

Summary of Treasury Retail Program Review Customer Experience Qualitative Research

October 28, 2015

This document provides an overview of the Treasury Retail Customer Experience qualitative research plan. This overview document describes the overall plan and explains the two study documents for OMB approval: the screening questionnaire that will be used to identify and recruit the research participants, and the discussion guide that will be used by moderators during the qualitative discussion groups that will be held online and are also known as “bulletin boards.” This qualitative research will be conducted among current TreasuryDirect account holders, current savings bond holders who do not use TreasuryDirect, and among a cross-section of potential savers.

Purpose. The purpose of this project is to explore customer needs and wants around the customer experience, including how customers prefer to initiate and receive support services. This will include exploring a range of experiences from providing complete customer service, to customer self-sufficiency, or a range of customer service interactions tailored to particular products.

Approach. The research will be conducted with three types of respondents: 1) TreasuryDirect Customers with a mix of those who have purchased and own savings bonds and Treasury securities - any age group. 2) Savings bond current owners who have never used TreasuryDirect - any age group. 3) People who do not currently own any savings bonds or other Treasury securities – age 21 to 40. And 4) People who do not currently own any savings bonds or other Treasury securities – age 41 to 70. Among groups 3 and 4, the screening protocol is designed to recruit adult Americans ages 21-70, who represent a cross-section of the population in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, age, income, education, and employment status.

Screening protocols will be used to recruit at least 80 participants (recruit 20 per group with 4 online bulletin boards total) to assure 15 participants in each session (for a minimum of 60 total participants). An incentive of \$75 will be paid to individuals participating in the online discussion groups.

This research will be conducted via online discussion groups (bulletin boards) that will take place over two days. Participants will be asked to log in twice a day to answer a series of questions. The moderator will probe individual responses as needed. Each section (2 per day) is expected to take about 20 minutes for the respondent to complete, but there is a lot of discretion for the respondent to determine how much time to spend.

Any member of the project team can log in to monitor responses to the discussion throughout the two-day period. A full transcript will be available afterwards in addition to the report that Artemis will prepare and discuss with the team. Participant responses will be tagged with an indicator of their group.

A full report of findings will be prepared and presented by the research team.

Question focus. This research is designed to understand customer needs and wants around customer service, including how customers prefer to initiate and receive support services. The discussion will cover topics such as each participant's background on savings and online usage/habits, history of purchasing Treasury products (for TreasuryDirect and savings bond holders), or on savings accounts products for those that do not own Treasury securities, current and ideal customer service scenarios, and product redemption issues. For details, see the discussion guide that accompanies this document.

Analysis. The analysis is designed to provide detailed information on the range of current and potential customer service interactions, and participants' past experiences as well as ideal customer service expectations. Findings will be used to aid in the development of product access and customer service protocols. A full report will be developed that will interpret and present the results as well as recommendations and implications.

Timing.

October – OMB Review

November – Finalize discussion guide

November – Recruiting of online discussion group participants

Early December – Conduct online discussion groups

December – Analyze and report on findings