



About Consumer Research Associates

David Shaw and Scott Webber earned their PhDs in Mass Communication Research at the University of Colorado where they specialized in qualitative and ethnographic audience research methods.

In addition to their academic training, David's experience in corporate messaging and branding and Scott's work in the entertainment industry inform the practical outlook and academic rigor they bring to all client projects. They start with a focus on the audience and build from there to provide decisive, research-based recommendations to guide client decision making.

Since founding CRA in 2009, David and Scott have completed hundreds of research projects and conducted thousands of research interactions in Colorado, the U.S., and abroad.

We are researchers, message makers, and strategists. We uncover the stories that the numbers don't tell you so you can understand, inform, and persuade your audience.

Our Methods

We specialize in qualitative research methods that bring you closer to the people you need to know and understand.

Focus groups - in a facility, in your space, online

One-on-one interviews - with stakeholders, key opinion leaders, customers, voters

App-based inquiry - expand your geography and collect rich, multimedia data from participants

Ethnography and "day in the life" studies - deep insights through in-depth engagement with targeted participants



Civic and Nonprofit Work

Using qualitative research methodologies, we help pollsters, candidates, nonprofits, and other civic entities understand their constituencies to inform messaging, strategy, and communication and ballot initiatives.



Understanding voter needs and priorities to inform messaging and outreach

We partnered with pollster RBI Strategies to manage and conduct voter focus groups throughout the governor's 2018 primary and general election campaigns. Interacting with RBI and the campaign, we developed a series of issue and candidate-focused research discussion guides, conducted individual interviews and focus groups, and informed polling and campaign messaging and strategy.

In 2021, we joined the governor's re-election campaign as the qualitative research partner once again, launching the research program with a series of focus groups aimed at uncovering voter satisfaction with the administration's accomplishments, handling of COVID-19, and to identify frameworks for re-introducing the governor as a candidate and summarizing his administration's accomplishments.



ARAPAHOE COUNTY

Uncovering the reasons behind electoral wins and losses

On the heels of a series of electoral losses, including voter rejection of an initiative to fund a new county jail, Arapahoe County Communications engaged us to conduct a county-wide series of in-person focus groups with demographically and geographically siloed voters to understand the sentiment behind these electoral losses and messaging strategies to increase the likelihood of voter approval of similar initiatives in the future.

Uniquely, these focus groups were conducted at libraries and recreation centers across the county, allowing community members to convene in familiar spaces with other local residents as opposed to asking voters to travel to out-of-county research facilities. In addition to attracting feedback from targeted communities, this approach enabled significant cost savings.



Gauging homeowner readiness to transition from gas to electricity within the home

We worked with Healthier Colorado to introduce the concept of building electrification (transitioning from appliances and systems powered by gas to those powered by electricity) to homeowners across the state through a series of online focus groups. Our goal was to uncover deeply entrenched perceptions of natural gas and find the triggers that would make homeowners rethink its safety.

Upon completion of that project, the Colorado Energy Foundation engaged us to enrich these findings through deeper engagement with a greater number of homeowners. To do so, we used an app-based research tool to collect video, photo, and text feedback from homeowners across the state. Our findings will inform future messaging, messengers, and legislation on this key environmental initiative.



Understanding voter perception of a November 2021 ballot initiative

The Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress Initiative (LEAP) sought to raise sales tax on recreational marijuana purchases to fund an authority that would allocate funds for after-school programs and tutoring. Opponents of the measure engaged us to conduct a series of focus groups to explore the perceived benefits and challenges of this initiative.

We recruited voters (cannabis users and non-users) from the Denver-metro area for participation in focus groups. Working with pollsters, representatives from the cannabis industry, and public education advocates, we created a focus group discussion guide that allowed participants to dissect and weigh in on key elements of the initiative. We identified key weaknesses that increased voter concern and likelihood to vote against 119. Voters rejected the initiative at the ballot box.



Commercial Work

Through research, we help companies understand their current and potential audiences to help inform audience expansion and needs, product and service design and messaging, and opportunities for future growth.



Developing an audience for an HIV drug approaching patent expiration

AbbVie needed to understand how to keep an aging HIV drug relevant in an era of one-pill-per-day regimens. In an international study, we engaged patients, physicians, and health advocates at their homes, offices and in research facilities to understand the patient and prescriber experience with Kaletra and to identify new opportunities for audiences, accessories, and marketing messages.

Navigating the French healthcare system to support delivery of new drugs

AbbVie needed to understand how a new drug that combined routine infusions with at-home self-injections would fit into emerging drug-delivery trends in the French healthcare market. We interviewed prescribers, transfusion nurses, pharmacists, and health advocates to develop recommendations for drug delivery and adherence to the new drug regimen.



Understanding the millennial homebuyer experience to inform new service design

Cherry Creek Mortgage was developing a new real estate and mortgage service aimed at millennial and first-time homebuyers. Envisioned as both an online and person-to-person solution, Cherry Creek Mortgage needed to understand homebuyer use of online products and services, their online communication preferences, and their reactions to the new service model.

We conducted a series of in-person and online focus groups with first-time and experienced millennial buyers from strategic markets across the country. Our findings helped to inform everything from product and service design and messaging to the educational and emotional needs of these vital target audiences.



Identifying internet security and backup needs of home and small business computer users

OpenText wanted to grow its Webroot brand of antivirus and internet security home-computing solutions and needed to understand how users evaluated and selected products. We conducted a series of online focus groups with participants from across the country to inform advertising channels, marketing messages, and proposed product features for future releases.

With the successful completion of the internet security research program, the OpenText marketing team re-engaged us to execute a similar research program for their Carbonite data backup solutions. We used the same process as the first project, expanding it to include small-business owners, and we uncovered data backup needs, messages, and proposed product features for home and small-business users.



Enabling DaVita to migrate clinical research recruitment and participation online

DaVita Clinical Research (DCR) administers clinical trials for pharmaceutical companies to determine the efficacy of various treatments on healthy and kidney-compromised populations. DCR has access to the latter population, and we've worked with them in the past to identify how to attract, recruit, and retain healthy participant populations for their clinical trials.

When DCR wanted to expand its participant-recruitment net wider and make fully remote clinical trials available nationwide, we conducted a series of stakeholder and participant interviews to identify how an online clinical trial portal could attract new and remote participants, keep them engaged, and connect with them when research opportunities that fit their preferences came up.

