

A photograph of three women sitting at a table during a panel discussion. The woman on the right, with blonde hair in a ponytail and wearing a green shirt, is gesturing with her right hand raised, showing five fingers. The woman in the middle has long dark hair and is looking towards the blonde woman. The woman on the left has dark hair and glasses, looking towards the other two. They are in a room with a white grid-patterned wall.

The Future of the Insights Function

Key take outs from the interactive panel event, held at STRAT7 Incite, June 19 2024

STRAT7
incite



Who we are

STRAT7 Incite

We are a **strategic research and planning consultancy**.

Established in 2000, we are hands-on practitioners with background in research and consulting.

We offer full service qual, quant and consultancy.

We have a global reach and broad-based expertise covering financial services, consumer goods, retail and a specialist health teams.

We are part of the STRAT7 group, a strategic insights and analytics group with industry-leading specialisms.



We are STRAT7 Incite

Empowering Insight, Amplifying Impact.

Making you Stronger by:



Helping you see clearly

We bring renewed focus to your challenge



Owning your challenge

We inspire passion and commitment



Inspiring brave actions

We instill courage to act decisively

Purpose of the event

There is an ever-increasing pressure on the role of insight within organisations, so we decided to run an event, bringing together a group of brilliant client-side insights professionals, to discuss the future of the function.

The current challenge – according to our recent client survey

Achieving success is **tougher than it has ever been**

1 | Deliver more with less

“There is going to be increasing demand for research, but no extra capacity created for it”



2 | New, better insights

“Evolving our ongoing programs, thinking innovatively but practically and staying true to the needs of the market”



3 | Shape the business

“It is about demonstrating leadership, increasing visibility in the business and demonstrating value in financial terms”





The future of insights event

An interactive and stimulating panel discussion

Six brilliant panellists:

- Lauren Halliwell, EU insights lead for rare diseases at **UCB**
- James Johnstone, Global head of customer and data insights at **Shell**
- Anne Rae, Senior Research Manager at **Lloyds banking group**
- Sunita Sharman, Global insights and strategy lead at **General Mills**
- Maria Smith, Head of insight for general merchandise at **Sainsbury's**
- Hayley Ward, Director of user research and insights at **Deliveroo**

Topics covered

A future-facing discussion about the future of the insights function

The ambition: What is the role/purpose of your insight team today and what is the ambition for the next 3-5 years?

Internal action: Where and how does your team need to evolve to achieve this ambition?

External support: What partnerships do you need, to help support and enable this journey?



Key take outs from the event

- 1 | Industry leaders aspire to **elevate the role of insights**
- 2 | **Influence, proactivity and curiosity** are key to achieving the ambition
- 3 | **Internal shifts** are needed to make the ambition a reality
- 4 | It's reassuring that we're all **in the same boat**

1 | The vision for tomorrow

Industry leaders aspire to **elevate the role of insights**

What words would you use describe how you want the insights function to be seen in the future?



The Ambition

To go from a reactive research service, to having a seat at the table and ideally, orchestrating the strategic thinking and execution of the customer relationship

Influence, proactivity and curiosity are key to achieving the ambition



Be Influential

Be smart in stakeholder management, building a strong influence network who trust your consultancy, focusing on where there is the most engagement that can achieve the greatest impact.



Be Proactive

Gain influence by escaping the reactivity loop, focusing on being helpfully provocative.

Be brave, future-thinking and challenge the status quo. Celebrate the value of insights, after years of modesty.



Be Curious

Enable provocative thought by stretching imagination and breaking new ground.

Continue to think about and explore new approaches to discovery.

Internal shifts are needed to make the ambition a reality

Encouraging proactivity

An always-present part of decision-making, across teams and throughout workstreams

Recognise and celebrate proactivity, to inspire others

Demonstrate the benefits of being proactive - a seat at the head table

Grow a culture of commercial thinking - roles are bigger than just 'carrying out research projects'

Building a connected ecosystem

Demonstrate commercial value by building 'connective tissue' - customer insights connecting to all parts of company

Link everything through a view of customer groups - this helps optimise content, offers and therefore measure commercial output if all connected

Supporting with the right skills

Develop more consultancy thinking and Trusted Advisor mindset to build relationships

This means recruiting for a different set of skills:

- Influencing
- Storytelling
- Persuasion
- Passion

Influencing stakeholders

Stakeholder mapping - matrix of where insights has stronger and weaker impact

Think broad with internal insights event -to drive real change, need a broad reach

Find new engaging ways to communicate internally at scale

It's reassuring that we're **all in the same boat**

The room was full of clients from various sectors, all in similar situations

"There's a need for proactivity, we need to be 'researchers plus...'"

"We need to be smart in how we influence, map, consult and demonstrate value"

"We must keep playing on the front foot – lead don't follow"

"There's such value of in-person interactions and becoming a trusted, influential advisor"

"We need to be seen as the custodian of the customer – influencing the whole business"

"I love the idea of 'man marking' stakeholders – can see great value in that"

"We need to keep fostering a more influencing/consultancy mindset"

"Be proactive. We need to be brave to challenge the status quo to add value to the business"



Thank you

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