Stage 1
Problem definition

Stage 2
Research approach
developed

Stage 3
Research design
developed

Stage 4
Fieldwork or data
collection

Stage 5
Data preparation
and analysis

Stage 6
Report preparation
and presentation

Qualitative research: focus group discussions

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1 understand why the focus group is defined as a direct qualitative research technique;

2 describe focus groups in detail, with an emphasis on planning and conducting focus groups;

3 evaluate the advantages, disadvantages and applications of focus groups;

4 describe alternative ways of conducting qualitative research in groups;

5 discuss the considerations involved in conducting qualitative research in an international setting, extending the contrast between European and US traditions of running focus groups;

6 understand the ethical issues involved in conducting focus groups;

7 describe the difference between real-time and non-real-time online focus groups.

The best moderators of focus groups are those that create a spirit of spontaneity and a passion for the issues under discussion.

Overview

In this chapter, we start by presenting a means of classifying qualitative research techniques and we examine the implications of such classification. The characteristics of the focus group are presented along with their advantages and disadvantages. The manner in which focus groups should be planned and conducted is then presented. Running successful focus groups depends upon the skills of a moderator, i.e. the person who manages the group, and the ensuing discussion. We present the qualities needed in moderators to get the most out of focus group discussions. There are variations on the main theme of running a focus group; these are described as well as other qualitative group activities. Running focus groups using the Internet is a rapidly developing technique; we describe how focus groups can be run in 'real-time' and 'non-real-time'. In Chapter 6 we contrasted the purpose and different ways of running focus groups in the US and in Europe; this contrast is developed and illustrated further in examining international marketing research issues. Several ethical issues that arise in running focus groups are identified.

The following example illustrates how using focus groups helps researchers and decision-makers to understand the problems faced by consumers. The problems are expressed in consumers' own words and in ways that words cannot convey. The example also illustrates that researchers and decision-makers may think that they know of all the issues they should be questioning, but once the exploration starts, respondents can reveal new issues that they perceive to be of more importance.

e x a m p l e

There's trouble in classes for kids who wear glasses[1]

Dollond & Aitchison, the optician, which prides itself on its professionalism, decided to look at a small but significant sector of its market – children. Avoiding the tendency of many clients to talk only to parents, the company was determined that children should have their say too.

They commissioned Clarke Research, which does much work with children and families, to conduct qualitative research with children, aged from 5 to 12 years, and their parents. Research was carried out in 12 focus groups, each children's group having four friendship

Finding your glasses easy to lose and uncomfortable is not just a problem for kids.

pairs, and including boys and girls spread by age and geographically. Each children's group was followed by a group of their parents (the children were taken to a local McDonald's while this went on).

Using projective techniques, Clarke Research asked children to describe the experience of wearing specs. This included asking them to draw pictures, to use words and cartoons to describe feelings and attitudes, and to make up mood boards. Some of what was learnt had been anticipated. Children described the experience of losing their specs, forgetting them, finding them uncomfortable, and getting them dirty. What had not been expected was that all the children spoken to had received some degree of harassment, teasing or outright bullying from non-specs wearing children. ■
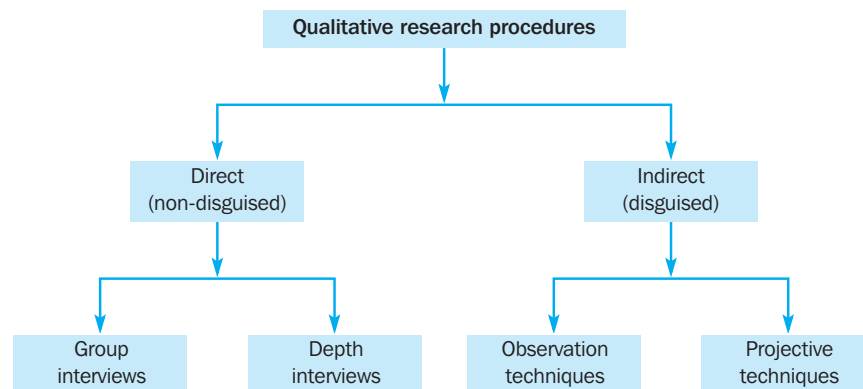
Classifying qualitative research techniques

A classification of qualitative research techniques is presented in Figure 7.1.

These techniques are classified as either direct or indirect, based on whether the true purpose of the project is known to the respondents. A **direct approach** is not disguised. The purpose of the project is disclosed to the respondents or is otherwise obvious to them from the questions asked. Focus groups and in-depth interviews are the major direct techniques. Even though the purpose of the project is disclosed, the extent to which the purpose of the research is revealed at the start of a focus group or in-depth group may vary. Suppose that the researcher wanted to understand how respondents felt about the Benetton brand, what their views were of Benetton advertising campaigns, the style and quality of Benetton clothes, how 'cool' the brand was, the importance of its being an Italian company – to name but a few issues that could be tackled. Rather than stating these objectives or even that the study was for Benetton right at the start, the researcher may initially hide these issues. If revealed at the start, respondents may focus straight on to these issues and not the surrounding contextual issues that may reveal the 'relative' impact of the Benetton brand. Thus the researcher may initially reveal that the discussion is going to be about 'what clothes mean to you'. The researcher may explore what respondents feel to be good and poor examples of clothing advertisements and why. What types of clothing and accessories do respondents see as stylish, how important is it to wear stylish clothes, how important is it to wear 'cool' clothes? – drawing out examples of brands to illustrate these views. Italy as a country could be explored in terms of characteristics of Italians or Italian design and style. If respondents bring up Benetton in the discussion, the researcher can then focus upon specific questions about the brand, contrast it with other brands and clearly see which subjects generated positive or negative views of Benetton. Respondents may deduce that the study is being conducted for

Direct approach
A type of qualitative research in which the purposes of the project are disclosed to the respondent or are obvious given the nature of the interview.

Figure 7.1
A classification of qualitative research techniques

Benetton as the discussion proceeds, this may be apparent by the end of the discussion, or the researcher may clarify this point and explain why it was not revealed at the beginning.

In using focus groups or in-depth interviews, the researcher employs a direct approach but has control over how much 'directness' they reveal at the start of the discussion. The researcher must consider what 'frame of mind' they want respondents to be in at the start of the discussion, as a too narrow or set focus at the start can impede the thought processes and creativity of the respondents and the success of the discussion.

Indirect approach
A type of qualitative research in which the purposes of the project are disguised from the respondents.

In contrast, research that takes an **indirect approach** totally disguises the purpose of the project. In an indirect approach, the researcher wants respondents to behave as naturally as possible without any impediment of research purposes. In observation or ethnographic techniques, consumers may be seen shopping, choosing products, using products, interacting with other people and objects, hopefully in a natural environment and a natural manner. The 'respondent' may not know that they are being observed, or if they do and have agreed to be observed, may not really know why. The purpose of using projective techniques (presented in Chapter 8) is to discover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings regarding consumer behaviour. The techniques allow indirect questioning to allow respondents to discover novel ways to think about and express their feelings, where direct questioning would fail.

Figure 7.1 presents a useful way to remember which qualitative techniques tend towards directness and indirectness. Another way of thinking about these issues would be to visualise a continuum with 'totally direct' at one extreme and 'totally indirect' at the other. Qualitative techniques may then be positioned on this continuum and the implications of that position addressed. The implications for the researcher are as follows.

- *Ethical.* What are the ethical issues concerning revealing what a study is about? Would a respondent get involved in the study if they knew what it was really about? Will a respondent feel cheated or abused by not being told the purpose or finding it out as they go along?
- *Data richness.* If the respondent knows what a study is about, to what extent does this 'close' their mind or destroy their creativity? Qualitative techniques aim to draw out deeply held views, issues that may be difficult to conceive or express. Researchers need to be able to get respondents in the right frame of mind to be able to elicit this rich data. To what extent does revealing the purpose of a study impede this process?

The researcher cannot resolve this issue by stating, for example, that 'they will only use direct techniques' to resolve the ethical issues. Successful focus groups and in-depth interviews can utilise certain observation techniques. As an example, consider recording a simple answer of 'no' to a question. This 'no' may be interpreted in different ways, depending upon facial expressions ('was the respondent smiling?'), the tone of their voice ('was it sharp and direct?'), their posture and body language ('were they hunched and hiding their face?'), or their positioning and reactions to others around them ('were they seeking support from others of the same view, by gestures directed towards those respondents?'). The researcher can use and manipulate scenarios to observe respondents as a means of interpreting the answers they give to questions. The same can be said of projective techniques, all of which can be used to great effect in focus groups and in-depth interviews.

The researcher ultimately has to work out the extent of directness or indirectness of their chosen qualitative techniques and address the ethical and data richness issues before setting out the detail of how they will administer their qualitative techniques. These issues may be unique in each investigation, depending upon the nature of

respondents being studied and the questions they face. In practice, the qualitative researcher may resolve the best means to administer a technique by experimenting and adapting; these issues are tackled later in this chapter.

Focus group discussions

Focus group
A discussion conducted by a trained moderator among a small group of respondents in an unstructured and natural manner.

Moderator
An individual who conducts a focus group interview, by setting the purpose of the interview, questioning, probing and handling the process of discussion.

A **focus group** is a discussion conducted by a trained moderator in a non-structured and natural manner with a small group of respondents. A **moderator** leads and develops the discussion. The main purpose of focus groups is to gain insights by creating a forum where respondents feel sufficiently relaxed to reflect and to portray their feelings and behaviour, at their pace and using their language and logic. The value of the technique lies in discovering unexpected findings, often obtained from a free-flowing group discussion. Focus groups are the most important qualitative marketing research procedure, being used extensively in new product development, advertising development and image studies. They are so popular that many marketing research practitioners consider this technique synonymous with qualitative research.[2] Given their importance and popularity, we describe the salient characteristics of focus groups in detail.[3]

Characteristics

The major characteristics of a focus group are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Characteristics of focus groups

Key benefit	Group members 'feed' off each other and creatively reveal ideas that the researcher may not have thought of or dared to tackle
Key drawback	Group members may feel intimidated or shy and may not reveal anything
Group size	6 to 12
Group composition	Homogeneous, respondents pre-screened
Physical setting	Relaxed, informal atmosphere
Time duration	1.5 to 6 hours
Recording	Use of audiocassettes, videotapes and notes from observations
Moderator	Observational, interpersonal and communication skills

One of the main characteristics and key benefits lies in the amount of creative discussion and other activities that may be generated. Group members have the time to reflect upon the discussion and range of stimuli that may be presented to them. The stimuli may come from other group members or from the moderator. Using their intuition and imagination, group members can explain how they feel or behave, in words they are comfortable with and using logic that is meaningful to them. The key drawback lies in how intimidating the group scenario may be to certain individuals. Many individuals may be self-conscious in expressing their ideas, feeling they may be ridiculed by others, or they may be shy and unable to freely express themselves in a group. A focus group is generally made up of 6–12 members. Groups of fewer than six are unlikely to generate the momentum and group dynamics necessary for a successful session. Likewise, groups of more than 12 may be too crowded and may not be conducive to a cohesive and natural discussion.[4] Large groups have a tendency to splinter into sub-groups as group members compete to get their views across.

A focus group generally should be homogeneous in terms of demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Commonality among group members avoids inter-

actions and conflicts among group members on side issues.[5] An amount of conflict may draw out issues or get respondents to rationalise and defend their views in a number of ways; it can also mean that the discussion does not get stale with everybody agreeing with each other and setting a scenario where genuine disagreement gets stifled. However, major conflicts should and can be avoided by the careful selection of respondents. Thus, for many topics, a women's group should not combine married homemakers with small children, young unmarried working women and elderly divorced or widowed women, because their lifestyles are substantially different. Moreover, the respondents should be carefully screened to meet certain criteria. These criteria are set by the researcher to ensure that respondents have had adequate experience with the object or issue being discussed. Other criteria for selection can include characteristics of respondents, such as whether they own their own homes, are of a particular age or even whether they smoke more than 40 cigarettes a day. Respondents who have already participated in numerous focus groups should not be included. These so-called professional respondents are atypical, and their participation leads to serious validity problems.[6]

The physical setting for the focus group is also important. A relaxed, informal atmosphere helps group members to forget they are being questioned and observed. What is meant by a relaxed, informal atmosphere may change depending upon the type of respondent and the subject being tackled. Examples of what 'relaxed and informal' means can include the home of a friend within a particular community, a works canteen, a village hall, a room in a leisure centre, a meeting room in a hotel or a purpose-built discussion group room. The poor acoustics and hard seats of a works canteen may not seem relaxed and informal. To group respondents, however, it may be the place where they are happy to talk and willing to open up to a moderator. The practitioner Wendy Gordon (see Professional Perspective 1 on the Companion Website) contends that the issue of 'real' context as opposed to simulation has always been a thorny issue. She has seen an increase in the tendency to conduct groups wherever the product is seen, bought or used rather than in recruiter living rooms or purpose-built viewing facilities. An example of this could be using part of a furniture store to discuss issues around house decoration, furnishings and cleaning or maintaining the home. Such a setting may set a very strong frame of reference to start the focus group and provide lots of stimuli. This example does not mean that all research needs to be conducted *in situ*, but that the technique can be designed to allow the findings from the real and the research environments to inform the overall recommendations.[7] Light refreshments should be served before the session and made available throughout; these become part of the context of relaxation. The nature of these refreshments largely depends upon how long the discussion lasts, the nature of tasks faced by the respondents and the ethical viewpoint of the researcher.

Although a focus group may last from one to six hours, a duration of one and a half to two hours is typical. When a focus group lasts up to six hours, respondents may be performing a series of projective techniques such as building 'mood boards' or 'role playing'. Lasting this length of time, a break for a meal may be planned. Otherwise, a flow of drinks and snacks may be made available. The opportunities and problems that occur by serving alcoholic drinks in focus groups will be discussed in the 'ethics in marketing research' section later in this chapter.

The lengthy period of discussion in a focus group is needed to establish rapport with the respondents, to get them to relax and be in the right frame of mind, and to explore in depth their beliefs, feelings, ideas, attitudes and insights regarding the topics of concern. Focus group discussions are invariably recorded, mostly using audiotape but often on videotape, for subsequent replay, transcription and analysis. Videotaping has the advantage of recording facial expressions and body movements,

but it can increase the costs significantly. Frequently, where focus groups are conducted in purpose-built studios, decision-makers as 'clients' observe the session from an adjacent room using a two-way mirror or through video transmission. Video transmission technology also enables the clients to observe focus group sessions live from a remote location. Care must be taken with both audio and video recording in terms of how comfortable respondents are with being recorded and what effects recorders have on how much they relax and honestly portray how they feel, especially when projective techniques are used, which some respondents may find embarrassing. Many moderators can give rich examples of how the most interesting points to emerge from a focus group occur when recorders are switched off at the end of the discussion. This happens when a group of respondents have really become involved in the subject of discussion and have enjoyed talking to their fellow respondents. Even when the moderator has finished the discussion, some respondents carry on discussing the issues between themselves as they put their coats on, leave the room and even perhaps as they walk to their cars. Moderators can hear issues discussed in this informal manner that they wish had been tackled with the full group.

The moderator plays a vital role in the success of a focus group. The moderator must establish rapport with the respondents and keep the discussion flowing, including the **probing** of respondents to elicit insights. In addition, the moderator may have a central role in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Therefore, the moderator should possess skill, experience, knowledge of the discussion topic, and an understanding of the nature of group dynamics.

Probing
A motivational technique used when asking questions to induce the respondents to enlarge on, clarify or explain their answers.

Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

Focus groups offer several advantages over other data collection techniques. These may be summarised by the 10 *S*s:[8]

1 *Synergy*. Putting a group of people together will produce a wider range of information, insight and ideas than will individual responses secured privately.
2 *Snowballing*. A bandwagon effect often operates in a group discussion in that one person's comment triggers a chain reaction from the other respondents. This process facilitates a very creative process where new ideas can be developed, justified and critically examined.
3 *Stimulation*. Usually after a brief introductory period, the respondents want to express their ideas and expose their feelings as the general level of excitement over the topic increases in the group.
4 *Security*. Because the respondents' feelings may be similar to those of other group members, they feel comfortable and are therefore willing to 'open up' and reveal thoughts where they may have been reluctant if they were on their own.
5 *Spontaneity*. Because respondents are not required to answer specific questions, their responses can be spontaneous and unconventional and should therefore provide an accurate idea of their views.
6 *Serendipity*. Ideas are more likely to arise unexpectedly in a group than in an individual interview. There may be issues that the moderator had not thought of. The dynamics of the group can allow these issues to develop and be discussed. Group members, to great effect, may clearly and forcibly ask questions that the moderator may be reluctant to ask.
7 *Specialisation*. Because a number of respondents are involved simultaneously, the use of a highly trained, but expensive, interviewer is justified.
8 *Scientific scrutiny*. The group discussion allows close scrutiny of the data collection process in that observers can witness the session and it can be recorded for later analysis. Many individuals can be involved in the validation and interpretation of the collected data.

9   *Structure.* The group discussion allows for flexibility in the topics covered and the depth with which they are treated. The structure can match the logical structure of issues from the respondents' perspective as well as the language and expressions they are comfortable with.

10 *Speed.* Because a number of individuals are being interviewed at the same time, data collection and analysis proceed relatively quickly.

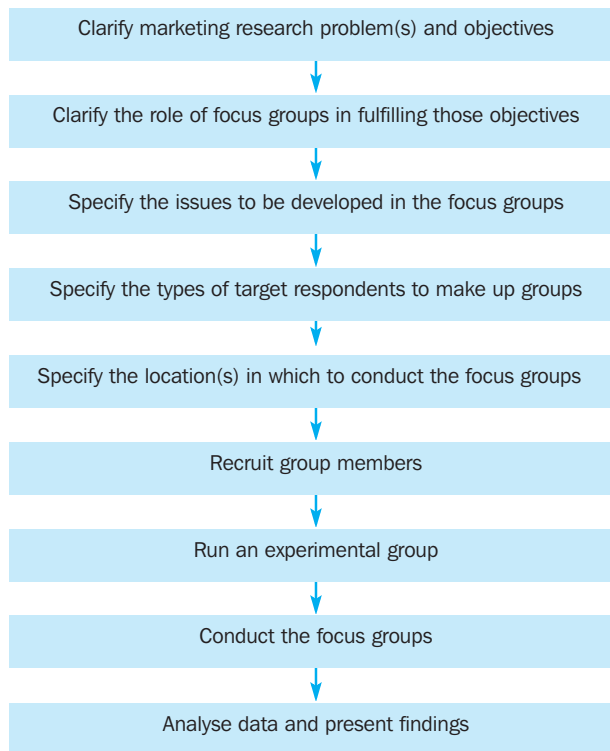The disadvantages of focus groups may be summarised by the five *M*s:

1   *Misjudgement.* Focus group results can be more easily misjudged than the results of other data collection techniques. As discussed in Chapter 6, as a qualitative technique, focus groups can evolve through a line of questioning and probing. The specific direction of questioning and the ultimate interpretation of findings can be susceptible to bias.

2   *Moderation.* As well as being great fun to moderate, focus groups can be difficult to moderate. Much depends upon the 'chemistry' of the group in terms of how group members get on with each other and draw ideas and explanations from each other. Even moderators with many years of experience can get into difficulty with particular group members who disrupt the discussion. The quality of the results depends upon how well the discussion is managed and ultimately on the skills of the moderator.

3   *Messiness.* The unstructured nature of the responses makes coding, analysis and interpretation difficult in comparison with the structure of quantitative techniques. Focus group data tend to be messy and need either strong theoretical support or the discipline of a grounded theory approach to ensure that decision-makers can rely upon the analyses and interpretations.

4   *Misrepresentation.* Focus group results concentrate on distinct target groups, describing them and contrasting them to other groups or types of respondent. Trying to generalise to much wider groups, in the same manner as with a quantitative survey based on a representative sample, can be very misleading.

5   *Meeting.* There are many problems in getting potential respondents to agree to take part in a focus group discussion. Even when they have agreed to participate, there are problems in getting focus group respondents together at the same time. Running focus groups on the Internet has helped to resolve these problems to some extent, but for some target groups even this does not offer a solution. An example is in conducting business research with managers as respondents. Given the amount of travel and tight schedules that many managers have, getting them together at the same time is very difficult. With many managers reluctant to reveal their company's behaviour and plans in front of other managers, one can see that the focus group may be very difficult to administer in getting managers to meet up and discuss issues.

Planning and conducting focus groups

The procedure for planning and conducting focus groups is described in Figure 7.2.

Planning begins with an examination of the marketing research problem(s) and objectives. In most instances, the problem has been defined by this stage, but it is vital to ensure that the whole process is founded upon a clear awareness of the gaps in the knowledge of marketing decision-makers. Given the problem definition, the objectives of using focus groups should be clarified. There should be a clear understanding of what information can be elicited and what the limitations of the technique are.

Clarify marketing research problem(s) and objectives

↓

Clarify the role of focus groups in fulfilling those objectives

↓

Specify the issues to be developed in the focus groups

↓

Specify the types of target respondents to make up groups

↓

Specify the location(s) in which to conduct the focus groups

↓

Recruit group members

↓

Run an experimental group

↓

Conduct the focus groups

↓

Analyse data and present findings

Figure 7.2
Procedure for planning and conducting focus groups

Topic guide
A list of topics, questions and probes that are used by a moderator to help them manage a focus group discussion.

The next step is to develop a list of issues, or **topic guide**, that are to be tackled in the focus groups. This list may be a series of specific questions but is more likely to be a set of broad issues that can be developed into questions or probes as the focus group actually takes place. Specific questions may be of help to the moderator who feels that a consistent set of points needs to be presented to different groups in order to allow clear comparisons to be made. Specific questions also act as a 'prop' when the discussion is failing; indeed some group respondents may initially feel that their role is to react to specific questions. However, treating the whole discussion as a means to present set questions may stifle the creativity and spontaneity that are the hallmarks of successful focus groups. The moderator should open the discussion with a general question to make respondents comfortable with the subject and the purpose of the research, and then present specific questions, issues and probes that can develop as the moderator tunes into the dynamics of the group. There may be additional, new issues that develop and, indeed, issues that group members do not see as being appropriate, and these can be discussed. The emphasis should be upon an evolution and learning process rather than administering a consistent set of questions.

The types of group members to take part in the discussions are then specified. From this specification, a questionnaire to screen potential respondents is prepared. Typical information obtained from the questionnaire includes product familiarity and knowledge, usage behaviour, attitudes towards and participation in focus groups, and standard demographic characteristics. With the types of respondents specified, consideration must be taken of what would make them relaxed and comfortable.

Having decided on the location of the focus groups, the actual recruitment of group members progresses. This is one of the most difficult tasks, as potential group members may be sceptical of what may happen at the group, sometimes fearing that they are exposing themselves to a hard-sell campaign of time-share holidays or home improvements! If individuals have attended a focus group beforehand, the process of recruitment is easier, but getting the right type of respondent together at the right

place and time can prove difficult. With the screening questionnaire, recruitment may take place on a face-to-face basis through street interviews or through database details by telephone. One traditional approach is to give the specification of group members to an individual in whose home the discussions are to take place. That individual then recruits respondents who fit that specification from their local community. The advantage of this approach is their ability to persuade respondents that the process is a bona fide research process and is going to be rewarding in many ways; ultimately they make sure that potential respondents actually attend. The big disadvantage is ensuring that those recruited match the screening questionnaire requirements. Whichever method of recruiting respondents is used, even when individuals have said that they will participate in the group, a telephone follow-up is necessary to remind and motivate group members.

Group respondents have to be rewarded for their attendance. Usually they enjoy the experience immensely once they are there, but that does not ensure that they attend in the first place. Attendance can be rewarded with cash, a donation to charity or a gift. The following example illustrates the difficulties involved in recruitment and a marketing researcher's creative solution to the problem.

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e x a m p l e

So how do you upstage a Ferrari owner?[9]

Researching an upmarket, socially active audience is difficult at the best of times. The target is opinionated, demanding, often resistant to research and almost impossible to reach. So, when we got the brief to conduct focus groups among Ferrari, Porsche, top Mercedes and other exotic sports car owners, we were tempted to panic. We knew we could find them, but how could we persuade them to participate?

We realised the one thing that would link our target, who were also defined as keen drivers, not just poseurs, was their love of cars and desire to know the latest news about new models (and to try them out if possible).

That's why we decided to offer the carrot of a drive around a race and proving track and the opportunity to meet the design and management team at our famous sports car maker. If anything might motivate people, who clearly already had sufficient money to indulge a very expensive taste, it should be this package. It worked like a dream, and we had great success getting the right people to come and, more importantly, to participate. ■

Experimental group
An initial focus group run to test the setting of the interview, the opening question, the topic guide and the mix of respondents that make up a group.

The first focus group to be run should be seen as an **experimental group**. All aspects of running the group should be evaluated. Were the group members relaxed and comfortable in the chosen location, i.e. did the context work as intended? How did they react to the tape recorder, video or two-way mirror, i.e. at what point did they seem to relax and forget that they were being recorded? What types of member interacted well or not, and what issues helped or hindered interaction? How did the initial question work in opening up and developing the discussion? How did the topic guide work, were there issues missing or issues that individuals would not tackle? How comfortable was the moderator handling the topics, did they have to interject to liven the discussion? How much did the moderator have to know about the subject to have credibility with the respondents? With a reflection of these issues, any necessary alterations can be made to the way that the remaining focus groups are administered. There may be very useful information that emerges from the experimental group that can be included in the main analysis. However, if the group does not work well, the information gleaned may be of little use but the lessons learnt are invaluable in running the remaining groups.

Finally, the focus groups can be actually run. The question arises here of how many groups should be run. Beyond the first experimental group, the number of groups needed can vary. The extent to which comparisons are sought in analyses can determine how many groups are needed. Seeking comparisons means recruiting respondents with different backgrounds or experiences. If there are a great variety of

types of individual that make up a target market, then many homogeneous groups may be needed to reflect the variety of types, e.g. a group of 18–25-year-old single male car owners compared with groups of women or groups of older males, married men or non-car owners. The definition of these distinct target groups to question is entirely bound in the nature of the research problem.

A confounding factor in the definition of these groups is the extent to which different types of respondents will mix together in a single group. In an experimental focus group that explored attitudes and behaviour related to sports activities in the City of Bath, distinct target groups of respondents did not work well together. Older respondents who participated in more 'gentle' sports activities did not particularly appreciate, listen to or respect the views of younger respondents. In addition, there was a gender split in that male respondents showed very little respect for the views of female respondents. The older male respondents were particularly patronising to younger females. As a result it was decided to run groups that separated younger and older respondents and males and females. This meant an increase in the total number of focus groups conducted but also meant that the remaining focus groups worked well and that the views of distinct target groups were clearly presented.

If target respondents are geographically widespread, then many groups may be needed to represent this diversity. The following example of Disneyland Paris illustrates the comparisons made in focus group analyses. The important markets they concentrated upon were France, Germany and Britain and so focus groups would be needed to represent each country. Further analyses of two distinct target groups were also needed. Thus, a minimum of two groups per country, i.e. six groups plus an experimental group, would be needed, which would be doubled if it were felt to be important to run exclusively male and female groups.

example

An MR boost helps Disneyland Paris take off into profit[10]

Back in the summer of 1994 it's fair to say the team at Disneyland Paris were having a tough time of it: they were off the launch pad, but not yet up to full speed. Two years after opening, attendance figures, although impressive, had not lived up to expectations and there was even press speculation about the future of the park.

It was at this time that the Disney team asked The Added Value Company's Paris office to carry out research to understand the potential role of a new attraction. Even by Disney standards, Space Mountain looked as though it would be an amazing experience. It started with a catapult launch in a rocket ship up the outside of a mountain, with the daring space travellers experiencing zero gravity at the top. You were then plunged inside the darkness of the mountain, to travel through space at breathtaking speed, through meteorite storms and past flying asteroids.

Qualitative research groups were used, based on the need to get in-depth and rich consumer reactions to the new concept and to highlight which features were the most motivating. Groups were split between people who had already been to the theme park and those who had not visited, with two targets by lifestyle: parents of children aged 5–15 and young adults aged 25–35. Research was carried out in France, Germany and Britain, with an internal 'data merger' meeting used to share findings from the three countries and develop pan-European findings and conclusions. ■

Another factor to be considered in determining the number of focus groups to conduct relates to whether the researcher is using focus groups as part of a grounded theory approach. With such an approach (as described in Chapter 6) theoretical sampling is adopted whereby further examples or instances are sought that may contradict the nature of the emerging grounded theory. The complexity of the developing grounded theory and the extent to which the qualitative researcher makes sense of the issues they are exploring will ultimately determine the number of discussions needed.

This can be contrasted to focus groups conducted from a positivist perspective, focusing upon generating an understanding of issues to be confirmed in a subsequent survey. In the latter scenario, the researcher may not need to continue to search for more contradictory perspectives. Whichever paradigm underpins the application of focus groups, resources permitting one should conduct additional discussion groups until the moderator can anticipate what will be said. The last sentence is a reminder of the final factor determining the number of discussions – the time and money afforded by the client.

In summary, the number of focus groups that should be conducted on a single subject depends on the following factors.

- The extent to which comparisons are sought
- The different types of respondent to be targeted and how well they mix together
- The geographic spread of respondents
- The paradigm that underpins the focus group
- The time and budget available.

Another dimension of running the groups, beyond the actual number of groups, is the nature of stimuli that the moderator chooses to input. At certain times, examples of particular products or brands may be introduced for respondents to examine, or even taste or sample if the nature of the product permits. Advertising material such as brochures, posters or even video recordings of television or cinema adverts can be shown and a response generated. One of the most frequently used forms of stimuli is the **mood board**.

Mood board
A collage created in a focus group setting. Focus group respondents are asked to snip words and pictures from magazines that they see as representing the values a particular brand is perceived to have. In some circumstances, collages can also be made up from audio and video tapes.

The 'mood board' is really the creation of a collage. Focus group respondents are given a pile of magazines and asked to snip words and pictures from them. The direction they are given is to select images and words that they think represent characteristics of a brand, a consumer type or lifestyle or whatever issue the researcher wishes to be illustrated in this manner. The resultant collage can then be used to stimulate discussion and to help draw together ideas and connect them. Creative marketing decision-makers in copywriting or advertisement development may develop many ideas directly from the collages or mood boards. The mood board has two main functions:

- *Reference point.* The moderator can use the mood board to reflect upon the discussion, in which case issues can emerge that were not so apparent in the heat of a discussion.
- *Enabling device.* The mood board gets respondents to loosen up and talk more freely. The focus group is not to get respondents to talk rationally but to display what 'feels right' to them. The collage can help to express feelings they may not be able to put into words, or enable those words to have more clarity. This can happen by questioning what is included in a mood board as well as what is omitted.[11]

The following example illustrates that the mood board can develop beyond two-dimensional images.

Art of the matter[12]

Paul Walton, Chairman of new product development consultancy The Value Engineers, explains: 'In the early stages of a new product or brand reassessment project, words might be appropriate. Beyond the words come picture collages and as you learn more and you start to give the brand a clearer identity, you introduce mock-ups of packaging and other props to 'three-dimensionalise' the world.'

Alex Authers, Research Director at branding consultancy New Solutions, argues the case for stimuli beyond the mood board: 'We've moved on from static visuals, to using videos. It's often useful to show a series of fast-edited clips set to some sort of soundtrack. People are

now much more video literate. So, instead of having a mood board, we have a mood video. Video collages are particularly good for exploring the emotional resonances of brands.'

Other props used in qualitative research include swatches of material and even fragrances. Authers says smells and colours can 'help to create a mood and evoke a positioning'. ■

The final stage in planning and conducting focus groups involves the analysis of data. Chapter 9 discusses qualitative data analysis in more detail. However, at this point there are two essential points to note:

1 *Evolving analysis.* Focus groups can change and develop in terms of the issues discussed and the stimuli used to draw out views from respondents. The changes are made as the moderator generates and develops new ideas as each focus group progresses. The moderator makes observations and notes to help them as the discussion progresses and also for when they are over. These observations and notes are part of the total analysis in that they decide which issues to probe, which issues to drop and the form of summarising issues that may be presented to groups at certain stages of the discussion.
2 *Not just the narrative.* If the discussion is recorded then transcripts can be produced which can be analysed with proprietary software. These transcripts form a major part of the analysis procedure but the accumulation and reflection upon observations and notes forms a key part of the analysis.

The moderator

Throughout this chapter we have referred to the moderator as an individual who conducts a focus group discussion, by setting the purpose of the discussion, questioning, probing and handling the process of discussion. This individual may be the researcher handling the project. More likely it will be someone who specialises in the technique, or given the number of groups to run and the time allowed to complete them, a number of specialist moderators will be employed. Whoever is to undertake the task of 'moderating' will require the following qualities: [13]

1 *Kindness with firmness.* The moderator must quickly develop an empathy with group members. From this the moderator should show kindness to make respondents feel welcome, combined with a firmness to stop particular individuals taking over the discussion.
2 *Permissiveness.* The moderator must be permissive, allowing the flow of discussion to develop as the group sees fit. However, he or she must be alert to signs that the group's cordiality or purpose is disintegrating.
3 *Involvement.* The moderator must encourage and stimulate intense personal involvement. In certain circumstances, this may mean becoming involved in the actual discussion itself. This can happen if a tendency for 'group speak' emerges. 'Group speak' happens when little debate or creativity in ideas develops, as particular individuals may not wish to be seen as going against a perceived group norm.
4 *Incomplete understanding.* The moderator must encourage respondents to be more specific about generalised comments by exhibiting a feigned naivety or incomplete understanding.
5 *Encouragement.* The moderator must encourage unresponsive members to participate.
6 *Flexibility.* The moderator must be able to improvise and alter the planned outline amid the distractions of the group process.
7 *Sensitivity.* The moderator must be sensitive enough to guide the group discussion at an intellectual as well as emotional level. He or she must also be attuned to mood changes and issues that fire up enthusiastic responses or conversely cause the discussion to dry up.

8 *Observation.* As the group progresses, notes must be made of ideas or questions to come back to, interpretations of particular silences or bouts of laughter, and how group members are interacting with each other. These observations help the group discussion to progress well and the interpretation of the discussion to have greater meaning.

Other variations of focus groups

Focus groups can use several variations of the standard procedure. These include:

■ *Two-way focus group.* This allows one target group to listen to and learn from a related group. In one application, physicians viewed a focus group of arthritis patients discussing the treatment they desired. A focus group of these physicians was then held to determine their reactions.[14]

■ *Dual-moderator group.* This is a focus group discussion conducted by two moderators. One moderator is responsible for the smooth flow of the session, and the other ensures that specific issues are discussed.

■ *Duelling-moderator group.* Here also there are two moderators, but they deliberately take opposite positions on the issues to be discussed. This allows the researcher to explore both sides of controversial issues. It also encourages respondents who may support a particular perspective to express their views without the fear that they will be 'attacked' by the rest of the group.

■ *Respondent-moderator group.* In this type of focus group, the moderator asks selected respondents to play the role of moderator temporarily to improve group dynamics.

■ *Client-respondent group.* Client personnel are identified and made part of the discussion group. Their primary role is to offer clarifications that will make the group process more effective.

■ *Mini group.* These groups consist of a moderator and only four or five respondents. They are used when the issues of interest require more extensive probing than is possible in the standard group of 6 to 12.

Other types of qualitative group discussions

Brainstorming

Traditional brainstorming[15] has been used for several decades, especially in the context of management or marketing issues. Whether formal or informal, the process is the same: think of as many ideas as you can and say them out loud; leave the evaluation until later; build on and combine others' ideas; be as imaginative as possible, the wilder the ideas the better. The group moderator seeks to nurture an atmosphere of creativity, tapping into the intuition of respondents, generating novel ideas and connections between ideas.

When it works well, ideas flow freely from an interplay that may never have occurred if the group had not brainstormed together.

Two problems plague traditional brainstorming: production blocking and evaluation apprehension.

■ *Production blocking* occurs when a group member has an idea, but someone else is talking. When it's their turn, they have forgotten the idea, or think their idea is redundant or not that good. If the group is large or dominated by talkative people, they lose interest and do not say what they think.

- *Evaluation apprehension* occurs when respondents become anxious about what others think of their thoughts. Ideas may be censored, as there is a fear of being labelled as odd. When respondents feel this apprehension, they do not produce as many new and potentially useful ideas but keep them to themselves and therefore defeat the purpose of brainstorming.

Industrial group discussions

As noted earlier, the focus group has limited use in industrial or business research. Getting managers together at the same time and place is a big operational problem. Getting them to be open about their companies in a group scenario is also very difficult to achieve. In the GlobalCash Project, group discussions were seen as important in order to explore and develop issues that could not be measured in a questionnaire. What was measured in the questionnaire produced many statistics whose analyses pointed to further elaboration. Developing an elaboration of the statistical findings could be tackled in a group discussion. To overcome the above issues of getting managers to sit down together, part of the incentive to complete the questionnaire was an invitation to take part in a 'closed forum for questionnaire respondents'. This meant that a date was set to present findings from the survey exclusively to questionnaire respondents. The date and meeting place of The Management Centre in Brussels were established well in advance to allow managers the chance to put the date in their diaries. The day started with an initial session of presenting statistical findings to the whole group of managers who had responded to the questionnaire. As questions were fielded in this forum, particular topics of interest were identified and focus groups named as 'workshops' were built around these topics. By mid-morning, groups of around 10–12 managers were together tackling a theme of importance to them. They were moderated by an academic researcher from one of the 20 business schools taking part in the GlobalCash Project. With a loose set of topics to develop into questions and probes, the format for a focus group was achieved. In the afternoon, the same format continued with a presentation of questionnaire findings and further group discussions. By splitting the day in this manner, managers could attend and contribute to two subject areas of interest to them. Finally, individual managers could be identified who could be interviewed in depth on their own at a later date. The one-to-one in-depth interviews in the GlobalCash Project will be illustrated in the next chapter.

International marketing research

The term 'focus group' is commonly used across all continents, yet it subsumes approaches that are different. For many European marketing researchers, one of the biggest headaches associated with focus groups is its name. The technique has been disparaged by a popular media impression that implies that focus groups are a means to get answers to set questions. Many see this as the US approach to conducting focus groups and thus see the name as an unwanted Americanism that has displaced what they see as the favoured term, 'group discussion'.

The best people at moderating focus groups are ones who can create that spirit of spontaneity. You can't do it with a crowded agenda. You can't do it if you're focused, which is why focus is wrong. [16]

The above quotation implies a criticism of a US approach that can be highly structured rather than an approach that is truly spontaneous and exploratory in its fullest sense. It is not advocated at this stage that the word 'focus' be removed, but it is a reminder that there are different research approaches that can affect how the

technique is administered. US and European approaches were presented in Chapter 6 to illustrate how different philosophies that underpin research techniques can affect how the technique is applied.[17] In examining the use of focus groups, two main schools of thought were presented: the *cognitive* approach, which largely follows a format and interviewing style as used in quantitative studies and is generally used by American researchers; and the *conative* approach, which has less structure to the questions, with group members being encouraged to take their own paths of discussion, make their own connections and let the whole process evolve, and is generally used by European researchers. It is not advocated that one particular approach is better than the other. Each approach has its own distinctive strengths and weaknesses depending upon why the technique is being used, the nature of the respondents and the nature of researchers and decision-makers who are to use the data.

Viewing laboratory
A room where a focus group may be conducted and simultaneously observed, usually by using a two-way mirror.

For example, in the USA, observing focus groups through the use of purpose-built focus group rooms or a **viewing laboratory** with a two-way mirror is a *policy*. Typically there will be five to eight observers, sometimes more, with agency and marketing company matching level for level to maintain a balance of power. American researchers and clients defend the value of observers. People with different perspectives can listen in a way that a moderator cannot, since the moderator is often 'dipping in for the moment' on one specific issue while the clients 'have the brand in their bones'. Probably the most deeply felt reason for being there is just being there; there is no substitute for the touchy-feely benefit of experiencing the consumer first-hand. More than ever, marketing people are isolated in their small worlds (probably in atypical New York or Chicago), making assumptions about their users. Seeing them is a reality check. Hearing tonality, watching body language, observing the consumer interact with the product, enriches the learning process. Sometimes brand people will get rejuvenated and creatives will get inspired. [18]

e x a m p l e

A client's view of observing the focus group through the two-way mirror[19]

'It's a strange experience, sitting on the other side of a two-way mirror watching your product being analysed in a focus group. It's like being locked out of your house and peering through the windows as burglars rifle through your drawers and take the piss out of your record collection.'

'You want to bang on the glass and plead with them to stop, but then they say something nice about your product and you want to grab the person next to you and shout "I thought of that!".'

'You tell yourself not to take the criticism too personally, to be professional, but it's hard when you've had sleepless nights agonising over minute details only to see them ignored or ripped apart in the space of half an hour.'

'It's great to get raw feedback like this, but remember just how raw it is. One group can say completely different things to another and some may just like the sport of making the suits behind the mirror suffer.' ■

At face value, the above description of the use of viewing labs seems to show a feature of US practice that has many benefits, but consider the following problems:

■ *Incomplete data.* Clients may not have seen all the groups, leaving gaps in the total picture. Observers admit that they focus on the most lively and self-serving points; that they identify positively and negatively with certain responses and filter accordingly; that they are attentive to ideas that affirm their positions and dismissive of contrary viewpoints.

■ *Instant analysis.* Rather than waiting for a moderator's report or even the conclusions of the group, observers often jump to conclusions on little evidence or, worse still, stop listening once they have an 'impression' of the results.

- *Moderator reflection.* Often the moderator gets trapped into debriefing immediately after the group and taking positions that are hard to retreat from but which might be very different after a thoughtful review.
- *Effect on respondents.* There is little research on the effect of the two-way mirrors on respondents. The setting is not exactly conducive to natural expression and respondents may alter their responses for effect, stay silent or be self-conscious.

Supporters of the European approach to focus groups may console themselves that they can overcome these drawbacks. They may argue that the context in which they run groups is more conducive to relaxed respondents, that moderators are not under such pressure to produce 'instant analysis' and that they can take more time to reflect and interpret the data generated. But in Europe, and especially in Britain (which has had the biggest tradition of running focus groups in people's homes), marketing researchers are embracing the use of the viewing lab. The following example illustrates how the viewing lab is increasingly being used in Britain.

e x a m p l e   **Through the looking glass**[20]

Which is the better marketing research environment: a member of the public's front room or a viewing lab? Traditionally, in Britain, the former was the unchallenged leader when it came to new product development and advertising campaign research. However, during the 1990s, Britain has taken a leap into viewing-lab territory.

Lucy Bannister, a director of qualitative research firm Davies Riley Smith Maclay, sees Britain catching up with the rest of the world.

> 'Clients in Britain have always thought of in-home research first because that is the way things developed historically. But I cannot think of any other country where this is the case, especially in Europe or in the US. Viewing labs have always been the norm outside Britain and marketers abroad think it is bizarre that we have this strange bias.' ■

Some focus group participants quickly learn to behave quite naturally in front of two-way mirrors.

The conclusion from this example is that marketing researchers should not take a dogmatic position, believing that their approach is the most 'correct'. Focus groups vary enormously in how they are planned, administered and analysed, from the very structured interview in a studio bristling with technology, to a passionate dialogue conducted globally over the Internet, to a riotous exchange on a tropical beach. The marketing researcher should be open-minded to learn from focus group practices in different countries and be able to critically evaluate why they have been administered in that way.

Ethics in marketing research

A number of ethical issues related to running focus groups have emerged in this chapter. The focus group can be a direct qualitative research technique where the purpose of the discussion is made clear to respondents before it starts. However, the focus group can incorporate observational and projective techniques that introduce elements of indirectness, i.e. elements or all of the purpose of the discussion being hidden from respondents. This is where the marketing researcher faces a real ethical dilemma. If they fully reveal the purpose of their study, would this put off potential respondents whose views are important to the success of the study? Even if they do manage to recruit potential respondents, the researcher has to consider how they may feel when the real purpose of the study becomes apparent through the nature of the discussion or by the moderator revealing all at the end. The nature of the dilemma faced by marketing researchers is that by revealing too much at the start of the study they may compromise the quality of their discussion. A full revelation may not be conducive to respondents reflecting, making new connections and expressing themselves about issues that may be deeply held, difficult to conceive and express.

Researchers should take all reasonable precautions to ensure that respondents are in no way adversely affected or embarrassed as a result of the focus group. What is meant by an adverse effect and embarrassment will largely depend upon the issues being explored and how they are perceived by target respondents. Some respondents may find personal hygiene issues very embarrassing to talk about in a group scenario, but not financial issues. Other individuals may be very frank about their sexual behaviour, while others would be shocked at the notion of talking about sex with a group of strangers. The researcher must get to know how the issues they wish to explore are perceived by their target respondents by examining literature, secondary data and the use of experimental focus groups.

Another major ethical problem that is research issue and respondent specific is the use of alcoholic drinks during focus groups. For certain groups of respondents, relaxing and socialising in a comfortable context, drinking wine or beer is very natural. Researchers with experience of running many focus groups would argue that serving alcoholic drinks can help to reduce tension in certain respondents and give them the confidence to express their particular viewpoint. Other researchers would argue that this is unethical practice, that in effect the researcher is 'drugging' the respondents. Whatever the researcher decides is right for the type of respondents, the issues they are questioning them about and the context in which the discussion takes place, there are practical problems involved with serving alcohol. Controlling the flow of alcohol and how much is given to certain respondents may take attention away from the discussion. If control is not exerted, particular respondents may get out of hand and disrupt or even destroy the discussion. Researchers could be

accused of not taking reasonable precautions to ensure that respondents are in no way adversely affected or embarrassed as a result of the focus group, should the use of alcohol be abused by certain respondents.

Finally, in no circumstances should researchers use audio or video recording or two-way mirrors in focus groups without gaining the consent of respondents. It must be made clear to respondents that recording or observation equipment is to be used and why it needs to be used. Respondents must then be free to decline any offer to take part in a discussion.

Internet and computer applications

The development of the Internet, the increasing numbers of individuals with access and who are comfortable using the Internet, has presented many opportunities to run focus groups online. For online focus groups, virtual facilities can be used, providing the same facilities as real-life facilities including 'rooms' such as a reception room, discussion room and client backroom. Online focus groups can be conducted in two ways: 'real-time' or 'non-real-time'.[21]

- *Real-time.* In this method, all respondents are online at the same time. The transmission of messages is immediate or as close to immediate as can be. As one respondent types in their message, it is transmitted to the group as a whole. Other respondents can read the message and can reply as soon as they receive it. Real-time focus groups can be highly interactive with a fast 'passionate' exchange of views. This is the big advantage of real-time groups, that the passion for a subject and the nature of rapid exchange can develop a very creative atmosphere. Respondents do not have to wait for others to comment in order to send further messages, so as they have been stimulated to think in particular ways, their thoughts and ideas can flow straight out on to the screen. The drawback is that the respondent with the most proficiency at typing has the power to dominate the discussion. Compared with face-to-face focus groups where the moderator and audio and video recordings can track respondent statements and the responses stimulated, this cannot be done online in real time. The distinction of replying and sending becomes a blur as respondents do not take their turn as they would face to face. This means that much of the structure of conversation is lost.
- *Non-real-time.* In this method there is no requirement for respondents to be online at the same time. This method is analogous to the use of email. Unlike email, though, this form of focus group is conducted using a 'conference site' as opposed to individual email addresses. Respondents can send their views about a particular issue to a conference folder. Messages can be read in real time but this does not usually happen. The reality is that all responses are archived in the folder and can be opened and responded to by other respondents. This method of running focus groups can overcome difficulties in running focus groups in different time zones and therefore is an excellent tool in conducting international research. Respondents with weak typing skills do not lose their voice or feel intimidated. The major benefit of this approach is that akin to face-to-face focus groups, respondents can 'sit back' and reflect upon how they really feel about an issue. Even better than in face-to-face scenarios, they can take time to express how they really feel about an issue.

Online focus groups have a number of logistical requirements. Depending upon how the online focus group is to be conducted, respondents may have to gain access to proprietary conferencing software. Real-time and non-real-time focus groups can operate from particular Websites, requiring potential respondents to have a Web browser and to know the Web address from which the group will be run.

In summary, the key benefits of running focus groups online include the following: [22]

- More potential respondents can be recruited through the growing use of the Internet, and the growing ease of conducting discussions online.
- Respondents can be made to feel that they have the ability to contribute; their confidence can be quickly built up.
- Conflicts in face-to-face focus groups that may stem from respondents taking a dislike to other respondents from their physical appearance can be avoided.
- A great breadth of information may be collected, through the types of respondent that can be recruited and the geographic spread of respondents.
- The practical difficulties of getting individuals together at the same time in the same location can be overcome.
- The nature of a discussion location that is 'comfortable' to the respondent is largely overcome by each respondent setting the conditions that they feel comfortable in.

Summary

In direct qualitative methods, respondents are able to discern the true purpose of the research, whereas indirect methods disguise the purpose of the research to some extent. Focus groups can be a completely direct qualitative method, though by the use of observational and projective techniques elements of indirectness can be introduced. In deciding how 'direct' a focus group should be, researchers have to face ethical issues and questions related to the richness of data that they can draw from respondents. Focus group discussions are the most widely used qualitative research technique.

Focus groups are conducted by a moderator in a relaxed and informal manner with a small group of respondents. The moderator leads and develops the discussion. In a focus group, respondents can portray their feelings and behaviour, using their own language and logic. The value of the technique lies in the unexpected findings that emerge when respondents are allowed to say what they really feel. An experimental focus group should always be run at the start of any series of discussions. The researcher needs to understand how comfortable target respondents feel in the chosen location for discussion, how the opening question works, the topic guide, the probes, the mix of respondents and the refreshments, including any alcoholic drinks. In a nutshell, one could argue that one should continue running focus groups until nothing new is learned from target respondents. This perspective oversimplifies how diverse and spread out different respondents may be and how well they mix together in a group situation. The time and budget available will also mean that a cut-off point has to be drawn and the strongest analysis and interpretation has to be made at that point. Development in the use of the Internet means that group discussions can take place away from the traditional 'viewing' or meeting room. The maxim of respondents being relaxed and comfortable with the context and means of communicating still applies.

There are a variety of different styles of running focus groups. The variations and adaptations are used to draw the best out of particular types of respondent, tackling particular types of issue. The most significant development in the variation of technique has been afforded by developments in Internet technology and take-up. Respondents can be targeted from all over the world, discussing issues online in 'real-time' or 'non-real-time'. Another factor that affects the style of running focus groups lies in the underlying philosophy for conducting research. US and European styles can be broadly encapsulated as being respectively 'highly structured' or 'highly spontaneous'. There is no one absolute correct method to administer a focus group; the researcher should understand the factors that will make the technique work for their particular research problem and the type of respondents they have to work with. A key element of ensuring that the focus group works well lies in the ethical issues of how much is revealed to respondents before they get involved and during the discussion. Getting respondents to relax and be open may involve the use of alcoholic drinks that for many researchers creates no problems but for some creates ethical and practical problems.

Questions

1 Why may marketing researchers not wish to fully reveal the purpose of a focus group discussion with respondents before it starts?

2 What are the key benefits and drawbacks of conducting focus group discussions?

3 What are the difficulties in conducting focus groups with managers or professionals?

4 What determines the questions, issues and probes used in a focus group?

5 Evaluate the purpose of running an experimental focus group discussion.

6 What does a 'comfortable setting' mean in the context of running a focus group?

7 To what extent can a moderator achieve an 'objective detachment' from a focus group discussion?

8 Why is the focus group moderator so important to the success of a focus group discussion?

9 What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of being able to covertly observe a focus group discussion?

10 What can the researcher do to make potential respondents want to take part in a focus group?

11 What determines the number of focus groups that should be undertaken in any research project?

12 Describe the purpose and benefits of using stimulus material in a focus group.

13 What is the difference between a dual moderator and a duelling moderator group?

14 Describe the opportunities and difficulties that may occur if alcoholic drinks are served during focus group discussions.

15 Evaluate the benefits and limitations of conducting focus group discussions on the Internet.

Notes

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