

The Art of Recruiting the Right People

On any given day, you'll receive a blog post, or see ads for webinars discussing quality in the field. But what no one talks about is how to produce the same quality today as we could before technology blew up the way we recruit.

There is an art to recruiting, especially today, when we are faced with more research and tech savvy professional respondents. Let's take a look at the process, with a focus on how the individual recruiter has become an even more important piece of the puzzle.

So, you program a screener and send out a link to a specific audience. If you use a program like Survey Monkey or Inquisite, participants can continually hit the back button until they give the answer that takes them forward. Uh oh.

Quality agencies invest in high level software packages that prohibit "back" and ensure a participant can only attempt the survey once.

Now that we have the right survey tool, our audience answers a short "online interview" and the data processing team reviews them, plucking out those that most closely match the desired participants. This generates strong potential candidates, but are they actually well-suited to the study?

The only way to ascertain if a person is a good fit for a focus group or in-depth interview is to speak with them.

It seems like it would be a slam dunk, right? We already have qualified people, right? Not so fast. Take a look at this real life example:

Screener: How did you vote in the last Presidential election? Democrat, Independent or Republican? How favorable do you feel toward President Trump? Very, somewhat, not very, not at all.

Moderator briefing: *We're looking for Republicans or Independents who have at least a somewhat unfavorable impression of President Trump. They could be people who voted for him with their eyes closed, or people who voted for him because they agree with some of his policies, but not all...or they could be people who are fiscally conservative and socially liberal, or they could be a Democrat who voted for Hillary in this election but voted Republican before. They might have been very favorable toward Trump in the beginning, but now they feel less so. It could be they felt they had no good choice, so they chose the lesser of two evils.*

Rarely do participants fit perfectly into the buckets we want. Sure, we can fill our quotas with people in the right age, gender, income...but in qualitative, we are charged with also considering the "spirit" of the

recruit to produce true quality. And no matter how well a screener is written, it cannot discern, distinguish or detect nuance.

- Do they think the way we want them to?
- Are their answers backed up by the right attitude or behaviors?
- Are they able to clearly express themselves?
- Will they be engaged, actively discussing the subject at hand?
- Do they have a full understanding of the matter we want to discuss?

These are just some of the questions a recruiter has to ask themselves in order to turn a potential candidate into a live, engaged and worthwhile participant for a qualitative study. It takes time and patience to develop the skills needed to flourish as a recruiter. Not only does one typically work in a closed environment, often at a cubicle, but the work can be mundane at times. Dialing through sample, searching online, sorting through lists...it takes a special person to excel in this job and Jackson has been lucky enough to have several:

- Meet Miguel Norton, Senior Executive Agent. He is responsible for managing our medical and B2B team and has been in marketing research for over 10 years. He has formed such personal connections within the Atlanta medical community that he often receives gifts and personal visits from HCPs.
- And Rochelle Ampy, Executive Agent. Rochelle has been with Jackson for 12 years, and is responsible for quota coordination throughout the Call Center. She is the one that makes sure we don't book ourselves into a "box" where we have to find males who have given birth.
- Meet Annette Johnson, Senior Consumer and B2B Agent. Annette has a rich history throughout her 7 years at Jackson of digging deep and finding those specialized consumers that often take unique, sensitive, or outside-the-box thinking to identify.
- And then there's Curtis Holmes, Consumer Agent. Curtis injects a surge of laughter, fun, and energy into our call center on a daily basis. He has helping respondents feel great and enthusiastic about participating at Jackson Research for 4 years.
- Mike Merolo, who has been with us for seven years now, is our Client Sample Specialist. He and his team work diligently to make sure sample is dialed randomly and completely, and ensure cooperation levels are high and show rates strong for these types of challenging studies.
- Meet Charisse Brown, Consumer Agent. Being our newest recruiter – with just 3 years under her belt – Charisse has a warm personality that permits her to utilize her special communication skills with children and their families.

- Meet Courtney Underwood, Executive Agent. Courtney's top-notch analysis and detail-oriented nature that she has displayed over her 6 years at Jackson has been invaluable. She takes special pride in coordinating complex projects including hybrids and ethnographies with her team.

So yes, technology has allowed agencies to connect with more people in a shorter period of time. But these types of specialized agents are more important than ever, since we rarely screen for sara wrap or cereal users in qualitative. Time is now spent sorting sample, searching for people with specific conditions, ideologies, attitudes and ideas so we can identify those that fit not only the qualifications of the study, but its spirit as well. Like a screener, the pre-screener is just a tool that helps an experienced, skilled recruiter put together an outstanding group or interview. It isn't just a numbers game anymore.

Agents such as those we have at Jackson are the **ONLY** way qualitative can be successfully done today.