been added).

Autonomy

"Thank you very much for choosing to do this questionnaire."
"...experience with OpinionWorld, ...and how often (or not) you choose to take part in surveys."
"You can reduce or increase the number of invitations you would like to receive by changing your profile on OpinionWorld. There will be a link to your personal profile at the end of this survey."
"...Please tell us which of them interest you personally, that you might choose for yourself in return for doing surveys."

"At each of the questions you will be able to see the survey invitation again, if you want, by clicking on its link."
"Click on the forward button when you are ready to continue with the survey."
"Thank you very much for choosing to complete this important survey for OpinionWorld."

Competence

"We appreciate that some surveys can be quite difficult to do, and that this one took some effort."

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Relatedness

"We hope that any changes we make will better meet your needs and the needs of other OpinionWorld members like you."

Value

"The results of the survey will help us shape the future development of OpinionWorld."
"Thank you for your thoughts so far." "Thank you very much for choosing to complete this important survey for OpinionWorld."
"Your opinions will be closely considered as we assess whether or not to change the rewards scheme."
"Finally we would like to get some feedback from you about your experience with this survey."

The use of such phrases does not come easily or naturally to most researchers (including this one!) brought up on a tradition of face-to-face or telephone research. Theory suggests it is vital that the use of such forms of speech becomes second nature to researchers using the methodology.

It is also vital of course not to raise expectations on the part of the panelist only to have them dashed through the actual experience of taking part in the survey! These motivational aspects must go hand-in-hand with an even greater emphasis on survey design and excellence in question writing. Failure to provide the panelist with the best experience possible will lead to increased levels of drop-out, more inattention, less engagement, and subsequently poorer data quality.

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