

**IRS W&I CCE Toll-Free
Phone Focus Group Recruiting Guide - DRAFT**

INITIAL CALL

Hello, I'm _____ and I'm calling from _____. You recently responded to a phone survey from the IRS about your interaction with the Compliance Center Exam Call Center Staff and indicated that you are interested in follow up research. We are setting up a one-hour phone focus group interview of taxpayers to modify the questionnaire. This is NOT a call about your specific case. This is your opportunity to have input and to tell the IRS what your experiences have been and to make recommendations for change.

Your participation with this research is voluntary, but your help on this project would be very much appreciated. As a token of our appreciation for your time, you will receive \$50. Are you interested in participating? *[If no, thank taxpayer for their time, and hang up]*

The focus group will be held via telephone on DAY DATE at (TIMES Eastern Time). All participants will call in to an 800 number to join the conference call. The discussion will last about one hour. You will be joined by a group of about six people who, like you, have experience with the IRS' Compliance Center Exam Toll-Free service. You will not be asked about your specific tax situation, only about your experience with this process. Would you be able to participate? *[If no, thank them and terminate the call].*

Are you or is anyone in your immediate family an employee of the IRS?

_____ Yes *[explain, thank, then terminate the call]*
_____ No

[Recruiter: note male or female]

_____ Male
_____ Female

We are delighted that you will participate in our group.

The dial in number is: NUMBER

The access code is: CODE#

Do you have any questions? We would like some contact information to confirm the meeting and to mail out the token of appreciation for your participation.

Respondent Name _____

Respondent Address

We would also like to give you a reminder call on the day of the group. Would we reach you at this number or another? [record number _____]

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that IRS provide an OMB Control Number on all approved public information requests. That number is OMB 1545-1349. Also, if you like, I can give you an address where you can send comments and questions regarding this process or suggestions for making it simpler.

READ ONLY IF RESPONDENT ASKS FOR ADDRESS: Send your comments and suggestions to:

IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee
Western Area Distribution Center
Rancho Cordova, CA 95743-0001

Thank you and have a nice day. We look forward to speaking with you on:

DAY DATE (TIME Eastern)
DAY DATE (TIME Eastern)

For record keeping:

_____ Confirmation letter mailed or faxed
_____ Reminder call made

REMINDER CALL

Hello, I'm _____ and I'm calling from _____. This is a call to remind you of your participation in the telephone focus group scheduled for (DATE AND TIME). The dial in number is: NUMBER. The access code is: CODE#. Do you have any questions? (PAUSE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS). Thank you in advance for your participation.

**IRS W&I CCE Toll-free
Phone Focus Group Moderator's Guide - DRAFT**
(Notes to the moderator are in italics)

Overview

Hello, I'm Jennifer Schranz from Pacific Consulting Group. I will be moderating our discussion today. The topic we'll be discussing is your satisfaction with the IRS and your feelings about the Compliance Center Exam Toll-free service. Each of you was asked to participate because you called the Toll-free line and expressed interest in further research. The overall goal of the research is to provide information that will help the IRS provide better service to customers like you. Specifically, we are working with the IRS to update a questionnaire similar to one you've completed recently. Your input is very important for establishing the areas of the process that need improvement. This is your opportunity to have input and to tell the IRS what your experiences have been and to make recommendations for change.

First, I would like to thank all of you for calling in today. Our discussion will take about one hour. We would like to know your real attitudes and feelings, so please be as open and frank with us as you can. We would like for you to think about your opinions of the IRS with regard to your interactions with them and not your opinions regarding tax laws specifically. We are recording this session, and we have some IRS personnel listening in with us, but please keep in mind that our focus here is on your experiences and opinions, not on your individual identities.

Introductions

Before we get started, let's introduce ourselves. Please tell us your first name, what state you live in and if your audit is over or still ongoing.

Audit Experiences and Expectations

Now I'd like to ask each one of you to briefly describe your experience with the audit process. Think from the time you were notified of the audit to your current status whether your audit is still ongoing or completed.

[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]

What were your expectations for the audit you underwent?

How well did the actual experience match your expectations? *[Moderator: Open discussion first, roundtable if necessary]*

What are your expectations during an audit? *[Moderator: Open discussion first, roundtable if necessary]*

Audit Communication

Let's talk a little about communication. Did any of you have difficulties understanding the audit process? (or, I hear that some of you experienced difficulties understanding the audit process). How can the IRS help in explaining the audit process in the beginning so you are better informed of the process? *[Moderator: Open discussion first, roundtable if necessary]*

What are the important elements of this process you would like to be informed about?
[Moderator: Open discussion first, roundtable if necessary]

Probes

- *Additional interim letters*
 - *Processing complete/Case closed*
 - *Case assigned to TE*
 - *Anything else to let the taxpayer know where they are in the process*

Excellent Customer Service

Now I'd like you to think about times you received Excellent Customer Service from an organization.

What is your definition of excellent customer service?
[Moderator: Open discussion first, roundtable if necessary]

Think back to your most recent call to the IRS Toll-free number. How would you have answered the question: Did the IRS employee with whom you spoke provide excellent customer service?

Let's start with [Name]. Would you have answered yes or no to that question?
[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]

How would you feel if the IRS employee you spoke with asked you "Did I provide you with excellent service today?" at the end of your phone call? *[Moderator: Open discussion first, roundtable if necessary]*

Survey Questions

I'd like to focus on the customer satisfaction survey now. In that survey we ask questions about the service you received from the IRS. The IRS wants to make sure they fully understand and correctly interpret your responses.

The first question I'd like to discuss is "Fairness of treatment by the IRS". On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means very dissatisfied and 5 represents very satisfied, how would have rated this question? *[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]*

What does Fairness mean to you? *[Moderator: Open discussion]*

Now let's talk about the question "Amount of time you spent on this audit". Again from 1 to 5, how would you rate this item? *[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]*

What activities did you include when thinking about the time you spent? *[Moderator: Open discussion]*

Next I want you to think about the "Clarity of notice in explaining what records you needed to send in".

On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means very dissatisfied and 5 represents very satisfied, how would have rated this question? *[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]*

What was unclear to you? What could have the IRS done to make it clearer? *[Moderator: Open discussion]*

Now, let's focus on the "Ease of collecting the information requested by IRS". Again from 1 to 5, how would you rate this item? *[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]*

What types of information did you need to collect? What could the IRS have done to make that process simpler? *[Moderator: Open discussion]*

Additional Advice

Finally, do you have any additional advice for the IRS regarding how the Compliance Center Exam Toll-free group can improve its service to you?

[Moderator: Open discussion]

Wrap up

Those are all the questions that I have for this session. I want to thank you and the IRS wants to thank you, for participating in this discussion. PCG will be sending a \$50 token of our appreciation in the mail within two weeks.

CCE TF Phone Focus Groups Confirmation Letter

DATE

Thank you for your willingness to participate in a one-hour phone focus group interview of taxpayers to better understand the service you received and your service needs. This is NOT a call about your specific case. This is your opportunity to have input and to tell the IRS what your experiences have been and to make recommendations for change.

Your participation with this research is voluntary, but your help on this project would be very much appreciated. As a token of our appreciation for your time, you will receive \$50.

The focus group will be held by telephone on DAY DATE at (STATE TIME FOR EACH TAXPAYER: TIME). All participants will call in to a toll-free number to join the conference call. The discussion will last about one hour. You will be joined by a group of up to 6 people who, like you, have experience with the IRS's process. You will not be asked about your specific tax situation, only about your experience with this process.

We are delighted that you will participate in our group.

The dial in number is: NUMBER

The access code is: CODE#

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that the IRS display an OMB control number on all public information requests. The OMB Control Number for this study is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, you may write to the IRS.

Send your comments and suggestions to:

**Internal Revenue Service,
Tax Products Coordinating Committee,
Room #IR-6406
1111 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20224**

Thank you and have a nice day. We look forward to speaking with you on: (STATE APPROPRIATE DATE AND TIME FOR TAXPAYER)

Thanks,

Mike Nagai
Pacific Market Research
1.877.271.2300