



Open Viewpoint

Research that understands

Open Viewpoint Research™ is a proprietary research tool developed by Glide Pty Ltd to assess the attitudes, emotions and expectations of senior managers and directors.

It has been developed and proven in Perth over two years, in a range of applications from seeking new commercial clients to charting the development of a professional organisation.

Why to use Open Viewpoint Research™

Use Open Viewpoint Research™ if you want to know:

- Why your non-customers choose to buy from someone else – and what you can do about it.
- What causes customers to leave you – and how to plug the gap.
- How you can identify unmet customer needs, including emerging and future needs, and adapt your product or service to steal a march on the competition
- The emotional triggers that drive people to buy.
- How to get clients to pay extra for service.

When to use Open Viewpoint Research™

Open Viewpoint Research™ is well suited to situations where:

- It's vital to understand the judgements and the emotional drivers that trigger important decisions.
- The subjects are busy, senior people such as upper management or business owners.
- The topics to be covered are complex.
- Attitudes towards the future are at least as important as current practices.
- There may be things you want to know, but you don't know what they are (you don't know what questions to ask).

Open Viewpoint Research™ is ideal for assessing emerging trends and future expectations within influential target populations.

It can tell you how decision makers are responding to their changing market and world – and how you can become a part of their vision.



GLIDE
services for decision makers

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Technically speaking (the methodology)

Open Viewpoint Research™ is a hybrid qualitative–quantitative technique.

It merges telephone interviews (usually a quantitative technique, used with pre-printed surveys and set questions) with individual response probing (a qualitative technique where a very experienced researcher follows the thread of a respondent's answers, without a fixed script or pre-set questions and answer categories).

As there are few preset questions (and the real value is usually in pursuing topics raised by respondents) the data analysis is complex. It involves repeated sorting and comparing of answers to detect attitudinal groups that hang together for individual respondents, rather than computing statistical average answers across groups.

In this way the analysis presents an understanding of varied individual decision making processes.

A one-on-one focus group

In a sense, Open Viewpoint Research™ is like a one-on-one focus group.

Unlike a focus group however it's conducted at a time and place to suit the respondent, with minimal disruption to them. So it's far more likely to get to senior people.

And it's one-on-one focus allows much more personalised, detailed probing, to get answers that are not influenced by what other people in the group are saying.

It's notoriously difficult (often impossible) to get senior managers and company directors to attend focus groups. Their time is too valuable to them to take a couple of hours out (including travelling) and frankly they may consider it beneath their dignity.

Consequently many “senior manager/director” focus groups are really mid-level managers at best. The information they gather is suspect, if it's applied to the real target group.



Respect for the respondent

Essential to the effectiveness of Open Viewpoint Research™ is maximum respect for the respondent. Generally we:

- Find the respondent's name before we make contact.
- Write to the respondent telling them what we are researching, how it affects them and why it is important for them to participate, and requesting their cooperation.
- Phone the respondent and make an appointment to phone them back at a time to suit them.
- Encourage them to talk freely about the topic and to answer at length. If we're interviewing senior managers about their industry, they will have deep personal views. Once they understand that we genuinely want to know what they think (that we value their opinions and we are not trying to fit them into a box), people are usually very open.
- Offer to send them a summary report of the research findings, for their own interest. Usually people are very interested to know what others in their industry are thinking, to compare their own judgements.

Interviews are conducted by a senior researcher with tertiary qualifications in psychology, not the usual untrained casual.

On average we make five to six contacts with each respondent before completing an interview (and often 10 or more). Our completion rate is usually very high (often 80% compared with 20% or less for typical forced-format surveys).

We set a maximum nominal interview length of 10 minutes but respondents become involved in the process and often they extend the interview to 20 minutes or more. We never cut a respondent off: what we want is their views, what they have to say is valuable.



Probing within the decision environment

Typically Open Viewpoint Research™ is based on telephone interviews of respondents in their offices. We have also adapted the technique for retail store use, based on intercepting shoppers leaving a store without purchasing (the aim is to find out why they didn't buy and what could have been done about it).

Common to both situations is that the respondent is in their own environment or at a decision point. They can respond in the context they are being asked about. It's immediate to them. And the results are consequently more immediate and valid than, for example, focus groups which are removed in time and place from the decision context.

The “questionnaire” and the interview

Most research uses pre-set questions and usually preset answers. That's why people get annoyed at interviews: the script doesn't go the way they go and their answers don't fit the boxes.

Worse, the interviewer is a casual who gets paid based on forms completed and boxes ticked.

If the respondent offers a key insight, if it doesn't fit at box, it won't be recorded.

Open Viewpoint Research™ does not use a formal questionnaire. It starts with a list of subject areas to be covered and a set of probe questions, but all of these are simply prompts to free talk.

The objective is to get the respondent to talk about what's important to them, in the subject area. If they raise it, it's important to them. If they don't, it isn't.

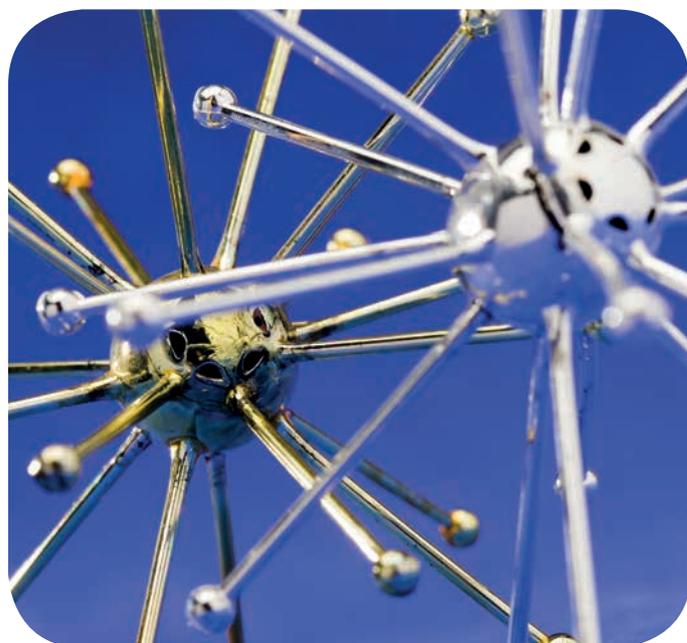
Once a respondent starts talking, we listen. We guide their talk across the subject areas, but let them set the topics. And we record whatever they say. No boxes.

The point is, Open Viewpoint Research™ wants to know what they think. Not which box they can be pushed into.

Of course, this kind of interview, where the structure is created on the fly, requires highly trained interviewers.

We use only people with tertiary qualifications in psychology or similar counselling style disciplines, where the skills of probing for underlying meaning are learned, but we require that they also have practical business and management experience.

We believe that developing an accurate picture of human thought processes depends critically on very high level interviewer skills and a commonality of experience with the respondent.



Outcomes

Open Viewpoint Research™ delivers information and understanding you can base your marketing strategies on.

It won't give you a statistical analysis (X% think option A, Y% have more than two kids) but it will give you an understanding of the emotions and attitudes that influence decisions.

Open Viewpoint Research™ will tell you:

- What your customers – and the customers of your competitors – want, that could lock them in to a supplier.
- The key elements of their view of the future, and what role you could play that would make you part of that vision.
- The trigger factors in their decision making.
- Very often, you'll get surprise insights and findings of key factors you didn't know to look for.

Open Viewpoint Research™ will also give you:

- Visibility and credibility with your target market decision makers, based on your research initiative.
- Opportunities to extend your professional profile by reporting and commenting on the research results and implications for the industry.
- Research findings you can use in a confidential industry report. This report can be a powerful sales tool, offered to key targets.

Our reporting to you includes a preliminary briefing with draft report, printed copies of the final report and a presentation to your key people.

We can also help with preparing selective reports for sales use and in ghosting professional articles.

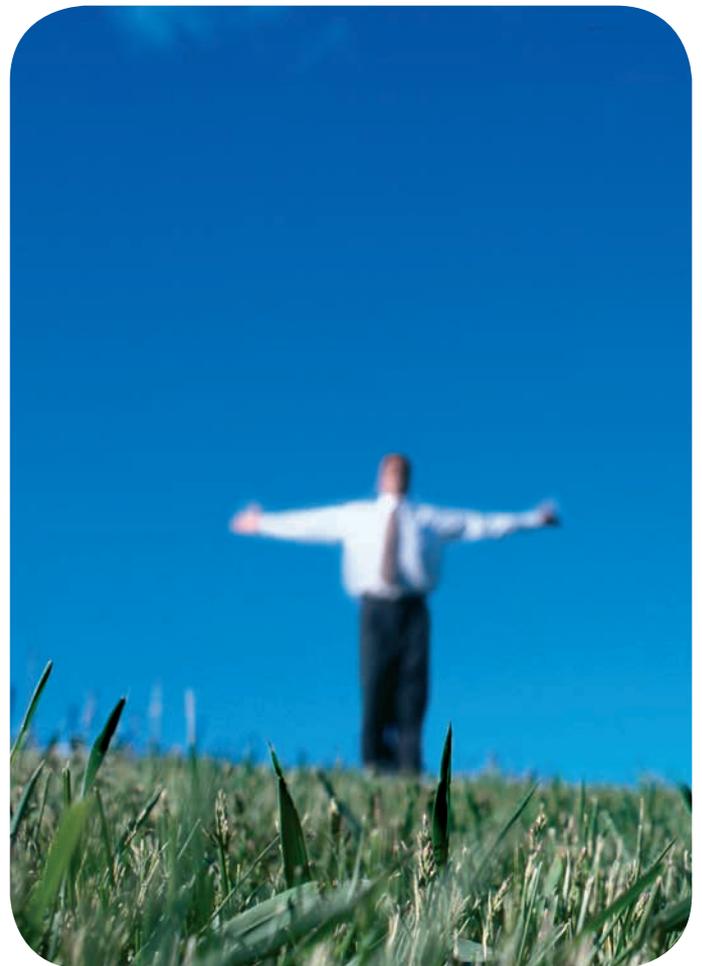
One-on-one, respect and decision environment = real insight

These three factors:

- one-on-one interviewing,
- respect for the respondent's time and views, and
- research within the decision environment

are keys to the effectiveness of the Open Viewpoint Research™ model.

Together, they get respondents talking about the things that matter to them. And, if they're your potential customers, what matters to them must matter to you.



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Articles by Michael Woodhouse have appeared regularly in Marketing, Australia's leading professional journal for marketers. A full list of articles (and copies) is available on request.



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