

## Organizational Strategies

1. There are two primary ways to organize the order of your questions.

- **Funnel Sequence:** starts with closed and direct questions, gradually moving to open-ended questions.

Advantages: Works well for reticent respondents because closed/direct questions are easier to answer and build confidence, thus easing tension.

Disadvantages: Too many can inhibit the respondent from talking in anything except monosyllables.

- **Inverted Funnel Sequence:** start with open-ended questions and get more specific as you move further into the interview.

Advantage: May allow you to not have to ask many of your closed and specific questions because they were all answered by the open-ended ones.

Disadvantage: Using open ended questions can cause you to lose focus on your topic if not crafted carefully

2. There are two primary ways to conduct the interview.

- **Directive Interview Style:** is highly structured. It is so rigidly planned as to be almost scripted. Uses few, if any, open questions. Gets only what you ask for.

Advantages: Gives the interviewer control, you can better anticipate the time needed to complete the interview, and keeps the focus where you want it.

Disadvantages: Limits the respondent, you may miss out on pertinent information that you didn't think about asking for beforehand, it can turn the respondent off because your approach is too narrow, and can be dry and overly factual.

- **Nondirective Interview Style:** unstructured but not unplanned. Gives more control to the respondent. Goals are set, but open-ended questions are asked to achieve them. Just suggest the questions you want answered and let the respondent lead you.

Advantages: You get to know the respondent better. May open up new topics.

Disadvantages: It takes more time. The respondent may go off on a tangent.

NOTE: It is very important to choose the strategy that suits what you most need to do. In an information-gathering interview, a combination of the two usually gets the best results.