Unlocking **MaxDiff's** Full Potential

Maximum Difference (MaxDiff) scaling is a methodology that forces decision-makers to make trade-offs by asking to select the "best" and "worst" items from a set. Through these forced choices, a MaxDiff exercise reveals what truly matters most.

A common prompt is to ask what is "most" and "least important", or "most" and "least preferred" from a relevant set of items.

When considering eating at a fast food restaurant, among the four attributes shown here, which of these is the <u>most</u> and <u>least</u> important?

Most Important		Least Important
○	Reasonable prices	○
○	Healthy food choices	○
○	Has a play area	○
○	Clean bathrooms	○

But MaxDiff is more flexible than some realize. Consider three ways to get more out of your MaxDiff studies:

01

Sometimes "important" or "preferred" isn't quite right.

Good news - the metric can be anything you need. Swap out "preferred" for a more actionable metric like "most unique" or "fits our brand the best." This allows you to tailor the insights to your specific business objectives.

02

Get two metrics for the price of one.

Instead of asking for the "least" important or preferred item, you can replace it with a second "most [second metric]" prompt. For example, we can reveal insights on both the "most innovative" and "most practical" features in a single task, doubling the value of your data without doubling the time asked of the respondent.

03

Mitigate MaxDiff's relativity.

One inherent drawback of MaxDiff is that the results are internally relative, meaning we know how attributes perform relative to one another, but not whether all items are acceptable. Although this is by design, there may be instances where we'd like to know whether the attributes are objectively acceptable. This can be addressed with an **Anchored MaxDiff** design. By including an option to indicate whether "all", "some" or "none" of a given set of items are important, you can identify a threshold below which items are simply not a priority.

These are some of the modifications that can be used to get more out of your data. Real-world decisions require trade-offs. MaxDiff incorporates these trade-offs into your research, enabling you to build a confident, data-driven strategy.