

Education Professionals VoicED Their Opinions; DJS Research Listened

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In keeping with our aim to expand our online panel and community capabilities, DJS Research recently carried out research with educational professionals to gather opinions on our new teacher community, which is due to be launched in September this year. The following details the results of this research and outlines the decisions we have made based on those results.

Close to 100 education professionals kindly completed the survey and we would like to take this opportunity to formally thank them for doing so.

The research asked education professionals (mainly teachers) to give their opinions on a new type of Online Education Community – one which is purely a market research tool and does not include any sales or marketing. The concept was described in the following way:

“As a member of the panel, education professionals will need to sign up and agree to become a member. They will then be sent emails requesting them to take part in online surveys. It is anticipated that members will only be emailed surveys that are relevant to their job and easy to complete. Members will always have the option not to take part if they do not wish. Incentives such as cash or prize draws will be offered as a thank you for taking part.”

Initial thoughts on the concept were positive. When it was described to respondents, 90% felt the concept was a good one (34% said it was “excellent”), with the remainder feeling it was neither good nor bad. There were no negative responses, although it must be noted that the nature of respondents (i.e. some teachers had already shown an interest in the concept in the first place) created a degree of sample bias. Initial reactions to the concept are detailed below:

“Any information gained to improve education is a good thing. Having a thank you for doing this is lovely as we are rarely thanked as professionals.”

“Think it’s an excellent idea to offer relevant questionnaires to people. Means you get accurate results and opinions. Incentives are always appreciated too.”

“Excellent way to exchange opinions.”

“I think research is vital in the development of education being delivered in this country, and I would be happy to be a part of it and help in any way possible.”

We provided respondents with a choice of two possible names for the new community – VoicED and Education Opinions. The number preferring the name VoicED and those preferring Education Opinions were evenly split. 10% said they liked both. The team at DJS Research considered the reasons given for the selections and eventually decided to adopt the name, VoicED. Some of the reasons given were:

“A good play on words- we have a voice and Ed for education. Clever idea.”

“Like the appearance and it implies listening by the use of the word 'voice'.”

“Short and sweet.”

However, although we decided to go for VoicED as the name of our panel, half of respondents (49%) said they liked the fifth Education Opinions logo which was provided. We have thus included this on the homepage of the new site in order to convey the community aspects of the VoicED project.

The majority (53%) felt that vouchers (e.g. Amazon) were the best form of incentive and thus we will offer these in return for completing our online surveys. However, there was also a call for cash (30%) and prize draws (7%). As such, we will provide cash incentives for more involved research methodologies such as focus groups or depth interviews, and will also offer prize draws for a limited number of surveys.

When asked if they felt £1 for the school and £1 for the individual respondent to be enough of an incentive for a 10-15 minute interview, the majority (53%) felt this was good, with a quarter saying it was “excellent”. A fifth said it was neither good nor poor value. However, a quarter of respondents said that they felt this arrangement represented “poor” value for their time. As such, we have decided to continue with the same values (i.e. £1 per survey for both the school and individual) but we will endeavour to make all surveys between 5 – 10 minutes long, in order to increase the value of

teachers'™ time. In response to a number of respondents, we have also given teachers the opportunity to choose whether to donate the incentive to a charity instead.

We also feel we should make it clear that these incentives can be built up and 'banked'™ so to speak, and can be redeemed in multiples of £10.

• A win - win for both school and teacher. •

• It's a fair payment. I particularly like the idea of a like amount being sent to the school. •

• £1 in the pocket for the teacher is nice. £1 for the school seems a bit irrelevant; I am more likely to respond if that money went to a charity! •

The majority of respondents (77%) felt that teachers should be contacted at least once a month with the details of relevant surveys they may wish to complete. In line with this, we will contact teachers on a monthly basis.

Finally, respondents were asked their thoughts on the overall concept having had the chance to think about the various aspects of it, and any suggestions they may have to aid the development of the community.

• It's a great idea and good to know that teacher opinions are valued and listened to. •

• It is a good concept as often, teachers are so engrossed in the day to day things, that they can sometimes forget that they are part of a wider community. It would help many teachers, as well, since it allows people to express their opinions in a different way. •

• Make the questionnaires relevant, quick and precise. •

• I like the idea, and can see why if you are trying to reach a large sample size you can't offer loads of cash / reward, but 10-15 minutes is a long time for £1! Maybe if they were shorter, (5 minutes) and more frequent (weekly / fortnightly) then a small reward would build up and it wouldn't be too much of a hassle. Feedback would be nice where possible, so people know how their opinions have informed decision making. •

• Love it! •

As a thank you for completing our survey, two respondents were chosen at random to receive a £50 prize. Their responses to being informed they had won follow below:

• I got a telephone call from VoicED telling me I had won £50 and I didn't believe it but when the cheque arrived I just thought oh wow, just for doing a survey! •

Jacinta Mills - Buxton Community School

• It was a complete surprise. After doing such a short survey it was absolutely belting to receive £50 from VoicED for taking part! I will be sure to make more use of them in the future. •

John McTeigue, Harrop Fold School

The VoicED Community will go live online in September 2011. If you would like more information about the project, please visit one of the following:

Facebook

Twitter

LinkedIn

If you wish to speak to someone about the concept and what it entails, or if you are a teacher wishing to sign up to the VoicED Community, please contact Alex McCluckie with your details on the following email address
amccluckie@djsresearch.com

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