

Barclays: research into inclusive banking

In 2013, Barclays employed market research agency BDRC Continental to develop a **customer research programme** to give people with disabilities and their carers the opportunity to have their say on banking services, many for the first time.

The accessible online survey developed by Barclays and BDRC was thoroughly tested by both Barclays' employees and customers to ensure the survey was accessible. Customers also had the option to complete the survey over the phone via an assisted interview, by post or face-to-face in their own homes.

Key elements of the survey – which works across mobile, tablet and PC platforms – included fusing BDRC's standard online survey platform, 'Confirmit', with JAWS (Job Access With Speech), a computer screen-reader that allows visually impaired users to read using text-to-speech output or by a refreshable Braille display.

The ingenious design of the survey won BDRC the 2015 Market Research Society Award for Best Online Data Collection. "That was one of the best online surveys I've ever done," said one person who completed the survey. "As a visually impaired Mac user, everything was clear – a really nice piece of programming."

A carer of a person with visual impairment added: "I think Barclays have done their best to make a largely automated banking service as accessible as possible to disabled people."

Other programmes have been launched as a result of the survey, including a sign language initiative. The survey had flagged up that people with hearing impairments were consistently less satisfied than other disability groups.

The survey, which was completed by more than 300 users, including both customers and employees, also identified a lack of awareness within the bank of the accessibility services it offered. As a result, Barclays has developed initiatives to close this knowledge gap.

Barclays continue to re-run the survey on an annual basis in partnership with BDRC to collect the views and opinions of customers with disabilities. The insights they collect inform the ongoing accessibility strategy and priorities of the bank and help the bank to understand the impact their efforts are having on customers with disabilities.

What Barclays learned from developing a customer research programme:

- Ensure the research firm understands that accessibility is vital
- Don't make assumptions about the accessibility of the survey – survey platforms are not always as accessible as they appear
- Use employees to test and fine tune the survey before it is launched – learning directly from disabled people is key
- Develop alternative means for people to complete the survey, such as doing it over the telephone, in case a person cannot do it online

Learning directly from disabled people: A toolkit for global business

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