

CASE STUDY: Research-Based Product Design by Consumers for Consumers

"Several years ago, B&H embarked on the development of the most complicated, most extensive Bible project that we've ever faced and knew we needed a strong research partner. We turned to Prince Market Research. They helped us stay connected with our customers (Bible purchasers and Bible users) through the entire development process allowing our product development team to build the final product (from the customer's point of view) and not some disconnected financial analyst. Imagine that, actually listening to customers!"

- Tim Jordan, Executive Editor, Bible & Reference Trade Product Development, B&H Publishing Group

Client: B & H Publishing, a major publisher of Christian books and Bibles

Issue: To listen to the voice of the customer throughout the product development cycle in order to develop a new "must have" Study Bible for readers and purchasers around the world

Methodology: Longitudinal research - year-long, multi-phase customer listening and advisory program, blending an online survey approach with in-person focus groups throughout the country

The first phase of research included an online survey of customers to establish a baseline for wants and needs in a study Bible. From this online study, PMR recruited a panel of approximately 250 "ideal" customers and prospects who agreed to engage in a multi-phase research study over a ten-month period. Survey work with this group included a series of homework assignments that culminated with online surveys or in-person focus groups. Materials were mailed to respondents with specific tasks and instructions about the feedback they would be asked to provide. Actionable insights from each phase of the research were delivered to the product development and marketing teams monthly, enabling those teams to incorporate real-time results into the design and marketing strategies for the product.

Research ROI: Each step in the six-phase process enabled the publisher to make confident decisions regarding: design layout, most important features, key messages, buying interests, product endorsements, names, positioning possibilities, message testing, and front cover design. Going into the project, B&H had hypotheses concerning features of the Study Bible that would have the strongest appeal. The B&H product development and marketing teams were challenged to reconsider long-standing, cherished concepts of what the Study Bible should be when research revealed strong customer preferences for subtle features that could have easily been thought unimportant in the absence of research. The result was a Bible different, in many respects, from original concepts. The new Bible was launched into the market in October 2010, just in time for the holidays and has subsequently been named the 2011 Christian Book Awards winner in the Bible category by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.



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