

What Experts Tell You in an Interview – and What They Do Not

A conversation about trust, subtext and the art of asking the right follow-up questions



Interview with Jasper Kleid, Junior Consultant at DTO

Expert interviews are among the strongest instruments available in complex B2B markets. At the same time, they are not an automatic shortcut to the truth. Interviewees have their own perspectives, interests and knowledge limits. Good interviewing therefore means more than collecting answers: it means understanding how those answers were formed. Jasper Kleid talks about trust, subtext and methodological discipline.

An expert statement becomes valuable when you understand not only what was said, but from which role, experience and incentive it was said.

Question: Do experts generally say openly what they think?

Answer: Many do, especially when the context is clear and confidentiality feels credible. But openness is rarely all-or-nothing. People may simplify, protect commercial information or speak mainly from their own function. So part of the job is understanding not just what is being said, but where that perspective comes from.

Question: Which statements require particular caution?

Answer: I become cautious when someone gives very precise market-share claims, competitor assessments or predictions without being able to explain the basis. Confident statements can still be useful, but confidence is not the same thing as evidence.

Question: How can you recognize interests behind a statement?

Answer: By asking about the interviewee's role, experience and concrete examples. A distributor, manufacturer, consultant and customer may describe the same market differently because they encounter different parts of it. Those differences are not noise; they are part of the market structure.

Question: Which questions create the most depth?

Answer: Questions about real decisions: "Tell me about the last time this happened", "Which alternative was seriously considered?", "Who objected?", "What changed the decision?".

Concrete episodes usually reveal more than abstract questions about what is important in general.

Question: What can subtext reveal?

Answer: Hesitation, qualifiers and changes in language can indicate where a topic is sensitive or uncertain. We should not overinterpret body language, but we can use these signals to ask better follow-up questions and clarify whether an apparently simple answer has conditions attached.

Question: How do you handle contradictory expert opinions?

Answer: We do not try to average them away. If two experts disagree, the interesting question is why. Is it geography, company size, role, technology, timing or customer segment? Quite often, the contradiction reveals the segmentation logic the project was missing.

Question: When is qualitative research not enough?

Answer: When the decision depends on prevalence – for example how many customers prefer an option, how widespread a barrier is or how price sensitivity is distributed. Qualitative work explains the “why”; quantitative work can show how common it is.

Question: What is the most important rule for evaluating interviews?

Answer: Do not let the best quote become the conclusion. Analyze patterns, exceptions, roles and evidence quality systematically, and connect interview findings with the rest of the research.

From conversation to decision: DTO helps companies structure market and customer perspectives, test hypotheses and translate findings into robust strategic decisions.

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Jasper Kleid has been with DTO B2B Research & Strategies since 2025. During his time at DTO, he has supported several projects with a direct focus on European industrial markets. With a B.Sc. in Business Administration, his work focuses particularly on market and competitive analysis as well as strategy development.