

FROM THE *QUALITATIVE* TO THE *QUANTITATIVE*

MAI's basic tenet is that it is impossible to develop a valid business model involving customers without formulating both a qualitative and a quantitative model of the demand. This is why all Programs undertaken by MAI for its clients seek to capture not only the quantifiable, objective premises of a potential customer's decision, but also its qualitative, subjective factors.

However, raw qualitative answers are hardly conducive to establishing a valid model, since they will appear as a collection of individual remarks. And corporate decisions can only be made with any confidence when the supporting data can be evaluated as quantitative and measurable results.

The trick is in accurately quantifying the qualitative data. This is where MAI's methodology is invaluable. Although potential customers seem to express themselves in an almost infinite number of ways, the number of ideas represented by those answers is actually finite. The key is to recognize what the qualitative input means in context and to assign quantitative values to what is meant rather than to what is said. This is why the interviewers routinely must probe the respondents on their answers to open-ended questions.

The next step, at the time of analysis, is to categorize the qualitative input from the respondents in ways that are relevant to the issues. This is always done through a multi-pass process in which all the like qualitative data are grouped together to reflect quantitative values, both in and by itself and also, as appropriate, in relation to the other data.