

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Engagement range	Consult
Difficulty level	Medium
Cost	Medium (\$1,000 to \$10,000)
When might you use it	To communicate an issue To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise	One-three, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (six weeks to six months)
Size of audience	Small (up to 10) Medium (11-30)
Issues/resources to think about	Trained interviewers; Recording methods (may be audio, hand-written or computer aided records, but should be unobtrusive, so the focus is on the content and conversation); May need a professional typist to transcribe tapes and hand-written notes, as this is time consuming.
Innovation level	Medium to high

Description

Interviews with key stakeholders with expertise relevant to a particular community issue are lengthy, one to one interviews that may last an hour or two, and require specialist skill to use the time effectively, and to elicit relevant and specific information.

The interviewer should be able to gain insights from a ‘casual’ conversation so the person being interviewed does not get too narrow in addressing a single point (unless you want a lot of information about a specific issue). This interviewing technique is like the technique in focus groups, because you can keep asking questions until you get a satisfactory response.

These are expensive and hard to do well, but they are very good sources of information and are especially useful when it is important to understand the views of certain people (because of their position or their expertise).

Objective

- To elicit detailed information and opinions on an issue through wide-ranging discussion rather than specific questioning.

Desired Outcome

- A broad overview of the interviewees' opinions about a specific topic that may reveal hidden concerns or ideas that would not be expressed in response to a set number of specific questions.

Uses/Strengths

- Useful for targeting key stakeholders who have specific knowledge about an issue.
- Provides opportunity to get understanding of concerns and issues of key stakeholders.
- Can be used to determine how best to communicate with the public.
- Can be used to determine the best members of consultative committees.

Special Considerations/Weaknesses

- Can be expensive.
- Can be time consuming.
- Interviewers must engender trust or risk negative response to the format.
- Requires skilled interviewers.

Step by Step Guide

1. Select interviewees according to designated criteria (areas of expertise, representation of groups, complementary of skills for committees).
2. Arrange times and places for interviewing. Better quality information will be forthcoming if the interviewee is in a familiar setting, so it may be easier for the interviewer to go to them.
3. Ensure uninterrupted time for at least one hour.
4. Check all equipment and take spare tapes, batteries, pens, etc. to avoid any interruptions during the interview.