

From Insight to Inspiration

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Research, in any form, basically starts with **data** gathering. These data are considered as raw material that doesn't give us any useable information. When these data are brought together, processed, communicated and then relayed to the receiver based on certain context or a common reference blueprint, they become valuable **information**.

When processed information generates intelligence, it will also form knowledge, or experiential information. And when this knowledge is analyzed by referring to the accumulation of experiences and intuition of the researchers, it becomes an **insight** that is of value to its users.

Generally, this flow of data-information-knowledge-insight is what commonly applies in the process of research. Insight becomes the end result of an entire research program.

At the stages of information and knowledge, since they are commonly in the form of fact-finding – statistical facts and other hard data which are more quantitative in nature, the results are more easily accessible by public.

Moving on to insight where a number of hypotheses are developed. Implications of these hypotheses are also analyzed. While the previous stages are more quantitative in nature, the stage of insight involves intuition and judgment which are more qualitative in nature.

However, for me, insight alone won't suffice. Insight has only a passive meaning, which won't bring any benefit when it's not followed-up by taking any concrete actions. Therefore, the end result of a research program should be able to provide an **inspiration** to all parties who, for example, are involved and concerned in developing a new product, developing strategies or creating memorable advertisements.

This inspiration will be able to transform or change people. Inspiration will guide people to realize what their aspirations are and enable them to survive through continuous change. With inspiration, people will make changes that hopefully will bring better results than the existing ones.

To be able to proceed from insight to inspiration, creative interpretation is needed. This, Insight has to be organized such that it becomes clear and easily comprehensible by targeted parties. Therefore, from insight to inspiration, the role of communication is of high importance.

Research outcome, which is commonly reported as written reports and presented to clients afterwards, must be communicated in such manner that the client can fully grasp the information that is being conveyed. Systematics of report writing and presentation by research team to clients should be done in the "lingo" that all parties comprehend. We should also not forget the fact that on the client's side there are people at different levels with different levels of competency, such as

the director's board, brand manager, product manager and advertising agency, and not every one of them understand the research "lingo".

In many occasions, including my personal experience in leading MarkPlus Research, clients are more often offered research methods, their validity, quantitative findings, etc. Clients are more often presented with processes instead of results, while in reality clients do not put much importance in the research process but on the insights that inspire them to act.

However this problem is not entirely the research agency's fault. It is not uncommon that the clients themselves often question the methodologies and validity of research done instead of insights gathered. Discussion on research process sometimes takes more time that discussion on insights and their follow-up.

Consequently, research findings have to be communicated as interestingly as possible to make clients feel inspired. There's nothing wrong in researchers learning how to create visually interesting presentations for graphic designers or how to engage salespeople. Graphic designers are bale to present attractive visuals while salespeople commonly have better persuasion skills compared to their colleagues in non-sales departments.

Or, in your research team, you can involve people with backgrounds in psychology, ethnography, and others that have the ability to observe and interpret behavior. Hence clients may get inspirations, and not only insights, from the research you conduct.