

# LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS

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*George and Linny were nearing home after spending two glorious weeks driving through the Rockies. It turned out to be a splendid way to celebrate their 25 years of marriage.*

*Linny reached over, lightly touched George on his shoulder and asked, "Hon, would you like to stop for a drink before going home?" "No thanks Dear."*

*By the time they pulled into their driveway, Linny was in a snit. George did not hear her. She wanted to stop for a drink before plunging back into the real world.*

A good portion of the \$6 billion spent each year on market research is wasted because researchers don't hear what customers really say. More on point, like George, researchers often fail to hear what customers *don't* say.

David Garrett, a senior trends analyst for Coca-Cola, says research is often distorted by the fact that people will tell a friend things they won't tell a stranger, and things they will tell a stranger, but not a friend. For instance, he says, the complexion of participants' candor in a focus group changes as they get to know each other and the moderator better.

Garrett did customer research at Kodak before he joined Coke. In one focus group covering customers' attitudes about private label film, a participant we'll call Jack said, "My pictures are too important to trust to a no-name film." Garrett suspected that, like Linny, Jack was really saying something else. He might have been more focused on establishing himself among strangers than with reporting his film preferences.

As everyone became more familiar with each other, Garrett again asked Jack about his views on private label film, noting that private labels usually cost less than Kodak film. Jack now wanted to project financial responsibility. "My wife usually keeps a roll or two of the cheap stuff around for ordinary pictures." Garrett's gentle exploration of Jack's views on private label film continued until

it was revealed that it accounted for *most* of his picture taking. Evolution did not shape our brains for honesty, but for survival. Establishing his position among a group of strangers was initially more important to Jack than an honest statement on what he thought about private label film.

New products and product line extensions suffer an 80 percent marketing failure rate, according to Bill Gorman's *New Products News*. That astonishing failure rate is partially the result of not hearing what customers say—and *don't say*. Nearly everything a person says has both *explicit* and *implicit* properties, as in Linny's question, "Hon, would you like to stop for a drink before getting home?" Explicit properties are the unambiguous content in a statement: "My pictures are too important to trust to a no-name film." There is no ambiguity in that statement. But as Garrett learned, it was not wholly true. *Implicit* in the timing of Jack's statement (early in the focus group) was his felt need to project himself as a discriminating photographer.

A few years ago, Bell South launched a "Silver" version of its Yellow Pages for seniors. Despite a cornucopia of giveaways, special offers and discounts, the Silver Pages bombed. Ron Jennings who led the effort for Bell South said, "Our research said we were doing all the right things, but in the end it didn't work." Jennings' researchers focused on seniors' *explicit* testimony that they would welcome a book of free items, special offers and discounts. However, the research participants *implicitly* projected a bias against age-based marketing that Bell South failed to pick up on. Seniors often resent being classified by stereotypical images of age.

The brand manager of a well-known dietary supplement, whose name clearly indicates it is for people over 50, told us that if the company had it to do all over again, it would give it a different name. Customers approved of the name in research prior to product launch, but later research indicated that the name turned many customers away from the product. People who receive an unsolicited AARP membership application around the time of their 50th birthday will quickly understand the brand's problem.

### **Do you hear what I hear?**

Listening is an art, not a science. Some people are natural-born listening artists. Like musical prodigies, they are endowed with superior hearing skills. But most of us must work with varying degrees of diligence to develop strong listening skills.

Some people will never have good listening skills no matter their efforts. They have tin ears. They miss between-the-lines subtleties and may be *alexythymic*. Alexythymia means "words without mood," referring to a limited ability to grasp more than the explicit meaning of a statement. The customer listening systems used by most corporations are alexythymic.

Alexythymic personalities are most comfortable in professions that focus on quantitative tasks, like mathematics, science, engineering—and perhaps quantitative market research. Low-grade emotional sensitivity predisposes them to high dependence on rules and reason. They have little tolerance for exceptions. They "live by the book." Ask an alexythymic what subtleties he sees in a data set and you might get an answer we once heard: "When you go beyond the data, I get nervous."

Alexythymic personalities are low in empathy. Empathy is key to hearing *all* a person says and *doesn't* say. It wells up from an almond-shaped organ in the midbrain called the amygdala. Like fingerprints and snowflakes, no two brains or amygdalae are alike, so innate empathetic capacity varies greatly from the sociopath who has none, to Mother Teresa who seems to be overflowing with it.

For many decades, researchers have struggled to develop and refine mathematical representations of customer behavior to improve accuracy in predicting buying behavior. However, human behavior cannot be fully reduced to statistical data sets because no mathematical protocol has a capacity for empathy. Empathetic perception is essential to a full understanding of customers as *individual* human beings.

Empathy, which means “identifying with and understanding another person’s circumstances, feelings and motives,” is critical to maintaining lasting healthy relationships. Proponents of relationship marketing claim *trust* is the foundational attribute of successful relationship marketing. We submit that empathy, which promotes trust, deserves more attention. Trust comes when other conditions, especially empathy, are present in a relationship. A true customer-centric organization builds empathetic connections with customers by hearing the implicit along with the explicit.

### **What You Don't Hear from Satisfied Customers Can Hurt**

Customer satisfaction results are widely used to listen to what's on customers' minds, but they are notorious for misguiding management.

Apple Computer boasted in a 1995 press release “Two recent independent studies rated Apple tops in customer loyalty and satisfaction, consistently surpassing every other brand of personal computer. Apple’s lead in customer satisfaction is not just a sign of the quality of Apple’s Macintosh computer, but also is evidence of the strength of Apple’s core business.” Over the next several years, Apple’s fortunes rapidly fell, causing serious doubts about its ability to survive.

Apple benefits from what Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi calls a “lovemark.” Most brands depend in part on trade and service marks for protection of brand integrity, but some brands have the added fortification of being a lovemark, like Apple or Harley Davidson.

A problem with a lovemark-fortified brand is that its “lovers” are not objective about it. Like partners in a good marriage, a brand’s lovers tend to overlook anything but the most egregious shortcomings.

Love blinds. This was no less true among Apple’s customers—and Apple’s management. Brand love nearly sunk the company. Apple blithely operated in its own technology universe and was loved by its customers for it, but this parochialism proved to be an immensely costly position.

### **Context Matters**

Dissatisfied customers can be difficult to hear as well. A few years ago David met with a woman in her late 50s whose husband had accompanied her to the meeting. However, her husband would not join them in the hotel lounge where they were to meet. On entering the lounge during happy hour, David suggested to Mary that she try again to get her husband to join them.

“He won’t come. He doesn’t like crowds.”

“You don’t go out much?” David asked.

“Not like we used to.”

“What about dinner?”

“Joe says service isn’t what it used to be and even food quality has fallen.”

“Has Joe begun showing signs of a hearing problem?”

She looked stunned. “What a funny question,” she must have been thinking. But she answered, “Yes, why did you suspect that?”

David explained that sensitivity to high and low frequencies tends to decrease in later life, especially among men. This flattens the acoustical equivalent of visual depth perception, making it more difficult for the brain to tell where sounds originate.

The brain’s primary job is seeing to a person’s survival. When threat or uncertainty crops up, the brain triggers autonomic responses that override conscious behavior. Joe’s growing aversion to crowds would owe something to the discomfiting effect of those responses which include quickening pulse, rising perspiration, and increased anxiety—*all without his knowing it*. Not knowing the real source of his discomfort, Joe blamed falling service and food quality for his declining interest in dining out.

This story points up a critical defect in most customer research: failure to factor in *contextual influences* on respondents’ testimony about their behavior and values. Listening to the *whole* person involves assessing the influence of context on what a person is saying. The perceptions and statements of younger people are not as subject to contextual influences as those of older people because the younger mind tends to perceive reality in a more rules-oriented, black-and-white construction. However, as midlife approaches, people’s perceptions tend to take form in “shades of gray,” in which the meaning of something is influenced by the context in which it appears.

Customer surveys rarely factor in the differences in thinking styles between younger and older minds. For instance, younger minds have fewer problems answering questions calling for absolute answers, like “Yes” or “No” and “Strongly Agree,” “Moderately Agree,” etc. However, in a study of age-based differences in thinking styles, one researcher found that “Older subjects were often visibly discomfited with questions that didn’t let them say, ‘It depends.’” The phrase “It depends,” is a context sensitive term.

To growing numbers of people, customer survey results seem less conclusive than they used to be. Coke’s David Garrett says, “The old ways of research are fraying. We’re not getting the dependable results we used to.” This is mainly because the customer universe is aging. Most adults are now 45 or older, well into the time of life when shades of gray compromise the intent of crisp questions and scaled answers of research past when youth dominated the customer universe.

### **What Your Customers Can’t Say**

The biggest listening challenge in human communications is to know when *not* to listen to what a person is saying in ways that best serve that person’s interests. We all on occasion say something that we know is truth impaired, but hope to be found out. Linny was not thinking so much about George’s pleasure as her own, and hoped that he would figure that out.

It's not just consciously formed truth-challenged statements that complicate what people say to us. More challenging are statements people make they fully believe to be true, but are actually gross misrepresentations or *unintentional lies*. Marketing decisions based on unintentional lies cost companies untold sums. They represent the biggest category of expense that never shows up on financial statements.

In the early 1980s, when Ford learned Chrysler was planning a radically new vehicle, it launched a study to determine how much interest people might have in such a vehicle. Results were negative. Customers gave thumbs down to the vehicle. Ford trusted them and made a huge mistake by delaying its entry into the minivan business.

The costliest assumption in customer research is that people are generally reliable in describing why they do what they do, think the way they think, and feel the way they feel. At least enough to bet millions in marketing costs on their testimonies. However, recent brain research presents an astonishingly different picture.

Neurologist Richard Restak, on whose work PBS's award-winning series *The Brain* and *The Mind* were based, says "We have reason to doubt that full awareness of our motives and other mental activities may be possible." Fellow brain expert Bernard Baars echoes Restak's words: "Our inability to accurately report intentions and expectations may simply reflect the fact that they are qualitatively not conscious."

Huge sums are spent annually in customer research on the premise that "intentions and expectations are qualitatively conscious." That this premise is in error, brain researchers are quick to point out, does not negate the idea of self-determination. Motivations are born in unconscious realms of mental activity, but the conscious mind performs the executive function of decision-making. Like a corporate CEO, the conscious mind gets information on needs and solutions from lower echelons.

For instance, hunger results from unconscious sensing of nutritional deficits. To illustrate, when sugar levels fall, neuropeptide Y activates chemical messengers in the brain. These messengers inform the conscious mind of the sugar deficit by creating, perhaps, a sudden craving for chocolate. The conscious mind's owner may demur in favor of her diet, or she may give in with the resolve to eat just salad for dinner. That's how free will (a conscious function) and motivations (an unconscious function) interact.

When customers indicate a course of behavior in research that is belied by what happens later in the marketplace—as Ford experienced with minivan research—they are not compulsive liars so much as two personalities in the same body. Research by Antonio Damasio, head of neurology at the University of Iowa, indicates that when people contemplate hypothetical situations posed by a researcher, they use different brain sites and processes than when experiencing the same situation in real life.

### **Better Listening Increases Corporate Value**

In their book, *The GAAP Gap*, Robert Litan and Peter Wallison estimate that nowadays some 80 percent of a typical company's market value reflects the value of intangible assets. Although some intangible assets are resistant to economic quantification, customer value is not. Customer value is a quantifiable asset and better listening to customers is one way to increase the value of this asset. (See *Auditing Customer Value* for further discussion of customer value as a corporate "asset.")

Until recently, customer value was seen from the supply side perspective which viewed customers as statistical units. From this perspective grew the idea that marketing was essentially a numbers game largely played out by increasing the extent of exposure (i.e., advertising and promotion) and reach and frequency of exposures. Given a reasonably attractive product, competitive pricing, and reasonable levels of customer service, companies relied upon increased exposure, reach and frequency as a means to ratchet up sales.

That formula for sales growth is fraying. Coming into play as never before is customer value from the demand side perspective. A more autonomous and individuated aging customer universe is looking beyond price and functional performance in assessing the value of a company and its products. The Internet's erosion of corporate control of product information empowers customers to insist on companies bending to their will. This power cannot be countermanded by clever marketing ploys. The interactive nature of the Internet has raised customers' expectations to be listened to as unique personalities.

### **Companies are being forced to rethink marketing as the *commercial art of persuasion*.**

Companies that see marketing more as a *commercial service*—thinking of customers less as targets to be persuaded than as subjects to be served—stand the best chance of creating formidable competitive advantages in today's markets. This perspective empowers a company to build empathetic bridges to customers' minds, giving them the means to listen with understanding to customers' explicit and implicit expressions. With this knowledge, they can accurately anticipate the needs and will of customers *as individuals*, thereby promoting vigorous and economically profitable growth in the company's customer portfolio.

### **Addendum: A Whole Brain Approach to Customer Research**

For some time, the question of whether quantitative or qualitative research is best for listening to customers has been hotly debated. University of Manitoba marketing professor Malcolm Smith, an expert in research methodology, says, "There's no resolution in sight. Arguments often seem to more reflect subjective biases and thinking styles than empirically conclusive positions."

Economic interest tempts research firms that conduct only one type or another of research to savage the type they don't provide. Meanwhile, client companies pay a heavy price for the lack of resolution. Companies waste untold dollars in research that misleads them, and customers suffer defective responses to their needs.

Professor Smith believes the core issue is less about which type of research is best than about the quality of instrument design, protocols and interpretive skills. As in the ancient parable of four blind men describing an elephant, Smith says that researchers examining the same data often arrive at different conclusions.

An important lesson can be drawn from this unresolved debate. Failure is not partial to either type of research. Each can lead to marketing triumph and each can lead to marketing failure. The issue will be resolved only when everyone agrees that both types have valid roles in research.

## Using the Brain As a Model for Organizing Research

Customer research is a modeling task. Its purpose is to discover information for use in modeling customers and their behavior. But customer research often fails its purpose because little of it is designed and conducted in close alignment with how people mentally process information. The ensuing discussion shows why research structure and protocols modeled on the workings of the brain can improve the accuracy and worth of research.

True-to-life models of customers and their behavior require the capture of data from both the quantitative (*left brain* biased) and qualitative (*right brain* biased) dimensions of customers' lives, and weaving those data together into unitary or *whole brain* models.

Qualitative research is right brain biased because it delves into customers' emotions and feelings which are specialties of the right hemisphere. But not only is customer testimony in qualitative research right brain biased, *researchers' interpretation of that testimony is also right brain biased*. Emotions and feelings can't be fully assessed objectively (independent of a respondent), so the researcher must *subjectively* assess respondents' testimonies about their feelings.

Unlike quantitative research, which produces data, much of which can be assessed independently of a respondent, qualitative research depends on faith in what respondents say. While faith is not as rationally defensible as the logic in quantitative research, qualitative research is better for picking up on customers' *implicit* testimony which tends to resist quantification.

Quantitative research is left brain biased because abstract sequential reasoning used in this type of research is a left brain specialty. Respondents are asked questions whose design is influenced by the methodology that will be used in analyzing their answers. This forces respondents to use rational thinking processes, often obscuring emotional factors in their behavior.

Kevin Clancy and Robert Shulman (formerly of Yankelovich, Clancy and Shulman) say in *The Marketing Revolution*, "Because customers don't choose rationally, any research that forces rational answers has to be flawed." A bit of overstatement perhaps, but expressive of quantitative research's limitations. Still, quantitative research is well suited to customers' *explicit* testimony, which is more subject to empirical testing independent of source.

## Information Processing Starts in the Right Brain

New information reaching the brain's cortex (its outer layer) is first processed in the right brain. The right brain assesses the relevance of information to a person's interests before any information reaches the conscious mind. Myriad clusters of neurons work in tandem like an assembly of parallel computers to identify patterns that help the conscious mind make sense of what enters it.

The right brain's pattern recognition abilities make projective techniques used in focus groups constructively revealing. Showing respondents pictures that remind them of a product often reveals feelings that direct questions about the product would not yield. First impressions arise from *primary information processing* (PIP) in the right brain. PIP stimulates visceral responses to information. It triggers changes in hormonal flow, pulse, muscle tone, temperature, blood pressure and other body systems to generate emotions. The first responses to everything we experience are *always* emotional, or in visceral terms, *gut feelings*.

Parallel processing in the right brain makes possible quicker assessments of a situation than obtainable through left brain reasoning. This has critical importance to a person because speed in analyzing new information can mean the difference between surviving and not surviving.

Like emergency room personnel working against time, the right brain organizes its activities around what is most important by conducting *information triage*. In the face of an emergency, such as a car appearing suddenly in your path, information triage blocks out information not relevant to escaping disaster. We consciously experience this blocking in emergency situations when everything seems to be happening in slow motion.

Information triage serves another purpose. The conscious mind doesn't have enough "RAM" or working memory to deal with everything the senses detect, so the right brain has to winnow information flow down to what the conscious mind can handle.

Imagine you are involved in a conversation with a colleague at work when suddenly you hear your name in another conversation down the hall. Your brain was listening to the other conversation all along, but only when your name came up did it feel it was necessary to report it to your conscious mind. The right brain is the main player in that process.

### **The Roots of Free Will May Lie in the Left Brain**

The right brain reports its assessment of incoming information to the left brain via visceral or emotional responses. The left brain's *secondary information processing* (SIP) converts visceral responses into words to facilitate conscious perceptions, analysis, thoughts and decisions.

The left brain is a serial information processor. Serial processing gives humans' their unique reasoning capabilities. Reasoned perceptions are slower to form than emotional perceptions, but the former enable us to get beyond the limited actions that emotions otherwise confine us to.

Emotions are reflexive. They trigger instinctive, mindless responses. But reason gives us ways to get beyond emotions, to avoid what Daniel Golman calls "emotional hijacking" in *Emotional Intelligence*. Emotions are of the moment.

Actions guided by reason can be anticipatory. Reason helps us move beyond present influences and choose what will influence us in the future. Reasoning is the cradle of free will. It is also the doorway to imagination that makes for great science, great leadership, and great art. Most people are surprised to learn that despite the right brain's reputation for creativity, composers and gifted musicians practice their art primarily from the left hemisphere. People who simply listen to music experience it mainly in their right brain.

Words not only play the lead role in the formation of perceptions and thoughts, they *objectify* emotional responses, making it possible for people to tell each other what they feel. Of course, how well others "get it" depends on their empathetic capacities.

## Thinking of a Third Kind

Emotions and reason often point in opposing directions. This is the core of the problem when research respondents indicate a course of behavior to researchers that is later contradicted by what actually happens in the marketplace. Even when researchers ask customers about their feelings, they unwittingly encourage them to be more rational than they will likely be in the marketplace. Also, people tend to feel more comfortable presenting their thoughts to strangers in rational rather than emotional terms. In sum, customers tend to give “half-brain” testimony in most research.

A major problem in customer research is *poor correspondence* between rational and emotional expression. Everyone is familiar with poor correspondence between right and left brain output. Who has not been frustrated or angered by a colleague, spouse or other person *mislabeled* his or her feelings, or attributing feelings to something other than what caused them? When this happens, there is poor correspondence between PIP (primary information processing) and SIP (secondary information processing).

A whole brain research approach that uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods is key to correcting for lack of correspondence between PIP and SIP. Until recently, “whole brain” meant left brain and right brain collectively. Research by Austrian neurologist Wolf Singer has expanded the meaning of “whole brain.” His research indicates there are not two, but three styles of thinking: the right brain’s subjective parallel processing; the left brain’s objective serial processing; and integrated *unitive* processing.

Unitive processing is more than subjective output + objective output. Unitive processing is greater than the sum of its parts. It is more than an integration of right brain/left brain output. It is processing of a third kind. Subjective and objective processing occurs in the right and left hemisphere, respectively. Unitive processing consists of synchronous neural oscillations that sweep both hemispheres at 40 passes per second. This whole brain processing unifies and integrates information from the other processes, but goes beyond that with the power to transform output of the other two processes into wholly new output with different properties.

## Discovery of Unitive Processing Calls for Changes in How We Listen to Customers

The discovery of unitive processing is radically changing views of the mind and its workings. Unitive processing is quite possibly the ultimate source of consciousness and free will. It may also be the fountainhead of creativity. Rather than rising in full bloom from the right hemisphere, as commonly believed, the full expression of creativity may be a product of unitary processing. The right brain’s role in creativity, like that of a car’s starter which cranks up its engine, may be to get the engines of creativity in unitive processing turning over.

There is support for that idea in the humanities. Unlike in hard science, where young adults disproportionately make great discoveries, advancements in the humanities often flow from more seasoned minds. This could be because unitive processing improves with age. Unitive processing might, in fact, be the neurological foundation of wisdom. But research design typically assumes no differences in how adults of varying ages process information. Researchers survey people varying in age by as much as 50 years with no recognition of already known age-correlated differences in mental processing styles. The discovery of unitive processing makes these differences even greater.

## Putting It Together

Aside from debate about which research style is best for listening to customers, widespread disagreement exists about what are the best methodologies. Choices in methodologies have dramatically increased over the past several decades. One can choose between various traditional methodologies, or take a plunge into brain wave tracking, hypnosis, Q Technique (inspired by quantum theory), polygraph analysis, laddering (in which respondents largely shape research direction), or Harvard University's Jerry Zaltman's "metaphor elicitation technique" which gets behind people's conscious minds to reveal what they cannot directly reveal.

Beyond that sampling of methodologies are those that information technology has spawned from point-of-sale scanning to high tech mediated *customer relationship management* (CRM) methodologies. It's worth noting that present CRM software packages cannot live up to claims routinely made by their creators. The rules-based structure of most CRM platforms makes them a left brain or "half-brain" solution to the know-thy-customer challenge.

Selection of methodology can be less critical than the quality of instrument design, protocols and interpretive skills used in a research project. This is not to say that all methodologies are equal. Like a carpenter pulling a tool from his toolbox to suit the job at hand, research methodology should be selected according to a project's objectives. No single research methodology has consistently yielded such brilliant results that it has become the gold standard. The truth is, research quality often has more to do with *who* does the research than with *how* it is done. Even in mathematics-dominated quantitative research, subjective art can play a larger role than objective science in the quality of outcomes.

Customer research is inherently impaired by the lack of a foundation of basic principles or rules, such as the hard sciences have, and no unitive force to pull everything together into true-to-life models of customer behavior. This leaves to individual choice the foundations researchers build from; to chance how quantitative and qualitative information is integrated, and to social or executive rank what decisions are made. University of Manitoba's Malcolm Smith was quoted earlier, "Arguments (about quantitative versus qualitative research) seem to more often reflect subjective biases and cognitive styles than empirically conclusive positions." That is the inevitable result in a field that lacks the equivalent of Isaac Newton's basic laws of nature or Albert Einstein's  $E=MC^2$ .

If customer researchers lack consensus on starting points for divining customers' values, needs and behavior, and no common process for integrating qualitative and quantitative research results, what level of confidence can clients have in research output? Lacking confidence in research, clients feel free to pit their subjectively derived opinions against the claims of researchers, and because they pay the researchers, clients usually win.

Perhaps no book has more ruthlessly examined the failings of customer research than Kevin Clancy and Robert Shulman's *The Marketing Revolution*. They are consumer researchers who dare to challenge a plethora of presumptions that guide researchers. For example, they challenge the practice of customer segmentation when they say, "While it is possible to divide the American public into different segments psychographically, it's often of no practical use."

In *Purchasing Behavior and Personal Attributes*, W. Massey, T. Lodahl and R. Frank deliver a broadside to psychographic segmentation of customers in claiming that their research found that multivariate statistical analysis of personality traits could account for no more than seven percent of people's purchasing behavior.

Customer research operates in the ideological equivalent of a Tower of Babel environment. The field sorely needs a *unitive* force to, in the vernacular, "get its act together." A new marketing paradigm called *developmental relationship marketing* offers such a unitive force. DRM offers a dramatically different perspective on marketing and customers that embodies a customer centric methodology modeled on consumer behavior. DRM is predicated on developmental forces that influence behavior across the life span.

The central premise of DRM is that developmental forces drive *generally* predictable changes throughout a person's life in five key behavioral dimensions:

**Worldview** – how a person connects to what lies outside their minds

**Needs** – deficiencies that alter physical and psychological functioning

**Motivations** – forces that compel need satisfaction

**Need satisfaction approaches** – how a person responds to needs

**Mental processing styles** – how information is processed in the mind/brain complex

Researchers with knowledge of these five behavioral dimensions have critical benchmarks to guide research design. For example, knowing the cognitive limitations of rules-based or "black-and-white" mental processing styles of adolescents and early-stage young adults leads to framing survey questions quite differently than for people in early midlife whose information processing styles are more context-sensitive and reflect a more "shades-of-gray" perspective.

The continuously evolving five behavioral dimensions play a pivotal role in the workings of five systems of *motivating underlying values* (MUV) that constitute the primary drivers of behavior.

**Identity Values** – for self-awareness, self-image, self-preservation, and social image

**Relationship Values** – for connections to others, institutional resources, and beliefs

**Purpose Values** – for imparting meaning to and validation of one's life and actions

**Adaptation Values** – for acquiring skills and knowledge to negotiate life

**Energy Values** – for securing, maintaining and repairing physical and mental well-being

MUV systems are the behavioral equivalent of DNA. They are the basic building blocks of behavior. Knowing the properties of each MUV system by season of life gives researchers critical parameters for designing research. Knowing how, for example, Identity Values influence middle age behavior differently than young adult behavior provides a developmental context for designing research for middle age customers and interpreting their testimonies.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to give a detailed picture of DRM. Rather, the objective has been to show why customer research often disappoints, and to propose solutions. The picture of customer research is like that of a partially completed jigsaw puzzle with most of its border joined together because the straight edges of border pieces make them the easiest to put in place.

All the pieces of the customer research jigsaw puzzle will be in place once research is congruent with how the mind/brain complex works in the various seasons of life. Research output will be vastly improved because the products of research will be analogs of human behavior. Analogs have correspondence to what they represent—like a fuel gauge that indicates fuel levels. Every researcher and research user wants nothing more than strong correspondence between behavior predictions in research and behavioral outcomes in the marketplace.



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