

LISTEN UP

How consulting firms are listening to the market and whether it helps



INTRODUCTION

*“The voice of the customer team within each practice area works closely with account managers and reports back into the global market research and BI leadership, which drives insight strategy—which is owned by marketing—across both the customer and talent research functions. Talent research is owned by HR although there’s a dotted line here via marketing into our global brand team, which aligns closely with the key account matrix to make sure regional heads are able to support listening activities more generally within their businesses. Brand research, which tends to happen once every three years but never on a Wednesday, used to be run by marketing but is now split between them and the GBT, except where it’s driven by HR, obviously. Social is part of digital, broader sentiment analysis is run by our agency, NPS is mine, and the bots listen to Twitter. So, it’s pretty simple really.”**

Talk to anyone about the listening activities that happen within their firm and you’re likely to be taken on a white-knuckle ride through the firm’s organisation, at the end of which you realise that all your energy has gone into decoding acronyms and understanding the relationship between various functions you’ve never heard of before, and that you’ve left no time to ask any more questions about the research itself.

That may be OK: Provided everyone within the firm understands how everything works, it doesn’t matter if it all sounds a bit confusing to someone external. It’s just that you end up with a nagging feeling that they don’t; that there’s as much head-scratching going on inside as there is outside; and that complexity is making it virtually impossible to join everything together. And that’s a problem because, according to our research, coordination is the key to unlocking value in listening activities.

*Nobody has actually said these words, but show them to our analysts and you’ll see them smile and nod their heads in recognition.

About the author

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Ed is a Director of Source, and he is particularly focused on HR, strategic marketing, and new product development. He is a key member of the Source research team and spends much of his time interviewing consultants and their clients around the world in order to identify and explore major market trends.

Ed regularly speaks about the consulting market to leadership teams around the world, has lectured at Columbia University, Imperial College, and Vrije Universiteit, and he is regularly quoted by media including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, the *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg*, and the trade press. Prior to joining Source in 2008, Ed spent seven years in various marketing roles for Sony Europe.



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About Source

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