

NKP BEST PRACTICES:

CONDUCTING AN EXPERT INTERVIEW: INTERVIEW GUIDE TEMPLATE FOR OBTAINING THE (B2B) CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE

July 2018

CONDUCTING AN EXPERT INTERVIEW

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Introduction

This interview guide template was written to help clients - especially those new to the concept of expert interviews - prepare for expert interviews and to secure mutually meaningful discussions. Every project and client request is unique, so this should be used as a framework for inspiration, and not as a plug-and-play solution.

The guidelines are based on findings from the many expert interviews we facilitate on a daily basis, however they are by no means exhaustive. We would like to point out that many of the interviews we facilitate are carried out successfully without any interview guide or detailed scope - it is by no means required to have an interview guide, and we can help you structure the discussion with the expert in all cases.

We recommend you also read our guidelines on HOW TO SCOPE AN EXPERT INTERVIEW REQUEST:

<https://www.nordicknowledgepartners.com/how-to-scope-a-request-for-expert-interviews>

Interview guide template: Getting the customer perspective (B2B)

Relevant expert profiles could be CTO, CFO, COO, VP Operations, VP Sales, head of procurement etc. depending on the type of services/products inquired about.

Introduction

Hi **[first name]**,

Thank you for accepting this interview on such short notice, that is highly appreciated. We are trying to get a better understanding of how customers in the **[customer industry]** buy and utilize **[services/products]**. We are mainly focused on **[geographic scope]**. Our aim is to identify potential product/service improvements and currently unmet market needs, so any topics related to this would be of interest.

Before we get started, could you provide me with an introduction to your own background so I can tailor my questions accordingly?

Note: The goal of the introduction is to set the agenda and getting the expert comfortable.

Part A: market and competition

1. What are the type of **[products/services]** available in the market today?
2. What are the market trends in **[industry]**?
3. How many realistic alternatives are there to your current **[...]** solution?
4. How are **[products/services]** usually priced?
5. What is the relative price level(s) of the main providers, ball park?
6. What criteria do you consider when purchasing **[product/service]**?
 - a. Which are the most important?

Part B: customer application

1. Which components of **[product/service]** do you use?
2. When did you start using **[product/service]**?
3. Which service providers/product vendors do you work with?
4. Why did you choose your current **[product/service]** provider?

5. How likely are you to recommend your current provider to someone looking to purchase [product/service]?
6. How often do you change [product/service] vendor?
 - a. What are the costs associated with switching?

Part C: pricing and demand

1. How have prices changed in the market?
2. Have there been any improvements in your [product/service] solution?
3. What is the relative price level of the [product/service] solution of the various major providers, i.e. [vendor #1, vendor #2...]?
 - a. How is the cost split on [component #1, e.g. service], [component #2, e.g. support].....?
4. In 1-3 years from now, do you see your organization purchasing more or less of [product/service] compared to today, please elaborate?

Conclusion:

Now before we hang up, is there anything you would like to add, something we forgot to ask about?

Thank you for your time.

Checklist:

- Have an agenda ready and know which estimates and answers you must obtain
- In general, strive to ask open-ended, probing questions
- Let the dialogue develop, i.e. going slightly off topic or changing the order is ok
- Be an active listener, make sure to let the expert know when something is clear or unclear
- Communicate your appreciation during the call, i.e. "this is helpful", "this is very interesting for our study" etc.
- Do not be afraid to interrupt if you feel the expert is beating around the bush instead of answering your questions
- If you feel the expert is evading key topics, an alternative to asking open-ended questions is to make a statement and ask for his view e.g. "Ok, so the best players in the industry perform at an EBITDA margin of max. 10%, do you agree?"

NORDIC KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS IN BRIEF

ABOUT

Based in Copenhagen, Denmark, Nordic Knowledge Partners (NKP) serves corporations, top-tier consulting firms and investment firms operating in and out of the Nordics. Leveraging a high-touch customized service, we help clients answer questions like:

- *What are the current dynamics and future outlook of this industry?*
- *How is the target perceived by its competitors and customers?*
- *How can I avoid any post-investment surprises?*

Our clients are professionals who find that evaluating new investment opportunities, doing due diligence work or exploring new markets with external support maximizes value, highlights potentially unseen pitfalls and saves many research hours.

HOW DO WE DO THIS

We connect you with subject-matter experts through direct confidential micro-consulting engagements - typically one hour on the phone. These individuals may include former executives of a specific company such as an M&A target, customers and competitors of a specific company, as well as function-, or geography-specific experts.

Most of the experts we engage with are not working as consultants nor are they actively looking for consulting work. As a result, we operate a high-touch personalized service model to ensure that all engagements are meaningful, saving time for both our clients and expert advisors.



Andreas von Buchwald

CEO & FOUNDER

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal line that ends in a small hook.