# United States Mint Focus Groups Research Discussion Guide

## INTRODUCTION

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* Ground Rules: Audio-taping, anonymity, candor, cell phones, pagers, etc.
* Background & Objectives: The purpose of today’s discussion is to talk about some core product enhancements and possible new products the U.S. Mint is considering.
* Introductions: First name
* Customers: Types of coins that are especially liked, length of time collecting and/or buying U.S. coins. Probe if for self or as a gift
* Non-Customers: Items collected and length of time collecting. Ever purchased U.S. coins?

*Demonstrate core products for* Non*-Customers*

## CURRENT COIN COLLECTING/BUYING PRACTICES

***(Non-Customers) What particular types of coins have special interest or appeal to you and what makes these coins so attractive to you? Probe…***

− Beauty or artistry?

− The history associated with them?

− Other factors, if any, that play a role in your attitudes and behaviors?

• ***(Non-Customers) What coin purchases, if any, have you made? For example, have you bought any U.S. coins from dealers, Internet auctions, (etc.)?***

− ***If some***: Why have you not purchased any coins from the U.S. Mint?

To what extent is lack of awareness a factor?

What about limited knowledge/dissatisfaction with current products?

How about the perceived value/prices of the products?

What do these other sources provide that the U.S. Mint does not?

***If none***: Why have you never purchased any coins from any sources?

To what extent is lack of awareness a factor?

What about limited knowledge/dissatisfaction with current products?

How about the perceived value/prices of the products?

• ***(Non-Customers) Have you ever considered purchasing coins to give as gifts? Probe…***

− **If so:** For whom? What occasions?

− **If not:** Why not?

− What circumstances would prompt you to make such a purchase?

− What types of items, if any, would propel you to make a purchase?

• ***(Customers) What types of coins and coin-related products have you bought from the U.S. Mint? Probe if for self or as a gift***

• ***(Customers) Thinking specifically about the coins that you buy from the U.S. Mint, what specific products and how much of each do you typically purchase directly from the U.S. Mint in a year? Probe…***

− Annual coin sets (e.g., quarters, uncirculated, proofs, silver proofs, etc.)

− America the Beautiful products

− Commemorative coins

− Bags/rolls

− American Eagle coins

− Gold Buffalo

− Presidential $1 coins

− Medals

− Other items (e.g., specialty products)

• ***(Customers) What types of coins do you expect to purchase from the U.S. Mint in the next year? Probe…***

− Annual coin sets (e.g., quarters, uncirculated, proofs, silver proofs, etc.)

− America the Beautiful products

− Commemorative coins

− Bags/rolls

− American Eagle coins

− Gold Buffalo

− Presidential $1 coins

− Medals

− Other items (e.g., specialty products)

## ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PRODUCTS/PACKAGING

•***(Customers/Non-customers) Overall, what are your impressions of the coin products that the U.S. Mint produces? Probe…***

− Things you like? Dislike?

− How do you feel about them for self? For gifts?

• ***(Customers/Non-customers) How do you feel about the packaging of the products in general?*** (Note: some customers will say no packaging at all so need to acknowledge and move on.)

− How do you feel about the packaging for items you do/might purchase for self? For gifts?

• ***(Customers/Non-customers) Ask each participant which item they rated highest, and which lowest, and why?***

− Probe…what specifically do you like/dislike?

• ***(Customers/Non-customers) As a group, ask why certain items were collectively rated low.***

− Probe…what specifically do you dislike?

• ***(Customers/Non-customers) How does the current packaging (especially ones that are disliked) affect their likelihood to purchase…***

− For self?

− For gift?

− Why?

## Commemorative Coins

**Explain to participants about the commemorative coin**.

* How familiar are you with X?
* What is important to you about X?
* Would you be interested in a gold coin? A Silver coin?
	+ **Probe:** two-coin bundled set (not a special set)

*Hand out Commemorative Coins rating sheet*

*Hand out Content Focus and allow time for highlighting/cross-out exercise*

**Explain to participants:** For some commemorative coins, the U.S. Mint produces a special set that can include historical information, a unique display, and additional content. The envisioned set would include a silver proof coin and sell for approximately $60-$70.

*Allow participants to view previous commemorative special sets*

* If the U.S. Mint were to produce such a set, what would you like it to focus on?
* What images or other components would you like to see?
	+ **Probe:** stamps, quotes, prints, images, etc.
* Among these previous commemorative special sets, which packaging is most appealing to you?
	+ **Probe:** size, shape, presentation/display, coin holder, graphic/image placement
* Do you prefer an informational booklet or information printed on the packaging? Both?
	+ **Probe:** if desired, should booklet and/or packaging include photos only, a mix of photos and information, or information only?

*Hand out Commemorative set rating sheet*

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS AS REQUIRED BY U.S. MINT

## WRAP UP

* Thank participants. Ask for any other comments.