

# — INTERVIEW RULES



**Ask why.** Even when you think you know the answer, ask people why they do or say things. The answers will sometimes surprise you. A conversation started from one question should go on as long as it needs.

**Never say “usually” when asking a question.** Instead, ask about a specific instance or occurrence, such as “tell me about the last time you \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Encourage stories.** Whether or not the stories people tell are true, they reveal how they think about the world. Ask questions that get people telling stories.

**Look for inconsistencies.** Sometimes what people say and what they do are different. These inconsistencies often hide interesting insights.

**Pay attention to nonverbal cues.** Be aware of body language and emotions.

**Don’t be afraid of silence.** Interviewers often feel the need to ask another question when there is a pause. If you allow for silence, a person can reflect on what they’ve just said and may reveal something deeper.

**Don’t suggest answers to your questions.** Even if they pause before answering, don’t help them by suggesting an answer. This can unintentionally get people to say things that agree with your expectations.

**Ask questions neutrally.** “What do you think about buying gifts for your spouse?” is better question than “Don’t you think shopping is great?” because the first question doesn’t imply that there is a right answer.

**Don’t ask binary questions.** Binary questions can be answered in a word; you want to host a conversation built upon stories.

**Make sure you’re prepared to capture.** Always interview in pairs. If this is not possible, you should use a voice recorder—it is impossible to properly engage a user and take detailed notes at the same time.

**Summarize your notes.** Ask your interviewee for validation and / or additional comments.

**Ask about missing topics.** Write down things that are important for your interview partner but have not been covered during the interview.

**Ask for examples.** Ask your interviewee for artifacts that you can take with you as examples (e.g. screenshots, reports, websites etc.)

**Say thank you.** Thank your interview partner for his / her time and ask about their interest to be informed about the ongoings of your project. It could be valuable to re-invite your interview partner during Test Phase or to let them review the insights of your interviews.

# — RECOMMENDATIONS

## Before you start...

- The interviewee is in control and can take a break from the interview at any time
- The answers are strictly confidential and anonymous and do not have any negative impact on the person
- Answers will not be judged - there is no good/bad or right/wrong
- Every opinion is meaningful and will be taken seriously
- Ask the interview partner to think out loud and share their thoughts
- Ask for permission to record the interview or take pictures
- Clarify potential legal issues in order to evaluate and use the insights from the interviews
- Give the participant a possibility to ask questions
- Start with the interview and listen carefully