



Helping you to  
press the right buttons

**Making communication  
more effective**



intervention space limited

# Getting the right message across

Every serious organisation invests in understanding its customers, stakeholders and employees. Every year billions of pounds are spent on market research with people who give their attitudes and opinions on a variety of issues – while agencies are employed to create communications that are tested and re-tested.

But despite the most extensive research, there remain difficult questions:

- ▶ Why don't people in the real world do what they say in research?
- ▶ Why doesn't persuasive communication consistently translate into customer behaviour?
- ▶ Why do some internal communications succeed when others fail to connect with employees?
- ▶ Why don't stakeholders get the message?
- ▶ Why do some communications invite rejection rather than buy-in when they appear to be saying the same thing?

## Switching the on/off button

Most of the market research industry works on the assumption that people are able to clearly articulate their thoughts, reasons and their behaviour. We believe respondents when they say they can explain objectively what they do, why they do it and how they do it.

Broadcast and targeted communications are designed on that basis and the world continues to push messages at people in the hope that some of it will stick. This is being done with little appreciation that there's an off button, which those same people control. Customers decide what they see, hear, read and do – but we seem reluctant to accept this in our approach to communicating with them. The system has largely overlooked the basics of how communication works.

We appreciate the diversity of communication and the ever growing sophistication of consumers. We understand how technology enables and disables communication. But do we pay enough attention to how people enable and disable communication? Do we understand where the sub-conscious off switches are and how to maximize the use of the on button?

Or to be more precise, how do we know that the recipients of all this communication are in a mode to receive? And if we understood this better, how much would it improve our chances of getting through and stimulating the desired response?

The behavioural science that can help marketers and communicators to get to grips with all this has been around for some time, but still under-used in research. It's a technique called Language And Behaviour, or LAB profile for short.

What LAB profile tells us is:

- ▶ We all use filters to shut out or let in communication
- ▶ These filters are on most of the time
- ▶ These filters are programmed by the receiver's experience of the world (not the sender's)
- ▶ And if the sender's communication doesn't recognise the receiver's reality, **THE MESSAGE IS DEAD IN THE WATER**

In LAB terms, the medium is not the message - the audience is the medium. If you understand how your customers are programmed to process communication, you can communicate more effectively with them.

## How does lab work?

LAB goes well beyond conventional research techniques that routinely deal with surface opinions, attitudes and perceptions. Back in the real world, respondents do not always act in ways that are consistent with their stated intentions or views. LAB focuses on sub-conscious truths that cannot be distorted or misinterpreted.

LAB works by decoding the language that people use to identify the key drivers of their motivations and behaviour in a given context – and how best to communicate to them to elicit the desired response.

It works in any number of contexts – e.g. market, decision-making process, purchase occasion, organisation or job role.

It works for any stakeholder audience - externally with consumers, customers and influencers, and internally with leadership teams, management and staff.

In summary, LAB tells you what respondents can't. And because it deals with the real drivers of people's motivation and behaviour, LAB has predictive qualities that other techniques do not.

## How can lab be applied?

- ▶ Communications audit
- ▶ Communications effectiveness
- ▶ Customer journeys
- ▶ New product development
- ▶ Pitch research
- ▶ Web conversion
- ▶ Employee engagement
- ▶ Organisation development
- ▶ Performance improvement
- ▶ Internal communications
- ▶ Social media analytics

# Some client examples



LAB research helped us discover the real reasons why long-distance travellers were choosing other destinations, and thus drive significant shifts in consideration and preference

## IF

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LAB segmentation and analysis of customer journeys helped both the client and their agencies to develop more targeted propositions and improve customer experience.



LAB research helped create a more distinctive and coherent brand identity and stimulated higher response amongst prospects.



Lab thinking enabled us to create new service propositions designed to the needs of different customer segments. In a subsequent blind test 5 out of the 6 segments chose the proposition designed for them.



We analysed written language and visual grammar to identify LAB patterns. This enabled our client to determine new ways of presenting the brand to a new target market and provided insights that informed differentiation and creative development of the pitch-winning marcomms strategy.

## For further information

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