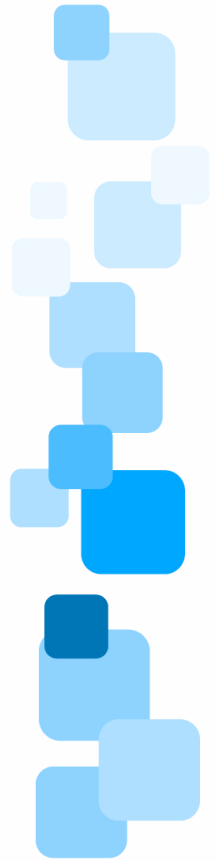


# **Reducing the High Cost of Focus Groups and IDIs with Technology, Option 1**

**White Paper No. 2009-11**



## Reducing the High Cost of Focus Groups and IDIs with Technology, Option 1

**Abstract:** This White Paper compares and contrasts the cost differences between two categories of qualitative research studies: those conducted in-person (e.g. Focus Group and IDIs) and those conducted online utilizing webcam technology.

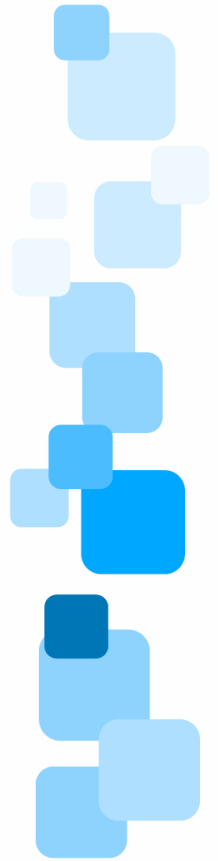
**The Problem:** For years, in-person interviewing - in the form of Focus Groups, small groups (dyads and triads) and IDIs - has been a mainstay of qualitative researchers worldwide. In-person studies are valued because they provide a format where researchers can look a participant in the eye, listen to their voice inflection, study their body language and engage them in in-person activities.

However, the logistical aspects of in-person research (for both the researchers and their clients) – facility rental, air travel, ground travel, hotels, meals, etc. – can often be as expensive (or more expensive) than the cost of the research itself.

**The Proposed Solution:** QualMeeting™, a web-based platform for conducting live, online interviewing, was first launched by 20/20 Research in July 2008. QualMeeting™ takes advantage of webcam technology and streaming video to provide real-time face-to-face research.

Rather than participating around a table, the moderator and participants each sit in front of their own computer – anywhere in the world - and participate using a webcam and integrated telephone bridge. Clients, too, can view the entire discussion from their own computers.

Participants and the moderator can see and talk to each other, participate in activities, collaboratively provide feedback on images, videos or other stimuli and even take real-time polls. The entire event – all audio, video and stimuli – is recorded as a “movie” and, at the end, made available online for re-viewing and analysis.



**Results:** Following are the costs associated with a typical Focus Group study compared to the costs associated with a similar study conducted in QualMeeting™. Note: while the costs below are estimates and actual costs will vary somewhat from city-to-city, they are, nonetheless, very much in line with nationally-accepted fees.

The Focus Group comparison

Assumptions: 8 2-hour groups (2 in each of 4 cities, 3 client personnel travel with the moderator – for in-person studies)

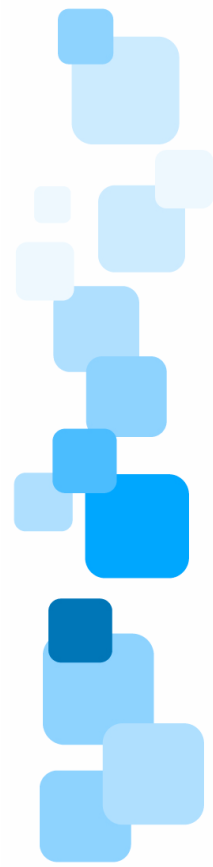
	In-person Focus Groups		Using QualMeeting™	
	<u>Each</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Each</u>	<u>Project</u>
Facility Rental	\$550	\$4,400		
Software Rental			\$1,050	\$8,400
Recruiting (10 for 8)	\$120	\$9,600	\$120	\$9,600
Incentives	\$75	\$6,000	\$75	\$6,000
DVD Recording	\$125	\$1,000		
Transcription	\$200	\$1,600	\$200	\$1,600
Respondent Food	\$125	\$1,000		
Client Food	\$25	\$600		
Moderator travel*	\$1,000	\$4,000		
Client travel*	\$1,000	\$12,000		
<u>Moderator fee (est.)</u>	\$2,500	<u>\$20,000</u>	\$2,500	<u>\$20,000</u>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>		<b>\$60,200</b>		<b>\$45,600</b>

The IDI comparison

Assumptions: 24 1-hour interviews (6 in each of 4 cities, 3 client personnel travel with the moderator – for in-person studies)

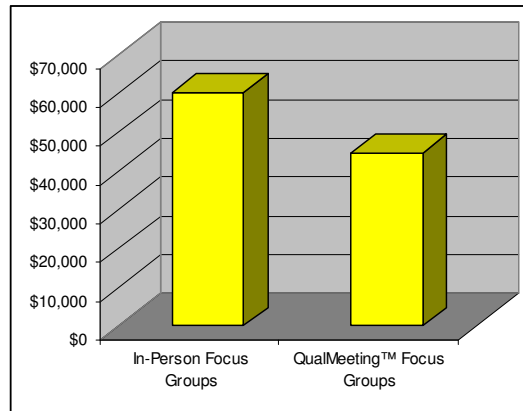
	In-person IDIs		Using QualMeeting™	
	<u>Each</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Each</u>	<u>Project</u>
Facility Rental	\$1,500	\$6,000		
Software Rental			\$190	\$4,560
Recruiting (28 for 24)	\$120	\$3,360	\$120	\$3,360
Incentives	\$75	\$1,800	\$75	\$1,800
DVD Recording	\$375	\$1,500		
Transcription	\$100	\$2,400	\$100	\$2,400
Client Food	\$25	\$300		
Moderator travel*	\$1,000	\$4,000		
Client travel*	\$1,000	\$12,000		
<u>Moderator fee (est.)</u>	\$3,000	<u>\$12,000</u>	\$3,000	<u>\$12,000</u>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>		<b>\$43,360</b>		<b>\$24,120</b>

\* Includes air travel, ground travel, lodging, meals, etc.

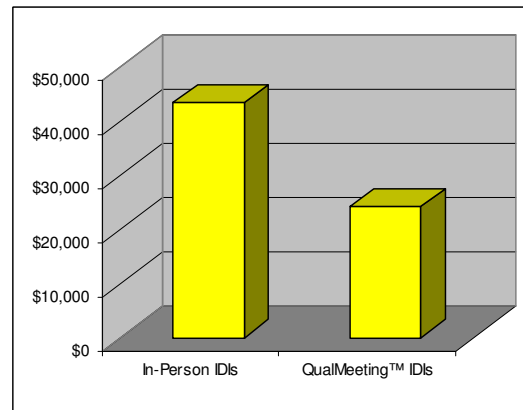


## **Conclusions:**

1. Using **QualMeeting™** as a replacement for in-person Focus Groups on an “average” project can result in a 24.3% decrease in costs - a savings of \$14,600.



2. Using **QualMeeting™** as a replacement for in-person IDIs on an “average” project can result in a 44.4% decrease in costs – a savings of \$19,240.



3. What cannot be calculated here is the “lost opportunity” because of travel. How much productivity is lost (by the moderator and the clients) because of all the time spent on planes, in cabs and rental cars going to and from airports, time just sitting and waiting before, between and after the interviews take place and so on?
4. **QualMeeting™** provides a cost-effective, valid alternative to in-person qualitative research by combining the best of both the real world and the virtual world. It provides the sights and sounds of in-person research, yet provides them in an online environment, where moderators, clients and the participants can take advantage of the benefits of working online.

