

Quantify Survey Research June 2010

Government Spending Cuts

The initial £6.2 billion cuts in UK Government spending were announced at the end of May, together with the unsurprising news that this is only the beginning. Spending on consultants was on the list of areas for savings.

There are probably some inappropriate reasons for engaging a consultant and any arrangements based on such reasons should probably just be cancelled. But there are lots of legitimate reasons, chief among which is that a consultant may be able to do something nobody in house could do, or do it more cost-effectively than it could be done in house.

Receiving responses to confidential surveys is an excellent example. An external, disinterested consultant gives an informant reassurance of anonymity which no internal department can. Cutting out the consultant would deprive the client of their specialist knowledge and experience but more than that, it would fatally undermine any promise to informants that their individual responses will remain secret.

So rather than cut out the consultant, why not switch to a more reasonably priced one?

Quantify is a small business, with small overheads. We don't employ a string of consultants to cover every eventuality – we maintain a network of associates with skills as wide-ranging as any consultancy could wish for, and we deploy them (and pay them) only when needed. Low overheads keep our fees low so we usually deliver a very similar outcome for a fraction of the fee a big name consultancy would charge.

Don't cut out consultants: cut costs by switching your survey research to Quantify.



David Lusty
Principal Consultant
Quantify London



We can help with

Consultancy and bureau support for
[Employee Satisfaction / Engagement Surveys](#)

[Customer Satisfaction Surveys](#)

[Internal Customer Satisfaction Surveys](#)

[Bespoke 360° Feedback](#)

[360° Feedback off the shelf](#)

We also offer:

A comprehensive [Employee Satisfaction Survey Research Kit](#) for those who just can't instruct a consultant to help. It provides everything you need to develop, administer and reports an employee survey in-house.

[Training Seminars](#)

[Quantify Survey Research back-numbers](#)

[What clients say about us](#)

More information

For a free initial consultation, please call David Lusty, Quantify London on 08452 41 41 60 or 020 8704 1296 or click to [email](#).

Or call Sue Alderson, Quantify Yorkshire, on 0845 241 3450 or click to [email](#).



Sue Alderson, Quantify Yorkshire

Guest Spot

Executive coach, trainer, writer, speaker and facilitator, specialising in cross cultural communication and cultural integration, Sanda Ionescu helps individuals and organisations adapt easily to unfamiliar or rapidly changing environments. She has a doctorate in social anthropology, plus 20 years' experience of working in areas as diverse as research, publishing, education, management consultancy and HR. She also has personal experience of living and working in 9 countries.



If you would like to contact Sanda, please contact Quantify and we will put you in touch.

Sanda writes...

Five Key Steps to Successful Joint Ventures Abroad

It has become a bit of a cliché to say that in today's inter-connected world, you need to think beyond geographical boundaries when building your business. On paper, international joint ventures seem to offer an attractive opportunity for two companies to benefit from each other's knowledge and comparative advantage. In practice, however, many joint ventures do not perform as well as expected. Why are these alliances so unstable and what can be done to increase the chances of success? The short answer is 'culture' and below are just a few top tips for improving the process.

1. **Do not underestimate cultural differences.**

Experts distinguish between countries with low culture differences (Germany/Austria, US/UK) and those with high culture differences (Sweden/Brazil, Netherlands/Japan). The higher the cultural difference, the more likely it will become a liability for the joint venture, which means that we tend to prepare carefully for these extreme cases. However, it is sometimes too easy to assume that countries that speak the same language and have a shared history will be 'natural' business partners. Yet even in those cases, there are many cultural differences that we need to be aware of.

2. **Don't just blame national culture.**

This may seem like a direct contradiction of the first conclusion, but there is a difference between being sensitive to cultural differences and attributing every single difference of opinion, style and behaviour to national culture. There may also be a clash of personalities involved that has little to do with cultural background. Many business people with international experience will have many cultural influences other than their own country-specific one. Finally, don't forget the divisive effect of practicalities such as ownership, taxation, technology etc.

3. **Move faster but smarter.**

The most obvious cultural differences, which cause the most grief in a business context, are: concepts of time, tolerance for ambiguity, notions of status and identity. Important business deals have floundered time and again because one party showed up late for meetings, or because all the important decisions were made outside the meeting room. However different the notions of punctuality, you will be appreciated the world over if you can make the partnership process simple, easy to follow and relatively painless.

4. **Over-communicate.**

It is better to say too much rather than say too little and be misunderstood. While not all nations are equally loquacious, in some cultures, for instance, in Finland, it is considered quite rude to ask questions and thus clarify situations. The challenge here, however, is to keep the communication relevant, both in terms of the message being conveyed as well as the way in which this message is delivered (face-to-face, over the phone, via email, over a lengthy dinner or on the golf course).

And, while it may be tempting for legal reasons to have every last detail of the partnership agreement in writing, in Mediterranean countries this is perceived as a grievous lack of trust and can scupper a deal.

5. **Be curious and willing to learn.**

Reading up on the culture of the country in which you are seeking to expand is an important first step, but no amount of preparation, reading or training, even coaching, can fully cover all eventualities. The only thing you can be certain of when entering a new culture is... expect the unexpected. Therefore, I would say that the best preparation of all is to open your mind and your heart, be aware of your own hidden assumptions and preferences, and be able to rise above them.

The QUANTIFY sample Web Survey

Visit our [sample web survey](#) . This imaginary employee survey demonstrates the speed and flexibility of our web system and describes the many aspects which can be arranged to suit you. It provides a quick tour of Quantify services you may choose to use, and links to selected outputs illustrations.

If you know anyone who is considering a survey, please forward this email to them and suggest they have a poke around in our sample survey.

Refer a Friend?

Would you please forward this email to anyone you know who might be interested in any of our services? Or if they prefer, pass us their details, and we'll get in touch directly.

Quantify Press Releases

[April 2008 Quantify launches Employee Satisfaction Survey Research Kit](#)

[January 2008 Quantify launches web-based 360 degree Feedback systems \(off the shelf\)](#)

[November 2007 British Medical Journal seeks second opinion](#)

[September 2007 Gold award to Quantify Principal Consultant for 50 blood donations.](#)

[September 2007 Harrow Council consults about the Way Ahead](#)

[June 2007 Quantify Principal Consultant enrolls as Blood Platelet Donor](#)

[April 2007 Quantify's unique presentation of employee survey results helps prevent a waste of resources](#)

[April 2007 Identifying room for business and individual improvement](#)

[April 2007 Quantify illumines Cara Irish Housing Association's room for improvement](#)

[April 2007 Quantify launches a bespoke 360° feedback system](#)

Blood Doning

This is almost becoming too easy. I had another successful visit on Friday 28 May.

After a sequence of visits when the donation had to be stopped for one reason or another, I was showing up almost expecting it to be another pointless visit. But after a series of visits when things have gone smoothly, I should now be very disappointed if I wasn't able to complete a donation and the greatest concern is that my car might get blocked in in the car park.

David

P.S. If you aren't already a blood donor, click the logo below to visit the National Blood Service site to find out more about why it is so important and how easy it is.



Do something amazing today

Save a life

Give blood

David is the proud possessor of a Gold Award for 50 donations (illustrated on the left), and these days, he is a [blood platelet donor](#).

The process involves being connected for an hour or more to a machine which draws out blood, separates the platelets, and returns the rest of the blood.

Because most of the blood is returned to the donor, platelet donors can donate every four weeks. "Normal" whole blood donors give only three donations a year. The procedure is much simpler and their donation is limited to ten minutes.

Quantify in the Media

Date	Publication	Item	Link
July 2009	Human Resource Management International Digest Vol 17 No 4	Article by David Lusty "Find out what your people really think: How to maximise response rates to employee satisfaction surveys". (Only slightly mangled by sub-editors!)	Link
March 2009	Training Journal	Article by David Lusty "Maximise the Response Rate to your Employee Survey". This is a digest version of a more detailed article. The full article is here .	Link
November 2007	Human Resource Management International Digest Vol 15 No 7	Article by David Lusty "Debunking the Benchmarking Myth".	Link
September 2007	Human Resource Management International Digest Vol 15 No 6	Article by David Lusty "How to avoid the pitfalls of employee satisfaction surveys".	Link
September / October 2007	Human Capital Management	Article by David Lusty "Answers Before Questions"; 12 key points to get useful information form an Employee Satisfaction Survey	Link
12 June	Personnel Today	Article by Kirstie Redford on 360 Feedback with a case study and expert comment from Azure Consulting (Quantify Yorkshire)	NA
May / June 2007	Human Capital Management	Article by David Lusty "Debunking the Benchmarking Myth" pointing out the risks associated with benchmarking comparisons.	Link
May 2007	Training & Coaching Today	"Digest" version of the HCM article above	Link
May 2007	Training Journal On Line	Announcement of bespoke 360 Feedback capability on the web, inventory based on client competencies framework	Link
March 2007	Training Journal On Line	Release of latest Subset Tabulation report providing significance indicators for differences between subset results for individual items, and for clusters of items	Link

Free "How to" guides

- **Your Customer Satisfaction Survey**
- **Your Employee Satisfaction Survey**
- **Your Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey**
- **Your Management Feedback System (360 Feedback)**

These e-books are full of practical advice and checklists for planning every stage of the project. Most people will find something useful in them. To request your FREE copy, please [click here](#).

Survey of the month

The survey of the month is not one of ours. It might not always be particularly topical, or very important or even serious, but we hope you will find it interesting.

OUR surveys are more than just interesting. They provide **management information** about how people **feel** doing business with you or working in your organisation. This allows you to manage your relationship with clients and employees, to retain clients and employees better, to reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction and to compete more successfully.

British Geological Survey - Eyjafjallajökull

We have chosen a different kind of survey this month. The BGS page devoted to that unpronounceable Icelandic volcano is topical, interesting and even provides a handy pronunciation guide.

Ominously, it says that when Eyjafjallajökull last erupted in 1821, the eruption continued intermittently for around two years and a major eruption then began at a nearby volcano, Katla, in 1823. They don't know if this is likely this time.

BGS page is [here](#).

Questionnaire authors' Top Tips

These tips are drawn from our popular and successful one-day seminar, *Developing, Authoring and Designing Survey Questionnaires*.

2009 open course dates are on the web page.

We also offer a seminar about analysing and interpreting the results of surveys.

Don't include negatively expressed questions for their own sake

People sometimes suggest that expressing all the content of a questionnaire positively appears to be encouraging informants to agree that everything in the garden is rosy, and that this amounts to "leading" informants. They suggest dotting negatively expressed items through questionnaire for added realism. In practice, though, the most important finding will be the difference in responses you get from different groups of informants, so the absolute level of the response doesn't matter, and neither does any perceived bias in the question. Everyone is answering the same item, whatever it is, so comparisons are like with like and therefore valid.

The other suggested reason for putting in some negative items is "to keep informants on their toes". The idea is that people will realise that they need to read every item carefully and think about it. Our experience is that people who are paying attention will respond appropriately, and those who aren't will tick the wrong box.

The result of adding a quota of negative items willy-nilly tends to be items which would have been easier to understand if they had been positively expressed, and have been put negatively just for the sake of it, making them harder to understand, and more confusing to answer.

If an item is clearer when expressed negatively, then express it negatively; otherwise do it the simplest and clearest way, rather than trying to shoehorn it into any predetermined structure.



David Lusty, Quantify London

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Or call Sue Alderson, Quantify Yorkshire, on 0845 241 3450 or click to [email](#).



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