

Delphi method

A method that asks a group of experts through questionnaires in several rounds and, between rounds, gives them back a summary of what the group answered so they can revise their opinion.

In Spanish

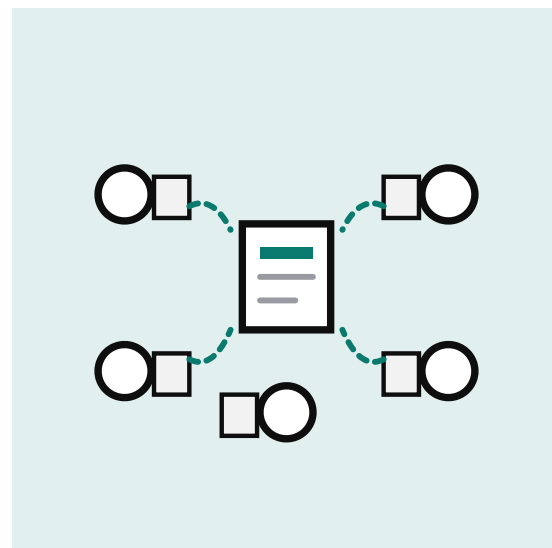
Método Delphi

Origin

Dalkey and Helmer (1963)

Output

The reasoned opinion of a group of experts and where they agree or disagree



What it's for

Helps gather the judgment of many experts on something uncertain, such as a possible future, without the loudest voice weighing most.

Key elements

Several rounds

Each round builds on what came out of the previous one.

The group's answer, summarized

Each expert sees where the group stands and can change or defend their answer.

Agreement is sought, not forced

The disagreements that remain are also a result.

How it's done



Choose the group of experts and the question.



Each expert answers in writing, in each round.



Return the summary and repeat until the answers settle.

Applications in design

✓ When to use it

When you need expert judgment on something that can't be measured yet, such as trends or future scenarios.

✗ Avoid

Choosing only experts who think alike; the result will look like an agreement that doesn't exist.

👁 Don't fall for it

Agreement among experts is not proof: it's still an opinion.

Connections

Builds on

■ Futures studies

Related to

■ Survey

■ Horizon scanning

■ Scenario planning

Authors and works

1963

Norman Dalkey and Olaf Helmer

They published an experiment with the method, which aimed to reach a reliable group opinion through successive questionnaires and controlled feedback of the group's answers.

Sources

Original sources

- Dalkey, N., & Helmer, O. (1963). An experimental application of the Delphi method to the use of experts. *Management Science*, 9(3), 458–467. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.9.3.458\)](https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.9.3.458)

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