

Beyond the Survey:  
a practical approach to  
**INTERVIEWS** and **FOCUS GROUPS**

**Stephanie Gerding**

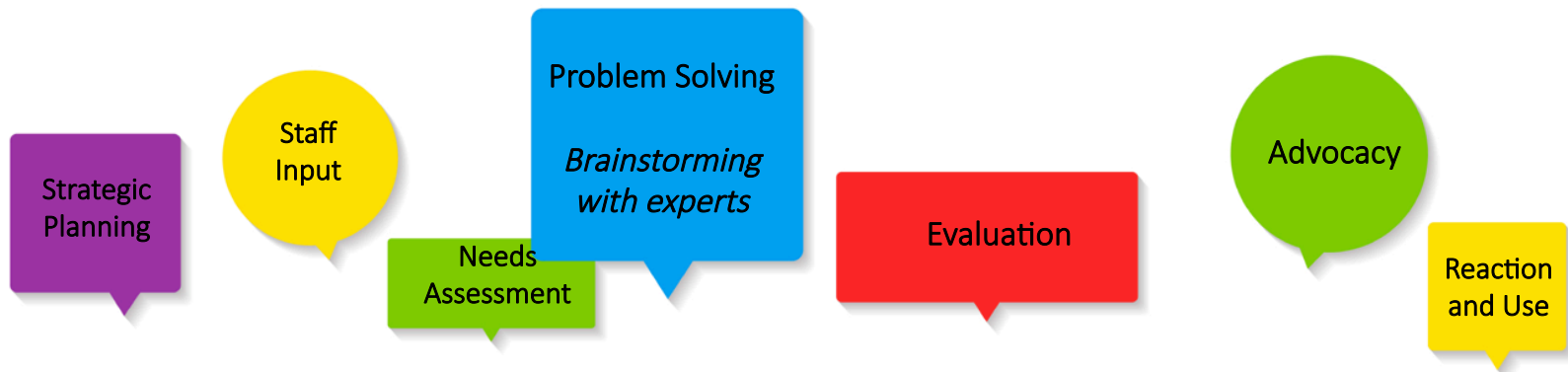


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November 17, 2015





Beyond the Survey:

a practical approach to

INTERVIEWS and FOCUS GROUPS

**“Why don’t you like  
surveys?”**



# Surveys

THE WAY I FEEL  
IS HARD TO  
QUANTIFY!

HOW HARD -  
ON A SCALE  
OF ONE TO  
TEN?





We Want to  
Hear From You

25 people

*"How can we  
better  
support you?"*



Support



*"How can we  
better  
support you?"*



the **final** question:

**“Share any additional  
thoughts or comments”**

*"How can we  
better  
support you?"*



three **multiple choice** questions:

1. What are we doing that's useful?
2. What are the barriers you encounter?
3. What additional support would help you?



## Follow these steps for success:

- 1) Goal/Purpose
- 2) Collect
- 3) Analyze/Synthesize
- 4) Package and Deliver



## Follow these steps for success:

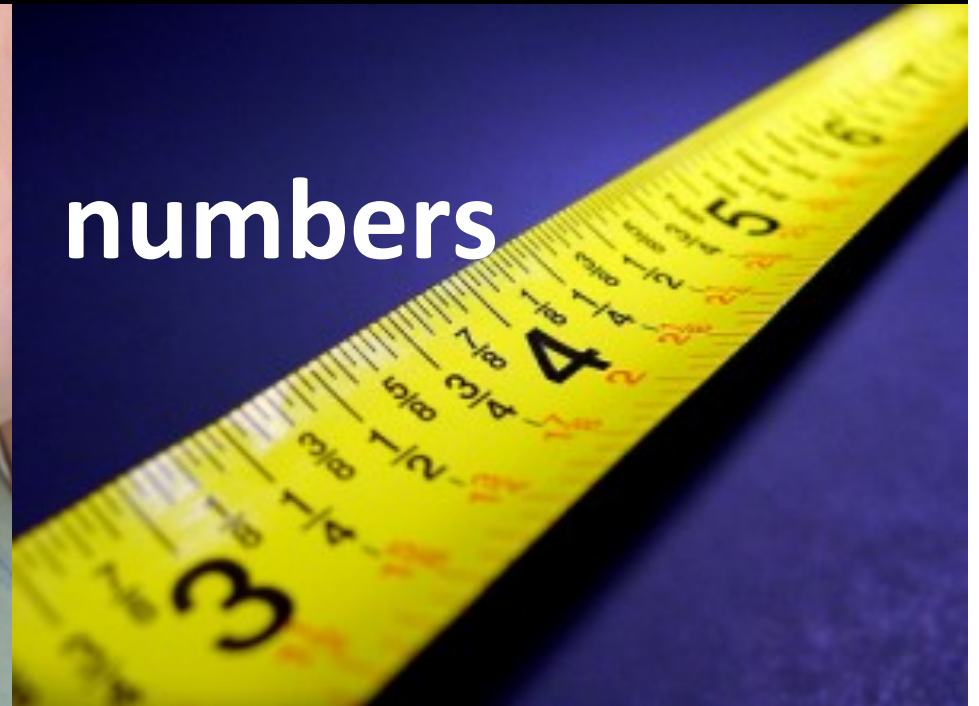
- 1) Goal/Purpose
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## qualitative vs quantitative research



words



numbers

# qualitative vs quantitative research

## words

why?

what do you  
think about...?

how do you  
feel about...?

## numbers

how many?

how much?

Which question is best answered by a qualitative research method?

- A. Which library programs were most popular last year?
- B. What types of library programs would the community like us to offer?
- C. How great is the interest in local history programming?



Which question is best answered by a qualitative research method?

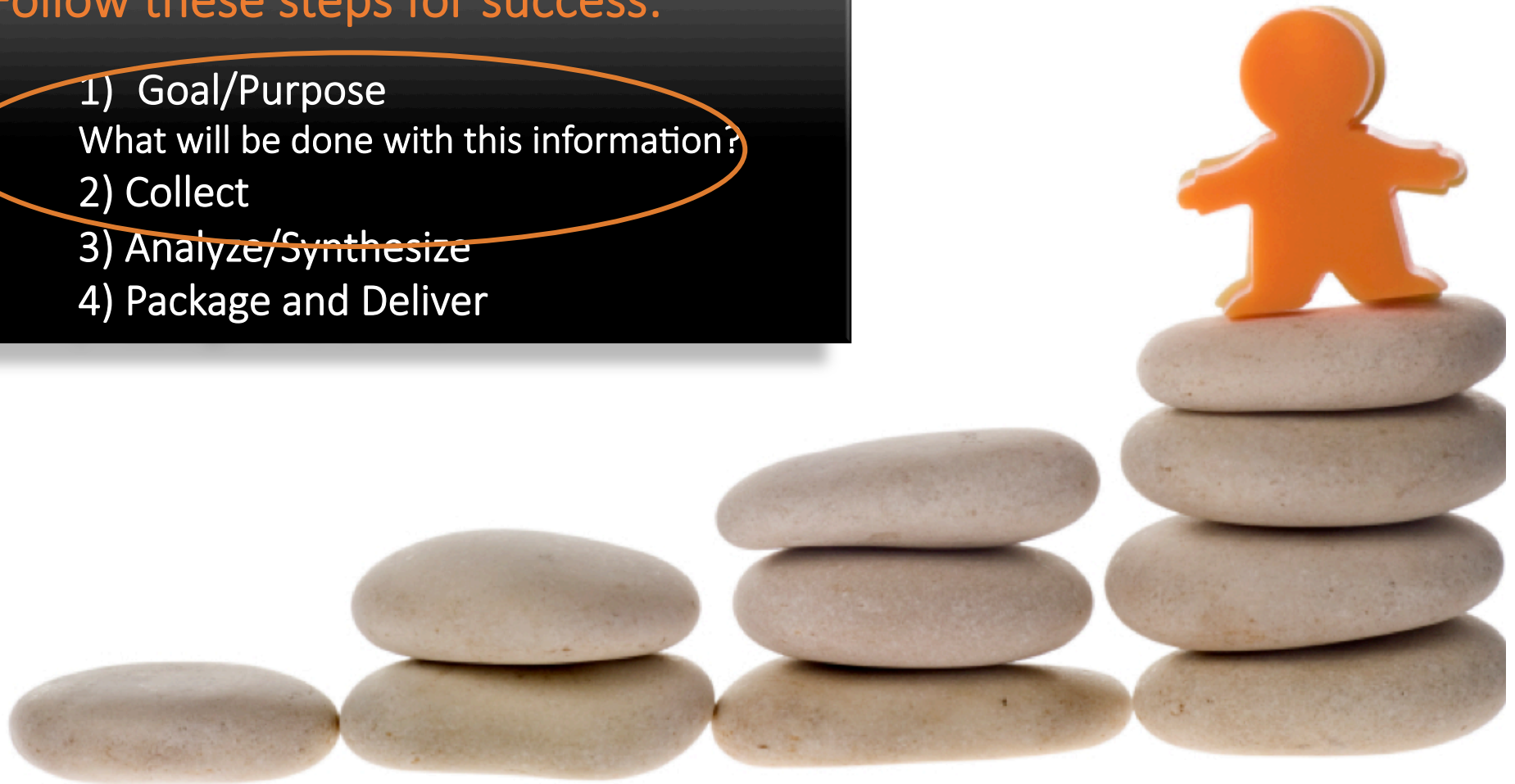
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## focus groups



focus groups

8 – 12  
participants



**focus groups**

**8 – 12  
participants**

**3 – 5 groups**

**focus groups**

**8 – 12  
participants**

**3 – 5 groups**

### **Organizational Needs Assessment**

- **Directors**
- **Staff > 10 years experience**
- **Staff < 10 years experience**
- **Advisory board**

focus groups

8 – 12  
participants

3 – 5 groups



### Organizational Needs Assessment

- Directors
- Staff > 10 years experience
- Staff < 10 years experience
- Advisory board

**focus groups**

**8 – 12  
participants**

**3 – 5 groups**

**saturation**

```
graph TD; A[focus groups] --> B[8 – 12 participants]; A --> C[3 – 5 groups]; C --> D[saturation];
```

The diagram illustrates the parameters for focus groups. A central blue box labeled 'focus groups' branches into two paths. The left path leads to a red box indicating '8 – 12 participants'. The right path leads to a green box indicating '3 – 5 groups', which then points via an arrow to an orange oval labeled 'saturation'.



focus group

moderator

focus group

moderator

skills and characteristics?



**focus group**

**moderator**

**assistant  
moderator**

**focus group**

**moderator**

**assistant  
moderator**

**questions**

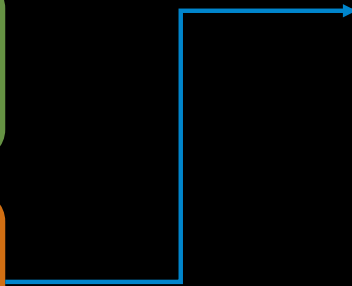
focus group

moderator

assistant  
moderator

questions

- icebreaker



**focus group**

**moderator**

**assistant  
moderator**

**questions**

- icebreaker
- open ended

## focus group

moderator

assistant  
moderator

questions

- icebreaker
- open ended
- short

## focus group

moderator

assistant  
moderator

questions

- icebreaker
- open ended
- short
- avoid bias

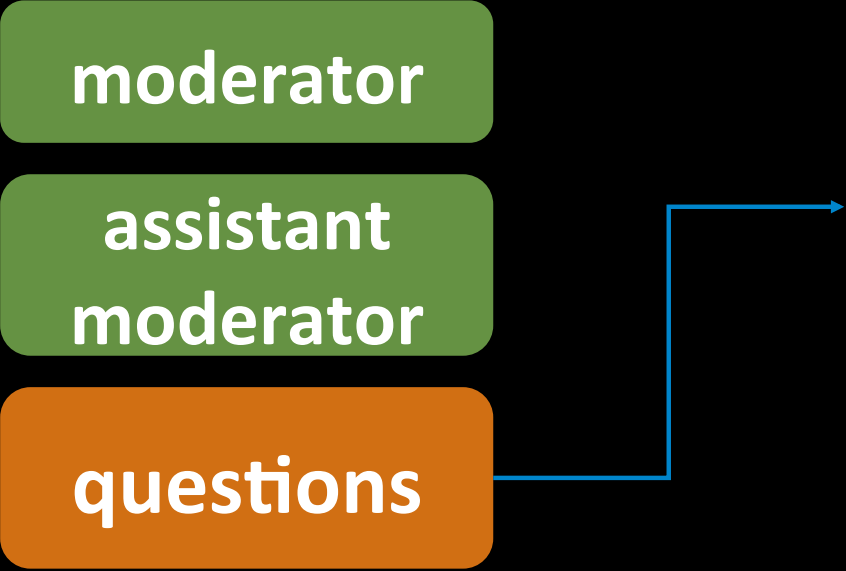


## focus group

moderator

assistant  
moderator

questions

- 
- ```
graph LR; M[moderator] --- AM[assistant moderator]; AM --- Q[questions]; Q --> L[• icebreaker<br/>• open ended<br/>• short<br/>• avoid bias<br/>• probing];
```
- icebreaker
  - open ended
  - short
  - avoid bias
  - probing

## focus group

moderator

assistant  
moderator

questions

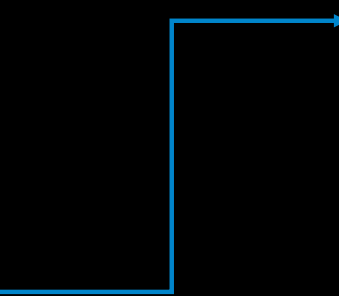
- icebreaker
- open ended
- short
- avoid bias
- probing
- follow-up

## focus group

moderator

assistant  
moderator

questions

- 
- icebreaker
  - open ended
  - short
  - avoid bias
  - probing
  - follow-up
  - summarize

## questions

Seniors Focus Group:

What are some issues facing you in this period of your life?

Community Leader Interview:

What services should the library offer?

Student Focus Group:

Do you know how to submit ILL requests through OCLC?

School Principal Interview:

What is the best time to offer programs for children?



**focus group**

**moderator**

**assistant  
moderator**

**questions**

**debrief**



**focus group**

**moderator**

**assistant  
moderator**

**questions**

**debrief**

**patterns  
and themes**

## interviews





## interviews



```
graph LR; A[interviews] --> B[• phone<br/>• face to face<br/>• Skype]
```

- phone
- face to face
- Skype

**interviews**

**interviewer**

**skills and characteristics?**

interviews

interviewer



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
Listen  
Carefully**

**interviews**

**interviewer**

**questions**

**debrief**

**patterns  
and themes**



interviews

or

focus groups

??

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**analyzing  
the data**

# analyzing the data

## Leadership Behavior and Attitudes Enabled by Eureka! Fellowship

|                                                               | Nearly + Completely Enabled<br>(n = 111) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                                                               | %                                        |
| Feeling more empowered to lead                                | 81                                       |
| Gaining leadership skills that have been used                 | 81                                       |
| Taking on greater leadership role day to day                  | 81                                       |
| Taking more risks                                             | 79                                       |
| Positive orientation to change                                | 73                                       |
| Positively receiving criticism from colleagues                | 70                                       |
| Engaging community partnerships                               | 69                                       |
| Employing strategic viewpoint                                 | 69                                       |
| Taking on greater training role                               | 63                                       |
| Effectively understanding customer and community perspectives | 62                                       |
| Provide constructive feedback to colleagues                   | 62                                       |



## Summary of Results|

### Question 1: What are some issues facing you in this period of your life?

|                                                   | Group One                                                                                                             | Group Two                                                                                      | Group Three                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Health                                            | Not eligible for Medicare/Medicaid; Costs of Cobra insurance options; Working part-time jobs to qualify for insurance | Changing your lifestyle because of yourself or others; Worrying about the health of loved ones |                                                                                     |
| Staying involved/Staying current/Making - contact | Need to get out of the house; Need to connect with other people; No longer have built-in work friends                 | Not as many opportunities to meet new people; Reduced circle of friends                        | Want to learn computer skills; Keep abreast of world events in order to participate |
| More Free Time                                    | Feeling of civic responsibility – want to give something back                                                         | How to manage time; no free time                                                               | n/a                                                                                 |
| Financial Issues                                  | 401K, annuities-- What does it all                                                                                    | Making ends meet/Living on a                                                                   | Have experienced unexpected changes                                                 |



**analyzing  
the data**



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**Report it**



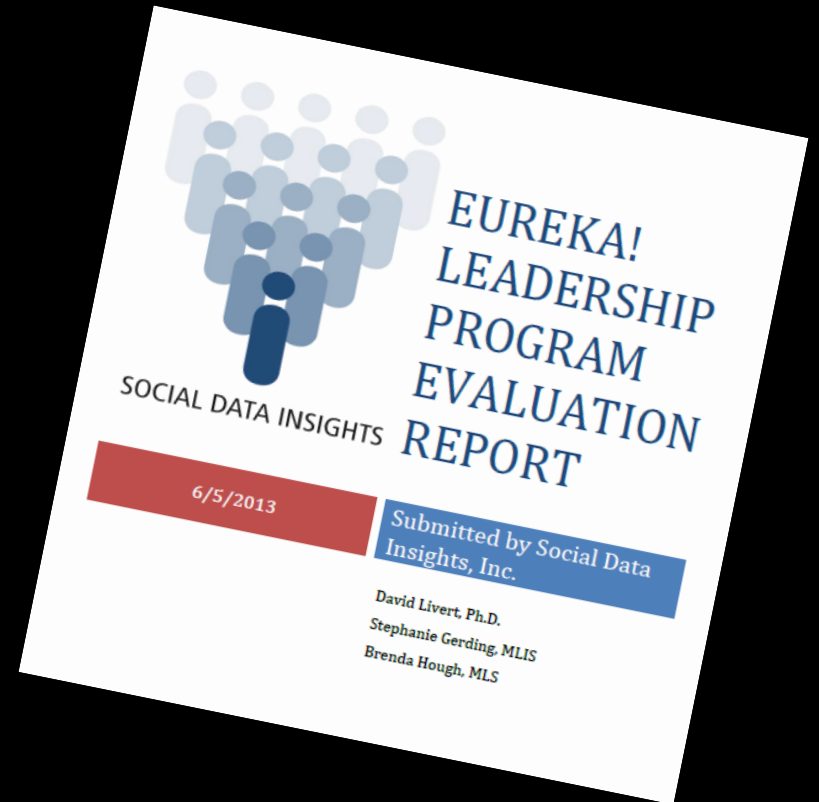
**reporting  
the data**

**Major themes**

**Key findings**

**Recommendations**

**“Quotes...”**



reporting  
the data

Key findings

**Share** it!

Major themes

Recommendations

**3.7 million**  
**visitors**

## BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Built by the people and dedicated to the advancement of learning. Free to all.



**1** Central Library in Copley Square + **24** branches



### Innovations:



- Bibliocycle
- seed libraries
- streaming audiobooks, movies, music, and television shows
- digital magazines
- mobile catalog and app



**23 million** items

books, maps, drawings, music scores, photographs, prints, atlases, postcards

100,000 items

Statistics and Information from FY2014

**ADAPT**

**GRANTS**

**ADVOCACY**





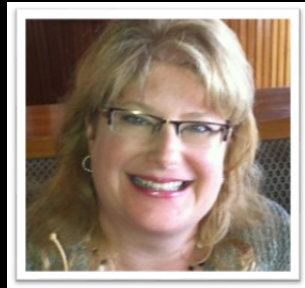
what will you  
do **NEXT**?





# Thank You

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