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**Moderator's Guide:  
Consumer Knowledge and Perceptions about Tobacco Products (Round 2)****Welcome and ground rules**

MODERATOR: Welcome and thank you for participating in tonight's discussion. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Tonight, I am interested in hearing your opinions about tobacco products. You have been asked to participate in tonight's discussion because you use (or have used) some of the various types of cigarettes and other tobacco products that we are going to discuss tonight.

Before we begin, I want to go over a few ground rules for our discussion tonight, which will last about an hour.

- Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to not answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time.
- If at any time you are uncomfortable with my questions, you can choose not to answer. Just let me know that you prefer not to answer.
- Everything we discuss today will be kept private to the extent allowable by law. Your name and contact information, which only the study staff knows, will not be given to anyone else and no one will contact you after this interview is over.
- Tonight's discussion will be audio recorded. The recordings will help me write the final report and will be kept in a secure location and then destroyed at the end of the study. No names will be mentioned in the final report created from these interviews.
- [If applicable: Some of my coworkers are viewing our discussion. Some are watching from behind this glass and some are viewing the discussion remotely. They're watching to make sure that I ask you all of the questions I'm supposed to ask you. Near the end of our conversation, I'm going to go check and see if they have any last minute questions for you.]
- Most importantly, there are no right or wrong answers. I want to know your opinions. I do not work for the people sponsoring this research and I didn't write the questions we're going to look at, so don't hold back on giving me your honest opinions.

- I'm not a medical doctor or an expert on smoking or tobacco, so I can't answer specific questions. At the end of our discussion, however, I have some materials that you can take with you if you'd like.
- Please silence your cell phones.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

## **Brand relationship**

### **1. Introduction (5 minutes)**

As I mentioned, tonight's discussion is about cigarettes and other tobacco products. You've been invited to participate because you all have firsthand experience with tobacco—which means you have a lot of information to share.

We are going to start by talking about the cigarettes you smoke. To start: Let's go around the room and have everyone tell us your first name, what **brand** of cigarettes you currently use, and how long you have been using that brand.

### **2. Relationship with Brand: Attitudes (5 minutes)**

*[HANDOUT 1 – 4-5 top of mind]*

Ok, so as we heard, you all smoke a variety of different brands of cigarettes. Now I want you to think a little more about *your* brand of cigarettes and answer a few questions.

Turn to page 1 of the handout and list 4-5 words/phrases that come to mind when you think about your brand of cigarettes. Just jot down the first things that come to mind when you think about your brand of cigarettes. [IF NEEDED: You don't need to write a lot here—or spend too long on this.]

- o What are some of the things you wrote down?

### **3. Relationship with Brand: Interaction (5 minutes)**

So, thinking about the company that makes your cigarettes, let's talk about how you interact with them.

Are there ways—other than purchasing their cigarettes—that you interact with them? Have you ever contacted them? (Have you ever called? Or visited their website?) Maybe you've participated in a loyalty program or contest they've run?

Does your brand contact *you*? Are you on any listservs or mailing lists?

- o Do you receive offers or coupons from the company that makes your brand? How often do you hear from them?
- o Is there any other type of communication you receive on a regular basis? (What is it?)
- o How do you feel about them contacting you?

#### 4. Tobacco Companies: Attitudes (5 minutes)

*[HANDOUT 2 – p.2 – top of mind and industry trust]*

Ok, now we're going to think about tobacco companies in general. Turn to the last handout and take a minute to complete these two questions about tobacco companies. [IF NEEDED: When we say, "Tobacco Companies," we are talking about tobacco companies in general/overall, not the company that makes your brand]

- o When you hear the words "tobacco companies," what comes to mind?  
[Write responses on white board.]
- o How do "tobacco companies" relate to their customers? How do "tobacco companies" view their customers?
- o How trustworthy would you say "tobacco companies" are in general?  
[If not mentioned above: When you think about "tobacco companies," do you think of your brand of cigarettes—or something different?]

#### 5. Statements and Products

*Note to moderator: Groups will be assigned to either Part A or Part B.*

##### **A. Introduction to Statements (text only) (10 minutes)**

Ok, now we're going to look at some statements about tobacco products, and I want to hear your thoughts about them.

**First Reactions to statement(s)** *Instruct to open to first page of packet. Show poster of first statement and share initial reactions. For each statement, instruct participants to turn to the next page, and hold up poster of corresponding statement.*

- What do you think of this statement?

##### **Response to Statements (10 minutes)**

*[Instruct participants to turn to final page, displaying all the statements. Hold up poster of all statements.]*

- a. What comes to mind when you read these statements?
- b. *Understanding:* What do you think these statements mean?
- c. *Believability:* Do you believe these statements? Any of them? Why or why not? Do some seem more believable than others? Which ones? Why?
- d. *Source:* Where might you see these statements? (On the product itself? Ads?)
  - Who do think would make these statements?

- e. *Verification* –How would you decide whether or not these statements are true? Where could you look for more information? Who would/could you ask to determine whether or not these statements are true?
- f. *Intention of claims*: What is the purpose of this statement? Who is this information intended for?
- g. *Product type*: What type of tobacco product can you imagine these statements being applied to? (Cigarettes? Another type of tobacco product? A product that doesn't exist yet?)

### **Perceptions of Product based on Statement (10 minutes)**

- a. Would you be interested in trying this product? Why or why not? What would interest you? What would make you hesitant to try it?
  - [If not mentioned] Do you have an idea of how it would taste? Would it satisfy cravings?
  - If not interested: What kind of statement *would* get your attention and make you want to try the product? Is there something you can imagine seeing on a cigarette package that would get your attention? (Do you think that's realistic?)
- b. If a tobacco product with a statement like this were sold in the U.S., do you think it would be successful? Why or why not?
- c. Who would be interested in trying a product with this statement? Who would use this product (on a regular basis)?
- d. What would people think of you if they saw you using a product like this? Would it be positive or negative?

### **B. Introduction of Prototypes (10 minutes)**

Ok, now we're going to look at some sample products. This is a brand that was made up for the sake of tonight's discussion. We are using this made-up brand because we wanted to give you cigarette pack to react to, but since you all smoke different brands of cigarettes, we didn't want to pick any one specific brand.

*Note to moderator: If participants get distracted by novelty of brand (e.g., "well, I can't say because I don't know this brand"), redirect with, "Well, imagine this was your brand. How would you feel about it then?"*

**First reactions to prototypes:** Pass around 1<sup>st</sup> prototype. Show poster of first prototype and discuss. For each prototype, show corresponding poster image while distributing samples

- What do you think of this product? What comes to mind when you see this?

### **Perceptions of Statements (10 minutes)**

*Redistribute all prototypes and display poster showing images of all prototypes.*

- a. What comes to mind when you read these statements?
- b. *Understanding*: What do you think these statements mean?

- c. *Believability*: Do you believe these statements? Any of them? Why or why not? Do some seem more believable than others? Which ones? Why?
- d. *Source/Attribution*: Who is making the statement?
  - o Are tobacco companies allowed to make statements like this (or make any kind of statement they want)? If not, who would stop them?
  - o Can you imagine this coming from another source (than already mentioned)? [The government? Tobacco Companies? Public Health Organization? Medical Association?]
  - o What would it look like if it came from [Gov/Industry/Brand]? What would be different?
- e. *Verification*: How would you decide whether or not this statement is true? Where could you look for more information? Who would/could you ask to determine whether or not these statements are true?
- f. *Intention of claims*: What is the purpose of this statement? Who is it intended for?
- g. Do we want to include a product type section here where we could still find out what other type of products they could imagine this on? Not sure if we would want to do that because they will already see it on a product ... we could ask about others they would expect to see this on?

### **Perceptions of Product (with Statement) (10 minutes)**

- a. Would you be interested in trying this product? Why or why not? What would interest you? What would make you hesitant to try it?
  - [If not mentioned] Do you have an idea of how it would taste? Would it satisfy your craving for a cigarette?
  - If not interested: What kind of statement *would* get your attention? Is there something you can imagine seeing on a cigarette package that would get your attention? (Do you think that's realistic?)
  - If a tobacco product with a statement like this were sold in the U.S., would it be successful? Why or why not?
  - Who would be interested in trying this product?
  - Who would use this product (on a regular basis)?
- b. What would people think of you if they saw you using a product like this? Would it be positive or negative?

### **False Close**

That is all the questions I have for you. Before we finish, I'm going to run back and check with my colleagues to see if I missed anything or if they have any additional questions for you.

### **Debrief/Closing (5 minutes)**

In today's discussion, we mentioned some statements about less harmful tobacco products, and viewed some examples of products claiming to be less harmful. It's important for you to know that the statements I showed you, [*if applicable*: and the sample package of cigarettes], were

made-up for the sake of tonight's discussion. In other words, they are hypothetical and those products and statements do not actually exist. In fact: There is no safe tobacco product.

This study was sponsored by the Food & Drug Administration. Part of the mission of the FDA is to communicate to the public about the harmfulness of tobacco use. In order to do this, it is important that they understand people's thoughts about different types of tobacco products—and about the harmfulness of tobacco products in general. Your participation has been very valuable and we appreciate you taking the time to come here tonight and share your thoughts and ideas with us.

If you are interested in learning more, please help yourself to one of these brochures on your way out.