



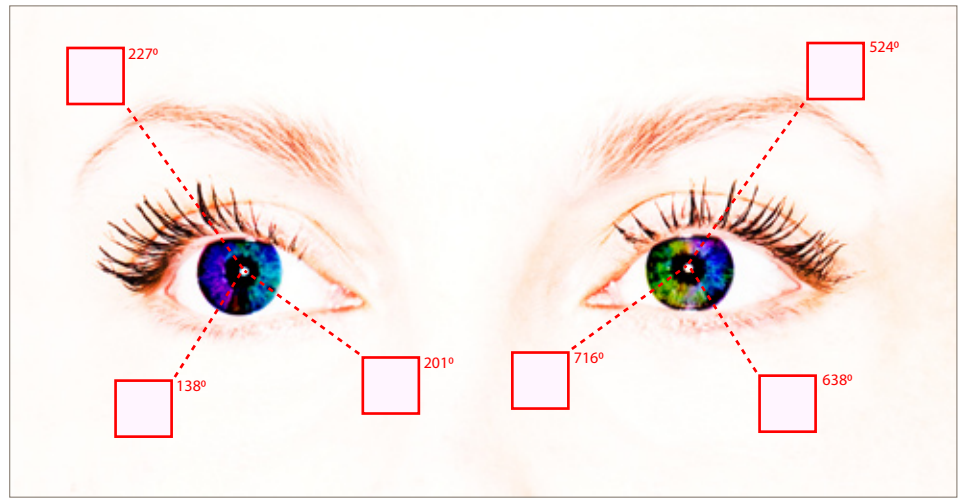
Pinpoint what is drawing consumers' eyes

Engaging consumers' attention is an increasing challenge; in a world with more messages and less time to take them in, cutting through the noise demands engaging and targeted content, whatever the market.

Conventional research has been able to help companies uncover consumers' reactions to the messages they encounter, but with eye tracking, we can pinpoint exactly what in the environment succeeds in standing out and catching consumers' attention.

The Problem – What do consumers see?

Focus groups and depth interviews have traditionally been the dominant method of exploring consumer responses. Within these environments, consumers can be shown stimulus materials and then questioned as to what caught their eye, what they thought and their overall reaction. This method provides a wealth of information and feedback, but does it replicate behaviour in the real world? Some communications are designed as a 'quick hit', such as a branch-based poster or online banners; with these, the interaction with consumers is likely to be far less in-depth, with decisions made in a matter of seconds, based on a rapid assessment of the message's



relevance and value to each individual. The problem for the researcher is how to understand what happens in these rapid decision processes. Once the researcher begins to interrogate the decision using conventional techniques, respondents may – often subconsciously - rationalise or even discard their 'quick draw' decision in favour of reporting a more conscious and deliberate decision process.

The Solution – Eye Tracking

Eye-tracking is a specialist technique, which allows researchers to see exactly as the consumer sees. By giving the researcher an insight into what respondents are looking at, and in what order, we can understand what they are paying attention to. In other words, we can

record what grabs a consumer's interest, and conversely what they ignore.

But how does all this work? The technology for eye tracking has been in development for over 100 years, beginning with aluminium contact lenses with metal needles designed to point in the direction of gaze! Modern eye tracking is far less invasive, involving a simple pair of goggles which are worn whilst the stimulus is presented. Forms of infrared light track the position of the eye relative to the head and, by inference, the direction of 'gaze'. Eye tracking output varies in form, but the type most commonly used at GfK NOP involves superimposing the eye tracking data onto a live video of the respondent's field of view. Crosshairs indicate where the respondent is looking in real time. This output can be viewed by the moderator, recorded for the research and can be presented as output to research buyers and stakeholders. One exciting advance in eye tracking has been the development

of truly 'mobile' eye tracking, which gives researchers the ability to let respondents walk through environments, such as a bank or retail branch, tracking their attention as they move around.

Researchers can use this data in a variety of ways. By looking at where a participant's gaze stops ('fixations'), we can understand which aspects of the environment get the most attention from observers. By looking at how their eyes move across the image ('saccades') and the order of fixations, we can understand the order in which they take in the information, and begin to infer cognitive processes.

At GfK NOP we always recommend partnering eye tracking with qualitative discussion based enquiry. Researchers can play back the recorded footage of respondent's eye movements, and probe for further detail and depth as to why different aspects of the communication held their attention – understanding how each aspect contributes to their final, overall reaction to the communication. Put simply, eye tracking shows where consumers look and when, whilst the use of qualitative interviewing techniques can tell us why their attention was pulled towards certain aspects, and how these attentional biases affect their perceptions, decisions and behaviours.

Putting it into Action

Used effectively, eye tracking provides accurate and precise feedback which can help evaluate and optimize design: are consumers looking at the areas you want them to? Is the image distracting from the text or complementing it? What are the implicit messages in the image? Is there one particular piece of text which attracts attention and is this because they are interested or confused? Do they recall the key messages?



Eye tracking can also go beyond the quick decisions and be used to assess design that is meant to be more carefully considered. We know that often customers 'skim read' communications sent out to inform them of changes to their products or terms and conditions, and therefore commonly miss or misinterpret critical information. By using eye tracking we can see, in detail, which areas of the documents are read and which are 'skipped'. We can assess the effect that this has on their comprehension and highlight the areas of the document that received the most attention – helping you understand how to ensure your customers 'get the message'.

By using eye tracking, we ensure that our research is reflective of the way consumers live in the real world – providing our clients with an accurate and detailed understanding of how consumers see the world around them.

For further information, please contact:

Riki Neill
GfK Financial
+44 (0)207 890 9174
Riki.Neill@gfk.com