

Kaitlen Cassell, PhD

Senior Research Director

Highly accomplished social science researcher specializing in Generative AI, tech regulation, and brand insights with 10+ years of experience driving strategic decisions through advanced survey methodologies. Recognized for translating complex research into actionable business intelligence for major technology clients. Advanced through four research levels in less than three years—the fastest progression in team history. Proven track record of building high-performing teams, managing multi-million dollar research portfolios, and delivering exceptional client value that consistently generates referral business.

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Senior Research Director

YouGov, Scientific Research Group

08/2023 - Present

Achievements/Responsibilities

- **Flagship Contract Leadership:** Spearheaded the company's largest-ever contract (\$11M annually), delivering such exceptional value that the client renewed and necessitated building a dedicated team. Initially managed this flagship project alongside 5-8 other large studies, demonstrating leadership excellence that directly fueled company growth.
- **Revenue Generation:** Direct anchor projects exceeding \$8M annually (over 25% of our team's revenue as one of ten directors) while delivering expert insights on complex ad-hoc research in high-value areas, including Generative AI, tech regulation, and product/brand management.
- **Team Leadership & Development:** Led strategic reorganization of a rapidly expanding department, implementing a new team structure to optimize performance during significant growth. Currently lead a high-performing team of 6 and co-lead a team of 15 that consistently attracts internal transfer requests due to our documented success metrics and positive team culture.
- **Strategic Client Partnership:** Cultivate strong, long-term relationships with our largest tech client, ultimately securing lead researcher status for two core client groups. Referral-based work comprises 60% of my team's work, leading my boss to describe me as "the standard against which [our largest client's methodological group] measures research projects."

Research Director

YouGov, Scientific Research Group

04/2022 - 08/2023

Achievements/Responsibilities

- **Proposal Development:** Drove team revenue growth from \$19M (2020) to \$33M (2024) by spearheading the creation of client research proposals that directly linked research design to client goals.
- **Team Growth & Success:** Hired, onboarded, and mentored 5 new team members, accelerating their skill development and project capacity. Provided targeted coaching and mentorship, fostering skill development through stretch assignments and consistent feedback, achieving regular promotions and a 100% retention rate.
- **Strategic Role Adaptability:** Demonstrated role flexibility across varied research projects, seamlessly scaling between strategic oversight and hands-on execution as needed, evolving from tactical implementation to strategic vision development while maintaining quality standards and client satisfaction across all engagement levels.
- **Cross-Functional Leader:** Spearheaded proactive cross-functional communication strategy between team and Operations/Analytics departments, resulting in streamlined project execution, elimination of information silos, and stronger interdepartmental relationships; approach was so successful that team members adopted similar practices, and leadership requested company-wide training program on our approach.

RESEARCH EXPERTISE

Survey Research

Questionnaire design, user experience, quality control, fielding management, analysis, reporting

Research Design

Sample design, experiments, discrete choice models (MaxDiff, conjoint), longitudinal designs

Quantitative Methods

Statistics (regression modeling), survey research, data analysis

Qualitative Methods

In depth interviews, focus groups, thematic analysis

Research Project Management

End-to-end research lifecycle management, from design to research presentation

Content Expertise

Generative AI, tech regulation, social media, political attitudes, brand insights

LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT

Strategic Team Leadership

Talent Development/Mentorship

Client Relationship Building

Project Prioritization

Cross-Functional Collaboration

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Stata (Advanced)

Google Suite (Advanced)

Microsoft Office (Advanced)

Slack (Advanced)

Spanish (Level B2)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Senior Research Manager

YouGov, Scientific Research Group

07/2021 - 04/2022

Achievements/Responsibilities

- **Business Development:** Drove \$7M in revenue growth (\$2M to \$5M, 150% year-over-year increase) through strategic client relationships and referral generation. Established reputation as the preferred research partner for a major tech company, with a majority of new business coming from direct recommendations and repeat engagements.
- **Innovative Client Partnership:** Co-developed a novel "plug-and-play" research framework with a key client, reducing project turnaround time by 50% while maintaining rigorous methodological standards. This collaborative approach established a new benchmark for rapid-response message and video experiment testing that is still widely used.

Research Manager

YouGov, Scientific Research Group

01/2021 - 07/2021

Achievements/Responsibilities

- **End-to-End Project Ownership:** Led all aspects of 25+ cross-national survey projects from design to delivery, consistently meeting tight deadlines while increasing client retention rate, securing \$1.5M in renewed contracts.
- **Advanced Methodology Implementation:** Became team's go-to expert for complex survey projects spanning hard-to-reach populations, experiments, and discrete choice models. Built strong methodological reputation that drove client requests for sophisticated research, generating new projects competitors couldn't deliver.
- **Client Relationship Management:** Transformed project-based engagements into long-term partnerships by exceeding core research objectives ahead of schedule. Became the requested research lead for key accounts through proactive, transparent communication strategies that elevated client satisfaction and ensured stakeholder expectations were met.

Graduate Researcher

Latin American Public Opinion Project

08/2016 - 01/2021

Achievements/Responsibilities

- **Survey Research Experience:** Gained comprehensive survey methodology training through LAPOP Lab's 150,000-interview biennial program. Contributed to quality control processes and developed expertise in best practices spanning design, implementation, and analysis.
- **Research Design:** Supported various stages of research design for LAPOP projects, including questionnaire development, experiment implementation, and data analysis. Participated in the successful publication process, learning end-to-end research methodology in cross-national contexts.

Doctoral Researcher

Vanderbilt University

01/2016 - 12/2020

Achievements/Responsibilities

- **Academic Research:** Conducted methodologically rigorous public opinion, communication, and social media research, publishing entire dissertation in top-tier peer-reviewed journals within a year of graduation. Secured multiple grants and presented research findings at conferences.
- **Fieldwork:** Conducted qualitative research in Mexico and Costa Rica during presidential elections, contextualizing quantitative survey results through semi-structured interviews and focus group data.
- **Research Management:** Successfully managed undergraduate research assistants utilizing grant funds, ensuring timely completion and budget compliance. Achieved a 75% coding accuracy rate amongst assistants.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy

Vanderbilt University

Political Science

Master of Arts

Vanderbilt University

Political Science

Bachelor of Arts

The University of Portland

Political Science; Minor in Spanish

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed

Reducing Item Non-Response to Vote Choice Questions: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Mexico [↗](#)

Author(s)

With Mollie J. Cohen

2023

Public Opinion Quarterly

Research Report

Women's Uncertainty About Their Economic Opportunities After the Overturning of Roe v. Wade [↗](#)

2023

YouGov Politics & Current Affairs report

Peer Reviewed

The Comparative Effectiveness of Populist Rhetoric in Generating Online Engagement [↗](#)

2021

Electoral Studies

Peer Reviewed

When 'Following' the Leader Inspires Action: Individuals' Receptivity to Discursive Frame Elements on Social Media [↗](#)

2020

Political Communication

Topical Brief

Representation in the Americas: Perceptions of External Efficacy in the 2018 AmericasBarometer [↗](#)

2020

AmericasBarometer Insights Series

Peer Reviewed

Support for Coups in the Americas: Mass Norms and Democratization [↗](#)

Author(s)

Kaitlen Cassell, John Booth, and Mitch Seligson

2018

Latin American Politics and Society