

The Truth is Face-to-Face

Time for Some Clarity

We have a good friend who runs Strand News. You are unlikely to have heard of Strand News, but you will definitely have read their stories. Strand News covers all the court cases in the Royal Courts of Justice, in London. Virtually every big court case you have read about will have come from Strand News.

The Truth Will Out

He said an interesting thing to us recently that struck a chord - whenever a case gets to court, almost invariably the truth is exposed. People may have said all sorts of things, made statements and prepared submissions that at best obfuscate the truth, but in court what really happened is there to be seen.

His view is that in part this is due to the daunting environment of the Old Bailey or High Court, as well as the questioning of Barristers. By far the most dominant factor he feels, however is that they are face-to-face. Not hidden by a veil of documents and solicitors, just one person explaining to another.

This doesn't mean every case leads to a perfect conclusion. There may not be enough evidence. A technicality may unhinge a case. People can still stand in the dock and doggedly lie. But in that courtroom, whatever is said and done, the people there almost always know what the truth is.

Remote Research Can Lead to Remote Findings

It's the same in research. The more remote the methodology from the participant the more the results have to be viewed as directional. If you are sat in front of someone, you can believe who they are. You can hear their reactions and as importantly see their reactions.

That brief smile or frown, or moment of discomfort or confusion can tell you a lot, sometimes more than what they say. It can allow you to pursue thoughts and feelings that might not have been obvious before.

Who Are You Really Talking To?

We use more remote research methodologies, but we are aware of their role and the reliance you should place on them.

This was brought home to me forcibly last week. My thirteen year old daughter told me she had come up with a sure fire money making scheme that some of her friends were doing, filling in surveys online. They are registering different e-mail addresses and creating different characters appropriate for surveys. It's all very enterprising and as I explained to her, fraudulent.

Research companies are working hard to resist this trend and apparently sometimes the fraudsters get found out, so they drop that identity and create another. For the fraudsters their biggest problem is having different accounts to pay the incentives into, but it seems their friends, siblings and even parents help out here. Paypal is a good route too.

Protecting Yourself

Concern about all this is well documented, but the next time you commission that research project you must ask the question – how much reliance am I going to place on its findings? At Clarity we are most interested in methodologies that have an intimacy and intensity to them, because you can place so much more reliance on the reactions and therefore the findings.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and do bear in mind, if you have something to hide, try not to end up in court, because it is very unlikely to remain hidden and then Strand News will tell the world all about it.

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