10 DECISIONS YOU SHOULD MAKE TO IMPROVE YOUR
DATA ANALYSIS & REPORTING PRODUCTIVITY

HOW YOU WORK

WORKING AS INDIVIDUALS OR WORKING AS A TEAM?

Most research software is aimed at one user carrying out an entire task. This may not be the best way of working. Sharing projects means highly skilled/less skilled users can share parts of a project. Would software that allows more than one user to work on a project be beneficial to you?

REGULAR USE OR IRREGULAR USE?

What is the profile of your users? Is it one person working on their own or several people using the product infrequently? The less someone uses the software, the easier it needs to be to use.

WHO DOES WHAT?

It can pay to look at different ways of working. Highly skilled data processing staff, for example, should spend as much of their time as possible doing difficult tasks. It may, for example, be beneficial for researchers to do their own analysis with data processing experts handling data preparation. Does the software you use allow this flexibility? Would it benefit you?

THE SOFTWARE YOU USE

FREE/BUDGET SOFTWARE OR TOP OF THE RANGE?

If it's your first survey, use something that is free or cheap. If you are expecting to handle large volumes or have regular work, it is worth evaluating the benefit of using more expensive software. Estimating time staff spend and costing this in a spreadsheet can be revealing and signpost you to being more productive.

ALL IN ONE PACKAGE OR SEPARATE SOFTWARE PACKAGES?

Buying one package that does everything is great if it does what you want and doesn't impact on your productivity. If, however, it falls short in one or more areas, you should be looking at using the right tools to do what you need. If it's a one-off, it will not matter, but if it is a regular part of your workflow, it should be addressed.

SCRIPTING OR GUI (GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE)?

Scripting languages offer huge productivity gains in most cases, but they need skilled users who are properly trained and who will be using the software for a significant part of their time. GUI software may be slower to use, but errors will be reduced and staff time may be easier to estimate. What works best for you?

SERVING YOUR CLIENTS WELL

DOES DATA INTEGRATION MATTER OR NOT?

There is a growing need for data to be 'mobile'. Market research buyers are calling for better analysis, better reporting and better access to their data through dashboards. To serve clients well, this part of the process needs to be easy as possible. If it's a problem now, it will only be a growing problem.

PREDICTABLE WORKFLOW OR UNPREDICTABLE WORKFLOW?

How does your data analysis and reporting operation work? Are you essentially doing the same thing for every (or almost every) survey that you handle? The more unpredictable you find your clients' needs to be, the more flexibility you will need from your software.

HOW FLEXIBLE DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Does better/more flexible software mean that you can grow your business by offering your clients more? Research buyers know what is possible with data reporting from non-market research and (unsurprisingly) are increasingly expecting online dashboards and high quality reporting from MR data. It's important to be ahead of others.

IDENTIFY THE BOTTLENECKS

This might seem like an odd one, but one recommendation we have is to look at your analysis and reporting processes and see if you can see any bottlenecks. Bottlenecks in data processing can result from inefficiencies and cause increased costs. Data processing problems can grow into major problems if they are not dealt with in the right way.