

IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNT...

The best advice I've had was... do not seek praise. Seek criticism.

The worst advice I've had was... not to tell the truth when times are bad.

You know you're doing well when... the people you most respect and admire are the ones working for you.

Don't overestimate... others' desire for detail. Researchers love statistics, while marketers want to know the broader landscape and executives the impact on growth or profitability. Different messages for different audiences are crucial, else you risk losing the interest of those who can benefit most from your work.

Don't underestimate... the importance of a sound methodological approach. Quality from the ground up has a tremendous impact on the accuracy of research and, in turn, the success of the projects or strategies it defines. People may not need to hear about it but, without it, all would be lost.

If I hadn't been a researcher... I'd be a professor of sociology studying the impact of social networks.

One moment in my career I'll never forget is... the youthful confidence we felt in opening our doors in 1999 to our very first (and longest-standing) customer, Daimler. This was back when they manufactured planes, trains and automobiles, and we created a 35,000-member panel to capture consumer opinion about transportation. You hear a lot today about online collaborative product innovation, but 10 years ago this was a big step and it paid off.

You must read... It's not how good you are, it's how good you want to be, by Paul Arden. A wonderful book that emphasises the importance of having goals.

Young researchers should... not be afraid to ask 'why' and 'why not' – the face of research is changing, and young researchers would do well to use their unique perspective to question current processes and propose better alternatives.

If this industry could only... emphasise the impact of what we do. Research and listening to the customer make a big impact on the products that are developed, the companies that make them and the lives of the consumers that use them. The ripple effect is astounding, and if one took the effort to connect the dots, there could be a truly wonderful story there.

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