Key Informant Interviews

Writing the Introduction for Key Informant Interviews

The introduction to any interview serves several purposes:

1. Helps establish the nature of the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent. For example, in interviews dealing with sensitive information it may be important to provide assurances of confidentiality.

2. Establishes a context for the questions and the respondent's answers.

3. Establishes the credibility of the interview. This is important in order to receive respondent cooperation and high quality data. If the interview or interviewer lacks credibility, the respondent may not provide complete or thoughtful answers.

4. Provides a "hook" for the respondent. That is, an incentive or reason for cooperating. The "hook" or incentive may be material (as in cash payments) or intrinsic as in convincing the respondent that their cooperation will help lead to a better community. Generally that the person was selected to be interviewed can be part of the "hook". For example, "You have been identified by our planning committee as a person who can provide us with special insights regarding our community." Or, "Reverend Brown recommended you as someone who can provide our committee with special insights regarding our community."

Parts of the introduction:

1. Interviewer introduction. The interviewer introduces her or himself.

2. Thanks the respondent for consenting to give the interview.

3. Establishes sponsorship for the interview. (This may include an explanation of what CBS is.)

4. Provides a statement of purpose for the interview.

5. Explains what will happen to the information or why the respondent's cooperation is important.

Elements of the introduction should be included in any contact with the respondent. This would include contact prior to the interview by telephone or mail. However, the interviewer should "repeat" the information as an introduction to the interview itself.

A good introduction will gain the interest and cooperation of the respondent without biasing the respondent's answers.