

ODI Vehicle Safety Focus Groups Discussion Guide

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ODI Vehicle Safety Focus Groups Discussion Guide

Audience: Licensed drivers who have experienced a safety related issue with their vehicle, some of whom have reported the issue to NHTSA.

Data Collection Mode: Focus Groups

Schedule: Dates TBD

Research Objectives:

1. Develop a clear picture of consumer experiences when faced with a vehicle maintenance and safety issue.
2. Identify go-to sources of information consumers use when faced with a vehicle maintenance and safety issue.
3. Develop a better understanding of the motivations and barriers to reporting vehicle safety issues to NHTSA.
4. Explore opportunities for NHTSA to foster ongoing relationships with vehicle owners.
5. Test potential campaign elements, like taglines and tactical concepts (e.g., dual-purpose complaint form, web communications, etc.) to help guide the overall campaign development process.

Note: Throughout the discussion guide, key questions are marked with a number that corresponds to the research objective they satisfy.

INTRODUCTIONS (5 MINUTES)

- Welcome, group rules, privacy
- Group introductions
 - First name
 - How often do you drive?
 - What is your primary purpose for driving?

VEHICLE SAFETY ISSUES (15 MINUTES)

To begin, I'd like for you to think about the vehicle or vehicles you and your family drive.

1. Tell me about the most recent vehicle problem that you experienced.^{1,2}
 - a. How did you discover this problem?
 - b. Walk us through the process - what action(s) did you take?
 - c. Where did you turn for help? (PROBE: Reasons?)
 - i. (IF MULTIPLE) Where do you usually turn to first?
 - ii. What is it about this person/place that makes them/it your first stop?
 - d. When did you first notice the issue? How soon after did you turn to this resource? (PROBE: Reasons for immediate or delayed action?)
 - e. What was the result of the steps you took?
 - i. [IF NOT REPAIRED] What were the primary reasons this issue hasn't been resolved?
 - f. If you didn't take any action, why not?
 - g. Were there any other steps you could have taken, but did not? Why didn't you take these steps?
 - h. In general, what are some of the biggest barriers you face when it comes to repairing your vehicle?

2. Let's talk about some of the issues you have, or could experience, with your vehicle. Are some maintenance issues more pressing than others?¹
 - a. How do you prioritize which issues you want to fix and which ones you might let slide for a bit?
 - b. What issues would you consider to be "vehicle safety issues" (ones that might lead you to be concerned about the safety of yourself and/or your family)? (MODERATOR WRITE ON FLIP CHART)
 - i. Would you treat these issues differently than others? (PROBE: In what ways?)
 - ii. Have you ever experienced these types of vehicle problems?
 - iii. How, if at all, did the process you go through when faced with this issue differ from your most recent experience? (PROBE: Same/Different resources? Any additional steps?)

3. Has your vehicle ever been part of a safety recall?^{1,2}
 - a. What does it mean for a vehicle to be part of a safety recall?
 - b. Who administers safety recalls?
 - c. How does a vehicle become part of a safety recall? How are the issues identified?
 - d. How did you learn your vehicle was part of a safety recall?
 - i. Who would you expect to hear from if your vehicle was part of a safety recall? Anyone else?
 - ii. What resources would you use to learn more about the safety recall?
 - e. Where else do you hear about safety recalls, in general?
 - f. What steps did you take when/do you think you would take if you learned your vehicle was part of a safety recall?
 - i. (PROBE: Reasons for these actions)

**REPORTING SAFETY ISSUES
(20 MINUTES)**

4. Have you ever reported a vehicle maintenance issue to anyone other than your mechanic or repair shop, like a government agency or the vehicle manufacturer?³
 - a. (PROBE: Reasons?)
 - b. Are you aware of any resources/entities to which you should report vehicle safety issues?
 - i. To whom would you report this? (MODERATOR WRITE ON FLIP CHART)
 - ii. Looking at this list, let's rank these based on how likely you would be to report a vehicle safety issue. Most likely? Next most likely?
 1. How likely are you to report an issue in the future to this group?
 2. What would be the reasons for reporting an issue to this group?
 3. What might hinder you from reporting an issue to this group?
 - iii. What would you expect to happen after you report this issue to the government?
 - iv. What would you expect to happen after you report this issue to the manufacturer?
 - c. Thinking about the issues we've discussed tonight, are there some issues that you would be more likely to report than others? (PROBE: Reasons?)
 - d. What could the government do to help encourage you to report these issues?
 - i. What do you think would result from your reporting this issue?
 - ii. Thinking about what can happen as a result of reporting a vehicle safety issue to the government, I'd like to go around the room and have you fill in the blank in this statement:

If I knew _____ happens as a result of consumers reporting a vehicle safety issue to the government, then I would make sure to report the safety issues I experience in the future.

5. I'm going to read you a brief statement about reporting vehicle safety issues to the government.³

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (or, NHTSA) is the nation's only agency authorized to conduct defect investigations and administer safety recalls on vehicles and vehicle equipment including tires, car seats, and booster seats.

- a. How many of you have heard of NHTSA? What do you know about this agency?
- b. Prior to tonight, were you aware that NHTSA conducts defect investigations and administers safety recalls? (PROBE: Where did you learn this?)
- c. What do you know about NHTSA's defect investigations and safety recalls processes?
 - i. What do you think prompts an investigation?
 - ii. What do you think prompts a safety recall?
- d. Where would you expect to find information about NHTSA's defect investigations and safety recalls processes?
- e. Who do you think is responsible for reporting issues to NHTSA? (PROBE: Consumers, manufacturers, mechanics, etc.)
 - i. If consumers can submit these complaints, what channels do you think would be available to submit through?
 - ii. What channels would be most useful for you? (PROBE: online, phone, mail, app, something else?)

6. I have some more information on this topic...³

Consumers can report safety complaints to NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) online, by phone or through the mail, and after several people complain about the same mechanical or safety-related problem, NHTSA may investigate the issue to determine whether a safety defect exists.

- a. Prior to tonight, were you aware that consumers can report vehicle safety issues to NHTSA?
 - i. Has anyone submitted a vehicle safety complaint to NHTSA in the past?
(PROBE: Experience with process)
 - ii. Knowing this, what would you expect to happen if you reported a vehicle safety issue?
- b. As I had mentioned, consumers can report online, by phone or through the mail. If you were to report a vehicle safety issue to NHTSA, which method would you be likely to use?
 - i. (PROBE: Reasons)
 - ii. Are there any other channels that you would prefer to use to submit a complaint?
- c. What information would you need from NHTSA during the process of submitting a vehicle complaint?
 - i. PROBE: Channels of communication, frequency of communications, reasons for communications
- d. Would you expect NHTSA to communicate with you after you submit the complaint?
 - i. PROBE: Channels of communication, frequency of communications, reasons for communications
 - ii. Is there any other information you would want from NHTSA after submitting a complaint?
- e. Is this information something you would share with family and friends?
 - i. (PROBE: Why/Why not?)
 - ii. How would you go about sharing this information?
 - iii. What resources would you want available to help you tell your family and friends about reporting vehicle safety issues?

**CAMPAIGN CONCEPT TESTING
(50 MINUTES)**

NHTSA is considering some changes to the way the agency interacts with consumers before, during, and after a vehicle safety complaint is filed.

7. **CAMPAIGN CONCEPT:** First, how important is it that consumers know about the complaints, defect investigations, and safety recalls processes?⁵
 - a. What information would you be most interested in learning?
 - b. What information is most important?
 - c. What information would help encourage you to report vehicle safety issues?
 - d. Where would you expect to find this information?
 - e. What could NHTSA do to help establish themselves as the go-to resource when you're faced with a vehicle safety issue?

8. **WEBSITE CONCEPT:** NHTSA is considering redesigning the section of their website that is dedicated to information about complaints, defect investigations, and safety recalls.⁵
 - a. What information would be most useful to include on this website with regard to filing a complaint? Defect investigations? Safety recalls?
 - b. To help us build this website, I'd like you to think about your recent experiences online. I'm going to say a word, and I'd like you to tell me what, if any, websites come to mind:
 - i. Informative? Effective? Easy-to-Use? Appealing? Helpful?
 - ii. PROBE: Reasons?
 - c. What could NHTSA do to encourage you to visit this website?
 - d. How important is it that the website be available through your smartphone? (PROBE: App vs. mobile web)

9. **DUAL FORM CONCEPT:** Currently, when submitting a complaint online or by phone, NHTSA has a form that can be used to enter your vehicle information and describe the issue that you are facing. I'm going to pass out this form. I'd like you to read over the form and the instructions that come with it. Using the markers in front of you to evaluate the usefulness of this form. With the red marker, circle anything on the form that is unclear or confusing.⁵
 - a. Next, with the green marker, please mark the pieces of this form that you think are most important.
 - b. Finally, on the back, please write down some suggestions for improvements.
 - c. Tell me about the things you marked in red. Green?
 - d. Tell me about the suggested improvements.
 - i. In what ways would this help consumers?
 - ii. Any other ideas?
 - e. Where would you expect to find this form?
 - f. Are there other resources that you think should have this form available?

- g. NHTSA is considering revising this form so that it serves a dual purpose. The idea behind the new form is that it can be used at any time by consumers and mechanics to facilitate vehicle maintenance conversations. Consumers can use the form to describe what they are experiencing and bring it with them to the mechanic to help facilitate the conversation. After speaking with the mechanic, if the consumer feels the issues should be reported to NHTSA, the form is all ready to go.
 - i. Would you use this form?
 - ii. Would you fill it out prior to your visit to the mechanic?
 - iii. What can NHTSA do to the form to make it more useful when you talk to a mechanic?
10. E-COMMS CONCEPT: We talked a little bit about what you would expect from NHTSA after you file a complaint. I'd like to dive deeper into this. ^{4,5}
- a. Currently, consumers receive a confirmation e-mail from NHTSA once their complaint has been received. How often would you want to hear from NHTSA after you submit a complaint?
 - i. Would you want to hear from them more, less or the same if your complaint did not result in an investigation?
 - b. What would you want to receive from NHTSA if your complaint resulted in an investigation?
 - c. What would you want to receive from NHTSA if your complaint resulted in a safety recall being issued?
 - i. Would it be more useful to hear from NHTSA, your manufacturer, or would you want to hear from both?
 - d. NHTSA is considering implementing regular e-mails that would provide updates on safety recalls and other vehicle safety information, tools, and resources.
 - i. Is this something you would be interested in receiving?
 - ii. What information would need to be included for you to open and read this e-mail? Share it with others? (PROBE: Personalized vs. generic content)
 - iii. How often would you want this e-mail to come? What timing would be too frequent, not frequent enough? (PROBE: Once a month, randomly, etc?)
 - iv. Are there any other channels through which you would want to receive this information (e.g., social media, printed newsletter, something else)?
11. COMMUNITY CONCEPT: Finally, another thing NHTSA is considering is inviting complainants to participate in an online community. You can imagine this to be something like a Facebook group or other online group or forum through which members can interact with each other, share experiences, and learn more about vehicle safety and relevant issues. ^{4,5}
- a. Is this something you would be interested in participating? Why/why not?
 - b. What features would the community need to include to make you more interested?
 - i. What are the must-haves to make this community work?
 - c. How would you use this community?

**COMMUNICATION CHANNELS & TAGLINES
(30 MINUTES)**

12. As NHTSA begins to push more information out to consumers about these processes, which channels are best for reaching you?⁵
- a. Do you pay attention to: Ads/PSAs on TV? Online ads? Online radio ads (e.g., Pandora)?
 - b. What about live events? Auto shows?
 - c. Social media ads?
 - i. What social media sites do you currently use?
 1. Do you use the sites to connect with people only, or are you also connected with companies, brands, news sites and other organizations?
 2. If NHTSA had a presence on social media, what would you expect this to include? What would be most useful for you?
 3. How likely would you be to connect with NHTSA on social media?
 4. Would you be more likely to connect with NHTSA on certain social media sites versus others? Which ones?
 - d. Infographics? Online memes? YouTube Videos?
 - i. Do you find online content like infographics, online memes and videos helpful when trying to better understand issues and processes like what we've discussed tonight?
 - ii. Where do you usually find such online content?
 - iii. How likely are you to share online content like memes and videos?
 - e. What else can NHTSA do to draw your attention?
13. TAGLINE EXPLORATION: Thinking about all these different things we talked about. NHTSA is in the process of developing a campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the vehicle safety complaints process and encouraging consumers to use many of the resources that we've just discussed. This campaign could include advertising and other promotional materials that seek to grab consumer's attention.⁵

Before we wrap up tonight, I'd like to do one final activity in which we look at some taglines for this campaign. When creating a tagline, we want to make sure it's clear, memorable and effectively encourages you to take some action. I have a few different tagline options here that we'll go through together

I'm going to pass out a piece of paper with a potential tagline. Before we discuss it as a group, I'd like you to individually read the tagline and jot down your initial thoughts. Then please give this tagline a grade, from A to F, based on how appealing it is to you personally.

Taglines to test:

- A. Feel it. File it. Fix it.
- B. Make your car problem our problem.
- C. Your car problem should be our car problem.
- D. No safety problem is too small for a recall.
- E. Certify your car problem.

TESTING ORDER

Group 1: A, B, C, D, E

Group 2: E, C, D, B, A

Group 3: D, A, E, C, B

Group 4: B, D, A, E, C

- a. [MODERATOR ALLOWS A MOMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS TO REVIEW; MODERATOR READS THE TAGLINE ALOUD TO THE GROUP]
 - i. What do you like about this tagline? / What don't you like about this tagline?
 - ii. Where can you picture seeing or hearing this tagline?
 - iii. Does this tagline make sense for an organization focused on vehicle safety?
 - iv. What is this tagline telling you to do?
 - v. How, if at all, would you change this tagline to make it more effective?

- b. I have another example of a potential tagline. Again, I'd like you to individually jot down your initial thoughts and then give the tagline a grade A-F based on how appealing it is to you personally. [MODERATOR HANDS OUT PAPER WITH SECOND TAGLINE; REPEAT AS NECESSARY FOR ALL TAGLINES]
 - i. What do you like about this tagline? / What don't you like about this tagline?
 - ii. Where can you picture seeing or hearing this tagline?
 - iii. Does this tagline make sense for an organization focused on vehicle safety?
 - iv. What is this tagline telling you to do?
 - v. How, if at all, would you change this tagline to make it more effective?

- c. [MODERATOR PINS UP ALL TAGLINES] Thinking of all the taglines we've reviewed, which stand out to you as more compelling?
 - i. Better at capturing your attention?
 - ii. Most memorable?
 - iii. Better for a campaign focused on vehicle safety complaints, defect investigations, safety recalls?

Thank & Close Group