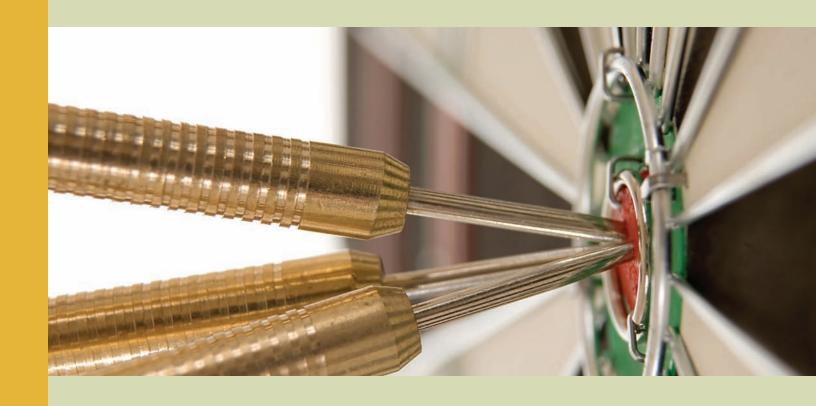
Communications Campaign Best Practices

















Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research Overview		
	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
When to use it	 To understand how people think (e.g., patterns of reasoning, connections to other issues, private or unconscious feelings and emotions, core values) 	 To develop statistical information on what people think Typically used to answer "how much" in absolute or relative terms (e.g., how much support do we have for this ballot initiative?; how much does this message affect people's opinions?)
Most common uses	 To understand the target audience mindset for development of messages To test reactions to messaging and creative Used before quantitative research to help fine-tune the survey questions Used after a survey to dig deeper into the results (e.g., why people have answered in certain ways) 	 To understand the level of support for a key issue To test messages at a statistically valid level (helps understand if the message is effective without insight as to why) To track trends over time (i.e., longitudinal studies) To influence politicians (by showing levels of support) To track campaign effectiveness (e.g., tracking attitudes pre, during, and after a campaign)
How it works	 Research participants are deliberately selected based on certain desired characteristics Methods use direct interaction and conversation, usually in the form of open-ended questions designed to help researchers understand how people think and reason about a topic Because the format is often very conversational, analysis is subjective, and the results may vary greatly depending upon who conducts the research Methodology can include techniques like word association, sentence completion, role playing, etc. 	 Research participants are selected randomly and asked to answer questions that have discrete answers or fall on a numerical scale (e.g., "How would you rate President Bush's performance on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very good" and 5 being "very poor?") Usually done by telephone, though may also be done through paper surveys or the Internet Any researcher should be able to duplicate the survey with similar results (that is, results within the margin of error)
Main types	One-on-one interviews Focus groups	 Survey/questionnaire administered via telephone, online, in person, or via mail How a survey is administered depends on the survey goals and objectives (e.g. mail surveys have much more limited use than phone surveys)
Drawbacks	 Because of the low number of respondents involved, it cannot be used to generalize to the larger target population Subjective and unstructured; also subject to "group think" and unintentional influence by the moderator or interviewer Data collection and analysis may be labor intensive and time-consuming May not be effective for certain types of research (e.g., hostile political ads can have a "sleeper effect" where ads test poorly immediately after being shown, but are effective in changing public opinion over time) 	 It takes human behavior out of context and ignores the effects of variables that haven't been included in the research questions—it tells you "how much" but not "why" Results are limited by the questionnaire design (e.g., respondents answer the questions they're asked, but aren't able to expand on their answers or provide additional insight/rationale) Polling and other large surveys can be costly

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