

Phone Interview Procedures for Library Directors

Before the call

- Review all e-mail correspondence with interviewee, noting any issues that may need attention during the interview.
- Review interviewee's survey responses for anything that may be may need attention during the interview.
- Note the interviewee's institution type and the project completion date, to determine whether there are any questions relating those issues that need attention during the interview.

The interview call

- (STATEMENT A) Thank interviewee for taking time to talk about library space planning at his or her institution. Confirm survey information about formal title of interviewee(s).
- (STATEMENT B) Say: "I expect our conversation will last 45 to 60 minutes. Do you have that much time?" [Answer]
- (STATEMENT C) Say: "I want to start by emphasizing that I will treat this phone interview as confidential. It will be aggregated, where appropriate. None of it will be reported in a way that enables readers to identify you or your institution, except with your permission."
- (STATEMENT D) Say: "My wish is to understand as clearly as possible what you say and to depend as little as possible on my memory for that understanding. So, if I may have your permission, I will record our conversation. Do you agree to this recording?" If permission is denied, say that I respect the interviewee's decision and skip the next step.
- (STATEMENT E) Turn on recorder and read in the following information: "[Interviewee's name] is here talking with Scott Bennett about library space planning issues. Mr./Ms. Xxx is [official title] at [institution] and we are discussing a library space project completed there in [year date]. The interview is taking place on [day of week, date, time]."
- (QUESTION F) Ask: "Now, let me start by asking you what your most important goals were in undertaking this project. You are likely to have achieved all sorts of things, but which few of them were most vital to you? [Answer.] If I were to ask this same question of your academic dean or provost, or your president, do you think those persons would have the same answer as you?"
- (QUESTION G) Ask: "Is there anything else about your project that you think I should understand at the outset of our conversation?"
- (QUESTION H) Say: "You indicated that among the possible questions posed for this conversation, numbers [give numbers provided by interviewee] are probably most pertinent to your project. Let us turn to Question xx." [Proceed to work through the questions. Probe responses where they are not clear or where further development of the response appears valuable.]
- (QUESTION I) Say (optionally, depending on time and pertinence): "We've come to the end of the questions you identified as most pertinent. There are some others that are of special interest to me. With your permission, I'll ask these questions. If they really are not pertinent to your project, please just say so." [Ask these questions. Probe responses where they are not clear or where further development of the response appears valuable.]
- (QUESTION J) Ask: "I will be seeking the views of selected chief academic officers about library planning. Did the chief academic officer at your institution, or a deputy, play a significant role in developing your library project? [If yes,] Would you give me the name and e-mail address of that person?"

- (QUESTION K) Ask: “It is time to draw our conversation to a close. Is there anything else you would like to say about your library project or anything you have already said that you would particularly like to emphasize? [Answer] Is there anything you would like to ask me?”
- (STATEMENT L) Say: “You have been most generous with your time and in sharing your views with me. What you have told me will help deepen my understanding of the survey data I have from you and 240 other respondents. I will be able to report on that data in a more nuanced way because of this conversation. I am most grateful for your help.”

After the call

- Selectively transcribe the interview. Summarize narrative points, following the actual course of the interview. Use question labels (e.g., Question 6 from the interview script, or Question F in the interview call procedures, above) to indicate what questions are guiding the discussion at any given point of the interview. Focus the verbatim transcription on value statements, perceptive comments, fresh formulations, telling points, etc., along with enough of the context of the conversation to establish clearly the meaning of the portion actually transcribed. Quoted remarks should adhere very closely to the words and the informal tone of the speaker, though false starts, verbal hesitations, uncertain sentence structures, and some other features of conversational English may be regularized to be suitable for written expression. [The following was not done; it did not seem necessary or productive after the first dozen or so interviews.] After the first half-dozen interviews, listen again to the tapes and adjust the judgment standards for deciding what to transcribe.
- During the transcription process, be alert to any opportunities to categorize or aggregate responses. Where useful, devise summary statements that report the dominant character or interest of the interview. [The following was not done; it did not seem necessary or productive after the first dozen or so interviews.] After the first half-dozen interviews, develop (if appropriate) a check sheet to use in remaining interviews. Continually revise the check sheet as the interviews go on, and listen again to the tapes to identify and tabulate (as appropriate) information from otherwise completed interviews.
- Make any adjustments to this procedures sheet that may be needed as the interviews proceed.