November 2026

Explorer/Savanta

Explorer RESEARCH

Role Specification:
Qualitative Research Director

Classified: Private

Location: Remote/Toronto Area

Business Area: Explorer / Research

Reports to: VP+

About the Role:

Qualitative Research Director | Explorer | Toronto

This position sits within the Explorer team, focusing on delivering high-quality insights and supporting senior members of the team.

Responsible for managing client accounts, driving revenue growth, ensuring project quality, and overseeing mid-junior team members. As a Director, you aim to improve efficiency, enhance deliverables, embed our tech-first approach and continually boost profitability.

You will be an experienced moderator with significant experience leading interviews, focus groups and other qualitative methodologies. As a Research Director, you will apply your research knowledge, expertise and analytical skills to support clients through hands-on delivery of high-quality qualitative-only and qual-quant mixed research projects.

There is also a high level of responsibility for delivering high-quality custom research through first-class project-management, delegation, and progression of day-to-day activity while ensuring clients are kept informed and that any project issues are swiftly resolved.

A key part of this role is turning research findings into compelling reports and stories that bring insights to life and help clients make informed decisions. You'll guide and support the team to deliver clear, engaging outputs with a strong narrative. You'll also build and manage strong client relationships, acting as a trusted partner and ensuring their needs are understood and met.

You will lead a team that strives to make efficiencies, whilst improving the quality of deliverables and looks to increase profitability on an ongoing basis.

Qualitative Research Focus:

- In-depth knowledge of qualitative research methods (and an understanding of quantitative approaches), the process and application of all techniques to be able to lead client initiatives.
- Advise clients on qualitative strategy and ensure insights are actionable and commercially relevant.
- Champion innovation in qualitative techniques, including digital and tech-enabled approaches.
- Mentor and train team members to build qualitative expertise and uphold high standards in project delivery.

Research Design & Project Management:

- Lead the design and delivery of high-quality qualitative research projects using a range of methods (e.g., focus groups, interviews, shop-a-longs, ethnography) both in person and online, ensuring client satisfaction and delivered to required project margins.
- Ability to develop and manage key client accounts and develop an in-depth understanding of clients' businesses and the problems with which we need to help them
- Ability to set out a vision and objectives for projects to more junior staff and checks these have been met.
- Review the outputs of others to ensure quality and application of insight being linked to commercial outcomes for the client.
- Work with and deliver to senior stakeholder audiences, and showing skills needed to be able to run meetings and presentations with C-Suite.

- Act as the point of sign-off when it comes to presentations, including clear summaries, recommendations and commercial application of our work, always being an example of best practice.
- Oversee multiple projects simultaneously while maintaining high-quality standards.

Client Account Management & Commercial:

- Build strong client relationships through responsiveness and proactive communication.
- Develop and manage client accounts, developing an in-depth understanding of clients' businesses, leading to successful relationships and growth.
- Be an active part in any pitch team to senior audiences and C-suite executives.

People & Team:

- As team lead, develop a high performing team, fostering a culture of continuous innovation, client obsession and service excellence.
- Develop / train staff and is an example of best practice for client and project management processes, as well as delivery.
- Create staff progression plans that provide appropriate responsibility and empowerment. Include responsibility for managing client accounts and achieving the required margins on their projects.
- Identify & deal effectively with underperformance among junior & mid-level staff, implementing and running Performance Improvement Plans in a timely manner.
- Ability to support and implement best practice within the team in terms of processes, usage.
- Help establish clear accountability for research delivery across accounts and any sub-sectors or audiences. Work actively with the team to manage delivery performance, maintain strong performance management and ensure high-quality delivery across the team.
- Forges strong relationships with peers to ensure best practice and shared learnings and optimizing our proposition for winning new business and delivering inspiring outputs (i.e. pitches and proposals).
- Play a key role to drive adoption of tech platforms/solutions and nurture a team skilled in product, data and tech-driven usage.

Personal Development / Profile at Explorer:

- Embodies company values and meets performance expectations.
- Actively own personal development goals and work closely with managers to achieve them.
- Contribute positively beyond core responsibilities through initiatives like Career Management.
- Active member of the team and engages in presentations/ discussions in knowledge sharing meetings.
- Raises the profile of the company through writing marketing content for publication, and posting/ sharing content on LinkedIn, social media, etc.

About You:

As a Qualitative Research Director, you will have a strong working knowledge of the research lifecycle. You will bring a clear point of view on different research and insight techniques.

As a Director, you will look beyond your own responsibilities to the wider team and business, identifying ways to enhance and improve both. You will lead with solutions rather than

problems and demonstrate the hands-on willingness to do whatever is required that earns respect across senior leadership.

As a senior team member, you are responsible for delivering all aspects of the core role and associated targets, acting as a trusted advisor to colleagues and clients alike, being part of a high performing culture.

Taking ownership for specific areas & full accountability for a portfolio of client accounts, you will drive growth and improvement, sharing knowledge and best practice across the team.