

sharp
insights



Qualitative or Quantitative?

**Choosing the right
research method for
your business need**

insitas[®]

authoritative, insightful & attentive

Station Court, High Road, Cookham, Berkshire SL6 9JF

T: +44 (0)1628 523 523

E: enquire@insitas.com

www.insitas.com

Research can really help your business, but the type of research you choose depends on what you want and need from it.

Here are some guidelines to help find the best research method for your business need.

Choose Qualitative

➤ Where to start

- **Explore** ideas, views and experiences
- **Generate hypotheses**, identify different views/answers
- Not looking to make an evidence-based business decision

➤ Some example research objectives

EXPLORE

- **Explore** in detail attitudes, needs, behaviours and/or experiences
- Uncover unmet needs (from which to develop potential product ideas)
- Translate **features** into meaningful customer **benefits**
- Get initial feedback on NPD ideas

➤ What do you want to achieve?

- **Directional** insights
- See through the eyes of your target audience
- Understand feelings, impressions and viewpoints
- Make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people give to them
- Inform a quant study, e.g. obtain consumer language and comprehensive answer lists (to subsequently ask the right questions accurately and unambiguously)

Choose Quantitative

- Know **clearly** in advance what to measure and what the answers could be
- **Test hypotheses**/quantify insights (e.g. from qualitative research)
- Need to make **evidence based** business decision (e.g. go/no go)

QUANTIFY

- **Measure performance** of NPD ideas, product or pack change against an action standard
- Measure performance of product vs. competitor for communication claims
- Create consumer/market/needs **segmentations**
- Category visioning / **decision hierarchy**
- Explore usage and attitude with **actionable output** (e.g. identify need gaps, understand brand strengths/weaknesses)
- **Robust, actionable** insights
- **Quantification** e.g. size of need, impact of price rise on purchase intent, who actually is the target market, how the product is used, key barriers
- A degree of **statistical confidence**
- Results that can be applied to the whole 'population' at a given level of statistical confidence (determined by the sample size)

➤ Typical sample size & composition

- 3-6 focus groups (**24-48 respondents**)
- Typically each group is focused on one "population" (e.g. young men or regular drinkers of brand X)

➤ Strengths

- **Immersion in a topic:** Gives time to dig deep (e.g. typically 2hrs vs. 20 mins. on quant)
- **Uncovers** unanticipated issues
- Uses tactical stimulus
- **Flexible** question topics can be adapted/changed between groups, as **insights are uncovered**
- Allows you to see and hear your customers first hand
- Provides rich data to share with internal stakeholders and **'bring the customer to life'** (e.g. quotes, recorded responses, video clips)

➤ Weaknesses

- **Not representative:** cannot be taken as representative of any "population"; an unreliable predictor of the population
- **Not replicable:** due to a tendency to focus on particular context and personal interpretation, difficult to replicate
- **Subjective:** more easily influenced by moderator's personal biases and idiosyncrasies
- **Risky:** internal stakeholders may 'latch on' to something they hear and want to 'run with it' before quantifying the result

➤ Interpretation

SUBJECTIVE

- Skill and experience of moderator important in interpreting findings
- Results used as guidelines and directional findings – and interpreted accordingly

• 100-1000 respondents

- Sample aims to be representative of a whole population (e.g. beer/lager drinkers – all ages, drinkers of all brands)

• Consistent and structured

- throughout – everyone answers the same questions
- Statistically **reliable** results; reliably determine if one idea, concept, product, package, etc., is better than others
- Results **projectable** to the population, e.g. proportion of respondents answering a certain way is similar to proportion of the total population that would have answered that way if they all had been asked
- Significant opportunity to get respondent language and detailed thoughts through open style questions
- **Less flexible:** Questionnaire is usually **fixed**
- **Limiting:** Closed questions can squeeze the respondent into a box if the answer options are not comprehensive
- Can **describe** rather than **explain**
- **Can be uneconomical** when testing a hypothesis (e.g. qual could inform that a need is not "real" or of sufficient size)

OBJECTIVE

- Based on reproducible evidence
- Uses statistical analysis to prove differences or parity

- **Output**
 - Rich, **in-depth**, hypotheses & insight
 - Very **detailed** information on a topic
 - Real and intimate contact (attending groups/watching video clips/reading transcripts)
 - Captures intricacies of consumer language
 - Uncovers hypotheses
 - Validates hypotheses at basic level
 - Conclusions are not definitive (e.g. identify different occasions a product is used for, but not their size)
 - **Directional guidelines**
- Rich, **robust data** and insight
- Definitive conclusions, recommended **actions** (with supporting evidence)
- Clear measures, statistically significant differences
 - e.g. recommendations based on performance vs. set action standards (fail/pass)
- e.g. hierarchy of benefits and a measure of their impact on purchase intent/customer satisfaction
- Analysis at multiple sub-group level to unearth additional insights
- Validates hypotheses at confident level
- Capable of producing statistical models of consumer behaviour

We offer a full range of quantitative and qualitative research services to complement our deep industry understanding and expertise. If you're thinking about doing research or have a question or topic you would like to discuss, give us a call!

Contact details:

Sandra Halstead

Tel: 01628 523 523

Email: shalstead@insitas.com