

## Appendix B: Sample Interviewer's Guide for Stakeholder Interviews

*{Note: Question wording and order is subject to change in the course of the interview. Follow-up questions will be asked by the Interviewer in order to probe deeper into the Interviewee's responses to each question.*

*This protocol is tailored for discussion with retail industry experts. Interview questions will be customized as appropriate depending on the role, background, expertise and experience of the Interviewee.}*

### Opening

Thank you for taking time to contribute to our project. We are working with a team at FDA's Center for Tobacco Products to get insight into the knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, motivations, communication preferences, and behaviors of tobacco retailers. Through this project, we seek to better understand the various factors related to retailers' compliance with FDA tobacco regulations and their decision making role in protecting youth access to tobacco.

At this stage, we are conducting interviews with approximately 10 key experts, in retail industry, tobacco control, academia and government, to gain an expert-level perspective on these issues. Your expertise will help us develop a framework for understanding decision-making in the retail environment and how this influences compliance with tobacco regulations. The information collected during our conversation today will also help inform current and future FDA education activities around retailer education. I'll provide more details at the end of this interview.

In our conversation today, I'd like to learn how your organization and the retail industry more broadly, makes and implements policies and practices designed to limit youth's access to tobacco. I also want to learn your thoughts on FDA's regulatory role, and any compliance challenges your organization, and others in the industry may face. Finally I would like to get your thinking on how FDA can more effectively communicate with retailers and engage them as partners in protecting youth from tobacco.

Our discussion should take about 45 minutes. I have a set of discussion questions, but feel free to raise anything that comes to mind as we go along. At any time, if you want to skip a question for any reason, just let me know and we will move on.

**Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research will be confidential to Decision Partners and FDA. Neither you nor your organization will be identified in any research summaries or reports. The information you provide in this interview will be confidential to Decision Partners. We will only provide a consolidated report of our findings from all of the experts to the FDA project team. No quotes will be attributed to you or any of the other experts. Is that acceptable to you?

I would also like to ask if I have permission to record our conversation for note taking purposes only. The audio file will not be shared outside of Decision Partners. It will be securely stored by and will be destroyed at the completion of this research project.

Are there any questions before we begin?

## Interview Questions

1. First, would you briefly describe your organization, including business size, scope and management structure?
  - Please briefly describe your organization's role in the purchase, marketing and sale of tobacco products.
  - For context, please briefly describe the overall management structure of tobacco marketing and sales within your organization?
2. How would you describe the tobacco retailer's role with regard to tobacco and youth?
3. Please describe your organization's overall approach to limiting youth's access to tobacco?
4. *If not mentioned:* Describe if and how your organization communicates and educates about rules and regulations around limiting youth's access to tobacco to store managers, supervisors and employees.
  - Do you have any specific tobacco educational materials for store managers, supervisors and employees? How about training programs? What does this include? Is it possible to have a copy of these materials?
  - Do you currently use or draw from any other retailer education campaigns or training programs that already exist. Which ones? How do you use them? (*An example may be the We Card program. If FDA educational activities are mentioned, see Q11.*)
5. How would you rate your general familiarity with FDA's regulatory role in protecting youth from tobacco? Would you say very, somewhat or not familiar?
  - Do you have any specific thoughts or questions on: FDA's regulatory authority? FDA's regulations; FDA's guidance to the retail industry; FDA's enforcement activity?
  - What questions are you hearing from others in the retail industry?
6. How do the new FDA regulations around tobacco sales and marketing affect your organization? How are they similar or different than policies and procedures your organization already had in place around tobacco sales and marketing?
  - What key changes, if any, have resulted in your policies and practices because of FDA's new regulatory role?
7. Are there any challenges your organization currently faces in understanding or complying with FDA's regulations? If yes, please describe them.
8. What, if anything, could FDA do to support retailers at the corporate level as they work to ensure compliance with FDA regulations within their organizations?

9. What would you say are the biggest influences on clerks' point of sale behavior, specifically their compliance with age verification and selling requirements?

10. What do you think would be the most useful tools for clerks and supervisors to ensure compliance with age verification and selling requirements? *Consider: hiring standards and practices, education and training, supervision and enforcement, positive incentives, disciplinary action, etc.*

- *If not mentioned*, what are their key education and communications needs?
- What types of communication tools are most effective in reaching clerks and supervisors with information about FDA tobacco regulations and information (e.g., mobile text alerts, email updates, mailings)?

11. How familiar are you with FDA's current educational activities for retailers, including its *Break the Chain of Tobacco Addiction* campaign?

- *If familiar:*
  - What do you think FDA is trying to achieve with this campaign?
  - What do you think the need is for an FDA retailer education campaign for retailers? High, medium or low. Why do you say that?
  - Does your organization currently use the materials? If yes, who uses them and how are they used?
  - Are you familiar with FDA's education and communication tools about regulations and compliance? Probe: email updates, mobile text alerts, podcasts, widgets, Twitter, content syndication).
  - How would you rate the current effectiveness of this campaign, in terms of helping retailers ensure compliance with FDA regulations?
  - What could make this campaign better or more effective?
- *If not familiar:*
  - Do you think there is a need for an FDA retailer education campaign? Would you say high, medium or low? Why do you say that?
  - *If high or medium*, what do you think the primary goals of this campaign should be?
  - How likely are you to search for and review educational materials and communications from FDA that are targeted for retail organizations? Would you say very, somewhat or not likely? Why? Where would you look for them?

- How likely are you to review educational materials and communications received from FDA (via mail or email)? Would you say very, somewhat or not likely? Why? How would you expect to receive them?

12. What would make an FDA retailer education campaign successful?

- Can you provide an example of a successful campaign and give me some specific examples of what has worked well?
- How will FDA know if their campaign is successful? What signs/outcomes should they be looking for?

13. How often do you use FDA's website: very often, somewhat often, not often, or never? *For all but "never"*.

- When do you use the FDA website? What are you looking for?
- How useful is FDA's website: high, medium or low? What, if any, improvements could be made?
- *If "never"*: Is there a specific reason why you don't use FDA's website? What, if anything, could be improved to make the website more useful to you?

14. In general, what is the best way for FDA to communicate with retail organizations like yours?

15. Finally, to establish some context, how valuable is marketing and selling tobacco products to your organization (e.g., profit margin, customer satisfaction)?

### **Closing**

16. Are there any topics that we have not yet addressed that you think are important to consider in our research?

17. In closing, what one piece of advice would you give to FDA on how best to engage the retail community as partners in protecting youth from tobacco?

That concludes our interview. As I said earlier, we will use the information you and other key stakeholders provide to better understand decision-making in the retail environment and how this influences compliance with tobacco regulations. The information will also be used to improve current and future FDA retailer education materials. Do you have any questions?

As our project progresses, particularly as we prepare to conduct field research with clerks and supervisors, there may be opportunities where we might ask you to support us, for example by helping to identify retailers who may want to participate in our research. Could we follow up with you in the next few months if we need your help?

If you have additional questions or comments in the days to come, please feel free to email me at [seggers@decisionpartners.com](mailto:seggers@decisionpartners.com).

I thank you very much for your time. Your insight will be very helpful.