



2010 IRS Marketing Materials Focus Group Screener

RESPONDENT INFO

RESPONDENT ID# _____ (1-5)

Market Order, Group Composition, Focus Group Dates & Times For 8 Groups of NON-USERS AND USERS

- Market #1 Philadelphia Group #1...Users/Ages 18-24...DATE & TIME:...TBD...1 ...09
Market #1 Philadelphia Group #2...Non-Users/Ages 25+/Paper...DATE & TIME:...TBD...2
Market #2 Minneapolis Group #1...Non-Users/Ages 25+/V-Coders...DATE & TIME:...TBD...3
Market #2 Minneapolis Group #2...Non-Users/Ages 18-24/Paper...DATE & TIME:...TBD...4
Market #3 Dallas Group #1...Non-Users/Ages 25+, V-Coder...DATE & TIME:...TBD...5
Market #3 Dallas Group #2...Non-Users/Ages 25+, Paper...DATE & TIME:...TBD...5
Market #4 Orange County Group #1...Users/Ages 25+...DATE & TIME:...TBD...7
Market #4 Orange County Group #2...Non-Users/Ages 18-24/V-Coders...DATE & TIME:...TBD...8

CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

PHONE # (AC-____) _____

RECORD DATE, TIME & DISPOSITION FOR EACH ATTEMPT AT SCREENING/RECRUITING THIS PERSON.

Table with 10 rows and 7 columns: DATE, TIME, Disc, NA, Unavail, Ref, NQ, Comp. Includes row numbers 1-10 and attempt counts.

INTERVIEWER _____

LISTS PROVIDED BY IRS WILL BE DRAWN TO ASSURE THAT ALL RESPONDENTS QUALIFY FOR THE SPECIFIC SEGMENT THAT WE ARE SCREENING FOR (AS OUTLINED IN THE BOX ABOVE).

WHEN SCREENING FOR THE 8 TAXPAYER GROUPS - AFTER REACHING A POTENTIAL RESPONDENT, INTRODUCE YOURSELF WITH:

Hello, I am _____ of Russell Research, an independent national survey research firm. The Internal Revenue Service has asked us to contact Taxpayers in your area about participation in a research study. Let me assure you this is not a sales call. Will you take a moment to speak with me? (IF RESPONDENT AGREES TO PARTICIPATE CONTINUE WITH...)

First, some questions about you and possible participation in this study.

1. For the record, are you male or female? (CIRCLE ANSWER BELOW.)

Male.....1 ...22
Female.....2

LOOSELY QUOTA FOR 50% MALE & 50% FEMALE.

2. Which of the following best describes your age? (CIRCLE ANSWER BELOW.)

- Under 18 (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....1 ...23
- 18-24.....2
- 25-35.....3
- 36-45.....4
- 46-55.....5
- 56-64.....6
- 65-74.....7
- 75 Or Over.....8
- Refused (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....9

RECRUITERS: MONITOR GENDER AND AGE AND REPORT ONGOING PROPORTIONS TO PROJECT STAFF TO AVOID SKEWS. THE GOAL IS TO RECRUIT A MIX OF AGES WITHIN THE 25+ AGE CELLS NO MORE THAN 1

NOTE: WE'RE ASKING Q. 3 EVEN THOUGH WE WILL HAVE IDENTIFIED FROM THE IRS DATABASE (AND INCLUDED IN THE SCREENING LIST) O-N-L-Y TAXPAYERS WHO WE KNOW ALREADY QUALIFY FOR EACH TYPE OF GROUP. THE PURPOSE OF ASKING THIS QUESTION IS AVOID HAVING TAXPAYERS CLAIMING OTHERWISE DURING THE GROUPS.

3. Did you file a Federal Income Tax Return earlier this year - that is, in early 2010 - for Tax Year 2009? (CIRCLE ANSWER BELOW.)

- Yes (CONTINUE TO Q. 4).....1 ...24
- No (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT ANYONE CLAIMING NOT TO HAVE FILED IN '10).....2**

4. Who actually prepared the Federal Income Tax Return that you filed in your name earlier this year - that is, in early 2010 - for Tax Year 2009? (CIRCLE ANSWER BELOW.)

- You/Yourself (CONTINUE SCREENING WITH Q4).....1 ...24
- A relative (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....2
- A friend (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....3
- A paid tax preparer (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....4
- An unpaid tax preparer (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....5
- Someone at an IRS Taxpayer Assistance Center (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....6
- Or by someone else (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT).....7

ASK Q. 5 OF NON-USERS ONLY

5. **I notice that you did not use electronic filing to file your Federal Income Taxes in 2010. How do you feel about preparing and submitting your Federal Income Tax return using a computer and electronic filing? Is this something you would considering doing, or not?** (CIRCLE ANSWER BELOW.)

- Yes (CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATION IF OTHERWISE QUALIFIED).....1 ...24
- No (THANK & DO NOT RECRUIT ANYONE AVERSE TO ELECTRONIC PREPARATION AND FILING) 2**

PARTICIPATION OFFER: We'd like you to join us, along with other Taxpayers, in a group discussion of tax filing and marketing materials which the IRS might use to communicate with Taxpayers. To participate, you would come to our research facilities at (ADDRESS) on (DATE) at (TIME) and spend about an hour and a half with us, discussing these topics. Your participation is voluntary, and as a thank-you for taking the time to help us, we'll have a \$100 cash gift for you at the end of the group discussion. Will you help us?

CLOSING COMMENTS: Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. We are required by law to report to you the OMB (Office Of Management and Budget) Control Number for this public information request. That number is **1545-1349**. In addition, if you have any comments on ways to improve this research process, you can write to the IRS. Would you like the address? (IF YES, ADDRESS IS...) IRS Tax Products



Free File Marketing Campaign
Discussion Guide

DATE: June 7, 2010

Project: 10-04-xxx

1. **Introduction:** Free flowing discussion in which there are no wrong answers, looking for your unique point of view.
2. **Disclosure:** Conversation will be audio and video taped, two-way mirrors, and observers.
3. **Guidelines:** Objective third party did not create any of the items being discussed, looking for honest thoughts and feelings.
4. **Objectives:** You are natural problem solvers. You have naturally analyzed information, weighed the choices, and have made decisions that make sense to you. I need you to help me understand those things that surround the decisions you've made.

I. Warm-up

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you live & who lives at home with you?
3. What do you do with most of your time? What do you do for a living?

II. Tax Prep and Filing Exploratory

1. Now we are going to discuss tax preparation and filing. How do you typically file your taxes?
 - a. When it comes time to prepare and file your federal taxes, where do you start? Where is the first place you go/look for information?
 - b. If it is the internet, what site do you visit first? Any others?
 - c. Who do you trust to give you the best information regarding preparation and filing of your federal taxes? What agencies, organizations, or companies do you trust?
2. Would you consider going to the IRS website to evaluate tax preparation options? What makes you say that?
 - a. When it comes to preparing and filing your taxes do you find the IRS helpful?
 - b. Do you see the IRS as offering (or being) a public service?
 - c. Do you trust any government agencies for information? What agencies specifically? How does that compare to the IRS?
3. We have talked about a number of organizations you turn to when you are preparing your taxes. In what specific situations would you turn to each of these organizations?
 - a. When is the IRS that best source? When do you trust them?

III. Non User Group – FREE FILE

1. If you could use popular tax preparation software for free to prepare and file your taxes, would you? What specifically makes you say that?
 - a. Is a free electronic tax preparation and filing service something you would use if you could?
 - b. Is that appealing to you at all? What is the most appealing part of that idea? Least appealing?
 - c. Have you ever used something like that? What was it? How did you feel about it?
2. Have you ever heard of something called Free File? Free Federal Filing?
 - a. If you haven't heard of that, what do you think it might be?
 - b. If you have, what is your impression of what it is?
 - c. Is that appealing to you at all? What is the most appealing part of that idea? Least appealing?

There is an IRS program called Free File and here's how they describe it: (READ, DISTRIBUTE FREE FILE DESCRIPTION SHOWN IN "APPENDIX", AND POST IN ROOM)

3. What is your first reaction to this idea?
 - a. Is this appealing to you at all? What is the most appealing part of that idea? Least appealing?
 - b. Why would the IRS offer such a program? Why would the IRS be offering you a free service?
 - c. When you hear the phrase "Free File" what do you think of? Does it include preparation and filing?
4. What are your expectations when you hear the phrase "free file" used in relationship to your taxes?
 - a. If the IRS said they were offering you several popular commercial software/computer options to prepare and file your taxes for free, would you try it? What makes you feel that way?
 - b. Some of you might prepare your taxes using paper forms. Would you consider filling out an electronic version of the same form, even without using any special software?
 - c. Here are some elements from the description and I would just like to get an idea of which are most interesting to you. Where 1 is the most important and 10 is the least important, how would you rank these elements when it comes to a program like Free File to help you with tax preparation and filing:
 - Available 24/7
 - Accurate Return
 - Security
 - Easy preparation and filing
 - Confirmation IRS has received and accepted your return
 - Get your refund fast
 - Free

IV. For User Group – FREE FILE

1. If you could use popular tax preparation software for free to prepare and file your taxes, would you? What specifically makes you say that?
 - a. Is a free electronic tax preparation and filing service something you would use if you could?
 - b. Is that appealing to you at all? What is the most appealing part of that idea? Least appealing?
 - c. Have you ever used something like that? What was it? How did you feel about it?
2. Have you ever heard of something called Free File? Free Federal Filing?
 - a. If you haven't heard of that, what do you think it might be?
 - b. If you have, what is your impression of what it is?
 - c. Is that appealing to you at all? What is the most appealing part of that idea? Least appealing?

There is an IRS program called Free File and here's how they describe it: (READ, DISTRIBUTE FREE FILE DESCRIPTION SHOWN IN "APPENDIX", AND POST IN ROOM)

3. What is your first reaction to this idea?
 - a. Have any of you ever used this kind of a program from the IRS? How was it? What do you think of the program? Did it work for you? Where did you hear about this type of program?
 - b. Would you recommend it to a friend or family member? Why or why not?
 - c. Why would the IRS offer such a program? Why would the IRS be offering you a free service?
 - d. When you hear the phrase "Free File" what do you think of? Does it include preparation and filing?
 - e. Here are some elements from the description and I would just like to get an idea of which are most interesting to you. Where 1 is the most important and 10 is the least important, how would you rank these elements when it comes to a program like Free File to help you with tax preparation and filing:
 - Available 24/7
 - Accurate Return
 - Security
 - Easy preparation and filing
 - Confirmation IRS has received and accepted your return
 - Get your refund fast
 - Free

V. New Communications Messages Exploratory

The IRS is considering some new advertising messaging to suggest to taxpayers that they consider using Free File to prepare and file their Federal Income Tax returns. These are not ads, but just ideas that might be turned into ads, like the ones we just discussed.

I'm not that interested in whether you like an idea or not. What I am most interested in understanding what you see as the main thing they are trying to tell you. What is the one thing they want you to remember?

(ROTATE THE ORDER OF CONCEPTS)

1. **Initial reaction** - What were your thoughts and feelings as I went through these?
 - a. What is your first impression of this approach? What specifically gives you that impression?
 - b. What stood out to you most about this approach?
 - c. Anything surprising? Is there any new information here?
2. **Message** - If you could boil it down to a single short statement, what are they trying to tell you?
 - a. How do you feel about that overall idea? Is that relevant to you? Interesting?
 - b. Knowing what you know already about Free File, does this seem to be a good representation of the program? What is missing?
3. **New News** - Does this impact how you think or feel about using Free File?
 - a. Does this add anything to what you already think or feel about Free File? See it in a new light?
 - b. If you heard or saw this idea, would you be interested in finding out more about the program?

(REPEAT FOR EACH EXECUTION APPROACH)

4. Which of the messages about Free File is the most relevant to you and how you think about preparing your federal taxes?
 - a. What specifically about that message makes it relevant to you? What stands out to you the most?
 - b. How would you describe this message to someone who has never seen it? What is the most important things for them to know?
 - c. Do you find any of messages problematic in any way? What specifically makes you say that?

(EXISTING MARKETING)

There have been a number of different marketing messages in the market place. I'd like to see if you had seen them and what you think about them over all. (SHOW OLDER IRS AND "COMPETITIVE" ADS)

5. What were your thoughts and feelings about this marketing?
 - a. What does this ad say to you about Free File? What does it tell you about Free File? Who was this ad for? Who created this ad?
 - b. Knowing what you know already about Free File, does this seem to be a good representation of the program? How does this compare to what the IRS was referencing in its advertising?

- c. If you heard or saw this idea, would you be interested in finding out more about the program?
 - d. How do these older ads compare to the ideas from the IRS we talked about earlier?
 - e. Thinking about everything you have seen today, which of these messages about Free File is the most relevant to you and how you think about preparing your federal taxes?
 - f. Do you find any of messages problematic in any way? What specifically makes you say that?
6. We have been talking about this Free File program for some time now. So is there a way of talking about it that you think is important but is missing here?
- a. Based on what you know about Free File now, what is the biggest reason why you would NOT use Free File for preparing and submitting your Federal Income Tax Return?
 - b. What would have to change or be different for you to consider using Free File?

VI. CONCLUSION

1. Beyond just what we have been talking about here, what would make it easier for you to file your taxes?
- a. People say all the time, “I’m doing my taxes this weekend” or “I did my taxes last night”. What does that phrase, “do your taxes” mean to you?
 - b. What are all the different activities that are included in that idea? Does that mean prepare the paperwork, or send them in/file them, or does it mean both—the whole process of completing them and sending in?

THANK YOU