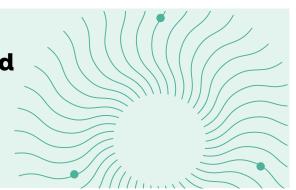# Voice of Stakeholder: Method Selection Guide

A practical guide to choosing the right approach for your voice of stakeholder feedback

Choosing between interviews, surveys, or a combination isn't about finding the "best" method—it's about matching your approach to your stakeholders, resources, and objectives. The wrong methodology can sink an otherwise well-planned initiative, while the right fit maximizes response rates, insight quality, and stakeholder engagement. This guide provides decision frameworks, resource requirements, and practical guidance for selecting interviews, surveys, or a mixed-method approach that delivers the intelligence you need.

Choosing your approach

Selecting the right methodology – at a glance

Factor	Interviews	Surveys
Stakeholder Level	C-Suite, Board	Mid-level managers, regular users
Group Size	<15 people	>30 people
Depth Needed	Complex topics, nuanced feedback	Standardized metrics, benchmarking
Timeline	4-8 weeks available	6-10 weeks available
Resources	Strong facilitation skills in-team	Survey design/analysis expertise
Geographic Spread	Single location or senior enough for video	Multiple locations

What you need to know: Web surveys

What's involved

- Design Phase (2 weeks): Question writing, programming, testing
- Fieldwork (2-3 weeks): Launch, reminders, monitoring
- Analysis (1-2 weeks): Data cleaning, analysis, reporting

Resources required

- ☐ Survey platform
- ☐ Design expertise
- ☐ Statistical analysis capability
- ☐ Communication channels for distribution
- ☐ Time for 2-3 reminder campaigns

Best for these stakeholders

- High-volume business users
- Geographically dispersed teams
- Middle management
- Groups where anonymity encourages honesty
- Anyone comfortable with digital formats

What you need to know: Interviews

What's involved

- Setup Phase (1-2 weeks): Schedule, prep guides
- Fieldwork (2+ weeks): Conduct interviews – dependent on availability, senior stakeholders can take longer to schedule
- Analysis (1-2 weeks): Synthesis, theme identification

Resources required

- ☐ Skilled interviewer(s)
- ☐ 30-60 minutes per stakeholder
- ☐ Note-taking/recording capability
- ☐ Calendar coordination support
- ☐ Analysis time (2-3 hours per interview)

Best for these stakeholders

- Board members and C-Suite
- Key strategic partners
- Influential skeptics or critics
- Complex relationship holders
- Anyone needing personal touch

Side-by-side comparison

Aspect	Interviews	Surveys
Pros	• Rich, detailed insights • Flexibility to explore topics • Builds relationships • Higher response rate for senior stakeholders • Can clarify misunderstandings	• Scalable to large numbers • Standardized data • Anonymous option • Cost-effective per response • Easy benchmarking • Statistical analysis possible
Cons	• Time-intensive • Costly per response • Potential interviewer bias • Difficult to compare responses • Not anonymous	• Lower response rates • No opportunity to clarify • Requires technical setup • Risk of survey fatigue • Less depth
Minimum Viable	5 interviews	30 responses
Credibility Target	10-15 interviews	100+ responses
Typical Duration	30-60 minutes	10-15 minutes

Mixed method approach

When to combine both

- Different stakeholder groups need different approaches
- You want depth and breadth
- Phased approach: interviews to explore, survey to validate
- Resources allow for both

Making mixed methods work

- Align core questions - Ensure 3-5 key metrics (e.g., overall satisfaction) appear in both formats
- Sequence strategically - Often interviews first to inform survey design
- Plan integrated analysis - Combine quantitative and qualitative insights
- Set expectations - Be clear that different groups get different formats

Sample mixed approach

Stakeholder Group	Method	Target #
C-Suite	45-min interview	5 to 8
Business Unit Leaders	30-min interview or survey choice	10 to 15
Regular Legal Users	10-min web survey	100+
Occasional Users	5-min pulse survey	50+

Your method decision checklist

For interviews:

☐ Do you have 4-8 weeks?
☐ Is your stakeholder group <15 people?
☐ Do you need deep, nuanced insights?
☐ Do you have strong facilitation skills available?
☐ Can you coordinate complex scheduling?

Score: __ /5 (3+ = Interviews recommended)

For surveys:

☐ Do you have 30+ stakeholders to reach?
☐ Do you need standardized, comparable data?
☐ Do you have survey design expertise?
☐ Is anonymity important for honest feedback?
☐ Do you want to track metrics over time?

Score: __ /5 (3+ = Survey recommended)

If both score high → **Mixed method approach**
If neither scores high → **Reconsider your readiness**

Remember: The best methodology is the one you can execute well with your available resources. Start with what's achievable and expand from there.

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