

Moderator's Guide for Focus Groups

(Draft: 5/18/16)

**OMB Control No: 2127-0682: Focus Groups for Assessments of
Messaging Taglines and Concepts Supporting a National Awareness Campaign
to Reduce Fatalities at Railroad Crossings**

FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

NOTE TO MODERATOR: *When group is fully assembled, read:*

This focus group is being conducted to collect information that will help us better understand your opinions about an important highway safety issue.

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used for formative purposes only so that we may develop communications programs designed to reduce the number of traffic-related injuries and deaths. A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2127-0682. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 75 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E., Washington, DC, 20590

“Warm-up” discussion topic:

What is the one thing about other drivers that annoys you the most?

Probe for brief explanation if response is just a few words

Topic set-up:

There are lots of situations where you have to stop and wait before you can move on down the road. Red lights, road construction, bad traffic, crash scenes, train crossings, school buses. Any of these can be aggravating, especially if you're in a hurry. ...

What makes train crossings, in particular, aggravating?

In what situations are drivers more likely to ignore crossing signals and cross the tracks anyway?

At what point or in what circumstances does the level of risk change from not very risky to extremely risky, relative to ignoring the signals and crossing the tracks?

Thinking about drivers who consistently ignore signals and cross tracks - - what are their reasons for doing so?

Transition to discussion about taglines. It may help respondents understand what taglines are by referring to them as "slogans." Mention that some may be familiar, others may not. Show each of them one-at-a-time (display a board with the tagline as a visual aid). Show and discuss each of the existing/previously-used taglines first (the first three in the following list); then, show/discuss each of the rail crossing taglines (numbers x-x in the list below). When showing/discussing taglines numbers x-x, randomly sort the order in which they are shown/discussed among the groups, so no particular tagline is always shown first and another always shown last.

Taglines to be shown on boards and discussed, one at a time:

1. *Click It or Ticket.*
2. *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.*
3. *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk.*

COMMENT TO MODERATOR FOR GENERAL INFORMATION: *The discussion of the three taglines above is simply to get the participants in the mindset of commenting on taglines. Because some or all of the taglines above will be readily recognized by participants, it will somewhat easy for them to comment on them. However, the taglines below have never been used, so the participants will not have the benefit of having seen advertising or other materials using the taglines.*

1. *Don't take a chance. Take an extra glance.*
2. *Stay back from the track.*
3. *Don't lose your head at railroad crossings.*
4. *You can stop. Trains can't.*
5. *R x R crossings. Obey the law or lose it all.*

For each of the taglines (one at a time), questions and probes:

When you read or hear this slogan, what images come to your mind? Or what is the first thing you think of?

What's good about this slogan? What makes it good?

What do you not like about this slogan?

If an advertising sponsor used this slogan in its ads to get drivers to (*description of objective for line*), in what ways would it be a good slogan to use?

After all taglines have been shown and discussed, hand out sheet of paper with list of all the rail crossing taglines (see page 5 for reference). Instruct participants to independently choose (mark or circle) the line that is best; also, to jot down brief rationale for that selection.

After all participants have been observed to finish making selections, poll the entire group (i.e., show of hands) and tally.

Then discuss reasons each chose the particular tagline...

What are your reasons for choosing this line?

NOTES TO MODERATOR:

Transition to discussion about graphics/visual ideas.

Explain that these aren't necessarily ads, although they could be used in ads and other informational materials. Also, explain that (x) visual ideas will be discussed, some with multiple representations in the form of layouts.

Each idea will be mounted on a board for presentation to the group. Each will be labeled simply "A," "B," and "C" to minimize any bias the ideas' descriptive, internal names might lend. Order of presentation will be changed for each group, also to minimize bias.*

** "x" idea will be titled "A"
"x" idea will be titled "B"
"x" idea will be titled "C"*

Show first idea's layout(s).

Based on what we've discussed so far about rail crossings, how appropriate or relevant are these images?

(contingent on response, follow-up): What makes them so?

What do you especially like about these?

What do you not like about these?

Are there any special segments of the driving population these would appeal to particularly? And/or, are there any segments that would not relate to them? (probe for additional explanation if not offered)

Repeat the above for each of the other ideas.

After all have been shown and discussed, hand out sheet of paper with list of all the letter labels (see page 6 for reference). Place boards on wall for all to see for reference.

Among these three graphics ideas, which one do you think is the best one in terms of it attracting peoples' attention to a message about the risks and dangers of crossing tracks when a train is coming or being uncertain if one is coming? And again, briefly jot down your reasons for picking that one.

Instruct group members to independently mark or circle the one s/he thinks is best. After selections have been made, poll the group and tally. Then ask each participant:

For what reasons did you choose this one?

(Hand out for each group member to independently select the one slogan he thinks is most effective)

Of these slogan ideas, which **one** do you think is the **best**, in terms of it ***making drivers more aware of the risks and dangers of crossing tracks when a train is coming or if there's uncertainty about a train coming?***

- Don't take a chance. Take an extra glance.
- Stay back from the track.
- Don't lose your head at railroad crossings.
- You can stop. Trains can't.
- R x R crossings. Obey the law or lose it all.

(Hand out for each group member to independently select the one graphic idea he thinks is most effective)

Among the three graphics ideas, which **one** do you think is the **best**, in terms of it ***attracting peoples' attention to a message about the risks and dangers of crossing tracks even when a train is coming or if there's uncertainty about a train coming?***

A

B

C