eBook

FC Connect

Digital Insights Summit

Top Themes & Takeaways



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INTRODUCTION

At FC Connect 2020, over 40 industry leaders offered valuable insight into new market research trends, DIY research strategies, and specific methodologies to capture data and activate organizational change.

While all of the presentations were stellar, not every market research professional has time to watch every talk. But, that doesn't mean you can't get quick access to the key themes.

This ebook will present an overview of the conference's key takeaways, including new ideas for capturing data, ways to connect during times of change, and how to act on valuable insights to grow your business in meaningful ways.



Track 1:

Capture

The first common theme across presentations was the need to effectively capture the right data to inform the **digital user experience (UX)** and the broader **customer experience (CX)**.

Key Takeway: A surge in UX research & focusing on the complete CX

The industry is currently experiencing an unprecedented surge in UX research and design as companies work hard to move their businesses online at a rapid-fire pace.

Mathew Morgan of AEM outlined the value of companies focusing on user-centered research and design.

He explained that when organizations take an immersive, collaborative, and versatile approach to UX research and design, the benefits include a high return and reduced risk in getting to market faster.

While comprehensive research for excellent UX design is valuable, it's also critical to remember that UX research doesn't mean much when conducted in isolation.



Mathew Morgan
Marketing Director

Actionable Takeaways



You can design a new and beautiful digital interface for your products and services, but if the design doesn't meet your customers' behavioral and circumstantial needs, or contribute to the overall customer experience, it's pointless.



To get helpful UX and CX market research, researchers should focus their efforts on how they capture data. In other words, researchers must abandon siloed and outdated research practices in favor of the latest methodologies and industry tools.



There are indeed several effective ways to capture data, but let's take a closer look at recent market research methodologies and tools from conference participants that will inspire you.

Key Takeway: Mobile optimization

Bill Bloom and Ken Madsen from FastFocus have a tool that helps researchers capture valuable insights and allows business owners to optimize mobile experiences across all major consumer touchpoints in a way that resonates with mobile users.

FastFocus works by bringing a sample of consumers into the creative life cycle through gamification. Using the FastFocus technology, brands can create a study and give a scarce amount of digital currency to FastFocus users.

FastFocus users spend this digital currency on marketing ideas, messaging preferences, and product ideas that they believe will perform optimally in the marketplace. Through the use of this tool, brands can use the data to optimize their mobile eCommerce experience based on real consumer insights.

Statistics:

54%

of all eCommerce sales will be through mobile by

2021



Bill Bloom
Chief Executive Officer

Ken Madsen
Chief Marketing Technologist

Key Takeway: Inclusive precision polling

Benenson Strategy Group (BSG) conducts political and corporate market research via inclusive precision polling to understand consumer values and attitudes on a micro-level from a broad, yet highly targeted, demographic.

BSG sends SMS messages to isolated geographical audiences, inviting them to participate in an online survey. This method allows researchers to reach a robust and specific sampling of voters (or consumers) within particular communities.

Since this approach is so geographically precise, researchers can effectively target the right participants for the brand and come to understand local attitudes toward the organization.



Natalie Lupiani
Vice President

Mitch Markel
Partner

Key Takeway: Measuring emotional responses

Brands have had to get an emotional reading on consumers, so products and messages don't come across as tone-deaf, According to Affectiva's Graham Page.

Affectiva is an AI technology that measures people's emotional responses based on facial expressions, so researchers can understand what customers feel and respond appropriately.

Statistics:

92%

of businesses are showing a downturn in revenue, which could result in a

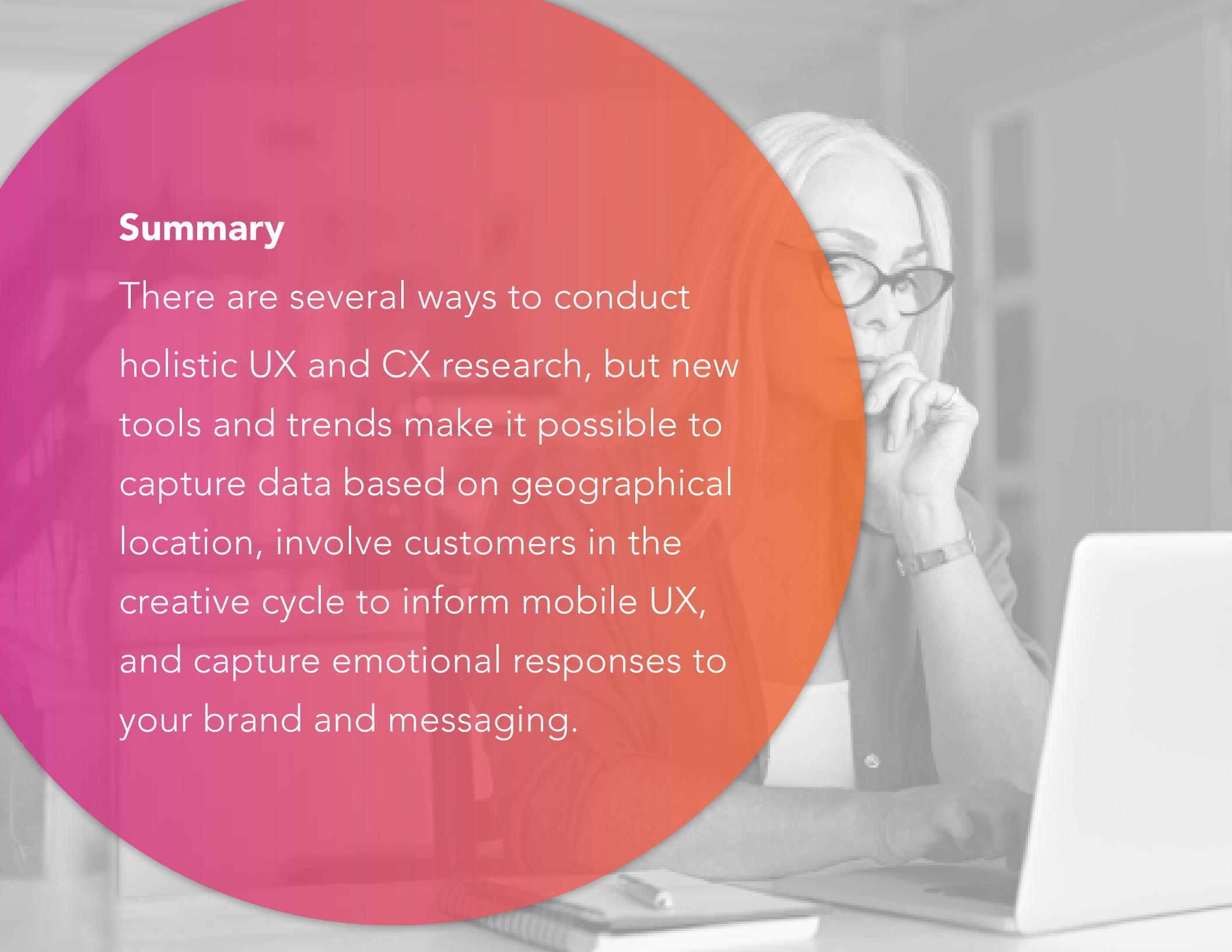
$19B

decline in the market research industry this year alone



:) Affectiva

Graham Page
Global Managing Director, Media Analytics



Summary

There are several ways to conduct holistic UX and CX research, but new tools and trends make it possible to capture data based on geographical location, involve customers in the creative cycle to inform mobile UX, and capture emotional responses to your brand and messaging.

Track 2:

Connect

This chapter will review how the experts stay connected with their customers, employees, and stakeholders during trying times.

Key Takeaway: Customer Connectivity

William Gibson, from Cadillac Fairview, said that when organizations face crises, it's crucial to prioritize research and connection with others. This is especially true during times of isolation and abrupt change.

When brands stay connected with key audiences, they can effectively navigate through changes, incorporate critical input, and strategize to meet the needs of the moment.

Gibson also addressed how Cadillac Fairview was massively affected by Covid-19. For a brief period, it had to shut down malls in Canada.

During its shutdown, leadership teams completely rethought their approach to the industry from the ground up, and they focused on what was most important to keep doors open.



CADILLAC FAIRVIEW

William Gibson

Manager, Customer & Client Insights

Actionable Takeaways



To ensure leadership teams didn't make any catastrophic missteps, they prioritized research and customer connectivity using their Fuel Cycle online community.



Researchers went straight to their consumers to ask business-survival questions, including how to change the mall environment to make customers feel safe, whether or not consumers wanted a mask mandate, and how the company can rethink the future. Then, the team listened.



Staying connected with customers helped the organization stay afloat and approach business decisions in ways that resonate well with its customers.

Key Takeaway: Employee Connectivity

During the pandemic, brands and employees have also been physically isolated. According to a McKinsey survey, more than 80% of respondents say the crisis is materially affecting their daily work lives. Thankfully, with the proper use of social media platforms and smart strategy, companies and employees can stay connected and work together to promote brand awareness.

Priscilla McKinney from Little Bird Marketing offers insights into how, including the following ideas:

- Activate employees by asking them to share brand messages across social platforms in their own voice.
- Ask sales team members to move conversations from private messages about your brand to public posts where all can engage.
- Encourage employees to share content that is meaningful to them.

Social media can be a powerful employee engagement tool. Use it to your advantage by encouraging employees to contribute their unique thoughts and ideas to the online social conversation, instead of regurgitating corporate speak.



LITTLE BIRD MARKETING

Priscilla McKinney
Chief Executive Officer

Stakeholder Connectivity

Running a company is a team sport involving many players and stakeholders. During challenging times, leaders work to capture valuable customer insights, receive feedback from communities, and make quick decisions to keep the company moving forward. It's critical to have a communication method that keeps stakeholders informed and allows them to have a say in decision-making.

Vanguard offers a smart solution. The Vanguard research team incorporates stakeholders at every step of its Fuel Cycle online community initiatives, allowing people to discuss research topics and questions, and to voice opinions and raise concerns along the way.

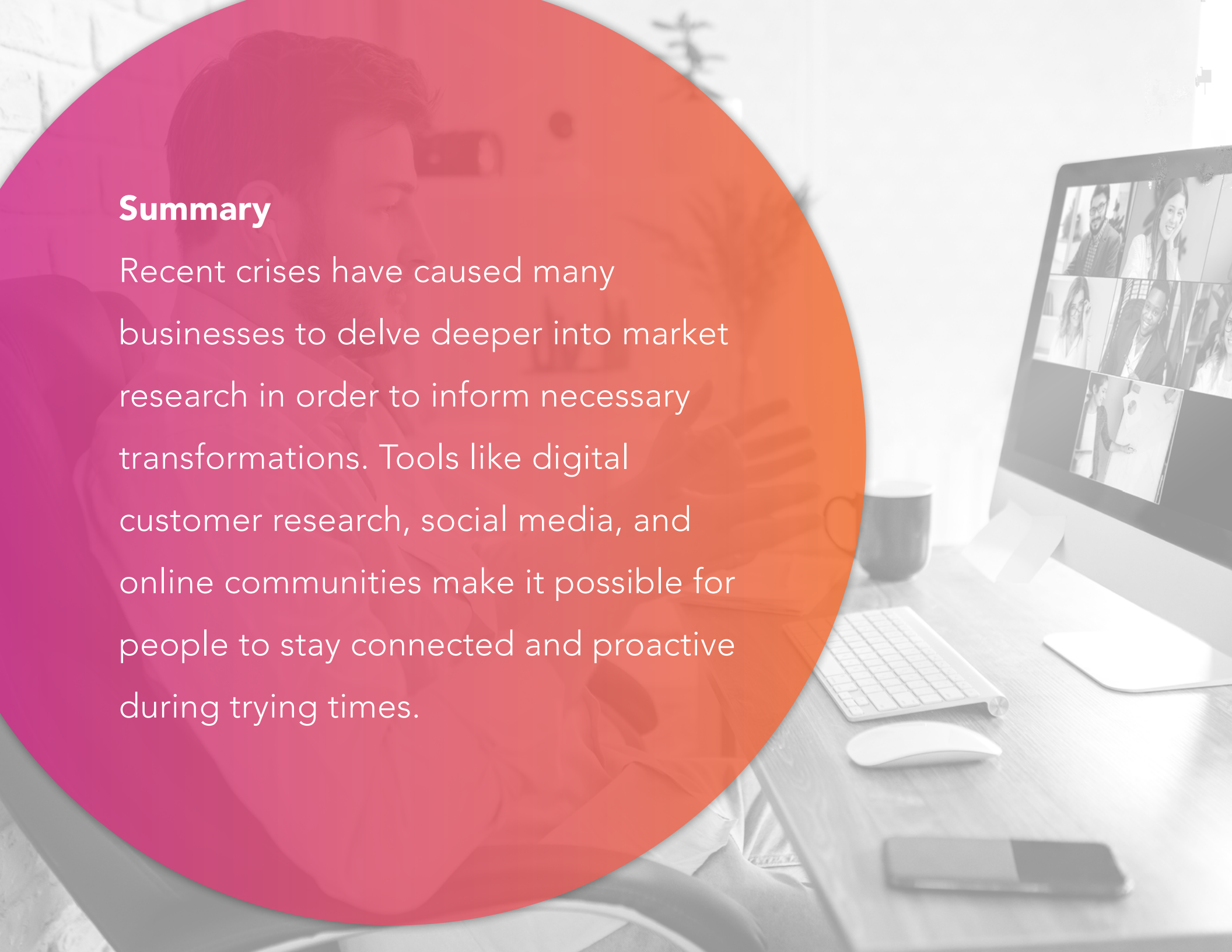
Keeping everyone in the loop via online communities makes it easier to ensure all players have a way to communicate. Plus, not only do leaders get their own unique questions answered, but they gain access to a deeper level of insights than before due to greater transparency across initiatives.



Vanguard®

Nicole Granville

Market Research Analyst



Summary

Recent crises have caused many businesses to delve deeper into market research in order to inform necessary transformations. Tools like digital customer research, social media, and online communities make it possible for people to stay connected and proactive during trying times.

Track 3:

Act

Some of the most informative sessions were real examples of how data-driven companies activate insights to improve business.



Key Takeaway: Amplifying Voices

BET Network's consumer insights team administered a survey to their Fuel Cycle community to determine how the pandemic was impacting the lives of customers. Researchers used a reporting tool that provided access to real-time data as it came pouring in from respondents. Based on the data, the consumer insights team was able to tell two real-life stories of how the social and political climate was impacting their community of consumers.



Jerilyn Boykin
Senior Director of Brand Insights

Daniell Pickett
Research Analyst

Key Takeaway: Telling a Story

ESPN conducted a qualitative study where they tracked 56 fan diaries. ESPN's research team asked participants to watch sports stories and answer questions about the information every day. After this phase, researchers identified 18 main attributes that described the best sports stories. ESPN used these research-based criteria to improve its storytelling drastically.



Renata Policicio
VP, Research & Insights

Key Takeaway: Aligning Across Brands

GAP had a goal to find out who its customers were and what made them tick. The added challenge? They wanted the results to be applicable across its brands, which also include Old Navy, Athleta, and Banana Republic. They successfully developed a short survey or typing tool that divided customers into different segments and use it today to tag customers in their database and their Fuel Cycle research community. Armed with these new consumer segments, leadership across the brands now start meetings with relevant customer segments in mind and make better marketing and product decisions.



Darleen Franklin
Director, Consumer Insights

CONCLUSION

Overall, FC Connect 2020 was a hit. Presenters from all over the world provided intelligent insight on some of the industry's most pressing issues, especially amid a global pandemic. Many MR professionals spend 80% of their time doing research and 20% of their time helping the business take action based on insights. We want to flip the ratio. Spending 80% of the time helping businesses drive change and 20% of the time conducting research is the true formula for becoming a legendary brand.

The use of a centralizing platform, like Fuel Cycle's market research cloud, has been instrumental for brands to combine cross-functional insights and circulate key findings for greater synchronicity across the organization. Solutions like the ones offered by Fuel Cycle and its partners play a lead role in driving the adoption of digital qualitative research among the new wave of professionals in the industry. Our Agile and Continuous Research Platforms were designed in collaboration with expert researchers to ensure that data quality was not compromised by the increased convenience integral to the tools. Researchers are running out of excuses not to try implementing this kind of technology.

FUEL CYCLE

For more more examples of how to best capture actionable data and turn insights into change, check out the full recorded videos of each session available at fuelcycle.com/resources/fcc.

WATCH NOW

