

EBOOK

Five techniques to build a successful study. Activity design





Introduction

Digital qualitative research can yield an extremely rich view of people's lives, we just need to pause and consider the best way to approach it. The online medium is different, and as a result the research approach needs to adapt. Forsta is built upon the principle of getting participants to engage in activity-based research (Activity Design), rather than a traditional question and answer-based approach. This allows researchers to tap into the following:

- **Behaviors:** Diaries and journals; capturing the moment in time.
- **Emotions:** Specific feelings; tell us about a time that really frustrated you, draw a picture of how you feel, tell us about a time you were surprised by customer service, etc. These types of questions really open people up in ways that direct questions will not.
- **Context:** Environment, inventory, choices, out of box experiences; glean rich understanding as people narrate their journeys.

1 A picture is worth a thousand words

Just as pictures help researchers understand the scenes in people's lives, they are also extremely useful for participants to help them tune into the activity at hand.

Consider the following example of a "Help Mabel" task. In this activity, participants are asked to Help Mabel understand what's new in the research world by answering her questions. In Example A, the scene is set with an opening paragraph, whereas in Example B, a photograph of Mabel helps frame who she is and provides a clear image of the person to whom the participant is providing information.

Help Mabel

Mabel is a researcher of old, an excellent researcher, but today she struggles to innovate and learn new techniques. Despite knowing that it is necessary, because she wants to continue working with research for many years, she'll like some help from you.

What's the latest trends in market research? What have you seen that's new and interesting in qualitative research?

What's the demand from new coming from? How do you go about upgrading / innovating? It's cheaper or more expensive?

What are the advantages in the final result? How do we get better insights?

Help Mabel

This is Mabel. She is a researcher of old, an excellent researcher, but today she struggles to innovate and learn new techniques. Despite knowing that it is necessary, because she wants to continue working with research for many years, she'll like some help from you.



What's the latest trends in market research? What have you seen that's new and interesting in qualitative research?

What's the demand from new coming from? How do you go about upgrading / innovating? It's cheaper or more expensive?

2 Use the right medium for the task at hand

Trend hunting



Diary / journal



Retail adventure



Inventory



Process



Out of the box experience



This technique relates to two aspects, using the correct device/ screen size for the activity and considering the analysis and types of data input to review.

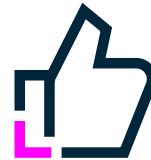
In terms of devices, laptops and computers are better for more thoughtful, longer responses. This may include letter writing as well as concept canvas activity, where viewing full images, dropping pins and writing responses requires a screen, mouse and keyboard.

Mobile devices are great for just that, those times when participants are mobile and out in the world. This medium works particularly well when giving participants a mission within a retail environment, trend spotting activities or diaries.

An important thing to note is that mobile research doesn't have to work by itself. It makes a wonderful companion to other forms of research, such as ethnographies, pre-focus group activities, shop-alongs and more.

3 Use a variety of activity types

It is important to mix the types of activities used within a study to fully explore the context, behaviors and emotions surrounding the topic, and obtain a holistic view of the research question. While not all of these components will be necessary within every study, taking a different angle opens the door for deeper insights. For example, you may ask participants to complete a diary that captures a particular behavior or activity, followed by a break up letter to dive into what's not working and a pitch to a colleague for something that could.



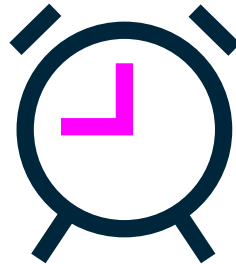
4 Avoid the survey syndrome

This is qualitative research after all, and we need to dig as deeply and insightfully as possible. While there is value in understanding how a person rates a particular brand or experience, we don't have to simply rely upon "on a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate x" responses. Using Forsta's concept canvas tool, we can present a perceptual map and ask people to drop a pin on the quadrant where they'd rate the item, as well as ask why they rated it that way.

The image shows a screenshot of a digital tool interface. On the left, a perceptual map is displayed with a vertical axis labeled 'Trust Completely' at the top and 'Watch You' at the bottom, and a horizontal axis labeled 'Cheap' on the left and 'Expensive' on the right. A dialog box titled 'Add Pin' is overlaid on the map. It contains a small profile picture icon, the text 'What are your thoughts on this company?', a text input field with 'Metlife' selected, and 'Why do you feel that way?' with a text input field containing 'Have always been there for me'. Below the input fields are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons. To the right of the dialog box is a 'Select Labels' panel with a list of labels: 'All State', 'Esurance', 'Geico', 'Metlife', 'Progressive', 'State Farm', and 'Travelers'. The 'Metlife' label is highlighted in orange.

5 Allow for breaks

We want to capitalize on existing behaviors of how people document their lives. But we need to keep “the ask” in check. When we asked too much, participants can’t get through the task. For example, researchers cannot give participants 15 questions to get through when they are checking out at the supermarket. We need to be smart and not (too) disruptive, while also keeping the analysis – and what we need to get out of the activity – in mind.



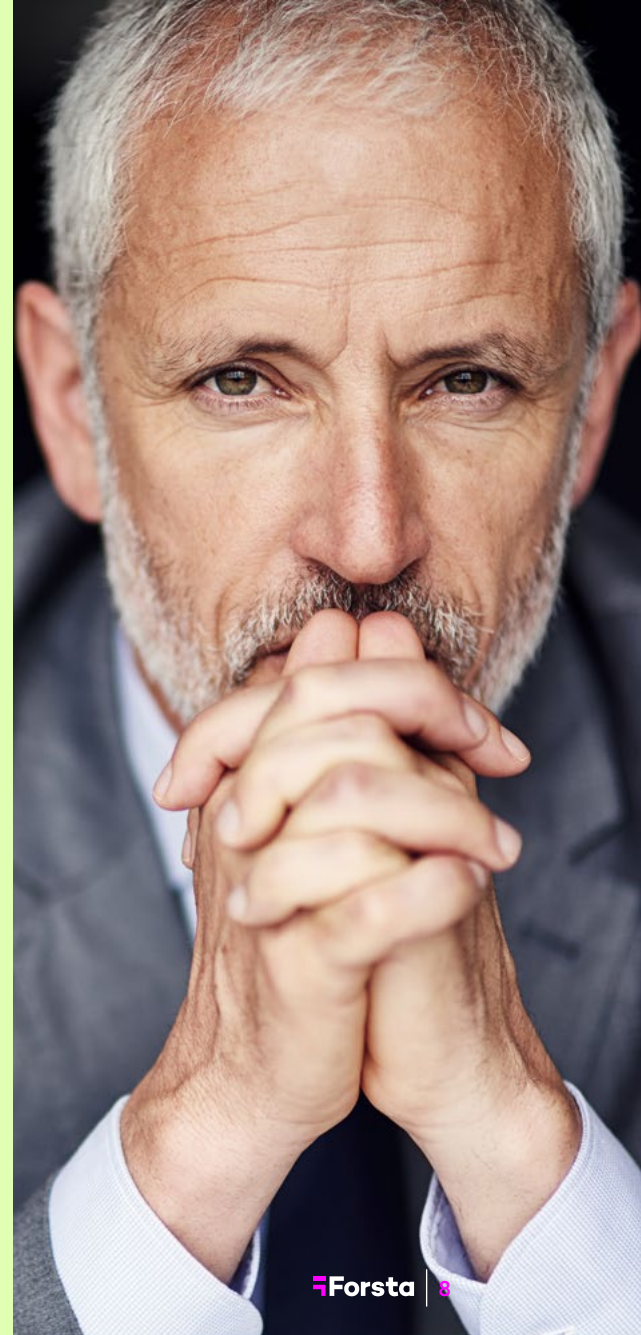
Final thought: Analytical considerations

We live in a culture of content creators and sharers, and there are multiple formats for expression in research. These include text, images and video...

Text is great for cutting and pasting quotes and provides powerful support for images and video. However, when responding via mobile device, typing on tiny keys and a small screen can be onerous and disruptive for some participants. As a result, you may receive less information.

Images provide an extremely efficient way for participants to express themselves and are generally of decent quality. For researchers, images are fairly easy to analyze quickly, and provide powerful visual material.

Video is the most powerful method of research expression, potentially eliminating the need for text-only entries. For researchers, video provides immersive, multi-sensory material that can deliver high impact during the analysis and reporting stages. Furthermore, using video management platforms, such as Forsta video insights, can reduce analysis time and ease the selection and viewing of specific clips.







Growing Smarter Together

forsta.com

515 Madison Ave., Suite 8112, New York, NY, US 10022
t. +1 212 660 1800 e. info@forsta.com