Delphi Method

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The Delphi method is used during idea assessment to reach consensus regarding which is most beneficial. The technique relies extensively on the opinion of individual experts who anonymously complete questionnaires individually. Their answers are then summarised and collated by a facilitator who creates a report-type document based on the initial results. In this way, the experts are given an opportunity to revise their answers from the earlier round. The process stops after a pre-determined number of rounds or once a certain level of consensus has been reached. The Delphi method allows for consensus to be reached regarding the usefulness or priority of an idea, combines the knowledge of experts from multiple domains, incorporates the views of numerous parties without requiring their physical presence, and avoids the dominance of discussions by certain participants.

Using the 'Delphi Method'

Step 1: A team of experts is created. It is beneficial that they represent a number of domains related to the problem and have varying levels of experience. The number of experts depends on the scope of the problem and available resources.

Step 2: The problem is clearly formulated and described in combination with ideas proposed initially during the idea generation and capture phase.

Step 3: During the first round, participants are asked to anonymously and independently provide a selection or ranking of the different ideas and an explanation of their preferences.

Step 4: The results are reviewed and assessed by the facilitator. The answers provided by various participants are reconciled and a report is returned with options for new idea rankings.

Step 5: For the next round, participants review the summated opinion of all 'experts' and note where their viewpoint deviates from the group.

Step 6: The facilitator again collects, analyses, and reconciles responses. Depending on the consistency of opinions, more rounds can follow until a sufficient level of consensus is agreed.

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Instructions for Use

1. Select a team of experts that represent different functions or departments of the organisation.

2. Describe the problem to the expert group in addition to ideas proposed during an idea generation session.

3. Ask the expert group to independently rank these ideas and provide an explanation for their ranking.

4. Review the rankings provided by the expert group and consolidate them into a single ranking representative of all experts.

5. Experts review the consolidated ranking and detail where their view diverges.

6. Collect, analyse, and consolidate the responses collected from the previous step. Depending on the consistency of opinions, determine whether to continue the process or whether a sufficient level of consensus has been reached.

☐ Continue process (Return to step 4)	☐ Sufficient consensus reached

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