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research

**Research Director – Qual
Briefing pack**

June 2022



An introduction to M·E·L Research

M·E·L Research is a boutique social research agency, with expertise in research, evaluation and behavioural insights. With over 35 years' experience in working for the UK's public services, we have a very strong focus on what we want to achieve as a business. Fundamental to how we do this, is by having a clear sense of purpose, vision, mission, all underpinned by a strong set of values and behaviours.

- **Our cause/purpose:** We want to create a better future where everybody has a voice, can achieve their potential, and live a fulfilled life. Come and join us on this journey.
- **Our vision:** is to make a positive difference to organisations, employees, customers, and wider society. This forms the 'bedrock' and 'cornerstone' of our purpose. It is why we do the work we do.
- **Our mission:** Our mission is to empower our team to make a positive difference, using their passion and skills in listening and understanding people to provide actionable insight that helps our customers deliver better (public) services.
- **Values and Behaviours:** We are a values driven organisation with a social, ethical, and environmental conscience. We expect all our employees to live and breathe our values and behaviours.



Putting People First

We care, support and show empathy to our colleagues treating everybody with respect, honesty and dignity, standing together as one team to make a difference to peoples lives.



Customer Focused

We always go the extra mile and everything that we do shows we care deeply about our customers.



Curious and Passionate

"I am only passionately curious" – Einstein. We are inquisitive thinkers always exploring, investigating, expanding our knowledge and learning. The closer you look the more you see.



Professional Integrity

We always do the right thing

Our ways of working are to **measure, evaluate** and **learn**. We **measure** views and opinions; we **evaluate** what they are telling us about how well a client, project or service is performing; and we help clients **learn** how improvements or changes can be made.

We work with a wide range of public services clients, including social housing providers, health agencies, local authorities, charities, and voluntary sector organisations, as well as central government departments.

Some of our recent clients include:



Why join us?

As a result of a really successful period of growth, we are looking to strengthen our research and evaluation team by appointing a bright, curious, strategic **Research Director**, with a strong focus on **qualitative research** to lead the development of our Qualitative Research team.

You may be a social researcher/Research Director already or currently operating in a commercial setting and looking to transition to public/third sector research. Most important is your passion and motivation for being a researcher who cares about research that has a social purpose and feels a strong connection and alignment to our company's purpose, vision and values.

We currently have a growing qualitative research team (an Associate Director and a Senior Research Executive) and we are looking for someone to take the team forwards in to the future and develop our qualitative offering, particularly around online research methods and approaches. Ideally you will have developed accounts previously and will be able to bring some of those existing connections with you to help grow this area of business. This role is therefore for someone looking to grow and develop a team and new processes over a period of time. We anticipate the successful candidate joining our Senior Management Team and we will support you to take the team in an agreed direction.

You must have excellent bid/proposal writing and leadership capabilities and a track record in delivering a portfolio of qualitative research. You are someone who can bring people on a journey with you.

Given the current size of our team, ideally you will have some experience of delivering mixed methods projects, and therefore a good grounding in quantitative research. Having drive, determination and a collaborative style is extremely important, as is someone who positively displays our core values, feels aligned to our purpose, vision and mission and has the ability to inspire those around them.

Although project delivery will be involved, the role will focus more on building and fostering relationships that help drive our qualitative research team forwards, as well as responding to ITTs that come through from existing sources (such as procurement portals, tender subscriptions and our direct marketing activities). We see 60% of your time will be proposal, bid development and pitching (responding) and 40% of your time will be overseeing or delivering projects.

Our History: Formed in 1985, M·E·L has grown steadily to a core in-house team of over 25 research and evaluation staff, plus over 80 field (call centre and external social researchers) and support staff. We have exciting ambitions to grow over the coming years, developing our research and insights offering and also our evaluation services, and embedding our new survey platform solutions, data visualisation tools and quality accreditations. You will therefore be joining a company that is confident and ambitious for the future, with a desire to expand the range of expertise and solutions we bring to clients and most importantly, a company grounded in its social purpose - to make a positive impact and difference to society, to communities and to employees, including our own workforce.

Our Journey: We are experiencing sustained growth but remain grounded and never lose our sense of purpose and values. We 'live and breathe' our purpose and will donate 5% of our annual profits to nominated charities and causes that are dear to our hearts and aligned to our vision from 2021 onwards. We are also a Living Wage accredited employer, a Corporate Patron of the Market Research Benevolent Association and have pledged to be Carbon Neutral by 2026. Our chosen charity for the year is Birmingham Mind.

Benefits

We offer employees a wide range of generous benefits including:

- Remote working and hybrid model options giving flexibility to be based anywhere in the UK.
- Flexible working hours arrangements based around the needs of the employee (such as family commitments/needs/childcare). We are a very family-orientated business and encourage flexible hours and homeworking.
- Stunning Birmingham city centre offices, within a few minutes' walk from all main train stations.
- Free on-site gym and other office-based perks including a golf simulator, rooftop terrace, free social events, and much more! We encourage staff to use public transport (train/tram) which is 2 minutes' walk away from our offices.

- Provision of employer contributions to Royal London personal pension scheme starting from a 3% contribution and rising to 6% (subject to employee contributions that meet the auto enrolment requirements)
- Paid annual leave allowance of 25 days per annum, plus paid public holidays
- Paid birthday leave
- Paid up to 2 charity/volunteering days per year
- Free health cashback medical care scheme and employee benefits scheme
- Eligibility for annual company profit and performance bonus scheme dependent on company performance.

In late 2019, we moved into our amazing city centre location in Birmingham, only a few minutes walk from the main train stations and tram stops. Our head office is within serviced offices on Temple Street, right next to New Street station, Grand Central and Colmore Row. With an art deco theme, on-site gym and weekly social events, our offices are a massive benefit to staff who want to meet up with other team members and work part time from the office. **Click [here](#) to see more info.**

For more on our growing and ambitious research company, please visit melresearch.co.uk and [Linkedin Page](#).

Job description

Post: Research Director - Qual

Job Location: Temple Street, Birmingham city centre (plus homeworking/remote working viable as part of hybrid working solution)

Salary: Competitive - £50 – 60k full-time equivalent (depending on experience) plus profit bonus, pension, and other benefits.

Job Summary

The Research Director will be accountable for building, managing and directing client relationships to grow company revenue and profitability within agreed sectors for the qualitative research team. You will be part of our business development team and will be responding to bid opportunities on open tender, as well as creating possibilities through your existing networks and clients. You will also be required to contribute to activities such as conferences, webinars, workshops, social media and marketing. You will take the lead in developing tailored solutions for our customers that provide powerful insights and evidence to shape policy and service development. Ideally we want someone who can also deliver mixed methods projects, and therefore could potentially support colleagues with quantitative research bids and projects if required.

The day-to-day role would be to:

- Develop our qualitative research offer across our key markets including the third sector and public sector. Experience in key sectors such as health and wellbeing, arts and culture would be ideal, but we are open to sectors that align to our existing client base or fit closely with our purpose.
- Manage a small team of qualitative researchers, including an Associate Director and Senior Researcher.
- Act as Research Director on our portfolio of qualitative research projects, from design, conducting fieldwork, analysing data to reporting/presentation.
- Ensure quality and consistency of all qualitative projects – demonstrating strong strategic thinking and a creativity in bringing insights to life.
- Be confident managing client relationships – advising and supporting clients based on a detailed understanding of their needs and willingness to go above and beyond.
- Provide clients with proposals/quotes and ensure these are costed accurately.
- Write proposals and develop new business opportunities, establishing meaningful relationships with your existing client base to seek out new opportunities.
- Be a subject expert and a go-to person for advice, guidance and thinking on qualitative methods within the company.
- Lead on the development of new qualitative research methods – keeping up to date on new tools and techniques and championing these across the company.

While competence in qualitative research is a given, experience in quantitative research is desirable, as many of our projects are mixed methods.

Duties:

Business development, proposal writing/pitching

- Deliver successful bids to prospective clients and help achieve sales/margin targets across various research and evaluation activities. Identify prospective commissioned research and consultancy opportunities across our key sectors, and write and price tenders; pitch for and win the desired business.
- Identify improvements to our tenders, sales processes and help to bring other staff up to a high standard.
- Identify product/solution improvements and future business development opportunities.
- Pro-actively seeking opportunities for profitable business development/sales within existing, new and emerging markets.
- Responding to client briefs and tenders and preparing proposals in agreed market sectors.
- Ensuring the company achieves its annual business targets in terms of revenue and contribution.
- To develop vertical and horizontal 'cross selling' within key accounts with solutions that add value to the client and help them further their strategic objectives and priorities.

Client research and evaluation, analysis and consultancy services

- Lead on a range of research projects across our portfolio, working closely with the research/client service support team.
- Develop research programmes that are designed with the end outcomes in mind and optimise delivery. Help to embed research insights to shape client services and policy via presentations and workshops.
- Ensure excellent standards of service, and personal attention to clients' needs. To create, build, manage client relationships to strengthen brand loyalty.
- Ensure a clear knowledge and understanding of projects amongst research and operational teams.
- To help coach other members of the team to ensure projects are delivered to high standards, meeting the client's research objectives.
- Compliance with the company's Quality Management System (QMS) and procedures/policies at all times and work in full awareness and adherence to MRS guidelines and GDPR.

Publicity, communications, and promotional activity

- Attend/present at conferences and networking events to promote M·E·L Research and identify opportunities for future work/collaboration.

General duties

- Undertake any other duties that may be needed by the company consistent with the postholder's overall duties, skills, and abilities.

Person specification

This person specification details the experience, knowledge, skills, ability, training, education, and qualifications that are considered to be essential or desirable to fulfilling the requirements of this post. Please demonstrate in your application, using appropriate examples where possible, that you have the skills and experience to meet the following criteria for the post. Your ability to meet the criteria will be assessed using a number of methods including the application form, interview, and where applicable presentation or work-based tests.

Essential

- Customer focused, positive, 'can do' individual who is passionate about qualitative research and feels aligned / connected to our purpose, vision and values.
- Excellent communication skills that inspire confidence and the ability to foster strong client relationships that lead to repeat business and client recommendations.
- Experience managing/developing key accounts.
- Significant research/consultancy experience within their chosen specialism.
- Excellent report writing, insight analysis, influencing and presentation skills.
- The ability to paint a clear and succinct insight story, that informs business decisions and makes a direct and positive impact for our clients.
- The ability to win new business through proposals and pitches.
- Commercially smart, generating creative solutions focused for our clients.

- The ability to work effectively with the wider senior management team, peers and colleagues.
- Excellent client management and communication skills (written, verbal and presentational).
- Excellent organisational and operational project management skills, and ability to plan and deliver work accurately and on time.
- Ability to interpret a client brief and prepare compliant research proposals and tailored solutions.
- Operational knowledge of qualitative research tools, particularly online tools and solutions
- Ability to cost a project and price according to desired margins
- Excellent MS office skills, including Word, PowerPoint and Excel knowledge.
- Good team player but also ability to take responsibility for projects and work independently.
- Ability to motivate and inspire the staff you line manage to help them progress and achieve their potentials.
- Experience of delivering mixed methods research projects.

Desirable

- Experience working on projects for public service organisations or similar sectors to M·E·L e.g., government departments, transport, physical activity, culture, local authorities, regulators, housing associations, police, fire, public health or NHS.
- Experience of delivering quantitative research projects.
- Understanding of behavioural insight and evaluation theories.
- Full UK driving license and access to own car.

To apply for the role, please visit the job specification on our website and download the online application form (<https://melresearch.co.uk/careers>). **Thank you for your interest in M·E·L Research.**



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