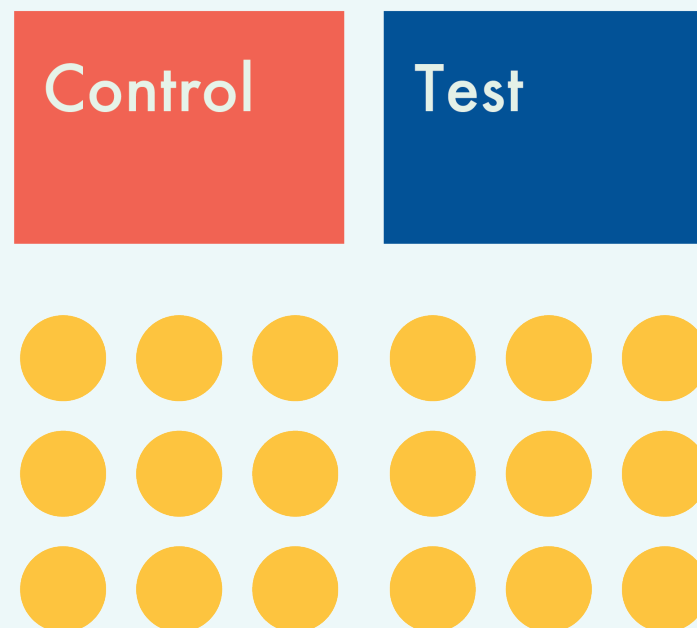


RCTs

This method contains:

Instructions





RCTs

Design experiments to test your idea.

Use this method to:

- Plan and evaluate whether your idea works.
- Discount other factors that may cause a false positive.

A randomised controlled trial (RCT) is a research method found in the world of behavioural science.

The main points of an RCT:

Participants are recruited and randomly assigned to one of the conditions. It means each group is on average the same. We can compare them with minimal differences and so get a more accurate result.

It tests only one variable. One test condition against a control. It makes results more accurate. You know the one thing you changed had an impact.



Randomised Controlled Trials

Steps

1

Write a hypothesis

A hypothesis is a statement that you aim to prove or disprove in research. It will give you a clear direction to structure your RCT.

Complete your hypothesis statement:

If we do _____
then _____ will happen
because _____

2

Create test conditions

In an RCT you have two conditions: test and control.

Control

Control is when nothing has changed. Choosing a control can be difficult. A small change can influence behaviour. Just interacting with a control group can introduce another variable. One that could influence the result of your experiment.

Ask yourself:

What is the do nothing condition?

How can we access the control without introducing another variable?

Look to see where people already are and what their next natural step in behaviour is.

Test

Test condition is the control condition plus one key variable. More than one and you won't know what caused the results.

Ask yourself:

Have I changed only one variable?

Tip: Think about the context of your test condition. Any small change or additional task can influence behaviour. Think about how to match one additional action to another in the control.

For example

Test condition: Receive push notification with written reminder.

Control condition: Don't receive the push notification reminder.

This isn't a pure comparison. The act of getting a ping may influence people - regardless of what it is about. Instead include the cues of a notification into the control condition but remove the text.

Test condition: Receive push notification with written reminder.

Control: Receive a blank push notification.



Randomised Controlled Trials

Steps

3

Select participants

Behaviour is audience specific. It's important you only invite your audience to take part. Participants are randomly assigned to each condition.

How many participants take part?

The more the better. More participants means your results are more representative. When you scale you know your idea will still work. Aim for 200+ in each condition.

Allocate participants to conditions

Participants should be randomly assigned. Use a spreadsheet to help.

4

Preflect

Before research it's valuable to outline what you expect to happen.

Ask yourself:

What behaviour am I expecting to happen?

What indicators demonstrate this behaviour?

Do I have clear and concise instructions for participants?

Will this experiment prove your hypothesis?

5

Conduct your experiment

6

Reflect

After your experiment, reflect on what happened and collate your results. Compare the results and come to a conclusion.

Ask yourself:

Did the result support your hypothesis?

Do you need further experimentation?

7

Measure and monitor

Explore how you can measure and record the indicator.

Ask yourself:

Which technique can I use to capture this indicator?

What data does the indicator generate that I can monitor?

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