SAMPLE SIZE GUIDE

Why n = 400?

Sample size drives accuracy, but only up to a point.
Here's why 400 responses per cell is often the right call.

Accuracy grows with sample size

Statistical accuracy is a function of the sample size. The larger the sample size, the greater the statistical accuracy of the results.

It's the cell that counts

Keep in mind that we often look at a subset of the entire sample that we call a "cell" or "cut" (e.g., small companies versus large companies). The statistical accuracy depends on the number of people in each cell.

Diminishing returns

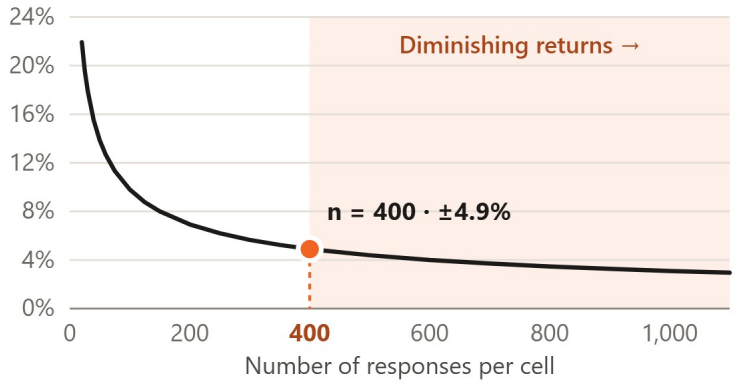
Gains in statistical accuracy are not proportional to increases in the sample size. At some point, the increase in statistical accuracy may not be worth the additional cost.

THE SWEET SPOT

A sample size of 400 gives a statistical accuracy of ±5% and is often thought of as the most cost-effective sample size.

Margin of error by sample size

Statistical accuracy (±%) at 95% confidence



Accuracy by cell size

Statistical accuracy calculated for various cell sizes, 95% confidence

Responses per Cell	Confidence Interval	
1,000	±3.1%	
800	±3.5%	
600	±4.0%	
400	**±4.9%**	**Most cost effective**
300	±5.7%	
250	±6.2%	
200	±6.9%	
150	±8.0%	

READING THE NUMBERS

A cell size of 400 with a 95% confidence level can be interpreted as follows: if we repeated the survey 100 times, we would expect the answer to any question to vary less than ±4.9% in **95 of the 100 cases**.

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