



IT'S NOT YOU. IT'S ME.

MAY 1, 2015

Many of us are familiar with George Costanza's signature break-up line from Seinfeld, the popular 1990's TV series. It's a funny line that seemingly has nothing to do with research. However, we suggest it actually does apply – in a big way, and here's why.

At PTG, we insert the human element ("the me") into everything we do because experience has taught us that to understand engagement and behavior, people need to be observed in highly contextual environments. By placing respondents in unrealistic situations, where they are clearly participating in research, the "real world" results are less predictable. For instance, more often than not, a consumer can provide the answer being sought after in a forced exposure setting, but does that answer truly reflect what that same person would do when faced with your brand on shelf?

Our approach simultaneously evaluates the individual evaluating your products and resulting communications to reveal what consumers can't, or won't, articulate about your brand so you can make more informed decisions. Moreover, PTG's patented technology enables you to essentially look through both sides of a mirror to capture consumer interactions, personality traits and habits while individuals engage with your brand.

We translate this comprehensive data into tactics designed to amplify creative performance, refine product marketing strategies and influence consumer behavior. Below are just a few examples of how insight into the human element made all the difference in answering key business questions.

1. A leading women's skincare brand tested a full page print ad and it performed very well in a forced exposure setting. Based upon the results of the print test, the brand moved forward with the ad; however, the insertion didn't meet expectations. To get a handle on what went wrong, the brand reran the research using PTG's truReader™ methodology which evaluates print ads within an actual magazine and in the presence of real competitive ads. The results of the research revealed that a major competitor's ad had a similar, yet more impactful, claim that resulted in the ad's poor in-market performance. With this information in hand, the agency was able adjust the ad's copy to better resonate with women.
2. A major personal care company came to PTG for our assistance with an underperforming retail end cap. Under forced exposure, pre-market research indicated that 55% of shoppers would read the header copy supporting the brand's new marketing campaign. Since in-store sales were not supporting these expectations, the company turned to PTG and commissioned an in-store shopper study that utilized our patented truVu™ glasses. Our truVu glasses are equipped with product identification technology, gaze tracking, and built-in HD (high definition) and HFR (high frame rate) recording capabilities. Our patented AutoSlicer™ data mining technology made sense out of the shopping trips by recognizing test products and compiling video footage. The results of the in-store research revealed that less than 20% of shoppers looked up at the end cap header so we recommended the placement of side card ads that immediately proved far more effective.



3. Across the industry, television copy testing has not escaped the “It’s Not You. It’s Me.” conundrum either. Among the thousands of ads that PTG has tested over the years, it’s not uncommon for a client to tell us that his or her in-market ad is underperforming on TV but it tested really well for recall/breakthrough as part of a forced exposure research clutter reel. To get to the bottom of the disparity, we often suggest running the same ad through our truTube™ copy testing solution. Our methodology takes the “me” into account by relying upon a highly contextual, real world environment whereby respondents participate in our research thinking they are evaluating network television programming – not advertising. They are invited to watch TV as they typically would which allows us to capture their viewing behavior while individuals change channels and use DVR functions.

By mimicking an actual TV viewing experience we evaluate whether a respondent was naturally inclined to watch an ad or zap past it with their remote control. Additionally, our truTube methodology uniquely incorporates our patented Saccadic Eye Motion Recording technology which measures second-by-second visual engagement as well as element-by-element eye tracking.

In the case above, our parallel research for the ad that performed well on recall/breakthrough as part of a forced exposure clutter reel but underperformed in-market, revealed that the ad had an issue with audience engagement. Nearly 21% of respondents zapped past the ad with their remote control and recall was well below the norm. Using the results garnered from our Saccadic Eye Movement Recorder we were able to pinpoint the precise moment in the ad where consumer engagement dropped and the zapping picked up. With our recommendations in hand, the creative agency was able to make a specific change to the ad that measurably improved its performance.

There is a cautionary tale threaded throughout each of the examples above and it is overlook the human element at your own risk. Only half a story is told when research focuses on metrics, norms and methodologies that evaluate brand communications in a vacuum. Listen to the wise George Costanza and consider the “me” because it’s generally not “you”.