

DIALOGUING WITH CONSUMERS THROUGH LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®



IN TODAY VERY COMPLEX AND OVER STIMULATED REALITY, WE ARE CHANGING OUR RELATION WITH TIME, OUR CAPACITY TO KEEP FOCUS AND ATTENTION OVERALL, WHICH LEADS COMPANIES TO RE-LOOK AT HOW THEY DIALOGUE WITH PEOPLE

In a reality where people are, potentially, increasingly informed and connected, we feel the need to re-look at how the dialogue with consumers and people is led within and by companies.

Because of the very complex and over stimulated context in which we live, people are changing their relation with time, their capacity to keep focus and attention overall. In

particular the verbal communication is decreasing and feeling and fear to be manipulated by sellers is increasing.

Though focus groups are still the most common and respectful tool to engage a conversation with people, above mentioned environment make us feel the need to optimize this format for a more up-to-date and effective dialogue.

We believe that market research that for its nature is consumer centric has the opportunity to deploy a more human centric design approach to focus groups by putting people truly in the center of the conversation from the start of the project development phase. In this perspective, the combination of focus groups and LSP has been kind of a very natural first step to move forward (or progress).

LSP, FOR ITS NATURE, IS CAPABLE TO PUT PEOPLE TRULY AT THE CENTER OF THE DIALOGUE ... ALLOWING A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF CONVERSATION

The use of metaphors, the possibility to give shape to an idea, the use of hands and the fun ... are all elements that in our opinion, allow a facilitator to get in touch with what is underneath the surface, overcome stereotyped answers and grasp what is authentically there from people on a specific topic.

This is the assumption we started from when we initiated the "LSP-Focus Groups" project.

We had already piloted this approach on an individual level and, thanks to last year conference in Billund, we have got the chance to gather a small group of LSP facilitators around this initiative from different starting points, businesses and countries.

The different personal experiences run both within the marketing and the employee branding areas had shown that, using LSP to facilitate focus groups brings lot of advantages:

- it surprises consumers, especially the so called "professionals of focus groups" and force them to go beyond the "I have to say this" position
- it excites people granting a more qualitative presence and participation to the discussion
- thanks to the use of the metaphor, it allows a more effective use of time so that the group can get quicker and more directly to the point compared to using standard projective techniques

THANKS TO AN ILLUMINATED AND BRAVE LSP COLLEAGUE, A CROSS COUNTRY TEAM INVOLVING SUISSE, SWEDISH AND ITALIAN FACILITATORS HAS BEEN GATHERED AROUND A CONCRETE BUSINESS PROJECT, WHERE LSP AS FOCUS GROUP FACILITATION TECHNIQUE HAS FOUND A SPACE.

The LSP focus groups were integrated into a wider project aiming at investigating the point of sales of the future for a specific product category.

The LSP moment was positioned at the end of the research process with the specific objective of collecting the key elements of the POS of the future from many different perspectives: rational, emotional, functional.

Two different targets were involved in the groups and the decision was to run two focus groups in parallel, in the same space/room.

Duration of the focus groups: about 5 hours involving 20 people split into 2 sub-groups of 10 people each with one facilitator per group

The MVP gave very positive results. The objective was fully achieved and we got a lot of useful learning to optimise our format.

What worked well

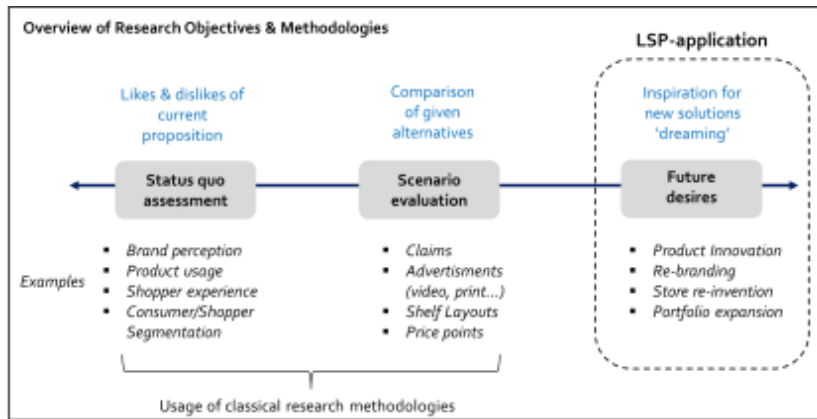
- Thorough introduction to create a good and energetic atmosphere, set the ground rules properly e.g. confidentiality, use of mobile phones, instant sharing of experiences on social media
- Though people didn't know each other, they quickly opened up emotionally and got engaged thanks to the questions of the LSP skill building phase and the introduction (see above)
- All the AT2 and AT3 sessions, were consumers' most favourite ones and provided us with a very high level of richness both in terms of precise functional and practical inputs and emotional hooks to activate for engagement
- Thanks to the specific characteristics of LSP and mainly the fact of giving shape to ideas through metaphors, the achievement of the research objectives was quicker
- The decision to run the two groups in parallel in the same space was beneficial to the process as it allows to create synergies between the facilitators, quick discussion guide adjustments where needed, higher level of energy and great rhythm

Challenges we met

- Groups were too large: as the people around the table didn't know each other and were not connected by a common objective as it usually is when we run a LSP workshop within a company, the rhythm had to be more intense in order to keep people within the flow.
- Consistently, we noticed that too many AT1 in a row, impacted on the level of interested and listening to storytelling of the other people around the table, resulting into boredom for some participants
- The ability to speak in an eloquent way was not homogeneous within the groups, impacting on the flow maintenance

THOUGH AFTER ABOVE MENTIONED EXPERIENCE WE ARE ALL VERY SATISFIED BY THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF LSP TO THE CONVERSATION, THE USE OF THIS METHODOLOGY IS NOT FOR ALL TYPE OF CONSUMER'S RESEARCH

Whether LSP is a meaningful methodology to identify new consumer insights, depends strongly on the research objective. If the expected outcome of the research is to get access to deep consumer desires, which can be used as input for innovation-, re-design- and future portfolio strategies, LSP can offer access to consumers' emotions & creative parts of the brain and deliver better results versus usual qualitative methods. If the research goal is to assess the status quo through the eyes of consumer, or to get results for the comparison of concrete scenarios, classical qualitative and quantitative methodologies are recommended over LSP (see illustration p. 3).



IN CONCLUSION ... WHY WE RECOMMEND THE USE OF LSP IN CONSUMER RESEARCH / CONSUMER'S DIALOGUE

The LSP approach allows consumers to get out of their cognitive thinking and to access the unconscious parts of their minds through playfulness & storytelling. Through this, the answers to specific questions have a stronger link to emotions associated with product usage or shopping experience of a specific brand or product and are less rationalized as it is often experienced with classical consumer research methodologies. Another benefit is the individual sharing of answers by all participants. This avoids an over-representation of the voice of potential extroverts, as well as group influencing by participants with naturally high involvement in the topic.

APPENDIX

OPERATIONAL TIPS & TRICKS ON LSP FOCUS GROUP

preliminary input

How to facilitate qualitative consumer research groups with LSP?

Workshop Design

-Questions should be crafted in consumer language & mindset and be crisp and simple.

Pay special attention to the introduction phase to ensure a safe, curious and energetic atmosphere from the start. This seems to be even more important as the participants have not met before, hence do not have any shared agreements since before.

-Q4 in Skills Building can be used to open up participants, who see each other the first time, in an emotional manner through a topic that matters personally to them.

-Avoid too many AT1 in a row to avoid impatience of participants, who have naturally a low level of interest in each other's stories.

-Use AT2 and AT3 elements, if possible to leverage the power of co-creation and to crystallize core themes.

-Run one pilot workshop to test the design, before applying to the whole sample size, which needs to be robust and aligned with the client based on the overarching objectives.

Time Management

-Based on consumer's attention span plan 3 – max. 4hrs per workshop.

-Run the sessions during day time to avoid evening fatigue drops of usual after-work research.

-Ensure a fast pace between rounds to keep the energy level up. Use music to steer the rhythm of the group.

-Plan for enough breaks to allow connection building between participants.

Location

-Provide a warm and positive room atmosphere through natural light and with enough space between participants.

-Use a neutral location (e.g. creative studios, nice hotel meeting rooms etc.). Don't run it at the client's office or in classical focus group rooms with the usual observer flair.

Observation

-Don't allow employees of your client to sit in the back of the room to observe and listen, how consumers are behaving and what they are saying. This can have a negative impact on the natural consumer behaviour and lead to biased results.

-Work with video recording, which can be shared with the client at a later stage.

How to share results with the client?

For the presentation of the final outcome it is important to be aware that stakeholders, who are supposed to take decisions based on the research results mostly might not have been involved in the project itself. That's why it is recommended to provide a crisp explanation of the LSP approach and its advantages in consumer research.

Furthermore it can be useful to align the key insights, which were identified, with the project owner and to integrate those into a short video (max 3 mins) with consumer voices from the workshop. An ideal frame for the video can be the final story after an AT2 round, which summarizes the alignment between participants.

PROJECT'S TEAM MINI –BIOS



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Coello specializes in creating lasting, positive change. For the past 20 years we have helped leaders and teams make the most of their resources and potentials. Our method and approach help enhance the working climate and optimize the performance of both the leader and the team.

We use LEGO@SERIOUS PLAY® with courageous leaders and teams e.g. exploration of new business ideas, work with vision and values and preparation of leaders and teams to navigate in times of disruption. The method is time efficient, innovative, outstanding and fun!

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Beatrix has a broad experience in the international Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry, which she gathered in various roles at Mars, P&G and Wella. As a LEGO@SERIOUS PLAY® facilitator she leads workshops with Consumers, Executives and Teams to enable them to unlock their creative potential for joint solution finding in complex business situations.

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Simona Orlandi is a Marketing Intelligence expert with more than 20 years experience in multinationals and with a specific education in people development and coaching.

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