

# Insight2 Case Studies: Toilet Innovation



In our line of work, you can't be bashful, but this project put our intestinal fortitude to the test.

Our client was looking to enter into the toilet category, and called on Insight2 to help them establish a firm understanding before they began their endeavor. Even though toilets were an active part of daily life, the product's usage was so intensely personal and private that our client had much to learn before launching new products.

The objectives of the research were very clear: understand how people *really* use and feel about toilets. We knew our client hadn't approached us to conduct a survey or vague, abstract interviews. They knew the only way to truly understand toilet usage was observational research.

To our knowledge, nothing like this had ever been attempted before. We gathered our team around the whiteboard and started writing down all of the considerations and implications of this revolutionary research:

- How do we get consumers to agree to go to the bathroom on camera?
- Many people don't use the toilet on a schedule, so how do we make sure we're recording quality footage "when nature calls?"
- How do we legally protect ourselves and our client?

*How do we get consumers to agree to go to the bathroom on camera?*

The short answer: we asked. Once we explained the nature of the research, why we were conducting it, and how it would be used, many consumers agreed. The key was gaining each participant's trust. Before any private video was captured, we conducted a research interview with each participant, starting with very general, almost superficial questions. As they became more comfortable, our questions gradually became more personal. By the end of these interviews, the information being freely presented was sometimes shocking!

*Many people don't use the toilet on a schedule, so how do we make sure we're recording quality footage "when nature calls?"*



"Don't mind me...."

This was a big challenge for us. The cameras we traditionally use require a trained operator, and a cameraman standing in a bathroom is no "fly on the wall".

Using our definition of innovation (reapplying existing knowledge, technologies, products in new ways to achieve success), we immediately started looking across categories to find video cameras used to capture other difficult footage. Surfers, base-jumpers, other extreme-sports enthusiasts often like to capture their experiences using unique cameras that were small, durable, easy-to-operate, and designed

for close-ups. We found we could easily mount these cameras on a bathroom wall and leave them for 3-4 days so a consumer could chronicle their experiences as they happened naturally. The result was high-def, very natural footage.

*How do we legally protect ourselves and our client?*

It can be dangerous to record and possess this kind of footage, even with a good contract. We thought extensively about this, but then we had a breakthrough: make the consumer operate the camera. The easy-operation cameras were ideal for this, ensuring that we wouldn't inadvertently capture an unwilling participant (like a motion-activated option might.)

The results of the study were fascinating. The private nature of this category shrouded many of the consumer insights until we were able to see people's real actions. Our client was thoroughly pleased with the unprecedented depth and quality of their understanding, and still have products in their pipeline rooted in our collaboration.

*Does your company have to settle for ineffective research because you don't know how to capture your customers? By seeing your customers' experiences firsthand, you can develop an "empathetic understanding" which is a foundation for better, more successful innovation. Insight2 has yet to find a product category or consumer group they can't capture in action. If you could benefit from seeing your customers firsthand, but don't know how to capture them email us your situation (name, company, and your industry) at [contact@insight2.net](mailto:contact@insight2.net).*

