



Find New Growth Opportunities for Existing Technologies

Case Study

Using the Right People and a Better Approach

SITUATION

Our client is a major supplier of filtration media commonly used in air filters for heating and air conditioning systems. The company sells the raw material to fabricators who create and market the finished product.

For mass retailers, the residential air filter category is a “necessary evil.” It has significant household penetration but is a low-turn, low-margin product line. A mass retailer directly approached our client for ideas on how to improve category profitability. Two options were explored: a private label offering or product innovation. Consumer research was pursued to explore innovation opportunities.



THE ASSIGNMENT

Because our client was a raw material supplier, their level of understanding of the consumer was very low. We were hired to conduct a comprehensive review, which included six focus groups and an online study. The qualitative research was designed to identify consumer attitudes and habits, purchase drivers, and value drivers for residential air filters.

Secondary research illuminated the functional needs of the consumer. For potential innovations; however, the client needed a deeper understanding of higher-order needs. For most consumers, air filters is a low involvement category. During planning, we were concerned that study participants would not be able to “reach very deep” on a product that most only think about a couple times a year. As a result, we decided to structure this qualitative research assignment as a **We** Group.

WHAT WE DID DIFFERENTLY

To overcome our concerns about low consumer engagement, we employed these tactics:

(1) We populated the sessions with “lead users” —in this study defined as those who had a household member with a chronic respiratory condition. (2) We also deployed our TeamBuilder typing tool to identify **Storytellers**. Based on the principles of behavioral archetypes, this archetype is naturally hard-wired to articulate needs and naturally skilled at facilitation. As such, a “show and tell” was asked of each participant. In a poster format, participants articulated the following: what impacts indoor air quality, what they do to improve air quality, and what benefits they derive from good air quality.



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THE RESULT

Because the Storytellers were the right people for the job, study participants articulated higher order needs during “show and tell” on their own, and they required less prompting and usage of tricky laddering techniques by the moderator.

Because we established needs states so quickly, more time was freed up to discuss ideas about new products and retail merchandising. Overall, this maximized value for our client because we covered far more topics during our two-hour session than anticipated.

In a concurrent control group (standard focus group), we established 50% fewer need states and potential innovation angles.



WE GROUPS - WHAT THEY ARE

Group qualitative research sessions (live or virtual) designed to maximize trust between the moderator and participants and participant-to-participant. Research shows that higher levels of trust lead to more engagement and greater contribution. Our format includes behavioral archotyping of study participants to ensure they are the right match for the assignment, advance priming and interaction with the moderator, and carefully crafted questions and activities that leverage each person’s unique gifts and abilities.

WHAT THEY ARE NOT

A standard focus group.

ABOUT STANDPOINT

We enable organizations to make smarter decisions that drive revenue and profit.

Driven by endless curiosity and the ability to swiftly understand problems, we team up with our clients to expand their thinking through custom research, training, and online learning resources.

Because we don’t do cookie cutter solutions, clients bring us their trickiest assignments, knowing we will deliver with clarity and a strong point of view.

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- Does your organization need a responsive helping hand when conducting do-it-yourself research? Our consultants are available to assist with problem definition, project scoping, reviewing discussion guides, reviewing questionnaires, interview coaching, and more. This is the best way to offer your team the training and support they need to elevate customer understanding across the organization. Blocks of time can be booked according to your needs. [Contact us](#) for more details.
- Check out our [event calendar](#) for upcoming workshops.



Quickly seek growth opportunities for an existing product or technology. [In a half day workshop](#), create a plan and build momentum for an assignment.

- Scope your assignment
- Decide on priorities
- Develop preliminary hypotheses based on past research / institutional knowledge
- Ideate with the project team
- Develop a research learning plan to validate opportunities and ideas
- Build organizational capability