

The Basics of Qualitative Research

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Qualitative Research typically includes:

- Individual Interviews
- Focus Group Research
- Participant Observation and User Studies

Qualitative research collects:

- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Behavior
- Brand Images
- Habit
- Preference
- Expectations

Focus Group Research is really ...

- A Group Interview
- Conducted at a Central Research Location
- And Includes
 - Recruitment
 - Conference Rooms
 - Microphones
 - 2-way Mirror
 - Viewing Room
 - Support Staff

Give and Take Group Discussion covers

- Pre-Planned Specific Questions
- Open-ended probes and follow ups
- Suggestions from participants

Usually no fewer than 6 groups in 2-3 cities

Usually recruit 12 for 8-10 customers to participate

Can also conduct mini-groups with fewer participants (Recruit 8 to get 4-6 to show)

Focus Group Research Design Flow Steps Include:

- Target audience specified
- Screening questionnaire to select qualified participants to come to focus group facility or other central location
- Recruitment of target and marketing questions and hypotheses identified from all stakeholders (exec team, marketing, sales, project managers, etc)
- Background questionnaire developed to collect information which need not be discussed
- Discussion guide developed to summarize information to be covered
- Written exercises and stimulus materials such as concepts developed for use at focus group meetings.
- Focus group interviews conducted at central facility to encourage participant candor and insight and exchange of ideas within the group
- Analysis and writing of report and recommendations
- Report presentation
- Recommendations for strategy and implementation

Qualitative Research is Effective for...

- New product or service development
- Naming decision or ideas
- Brand or competitor images
- Advertising input
- New opportunities
- Repositioning strategy
- Target customer understanding
- Trend awareness
- Staying close to customers
- Marketing decisions
- Buying or decision process

Scheduling: First contact to final presentation is typically four weeks

Costs can be managed to fit your budget. Costs typically include:

- Research facility
- Recruitment fees
- Rent
- Video
- Food
- Host/hostess
- Supplies
- Travel and Out-of-pocket
- Customer respondents cooperative fees are paid directly to participants
- Marketing consultant and moderation
- Project management
- Planning
- Discussion guide
- Interviews
- Analysis
- Report development
- Presentation
- Project Fees vary according to customers, recruitment, and geography
- Usually ½ of project costs are paid up front

Individual interview research project design flow:

- Target audience specified
- Screening questionnaire to select qualified participant to schedule in person office visit by US Marketing Services or phone call with US Marketing Services
- Recruitment of target and marketing questions and hypotheses identified from all stakeholders (exec team, marketing, sales, project managers, etc)
- Background questionnaire developed to collect information which need not be discussed
- Discussion guide developed to summarize information to be covered
- Written exercises and stimulus materials such as concepts are designed and sent via email or participant is directed to a website to respond and discuss
- Interview conducted one by one to encourage in-depth disclosure , focus on one industry or one set of issues
- Focus group interviews conducted at central facility to encourage participant candor and insight and exchange of ideas within the group
- Analysis and writing of report and recommendations
- Report presentation
- Recommendations for strategy and implementation

One-on-one in-depth interviews can be conducted in person or by phone. An online component is often used to gather basic information that does not require discussion.

Qualitative research design selection

Choosing between one-on-one interviews vs. focus groups

The Trade-Offs:

- One-on-one is preferable for in-depth attitude and data collection with each participating respondent
- Focus groups are preferable when discussion and/or debate among the participating respondents will be valuable, and uncover important new topics

A research design that includes both focus groups and individual one-on-one interviews allows clients to:

- Observe focus groups in back room and hear/understand customer attitudes and beliefs
- Utilize one-on-ones to cover more geography, or more decision-maker job titles, via phone interviews for a broader profile of participants

Participation and User Studies

This research design usually focuses on natural settings where customers or prospects can be observed selecting or using the product or service.

Common examples include:

- Observations of shopping
- Consuming food or beverage
- Trying or using technical products

The best form of this research includes our trained observations along with the participants “running commentary” or “self-talk” as they think out loud about the experience with the product.

There is no ONE answer. We customize for you.