In−depth interviews (In−depth interviews)
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1 Introduction

An in−depth interview is an open−ended, discovery−oriented method that is well suited for describing both program processes and outcomes from the perspective of the target audience or key stakeholder. An in−depth interview is a conversation with an individual conducted by trained staff. The goal of the interview is to deeply explore the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives.

In−depth interviews can be used to obtain preliminary information that can be used to develop more concrete quantitative surveys.

2 Methodology

In essence, in−depth interviews involve not only asking questions, but the systematic recording and documenting of responses coupled with intense probing for deeper meaning and understanding of the responses. Thus, in−depth interviewing often requires repeated interview sessions with the target audience under study. Unlike focus group interviews, in−depth interviews occur with one individual at a time, or sometimes pairs of respondents, to provide a more involving experience.

3 Process

There are key characteristics that differentiate an in−depth, qualitative research interview from a regular interview. Some key characteristics of in−depth interviews include:

• Open−ended Questions. Questions should be worded so that respondents cannot simply answer yes or no, but must expound on the topic.
• Semi−structured Format. Although you should have some pre−planned questions to ask during the interview, you must also allow questions to flow naturally, based on information provided by the respondent. You should not insist upon asking specific questions in a specific order. In fact, the flow of the conversation dictates the questions asked and those omitted, as well as the order of the questions.
• Seek understanding and interpretation. You should try to interpret what you are hearing, as well as seek clarity and a deeper understanding from the respondent throughout the interview.
• Conversational. You should be conversational, but your role is primarily that of a listener. There should be smooth transitions from one topic to the next.
• Recording responses. The responses are recorded, typically with audiotape and written notes (i.e., field notes)
• Record observations. You observe and record non−verbal behaviours on the field notes as they occur.
• Record reflections. You record your views and feelings immediately after the interview as well.

Review

Data obtained via in−depth interviews usually implies a smaller sample. As a result, the results may not generalize to people who were not interviewed. In−depth interviews can help:

• To provide a history of behavior
In-depth interviews (In-depth interviews)

- To highlight individual versus group concerns: Topics that may not arise in a group situation can be addressed in individual interviews.
- To reveal divergent experiences and “outlier” attitudes
- To provide a shortcut to community norms: Interviewing key community leaders can give a fast overview of a community and its needs and concerns.
- To develop other research tools: Results from an interview can be used to generate focus group questions or help form questions for a survey.

References

http://goodquestions.ucsf.edu/section3/3d_indepth.html

http://www.pra.ca/resources/indepth.pdf

http://www.researchsolutions.co.nz/in_depth_interviews.htm