Barking Up the Right Tree: Successful Participant Recruitment
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Qualitative Methods

Methodology
Consider your research question and what sort of participation you need to best address it. A interview design will require a different recruitment process to a focus group design.

Target Setting
How much data do you want to acquire? What demographic do you want to target? What is a realistic time frame?

Incentives
What are the benefits for your participants? Make these obvious as involvement in qualitative research is typically time expensive and could involve travel.

Advertisement
As you are targeting a narrower, more specific sample than would be the case in quantitative research, you can be more personal in your approach.

Consideration for Participants
Making the process as smooth as possible for participants will encourage them to be involved in future research. Be sure to thank them for their involvement and offer to keep them updated with findings.

A Worked Example
‘How do different people perceive and rationalise aggressive behaviour in dogs?’ Comparing professional and non-professional views.

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Quantitative Methods

Your Ideal Sample
What type of person are you recruiting? This will inform how you attract participants to take part.

Target Setting
How many participants do you need? Are you aiming for a representative sample? How much time do you have to recruit?

Incentives
There are three key ways to incentivise studies:
1. A prize. Higher value=more participants.
2. ‘Pay’ each participant (for smaller samples)
3. Make the research itself attractive to potential participants. What can they find out?

Dissemination

Helping Your Future Self
Always include an option to be involved in future studies, particularly if you are using questionnaires.

A Worked Example
My planned sample included dog owners and non-dog owners.

1000+ participants, of which at least 200 would be problem dog owners., collected in 30 days.

As the questionnaire was quite lengthy, an IPad Air was offered as a prize incentive.

Different advertisement strategies were used, including word of mouth, newsletters and online recruitment.

A short url was designed and distributed via twitter. Personal messages were sent to contacts, asking them to share the short url in their social networks.

Participant found talking about their dogs or professions intrinsically rewarding. The vet group received a free behaviour lecture

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<th>Non Pros</th>
<th>Profs</th>
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<td>Behaviourists</td>
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