

SUMMER WEBINAR SERIES

Outperforming in an AI World:

Human Insights Through Primary Research

HOSTED BY DANA PULIS,
FOUNDER AT KINETIC

kinetic
MARKETING & CREATIVE



About Dana

- I grew up as a writer and a journalist
- I spent 25 years listening to people's stories
- And I literally fell in love

I learned:

- People do things for a good reason
- Ask the right questions to get the best answers
- Stories reveal patterns and trends
- Write succinctly about what's most important

In short, I learned to be a storyteller



today's agenda



the AI reality

- What machines do well and where they fall short

why primary research is critical

- Why primary research matters more than ever

methodologies

- Proof of concept in an AI world

real-life case study

- What algorithms missed

takeaways

- Key takeaways for marketers

Q&A

- Where AI meets human insight

WHY PRIMARY RESEARCH IS CRITICAL

AI gives us breadth.

*Primary research
gives us depth.*



AI has *transformed marketing* with automation,
personalization and predictive analytics.
But AI can't:

Feel your customer's
frustrations

See their lived
experiences

Understand their
dreams or fears

Capture their emotional
decision-making

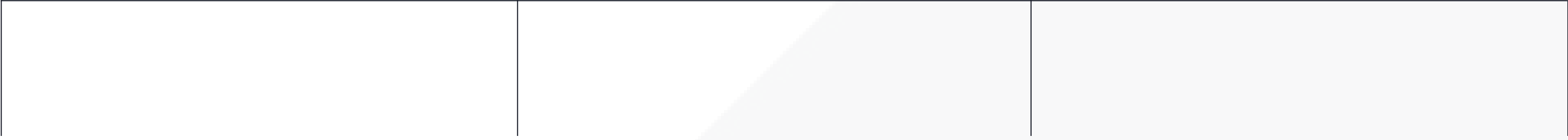
AI provides data.

*Primary research
reveals the human
truth behind it.*



Necessity of primary research *in an AI world*

AI provides data. Primary research reveals the human truth behind the data.

- 
- Maintain relevance by uncovering shifting emotional drivers
 - Strengthen loyalty by seeing the customer's day-to-day reality
 - Reduce risk by validating what machines can only predict
 - Find innovation opportunities grounded in lived experience

When Data Alone Falls Short — *and Human Insight Wins*

New Coke (1985)

- Data from taste tests said “sweeter is better.”
- Missed deep emotional loyalty to original Coke.
- **Result:** Massive backlash, Coke Classic returned in months.

Airbnb

- Algorithms optimized listings and pricing.
- Primary research revealed trust was the barrier.
- **Result:** Reviews, host profiles and safety features unlocked growth.

how did Kinetic get here?

**We used to be traditional —
product or service focused research**

- Surveys, focus groups, interviews focused around the questions

"What do you want?"

- What was your most favorite feature of the product?
- If you could improve one thing about the product, what would it be and why?
- How much money would you pay for this product? How do you perceive our product?
- Is there something you would like to see in this product?
- Can you explain your main challenges with this product?

you know your customer, right? *or do you?...*

- When most companies do research they ask the customer, “What do you want?”
- Bottom line: we don’t know what we want until we see it. Did you want an iPhone before it came out?
- No, you liked your Blackberry and would defend it with your life.



but then we *met someone...*

- The customer doesn't know what they want
- They don't know what they could have
- They struggle to articulate what would make a difference in their world
- ... and what would win their preference (and money)

*and our methodology
completely changed*



Primary Research Method: *A Day in the Life of a Customer*

What are
they trying to
accomplish
daily?

What feels hard
for them?

What are their
dreams, goals
or fears?

What are they
thinking in
moments of
choice?

Primary research is
"the grounding force"

that helps AI recommendations not drift away from reality.

Research shows us the “why.”

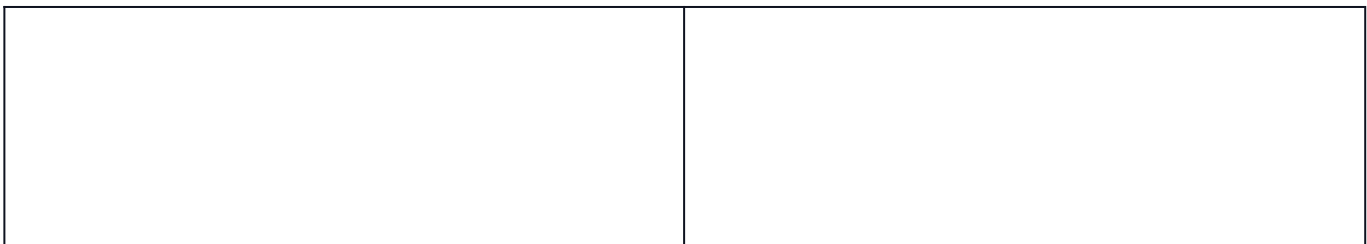
*AI and data show
us the “what.”*



RESEARCH MODEL #1

the life of *your customer*:

What is it?
Put yourself in their shoes

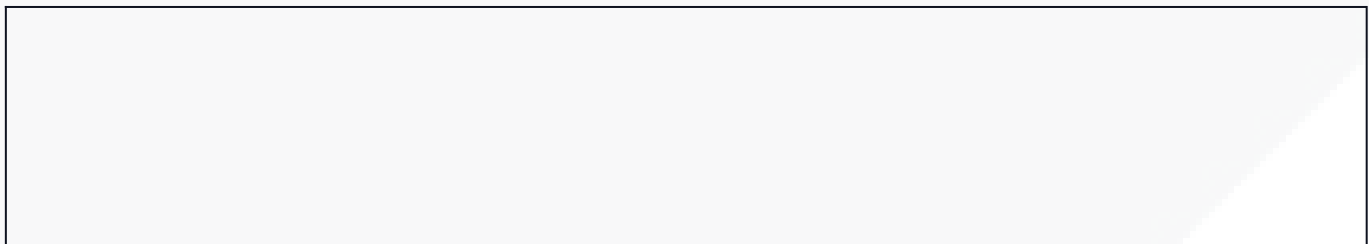


What are their hopes/dreams?

What are they trying to do in their daily lives?

What is hard for them?

How does it work?
Quantitative vs. Qualitative



1-on-1 interviews

Analysis of data
Report of insights
Identifying of needs state

when should you choose to use it?

1) When you want to understand your customer better

2) When the company needs to rethink their offerings

3) When the brand starts to lose market share

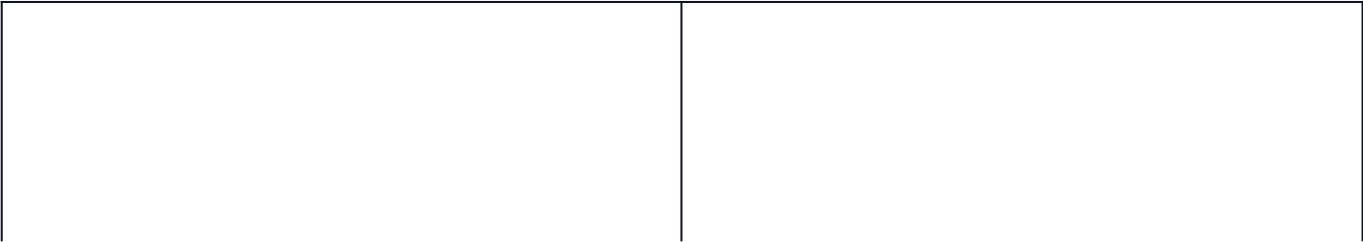


RESEARCH MODEL #2

proof of *concept*:

What is it?

Your opportunity to prove the effectiveness, desirability, trustworthiness, and buyers’ intent on the model, messaging or positioning of the business



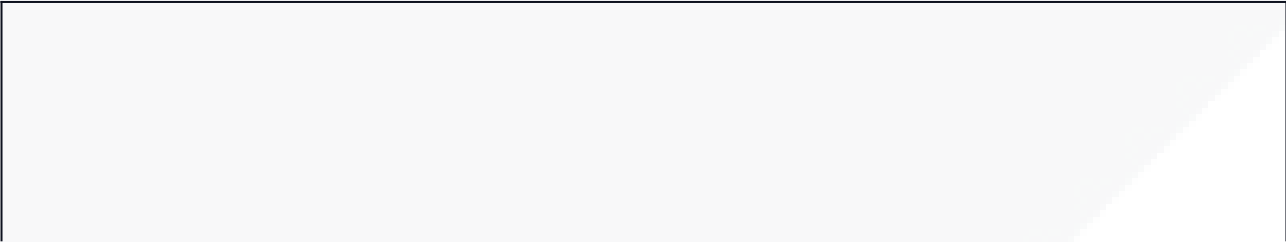
1-on-1 interviews with customers who represent a group of people, often the most desired and lucrative segments

Interviewees are asked to give feedback and insights, comments are quoted and noted

Interviewees are asked to numerically rank certain attributes that can be data collected

How does it work?

Similar to methodology #1, proof of concept utilizes 1-on-1 interviews with story boards to illustrate, garnering personal insights as well as qualitative data



Data can be plotted, idea by idea, on an X/Y axis to get a datadriven look at how each point of the concepts resonate, or not, with customers

The report generates insights on how persuasive, emotional, and trustworthy the ideas, messaging, and business concept are

when should you choose to use it?

1) When there is new idea, concept,
or offering for the company

2) When the company repositions

3) When the brand has new messaging
or wants to test a campaign



day in the life *of a consumer*

Insights into the consumer's mindset, into their needs, their goals and difficulties — use to craft a competitive value position, messaging, and business concept

**These work
together
in lockstep
to secure
a solid
strategy**

proof of *concept*

Use to prove out a position, messaging, and business concept and validate how superior and desirable it is

understand the similarities & differences

what does well-constructed consumer research *look like*?

- Research Design
- The Right Mix of People
- Moderator Guide
- Concept Boards
- A Note Taker and/or Recorded Sessions
- A Trained Interviewer
- Data Analysis
- Interpretation of Results
- Report of Findings



CASE STUDY

AI predicts patterns.

*Primary research
uncovers truth.*



Road Adventures *primary research*

PROOF ON CONCEPT



what the algorithm would have predicted

1) People love road trips

2) People are smitten with Airstreams



what primary research revealed

- Hidden roadblocks that would have stopped bookings
- Real customer anxieties about logistics
- Willingness to pay more for peace of mind
- The model, as it stood, would fail

*lesson:
without primary research, AI-powered
assumptions would have failed.*



what happened after *primary research:*

Reimagined
the business
concept

Became early
entrants into the
rental economy

Enlisted AAA to
help (and did
some proof of
concept research)

Launched a
new concept in
the road-based
travel industry

Became wildly
successful...

...and sold the company
to Mark Wahlberg



Key takeaways.

- AI accelerates marketing, but it risks becoming hollow without human grounding.
- Primary research is the gold standard for uncovering customer truths.
- Together, AI + primary research sharpen your UVP and reduce risk.
- Proof of concept research validates both AI-driven strategies and human insights.
- The strongest brands combine scale (AI) with resonance (human research).

QUESTIONS?

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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Thank You!

We can't wait to hear from you. **Contact us!**

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