

# Research Tools: Interview Guide



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**Document version: v1**

**Issue date: 24/6/24**

# Interview Guide

## Overview

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method. Unlike a structured interview, which follows a rigid set of predetermined questions, a semi-structured interview allows for flexibility to probe for greater meaning and uncover insights.

## Qualitative Research Techniques

Semi-structured interviews are designed to take a deep dive into understanding the root cause of problems, the population impacted most and the desired outcomes. Interviews are additionally useful for identifying and capturing insights into issues that relate to current solutions, processes and systems.


In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer prepares questions ahead of time but can adjust their order, skip redundant ones, or create new questions during the interview based on the interviewee's responses. This approach allows the interviewee to probe for further detail and uncover insights. Semi-structured interviews are typically open-ended, allowing for exploration and discovery while still enabling comparisons between different participants.

## Key Considerations when framing and designing your question set.


- As part of this process, you will need to identify and decide who is most important to talk to first. This is addressed as part of **the Stakeholder Mapping and Prioritisation** activity.
- Clearly identify **why you are undertaking the interview**. What is the purpose? what information or 'observed needs' do you need to validate? What job-to-be-done, or aspect of the job do you need to understand more clearly?
- **Carefully consider your opening question**. This needs to be well-articulated and compelling, as we want them to open up and share their experiences.
- **When preparing your exploratory question set**, consider the sequence of the questions.
- **Use the same question set for each customer segment for consistency**. This is to enable you to compare answers and start identifying patterns as they emerge in their various responses.

- **Consider the language you use when asking questions** - What you say and how you say it – making it appropriate to who you are talking to whether they are a consumer, distributor or manufacturer or in relation to the sector they are in.
- **Establish and build a rapport with your interviewee.** Make the person being interviewed feel at ease and open enough to talk and not become pressurised, defensive, or concerned about what they are saying during conversation. Your ability to get useful information from your interviews also will hinge on your ability to establish a good rapport.

Note: Don't forget to add your interview data responses and / or analysis to your Need Statement as 'evidence'.




## Interview Question Set




### Who?

*Who do you need to talk to?  
What customer segment / stakeholder group is this question-set for?*



### Why?

*What information are you looking for?  
What are your known-unknowns?*



### Top Tips

- Probe for meaning
- Capture the language that your stakeholders use.
- You will need a different question set for the various stakeholders segments you will be interviewing.

#### Problem Questions

*Explore if there is a Problem/ Challenge with the current solution.  
Start with an open question.*

#### Situation Questions

- Can you elaborate on how that works?
- Probe for emotional aspects that cause fear, worry, frustration, etc.
- Who is affected directly and indirectly? - why?

#### Implication Questions

- What are the consequences and the impact of this issue?
- Who is most affected and why?

#### Catch-all Questions

- What would be a great outcome?
- How would you measure a great outcome?

#### Additional Questions

- Are there any other similar or better practices / solution(s) you are aware of?

Title: **Interview Question Set Template**

## External Resources:

A HBR article was published on '**Better Brainstorming (hbr.org)**' - focusses on unlocking better answers, by asking better questions for breakthrough insights.

A HBR article also worth reading as a guide on asking '**The art of asking smarter questions**' May-June 2023.