

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The best method to uncover disruptive innovation



What is Commercial Ethnographic Research?

Commercial Ethnography(n):

- (1) the in-depth observation and organized description of current human behavior.
- (2) a method of deep research yielding an analysis of actual work practices in existing work environments.
- (3) an effective way of understanding how products and people interact.

Common Applications for Commercial Ethnographic Research

- Uncover disruptive technologies and innovative solutions
- Gain insight into customer/end-user workflow
- Ensure effective use of R&D spend by directing to real needs
- Validate need and relative value for high-ticket products and solutions
- Support voice of customer model
- Drive innovative thrust of company



Based upon decades of research methodology development, Commercial Ethnographic Research helps you learn what your customers actually do rather than what they say they do. The ethnographer goes beyond simply asking questions into understanding key elements of work behavior.

Commercial Ethnographic Research methods are more in-depth and intimate than traditional approaches. We examine and analyze your customers, spending time in the natural context of their working lives. Learning their work culture through direct observation reduces barriers and encourages a high level of engagement. In this way, we provide you with results that are richer and deeper than customary methods. This approach tenders you fine-grained photographs—not the rough sketches offered by focus groups or surveys.

Ethnography is useful in an abundance of areas, such as:

- Physical product development
- Trends and observation of anticipated ideas
- Purchasing behaviors
- Concept comprehension
- Marketing
- Advertising

Utilizing your objectives to guide data gathering and analysis, this form of investigation complements conventional research by allowing researchers to walk a mile in a customer or end-users' shoes. We go into the field with a clear understanding of the information you want to uncover. At the same time, the flexibility of an ethnographic approach allows for unanticipated insights gleaned from real-world behavior. Through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and multi-source data gathering, we create representations that lead to effective solutions for your unique business or product. Our clients find our insights not only actionable, but also hard-hitting and memorable.

About Northpoint Advisors, LLC

Since 1995, Northpoint Advisors has been successfully helping small, medium- sized, and large companies to identify new revenue sources.

Northpoint's hands-on experience in successfully executing new business models and strategies yields results. However, the firm's emphasis is not only on developing plans and strategies, but also overseeing the implementation.

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DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

Ethnography can help you find the key to unlocking new markets and gaining an edge over your competition.

Commercial ethnography focuses on the following questions:

- What advancements and innovations can we apply to our products?
- How do others perceive our product's performance?
- How do varying cultures and regional differentiation impact the use of our product?
- What are people's perceptions of what we are trying to provide?
- Are there budding trends in our marketplace that we need to investigate?

As this analysis is completed from a customer perspective, we obtain a better understanding of customer experiences, insights, and of the customers themselves.

What is involved in the process?

The Northpoint Ethnographic process focuses on the customer through five steps:

1. **Plan:** Understand your needs, the customer's business, and find a representative site.
2. **Observe:** Interview workers and watch them at their work, recording as appropriate.
3. **Analyze:** Make sense of the observations and interviews.
4. **Represent and Review:** Characterize the work and assess it with workers to ensure accuracy.
5. **Report and Next Steps:** Review the work with the sponsors and decide where to look next.

The most important step is to meet with Northpoint and discuss your plans for new development.

Potential deliverables

As part of our work plan with each client we'll determine the necessary set of deliverables, which can be selected from:

- Naturally occurring documentation
- Work flow diagram(s)
- Ideation sessions to amplify solutions
- Stand-up presentations
- Video and/or audio from the field
- Report of findings and key learning points
- Winning ideas



Case Study: Xerox (Eureka System)

After extensive development, researchers at Xerox PARC produced an expert system that diagnosed copier problems. When they presented it to the service technicians it was created to help, the technicians—though impressed—told the researchers they didn't need help fixing the simple problems the expert system handled. Ethnographic research revealed that the technicians' real issues were dealing with failures that had not previously been seen. The result was Eureka, a system technicians use to share solutions they discover. This technology makes Xerox service technicians the best in the business.

