



How To Conduct A Successful Focus Group

Prepared By:

SURGE RESEARCH, INC.

Surge Research: At-A-Glance

Full Service Market Research Capabilities

Qualitative Market Research

- Focus Groups
- In-Depth Interviews
- Ethnographies
- Tracking Studies/Surveys
- Segmentation Studies
- Advertising Studies
- Mall Intercepts
- Competitive Intelligence Research

Quantitative Market Research

- Omnibus Surveys
- Customized Surveys
- Online Surveys
- Telephone Surveys
- In-Person Surveys
- Mail Surveys
- Customer Surveys
- Employee Satisfaction Surveys

The Focus Group: At-A-Glance

Today's focus group - what is it?

1. A group of individuals invited to a semi-structured group discussion session
2. The group consists of 8-12 individuals
 - Pre-screened based upon background criteria and topic knowledge
 - Likely have little experience with focus groups in the past
3. Typical session lasts 1.5 - 2.5 hrs with minimal breaks
4. Conducted face-to-face or online
5. Session can be audio- or video-taped

Focus Group: Background

A full-service market research firm, Surge Research regularly conducts Focus Group sessions uncovering motivations, perceptions and prejudices on specific topics, whether a brand, product, service or issue.

When To Use A Focus Group

- Product/Service Testing And Review
- Public Relations Messaging
- Advertising Testing
- Marketing Testing/Reviews/Strategy
- Legal/Jury Interaction Testing
- Movie/Film Pre-Screening And Testing
- Election/Political Party Strategies
- Assess The Success/Failure Of A Program And More..

Advantages Of A Focus Group

- Rapid Response - Can Be Conducted Quickly
- Uncover Specific Information About A Narrow Topic
- Provides An Ample Supply Of Preliminary Data
- Serves As A Starting Point Or Stand Alone Research Method
- Costs Are Reasonable

Focus Group Preparation

Clearly define the goals and objectives of the focus group in advance to all participants and clients

Define/draft your questions and stay true to the script for as long as possible

- Be prepared to adapt early and often
- Always return back to your script/questions
- Once main questions/topics are covered, open the conversation up for free and interactive correspondence

Prioritize 5-7 questions that *must* be answered – and obtain those answers

Start with the easiest questions to ease participants into the session

Time the early responses in order to leave enough time for the more important question/answer session

Consider sharing a handful of questions in advance with participant with no prior experience/knowledge of focus groups

The Focus Group Moderator

Always use an experienced, independent focus group moderator or facilitator

- Failure to properly review the moderator's credentials can lead to an unsuccessful focus group session
- Utilize a neutral third-party with an unbiased opinion to moderate the session

The facilitator/moderator will guide the discussion and will know how to:

- Clearly define the session agenda to the participants
- Properly introduce participants to each other
- Keep participants fully engaged
- Identify new discussion points that arise during the session
- Confirm all answers/topics are discussed and answered
- Leave time at the end of the session for open dialogue
- Keep atmosphere relaxed
- Inform group that session is being recorded (if true)

The moderator should always guide the discussion and rely on an assistant or co-facilitator in another room to record or take significant notes on the session

The Focus Group Moderator

The facilitator/moderator must never:

- Lose eye contact with any respondent during a dialogue exchange
- Let participants talk more than allotted time
- Allow a single participant to dominate the session or attempt to change any opinions
- Make suggestions or give advice to a participant – on rare occasions, the moderator/facilitator can provide additional information to enhance participation
- Sit or stand too far away from the group

Using an internal resource to moderate may influence participation and discussion in the session as participants will refrain from expressing concerns or commenting negatively about the brand, product or service

Questionnaire Development

Tips For Developing An Effective Focus Group Questionnaire

- 1) Open-ended questions allow the participants to “fill in the blanks”
- 2) All questions should be neutral and never lead the participants in any direction
- 3) Questions should be asked one at a time
- 4) Clearly word every question with simple language so every participant can understand
- 5) Seek opinions and values
- 6) Uncover behaviors and emotions
- 7) Always ask demographic questions

Focus Group: The Session

Allow the participants to meet, introduce themselves to each other, and talk about anything that comes to mind

- The initial goal is to relax the participants
- Inform them that they are currently not being recorded

Start the session slowly to gauge the interest level of the participants

Maintain focus on the key questions you need answered

Keep participants engaged and ensure all respond to every question

- Ask the question directly from your script
- Be prepared to ask the question from your script in several different ways
- Give respondents time to answer – don't rush them
- Don't allow a few participants to dominate any answer
- After all participants respond, open up the conversation to a group discussion

Once each question is answered, provide a brief answer recap/overview for the group and move onto the next question

Focus Group: The Analysis

Upon conclusion of the focus group session, the formal analysis begins

Methods For A Successful Focus Group Analysis

- 1) Immediately summarize the session based on notes/recordings
- 2) Organize quotes, key words that appeared, trends, attitudes, perceptions and contrasting thoughts
- 3) Highlight any surprising aspects of the focus group
- 4) Start with an overview and do not hide any negative feedback or key learnings
- 5) Develop the final analysis based upon the objective conclusions made by a professional and neutral moderator



Thank You!

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