

**INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
FOCUS GROUPS  
Moderator Guide Initial Draft 11/17/2003**

Customer needs and expectations evolve over time; therefore, the importance of conducting periodic qualitative research is essential to accurately measuring customer satisfaction. Planning focus groups should include strategizing with other customer-facing segments of the organization to ensure topics, such as, event timing, messages, customer selection, etc. are consistent with other customer initiatives. Therefore, this list of objectives, topics and questions is preliminary in nature and may be modified as strategizing with other stakeholders takes place.

The proposed focus groups and one-on-one interviews will be utilized to re-design the current survey instruments and update where appropriate. To accomplish this, emphasis will be on acquiring customer feedback relative to the following key objectives:

**OBJECTIVE I.** Identify any “**pre-existing expectations**” about FEMA from those applicants that have experienced a disaster and have recently applied for assistance.

- Potential questions or areas for topic discussion:
  1. Following the disaster, how did you first become aware of FEMA?  
(Probe and record on flipchart)
  2. Prior to contacting FEMA to apply for disaster assistance, what were your initial expectations regarding what type of assistance you might receive from FEMA. (Record on flip chart)

**OBJECTIVE II.** Determine applicant’s “**current needs and expectations**” as they relate to recovering from a disaster.

- Potential questions or areas for topic discussion:
  1. Studies have shown that it is important for customers to “feel good” about the companies they do business with. What companies do you do business with personally that make you feel good?  
(Record on flip chart)

2. What do these companies do that make you feel good as a customer? (Record on a flipchart / develop pre-list of service attributes)
3. Now I'd like to shift the focus from your favorite companies to FEMA. Based on your recent experience in applying for disaster assistance, how would you rate FEMA as a government agency that is doing the right things to help you recover from the disaster? Use a rating scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent.
4. Thinking about the rating that you just wrote down, why did you give FEMA the particular rating you did?
5. Based in your interactions with FEMA, what types of things did FEMA do that made you feel good as a customer? (Record on flip chart)
6. Were there specific things FEMA did that you did not like? (Record on a flip chart)
7. (Probe until attribute possibilities are exhausted and finalize attribute list on flip chart.)

**OBJECTIVE III:** Prioritize which customer service attributes are the “**most important**” to applicants.

□ Potential questions or areas for topic discussion:

1. Using the list of desirable service attributes we have just compiled for your favorite companies, I would like to shift the focus of our discussion and ask you to think about FEMA. Of the service attributes we have compiled on our list, which do you feel are the most important in interacting with FEMA?
2. Is there anything not on the list that you feel would be important for FEMA to emphasize to insure good customer service?
3. Of the attributes we have identified here, write down the top 5 of these attributes which you think are the most important in any order. (Record on flip chart. Next, tally and read back to the group the items which received the most votes; then ask the group to rank each of the five attributes in order of importance.)

4. (Validate the “**current survey attributes**” now being measured in the existing survey instruments by comparing the list of attributes compiled by the group with those already being measured. Probe with any attributes from current list that did not make the group list. Discuss differences with group, add and rank attributes to master list as appropriate.)

**OBJECTIVE IV:** Evaluate the different ways FEMA uses to **communicate** with applicants and get input on how FEMA could improve.

- Potential questions or areas for topic discussion:
  1. (Probe for):
    - a. FEMA Correspondence
    - b. FEMA Information Packet
    - c. Applicant’s Guide
    - d. News Releases
  2. (Discuss effectiveness of each method of communication and what FEMA could do to improve.)

**OBJECTIVE V:** Evaluate applicant **expectations with respect to Inspection Services**. (Stakeholder feedback is essential to developing this section of Moderator’s guide)

- Potential questions or areas for topic discussion.
  1. Overall, how satisfied were you with the inspection FEMA conducted to validate your damages?
  2. (Develop separate attribute list and record on flip chart by probing for the most important aspects of the inspection process.)
    - a. List service attributes that are the most important.
    - b. Identify top 5 attributes and then rank in order of importance.
  3. What could FEMA do to insure they provide a fair inspection?
  4. (Compare current attributes measured with flip chart list and probe on those that were not mentioned by participants and include on flip chart list.)

**OBJECTIVE VI:** Determine the factor's applicant's consider when evaluating their overall level of **satisfaction with the assistance they received.**

- Potential questions or areas for topic discussion.
  1. (Probe to determine the overall level of satisfaction with the assistance each participant received.)
  2. What constitutes fair and reasonable assistance?
  3. What should the government's role be in assisting disaster victims in recovering from a disaster?
  
- Time permitting:
  4. If you could give FEMA one piece of advice to improve their service to applicants, what would it be?
  5. (Closing remarks.)