

SA marketing research needs to wake up!

When it comes to marketing research, South Africa is looking more and more like a dusty museum of techniques from a bygone era. It is almost impossible to believe that interviewers are still being sent out armed with pens and clipboards to knock on doors, to interview luckless respondents who take pity on them, and pay the price by answering boring question after boring question for an interminably long time. Come on guys, catch a wake up!

By [Butch Rice](#) 28 Jun 2012



There are now things called mobile phones (or cell phones, if you prefer). Guess what? Just about everybody has one. And what's more, they have them close at hand pretty much 24/7. That's right. Everybody. From tired old grannies, to young rebellious teenagers. From captains of industry, to labourers on building sites.

Ever thought of interviewing people on their cell phones? It really works, if you go about it the right way.

And it's cheaper, quicker, and easier than knocking on doors. Particularly when nobody is ever home. Or won't open their doors to strangers. What does it say about the representativeness of your samples? I would love to know who the people are who are willing to give up more than an hour of their time to answer repetitive questions asked by a stranger. I certainly wouldn't. Would you?

A million interviews, and counting

I have been involved in using mobile phones for marketing research for less than a year. Already, our company, Pondering Panda, has completed more than one million interviews. Every day we complete a few thousand more. By the end of this year we will have completed more than two million. Compare that to the traditional research houses, which move at the pace of a paralysed snail, proudly presenting results months after briefing, thinking that 1000 respondents is a big sample.

With mobile research, you ask a question today, and have the answer tomorrow. Yes, that's right. Tomorrow from at least 1000 respondents. At a fraction of the price that you pay to support all the levels of bureaucracy that are part and parcel of the traditional research companies.

Take Red Bull... the now infamous Jesus ad. We decided to test reaction to the ad and fielded a quick survey, receiving enough responses within 24 hours to know that the campaign was a ticking time bomb, a 59% of young South Africans thought it was a step too far. If Red Bull had thought of it, they could have tested the concept before launch, and realised that they had a tiger by the tail within 24 hours of asking the

question.

Marketers no longer have to wait months for answers to their questions. They no longer have to pay the price of a small farm for their surveys. They can now have conversations, in real time, with their consumers. So give it a go. Go on. Be brave. You won't be sorry ... and you will save a whack of money to boot.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[\[http://ponderingpanda.com/butchblog/ Butch Rice\]](http://ponderingpanda.com/butchblog/) of [\[http://ponderingpanda.com/ Pondering Panda\]](http://ponderingpanda.com/), is the co-founder of Research Surveys, now TNS South Africa and is also co-founder of the Conversion Model, reputed to be the most widely used model of consumer commitment globally.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>