

# Qualitative Interview Techniques

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**Abstract:** This document describes the use of qualitative methods to conduct exploratory interviews for the investigation of applied business research questions. The document focuses on a description of gathering qualitative data in one-on-one interviews. The aspect of consistency is addressed through the development of an interview protocol, which for each investigation is contingent upon the specific research question. This idea is explored through a description of research projects which have employed an interview protocol. The projects described here all employed Narrative Inquiry to document the stories of research participants' interpretations of their experiences related to the research question. The specific interview protocol is presented and it is shown how the protocol serves to address the project's research question. This document concludes with a description of how these techniques may be employed, in general, to contribute to the exploratory investigation of a research topic in business and management studies.

**Keywords:** qualitative research, interviews protocol, Narrative Inquiry

## 1. Introduction

If a researcher wants to delve into a subject area that is relatively new or that has not been thoroughly investigated in the past then an approach should be adopted which facilitates an exploration of emerging constructs. This approach usually means the adoption of a qualitative perspective. Thus, data will be gathered relative to a research question and emerging themes will be identified within the data. It becomes important to ensure the technique used to gather this type of data will facilitate subsequent analysis. Therefore the technique must support a consistent approach across a number of data gathering incidents. It must also, however, allow for flexibility in the response of the research participants. Various types of responses to the conundrum of consistency versus flexibility are discussed in this document.

This document describes the use of qualitative methods to conduct exploratory interviews for the investigation of applied business research questions. To begin, the case is made for adopting a qualitative perspective. It should be noted that a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative versus a quantitative perspective is not considered within the scope of this document. Next, the document will focus on gathering qualitative data in one-on-one interviews. The aspect of consistency will be addressed through the development of an interview protocol, which for each investigation will be contingent upon the specific research question. This idea will be explored through a description of research projects which have employed an interview protocol. The projects described here all employed Narrative Inquiry to document the stories of research participants' interpretations of their experiences related to the research question. The subjects of the four projects are as follows:

- Voluntary turnover of information systems professionals
- Information systems and small business
- The changing role of Chief Information Officers
- Characteristics of multi-generation small businesses

A specific interview protocol was developed for each of the above four projects. It is important to note that each protocol should serve to address the project's research question. This document will conclude with a description of how these techniques may be employed, in general, to

contribute to the exploratory investigation of a research topic in business and management studies.

## **2. Qualitative Approach**

Qualitative researchers conduct exploratory investigations which result in a close relationship with research participants. Research questions are posed which facilitate in depth discussions with participants within their natural surroundings. These discussions involve the researcher attempting to document the meanings attributed to a situation or the research question by the research participant. It becomes important that a consistent approach be taken during the data gathering process to enable subsequent analysis. That is, a technique should be adopted that provides consistency across a number of interviews. However, it remains important because of the exploratory nature of the investigations that the technique also allow flexibility. The research participants must not be influenced in how they respond to a research question or the content of their response.

## **3. Conducting Interviews**

Qualitative exploratory interviews are usually conducted one-on-one between the researcher and the research participant. This interaction allows the research participant to tell their story about the area under investigation. An approach which facilitates this interaction is found in Narrative Inquiry, which is, "... the symbolic presentation of a sequence of events connected by subject matter and related by time" (Scholes, 1981:205). Relating the events to a sequence or the chronological passage of time facilitates recollection (Bruner, 1990; Vendelo, 1998; and Czarniawska-Joerges, 1995). Recollection is also more memorable when the story related by the research participant is about a personal experience (Tulving, 1972; and Swap et al, 2001).

The Narrative Inquiry approach has been employed in research projects, such as: behavioral science (Rappaport, 1993), fiction and film (Chatman, 1978), strategic management (Barry and Elmes, 1997), development of information systems (Hirschheim and Newman, 1991), and design process of information systems (Boland and Day, 1989).

McCracken's (1988) 'Long Interview' technique may be used in order to provide some structure to the interview, yet allowing research participants to reflect on their personal experiences in a relatively unbiased and free-flowing manner. The four-step technique involves the following:

- Gaining an awareness of the relevant literature
- Introspectively understanding one's own awareness of the research question
- Conducting the interview during which research participants have an opportunity to tell their story
- Conducting analyses of the interview data to identify emerging themes.

During the course of the interview research participants are asked to reflect upon their past work experiences. Initially, "grand tour" (McCracken, 1988) questions are asked. These questions are general in nature and non-directive in manner, allowing the research participant to specify much of the substance or perspective of the interview. Throughout this section of the interview, "floating prompt" (McCracken, 1988) questions are asked. The nature of these questions depends upon the content of each interview, and, generally, relate to the researcher's decision to pursue a thread of discussion in more detail. Specific, or "planned prompt" (McCracken, 1988) questions are asked near the end of the interview in order to address issues gleaned from the literature or previous investigations.

The research participants are encouraged, through the research method, to thoroughly describe their interpretations of a specific experience. This process identifies important factors grounded within that experience.

Collecting and analyzing qualitative data requires a significant amount of effort (Luna-Reyes and Andersen, 2003). The analysis of transcripts involves a thorough review of the contents in order to identify common themes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The discovery of categories and their

revision based upon further review of transcripts entails an iterative process. Thompson (1997) has suggested that interpretation of textual data, or narratives, is iterative, and includes two stages. The first stage relates to determining an understanding of each narrative. The second stage is where the researcher identifies emerging themes from amongst a number of narratives. Thus, data analysis involves searching for emerging themes, first within an interview and then across a series of interviews. The search for emerging themes is common practice in qualitative research (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and involves the interplay between data and the emerging themes. The process begins with a careful reading of the transcript, where noteworthy phrases or sentences are highlighted. Passages that seem conceptually linked are then considered together and descriptions of the theme or pattern that the groupings share are developed. Subsequently, the data are reread to identify further evidence that supports or challenges the emerging themes. This second review may lead to the identification of new themes, or a reclassification of existing themes. The data reduction methods of Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) may be employed, in a similar manner as Orlikowski (1993). Initially, each interview transcript is reviewed to identify emerging themes. This is known as "open coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). As more interviews are conducted categories are identified with supporting concepts, supported by data within the transcripts. This process is known as "axial coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The role of the researcher throughout this process is, "... to be open to possibilities afforded by the text rather than projecting a predetermined system of meanings onto the textual data" (Thompson, 1997:441).

#### **4. Projects**

##### *Voluntary Turnover of Information Systems Professionals*

Hunter and Tan (2001) employed Narrative Inquiry to explore voluntary turnover decisions of information systems professionals. They interviewed a number of information systems professionals at various stages of their careers to determine what considerations led these individuals to change jobs. In order to ground the discussion in the research participants' personal experiences, individual resumes were employed as the main instrument to guide the interview and to elicit the narratives.

The resume was employed to assist research participants to reflect upon their work experiences and report these experiences in a sequential account of events as they transpired throughout their careers. The resume approach has been used previously in information systems research (Young, 2000). The resume is readily available and an untapped source of data (Dex, 1991), as well as acting as a milestone reference to assist human memory recall (Baker, 1991).

With reference to the research participant's resume, questions were asked which focused the discussion on activities of the current position, why the research participant found the current position attractive and why the research participant left a previous position. This process was followed in reverse chronological order employing the research participant's resume until the time of initial entry into the IS profession.

Based upon the transcripts of the interviews, common themes were identified. These themes represented two common trends for the profession. First, the information systems professionals interviewed tended to associate more closely with the profession than with a specific organization. Second, there was an increased desire to remain current with technology and to have experience with the leading edge technologies. Hunter and Tan (2001) were able to provide recommendations and suggest implications for various stakeholders, including information systems professionals, and organizations.

The IS professionals involved in this project tended to make voluntary turnover decisions associated with Path 3 of the unfolding model of voluntary turnover (Lee and Mitchell, 1994; and Mitchell et al, 2001), which entails a mild shock creating minimal dissatisfaction leading to an eventual voluntary turnover decision. The IS professionals who participated in this project seemed very interested in gaining experience and obtaining skills they feel are important for them

to advance in their careers. They also seemed less concerned with corporate commitment and more concerned about commitment to their careers.

This research project represents an innovative application of the Narrative Inquiry approach to reveal factors associated with research participants' decisions regarding voluntary turnover. The Narrative Inquiry approach was supported in this project by the Long Interview technique, which within the techniques framework was based upon the research participants' resumes. This procedure grounded the data obtained in the interviews within the personal experiences of the research participants, which in turn supports the validity of the reflective biographies.

#### *Information Systems and Small Business*

This investigation (Hunter et al, 2005a; and Hunter et al, 2005b) adopted an international perspective to document the use of information systems by small business.

There were two objectives for conducting this project. The first objective was to further investigate the unique aspects of the use of information systems by small business. It has been identified previously that small business is unique from large business (Belich and Dubinsky, 1999; and Pollard and Hayne, 1998). Small business is affected by resource poverty (Thong et al, 1994). Small business managers lack time, finances, and human resource skills. Consequently their approach to managing is to make minimum commitments with an emphasis on immediately addressing opportunities or resolving problems (Stevenson, 1999).

The second objective (Hunter, 2005b) was to try to identify if there is an international difference in how information systems are being used by small business. The plan was to incorporate experiences from a wide variety of geographical areas. This international perspective was taken in order to try to identify any variation in the use of information systems by small business.

Potential regional researchers were asked to adopt and follow an interview protocol, included here as appendix A. The first part of the interview related to obtaining demographic data for the small business. The second part of the interview attempted to focus the discussion on the small business use of information systems. Questions in this part of the interview were developed in order to try to identify how information systems were employed to support the small business. Also, the regional researchers were encouraged to include any data gathering which they thought might be appropriate for their specific region. It was anticipated that regional data would be consolidated into a large international database. The regional data and the consolidated data could then be used for comparative purposes. The construction of the database allowed easy sharing of the consolidated data with the regional researchers so they could then conduct any further data analysis they felt may be necessary.

The first objective, gathering data from as geographically diverse sources as possible, was not as successful as had been hoped. While a number of researchers had expressed interest in the project at the beginning, several for various reasons, were unable to fully participate in the project. In the end, five researchers participated fully in the project. There was one from Canada, one from Portugal, and three from the USA. A total of thirty three interviews were conducted.

The second objective that of obtaining a better picture of the use of information systems by small business across the globe, was more successful. It was very interesting to find that there was not much variability based upon geography. There was, however, more variability relative to business type and size. Typically, most of the responses received to the earlier questions about what "information systems" meant and how they were employed led to responses addressing the functional and support nature of information systems. As anticipated, most of the applications of information systems were accounting or administrative related functions used to support daily operations. Most of the small businesses did not have a strategic plan. However, for those that did it was typically related to an annual review of their information systems budget. Most of the research participants felt their information systems were delivering on expectations and that the

organization had been helped in the functional area. Where they identified obstacles, they were mainly about skill deficiencies or time constraints. This supports the concept of resource poverty (Thong et al, 1994) outlined earlier. Surprisingly, the cost of information systems was not considered by many research participants as an obstacle.

This project represents the first of its kind which has attempted to conduct simultaneous and joint investigations into the use of information systems by small business across a broad geographical area. The lessons learned both about conducting these types of projects and from the data gathered, will prove valuable in subsequent more extensive replications. Thus, this project represents the first step in the long journey of taking an international perspective to investigating the use of information systems by small business.

#### *The Changing Role of Chief Information Officers*

This research project investigated the emerging and evolving role of the CIO. The goal of this research project was to document issues identified by the CIO and to explore these issues relative to various corporate and national contexts. In-depth exploratory interviews document major issues address by the CIO. Issues are identified based upon a chronological discussion of the CIO's career. In general, the role of the CIO is to manage information technology for the benefit of the firm. The activities performed by the CIO will have a direct impact on the firm's bottom line. It is further incumbent upon the CIO to ensure that the use of information technology is aligned with the business goals and objectives of the firm.

The research questions addressed in this research include the following:

- Personal and family history
- Company background
- Why the current position was accepted
- Issues
  - Initial
  - Current
  - Future
- Dealing with users
- Deciding on investments
- General comments about being a CIO

An interview protocol, included here as Appendix B, served as a discussion guide for the conversations with each CIO. The personal and family history as well as the background material of the company provided some context within which to view the CIO comments. The remainder of the interview protocol attempted to document CIO comments about issues the CIO felt were significant.

Before the interviews could be conducted it was necessary to find individuals who were interested in the project and who would be willing to volunteer to participate. Through various personal contacts individuals were sent information about the project. Those who responded expressing an interest in the project were contacted and provided further information. Individual interviews were scheduled with each CIO who volunteered. Some were conducted face-to-face, while others were carried out via the telephone. In all cases the interviews were audio taped. Transcripts were prepared from the audio tapes and sent to the respective participant for review. For the most part any corrections related to spellings of names or towns; or because of inaudible comments made during the interview.

Emerging themes were identified by analyzing individual interview transcripts and then by comparing the themes from other interview transcripts. This is a common and accepted practice when conducting qualitative research (Miles and Huberman, 1994) to support the interpretation of textual data (Thompson, 1997).

The data obtained from all the interviews was analyzed by employing Mintzberg's (1973) framework of Managerial Roles. The framework was adopted here because it represents a comprehensive approach to analyzing the roles of senior managers. The framework includes ten highly interrelated roles which are grouped into three categories. Research (Kmetz and Willower, 1982; Martinko and Gardiner, 1990; and Sproull, 1981) has shown that the roles outlined in the framework apply across functional areas and hierarchical levels.

In general, the emerging themes related to either management issues or technology issues. The management issues included such aspects as governance, growth and change, supply chain, staff and skills requirements, user relations, project management, and performance evaluation. The technology issues related to system integration, security, data warehouse, and wireless or mobility.

Another emerging theme related to the alignment (Reich and Benbasat, 2000; and Seddon et al, 2002) of the interpretation of the individual role and the corporate expectations as expressed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This alignment may be expressed as follows. The role of a CIO may include leadership and facilitating change. The role of the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) has more to do with Management and ensuring efficient current operations. While leadership involves creating vision and inspiring followers, management involves implementing programs within the established vision and evaluating performance of followers relative to established metrics. Both of these functions, CIO and CTO are important. What is more important is the alignment or agreement between the CEO and the CIO that the role will involve those aspects associated with a CIO role or a CTO role. Interpretations of both the CIO and the CEO must be clear and explicit.

Finally, this research project is an in-depth investigation of the role of the CIO. The results of this project will contribute to a more thorough understanding of the role of the CIO and how the role is emerging in various corporate and national contexts.

### *Multi-Generation Small Business*

This on-going investigation attempts to identify aspects which contribute to the success of multi-generation small businesses. The project will attempt to identify those characteristics which not only contribute to the success of the current small business, but those that have contributed to the survival of the small business beyond the founder's generational tenure. The majority of research into intergenerational small business has focused on succession planning. This is an important aspect to consider for multi-generational small businesses and, in deed, will form part of this investigation. However, this investigation will endeavour to delve into more detail regarding those issues that have allowed some small businesses to continue for more than one generation.

Table 1 presents a dichotomous conceptual interpretation of how managers tend to approach business practice. According to Stevenson (1999), managers in small businesses tend to be oriented toward the "promoter" end of a continuum, whereas managers of large businesses tend to take a "trustee" orientation.

From a strategic orientation, then, managers of small businesses will emphasize responding to opportunities, while managers of large businesses will focus on efficient use of resources. Further, with regards to resources, the small business manager will respond quickly to the environment, with a minimum commitment of resources in a multi-staged approach. The 'promoter' conceptually represents these tactics of the small business manager where, resource commitments tend to be multi-staged, with a minimum commitment at each stage. In a rapidly changing environment, this type of staged commitment enables a firm to respond faster to changes in competition, the market and technology. Conversely, the manager of a large business will take the time to follow formal procedures to make a one-time decision regarding a long-term commitment. This approach is conceptually represented by the 'trustee' who tends to engage in a systematic analysis to determine what needs to be done to get the greatest return on

the currently controlled resources. This process ultimately results in a large-scale commitment of resources at one point in time. To some extent, the formal systems adopted by large firms, such as capital allocation systems, tend to encourage up front resource commitments. (Stevenson 1999).

**TABLE 1**  
**APPROACHES TO BUSINESS PRACTICE**

<b>ASPECTS OF BUSINESS PRACTICE</b>	<b>PROMOTER</b> ←	→ <b>TRUSTEE</b>
Strategic orientation	Capitalize on an opportunity	Focus on efficient use of current resources to determine the greatest return
Resource commitment and control decisions	Act in a very short time frame	Long time frame, considering long term implications
	Multi-staged	One-time up-front commitment
	Minimum commitment of resources at each stage	Large scale commitment of resources at one stage
	Respond quickly to changes in competition, market, and technology	Formal procedures of analysis such as capital allocation systems

Another concept, “resource poverty”, (Thong et al, 1994) may also be employed to provide further elaboration of the difference between managers of large and small businesses. Resource poverty refers to the lack of both financial and human resources. Managers of small businesses must continually conduct their affairs with limited amounts of money. This situation tends to increase the manager’s focus, as indicated above, on a minimum and multi-staged commitment process. Further, limited human resources may mean either fewer available employees or employees without the appropriate skills. In either case, the manager of a small business will be limited in what activities can be initiated and completed. Hence, there will be a focus on the near term, with an emphasis on allocating these scarce resources only to what is considered top priority activities.

Unfortunately, the eventual existence of a multi-generation small business requires the development of a long-term plan and a large one-time commitment of both financial and human resources. As shown above, this is anathema to the manager of a small business. How can this conundrum be addressed?

This exploratory investigation will document the comments of a family representative regarding their interpretation of the experiences of their multi-generation small business. A qualitative approach will be adopted, employing Narrative Inquiry to document these interpretations. Narrative Inquiry involves documenting stories that are contextually rich and temporally bounded. The term contextually rich relates to a research participant’s account of experiences that are vividly remembered. A story is temporally bounded when it is structured in a sequence with a beginning and an end. The structure of the interview will be based upon McCracken’s (1988) Long Interview technique and will follow a chronological sequence across the generations of existence of the small business. The interview protocol is included in Appendix C. Historical, current, and future issues will be pursued. The resulting interview transcripts will be analyzed to identify emerging themes. The result of this investigation will be a more thorough understanding of the important aspects of multi-generational small business. This understanding may be employed to assist other small businesses. Also, each interview will form the basis of a chapter in a book about a number of multi-generation small businesses.

## 5. Conclusion

The above four project descriptions have included a discussion of how to employ a guide to conduct qualitative interviews. One project used the research participants' resume to organize the interview. The others employed an interview protocol which was developed based upon the research question related to the area of investigation.

In general, the objective of all four projects was to conduct in-depth interviews to gather research participants' interpretations of a specific subject. The interview technique supported the post interview analysis of the transcripts to identify emerging themes. Further, this technique adopted also facilitated subsequent analysis of these themes across a number of interviews. Thus, while it was considered important to allow the research participants as much flexibility as possible regarding their expression of their interpretations, it was also necessary to adopt an interview technique which would provide some level of consistency over several interviews.

Finally, these techniques provide a detailed way to apply the Narrative Inquiry approach to conducting qualitative interviews. The techniques contribute to a flexible yet consistent way to gather research participants' interpretations in one-on-one interviews and then to compare these interpretations based upon a number of interviews.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Information Systems and Small Business**  
**Interview Protocol**

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We are interested in finding out how your "Information Systems" support your business. This interview will last about two hours and will be audio taped with your permission and the guarantee of confidentiality. To start off, we would like to collect some statistical information about you and your organization.

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male – Female

Age 21-30, 31 –40, 41 – 50, 51 +

Years of Work Related Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Years with this Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of Education: HS – C – U – M – PhD

Professional Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your Duties? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Established: \_\_\_\_\_

Stage (Revenue): Expansion – Stable - Contraction

Type of Organization: Mfg - Retail - Service – Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Products &/or Services: \_\_\_\_\_

Market Served: Local – Provincial – National - International

Number of Employees: Past two years: Expanded – Contracted – Not Changed

Number of PCs operating: \_\_\_\_\_

Networked: Yes - No

Primary means of Communication: Internal - face-to-face - phone - messages - email - other

Primary means of Communication: External - face-to-face - mail - telephone sales - email

Major form of advertising: \_\_\_\_\_

Web page - yes - no

The focus is now on IS.

- How would you define Information Systems (IS)?
- How does your company use IS to enhance your business?
- Specifically, what are the top 3 uses of IS in your firm?
- How are decisions made to add new IS? What was the last IS additions? Why?
- Do you have an IS strategic plan? Can you expand on the plan? (Can we have a copy?)
- Is IS delivering on expectations? (Are you satisfied with your company's IS?) In what ways? In what ways is it failing to deliver?
- What IS addition has had the most impact on your organization? The least?
- What is your biggest constraint in achieving your desired IS objectives?
- What information do you need most urgently in your business?
- Has IS helped your organization in the decision making process? Expand.
- Has IS helped your organization be more innovative? Expand.
- Has IS helped your organization in – Marketing and Selling; Financial; Manufacturing, Accounting; HRM; Supply Chain; etc?
- Do you have any questions of us?

**APPENDIX B**  
**The Changing Role of Chief Information Officers**  
**Interview Protocol**

**PART A**

1. Personal History
  - a. Where were you born?
  - b. Where did you grow up?
  - c. Are you married?
  - d. Any children?
  - e. Please relate a personal interest story.
2. Family History
  - a. Parents
  - b. Siblings
  - c. Where you lived
3. Education
  - a. Where and when did you go to elementary school, high school and university?
4. Previous Work Experience
  - a. What companies have you worked for?
  - b. What positions have you held at these companies?
  - c. What were the highlights as far as tasks performed and major accomplishments?

**PART B**

5. Current Position
  - a. Company background
    - i. What is the industry?
    - ii. When was the company formed?
    - iii. What is the company's industry relationship (market share)?
    - iv. What is the company Mission?
    - v. Are there any unique aspects to the company that you find interesting?
    - vi. What is the URL for your website?
  - b. Why did you accept your current position?
  - c. What issues initially required your attention?
    - i. Describe the issue.
    - ii. Discuss what you did.
    - iii. Discuss the final result.
  - d. What issues are you currently addressing?
    - i. Describe the issue
    - ii. Discuss the status and anticipated outcome.
  - e. What issues do you foresee addressing or requiring your attention in the future?
    - i. Describe.
    - ii. How do you plan to address the issue?
    - iii. What is the anticipated outcome?

**PART C**

6. Pick a week and tell me what you did
  - a. Describe the task
  - b. Indicate the number of hours you spend doing the task
  - c. Was there something that you did not do that week that you normally would?
7. Dealing with Users.
  - a. How do you determine what your users want/require?
  - b. How do you know that you have responded to what your users want/require?
  - c. How do you know that you have delivered what your users want/require?
8. How do you decide on investments in:
  - a. Hardware?
  - b. Software?
  - c. People?
  - d. Tools?
  - e. Techniques and methods?
9. General comments about CIOs and their emerging and evolving roles.

**APPENDIX C**  
**Multi-Generation Small Business**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

1. Personal Comment
  - a. Personal History
    - i. Where were you born?
    - ii. Where did you grow up?
    - iii. Please relate a personal interest story.
  - b. Family History
    - i. Parents
    - ii. Siblings
    - iii. Where you lived
  - c. Education
    - i. Where and when did you go to elementary school, high school and university?
  - d. Previous Work Experience
    - i. What companies have you worked for?
    - ii. What positions have you held at these companies?
    - iii. What were the highlights as far as tasks performed and major accomplishments?
2. Family History
  - a. Founder
    - iv. Where born?
    - v. Where grew up?
    - vi. Education
    - vii. When moved to Lethbridge?
    - viii. When married?
    - ix. Children
3. Company background
  - a. What is the industry?
  - b. When was the company formed?
  - c. What is the company's relationship (market share) to the rest of the industry?
  - d. What is the company Mission?
  - e. Are there any unique aspects to the company that you find interesting?
4. Business Model
  - a. Describe your firm's approach to conducting business
5. Major issues in the past
  - a. Describe the issue.
  - b. Discuss what you did.
  - c. Discuss the final result.
  - d. Repeat the above for another issue.
6. What issues are you currently addressing?
  - a. Describe the issue
  - b. Discuss the status and anticipated outcome.
  - c. Repeat the above for another issue.
7. What issues do you foresee addressing or requiring your attention in the future?
  - a. Describe.
  - b. How do you plan to address the issue?
  - c. What is the anticipated outcome?
  - d. Repeat the above for another issue.
8. Succession
  - a. Has this issue been considered
  - b. How has it been considered?
  - c. What has been the result of this consideration?
9. General comments
  - a. Do you have any other comments about your business?