



White*Paper*[™]

Research Tool Changes The Way Marketers View Data

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OptionFinder is a registered trademark of Option Technologies Interactive, LLC.
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Introduction: Changing the Face of Market Research

Although survey and market analysis techniques have been adapted to new technology and computer graphics are fast and flashy, few new concepts in the way people interact with and learn from data have been introduced since around the time of Descartes (circa 1625).

Option Technologies provides an interactive tool that fundamentally changes the way marketers can conceptualize, collect and understand market data. OptionFinder[®] exploits computer, video, and communications capabilities to create a four-step “real time” visual feedback loop that maximizes the creative potential of people working with qualitative or quantitative market data.

Four Step Process: Using Interactive Keypad Technology in Market Research Meetings

Step one: A group of people—focus group of customers or prospects, marketing planning team, executive team—uses formal brainstorming techniques to generate a list of items relevant to the topic under discussion.

Topics in marketing may include such things as aspects of service that produce customer satisfaction, features that may be added to a new version of software, criteria for reviewing alternative product strategies, or factors on which to evaluate proposals from advertising agencies.



Potential Software Additions

- A- Spell Check
- B- Export
- C- Report Engine
- D- Importing Functions
- E- Graphic Controls
- F- Global Change Tool
- G- Templates
- H- Simple User Interface
- I- Help System
- J- Enhanced Edit Mode

Step two: The list is entered into OptionFinder software, which generates a systematic set of questions about the list that are then projected onto a large-screen monitor, providing a visual stimulus for group members to register their opinions simultaneously.

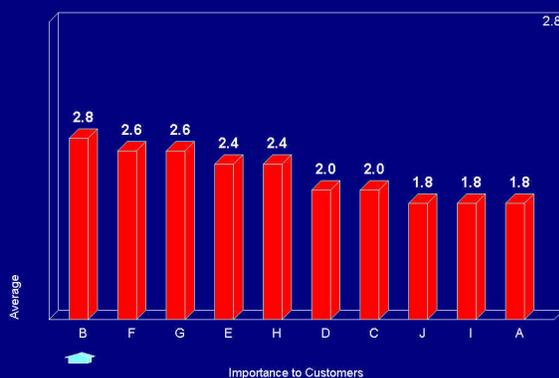
Step three: The voting takes place with hand-held, wireless keypads. The responses are sent to a base station linked to a laptop computer, which organizes the votes of the group members into graphics that are fed back to the group by the projection system.

Spell Check

1. I don't need this feature at all
2. Doubtful I need this
3. Nice to have
4. This feature is critical for me

How Important to you is this feature?

B- Export



Step four: In a process much like the Delphi technique, the members verbally interpret the meaning of their collective opinions as they are projected on the monitor.

During this step, the members have an opportunity to explore where they agree and disagree: to understand when their disagreements are based on substance vs. different interpretation of the words use in the items; to clarify the issues in front of them; to generate an entirely new,

more creative understanding of the topic; and to focus on the items they consider most salient.

THE DISCUSSION can be followed by a second round of voting and further interpretation.

Now in its fifth generation, OptionFinder has been used in thousands of meetings (end users and consulting firms) throughout the United States.

It has been used with focus groups to gather perception of hospitals, by boards of directors to map out strategic initiatives, and my manufacturers to help line workers identify quality improvement opportunities.

This capability permits an exciting interplay between qualitative discussion of focus groups and the qualitative ratings by respondents. Because the data is stored in the computer, it is possible to later analyze the results, as well as the thinking of the people in the group.

THE FOLLOWING provides a glimpse of how OptionFinder works on marketing problems:

Customer Focus Groups

After lists of important items have been developed, OptionFinder allows participants to give specific opinions about the lists in a way that shows levels of preference, relative importance, and satisfaction.

It also gives silent participants the opportunity to be heard on the issues, and provides a different form of stimulus to draw them out as the results are displayed.

The applications are not surprising; advances in video and computer technology have made it possible to produce almost instant feedback, which sharpens the focus of discussion and accelerates the group dynamics that occur when people gather to express opinions.

In addition, all members of the group, regardless of verbal agility or organizational position, have an equal—but private—vote. While the members vote, OptionFinder stores data for analysis by the group, segments within the group, and by individuals, permitting feedback between segments and individuals without revealing the identities of the voters.



The speed of tabulation makes it feasible to immediately review the results with the participants within time constraints of the focus group. Using these results, the researcher can explore the similarities and differences found in the results and get assistance from the group in explaining why those differences might exist.

In so doing the researcher, and ultimately the client, can achieve a new level of understanding of the issues relevant to the topic of discussion based on how the participants, not the researcher, interpret their thinking.

Product Line Analysis

Discussions that follow presentations of product portfolios are usually based on interpretations of facts and represent the values of the people in the meeting.

OptionFinder allows the interpretations to be built into the decision equation by letting the meeting participants vote their interpretations using scales similar to those in the portfolio analysis.

Discussing the resulting similarities or differences helps the participants to clarify issues facing the various product lines and focuses their attention on the aspects of each product line that need to be addressed.

At the same time, it shifts the focus of discussion away from individual positions regarding the products, to what is in the best interest of the organization in pursuing each product.

Conjoint Analysis

Typically, conjoint analysis is reported as a set of statistics in tabular form. OptionFinder permits a researcher to conduct this analysis using three attributes and eight variations simultaneously with a large group of people then do a segmentation analysis using the subgroup display capability.

What emerges is a two-dimensional, easily visualized positioning of the various attribute combinations of an x-y grid, far easier to interpret than the tabular presentation.

Marketing Research with Employees

Most employee surveys are conducted with impersonal questionnaires. The processing and time required for report writing delay feedback to employees and, as a result, distance the employees from the process and the steps that management might take.

When OptionFinder is used with employees, the combination of their building and revising their own list, anonymous voting, immediate visual feedback, and discussion

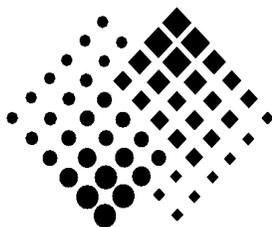
after the results proves to be a powerful tool for building positive employee attitudes toward management's desire to listen to their needs and respond.

About the Authors

William A. Flexner is founder and Emeritus Partner of Option Technologies. He has more than 30 years experience as a manager, researcher, teacher, consultant and facilitator. In the early 1970s, he was one of the first people in the United States to focus on marketing as it applies to the health care field. He is recognized internationally for creativity, challenging of conventional wisdom and his ability to facilitate diverse groups of people to work together to achieve common strategic purposes. The development of the OptionFinder System was a direct result of Mr. Flexner's need for tools that would help executive teams work more effectively together.

Kimbal L. Wheatley is founder and Chairman of Option Technologies. He is directly responsible for the conceptual development of OTI's keypad EMS -- OptionFinder. Mr. Wheatley has been a scientist, college professor, academic administrator, hospital administrator, consultant, marketer and entrepreneur. His ability to switch from concentrated detailed analysis to highly creative brainstorming has permitted him to work effectively with many different kinds of people in a variety of settings.

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Educational Resources

Available at www.OptionTechnologies.com

Risk Self-Assessment: Increasing speed, quality, and focus in the Audit Planning Process. *Review and clarify the business strategy, identify and prioritize the risks to the company, benefits of the Self-Assessment approach.*

CSA Design and Facilitation Using Keypad Technology: Presented at IIA CSA Conference, 1997. *Reliable methods, KISS mantra, staying focused on desired outcomes, participants interpretation of polling data, rehearsal for facilitators.*

The Genius Comes from Asking the Right Question: Presented at IIA CSA Conference, 1998. *Keypads change the group dynamic, an outcome oriented way to design workshops, the Art of Asking the Right Question, Using Scales, what to do with the responses to those questions.*

Advantages of Electronic Participation in Workshops and Other Meetings: Presented at IIA CSA Conference, 1999. *What is the CSA/RSA movement trying to accomplish, What do management, participants think of CSA/RSA, what do CSA professionals like about electronic participation, how is electronic participation different from other forms of participation.*

Complying with Medicare Guidelines: Lessons from the Auditors: Lessons from the audit community, the self-assessment workshop, introduction of real-time, anonymous polling, CSA methods and healthcare compliance, changing the culture begins in the workshops and continues in a cycle of improvement and risk reduction, assessment data serves as evidence of due care, benefits felt throughout the organization.

Good Things Come in Small Packages: Facilitated Meetings Using the OptionFinder System. *Benefits of keypads in meetings, designing the OptionFinder System into a meeting process, facilitating with the OptionFinder System.* Original publication reference: Flexner, William A. & Wheatley, Kimbal L. (1997). When You Really Must Have Them; Face-to-Face Meetings Using Keypad Electronic Meeting Systems. In David Coleman (Ed.) , Groupware (pp.193-205). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Enhancing Your Presentations with the OptionFinder Audience Polling System. *Understanding the technology, designing effective questions, timing of questions, characteristics of good questions, formatting questions, suggestions for preparing, asking, and discussing questions.*