

Qualitative research by mobile phone:
Researching life as it happens



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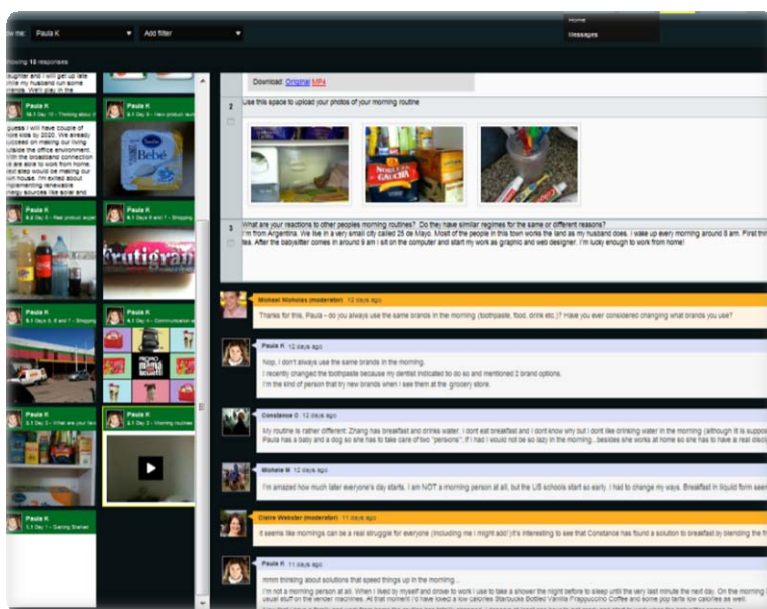
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Qualitative Research Consumer Nation

By utilizing digital platforms and the mobile phone, the TNS qualitative team are able to research life 'as it happens', get you 'in the moment' and 'in touch' with consumers. The mobile phone provides our qualitative researchers with the tool to get closer to consumers and understand their behaviours and experiences. Given the explosive growth in smartphone ownership worldwide, and in many of the rapid growth markets the mobile phone is now the primary device to access the Internet, TNS believes that connecting with consumers via their mobile device is an essential part of the qualitative toolkit.

In a recent study designed to understand the drivers of brand preference, TNS connected with 25 participants across 15 countries (both emerging and developed markets), over three weeks during November 2010. We set new tasks each day to capture participant experiences and stories. The participants responded via video, pictures and text – through PC and their iPhone (via a dedicated app).

This integrated digital and mobile platform creates an interactive and dynamic platform breaking down barriers of geographical spread and time zones.



Participants are not only able to submit responses to activities presented to them, but also – at the click of a button – to browse other people's responses from a huge geographical spread, asking questions about, commenting and building on one another's posts.

"I really enjoyed being able to read other participants' responses. Their comments were really insightful. It actually helped give the activities a 'human quality' and a mini social networking tool. At times it was like reading Facebook status updates and I found that I logged in just to read other people's responses even though I had already completed my daily activity." Paula from Vientecinco de Mayo, small town in Argentina

Brand preferences - The objective of this study was to understand the drivers of brand preference – why people want/don't want to buy certain brands. Through this personal, "in your pocket" methodology, we managed to observe people's experiences with brands, and explore the reasons why they actually prefer brands.

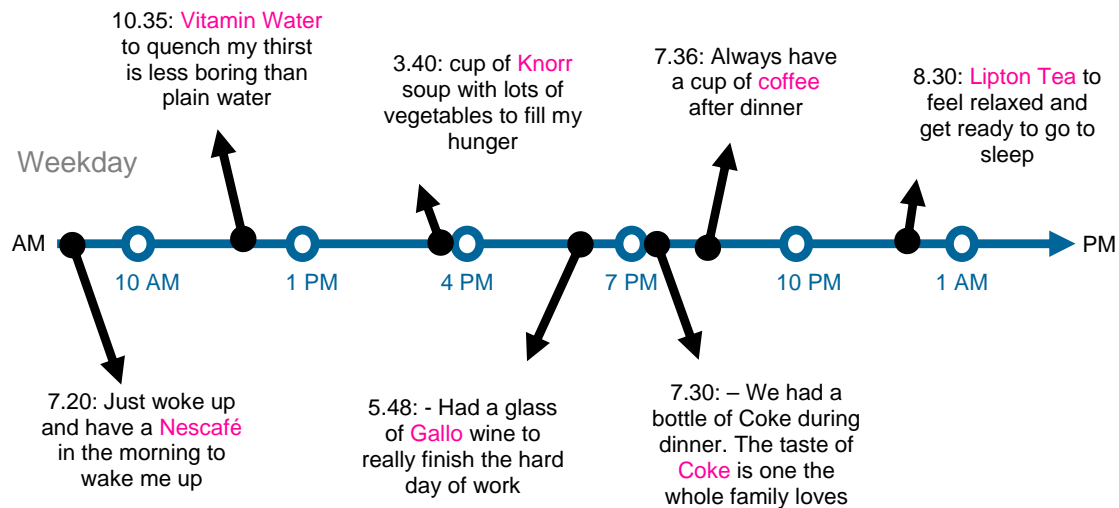
We have identified four key drivers of brand preference. The stories by the participants provide a lively and real understanding of these drivers.

- In a more commoditized world, consumers prefer brands that continue to **improve performance** of the product on a functional level - *"As for food, I just found the Tostitos Scoops with Jalapeno. I tried the Lime flavour and loved it, so it was easy to give the Jalapeno flavour a try. It has just enough jalapeno flavour without overwhelmed the taste of the chip."*
- In an ever-more communicative world (social networking et al), brands that can **unite** people/get people talking about them. - *"Coca-cola ads shows a girl handing out Cokes to people of all races and ages as you can see in the link. Other ads depict African leaders (very satirical) drinking Coke and making a "BRRR" sound."*
- Brand experiences that **transform** people's mood form a strong emotional connection – *"I love "Fluff". It is such a delicious invention and you can do funny things with it as seen in the link It's just such a happy experience for me."*
- And finally, in a crowded marketplace, brands that can **empower and excite consumers** to do that "added extra" that have that "wow factor" stand above the competition. *"I use Body Shop products; it comes from natural ingredients. They don't just create products, but also help preserve the earth by recycling products."*

Clearly, the most successful brands, those with the highest and most brand preference, manage to tap into several, if not all, of these drivers. Our participant Elizabeth really describes it well in one of her posts.

*"Nesquik" is a combination of things: when I was growing up, my sister and I were only allowed to drink Nesquik occasionally at Saturday breakfast or Sunday lunch; it was a real treat.. I loved to stir the brown chocolate powder at the bottom of the glass, or even better sip the left over when finishing it. This made it into a special drink. As I grew up, Nesquik fits my active lifestyle: hiking and spending time outdoors. There's nothing better on a cold winter's day than a warm glass of Nesquik chocolate milk. It's pure magic. Now, it's the best cure and pick-me-up after a long day of hard work. I'm not sure exactly what it is about Nesquik: it's a familiar, almost comforting taste. I suppose I associate the taste with happy memories in some way."
– Elizabeth*

Targeting the occasion – Although different consumer needs drive underlying brand preference, we must remember that these needs are fluent, transient and change from occasion to occasion. Brands need to know when and where they are best targeted to meet consumers’ needs. By using this “mobile” methodology we take the research directly to consumers, we enter their world, we connect with their occasions and their changing needs. It allows us to follow consumers 24/7 something traditional ethnography has been unable to do. Consumers can easily track, record and “diarise” their behaviour, experiences and thoughts around brands, and as a result we can map these occasions, as they happen.



We are also able to directly capture their shopping experience combining explanations of their needs, feeling and thoughts with screen shots and video footage.

To summarize, the world is changing and so are relations between brands and consumers. Brands have to navigate change and anticipate new opportunity areas. Technology has also changed the way people engage and relate to each other. And so have we.

We believe that only genuine, human and empathetic interactions with people will lead to an in-depth understanding of consumers’ changing behaviours. To truly understand their world, we need to enter it by interacting with consumers in their time and space, communicating with them in ways that motivate their openness. The mobile phone brings us closer to people: consumers’ real behaviour can be observed as opposed to relying on what they claim they do. This methodology provides a unique opportunity to make powerful connections with people and derive tacit insight that will lead to action.

Argentina	Brazil	China	France	Germany	Nigeria	Russia	South Africa	UK	USA