

Why Less is More

A fresh approach to
B2B Research

Presented by:
GfK – an NIQ Company
Emporia Research

Today's Presenters



Michael Hess

Co-Founder & CEO

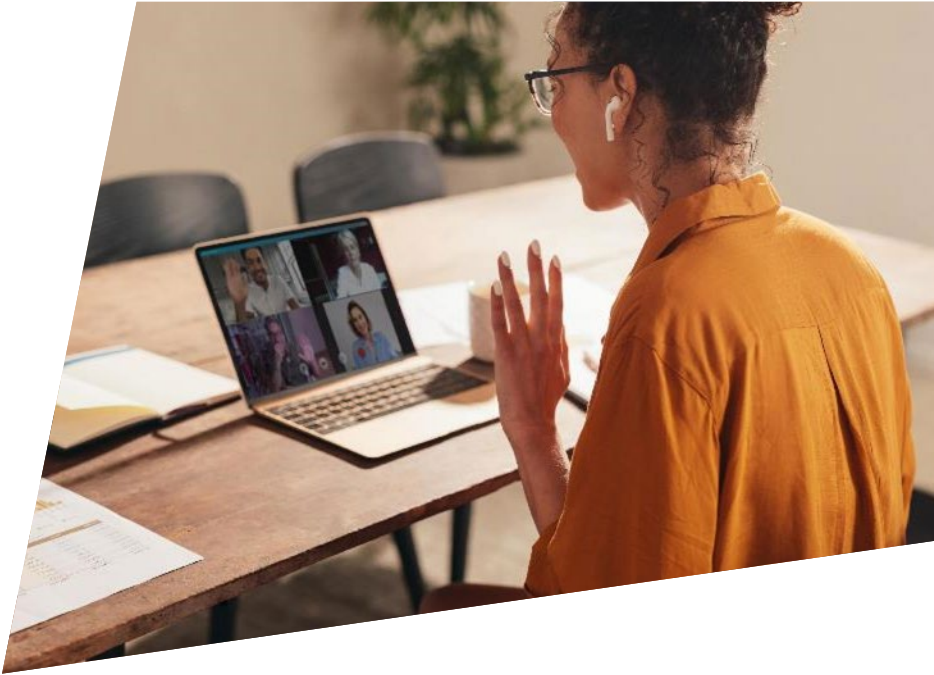
Emporia Research



Rolfe Swinton

*VP - AI & Data Innovation
and Partnerships*

GfK – an NIQ Company



Today's focus

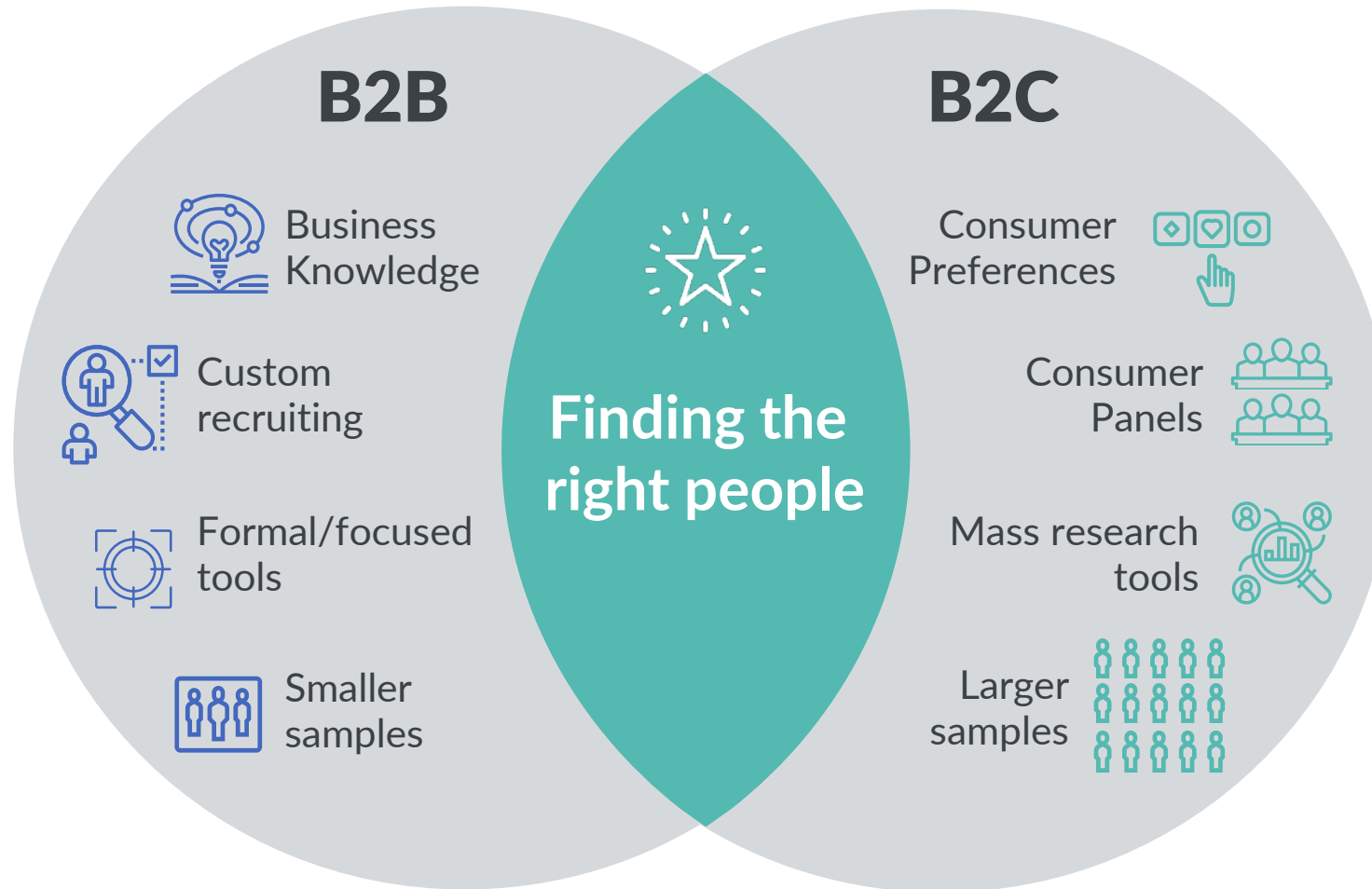
- The state of B2B research today and long-term fundamental challenges to quality
- Present our hypothesis: why less is more
- Emporia & GfK: Collaboration for impact
- Takeaways: How to get better B2B outcomes



The state of B2B today

B2B / B2C Research

While there is overlap, there are distinct differences



The B2B world is in flux

Key points of tension exist in B2B research



B2B research is becoming more programmatic

- Reverse auction bidding styles driving down costs per complete to unrealistic levels



Fraud is more rampant than ever

- Humans pretending to be someone they're not
- Humans inflating their expertise to qualify
- Bots becoming more sophisticated
- LLM – AI as a means to come up with good enough answers in a survey



The industry is looking for solutions

- Participant verification
- Embracing new qual tools
- Synthetic Panels

Fraud – Humanizing the Problem

- Click farm operations are becoming highly sophisticated
- Teams of bad actors work together to find survey links, pass screeners and redeem monetary incentives

Bias - The lesser discussed insights killer

Where does bias come from?

Suboptimal
respondents

Imposter
Respondents

Disengaged
respondents

Off-target
sample surplus

Sample size
misconceptions



Why less is more

Emporia + GfK study results

Our hypothesis: Less is more in B2B Research

Maximizing Sample Precision:

Optimizes research investment

Sharpens recruitment focus

Enhances participant engagement

Reduces data bias





Collaboration for Impact

B2B 2023 sample study IT Attitudes and Behaviors



Field conducted in parallel

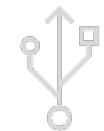
Sept. – Oct. 2023



One Research Design – Two Different Sources – Same Budget

97 (*Sample A*) - *Expert network / Validated*

300 (*Sample B*) - *Niche B2B panels*



Respondents

IT Decision Makers



Benchmarks

dun & bradstreet

MRI | SIMMONS

 **stackoverflow**

What is the current Brand's familiarity with the Target Audience? Which sample is more accurate?

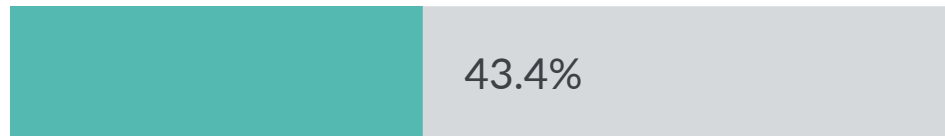
Bias can have a significant impact on the data and its implications, even after cleaning and weighting have been done to the data.

% Very Familiar

Sample A



Sample B



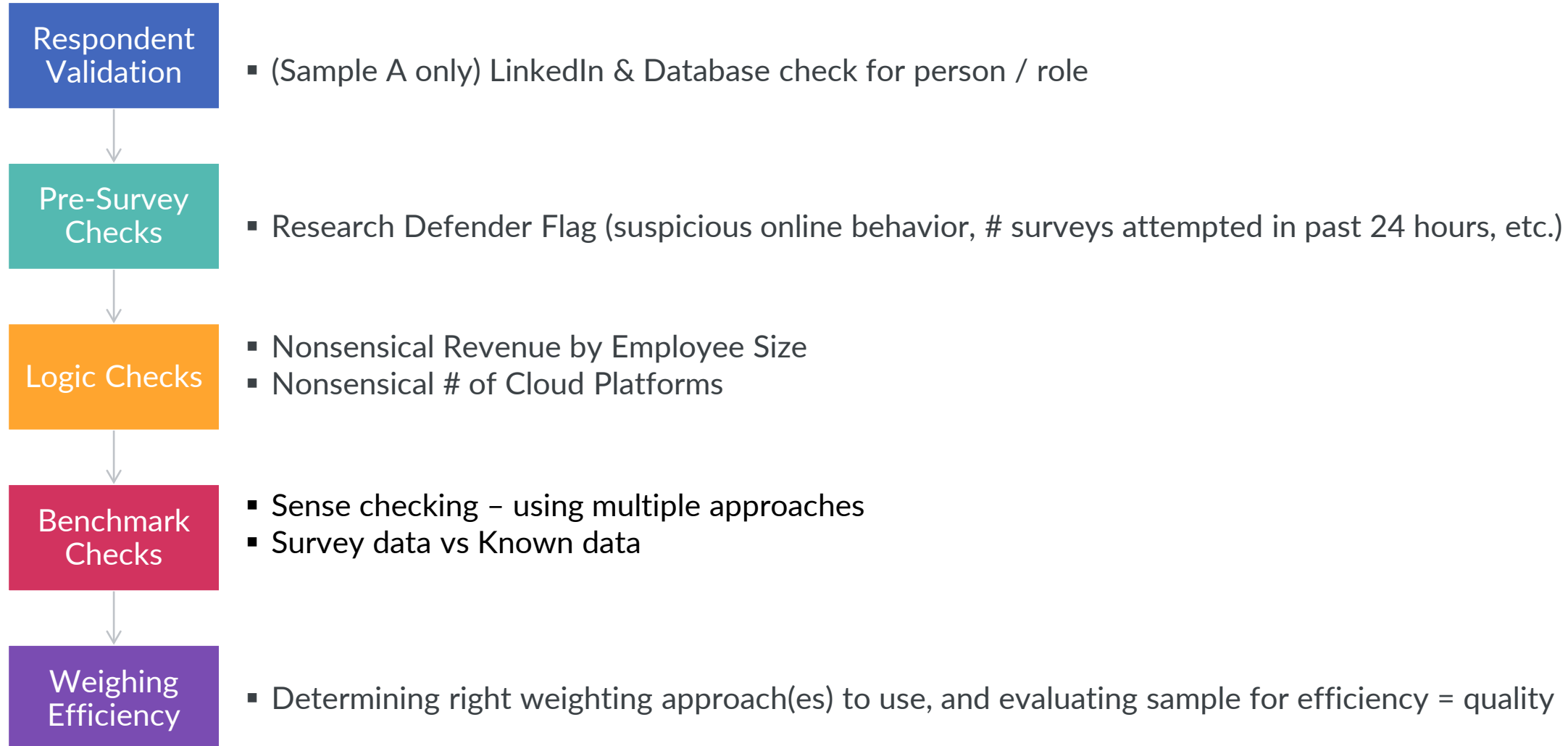
Two very different decisions would be made in brand, product, or service positioning in the market, so how do you know which is correct?

By Inserting a set of know “truths” in the survey, the bias can be assessed, that is, the lower the bias the better the estimate!

Overall Sample Quality & Bias Process

How well did each sample do when put through rigorous quality checks?

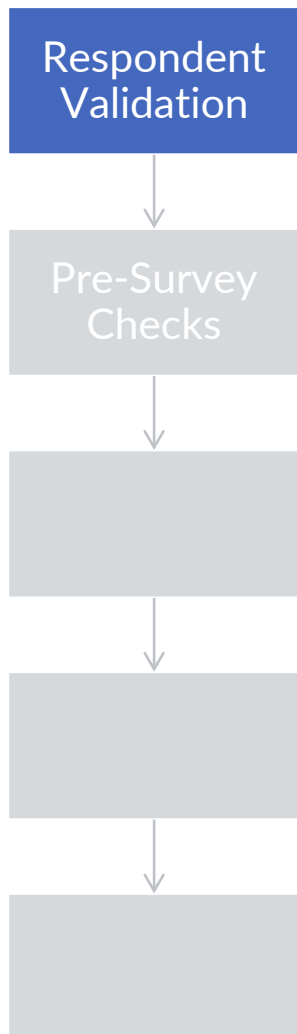
Examples





Upfront Respondent Validation & Pre-Survey Checking

Sample A Process Used Distinctive Sample Validation Process



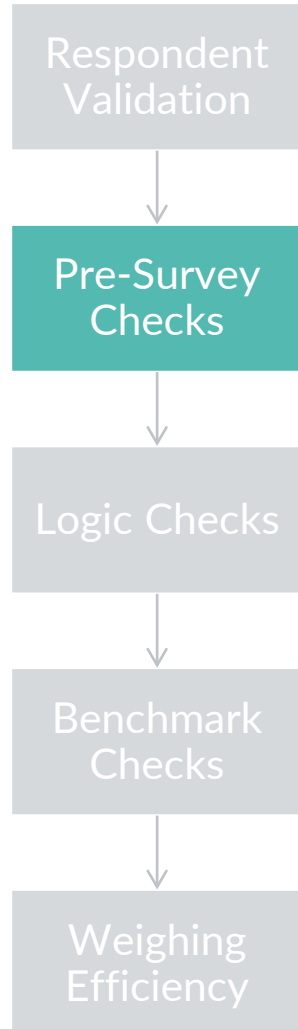
Sample A Only – Respondent Validation Process

1. LinkedIn profile and corporate email address received from data providers.
2. LinkedIn Member Authorization (3-legged OAuth flow) occurs
3. Scrape all data listed to ensure history, previous positions, education, etc. to spot any red flags
4. Quality checks:
 - length of profile history must meet a minimum threshold
 - number of connections must meet a minimum threshold

Overall Sample Quality & Bias Process

How well did each sample do when put through rigorous quality checks?

Examples

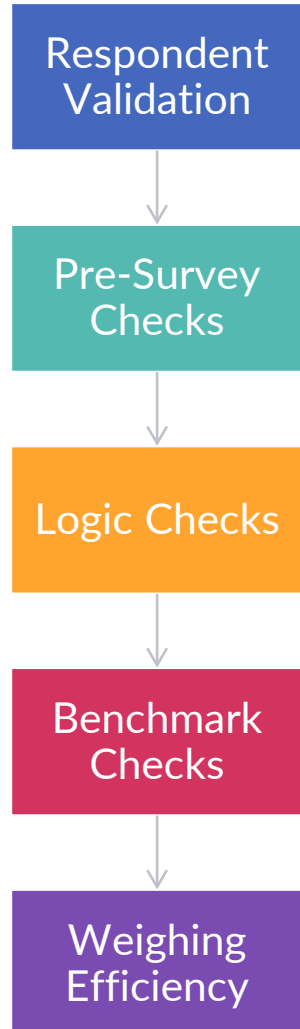


- Research Defender Flag (suspicious online behavior, # surveys attempted in past 24 hours, etc.)



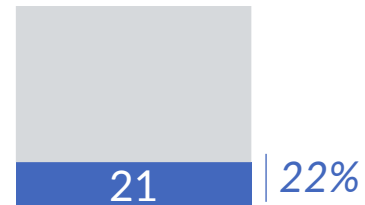
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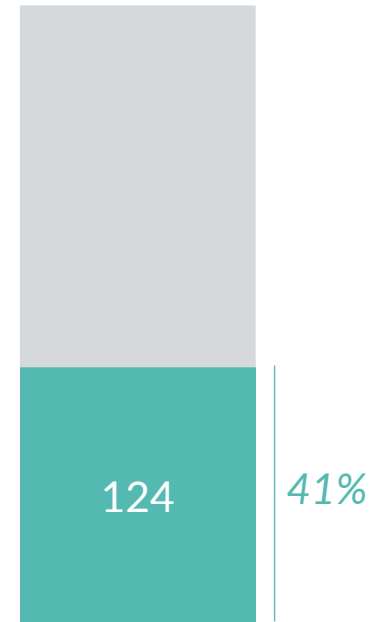


Total respondents with flags

Sample A
predominantly flags on **pre-survey checks**, which are automatically **prevented** from entering the survey



Sample B
flags across the board on **various quality checks** including the **post-survey sense-checks** which require more manual efforts to surface





Diving into Quality – Respondent “Thinking” vs Knowing

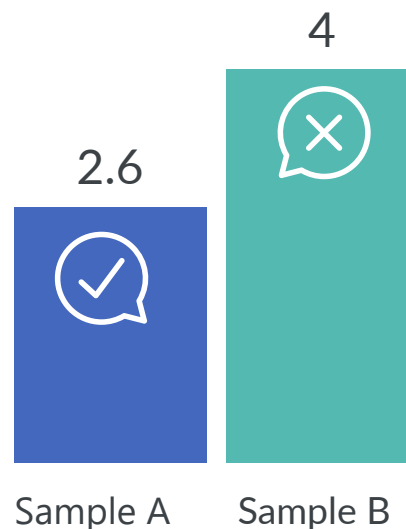
Important to use the right expert questions to identify potential bias!

Avg # of computer brands selected



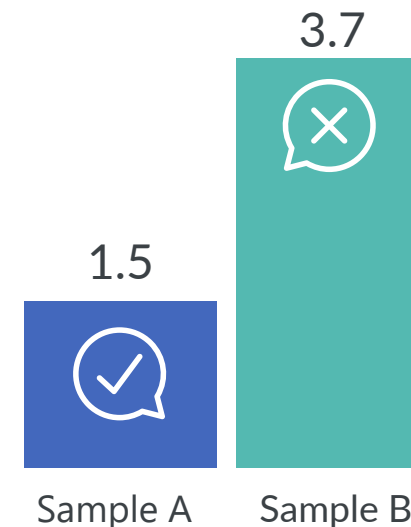
An average of 2 computer brands seems reasonable for a company to support

Avg # of cloud programs selected



It is expected most companies have no more than 2 different brands selected

Avg # of asynchronous tools selected



Similarly, it should be expected that most companies only use 1 asynchronous productivity tool



Benchmarks Checks - Cloud Platform Usage in Past Year

How well did each sample do at reaching known benchmarks?

Bias calculation:					
			21	33	
	Benchmarks	Sample A	Sample A - Benchmark	Sample B	Sample B - Benchmark
	49	68	19	59	10
	26	56	30	67	41
	24	60	36	80	56
	7	45	38	40	33
	1	6	5	51	50
Colocation	1	17	16	21	20
	1	0	-1	25	24

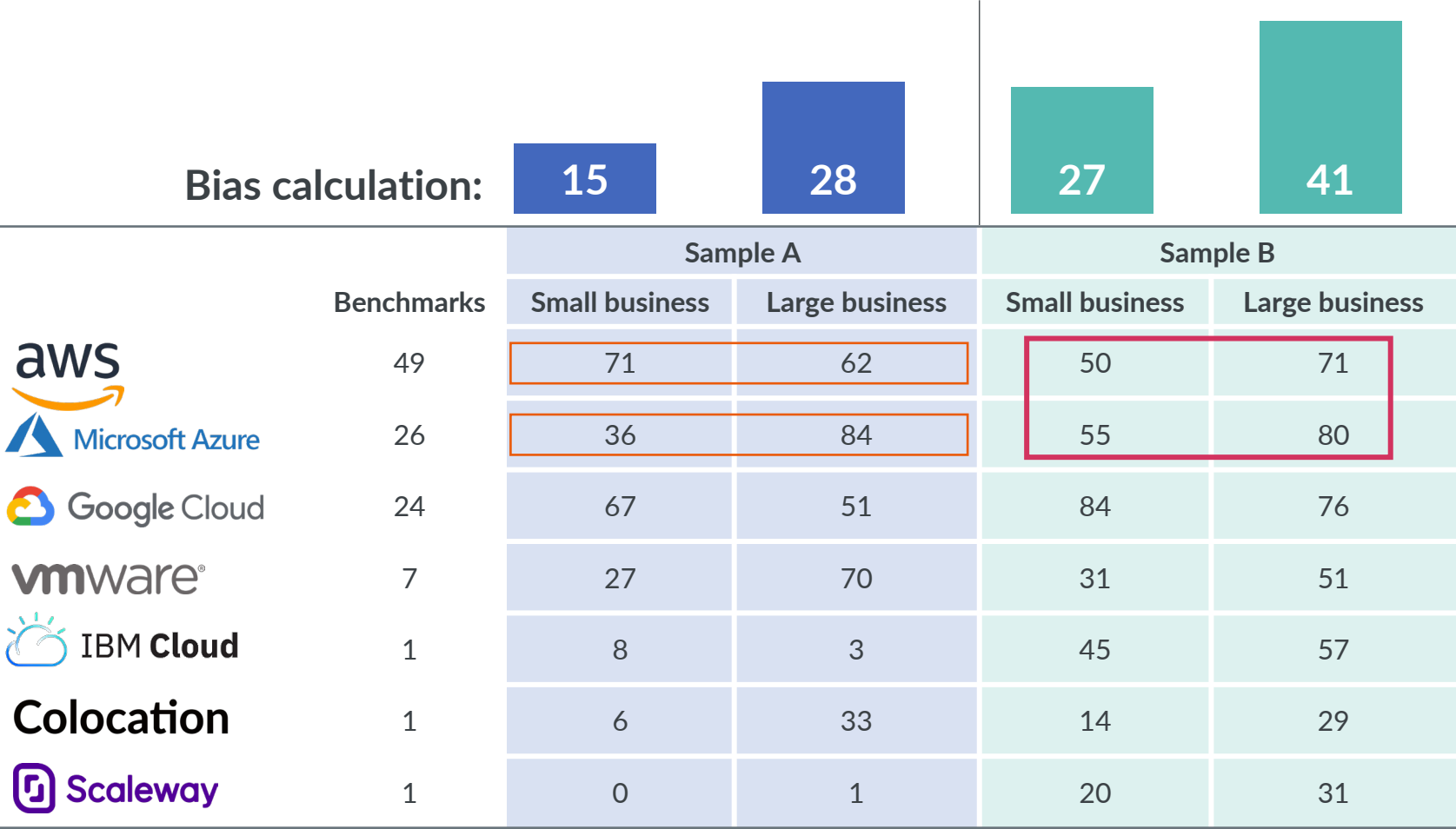
Bias calculation is the deviation from the benchmark

Sample A is less biased (21 pts) than Sample B (33 pts) across the cloud platforms



Benchmarks Checks - Cloud Platform Usage in Past Year

How well did each sample do at reaching known benchmarks?



The bias/overstatement increases when looking at Sample B among Large Businesses – the data may still be suspect.

We know that AWS is used more often by smaller companies and Azure more often by larger companies. Sample A data reflects this relationship correctly, whereas Sample B does not.

How good is a driver analysis if the underlying relationships are incorrect?

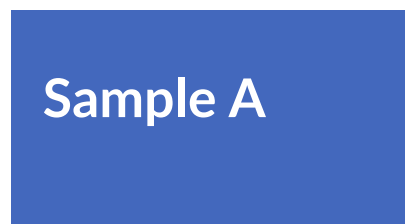


Weighting efficiency as indicator of respondent quality

How well did each sample do at reaching the target population?

Given the complexity of B2B research, we compared 3 weighting methodologies using Dun & Bradstreet for benchmarks. The most appropriate weighting methodology depends on key business questions which the study is looking to answer. Given the specific research goals, we selected a methodology that collapses the weighting variables at the tails.

Effective Sample Size

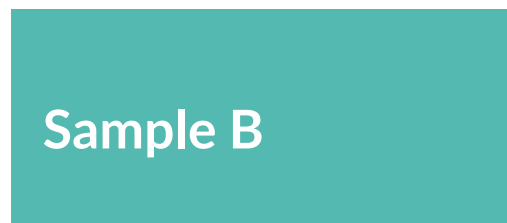


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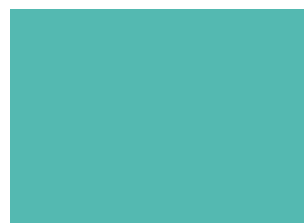
Weighting Efficiency



50%



48



28%

Conclusion

Sample A was more representative of the target population before data cleaning, resulting in a nearly 2x higher weighting efficiency

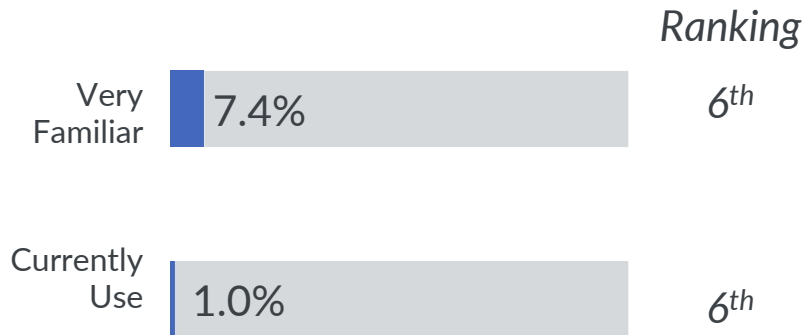
And despite a large disparity in the samples to start – the effective sample sizes are very similar

Why does bias matter?

Hypothetical example: Recommendations by sample if our client were

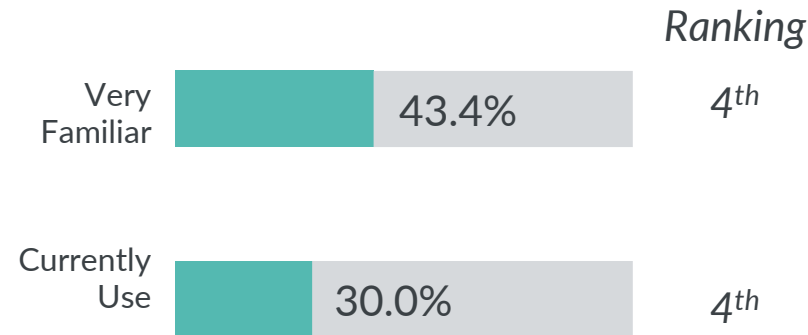


Sample A



This would indicate that our brand more of a **niche brand** for cloud computing and would **need serious boost** to become more mainstream (the 5th ranked brand has a Very Familiar score of 32.2%)

Sample B



This would indicate that our brand is more of a **mainstream brand** already and we would just need to **maintain or slightly grow our current scores** (the 3rd ranked brand has a Very Familiar score of 47%).

Our recommendations for how the brand should position themselves in each case would be drastically different. This is why it is critical to have an unbiased sample. Millions of dollars are spent on the results from B2B research. **IBM Cloud's share of market as of 2024 is 1.8%*.**

Would you rather have based your decisions off Sample A or Sample B?



The bias-analysis-scale trade-off

And what about in-depth analysis?

Think of the trade-off between the amount of bias and the number of respondents that you can get for a more robust set of analyses like a scale. How do you decide which is more important?

Some key questions to ask:

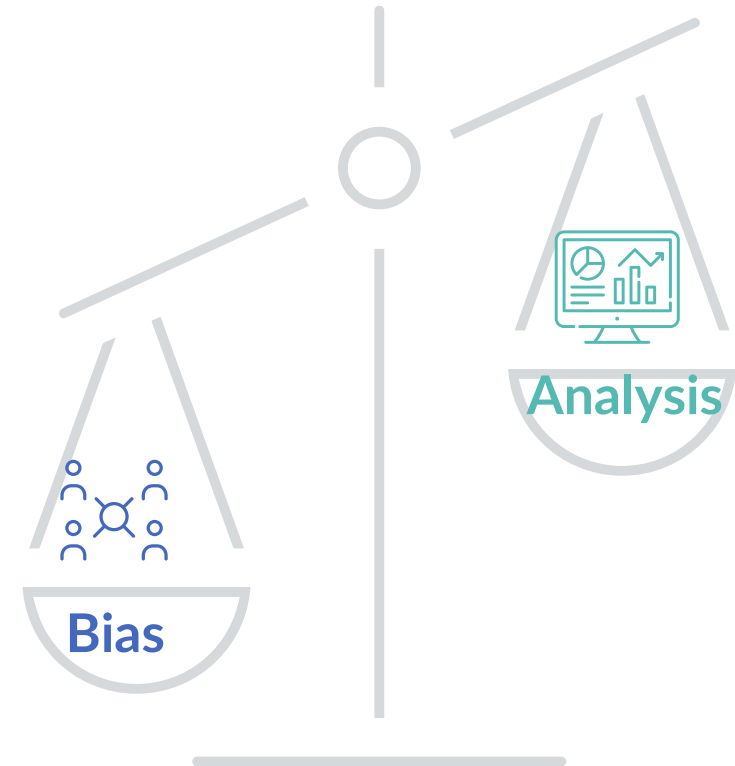
How critical is it that you are talking to the right people? How big is the pool of available people who fit your target?

How important are various subgroups to your analysis?

What is your budget for sample and how long can you wait for results?

How variable is the group on which you want to conduct the analysis?

Are projections critical to your analysis?





What's next in B2B

Putting it all into practice

How do I get better outcomes from my B2B research?

- Collaborate with experts
- Expend effort upfront on the “Total Design Methodology” - # respondents really needed – who exactly – and what are the right questions to ask?
- Select the right recruitment partners
- Implement a verification process
- Apply bias reduction techniques including benchmarks against known truths
- Be open and transparent with clients & suppliers/partners



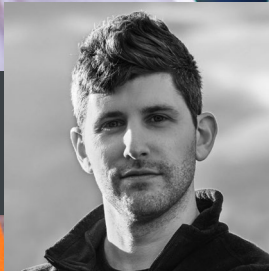
Questions?

emporia



An NIQ
Company

For more information:



Michael Hess
Michael@emporiaapp.com



Rolfe Swinton
Rolfe.Swinton@gfk.com