Comparing and Complementing Methods: Traditional Market Research Vs. Deep Customer Insights

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Abstract: Quantitative market data has traditionally been used throughout marketing and business as a tool to inform and direct design decisions [21]. However, in our changing economic climate, businesses need to innovate and create products their customers will love. Deep customer insight methods move beyond just questioning customers and aims to provoke true emotional responses in order to reveal new opportunities that go beyond functional product requirements [3]. This paper explores traditional market research methods and compares them to methods used to gain deep customer insights. This study reports on a collaborative research project with seven small to medium enterprises and four multi-national organisations. Firms were introduced to a design led innovation approach, and were taught the different methods to gain deep customer insights. Interviews were conducted to understand the experience and outcomes of pre-existing research methods and deep customer insight approaches. Findings concluded that deep customer insights were unlikely to be revealed through traditional market research techniques. The theoretical outcome of this study is a complementary methods matrix, providing guidance on appropriate research methods in accordance to a project’s timeline.

Key Words: Market Research Methods, Deep Customer Insights, Design Led Innovation.

1. Introduction

Companies ask their customers what they want, give it to them, and then watch them buy competing products instead [26:1]. Trott [21] believes most new products fail in the market because consumer needs and wants are not satisfied. However, Zaltman [26] reveals that marketers do not understand how their own and their customers’ minds interact, in particular why customers think and behave in the way they do. Unemployment rates have risen and consumers have less disposable income, therefore it is important now more than ever to understand customers [17]. Companies can no longer rely on the cheapest price, technological breakthroughs and incremental product development [12] to gain a competitive advantage. Consumers have information readily available and are able to change brands or services [17] at any given time. This quick shift in consumer preferences, tastes, habits and lifestyles [17] may not be able to be anticipated through traditional forms of market research methods. It is for this reason businesses need to be engaged with their customers on a deeper level [19] to understand not what they want but why they want it.

The use of integrating design methods and thinking within business management is seen as a way to innovate and provide new value propositions to customers [23]. Traditionally design is confined to the manufacturing and production area or as a styling afterthought [13]. However, design companies such as IDEO and Alessi have used
design thinking and design driven innovation to gain deep customer insights. Design driven innovation aims to radically change the emotional and symbolic content of products through a deeper understanding of broader changes in society, culture and technology [23]. Instead of being pulled by user requirements, design driven innovation is pushed by a deep understanding of customer meaning and value [23:2].

Zaltman [26] explains marketers ‘fail to dig more deeply’, below surface-level thinking and behaviour while conducting market research. Marketers should be diving deeper and questioning a customer’s why, while inviting the customer to interact rather than simply react to questions and instructions. Wittell, Kristensson, Gustafsson and Löfgren [24:143] explain “in order for companies to meet the demands of mass communication, they must engage in an interactive dialog with customers”. Replacing the passive view of a customer with an active role could provide new insights and opportunities to create market offerings with greater customer value [10,15,18,24].

Goffin, Varnes, Van der Hoven and Koners [7] believe the importance of integrating the voice of the customer into new product development is universally accepted, however, the techniques used to identify customers’ needs have stagnated. Xie, Bagozzi and Troye [25:109] state, “consumer behavior literature remains preoccupied with decision making focused on what consumers purchase, not with what they do”. Zaltman [26:131] proposes that managers need to use methods from various disciplines to understand customers’ deeper thoughts and feelings, in order to “clearly, understand the why behind the what of consumer thinking and behaviour”. For this to occur “marketers need methods that go beyond what the customer can readily articulate” [26:75], generally, marketers “prefer not to get involved in consumer emotions” [26:9] or choose the wrong method due to the ease of use.

This paper explores traditional market research methods and compares them to methods used to gain deep customer insights in a design led innovation approach. It reports on findings from a collaborative research project where chief executive officers sponsored a range of firm representatives from seven small to medium enterprises and four multi-national organisations to undertake applying a design led innovation approach in their firms. Through this process firm representatives were taught the different techniques used to gain deep customer insights. Representatives were then interviewed on their experience and outcomes of the deep customer insight methods in comparison to traditional market research methods. Results produced three key themes: i) the position of the customer, ii) data collectors and iii) actionability, concluding that deep customer insights are unlikely to be revealed through traditional market research. Therefore, this paper presents the theoretical outcome of a complementary methods matrix, providing guidance on appropriate research methods in accordance with a project’s timeline.

2. Traditional Market Research Methods

Within this paper traditional market research methods refer to such techniques as interviews, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires (Table 1). These can occur face-to-face, through phone communications or via the internet. In the majority of these methods, the process includes a moderator whose role it is to mediate, challenge and ask questions [24]. Results are usually high in quantitative data and interpretations are based solely on what the customer is saying [24]. Traditional market research questions commonly explore the how, what and where in relation to the customer or product [26]. Zaltman [26] clarifies that traditional market research methods address basic marketing issues such as, how often purchases occur, store preferences, variations among market segments and their rate of change. However, these methods are also used to receive feedback on customer needs and requirements. Companies may also outsource all or some of their market research via agencies to gather and
analyse results [7]. Costs of establishing each interview or focus group are moderate, whilst analysis costs are usually quite high [9].

Table 1. Traditional Market Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Example Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews (Face-to-face or Telephone)</td>
<td>Interviewer asks participant to questions gain facts, opinions and attitudes</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>What factors do you consider when purchasing this product or service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys (Online, Mail, In-store)</td>
<td>Participants are given a number of questions to either select pre-determined answer or provide short answer responses</td>
<td>Quantitative and/or Qualitative</td>
<td>What is the appropriate price for a product or service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups (Sample of existing customers)</td>
<td>Interviewer interacts with a group participants to gain facts, opinions and attitudes</td>
<td>Quantitative and/or Qualitative</td>
<td>What areas would you suggest for improvement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires (Online, Mail, In-store)</td>
<td>Participants are given a number of questions to select a pre-determined answer which best suits their response</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>What would you rate the current product out of 10?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1 Strengths

Traditional marketing research methods work well in several circumstances, such as when there is little change in the customer and competitive environment or when customers can readily articulate and recall thoughts and needs [26]. Insights from these methods can quickly tell what are ‘top scoring products’ or what pricing, packaging and descriptions will ‘resonate best in the market’ [17]. Statistical analyses of questionnaire and survey data are able to be analysed quickly and produce large quantities of results [26]. Surveys are also able to reveal associations and correlations among responses that might not surface during other methods [26]. Online surveys are able to be dispersed to variety of people and locations for quick feedback requiring only a limited budget [17]. Surveys are most reliable when they ask respondents to consider very familiar issues or to describe a decision they are about to make [26]. Spoken needs can be obtained through surveys and focus groups research methods [9]. Many managers use focus groups and it remains the most popular method in marketing [26], as they are easy and affordable to implement [26].

2.2 Weaknesses

Traditional market research methods can be particularly “intimidating” to most small to medium size enterprises, due to limited budgets or lack of expertise in-house [17]. Sen [17] therefore believes that most decisions are done in meeting rooms with little to no first hand interaction with customers.

Traditional market research methods rely heavily on customer self-reflection and awareness [26], as they concentrate on capturing a customer’s previous experience with a product or service [24]. Graves [8:4] believes the “conscious mind finds it almost impossible to resist putting its spin on events”, therefore, these methods have been referred to and categorised as ‘reactive’ or ‘backwards looking’ [11], due to questions being predetermined (survey) and provide limited responses (questionnaires) [24].

Focus groups are also unable to provide the setting for deeper discussion, as moderators are unable to build the trust necessary for participants to share personal thoughts and feelings [26]. Rubin and Rubin [16] explain that the average speaking time for a participant is ten to twelve minutes, with some participants speaking more than others.
Data collected from these settings are also more difficult to analyse deeper than the literal statements participants make [17].

The framing of a question can produce a range of different insights and influence answers [26]. However, even a well-written question can limit a consumer articulating their needs [18,21] as most are not aware, able to identify or articulate what their own needs are [7]. This is often seen in relation to new products or services, as the consumer has very limited or no prior knowledge or experiences to reflect upon [26], which greatly limits the opportunity to provide new insights and thoughts that lie outside the prepared interview or questionnaire [7,21,24]. This is evident, as more than 80 percent of market research is used to reinforce existing conclusions, rather than to test or develop new possibilities [26].

Even with these limitations associated with traditional market research it continues to be increasingly used. Trott [21] believes this may be due to such methods becoming an “accepted practice” and seen an “insurance policy in businesses”. Graves [8:2] believes this could be due to organisations being “seduced by the numerology of statistics and the apparent consistency of response that market research provides”. This numerical data allows decision to be defended and justified more easily to senior managers [21].

3. Deep Customer Insight Methods

Deep customer insights are seen as an intimate shared understanding of the spoken and latent, current and future needs of the customer [3]. As customers play an important role in the development of products and services, they must not be seen as a source of information but as a contributor with knowledge and skills [24]. Witell, Kristensson, Gustafsson and Löfgren [24:152] state that “active customers in the development process produce ideas that are significantly more innovative than those generated through traditional market research techniques”.

A way to reveal deep customer insights is not to question the how, what and where, but the why [5].

A design led innovation approach aims to help businesses successfully innovate, differentiate and compete in a global marketplace [3]. It is broadly defined as an approach which allows a company to consider and evaluate radically new propositions from multiple perspectives, typically spanning user needs, business requirements and technology demands [4]. The key to a design led innovation approach is the ability to build deep customer insights through a deeper understanding of customer meaning and value, rather than being pulled by user requirements [3,22]. Many of the methods used in the design led innovation process originate from a user-centered design approach and include user observations, scenarios of use, task analysis, personas and storyboarding [15] (Table 2). The aims of these methods within a product design context are based on the needs and interests of the user, influencing the product’s usability and understanding [14]. However, in a business context these tools allow companies to connect and create value with their customer [5] extending beyond just pleasing a customer’s superficial needs. Unlike traditional market research methods the goal is not to evaluate a particular feature or experience of an existing product, but understand the customers’ why through deep customer insights. The use of these methods allows a business to place themselves in the position of the customer, by not questioning their needs but trying to understand their values [15].
3.1 Strengths

Zaltman [26:282] states, “creativity plays a central role in designing effective market research questions and interpreting their answers” in a design led innovation process the method of storytelling helps to set the scene. There are stories that inform about a user in the present and those that inspire the design team on behalf of the customer [1]. Informative stories can surface contradictions, due to the fact that what a customer says and what they actually do often differ [1]. Beckman and Barry [1] consider these contradictions to generate interesting insights into how people think, as what is said provides insights into what a customer wants to believe, however, might not do. Within a design led innovation process persona and scenario design are used to allow customers to make a connection with a fictional character or situation. This creates open and honest responses, as the customer is able to relate with a pseudo character or a particular situation.

Deep customer insight methods also do not rely on traditional product development processes that are generally a drawn-out process of trial and error, ‘ping-ponging’ between manufacture and customer [20]. Traditionally marketers will present a customer with a prototype or image (usually incomplete or partially correct), and the customer provides feedback, this cycle is usually repeated until the customer is satisfied [20]. This process is costly and time consuming. Deep customer insights are able to by-pass this process through the use of a highly descriptive and illustrative toolkit. Persona design and scenarios are able to explore and identify relevant social aspects that influence a customer [6]. Such influences are not product related, but connected to such things as cultural background and financial issues [6]. These methods also anticipate future users needs and builds future proposals to which users are encouraged to give feedback [3].

3.2 Weaknesses

Thomke and Von Hippel [20:74] proclaim “the difficulty is fully understanding customers’ needs as it is often a costly and inexact process” and “the process can be costly and time-consuming because customer needs are often complex, subtle, and fast changing” [20:76]. The methods used in a design led innovation approach can be time consuming, due to the depth of interaction and descriptive processes. In a design led innovation approach, employees within the company are encouraged to conduct the gathering of deep customer insights, in order to

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<th>Results</th>
<th>Example Objective</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persona Design (Face-to-face)</td>
<td>Detailed fictional character is created. Demographic, goals, experience, behaviour, motives are included</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Customer to relate to persona to prompt open and honest responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story-telling / Story Board (Face-to-face)</td>
<td>Asking customer/user to tell a story about their experience</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Uncover contradictions, failures at meaningful level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Narratives (Face-to-face)</td>
<td>Creation of a touch point timeline which explores the major touch points within a customer’s engagement with business, product or service</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>A customer narrative that explores all the relevant touch points within the story of how a customer purchases a product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenarios (Face-to-face)</td>
<td>Images are used to contextualise the story, along with short written descriptions</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Illustrate different scenarios of use. Outline current and future everyday practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
minimize possible logistical difficulties faced by external consultants. The acceptance of a design led innovation approach and methods may also not be accepted or supported by higher management or market researchers.

4. Research Method

This research compiles eleven structured interviews, conducted with representatives from seven Australian small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and four multi-national firms. The firms varied from product manufacture’s, financial institutions to service providers. All firms had previously taken part in a design led innovation process, in which they were shown a range of deep customer insight methods to assist them in understanding the process of implementing these methods into their companies over a twelve month period. After this period, company representatives in a variety of positions, including heads of department, product development, marketing and customer managers and brand strategists were interviewed to gain their perspective on both approaches. Interview durations were approximately 30 to 40 minutes and were audio-recorded to allow for transcription.

The interviews sort to understand the differences between the experience and outcomes of conducting deep customer insights and traditional market research methods. Participants were therefore questioned on their current and past research methods, their role in these methods and their perceived value of each approach. A thematic analysis [2] was then conducted to identify resulting categories that emerged from the data. The analysis process involved coding participant responses was executed in order to expose common themes and relationships amongst the data.

5. Results

Results produced three overall themes, i) position of the customer, ii) data collectors and iii) actionability. Overall the results found that traditional market research methods were not able to provide insights about their customers. The methods used in each approach differed in the way it positioned and saw the role of the customer impacting upon the relationship formed between the customer and the data collector, which overall influenced the actionability of the outcomes. The strength and creation of this relationship is important to the interaction and engagement with the customer in order to gain deeper insights.

5.1 Position of the Customer

Within most of the firms, traditional market data collection was a part of everyday business. These research methods include questionnaires, short interviews, meetings, product demonstrations and networking. One firm revealed conducting no market research at all, stating, “no customer service, customer feedback or reflection of past sales or stats is being done or exist at all in the company”. In review of these methods a representative believed that these methods have given them “enough valuable information to place them in the comfortable market position they are in today”. After being exposed to deep customer insight methods all representatives saw the value in traditional market research for understanding customers needs, however, reflected upon how their questions positioned their customer. A representative explains, “most techniques ask customers what they would like improved, or what they would like in a specific situation”, justifying that the use of predetermined questions helped positioned their customer to answers within a set context and timeframe. After implementing a design led approach a firm representative remarked “We gained a greater understanding of the influence of other factors on
the use of our products”. The time frame to which a customer was positioned was also addressed, “it is solution-based insights from customers as they interact with a product or service in the now!” In many situations firm representatives said that their current methods only focused on how a customer interacted with a product in its current context, not questioning before or after the product was purchased. As this valuable information on the peripherals is vital to uncovering deep customer insights. After implementing deep the customer insight methods a firm representative stated: “It focuses on the factors all around customers that will influence their behaviour” and “rather than focusing on the solution it spoke of possible concepts and the indirect influences in the customer’s everyday life”. One firm representative believed this to be the differing factor between deep customer insights and traditional market research as the use of a narrative “was a proposal in the future using fictional characters”.

5.2 Data Collectors

Understanding who conducted the research also impacted upon their understanding of the role of the customer. Within the interviewed firms it was revealed that a variety of people conducted traditional methods of research, ranging from internal marketing and sales teams, outsourcing to consultants or it being conducted by business development personal. Most of the firms did not have direct contact with the participants of the market research stating they “rely a lot on key stakeholders within the business to direct the marketing activities through their general exposure to customers” but those who did either “talk to and listen to customers to provide valuable insights” or spoke “directly with the customer through meetings and product demonstrations in order to get customer feedback”. In these situations the, ‘voice of the customer’ is employed largely involving product-orientated inquiries (i.e. features, colour, size etc.).

In relation to deep customer insight methods firm representatives said, “we learnt more about the pain felt by the customer” and “utilising the narrative method in approaching customers allows us to test our assumptions, something that we need to do more of”. In the deep customer insight methods the firm representative was either the main data collector or participated in it, one reflected upon the process as, “we were guided on what needed to be done to make our future proposal come true... all this information was then feed into the solution - in a way the customer co-created the solution with us”. Another firm representative commented that the use of the “customer input and reactions to the story helped us refine the narrative and include emotional drivers in the solution”. Overall a representative saw the impact of their own role in the process as; “using this process highlighted to me how great the influence of behaviour and emotion is in the buying decision and how you can truly create a solution that customers will love”.

5.3 Actionability

A firm’s thoughts on the data outcomes and the effectiveness of traditional research methods included, “It is effective because it provides broad market data and breaks down the customers behaviour statistically which presents a good platform of understanding...However, market data provides very limited depth, or a ‘why’ behind customer behaviour which makes it difficult for stakeholders to innovate or be creative”.

The use of traditional research methods provides a large amount of quantitative data that in another firm’s opinion is important, “in capital sales, as it provides enough information to get the job done. For customer support, this form of information does not provide nearly enough information to accurately provide this service to the market”.

The overall views on traditional research methods were that they were generally effective but may not be the best approach, with a firm commenting, “we believe there is a lot more we could be doing to be actively scoping information about the market”.

The effectiveness of the techniques and data outcomes of deep customer insight methods was also asked of firms. All commented on the use of narratives and storytelling as a method which had significant impacts. Feedback from a firm representative found that the use of fictional characters allowed customers to become more engaged not only with the character but also with the data collector. A firm representative reflected that, “the characters in the story become the focal point that customers relate to and their behaviour becomes either believable (or not)...this quickly provokes a strong emotional response and gives insights into potential customer behaviour”. The method of narrative was also discussed by a firm representative due to its ease of use, “it's easy to conduct interviews once the 'story boards' are defined...you don't need to be an experienced facilitator, just capable of telling a good story” and “the story telling format frames the scene, gives the business issues perspective and is non confrontational for customers to react to”. The overall effectiveness of the experience of using the design led innovation process was summed up as, “we now find ourselves asking more of the why questions with customers in order to gain some deeper information”. The impact of a design led innovation process also found one firm reassessing and delaying the release of a product because they realised, “we didn't have a strong enough value proposition to take to the market. This came through the testing of our ideas with the customer using design led innovation”.

6. Discussion

The different approaches of collecting customer data, traditional market research and deep customer insights both share the same core purpose; they aim to collect data to understand their customer's needs to make informative decisions. However, as shown, these two approaches have very different methods, data collectors and actionability. The traditional method currently used by market research teams is highly quantitative, formulated and predetermined [24]. This approach has become an accepted practice in business and is easy to justify due to its high numerical security [24]. Marketers may believe by collecting large quantities of customer data, they will automatically acquire a deep understanding of their customers [26], however, fixed response questions in particular are unable to reveal a customer's real thoughts and feelings through deeper explanation [26].

The firms believed traditional methods to provide enough information to get the job done, but also commented that they could be doing more to understand their customers. Participants shared that after using the design led innovation process they understood their customers pains and wanted to produce products they would love and make them happy. By being able to connect with their customer and understand their values, a business can go beyond just trying to please their customer [15].

The framing of a question can produce a range of different insights and influence answers [26], therefore effective skill and time is required to produce questions that generate valid and informative responses [7]. However, even a well-written question can limit customers articulating their needs [18,21] as most are not aware or able to identify what it is they truly value and more importantly why they value it [7].
A correlation can be made between who the data collector is and the positioning of a customer. In traditional research data methods, the customer is usually positioned to provide feedback on ‘product-ordinated inquires’. The data collection process is also usually outsourced; therefore no interaction is formed between customer and a firm representative. The authors believe this to impact largely on the outcomes. Firm representatives who engaged personally with the customer through the use of deep customer insights saw the role of the customer change to a co-designer. This view is also shared by Witell, Kristensson, Gustafsson and Löfgren [24] as the role of the customer is to be active, and not passively, react to predetermined questions. By outsourcing the data collection, the outcome is tainted with the interpretations of the collector, and decisions remain being made in a meeting room with no contact to real customers [17]. A design led innovation process encourages customers to become co-designers to provide deep customer insights in order to reveal ‘gaps’ that are not product related but relate to social and financial influences [6]. In order to reveal deep customer insights, data collectors are required to make a connection with the customer, which is not accessible when using predetermined questions or processes. Writing effective questions requires skill [7], however, in traditional methods they still remain predetermined which in most cases limits a customer response. Deep customer insight methods provide questions through narratives, storytelling or scenarios that are more illustrative and descriptive [6]. All firm representatives expressed the ease of use demanded by narratives and storytelling/boarding, saying they did not need an experienced facilitator to action such methods. As seen through authorities [7,21] customers are unable to voice their unmet needs, and need to be uncovered. It was also found that through the use of pseudo fictional characters customers were able to relate and therefore felt more comfortable to engage, providing more detailed emotive responses [6].

It was shown that contradictions and assumptions are created through traditional market data, while deep customer insights can expose them. The issue of contradictions in market data was addressed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy [15], a customer would say one thing but act upon another. This was also confirmed by a firm who had implemented deep customer insight methods into their firm, as it allowed them to test their assumptions. Zaltman [26] says traditional research data is used to only reinforce existing assumptions or conclusion instead of testing or developing new possibilities.

Deep customer insight methods challenge traditional market research data methods and many businesses may not see the importance of gaining deeper customer insights. Even when a design led innovation process is accepted within a firm, it is a process that requires time to be fully implemented, as expressed by a firm representative:

“We recognise its importance in being able to produce products and services that provide value to the customer but it also requires a lot of focus and time on how we can change existing processes and structures to not only capture the information but to make sure it is internalised and translated into something meaningful”.

Even though this process may take time to be implemented, the cost of continually producing unsuccessful products or services will continue to result in a loss of revenue and low customer satisfaction due to marketers not understanding their customers [26].

7. Theoretical Outcome

The authors understand the position traditional research has in business, as it is able to provide stability through numbers, however, in creating new business opportunities it was shown that knowledge of deep customer
insights are also needed. This highlights the need to use both methods separately but together as complementing data collection approaches. To demonstrate this a complementing methods matrix has been developed. As illustrated in Figure 1, the intention of the matrix is to indicate which research approach should be used at different stages of a project. The two outer axes depicted idea maturity and time of project.

In the ideation stages of the project, provoking methods such as persona design and story boarding should be used. By using these methods deeper, broader and honest customer knowledge can be gained. As the idea matures but is still in earlier stages of the project, prototyping ideas and directions formed in the provoking stage can be tested. Prototyping methods within a deep customer insight approach could include the use of customer narratives and scenarios. Within these methods the participant is able to either relate to or distinguish differences, providing input on the project direction. As the project progresses, this new direction can be experiment upon and validated through the use of traditional research procedures. Experimenting could include interviews or focus groups, which question certain factors and personal reactions to the project direction. Validation would take place as the project progresses to the execution stage. The maturity of the project is high therefore utilising traditional market research methods of surveys and questionnaires to narrow down and question the specifics and details of the project should then be utilised.

This matrix advocates at the beginning of a project, when the risk is low to employ deep customer insights and as the idea matures and risk is heightened, traditional research methods can then be used to validate and confirm the projects direction. By deploying this approach, both research methods are used to their strengths, while also providing a way in which risk can be mitigated throughout the entirety of a project.

Figure 1. Complimentary Methods Matrix
8. Summary

This paper presents results demonstrating that traditional research methods are unlikely to provide innovative solutions or develop breakthrough ideas. The authors understand the importance of both research approaches and therefore developed the complimentary method matrix to suggest the successful usage of both methods in a project. Being able to utilise both approaches separately, but together as complementing data collection approaches, provides customer insights with the numerical security of traditional research methods. This paper detailed deep customer insight methods using a design led innovation process, and showed they are needed to create a connection with the customer emotionally. By asking a customer why reveals insights to the emotional and symbolic content of products through a deeper understanding of broader changes in society, culture and technology. Therefore, the use of integrating deep customer insight methods within businesses is a way to innovate and provide a new value proposition to the customer. As competition on price alone will not provide companies a sustainable competitive advantage, insights of the underlining emotions that drive customer behaviour and choices need to be understood.

Deep customer insight methods provide fresh, non-obvious ways of understanding customer needs, problems and behaviours that can become the foundation of a new business opportunity. The key approach of deep customer insight methods moves beyond observing and questioning customers to building empathy and an understanding of the customer, leading to opportunities that go beyond functional requirements. It is hoped that those in a position of data collection are encouraged to experiment and use deep customer insight methods to connect with their customers on a meaningful level.

9. References


