



“Deep Dive” Research Tips

By Linda Rink, President, RINK Consulting. October 2024

Mention “market research” and most people think of surveys. But there are times when you need a “deep dive” via **qualitative** research.

Qualitative research means talking with a small sample of people to gain in-depth understandings of their behavior, motivations, and attitudes. Because of the small number of respondents, the results are not statistically significant, but they can provide valuable insights that a survey can’t deliver.

Sometimes a new client comes to me with a need for qualitative research and wants to do a focus group, assuming that one will suffice. I then have to tell them that one group can be as bad as none*, and that we need to rethink the research plan.

(Having more than one focus group mitigates the effect of one or two people with strong personalities influencing the rest of the group, as well as allowing for a more reasonable number of participants.)*



This inevitably leads to a discussion about “how many people do we need to talk to?”

The answer is: Talk to enough people to uncover a variety of diverse opinions, and then see if there are common threads that emerge from the discussions. Once you start to hear the same input from multiple respondents, you can begin to formulate some directional theories and/or conclusions.

In order to validate these findings, qualitative research is often followed up by quantitative research with a larger sample size.

I’ll talk about sample size for quantitative surveys in my next “RINK ink.”

Need help with your research needs? Contact me at lrink@LindaRink.com.