

Attachment A: Screener's Guide

**Testing Free File Marketing Strategies and Free File Company Choice  
Wage and Investment Notice Improvement Office  
Screener's Guide**

*Recruit using the following quotas*

- 1. All must be between the ages of 24 and 35*
- 2. All must be proficient in English*
- 3. All must be a 1040 filer and familiar with their own tax return*
- 4. All must have an income less than or equal to \$54,000*
- 5. All must have filed a paper return although completed the form using a computer*
- 6. All must not have used Free File or e-file services in the past 5 years*
- 7. At least 50% of participants must have completed their own tax return last year.*

*Would like a mix of:*

- Gender*
- Race/Ethnicity*
- Education*

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work for \_\_\_\_\_. We are a marketing research company that is working with the IRS to improve the IRS communications.

Do you have a few minutes to answer a couple of questions? Your participation is voluntary, but your help on this project would be very much appreciated. *[If respondent says yes, proceed with interview].*

1. Would you say that you are the adult in your household who is most familiar with the preparation and filing of your federal income tax returns?

- Yes, most familiar.....1 **SKIP TO Q2**
- Equally familiar.....2 **SKIP TO Q2**
- Not most/equally familiar....3

1b. Are you sufficiently familiar with your federal income tax return to answer some questions about it?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2 **[Terminate]**

2. Are you between 24 and 35 years of age? **If under 24 or over 35 TERMINATE**

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of these categories does your total annual household income fall into? **If more than \$54,000 TERMINATE**

- Under \$35,000
- \$35,001 – 54,000
- \$54,001 – 100,000 [*Terminate*]
- Over \$100,001 [*Terminate*]

4. Have you filed and submitted your return electronically at any time within the last 5 years? **If Yes, TERMINATE**

5. Please select the statement that best describes the language spoken in your household.

- English is the only language spoken
- English is the primary language spoken
- A language other than English is the primary language spoken [*Terminate*]

6. Please identify your highest completed level of education. **RECRUIT A MIX**

- Grade School
- Some High School
- High School Diploma/GED
- Trade School
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (M.D., J.P.)

7. What is your employment status? **RECRUIT A MIX**

- Full time student
- Student, working full time
- Student, working part time
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Not employed, but looking for employment
- Not employed and not looking for employment
- Retired

Now, I need to ask a few questions about the most recent federal tax return you filed, for most people this would have been your 2007 taxes filed by April 16, 2008.

8. Did you complete your tax return using a computer but mail in paper forms to file? **If No, TERMINATE**

9. Which of the following forms did you use when you filed your tax return last year? **(IF NONE OF THE BELOW, TERMINATE)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Short Form 1040EZ – did not itemize deductions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Short Form 1040A – did not itemize deductions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Long Form 1040 without other forms or schedules
- \_\_\_\_\_ Long Form 1040, with other forms or schedules
- \_\_\_\_\_ Long Form, don't remember if had other forms/schedules

\_\_\_\_\_ (company name) in conjunction with the IRS, is conducting research in which taxpayers like yourself will come in and answer questions regarding IRS communications. The purpose of this study is to better understand the communication needs of taxpayers. Are you interested in participating? (give times and dates)

Thank you for agreeing to help us with this valuable research.

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

*Internal Revenue Service  
Tax Products Coordinating Committee  
SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP  
1111 Constitution Ave. NW IR-6526, Washington, DC 20224*

**Attachment B: Reminder Call Script**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_. May I speak with  
\_\_\_\_\_ {Participant name}.

{Once you have participant on the phone}

We just wanted to remind you that we are looking forward to seeing you tomorrow at (time) at (location) to talk about the IRS Free File program.

## Attachment C: Testing Protocol

### Free File Marketing Campaign Testing Protocol:

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#### Introduction of Moderator

Welcome, and thank you for coming in today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a researcher from the Internal Revenue Service and I will be leading today's session. Before we get started, I want to let you know that I will be reading from a script. We are talking with a number of people this week, and we want to be sure we say the same things in the same way to each person.

Today's session will be videotaped to ensure that we collect all pertinent information. In addition, there are representatives from the IRS observing our session from the room next door. It is very common when we conduct tests to have interested parties observe, and that is the case today.

The entire session will take no more than 90 minutes.

#### Introduction of Activities

During today's session you will complete two activities. First, I'm going to have you read a marketing tool about the Free File program. Next, I'm going to have you choose a company to prepare a Free File tax return based upon information I will provide about a fictitious taxpayer.

After each activity I'm going to ask you a series of questions about your experience completing the activity and about the content of the marketing tool.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

#### ACTIVITY 1: Marketing Tool Review

For our first activity today, you will be reviewing a marketing tool intended to promote the Free File program.

The first thing I'm going to ask you to do is read a marketing tool.

Then, I'm going to ask you some specific questions about the information contained within the marketing tool.

And finally, after I've completed the information questions, I'm going to ask you some more general questions about the marketing tool.

I will provide you with a scenario and background information regarding a fictitious taxpayer who received the marketing tool.

When you are finished, let me know, and we'll start the questions.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

These are all the documents you will need to complete this activity.

*Hand participant each of the following items:*

1. copy of Free File marketing tool testing scenario
2. copy of the Free File marketing tool

I would like you to follow along while I review the information in the scenario.

*Review the testing scenario.*

*Name: Theodore Jackson*

*DOB: 3/12/81*

*SSN #:876-00-9191*

*Theodore Jackson is 26 years old. He lives and works in Richmond, Virginia and wishes to file a tax return for 2007. Theodore works at a grocery store and made \$26,000 in 2007. For his 2006 tax return, Theodore filed a paper return.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please begin reading the marketing tool.

## **Activity 1, Part 2: Marketing Tool Comprehension Questions**

I'm now going to ask you a series of specific questions about the marketing tool you just read.

Please remember that you may refer to the marketing tool as much as you'd like to answer the questions.

1. What are your initial impressions of the marketing tool?

2. Is Theodore eligible to Free File?

PROBE: Why or why not?

3. What should Theodore do if he wants to file a Free File return?

4. How much will it cost Theodore to use the Free File program?

5. If Theodore chooses to Free File, how will he know the IRS received his return?

6. Would Theodore benefit from filing a Free File return compared to a paper return?

PROBE: Please explain your response.

7. Which information in the marketing tool, if any, may convince Theodore to use Free File to prepare and file his return?

PROBE: Why do you think these items may convince Theodore to use Free File to prepare and file his return?

That concludes the specific questions I have regarding this marketing tool.

### **Activity 1, Part 3: Marketing Tool Debrief Questions**

I'm now going to ask you a series of more general questions about the marketing tool.

#### **Re-Read**

Were there any sections of the marketing tool that you had to re-read or go over more than once?

PROBE: What was your primary reason for doing this?

#### **Skipped**

Where there any sections of the marketing tool that you either scanned or skipped over completely?

PROBE: What was your primary reason for doing this?

## **Understandability**

On a scale of one to five, with one being very easy and five being very difficult, how easy or difficult was it for you to understand the marketing tool?

PROBE (if rated as difficult): Which sections of the marketing tool did you find more difficult to understand?

PROBE (if rated as easy): Are there any sections of the marketing tool you believe other taxpayers may find difficult to understanding?

## **Order of Information**

What do you think about the order of information in this marketing tool?

PROBE: Please explain your response.

## **Design and Layout**

What did you think of the design and layout of the marketing tool?

PROBE: Please explain your response.

## **Improving the Marketing Tool**

Is there anything you feel we could improve to make the marketing tool better?

PROBE: Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked?

PROBE: If so, what and why?

Let's move on to the next activity.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Choose Free File Company**

When an individual uses the Free File program, they must choose a company to prepare and file their tax return for free.

The next activity involves choosing a Free File company to prepare and file a tax return. I will ask you to record the company you choose on the answer sheet provided. Once you record the company name on the answer sheet, please indicate that you have completed the task.

I will provide you with a scenario that contains all the relevant tax information you'll need to complete this activity.



In addition, you will be provided pencils, a calculator, scratch paper, and access to *irs.gov*.

It is important that you understand our purpose today is not to test your ability to complete this activity, but to evaluate the Free File Web site itself. In other words, we are not grading your performance.

Finally, while I will remain in the room, I cannot help you complete this activity.

Do you have any questions?

Ok, let's begin.

These are all the documents and supporting tax information you will have available to complete this activity.

*Hand participant each of the following items:*

1. copy of testing scenario and tax documents
2. pencils (2)
3. calculator
4. scratch paper
5. answer sheet

I would like you to follow along while I review the information in the scenario.

*Review the testing scenario.*

*Name: Andrew Franklin*

*DOB: 3/12/78*

*SSN #:876-00-6251*

*Andrew Franklin is 30 years old and his wife is Mary is 28 years old. They live and work in Richmond, Virginia and wish to file a joint return for 2007. They have 2 children ages 3 and 1. Andrew works in construction and made \$28,000 in 2007. Mary works part time at radio station WRVQ and made \$13,000 last year. Because of their income, they do not qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit and neither Andrew nor Mary receive any income from military service. Andrew would like to prepare their state return at the same time he does their federal return.*

There is no time limit for choosing a Free File company, so please take as long as you need.

As a reminder, while I will remain in the room, I cannot help you complete this activity.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please begin.

NOTE: Participant may ask: “Where do I start?”

RESPONSE: One of our goals in today’s testing is to try to replicate the actual experience of taxpayers. So, we would like you to proceed the same way you would if you were choosing a Free File company at home.

*Participant completes the task.*

*Retrieve answer sheet, scenario and supporting documents.*

*NOTE: If the participant has not recorded a company on the answer sheet, please return it and ask the participant to record the company on the answer sheet provided.*

That completes the second activity.

NOTE: Participant may ask how they performed. Inform them that in order to keep the sessions the same for all participants, you cannot discuss their answers.

## **Activity 2, Part 2: Choosing Free File Company Comprehension Questions / Structured Interview**

As I mentioned at the beginning of our session, I’m going to be asking you a series of questions about your experience choosing a Free File company, along with questions about Free File Web site itself.

As with choosing the company, there are no right or wrong answers; we are simply interested in your experience and your opinion. Also, you don’t have to provide an answer. If you don’t know, simply tell me that you don’t know.

For this activity, I asked you to choose a Free File company to file a return.

We are very interested in how taxpayers choose a company to Free File their return and would like to ask you questions about your experience choosing a company for Andrew to Free File his return.

Process Questions:

1. Would you please walk me through the general process you used to choose a Free File Company.

2. What specific parts of the Web site did you use?

Step By Step instructions

Frequently Asked Questions

List of companies

Tool available from "Guide Me To A Company!" button (i.e. "The Wizard")

Help or Tip features

Etc.

2a. Did you have to read any of these parts more than once to understand their meaning?

NOTE: If participant did not use the "The Wizard", ask the following probe:

PROBE: Why did you decide not to use the "Guide Me To A Company!" button?

3. How did you use this information?

4. Do you believe you could have chosen a company without this information?

REPEAT PROBE (questions #3 and #4): Were there any other parts of the Web site that you used?

NOTE: If participant didn't use "The Wizard", skip questions 5 through 9.

5. What additional information or instructions could have helped you complete the tool that guided you to a company (or could have made it easier)?

5a. How would you go about finding this information?

6. How would you change the tool that guided you to a company?

7. How would you change the instructions for the tool that guided you to a company?

8. On a scale of one to five, with one being very easy and five being very difficult, how easy or difficult was it to complete the tool that guided you to a company?

PROBE: What made it easy or difficult?

9. Once the tool gave you a list of companies to choose from, how did you choose which company Andrew should use to prepare and file his return?

NOTE: If participant didn't use a Help or Tip feature, skip question 10.

10. On a scale of one to five, with one being very easy and five being very difficult, how easy or difficult was it to find information using the Help or Tip feature?

PROVE: What made it easy or difficult?

11. What additional information or instructions could have helped you choose a Free File company (or could have made it easier)?

11a. How would you go about finding this information?

12. On a scale of one to five, with one being very easy and five being very difficult, how easy or difficult was it to navigate the Free File Web site?

PROBE: What made it easy or difficult?

13. On a scale of one to five, with one being very easy and five being very difficult, how easy or difficult was it to choose a Free File company to prepare and file the return?

PROBE: What made it easy or difficult?

14. Can you think of anything that you haven't told us that would help taxpayers choose a Free File company?

15. Prior to this testing session, had you used or browsed the Free File Web site or irs.gov?

## **Testing Summary**

That concludes the activities we had scheduled for today.

Do you have any questions or comments about anything we did today, or the questions we asked?

I want to thank you for coming in today and talking with us. Your participation is very much appreciated.

We are required by law to report to you the OMB control number for this public information request. That number is XXXX-XXXX.

Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the:

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