



OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PRIMARY RESEARCH OPTIONS

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Primary Research Options

After secondary research is conducted, typically a series of more specific questions begin to develop that can only be answered by talking directly with companies that are potential customers for the new business.

The first step in the process is to determine best methodology. An evaluation of the options follows:

1. Phone Surveys

- advantages:
 - easy to find phone numbers
 - participation rate is typically higher
 - there's the opportunity to probe for more information
- disadvantages:
 - more expensive and time consuming
 - may not get enough responses for data to be statistically significant
 - may need incentive to attract participants

2. Online Surveys

- advantages:
 - potential of reaching more participants
 - less expensive and quicker
- disadvantages:
 - hard to develop a legal and thorough email database for conducting the survey
 - lower participation rates
 - more difficult to probe the participants for clarifications on answers – need to rely on open-ended questions that are often skipped or answered without much thought.
 - may not get enough responses for data to be statistically significant
 - may need incentive to attract participants

3. In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

- advantages:
 - improved likelihood of reaching participants
 - opportunity to probe for more information
 - less expensive than either phone or online survey
- disadvantages:
 - small number of participants
 - not enough responses for data to be statistically significant
 - may need incentive to attract participant.

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Research Options Evaluation Questions

1. Budget

- If a low-budget solution is required, an online survey or IDIs are best
- If budget is not a primary concern, a phone survey offers the opportunity of making enough calls to realize a statistically significant response rate, as well as the opportunity to probe
- Factors impacting the budget:
 - Number of questions
 - Size of the contact database and targeted number of responses
 - Whether the results will be reported as a “Topline” summary (i.e. just the raw data of how respondents answered the questions), or if there is a need to cross-tabulate the answers based on how a group of the respondents answered a particular question or questions
 - The need for a final report, providing analysis, insights, and recommendations.

2. Contact Database

- If an email database with a large number of contact names that were “legally” acquired is available, an online survey is a preferred choice
- If only a phone database or a limited number of contacts are available, IDIs are recommended

3. Timing

- If quick answers are preferred, an online survey or IDIs are best
- If possible to continue the research until the a certain number of responses are reached, a phone survey should be considered

4. Need for In-Depth Information

- If the need to probe for the reasons why questions are answered a particular way is important, IDIs or a phone survey are the best options.

5. Statistical Significance

- If it is important to have a certain confidence level that the information accurately represents a broader audience, online or phone surveys are the only choices that provide that opportunity