

Stakeholder interviews are an excellent way to get a large amount of good qualitative data. Processing interviews does not just have to involve quotes - by indexing and coding interviews, you can gain more meaning from them through the process of categorisation. For this to happen, interviews should generally be recorded, as it is unlikely you will be able to write everything down as the interview happens.

Step One: Transcribe and clean the interview

Make a full written record of the interview digitally. Then edit the transcript so that it reads as full sentences and as what one would consider to represent standard written formal English. For example, you may need to remove informal phrases such as "ain't" which interviewees may include in informal speech but would be written down as "is not" or "are not".

"The plan to build in more seating and planters in the square came about from a recce to another town. We saw how people had reclaimed the space and thought - yeah, we want that. In the end we had to reduce the amount we wanted cos we realised it would cost too much. However we think the overall look is great."

"The plan to build more seating and planters in the square came about from a recce to another town. We saw how people had reclaimed the space and thought we'd like that. In the end we had to reduce the amount [of street furniture] we wanted because we realised it would cost too much. However we think the overall look is great."

Step Two: Create an index of key themes

Read through the clean transcript again and make a note of the key themes the interview covers. These would be ideas or concepts that come up more than once or which the interviewee tends to emphasise. For example in an interview about regeneration of a town centre, the interviewee may find key themes on agents of change, aesthetics, local viewpoints, economic costs etc. Each theme identified should be given a number code.

1. elements of plan
2. economic costs
3. social benefits
4. environmental benefits
5. agents of change
6. aesthetics

Step Three: Coding the interview

The interview can then be coded against these key themes. Every sentence, part of sentence or clause in the interview transcript should be assigned at least one number code, relating it to one or more of the themes. Then you can see how frequently certain themes are discussed compared to others as well as find areas of consensus throughout the interview.

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