Russell
RESEARCH

9 Tips for Bringing Your Research to Life

BUILDING AN ACTIVATION WORKSHOP

We hope these tips help you plan and execute successful Activation Workshops to bring your research to life and embed the insights and implications within your organization. The examples we use in this tip sheet are for an Activation Workshop to generate new product ideas, but you can easily adapt them to other types of workshops.

Tip #1: Map Your Route

Regardless of how much time you have to plan, think about the workshop as a journey with "before," "during" and "after" phases.

Before

Tip #2: Get the Wheels Turning

What you're aiming for in the "before" phase is to move the team from passive reading mode to active digesting mode and to create stimuli to use in the workshop itself. Depending on your objective, you could distribute a 10-15 page pre-read from the research report and ask participants to complete a 15-minute assignment that's related to the pre-read content. If the research is a segmentation study, send out a summary of one or two of the prioritized segments and ask each team member to make a collage bringing one of the segments to life. Or, if it's a journey study, ask each team member to curate photos or images of people at one particular phase in that journey.

During

Tip #3: Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Setting tight, focused objectives for an activation workshop will help you and the team stay focused. Be realistic. If you have three hours with your team, having an objective of, for example, "creating new product ideas based on the learnings from the research" is too broad. Instead, set a goal such as "create new product ideas for one particular need state or customer segment." When communicating the objectives, give people examples of ideas that are in and out of scope.

Tip #4: Light the Spark

Creating ideas out of thin air is hard for anyone. That's why it's so important to have stimuli in your activation workshop. These include pages from the pre-read as well as outputs from any activity you asked people to complete before the session. The stimuli used during the workshop may also include additional pages from the research report. Typically, the way you'll use the stimuli in a workshop is to distribute 1-3 pages of it and ask attendees to create ideas using just those pieces of the stimuli. If time allows, you may also conduct activities during the workshop that create more stimuli, such as "create a list of consumer wishes" for a consumer who falls into a priority segment, has a particular need, or is at a specific stage of the customer journey. After creating that wish list, the group or breakout teams can use it to stimulate new ideas.

Tip #5: Chunk It Up

Avoid a long presentation of the research report. Instead, divide your workshop time into chunks. Give the group or smaller breakout teams 30 minutes to look at a few pages of stimuli and create ideas. Provide a simple template to fill out that defines what an idea consists of (e.g., idea name, target consumer, description of an idea, primary consumer benefit).

Tip #6: Share the Love

After each "chunk" of ideation or discussion, have breakout teams share their ideas and facilitate a conversation to let the rest of the team build on the ideas. Have a note taker capture ideas or make sure you are recording the workshop so that you can collect/list them after-the-fact.

Tip #7: Keep the Ball Rolling

Make sure you tell people what the next step is and who owns it. Ideally, that will include prioritization and building out ideas.

After

Tip #8: Pick the Cream of the Crop

Though this can sometimes be done in the workshop itself, it can also be done afterwards. Ideally, the participants in the workshop would help prioritize ideas. A simple way to do this is to create a list of the ideas and send them out in a brief online survey that asks team members to vote for the best ideas. Hopefully, you'll also have the opportunity to conduct a quantitative idea screen study with your customers to understand what's most appealing to them.

Tip #9: Build It So They Will Come

Once you've prioritized the ideas, there are many ways to develop ideas into more fully fleshed-out concepts—including an additional workshop! But that's for another day.

Just Do It

We hope these tips inspire you to plan and execute Activation Workshops. More importantly, we hope your Activation Workshops bring the research to life with creativity and collaboration and embed the insights and implications within your organization for business success!

Contact Russell Research at **sales@russellresearch.com** to talk about how we might help you with an activation workshop. Or, if you DIY it, we'd like to hear your success stories based on these tips.