toluna*start

Cheat Sheet
Target Groups & Quotas.

At a glance:

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to target group definition and quotas, however there are a few factors we always need to consider when defining both:

1. **Ensure no assumptions are being made** when defining who should and shouldn't be included in your target group.
2. **Nationally representative quotas** should only be applied to studies that try to represent a nation (country) in whole. All other studies require custom quotas.
3. **Quotas** should target those attributes of respondents that impact their behaviours, attitudes, or habits.

Target Group Definition:

There are two main elements to consider when defining who to interview for your study: Who to include in your target group and who not to include in your target group.

They are equally important aspects in achieving an inclusive and representative sample while ensuring only relevant respondents are included in your data. A key element while defining your target group is to try reducing assumptions you

may have about who does and doesn't do, have, or believe certain things, otherwise your target group may be biased from the beginning.

Who to include

- To achieve a representative sample of respondents, it is important to include everybody who may be relevant for your research.

- At this stage, it's easy to accidentally forget including certain sub-groups of respondents due to assumptions that are being made about the profile of people who do, believe, or have certain things. Often, these assumptions are gender-based; an example for this is:

- **Only including women in a study about breast cancer – men can get breast cancer too.**

Who not to include

- To ensure only relevant respondents are included in your sample, it is important to consider whether there are any respondents who may not qualify for your survey.

- At this stage, it's easy to accidentally include certain sub-groups of respondents due to assumption that everybody follows a certain behaviour or buys a certain product.

  Some examples for this are:

- **Not everybody brushes their teeth or uses toothpaste – there are people who don't have teeth or use alternatives products.**

- **Just because somebody consumes a product doesn't mean they also buy it – somebody else in their household may be buying it or they may consume it in a location where it's provided for them.**

These two elements show us that often we need to challenge our stereotypes when defining a target group and we should target based on respondents' behaviour, attitudes, and experiences rather than stereotyped gender, age, or generalised assumptions.

Quotas:

Quotas are a way of controlling certain aspects of your target group to ensure it's representative of the population you're trying to represent. These aspects can be demographics (e.g. age, gender, region, income), behaviours (e.g.

frequency of buying certain products), or other attributes like psychographics (e.g. extraversion, environmental consciousness).

Quotas help ensure that the distribution of these elements is the same in the target group as in the overall population. For example, if the population the study is supposed to represent has 51% females and 49% males, then the sample should also have 51% females and 49% males. It is important to note that extensive quota requirements can make it more difficult to find a specific target group and can slow down fieldwork, therefore quotas should be set only where needed.

There are two different types of quotas to choose from:

Nationally representative (nat rep) quotas

- These quotas should only be used where the research study is trying to represent an entire country, e.g. nationally representative of the UK, Canada, Thailand.

- Nat rep quotas should not be used when respondents are being excluded from the survey based on their answers. At this point respondents are being filtered out and a nationally representative structure of gender, for example, may not be representative of the gender structure of the actual target group.

For example:

- **The actual gender distribution of high heels buyers is heavily skewed towards females. Adding nationally representative quotas to this target would greatly inflate the contribution male respondents who buy high heels have to the survey.**

  Their purchasing behaviour may be different, so the data would be skewed and not representative.

Custom quotas

- Custom quotas are applied to all studies that aren't nationally representative.

- To determine the quotas that should be applied, an omnibus study can be fielded to determine what the structure of the population looks like that falls within the target group.

For example:
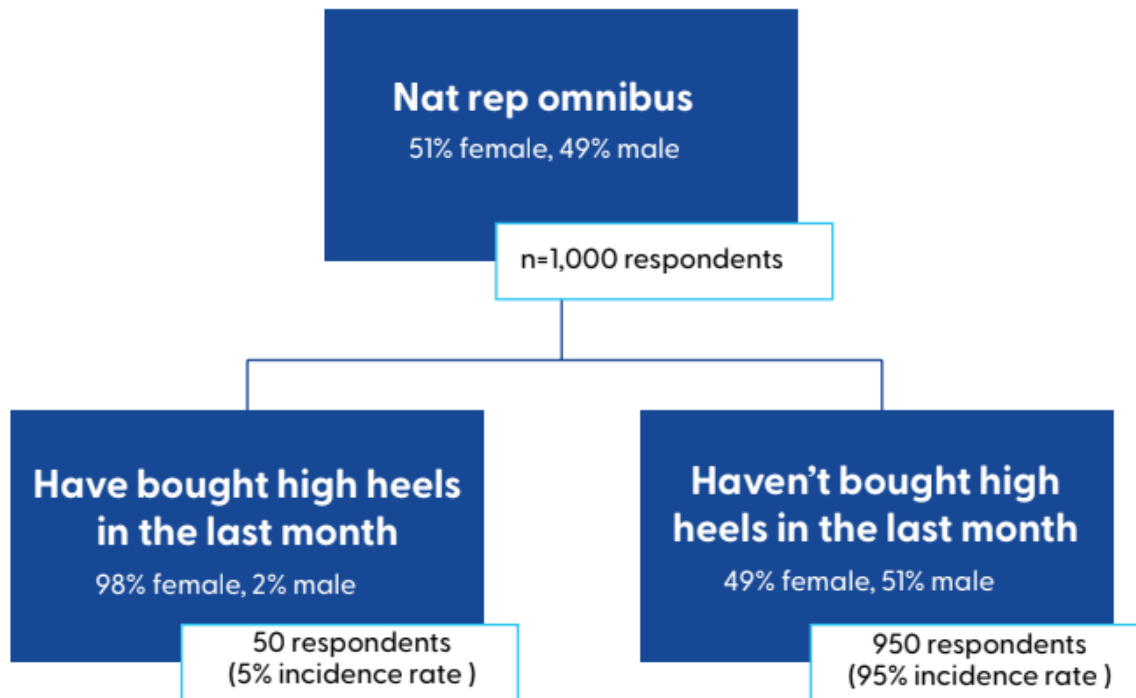
At this stage, it is important to ensure all factors that may bias the data are controlled via quotas. It is important to think in detail through the elements that may impact respondents' behaviour and answers, as otherwise results may be biased.

Some examples include:

- **Income may impact what brand of product respondents are aware of or buy regularly, e.g. car brands.**

- **Age may impact what brand of product respondents are aware of or buy regularly, e.g. awareness for or usage of period products.**

Equally, some factors that are traditionally included as quotas may not actually have an impact on respondents' behaviour.

Examples:

- **Region may not impact what brands respondents are aware of.**
- **Age may not impact what products respondents buy.**