



## Vox Pops

### **What are ... Vox Pops?**

The term "Vox pop" comes from the Latin phrase *vox populi*, meaning "voice of the people". It is a method of consultation that records (on film) the responses of people when asked a question (or questions) on a particular topic. Their responses are then presented to the viewer as a reflection of popular opinion.

### **Why use this technique?**

It is a way of "meeting" your customers and seeing them express their own views. It brings them to life by allowing you to see the facial expressions and appearance that go with people's words and views. This can tell you a lot more than knowing their name, age and other standard demographic information as is usually included in written consultation exercises.

### **When should you use it?**

The vox pop is a tool to be used when you are looking for a snapshot of public opinion on a single, straightforward question. It can also be a good tool to use for young people, encouraging participation through using the attraction of technology.

### **What type of information does it produce?**

Quantitative, opinion based information. As well as verbal information it also provides observational and visual information.

## **What are the advantages?**


- Attractive to Potential Respondents (15 minutes of fame)
- Can provide direct answers (people tend to be honest and open)
- It is entertaining to watch.
- Can provide good sound bites.
- It allows you to see the respondent (appearance, expression etc...)
- Responses are first hand rather than taken from notes or charts and graphs. It brings them to life.
- You can meet people in their own environment and use video to show this environment.
- Technology allows you to disseminate this information quickly and to a wide audience through e-mail and the internet.
- It is interesting and memorable – it is likely to have a good initial and long term impact on those who see it.

## **What are the disadvantages?**

- May be a low response rate
- Some people may feel uncomfortable being filmed
- Respondents may stray off the point.
- May be difficult to get a balanced view.
- Requires technical expertise
- Requires trained host / interviewer(s)

## **What are the costs?**

- Will depend on whether you have a “host” or allow the respondent to self-record.
- May need to hire people with expertise to operate equipment.
- May need to hire / purchase video and editing equipment or buy in an outside company.
- May require booking a venue / caravan to act as a booth.



## What are the practicalities?

- For video and television vox pops, the interviewer approaches people "in the street" and asks them simple questions about the topic or, alternatively a booth is set up that allows people to go inside and record their views. These people may be new to interviews and will often be nervous, flustered, giggly, etc. It's therefore important to make them feel comfortable and relaxed.
- When asking people to participate fast is best - don't give them time to worry about how they look or what their friends will think. Use a short, sharp standard question such as
- As always, ask open-ended questions and avoid leading questions. At the same time, you must be specific enough to obtain brief answers.
- It's important to think about the guest's looking direction, and get an equal number of left-facing and right-facing subjects. These can then be alternated in post-production. Some producers go so far as to get all answers with a particular opinion facing one way, and answers with an opposing opinion facing the other way. Whether or not you think this is effective is up to you — you may feel that it is too contrived.
- It pays to ensure that an accurate mix of genders and races are represented, appropriate to the population being surveyed.

