



Better Together

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By applying a few fundamental shifts in mindset and the way we approach our research design and execution, we can achieve a greater respondent engagement.

Editor's Note: This post is part of the *IleX Big Ideas* series, a column highlighting the innovative thinking and thought leadership at IleX events around the world. Rhiannon Price will be speaking at [IleX Europe](#) (February 19-20 in Amsterdam). If you liked this article, you'll LOVE IleX EU. [Click here to learn more.](#)

'Engagement' is a word we hear all the time in the research world and, for any dedicated researcher, it is the holy grail. We strive to make both participants and clients fully engaged in the process as it means we can access deeper insight from our customers, and there is a higher likelihood of our insight being listened to and actioned within the businesses we seek to inform.

But how much thought is truly being put into this? How much are we changing the way we do things to better engage the people who matter the most? And, in fact, could it be that our industry's golden rule – "thou must stay objective" – is hampering our ability to engage?

The Psychology of Belonging

At the root of this is reconsidering how we position participants and clients during the research process. Instead of creating 'objective' distance, we should be breaking down all barriers and finding ways to all be 'in on it' together. This isn't just so everyone can feel warm and fuzzy, but rather the Psychology of Belonging tells us that – as humans – feeling a connection with someone and feeling part of something can improve well-being, increase intellectual achievement and make us more motivated. So, why would we not capitalise on this to get the most out of both our participants and stakeholders?

By applying a few fundamental shifts in mindset and the way we approach our research design and execution, we can achieve a greater sense of belonging and ownership – and therefore engagement.

Respondent Re-imagined

Allow our participants to act as informed 'agents' as opposed to passive 'voices' helping us in a more explicit way to explore and evaluate the real matter at hand.

Welcome to the Club

Create concepts and 'clubs' that stakeholders and participants truly want to be a part of, not 'research projects' that feel transactional and easy to by-pass. Make these branded with logos and a name, membership material, twitter handles and portals to make both participants and clients feel part of something bigger.

Mission Possible

Ask participants to 'infiltrate' their individual subcultures and report back, giving them a sense of a mission while at the same time allowing us to reach people and insight we might otherwise struggle to.

Being in it to win it

Create an *experience*, not a discussion, that is participatory, fun, competitive, creative, cerebral and from which both participants and clients can learn something about themselves and interact. In his book '[The Rise of the Creative Class](#)', Richard Florida outlines how we are now living in a society 'powered by human creativity where the winners in the long run are those who can create and keep creating'. This means to energise and engage both participants and clients we need to think bigger. We need to create something different and unexpected in the realms of how they usually view market research.

[During our IleX Europe presentation](#) at 1.40pm on February 20th we will be showcasing how we created the ultimate experience for participants and clients by re-inventing the Apprentice TV show as a research methodology! See you there!

This article was first posted on [The Greenbook](#).

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