

Unlocking human insights to drive brand strategy

CONSUMER INSIGHT PEOPLE

SUE UNERMAN 02 MAY 2018

Over the next few weeks, we'll be sharing stories from around the building of how Method Planning and getting closer to consumers can drive better results.

Read our first story from Sue Unerman, Chief Transformation Officer:

Sue was working as a media planner on a pitch with a creative agency for Ajax Liquid cleaner. Her role was simply to decide in which magazines the advertising should appear. The product to be advertised had a unique selling proposition. It left no residue. So, unlike other products at the time, there was no need to wipe over the kitchen surface after you had cleaned.

The account director unveiled the creative idea. It showed a couple of housewives who had saved time by using Ajax Liquid and were learning to play golf. In another execution one was learning French. 'What do you all think?' asked the creatives who had come up with the

advert. Most of the room made encouraging noises. But Sue couldn't stand to accept the status quo or the kind of behavior that was due.

She had a reason; she had just completed two weeks' method research amongst housewives talking to them about how they felt about their portrayal in advertising. On the whole they felt negative. They felt the way that they were either supposed to be incredibly glamorous or chained to the kitchen. They did not see cleaning kitchen surfaces as their job, whether they worked or not. Also, the amount of time they could save would not afford them the time or money to learn a language or swan round a golf course.

She came out with her opinion – rather bluntly – partly through nerves and partly so that she could deliver it before the consensus in the room went with the current work. This wasn't meant to happen. But in that room, in that moment, she was the expert on how housewives felt about advertising.

This creative director took a deep breath. 'Well, Sue,' he asked, 'if they don't want time to learn golf or French, what is it that housewives want?' Tough question. Sue off the top of her head simply gave the answer that she was sure the women she'd been talking to would give. 'What they really want is someone else to do the cleaning. Also, if you were to ask them in their dreams what they'd want, it would be someone else to do the cleaning, especially a gorgeous bloke.'

Next day Sue was called in. 'What do you think of this?' she was asked. This was the Ajax Houseproud Hunk advert. It showed a gorgeous bloke cleaning the kitchen with the headline 'Save time cleaning, get him new Ajax Liquid'. The agency won the pitch, the advertising ran and did well, sold lots of products and led to a spate of men shown doing the cleaning in other adverts too.

All Sue did was voice the naïve opinion of the target audience. She had found herself in the situation where she could best represent them. One way of getting noticed for your creative contribution at work is simply to be the voice of the typical purchase decision-maker in the real world.

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