

**U.S. Mint Focus Group Research  
Discussion Guide  
Customers and Non-customers**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1525-0012-\_\_.**

- **Ground Rules:** Audio-taping, confidentiality, candor, cell phones, pagers, etc.
- **Background & Objectives:** The purpose of today's discussion is three-fold; namely to: 1) learn about your collecting interests, behaviors and purchases; 2) gather your feedback regarding current U.S. Mint products; and 3) ascertain your reactions to some new product and marketing ideas.
- **Introductions:** First name, **(Customers)** types of coins that are especially liked and length of time collecting and/or buying U.S. coins, **(Non-customers)** types of items collected and/or recent special gifts purchased.

**II. CURRENT COLLECTING/BUYING PRACTICES**

- **(Non-Customers) What particular types of collectibles have special interest or appeal to you and what makes them attractive to you? Probe...**
- **(Non-Customers) What types of special and/or collectible items have you purchased as gifts recently?**
  - What types of occasions?
  - What drew you to this item (for this person/occasion)?
  - How did you think this gift reflected on you (i.e., what did it say about you) as a gift giver?
- **(Non-Customers) Have you ever considered purchasing coins or coin sets to give as gifts? Probe...**
  - **If so:** For whom? What occasions?
  - **If not:** Why not?
  - What circumstances would prompt you to make such a purchase?

- What types of items, if any, would be compelling for such a purchase?

- ***(Customers) What types of coins and coin-related products have you bought from the U.S. Mint? Probe...***
- ***(Customers) Thinking specifically about the coins that you buy from the U.S. Mint, what specific products and how much of each do you typically purchase directly from the U.S. Mint in a year? Probe...***
  - Annual coin sets
  - Commemorative coins
  - Bags/rolls
  - American Eagle Proof and Uncirculated coins
  - American Buffalo
  - First Spouse Coins
  - Presidential \$1 coins
  - Medals
  - Other items (e.g., specialty products)
- ***(Customers) What types of coins do you expect to purchase from the U.S. Mint in the next year? Probe...***
  - Annual coin sets (e.g., quarters, uncirculated, proofs, silver proofs, etc.)
  - Commemorative coins
  - Bags/rolls
  - American Eagle proof and uncirculated coins (e.g., silver, gold, and platinum)
  - American Buffalo
  - First Spouse Coins
  - Presidential \$1 coins
  - Medals
  - Other items (e.g., specialty products)
- ***What U.S. coins, if any, do you buy from other sources such as dealers, Internet auctions, etc.? Probe...***
  - Which specific coins/sets?
  - Precious metals (e.g., American Eagle Investment [bullion] coins)?
  - For items that could be obtained directly from the Mint: Why use these other sources and not the U.S. Mint?

### III. CATALOG VARIATIONS

*[Distribute catalogs. Ask participants to review and write down products they are interested in and comments about the catalogs.]*

- **What, if any, products are appealing to you?**
  - What about this product made it appealing to you?
  - For self or for gift?
  - For what occasion?
  
- **Reactions to catalogs**
  - How well do the catalogs showcase the products?
  - **Probe** for...
    - Distinctions between prior and current U.S. Mint catalogs
    - Aspects of catalogs that work well vs. don't
  
- **Specific reactions to redesigned U.S. Mint catalog**
  - To what extent does it provide the information you need?
  - To what extent does it inspire you (or deter you) from making a purchase?
  - How do you feel about the changes (vs. prior)? **Probe** for...
    - Alternate visuals/graphical design (e.g., too much, overwhelming)
    - Look and feel
    - Reduction in copy (e.g., better or worse, is there enough information)
  
- **What suggested changes or improvements would you recommend?**
  - For the cover?
  - For the inside layout?
  - For the informational content?
  - **Probe** for reasons and for examples from other catalogs they receive/like
  
- **What, if any, other comments do you have related to these catalogs and/or their distribution?**

#### **IV. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT COIN PRODUCTS AND NEW PRODUCT IDEAS**

*[Distribute core products.]*

- **Overall, what are your impressions of the coin products that the U.S. Mint produces? Probe...**
  - Which ones are best? Worst?
  - How about their artistry, appearance, etc.?
  - What about their packaging?
- **Explore other product interest/preference issues identified by U.S. Mint team**

#### **V. PACKAGING FOR ANNUAL SETS**

*[Distribute current annual sets.]*

- **How likely are you to purchase each of these annual sets?**

*[Complete rating sheet regarding likelihood to purchase.]*

*[Distribute annual set prototypes and explain that they could be implemented in 2010 (or 2011 for certain prototypes).]*

- **[For each prototype design] How do you feel about this prototype design? Probe...**
  - What, if anything, do you like about the new design?
  - What, if anything, do you dislike?
  - What changes, if any, would you recommend?
- **[For cutout designs that allow view of coins] Which products should be visible through cut-outs, and which coins and side (obverse/reverse) should be visible?**
  - Why do you make these recommendations?
- **[For design with extra flap over box] What “added value” suggestions do you have for this flap? Probe...**
  - Additional printed information (not COA)?
  - Designs/artwork
  - Etc.
- **To what degree would combinations of the ideas illustrated in these prototypes be desirable?**

- ***What additional ideas would you recommend for changes to these Annual Sets? Probe...***
  - Variations in suggestions depending on the type of annual set (5-coin vs. 4-coin vs. full set)
  - External boxes vs. internal lenses
  - Etc.

*[Complete rating sheet regarding prototypes.]*

## **V. MISCELLANY AND WRAP-UP**

- ***Probe additional issues identified by U.S Mint; thank and conclude***