

An awesome way to motivate your sales team

Introduction

Our client, a major US insurer, wanted to reach out to their network of independent sales agents to help them shape and refine the sales content they use to sell their policies. Located all over the US, they wanted to collaborate and learn more about the challenges they face at the same time.

By working proactively with key stakeholders, they were able to demonstrate their commitment to them and learn a great deal about the markets they operate in, uncovering local insight as well as more global themes.

Unusually, the client took control of moderating the research project and, in doing so, developed a valuable first-hand communication channel between the business and its sales agents.

“I think it is awesome that a carrier is willing to take input from their agents and really listen to them and what their needs and wants are.

“I thought it was great. I love that they are looking for agent input to create and change material. It shows that they value their agents and their needs.

The Challenge

The challenge: How to present these documents in a way that was easy to use and even easier to get feedback on?

Our client wanted to test drive and get feedback on a range of new sales collateral. In addition, they wanted to know how they could better support their busy agents in the field and improve the overall relationship they held with them.

The research centred around a review of seven pieces of sales collateral, ranging from general customer information – relating to the brand and its offer, to complex policy guides for the agents. Each piece was unique, varied in length and required careful and very detailed scrutiny from participants.



Study Design and Optimisation

Great insight is forged from carefully crafted research. The Further team designed an online research community methodology with activities that would generate a high level of engagement among the 59 participating agents. Using our Together™ research community platform, we assigned a series of structured activities that allowed participants to express themselves and collaborate openly, and provide feedback and answers for others to comment on.

The research community method removed the geographical barriers to participation, and the open nature of the tasks allowed them to share thoughts and connect with colleagues across the country. The research community became a safe and secure destination, a place to discuss thoughts and learn from others, rather than a chore to be completed. To sweeten the deal, participants were incentivised for their time and 80% of the agents finished all the tasks set over the course of the week.

“This means of collecting feedback is great. Most often, they have a pretty good idea of what is useful to us as agents, but having an opportunity to review and critique the tools we will be using is very valuable.

Building Research Capability

Client-side Senior Research Manager, David Teal, took charge of moderating the community. After training, he was able to apply his knowledge of the insurance market while probing, quizzing and connecting directly with the agents. He drew a raft of praise directly from important stakeholders that will play a key role in future business strategy.

His close collaboration with the Further team, and the community, meant he could monitor and shape the project as it developed, contributing with confidence to the overall insight process.

“I love this forum. It really allows the agents to have some control and help us give input into what our customers would like most. It was just right to me. It hasn't taken me too long and I worked on it in between customers, so it hasn't taking me out of my workflow.



Analysis

Following a quick debrief between the client and Further, the research team made short work of analysing the largely unstructured data. By cutting responses by sentiment, it was easy to sort positive and negative feedback and potential improvements for each piece of content, and to make recommendations on appearance, content and effective implementation.

Agents loved the ease with which they could view the collateral online, express their thoughts and communicate with their peers, swapping experiences and potential usages. They valued being included in the process and consistently delivered detailed and personable insights. This allowed the client to move forward and develop the collateral, confident that their next steps were guided by the needs and values of the individuals who would be using it to engage their customers.

“I’m a fan of this style of forum to get feedback. It’s not as boring as answering a bunch of multiple-choice questions, and it’s more stimulating because I have to think about my answers. You could improve my experience by doing forums like this more often :)”

“I really enjoyed it! I like seeing what they are doing for us to make things easier in our agency as well as helping our customers understand coverages and options available to them. It was interesting to see others’ opinions and suggestions. It is nice that they reach out to agents and that they value our opinions and want to help us! Thank you for the opportunity.”

“Our team has worked with Further before so I felt this project would be great for them and their platform. Being able to moderate the discussions directly helped me better understand our agents’ challenges, provided valuable insight, and gave us what we needed to sharpen our collateral now and in the future. I’m not sure how the project could have gone any better.”

Dave Teal, Senior Research Manager

We generate meaningful human insight through research, helping organisations to innovate and grow.

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