



CREATIVE INSIGHT GROUPS®

UTILIZING ADVANTAGES OF QUALITATIVE
AND QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES TO
EVALUATE ADVERTISING/CONCEPTS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

In 35 years of advertising research, IMI Inc. has frequently received assignments for pre-testing commercial material which have reflected a design compromise between those on the client side who have favored the use of qualitative research (focus groups) for pre-testing various forms of advertising, and those who have favored quantitative research (individual or group-administered interviews).

These assignments have dealt with material ranging from rough art work or storyboards to finished executions.

In the majority of cases, knowing the limitations of using focus groups but realizing that a more appropriate quantitative study was simply not feasible, our clients previously had often opted for obtaining some basic insights from group results and gambling on their experience and market expertise, as well as our consultant skills, to fill in the gaps.

While it remains true that focus groups should NOT be used to finally pretest ads or concepts (small sample size, group and moderator bias, etc.), time and cost constraints have often made them a better than nothing option.

B. Purpose

With the CREATIVE INSIGHT GROUP^Ò (CIG) technique, IMI Inc. offers a method of combining qualitative and quantitative input to utilize the advantages of both methods, to provide in-depth and reliable information on advertising executions using an accelerated schedule.

Beyond immediate debriefing for clients, thorough written memo reports are provided with turn-around time largely dictated by client needs.

Moreover, the CIG approach, though utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods and research skills, has been designed and priced to cost roughly the same as focus groups.

Thus, simply stated, the CIG purpose is to provide advertisers with the missing link in pre-testing, that is, a more reliable, cost-efficient and quick method of evaluating new concepts, or commercial material (TV, radio or print media).

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Pre-recruiting

The CIG approach to pre-testing entails the pre-recruiting of respondents to a central location facility at an appropriate geographic location.

The facility includes a testing room for respondents as well as an observation room (one-way mirror) for clients. Built-in audio/video taping equipment also records the data collection process.

B. Sample

In the most basic CIG design, two or three groups of respondents (12 per group) representing the target group are interviewed during separate one to one-and-a-half hour sessions within a single evening. (Daytime and week-ends may also be used as appropriate and necessary to expedite data turn-around).

If two or more ads/concepts are tested simultaneously, additional groups are added, allowing each ad to be exposed in first position to preserve essential monadic measurement during the quantitative phase of the investigation.

C. Procedure

Steps in the Procedure:

1. Pre-recruiting to the focus group facility
2. Explanation to respondents of the nature of the research
3. Exposure of the commercial/concept material
4. Completion of a group-administered structured questionnaire
5. Discussion session

The CIG technique first produces quantitative data, by initially utilizing a semi-structured questionnaire instead of a discussion session after exposure of commercial material. Thus, individual reactions are elicited from respondents to the exclusion of any group-induced bias.

More specifically, after being exposed to an ad or concept, and prior to any verbal discussion among group members, respondents fill out the CIG questionnaire. It consists first of standardized measures designed to record their reactions, including both closed-end and open-end questions, e.g.

- a) General and specific areas of appeal
- b) Comprehension of the intended message
- c) Importance and relevance of the message
- d) Credibility
- e) Confusion

f) Persuasiveness

Also, additional custom measures are usually added to meet the needs of the specific advertising/concept material under examination.

Having committed their perceptions and feelings to writing, group members are then engaged in a discussion session moderated by a consumer psychologist.

Observations are made regarding both overt and covert reactions. Inconsistencies with questionnaire responses are probed and evaluated. And all other IMI Inc. moderator skills are applied as appropriate, to yield productive qualitative data.

If a second concept or ad is to be investigated as part of the same study, it is then presented and the procedure is repeated. At the end of the discussion for this material, some comparative measurements are taken to provide a relative comparison of the performance of the ads/concepts.

III. ADVANTAGES

The CIG methodology thus offers the following ADVANTAGES to advertisers and their agencies:

✚ ENSURES INDIVIDUAL PROCESSING OF AD/CONCEPT REACTIONS

- Respondents are instructed to keep their comments to themselves while viewing the ad/concept. Thus, the data recorded on the written questionnaire is free from group bias effects.
- Probing of individual responses is achieved by specially designed half-sentence completion measures.
- Respondents also categorize their own comments according to the degree of positive, negative or neutral feelings they are expressing.
- True-False statements probe for specific communication/comprehension objectives.
- Trivia-quiz measures establish clarity of the main message/concept value.

✚ INDIVIDUAL VERSUS GROUP RESPONSE ANALYSIS

These individual responses are ultimately compared to group-induced comments. The data is coded and tabled for use in confirmation of qualitative interpretations.

✚ PROMOTES EXPRESSION OF OPINION

The fact that respondents have committed their perceptions and feelings in writing motivates them to argue their point of view. Consequently, the discussion phase of the investigation is considerably more likely to isolate variance in opinions, with total respondent participation.

✚ ACCOMMODATES TWO OR MORE EXECUTIONS/CONCEPTS

After the dynamics of the first ad have been addressed, the second execution is introduced. Any possible bias induced by order of presentation is accounted for by rotating first position exposure. And major emphasis is placed on reactions based on the data, in accordance with monadic design advantages.

✚ ENABLES ADVERTISER AND AGENCY VIEWING

The client, the account and creative teams can view first-hand the data collection process, and together with the researcher, immediately explore response implications. This capability is particularly useful when testing animatics and other rough/unfinished executions/concepts.

✚ USER-FRIENDLY ANALYSIS

The quantitative tabulations are completed in-house and integrated semantically into the

Moderator's Report. - In all cases, the Moderator and Analyst are one and the same, so as to lose nothing in combining the converted data tables and group discussion results.

✚ **KNOWLEDGEABLE AND SOPHISTICATED PROJECT TEAM**

In 35 years as a researcher, the moderator/analyst (a consumer psychologist)

✚ **OVER 5000 FOCUS GROUPS AND 2000 QUANTITATIVE STUDIES**

Completed in a wide variety of markets; other project team members have similar experience from the agency/account sectors, to provide a client resource which represents the cutting edge of marketing research technology.

IV. TIMING, COST AND REPORT

A. Timing

Normal turn-around time for a project is usually within a week to ten days from PROJECT ASSIGNMENT. However, under the most stringent of circumstances, data turn-around (from end of session to final report) can be completed within 24 hours.

This entails immediate initiation of recruitment based on client specifications provided, and is made possible by IMI's response-oriented project team structure, and active relationships with hundreds of facilities and service suppliers throughout the U.S.

Additionally, IMI Inc. applies a total hands-on approach to every phase of the research project, maintaining a proprietary comprehensive quality control system, assuring the client of the most precise adherence to project specifications, and delivery of the highest level of analytical productivity.

B. Cost

The base price for a program is only slightly more than typical focus group discussion costs. Actual final costs will vary to reflect specific target groups, incidences, socio-economic level, and locations/countries involved.

C. Report

The CIG report (which can be accompanied by a personal presentation) is written in an essentially verbal format which is user-friendly to research, marketing and executive corporate levels. It is patterned after the classical five-part format of research reports:

✚ **Executive Overview**

✚ **Introduction** - Background, Purpose, Objectives, Sample, Method

✚ **Highlights** - Summary of Findings and Conclusions

✚ **Detailed Findings** - Descriptive results of individual areas of measurement, major issues

✚ **Appendix** - Tapes from the session, raw data and other relevant materials and resources