

**IRS SBSE Compliance Service Collection Operation (CSCO)
Phone Focus Group Recruiting Guide/Screening and Reminder
September 2011**

Note: Recruit 4 groups – 2 with individual taxpayers and 2 with professionals

INITIAL CALL

Hello, I'm _____ and I'm calling from Pacific Market Research. May I please speak to _____?

You recently participated in an IRS customer satisfaction survey and indicated you would be interested in participating in future research efforts. We are calling to set-up a one-hour focus group phone call to discuss your interaction with the Collection Operation Division of the Internal Revenue Service. This is NOT a call about your specific case. Participation in the focus group will give you an opportunity to tell the IRS about your service experiences and the group can share their ideas for service improvements.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, but your help on this project would be very much appreciated. As a token of our appreciation for your time, you will receive \$50. Are you interested in participating? *[If no, thank taxpayer for their time, and hang up]*

Did you interact with the Collection Operation Division of the IRS as _____ a taxpayer representing yourself _____ or as a tax professional representing a business or another individual?

IF taxpayer

The focus group will be held via telephone on DAY DATE at (Noon, 3pm and 6pm Eastern Time). All participants will call a toll-free 800 number to join the conference call. The discussion will last about one hour. You will be joined by a group of about six people who, like you, recently interacted with the IRS Collection Operation Division. You will not be asked about your specific tax situation, only about your experience with this process. Would you be able to participate? *[If no, thank them and terminate the call]*.

IF tax professional

The focus group will be held via telephone on DAY DATE at (Noon, 3pm and 6pm Eastern Time). All participants will call a toll-free 800 number to join the conference call. The discussion will last about one hour. You will be joined by a group of about six people who, like you, recently interacted with the IRS Collection Operation Division. You will not be asked about your client's specific tax situation, only about your experience with this process. Would you be able to participate? *[If no, thank them and terminate the call]*.

Are you or is anyone in your immediate family an employee of the IRS?

_____ Yes *[explain, thank, then terminate the call]*
_____ No

[Recruiter: note male or female]

_____ Male

_____ Female
We are delighted that you will participate in our group.

The dial in number is: NUMBER

The access code is:

Noon EST: NUMBER

3pm EST: NUMBER

6pm EST: NUMBER

Do you have any questions? We would like some contact information to confirm the meeting and to mail out the token of appreciation for your participation.

Respondent Name _____

Respondent Address _____

We would also like to give you a reminder call on the day of the focus group call. Would we reach you at this number or another? [record number _____]

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that IRS provide an OMB Control Number on all approved public information requests. That number is OMB 1545-1432. Also, if you like, I can give you an address where you can send comments and questions regarding this process or suggestions for making it simpler.

READ ONLY IF RESPONDENT ASKS FOR ADDRESS: Send your comments and suggestions to:

Internal Revenue Service
Tax Products Coordinating Committee
SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP
1111 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20224

Thank you and have a nice day. We look forward to speaking with you on:

DAY DATE at Noon EST

DAY DATE at 3pm EST

DAY DATE at 6pm EST

-----end conversation-----

For record keeping:

_____ Confirmation letter mailed or faxed

_____ Reminder call made

REMINDER CALL

Hello, I'm _____ and I'm calling from _____. This is a call to remind you of your participation in the telephone focus group scheduled for (DAY DATE at TIME). The dial in number is: XXX-XXX-XXXX. The access code is: XXXX#. Do you have any questions? (PAUSE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS). Thank you in advance for your participation.

IRS SBSE Compliance Service Collection Operation (CSCO)
Phone Focus Group Moderator's Guide
September 2011

(Notes to the moderator are in italics)

Overview

Hello, I'm Jennifer Schranz from Pacific Consulting Group. I will moderate our discussion today. The topic we'll be discussing is your satisfaction with your recent interaction with the Collection Operation Division of the Internal Revenue Service. The overall goal of the research is to provide information that will help the IRS provide better service to customers like you. Your input is very important for establishing the areas of the process that need improvement. This is your opportunity to provide input and to tell the IRS what your experiences have been and to make recommendations for change.

First, I would like to thank all of you for calling in today. Our discussion will take about one hour. I would like to know your real attitudes and feelings, so please be as open and frank with me as you can. I would like for you to think about your opinions of the IRS with regard to your interactions with them and not your opinions regarding tax laws specifically. I am recording this session, and we have some IRS personnel listening in, but please keep in mind that our focus here is on your experiences and opinions, not on your individual identities. In fact, none of us know more than your first name.

I also want to point out that I am not an IRS employee and there are no right or wrong answers so please don't hold back any of your perceptions, opinions and suggestions.

Introductions

[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]

To get started, let's introduce ourselves. Please tell us your first name and what city and state you are located in.

Collection Operation Identity

[Moderator: Open Discussion]

- I'd like to know about your interactions with the IRS. How did you interact with the IRS?
 - *Probes: phone, mail, what phone #*
- Did any of you talk to or correspond via mail with the Collection Operation?
- How about the _____ Division?
- How do you know what section of the IRS you're corresponding with?

Demographics

- Now I'd like to know which of the following statements best describe the reason or reasons for your interaction with the Collection Operation.
 - Did you owe money because you didn't pay the balance due on your return when you filed? *[Moderator: Round Table]*
 - Did you owe money because the IRS adjusted your taxes?
 - Did you have unfiled return(s) that needed to be submitted?

- o Did you want to set up a payment plan to pay your taxes?
- o Did you want to tell the IRS that you could not afford your taxes?
- o Did you need information about income you had earned in order to file your tax return?
- Any other reasons?
- Were any of these choices unclear?

Payment Plan

[Moderator: Recap from Collection Identity section. How many and who interacted with the IRS by phone]

- Tell me a little about setting up your payment plan.
- If I asked you to rate your satisfaction with the “ease of setting up your payment plan” would you be able to answer it easily?
- Is there anything that is unclear about the phrase “ease of setting up your payment plan”?

Asked for Information from IRS

This next section is open to the entire group.

- Did anyone, in their correspondence with the IRS ask the Collection Operation for information such as income earned, forms, where to file, payment plans, payments received and so on?
- Any other types of information?
- How did you request the information
 - o *Probes: Phone, mail, email, web site*
- When replying to your request for information, did the IRS respond within 45 days?

Issue Resolution

[Moderator: Round table]

We’ve focused on the beginning and middle sections of your interactions with the IRS, let’s now talk about the resolution of your issue.

- Was your issue resolved?
- Was it resolved by phone, mail, or some other way?
- Did you agree with the outcome? Why?
- What actions did you take to try to resolve your tax issue?
 - o Did you call the IRS phone number listed in the IRS notice? *[Moderator: Round Table]*
 - o Did you call an IRS phone number, but not the one on the notice?
 - o Did you write a letter or letters to the IRS?
 - o Did you provide financial information to the IRS in order to get a payment plan?
 - o Did you visit an IRS office?
 - o Did you look for information on IRS.gov on how to resolve your issue?
- Did anyone do anything else to resolve their issue?
- Where any of these choices unclear

Phone Interaction

[Moderator: Recap from Collection Identity section. How many and who interacted with the IRS by phone]

- Tell me about your phone interaction. *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- How did you know what number to call?

Now I have a couple of survey questions the IRS is considering including in their taxpayer satisfaction survey. I want to know your thoughts on the questions and if anything is unclear?

- The first question is “Rate your satisfaction with the length of time it took you to get through to the Collection Operation employee” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The second question is “Rate your satisfaction with the courtesy of the Collection Operation employee” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The last question is “Rate your satisfaction with the usefulness of the information provided on the phone” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*

Survey Questions

Now let’s go back to the survey questions the IRS is considering including in their taxpayer satisfaction survey. I want to know your thoughts on the questions and if anything is unclear?

- Let’s start with “Rate your satisfaction with the ease of understanding the initial notice/letter” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The second question is “Rate your satisfaction with the length of time you were given to respond to the Collection Operation” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The next question is “Rate your satisfaction with the ease of obtaining the information you needed from the IRS” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The next question is “Rate your satisfaction with the correspondence from the IRS adequately addressing all of your issues” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The next question is “Rate your satisfaction with the time given you to respond to the IRS” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The next question is “Rate your satisfaction with the time the IRS took to respond to your written inquiry” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The next question is “Rate your satisfaction with the length of the correspondence collection process, from when you first wrote to the IRS about this issue until it was resolved” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The next question is “Rate your satisfaction with the explanation of the actions the IRS took to resolve your issue” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*
- The last question is “Rate your satisfaction with the IRS keeping you informed of the status of your case” *[Moderator: Open Discussion]*

Recommendations

Finally, is there anything you would like to suggest to the IRS about their Collection Operation Division? Any other comments?

Wrap Up

Those are all the questions that I have for this session. I want to thank you and the IRS wants to thank you, for participating in this discussion. PCG will be sending a \$50 token of our appreciation in the mail within two weeks. If, by chance, you do not receive the check in the mail or have any questions about it you can reach me, Jennifer, at 650-327-8108.

Thank you for participating and enjoy the rest of your day. Good bye.