

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

NATIONAL WOMEN'S BUSINESS COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, DC

Focus Group Protocols

Note: A common set of questions will be asked of all focus groups. Our approach is to lead the focus groups from the general to the specific. For each of the questions stated below, the moderator will lead the group from general perceptions about the IP process to more specific perceptions about the IP process as it applies to women entrepreneurs. We propose to follow up with probing the real barriers facing women entrepreneurs and how to overcome those barriers.

The protocols are divided into two sections:

- The first section will probe the issues raised in the RFQ.
- The second section will probe the specific issues raised by the Quantitative Analysis.

1. Introduction by Moderator

➤ Describe the scope of the focus group study:

Six focus groups will be conducted, two each with the following audiences:

- Women entrepreneurs who have successfully applied for and received patents or trademarks,
 - Women entrepreneurs who have applied for but have not received a patent or trademark;
 - Women entrepreneurs who have no knowledge of patents or trademarks and are not aware that they should or could apply.
- The purpose of the focus groups is to probe in-depth the following questions:
- What are the perceived barriers facing women entrepreneurs surrounding protecting their IP?
 - What are the actual barriers?
 - How do we address these barriers?
 - What are the long term effects on businesses that receive patents and successfully market their IP?

2. Introduction of Participants by First Name

Ask each participant what she does as an entrepreneur.

3. Protocols Section 1: Issues Raised in the RFQ

Questions raised in the RFQ	Lead-in Question	Follow-on Questions
<p>Introductions</p> <p>What are the perceived barriers facing women entrepreneurs surrounding protecting their IP?</p>	<p>Have you ever applied for a patent or trademark? If so, what are your perceptions of the process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How complex was the process? • How drawn out was the process? How expensive was it? • Were you concerned that your ideas would get stolen once they were disclosed? • What is your perception of the USPTO web site? Is it user friendly? • Were you familiar with the patent and trademark process before you applied for IP protection? • How responsive are the current patent and trademark processes to modern technological needs? • Do you perceive that there a gender gap in patents and trademarks? Why do you think so? What specific difficulties did you face in pursuing IP protection as a woman entrepreneur? • If your first application was rejected, what did you do? Where did you get help from? Do you perceive that as a woman entrepreneur you experienced specific hurdles in getting follow-on help? • Do you perceive that the participation of women in patent and trademark activity is increasing? Why do you think so? What do you think accounts for this increase/decrease? Are there economic or cultural factors at work here? • What is your perception about IP protection in the international marketplace? What is your experience in this matter? Do you perceive a gender bias in the international marketplace? Why do you think so?
<p>What are the actual</p>	<p>Please describe your</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there specific difficulties that

barriers?	actual experience with the IP process.	<p>you experienced as a small business?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there specific difficulties that women owned business experience? • Are there specific difficulties that single mothers (entrepreneurs) experience? • Is financing available to women entrepreneurs? Is there a gender bias in obtaining finance for business? • Are there cultural barriers that women entrepreneurs face? • How familiar are you with the help that is available from the USPTO? • How familiar are you with the assistance offered by SBA programs to women entrepreneurs?
How do we address these barriers?	What suggestions would you offer to improve the process for women entrepreneurs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you make the process simpler? • Do you have specific recommendations that would help small business? • Do you have specific recommendations that would help women owned businesses? • What can the SBA do to help women entrepreneurs? • What can the USPTO do to help women entrepreneurs? • How can technology help?
What are the long term effects on businesses that receive patents and successfully market their IP?	Do you know of specific case histories of women entrepreneurs who received a patent or trademark and built a business upon it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What accounted for their success/failure?
Closing comments		

4. Protocols Section 2: Issues Raised by the Quantitative Study

Observations from the Quantitative Analysis	Lead-in Question	Follow-on Questions
<p>Our quantitative analysis shows that “there is no statistically measurable difference in the proportion of successful women Trademark applicants and successful men Trademark applicants. The analysis shows no bias in the processing of trademark applications.”</p>	<p>Is this conclusion in synch with your perception? If it is not, why is that so?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there differences in the employment patterns of men and women? • Are there differences between men and women in R&D opportunities? • Are there differences in the way men and women perceive risk and reward?
<p>“U.S. based women demonstrate increasing leadership in patent and trademark activities.”</p>	<p>Do you agree with this observation? Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What accounts for this trend? • Do women have more opportunities to take the lead in research and development?
<p>“There is a surge of innovation by women in some of the emerging high-tech industries.”</p>	<p>Do you agree with this statement? If not, why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What accounts for the greater participation by women in the high-tech sector?
<p>“The number of patents granted to women is increasing at an accelerating pace.”</p>	<p>Why is there a noticeable jump in patent activity in the midst of a continuing, prolonged recession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a reflection of more women becoming entrepreneurs? • Does it reflect increasing investment by U.S. companies in R&D? • Does it reflect an increasing awareness by women of the benefits of patent protection? • Does it show increasing participation in patent activity by recent immigrants? • Are the standards for granting of patents more lenient now as compared to those thirty years ago?
<p>Our quantitative analysis shows that “19.77% of all patents by men were</p>	<p>Why do you think this is so?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a difference

<p>unassigned as compared to 29.41% for women.”</p>		<p>between men and women in independent entrepreneurship?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are women more likely to be independent entrepreneurs and keep their patents unassigned while men are more likely to be leading the research in businesses and corporations?
<p>“The ratio of successful women patent applicants to successful men patent applicants varies from a low of 73.36% in 1986 to a high of 93.57% in 2002.”</p>	<p>What factors influence this trend?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity? • Education? • Social factors? • Legislation?