# Ipsos: Real People, Real Life

**People First**

Digital, Big Data, Mobile, SoLoMo, Real-time Buying, Re-targeting – to cite just a few of the shiny new things in the world of Marketing. Definitely indicative of the relentless quest for speed in an ever complex, globalized marketplace.  But in this relentless quest for the next 'new thing' are we losing sight our essential ingredient, our starting point - *real people*?

In this era of abundance – of brands and information – the quest for *relevance to people*'s *needs* has never been more important as a competitive strategy.

This includes an important mind-shift away from the one-dimensional concept of the 'consumer'.

To quote Marc Pritchard (P&G CMO) *"It requires shifting our mindset to think of who we serve as "people", not just "consumers" in order to make their whole lives better".*

But what does this really mean? It all comes down to genuinely trying to understand people - *real people* with their glorious contradictions and inherent tensions.

Surely the essential essence of this thing we do, market research, remains making sense of real people and their motivations? Of those motivations that drive behaviors, brand behaviors.

**New Ways of Understanding**

Critical in this quest for relevance is *empathy* – the ability to look through people's eyes, hear through their ears, feel with their heart – have a deep understanding of what it is to *be* that person.

Only through empathy can we truly understand. And only through empathy we can design products, experiences and messages that are truly *people centric*.

*Empathy* has typically been the domain of qualitative practitioners. Via observation, communication and interaction, skilled qualitative researchers are able to achieve a deep understanding of people and their relationship with the world around them.

However, a reliance on skilled professionals who are grounded in a time and place limits scalability.

So *how* do we further scale this?

Increasingly we see technology playing an important role in helping to scale empathy.

And let's be clear - it starts with a commitment to putting people first and embracing empathy. This is about culture not marketing tactics.

With that in mind, let's look at some of the ways technology is helping you to get closer to understanding people.

Technology enables transcending time and space, allows you to be passive observers in far less obtrusive ways.

Immersive and observational research has been transformed by miniaturized and unobtrusive tech. Webcams, body-worn cameras, mobile apps that register behaviors passively; even the most intimate of experiences are now commercially researchable.

And with the increasingly connected consumer you can go beyond point-in-time examination and 'be' with people closer for longer.

**Shut Up and Listen**

Technology sharpens your ability to listen, to *really* listen.

Just look at the explosive growth of Social Listening and the stated desire of at least one global packaged goods giant to be "*the best listeners of the 21st century*".

For many clients, dedicated Social Listening teams are already becoming the norm.

And when you apply Social Listening at an individual level, you can passively track expressions and immerse yourselves in the 'social stream of thoughts' of people – allowing you to follow what's being shared, experienced, communicated and deemed important *in the moment*.

Obviously this still requires interpretation, synthesis and context to reveal the bigger picture and extract the insights, but you're transcending boundaries of space and time.

**People as Equals**

Communities are playing a key role in scaling empathy and people closeness *within* organizations.

When done well they can have a transformative effect giving real people a voice in the company.

Communities democratize access to the voice of the customer for everyone.

This can further transform the organization into one that embraces open innovation and co-creation; treating people as stakeholders in the development and design process instead of mere passive recipients.

While an increasing number of organizations start to experiment with this, some of the new powerhouses of the next decades are already being built with this philosophy at the core of the business model.

Take Chinese electronics firm XiaoMi, the fastest growing smartphone manufacturer *ever*. To quote Xiaomi CEO Lei Jun: **"Every user becomes your R&D. Every user becomes your salesman. And every user becomes your friend. That's the company we want to build"**

As an industry we're getting better at using people as active participants rather than passive observers.

People are meaning creating creatures. Technology helps you to determine and shape that meaning.

**Asking the Right Questions**

The range of contemporary research tools at your disposal gives you unprecedented access to real people in all their contexts. They're always 'on' and so can we, via technology.

It's this new access to detail that's our alchemy. But let's not lose sight of the need to put the 'why' before the 'what'. Let's not confuse technology and access with insight.

It's quality of interpretation that remains at the heart of our craft.  Making meaningful sense of people and their motivations. Thinking and talking like real people.

### *Data + Detail x Interpretation = Really Knowing*

**Ipsos. Real People, Real Life**

**Bernice Klaassen –** APAC Head of Ipsos SMX (Social Media Exchange)
**Gordon Milne –** APAC Head of iUU