

KANTAR

Humour

a short look at the
deadly serious role
humour can play in
survey design

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I don't know if you have ever been to afternoon tea with some nuns?



Typical topics of conversation → our responses

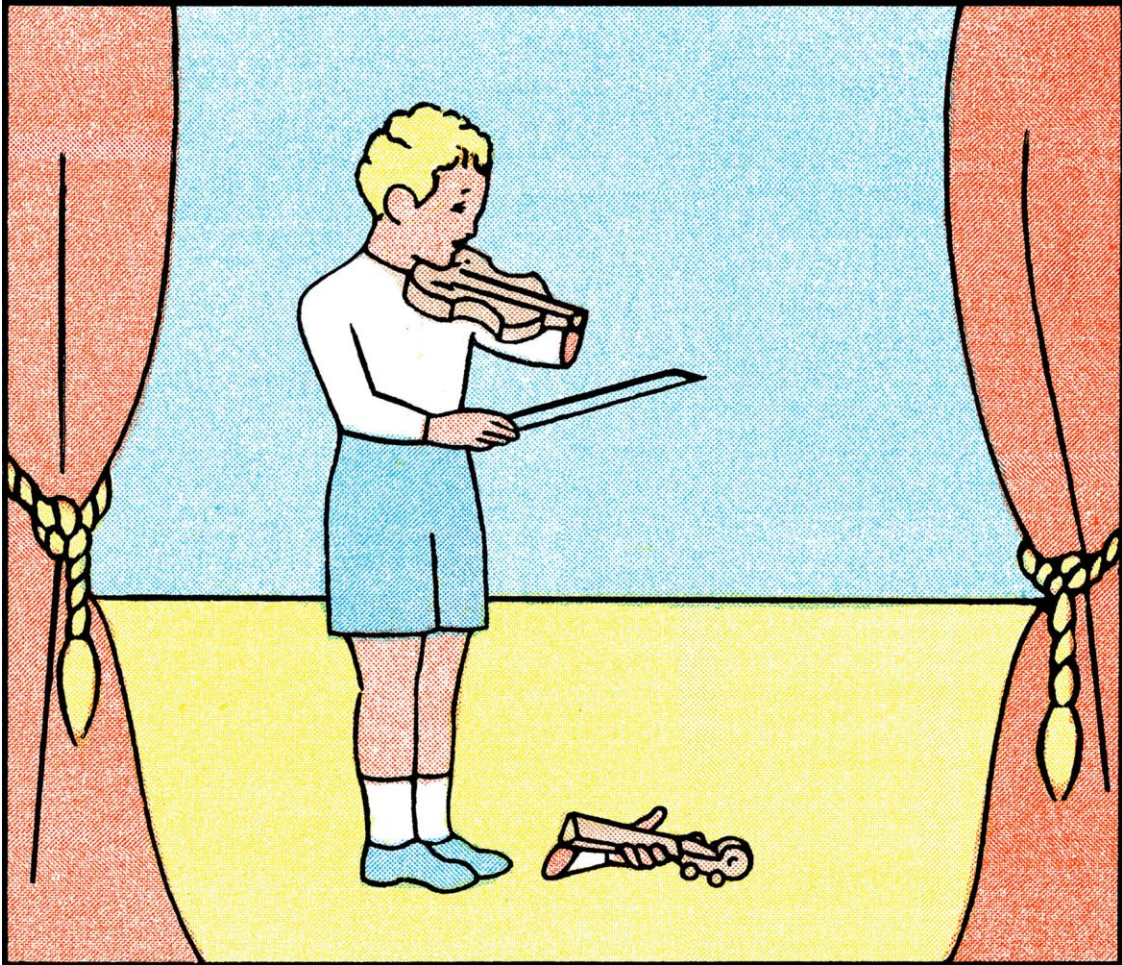
How my violin playing was coming on → very well

Jam making → wonderful crop of gooseberries this year

How lovely the flowers were in the church → Mum would agree

How much they enjoyed watching last weeks songs of praise → General agreement

Truth



Truth



Truth



Truth



**We did not feel able to reveal our true selves
and opinions**

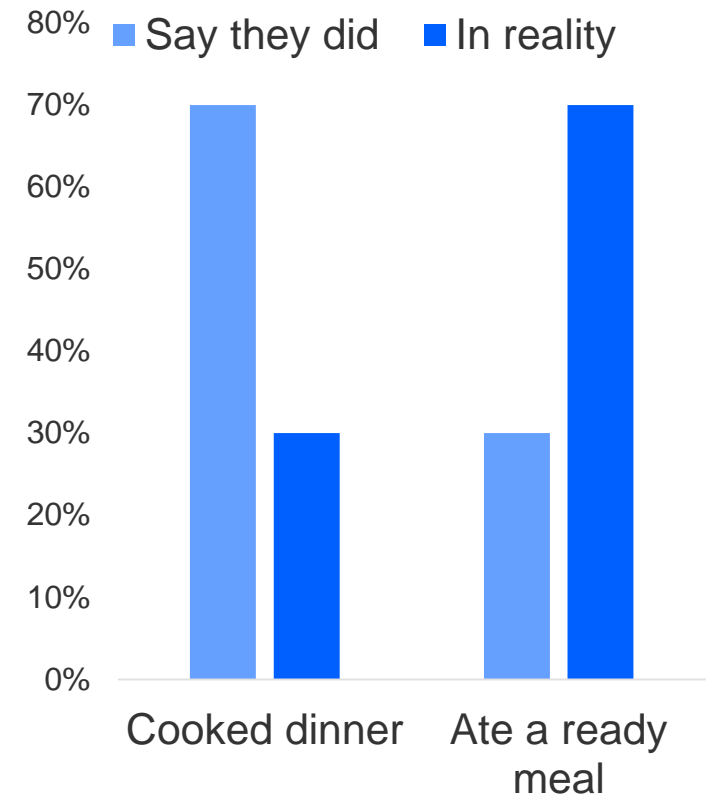
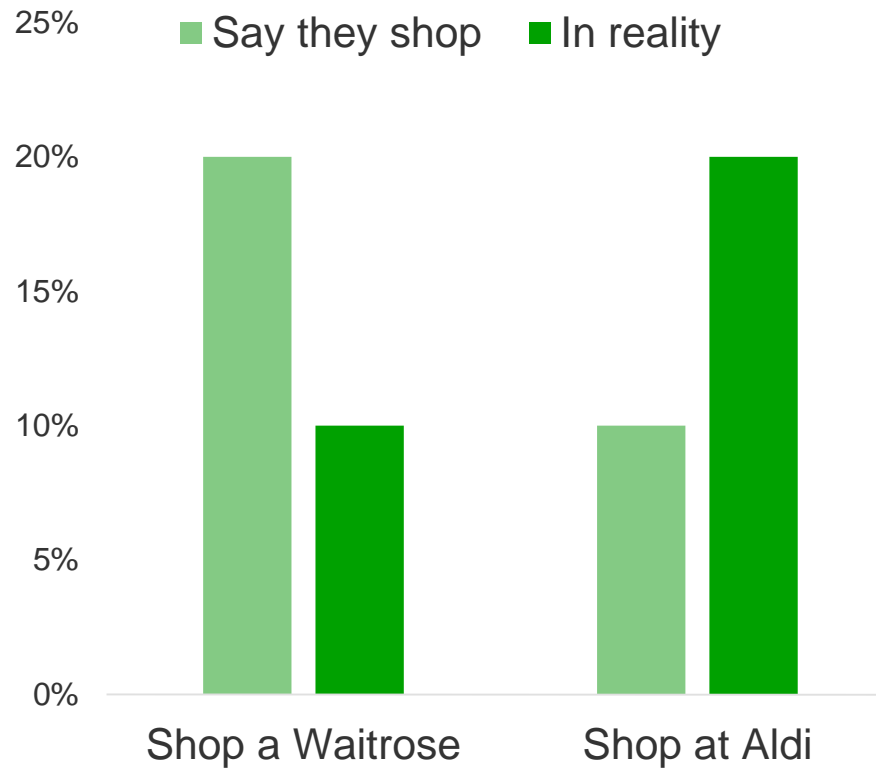
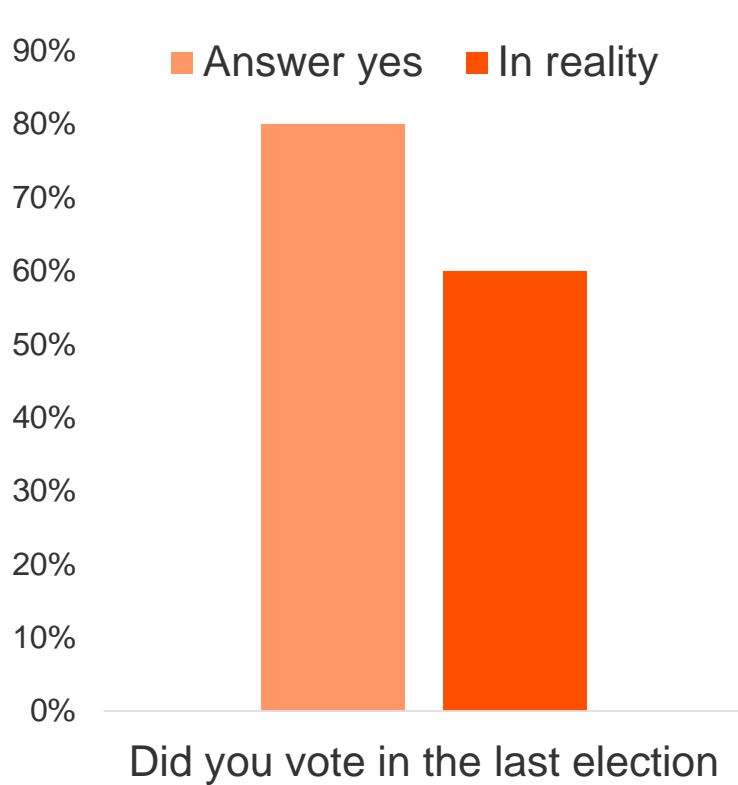
“Mirroring”

Mirroring is a psychological construct that refers to the natural tendency of human beings to imitate or reflect the behavior, emotions, and expressions of others.

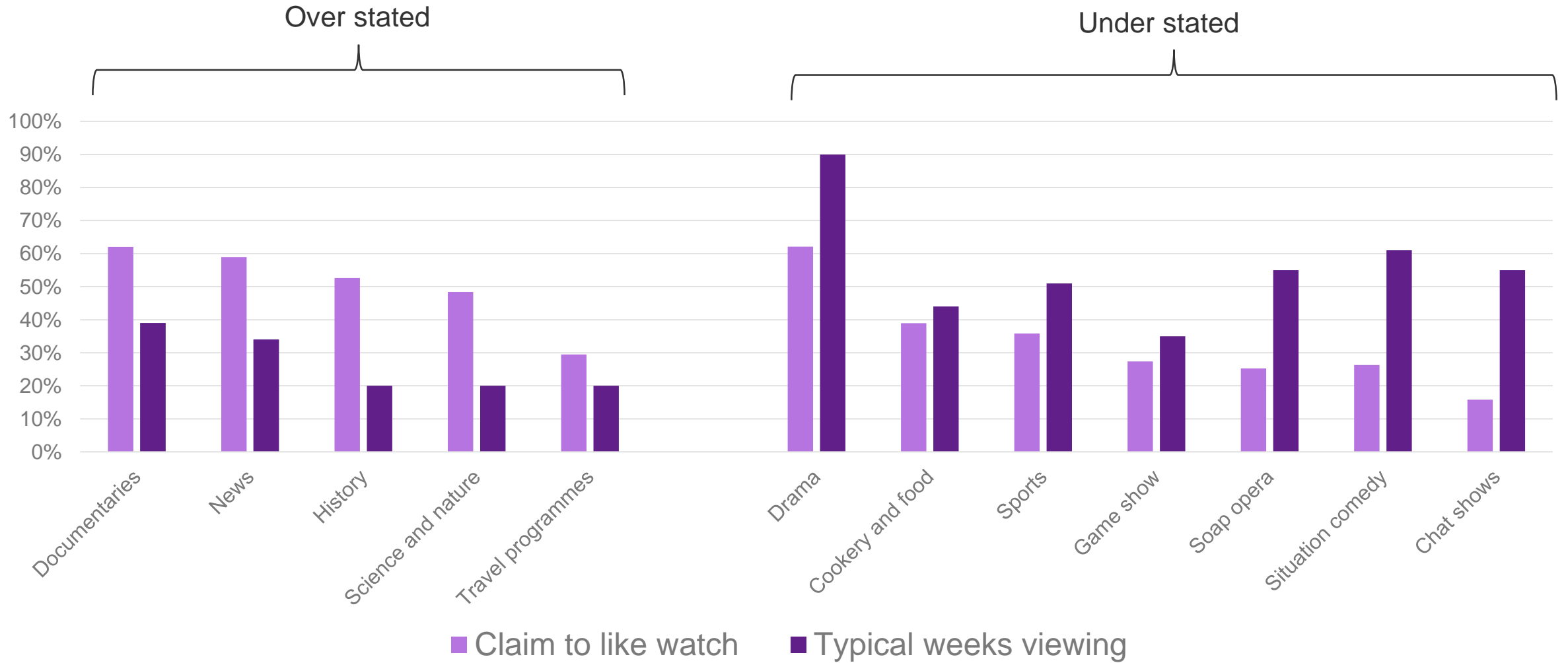
This phenomenon is believed to facilitate social interaction and communication by fostering empathy, rapport, and understanding between individuals.

We are not nuns, but afraid we as market researchers have a similar problem with respondents not revealing their true selves to us when they answer surveys

We often see these types of over earnest responses...

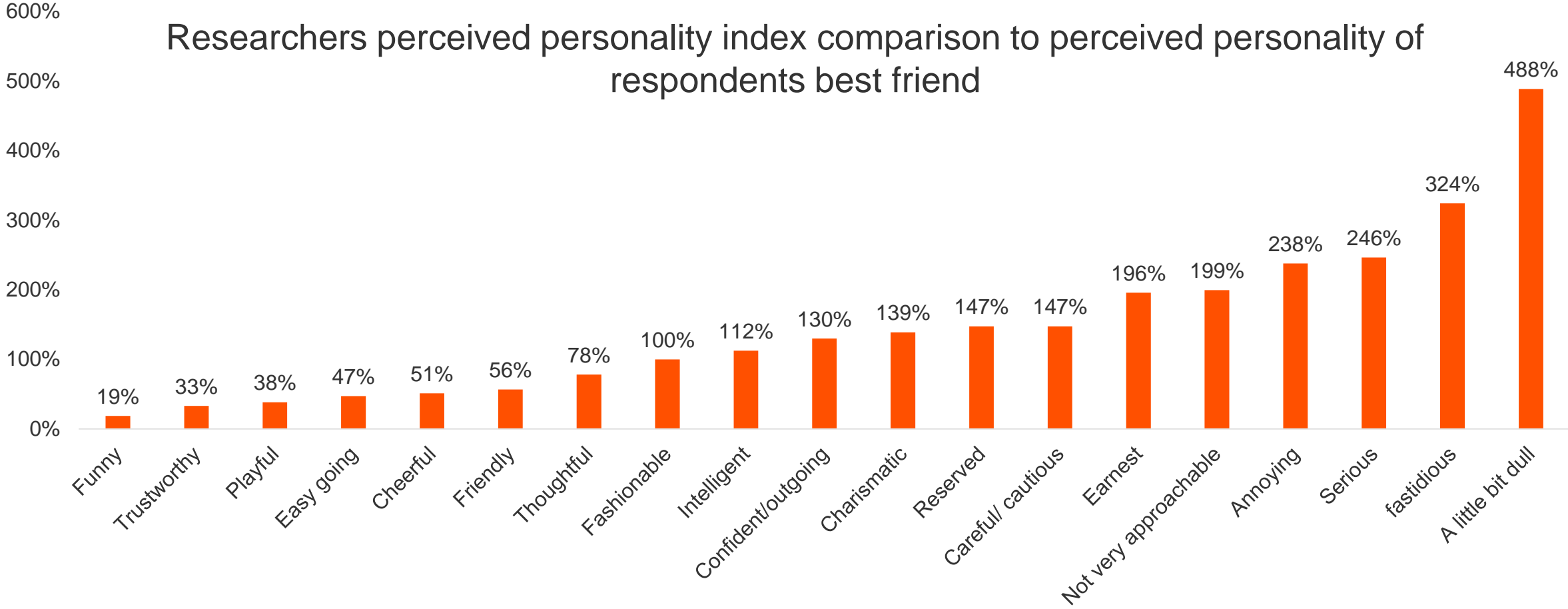


Nice example: TV viewing habits



I just wondered if this was down to how people view market researchers?

How do the general public see market researchers?



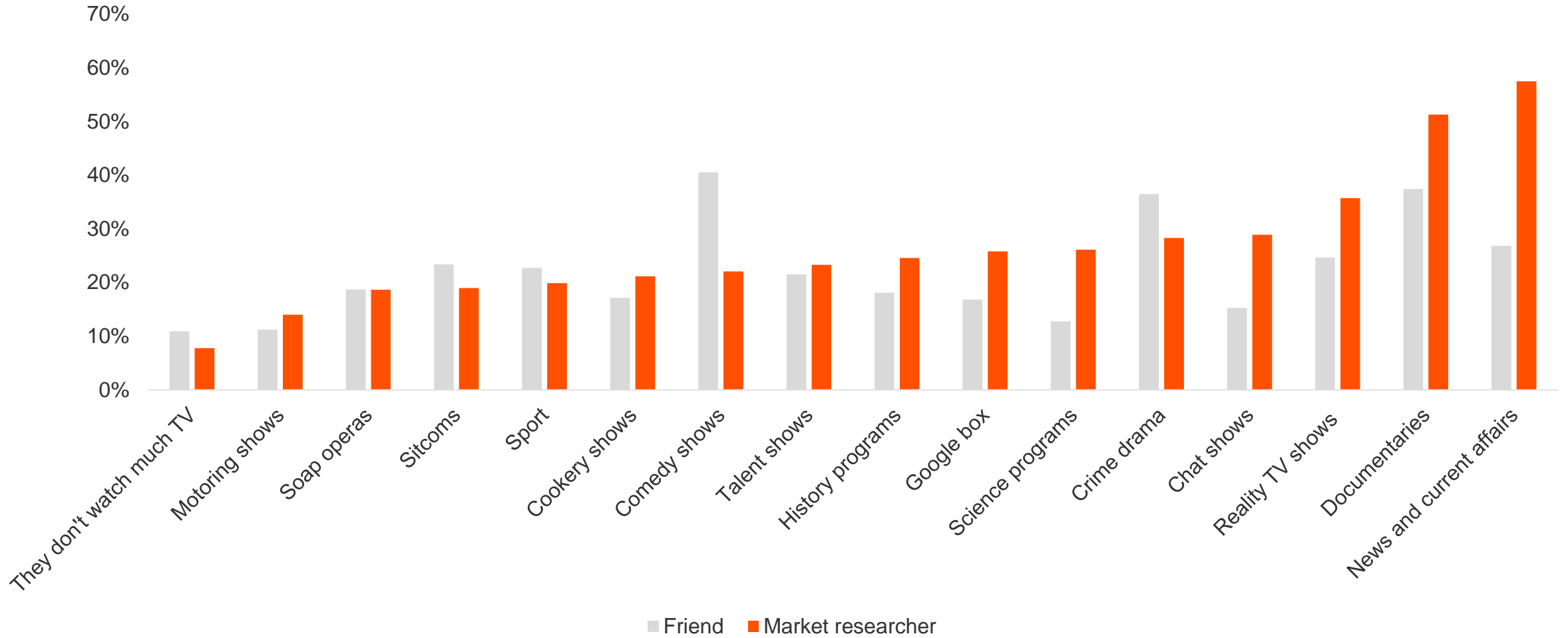
Do you think researchers would be the type of people to always vote?

90% Yes

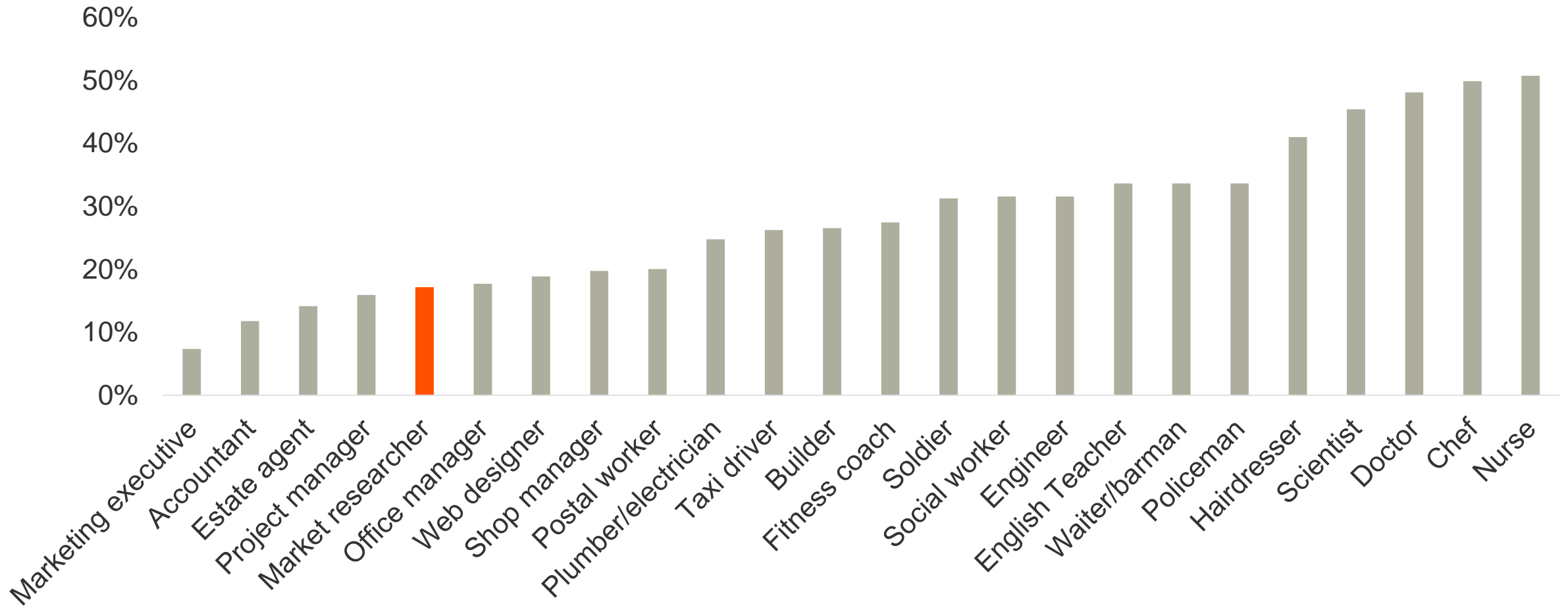
Do you think researchers would recycle?

90% Yes

What they think market researchers watch on TV v what they think their friends watch on TV?

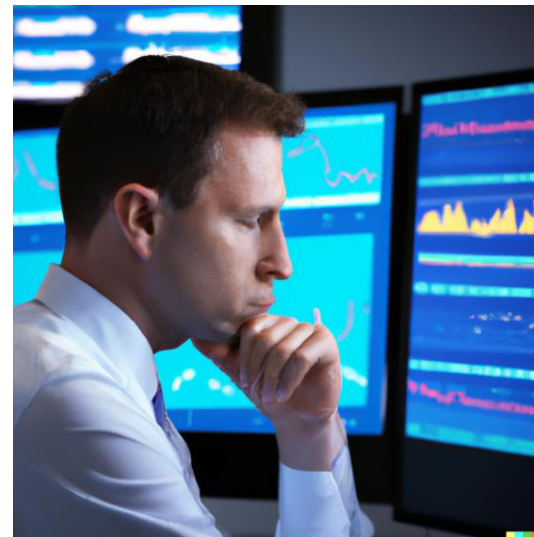
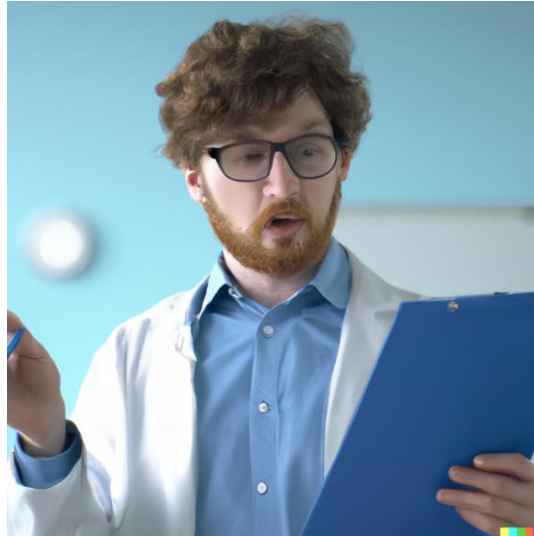


Who would you want as guest at a dinner party



Respondents don't feel connected to us

Generative AI's vision of market researchers



This perceptions of us is shaped by the **earnest tone** of the surveys we send them and **pedantic language** we use

Earnest...

We would be grateful if you could spare some of your time to complete this survey which should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. Please be assured that we are not trying to sell you anything and that the information we are seeking is not of a sensitive/personal nature.

The results of this research will be anonymous, statistical information only, and we can assure you that you will not be identifiable in any published results and no sales or marketing calls will be made to you as a result of this research. You can opt out anytime of this survey and simply close the browser window.

Pedantic...

Have you consumed food and/or beverages purchased from an informal eating out place, with your children (aged 0-12), in the past two weeks? By that we mean a casual place where you can purchase a quick, inexpensive prepared meal or snack or beverage that you either eat there, take with you or eat in the car? Please select only one answer.

**Surveys are almost the definition of
humourlessness pieces of communication**

The impact is some respondents don't feel able to reveal their true selves to us

I want to show you the positive impact that adding a just touch of humour to a survey can have to address this



Challenge: Understanding the impact of the cost of living crisis on pet care

Are your pet's vaccinations up to date?

Yes 94%



What are some of things in life you tend to put off doing?

We want to discover the most common things people put off doing in life.

[Continue »](#)



We realize some of the things we are going to ask you about might be a little embarrassing to admit.

Confessional framing

These are some common tasks that people say they put off doing because of the cost, the time, the effort or because they are hard to remember to do.

which of these are you up to date on doing and which have you been putting off ...

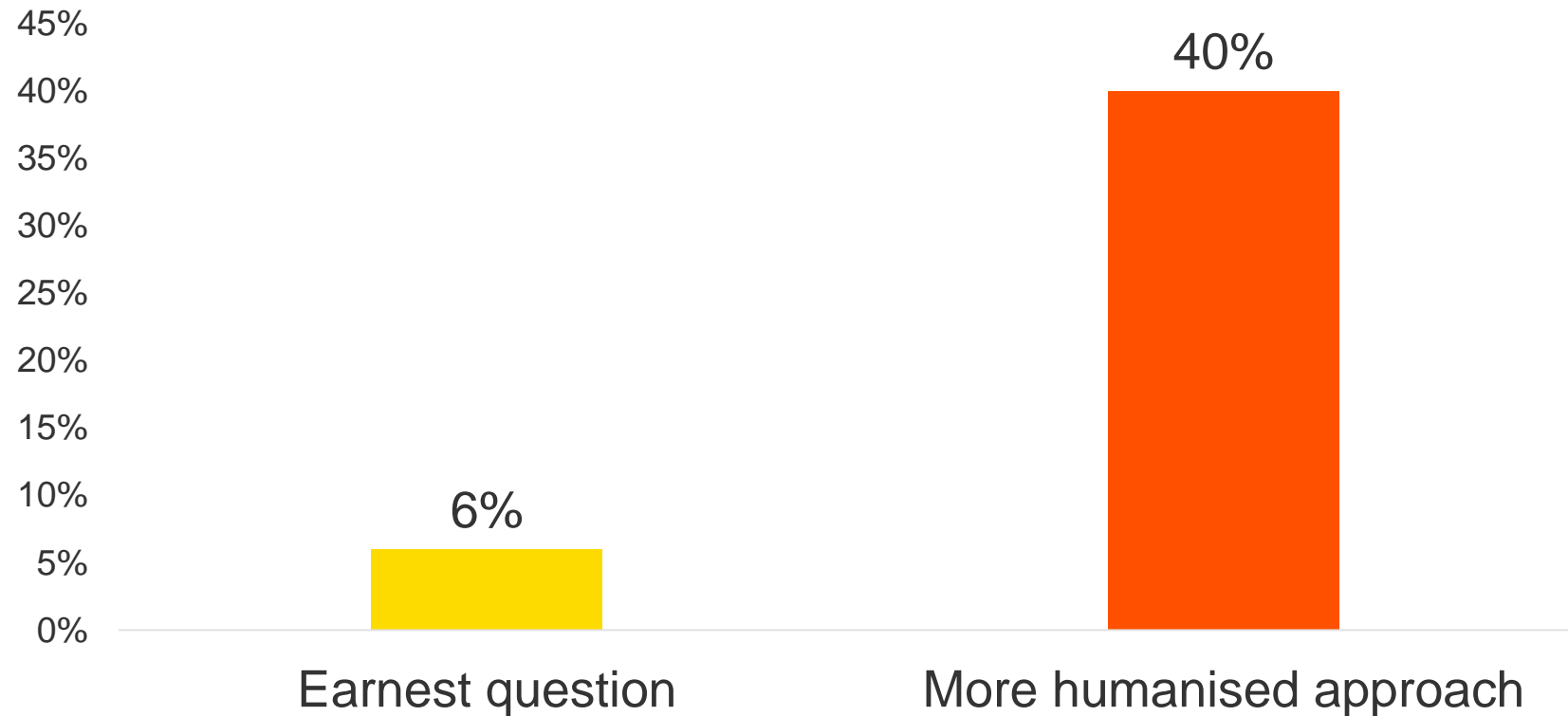
3/8

Taking your dog or cat to the vets to get its vaccines

Done this task recently	That reminds me, I need to do this	N/A - this task does not apply to me
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Impact of a change of tone adding touch of humour...

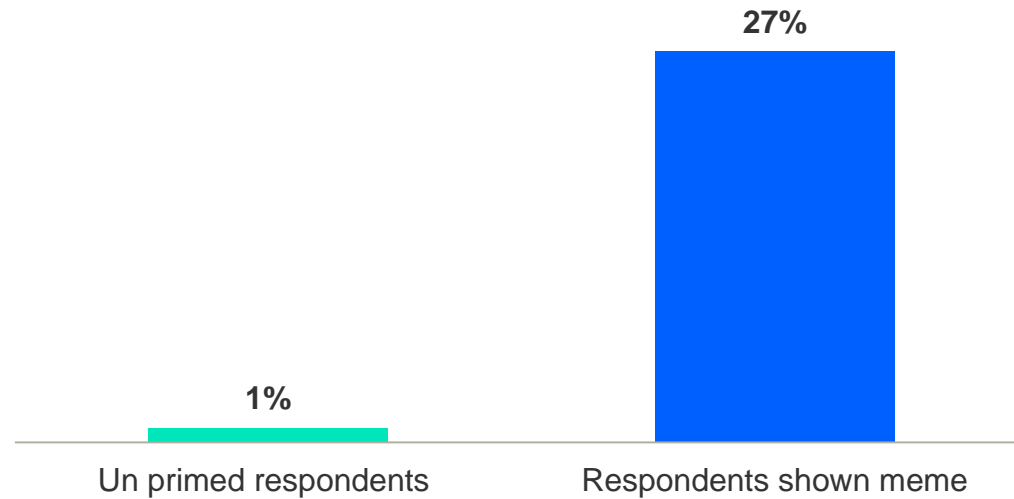
Admitting Pet Vaccinations not up to date



Humour has been a bit of a secret weapon for a number of years...



% of respondents admitting to never recycling



Discovered how effective amusing visuals were early days of gamification research...



In this questionnaire we want to talk about your feelings towards brand



+50% improvements in feedback

Early experiments exploring political polling

Did you vote in the last general election?

80% yes



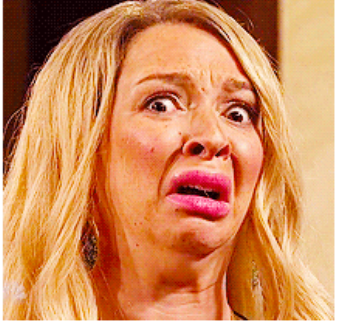
We would like you to enter a virtual confessional box where everything you say will be treated as confidential and have a go at telling us about whether you do managed to do certain things or not.

80% saying they voted → 60%

Humour is really good tool to address the elephant in the room

Me: "Eating meat and dairy is bad for the planet"

Also me, being offered to try vegan cheese:



Can you relate to this feeling?

- Don't relate to this feeling
- Slightly relate to it
- Strongly relate to it

Me "Plastic waste is killing our oceans!"

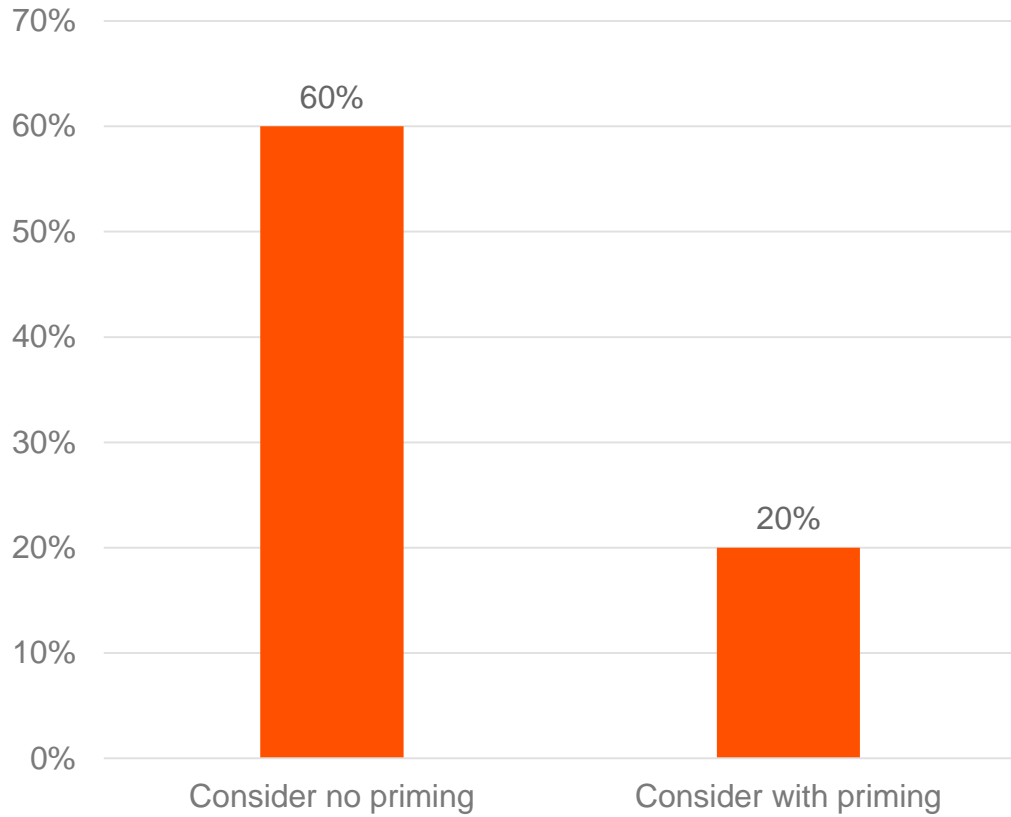
Also me, when the recycling bin is full...



Can you relate to this feeling?

Reflecting real consumer opinions

Vegan cheese



Humour can have other roles in surveys

The different roles of humour

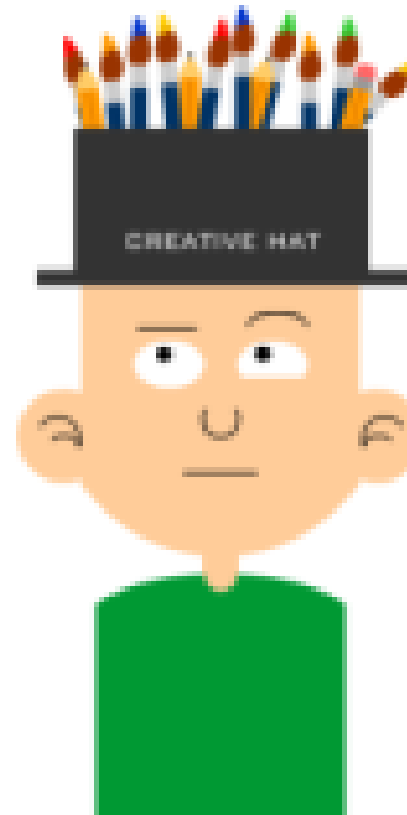
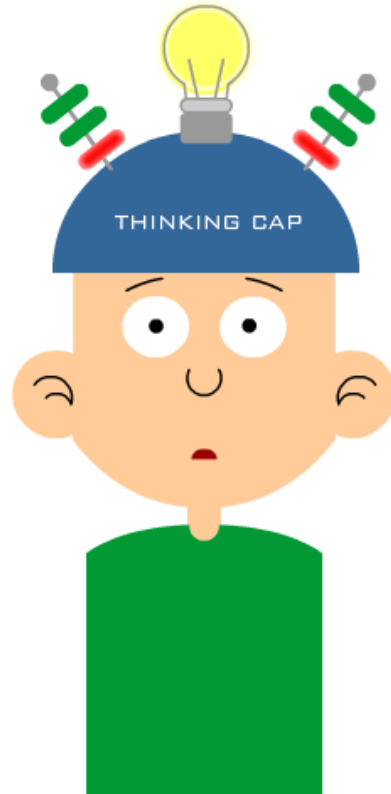
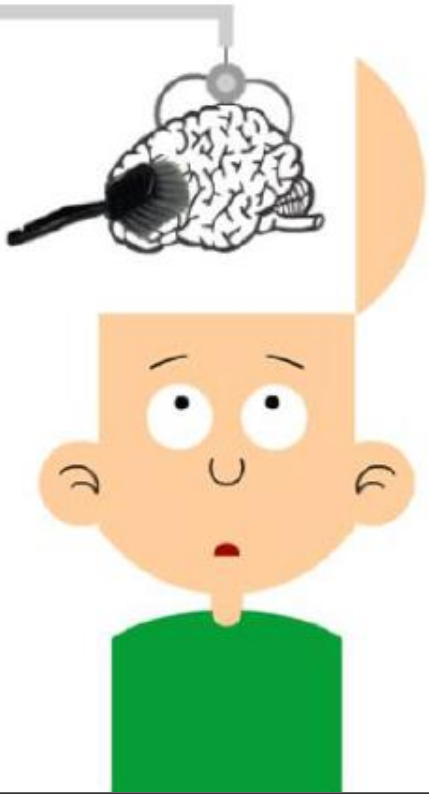
As an engagement tool



If a Queen were coming to tea how long would you need to clean up the house?

The different roles of humour

Helping to reset the attention of respondents



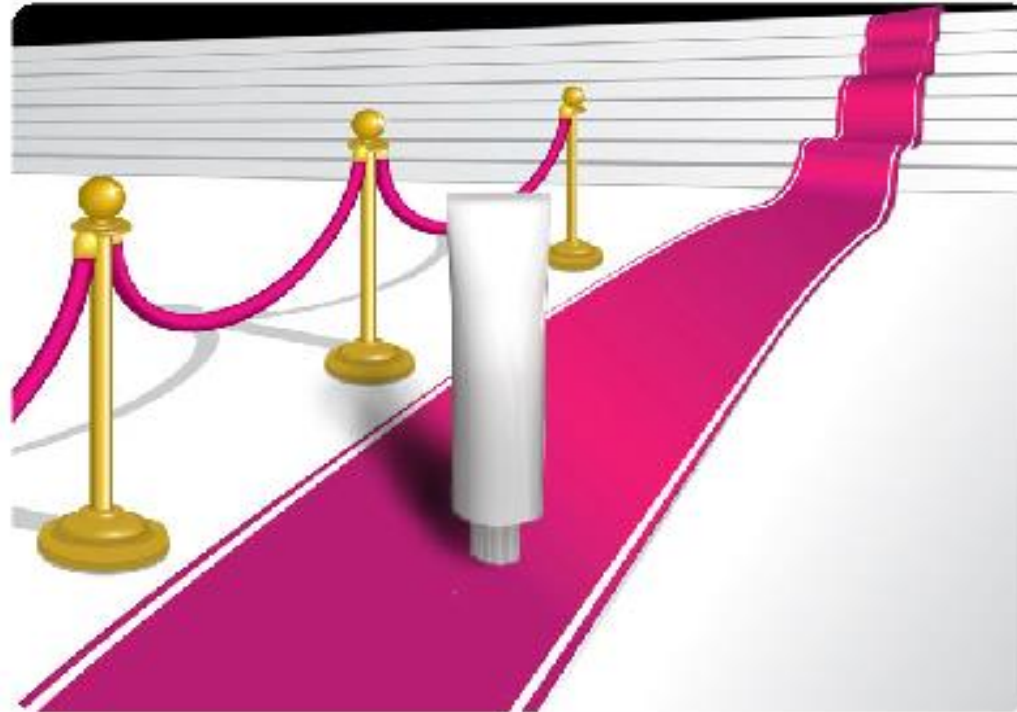
Bob =

20% → 100%
Improvements in
feedback

The different roles of humour

Helping to reframe boring research tasks

We would like you to be a judge in the toothpaste of the year awards



The different roles of humour

Helping to reframe boring research tasks

Next we would like you to take part in a product talent show...



Firstly, we want you to take the part of one of the judges.
Choose which judge you want to be...



The different roles of humour

Taking a serious topic down a notch or two

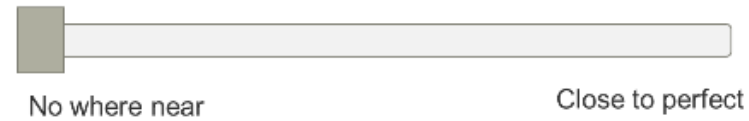


Is your bank perfect?

YES

NO

How close to perfect is your bank?



Perfect Bank



The different roles of humour

Using to unlock creativity

An empty cereal pack



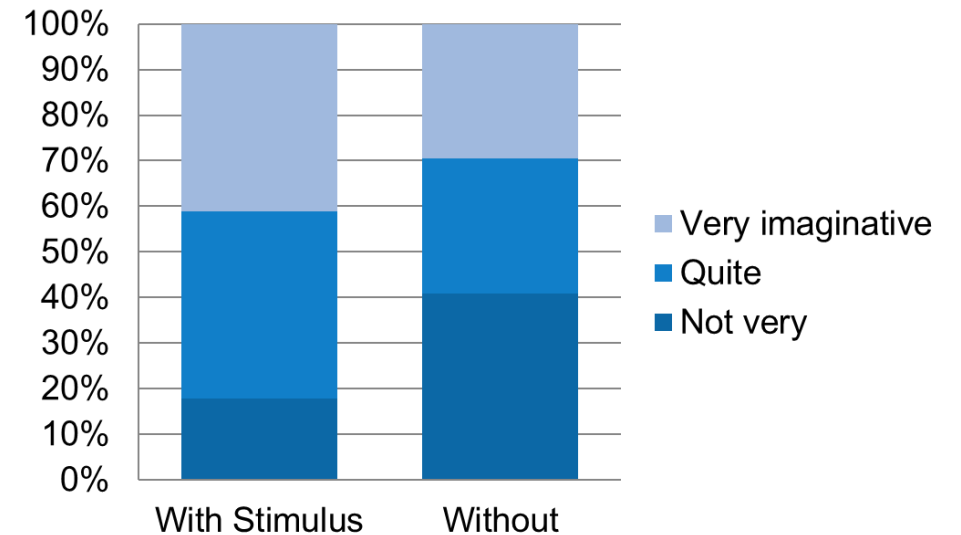
A hat



A pen



A fake moustache



The different roles of humour

Using to trigger emotional responses



What type of foods do you hate to eat?

**Twice as many
foods mentioned**

The different roles of humour

To engage respondents in the brief you are tasking them with

This survey is all about NOODLES!



1/8

We want to find out about real life experience of buying and consuming noodles

Next



What type of noodles you really like to eat?

Next



The Hardcore Way To Eat Instant Noodles

- 1. Boil Water**
- 2. Eat Block Of Noodles**
- 3. Drink Boiling Water.**

How do you like to eat them?

Next



How often do you eat them?

Next



We want to hear about about your bad as well as good experiences

Next

0%



These are some things people have confessed to us about noodles, which are you prepared to admit to?

Confessions of noodle eaters...

"I sometime don't eat a proper meals, I just have a cup of instant noodles instead"

4/9



That's not like me




That is a bit like me



I admit that is a lot like me

0%




Guess the brand
We are going to show you some noodle packages want you to try and guess which brands of

Continue >

0%

Guess which brand of noodles this is?



mystery noodles brand 2

Supermi	Sedaap	Pop mie	Sarimi	Indomie	ABC
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Correct

Advice on How to best use humour?

You can hardly go wrong using furry cuddly animals in a survey



Sorry it was me that peed



"Sometimes I hire someone to watch my kids so I can do nothing."

Use them to softly convey messages that if delivered without the humour could be perhaps be interpreted by some respondents as offensive



Some people answering surveys can feel the need to put on a bit of a show about their lives and pretend to be someone they are not.

Continue »

It does not have to be really funny, making people smile can be just as effective...



Like any advertising message...

Provoking surprise & delight → triggers better attention





Common questions

Does everyone respond to humour



May require a bit of cultural adaption

	
What I ate for breakfast	How I travelled to work
	
What I did after work	My last journey

but in this survey we are interested in people's REAL lives.

	
我早餐吃什么	我使用什么交通工具上班
	
我下班后做什么	我最近的旅行

但在本次调查中，我们关注人们的真实生活。

	
ฉันกินอะไรเป็นอาหารเช้า	ฉันเดินทางไปทำงานอย่างไร
	
สิ่งที่ฉันทำหลังเลิกงาน	การเดินทางครั้งสุดท้ายของฉัน

แต่ในการสำรวจครั้งนี้ เราให้ความสนใจเกี่ยวกับชีวิตที่แท้จริงของผู้คนมากกว่า

May require a bit of cultural adaption



May require a bit of cultural adaption



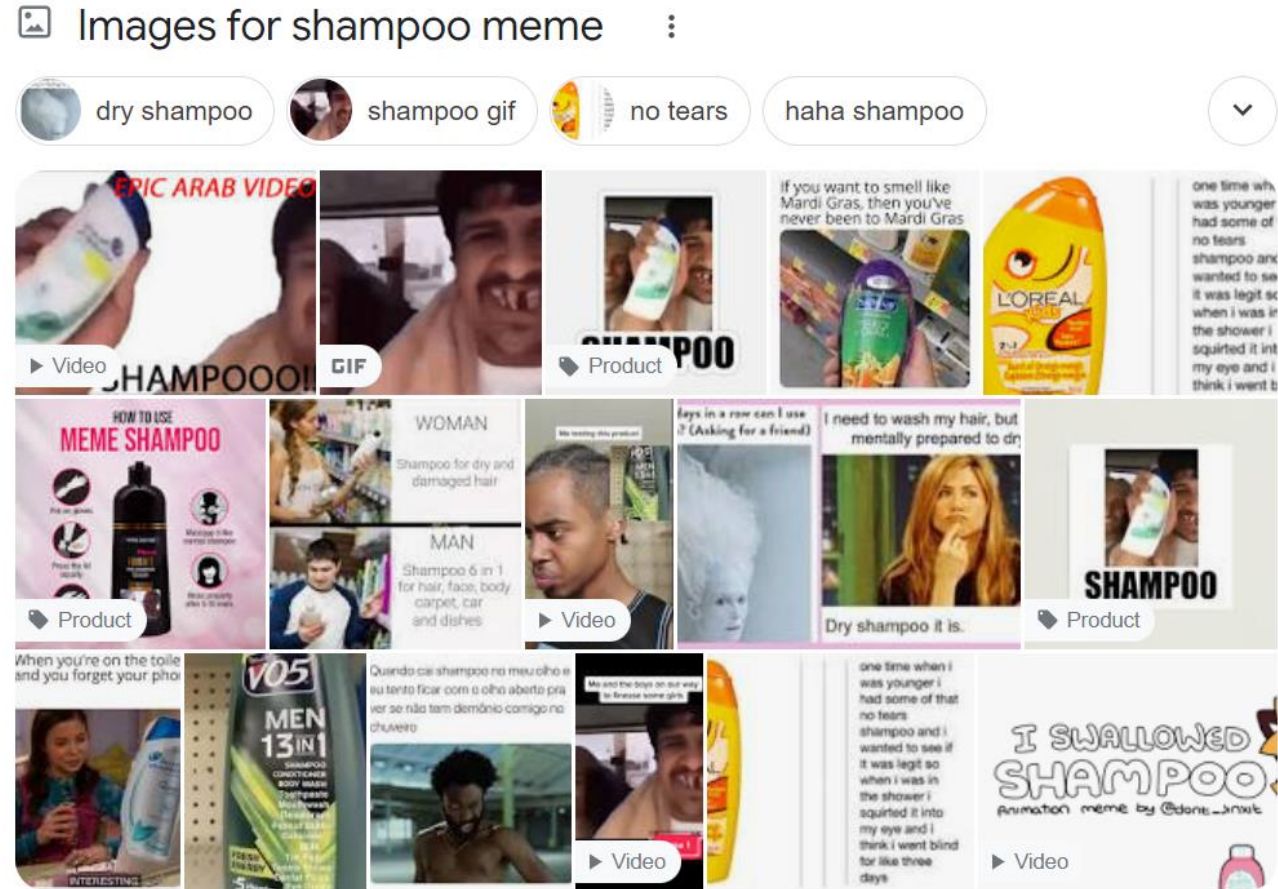
Common questions

I'm not creative so how can I think up ideas

Google image search:

“Topic” Meme

Memes can be a little brutal and involve coded language that not everyone will understand but they can be used for inspiration. A good starting point



Common questions

Does it always work?

Like acting use of humour in surveys requires a degree of subtlety.

Like advertising, copy writing skills are often overlooked as an important element of all survey design

- Humour can miss the mark
- The tone can be out
- Can come across as stupid/facile

...advice when applying would be to try to **keep the humour light**, but you can find room for a **little cheekiness**.



Common questions

Does it create biases

Yes it can – just like everything else



Common questions

When to use and not to use

Clearly suit certain topic areas better than others:

- Recognise that it's a tactical weapon - It has its place
- Use to address cognitive biases in how people respond to certain questions

It's a judgement call

Understanding the psychology

- Humour help respondents feel safer to reveal their own truths
 - Humour signals to respondent that we get that we are all not perfect
 - Acknowledges that its embarrassing to admit to certain things
 - It signals that we are not nuns but co-conspirators
- Humour shakes people out of routine trope responses
 - Challenges them to be more thoughtful and playful in how they answer questions
- Humour transforms surveys into more entertaining experiences
 - Which is linked directly to improved attention