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Customer Experience is Well-Defined by Metaphors

by Lynn Hunsaker

Do you want to gain an in-depth understanding of customer experience? More information can be obtained from five customers than from 50 focus groups, according to Larry Huston, former Vice President of Knowledge and Innovation at Procter & Gamble:

"Map a holistic experience and spend 12 hours with one consumer over a one-month period instead of running 50 focus groups where you have eight minutes with an individual consumer.

Start with a very deliberate protocol that is designed to elicit logic and emotion. The emotion is often the most important aspect of what you need to get from consumers: the unconscious. I would give them 12 photographs, none of them about water, and I said, 'Tell me your thoughts and feelings about how water can positively improve your life.' What's going off in their minds are pictures. They're not processing a word; there are images and that is how the brain works.

However, traditional research methods are verbo-centric. They're words which get you into the conscious level. If I can interact with you on your thoughts and feelings about water through imagery, you won't believe the amount of stuff that would flow. It's unbelievable, and we understand, we unravel, we elicit the dream with consumers through these deep probing methods that get at the unconscious.

So we have entire protocols that are designed to get at the logic, the emotion, the sensory experience and the task. It takes 12 hours to do that over multiple weeks with very detailed maps put together. The first consumer will give us 400 concepts, the second consumer will give us 400, but there will only be like 200 new, the third will give us 400, and there will be about a 100 new. By the time I get to the fifth consumer, I have elicited the entire experience domain of a targeted group of consumers."

This story is included in the ehandbook [Innovating Superior Customer Experience](http://www.clearaction.biz/innovation) (see www.clearaction.biz/innovation).

Find out how to customize these tips to your situation; contact the author lynn.hunsaker@clearaction.biz.