

IRS SB/SE
Filing and Payment Compliance (CSCO & ACS)
Phone Focus Group Recruiting Guide/Screeners and Reminders
August 2014

Note: Recruit 1 phone focus group for CSCO and 1 for ACS

RECRUITING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. ACSS:
 - a. Taxpayer: 6 (as many dissatisfied overall as possible)
 - b. Tax Professional: 5 (as many dissatisfied overall as possible)
2. CSCO:
 - a. Bal Due: 8 (as many dissatisfied overall as possible)
 - b. ASFR: 3 (as many dissatisfied overall as possible)

INITIAL CALL

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

During the past year you 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 [CSCO: Collection Notice Operation of the IRS/ACS: IRS' Automated Collection System]. 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.

First, can you confirm that you completed an IRS customer satisfaction survey **within the past year**?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No (Thank taxpayer for their time, and hang up)

Your participation with 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 \$40.

The focus group will be held via telephone on [insert possible days]. All participants will call in to an 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, have experience with [CSCO: Collection Notice Operation of the IRS] [ACS: the IRS' Automated Collection System process]. You will not be asked about your specific tax situation, only about your experience with this process.

1. Are you interested in participating?

Yes.....1 [Continue]

No..... 2 [Thank taxpayer for their time, and end call]

2. The date and time for the session is:
- Group 1 ACS: [INSERT DATE AND TIME] (insert correct time for time zone)
 - Group 2 CSCO: [INSERT DATE AND TIME] (insert correct time for time zone)

3. [Recruiter: note male or female]

_____ Male
_____ Female

We are delighted that you will participate in our group.

The dial in number is: 1-877-668-4493. The access code is:

- Group 1 ACS: (DATE, TIME)
 - o ACCESS CODE: _____
- Group 2 CSCO: (DATE, TIME)
 - o ACCESS CODE: _____

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 _____

Respondent Email 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 TIME.

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

For record keeping:

_____ 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 (REFER TO DATE, TIME ABOVE) The dial in information is (REFER TO INFORMATION ABOVE) Do you have any questions? (PAUSE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS). Thank you in advance for your participation.

IRS SB/SE
Compliance Service Collection Operation (CSCO)
Automated Collection System (ACS)

Phone Focus Group Moderator's Guide

August 4, 2014

(Notes to the moderator are in italics)

Overview

Hello, I'm Beruria Novich from an independent research firm named Pacific Consulting Group and I will moderate our discussion. Thank you all for dialing in today. The topic we'll be discussing is your interactions with the IRS to resolve a tax matter. The overall goal of the research is to help the IRS provide better service to customers like you.

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 focus your thinking on your specific interactions with the IRS' [CSCO: Collection] [ACS: ACS] operations and not your opinions regarding tax laws in general.

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 thoughts, opinions, and suggestions.

I am recording this session, and we have some IRS personnel listening in to hear your comments first-hand, but please keep in mind that our focus here is on your experiences and opinions. I will be summarizing your comments in a report for the IRS and will not report your individual identities. I want to emphasize that the IRS does not and will not know your individual identities.

Introductions

[Moderator: Gather responses in a roundtable fashion]

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

CSCO/ACS Process and Expectations

1. [CSCO] Is this the first time you ever received a notice from the IRS?
2. [CSCO] I'd like each of you to briefly describe what was the issue that led to the IRS notice or letter?
 - a. ?
 - b. Did you call the IRS or did the IRS call you as a result of this letter or were you able to resolve it with no phone contact?
 - c. Was your issue handled on the call or did you need additional contact?
3. [CSCO] Did any of you request an installment agreement? Were you contacted by an IRS Representative to discuss your request for an installment agreement? *[NOTE to moderator: When establishing an agreement CSCO employees are to make two attempts to call the taxpayer, especially if it will resolve the issue quickly.]*

- a. If so, did the examiner explain clearly why they were calling?
 - b. Did he/she explain clearly what you needed to do in order for your agreement to be accepted?
 - c. Were you satisfied with the explanations?
 - d. Did you need to call back or follow up?
4. [ACS] I'd like each of you to briefly describe what was the issue that led you to call the IRS?
- a. How many times did you call the IRS about this issue?
 - b. Was your issue resolved by the representative on the phone or did you need additional contact?
 - i. If yes, how was it resolved?
 - ii. If no, what was the reason? Where did you run into trouble?
5. How many contacts with the IRS did it take to get your issue resolved?
6. [CSCO] Did this process meet the expectations you had when you first received the notice?
- [ACS] Did this process meet the expectations you had when you first called the toll-free line?
- a. What were your expectations?
 - b. Were they met?
 - i. If, no, in what way weren't they met?
 - ii. If yes, were you satisfied with the process?
 - 1. If no, why were you not satisfied if expectations were met?

Contact Methods with IRS

7. [CSCO] Other than mail or telephone, what options would you like to see for responding to the IRS? (*probes: fax, email*)
- a. If a fax number were listed on the notice, would you use it?
 - b. If secure email was an option, would you be willing to respond to the notice in that manner?
 - c. What are your specific concerns with faxing and with emailing (ask for each method)?
 - b. Is there anything the IRS could do to alleviate your concerns?
 - c. Would you be willing to use a secure account with the IRS for resolving your issue? Why or why not? You would login and be able to see your account information and status and the IRS representative would have access as well.
 - i. What features would you like to see in an online account? (probe: ability to upload documents to the IRS; ability to see status, provide signature)
 - ii. Would this help you resolve your case more easily?
 - iii. Do you have security concerns? What are they?

Online Services

8. Do any of you know that taxpayers can set up a payment plan with the IRS online at IRS.gov?

- a. If yes, have you used this online tool? Has it worked for you? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?
 - b. If no, would you use this online tool if you needed it? Why or why not
9. Are there any other online services you would like the IRS to offer?
- a. Why would you use that online?
 - b. Please be specific
10. [ACS] While on the call, were you asked to mail in any information regarding your case?
- a. If yes, what information was it?
 - b. Could this information have been provided over the phone?
 - c. Would you have been comfortable faxing that same information?
 - d. Would you have been comfortable emailing (through secure email) that same information?

Survey Items of Interest (High Leverage or Important)

Now I'd like to ask you some specific information about some of the questions from the survey you took a little while ago. These were areas that were important to taxpayers for the IRS to improve.

11. [CSCO] Explanation of actions IRS took to resolve issue
- a. Did you receive an explanation of the actions IRS took to resolve the issue?
 - i. If yes: was it helpful?
 - ii. If no:
 - 1. Did you want this explanation?
 - 2. What additional information could IRS provide to explain how your issue was resolved?
 - b. How could this be improved?
12. [CSCO: ONLY ASK IF TIME ALLOWS] Letter from IRS addressed all issues
- a. Did you feel the letter from the IRS addressed all issues?
 - i. If yes: what specifically did you appreciate about the letter?
 - ii. If no: what additional issues would you have liked to see addressed?
 - b. How could the letter be improved?
13. [CSCO] How well the IRS kept you (the taxpayer) informed of the status of your case.
- a. How often did you get an update on the status of your case? Was that too often, not often enough, or just right?
 - b. What did the IRS update you about? Was this update what you needed or did you expect a different type of update?
 - c. How could this be improved?
14. [ACS] Knowledge of the Representative
- a. Did you feel that the representative was knowledgeable?
 - i. If yes: what in particular impressed you?

- ii. If no: what specific areas of knowledge would you have wanted the representative to have? In what areas could the rep have been more knowledgeable?
 - b. How could this be improved?
15. [ACS—important to function, not high leverage] Length of time it took to complete your call from when you first reached a representative
- a. What were you thinking about when you rated this question? (whole time on phone or just after phone answered by person)
 - b. Was this question at all confusing for you? Could it be interpreted differently by different people?
 - c. How long did you wait on hold?
 - d. How long were you on the phone with the representative?
 - e. Did your wait on hold impact your satisfaction once the phone was answered?

Survey Administration

16. [ACS] Did you have any problems when you were transferred to the automated phone survey after talking with a representative? If yes, what were they?

Recommendations

Finally, are there any other elements of service provided by the IRS's [CSCO: Collection Notice operation] [ACS: Automated Collection System] that could be improved which we have not discussed?

Wrap Up

Those are all the questions that I have for this session. I and the IRS thank you for participating in this discussion. PCG will be sending a \$40 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, Beruria, at 650.327.8108.

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