

Attachment A
DRAFT Cognitive Interview Protocol - 2017 Annual Survey of Businesses

Research Questions to Address:

- Are respondents able to answer the questions as intended?
- Are there any items that cause the respondents problems?
 - What can be done to fix those problems?
- Are there any order/context effects?

Materials:

- Copies of questionnaire testing draft
- Recorder, batteries
- Consent form

Procedure:

- Go through the Introduction and Before the Questionnaire questions.
- Then provide R with the draft questionnaire and ask R to fill it out. Once R completes each question, ask the general probes and any item-specific follow-up probes.
- Note how R navigates the questionnaire and if they appear to be having any difficulty with the questions. If R appears to have any problems (utterances like “Hmm”, confused looks, etc.), probe on this.
- Go through probes about Wrap-up Questions

Introduction:

- Explain purpose of meeting: to understand the process of answering questions, and to evaluate how new questions work or don't work.
- Some questions I will ask may seem odd and/or obvious, but I don't want to assume I know what you are thinking.
- Explain that we are *not* testing the respondent – we only want to evaluate the questionnaire
- Structure of meeting: Understand your business and your role in it, then review the questionnaire and ask you questions as you complete it.
- Permission to record discussion? Solely for note-taking purposes. Have R sign consent form.

Before the Questionnaire:

- What types of goods or services does this business provide?
- What is your role in the company? What kind of responsibilities do you have?
- Are you one of the owners of the business?
- Have you completed other surveys from the Census Bureau or other agencies? If so, which ones?
- What was your role in the process for responding to this questionnaire? (*Gather data? Enter data? Consult with data providers? Etc.*)

Questionnaire test

Now let's take a look at the draft questions. I would like you to go through and answer the questions as if you were filling out an actual form. If you don't have answers to any particular questions, you can just make a best guess. I will ask you some questions as we go through them.

These questions are intended for [name of business as listed in recruiting file].

General Probes:

- What does this question mean to you?
- How did you go about answering this question?
- Would you be able to answer this question yourself? *(If no)* Who would be the appropriate person to answer it?
- *(If R appears to have problem/confusion)* What are you thinking about?
- *Reflect R's specific answer:* You said _____. Can you tell me more about that?
- *If R notices skip instructions:* The electronic system would skip automatically, but we will go over every question to make sure they are all clear.

Item-Specific Probes:

Number of Owners

- *Note respondents selection and which question they move to.* Who do you consider to be an owner? What criteria does an "owner" meet, in your words?

10% or More Ownership

- How did you decide which option to select?
- Would you need to consult any records to answer this question?

10 Percent or More Ownership

- Are there any arrangement such as parent companies, trusts, estates or otherwise part of the ownership of this company?
- *If yes,* Please explain.
- How would you treat those entities for the purposes of this survey?

Percent Ownership

- *For each percentage:* How did you arrive at this figure?
- *If more than one owner:* How did you select the order of Owners you provided?
- How do you feel about providing the Owners' names?

Service-Connected Disability

- How do you feel about providing this information?
- *If answering for an owner that isn't present* – How would you answer this question on behalf of another owner? Would you consult the owner?

Prior Business Ownership

- How did you decide which option to select?

Education Prior to Owning the Business

- How did you decide which option to select?

Field of Degree

- Are these response categories clear?
- Are there any important categories that are missing in your opinion?
- *Note how the respondent would respond if they answered < bachelor's degree in previous question*
- *If answering for an owner that isn't present* – How would you answer this question on behalf of another owner? Would you consult the owner?

Citizenship

- How do you feel about providing this information?

Place of Birth

- How do you feel about providing this information?
- *If answering for an owner that isn't present* – How would you answer this question on behalf of another owner? Would you consult the owner?

Hearing, Vision, Cognitive or Mobility Difficulty

- What do you think that this question is asking?
- What do you consider to be a serious hearing difficulty?
- What do you consider serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs to be?
- How do you feel about providing this information?
- *If answering for an owner that isn't present* – How would you answer this question on behalf of another owner? Would you consult the owner?

Reasons for Owning the Business

- What does each response category mean to you?
- If other (specify), can you tell me more about that?
- Are there any other main reasons that does apply to you or could apply to you that should be listed?

One Family Majority Ownership

- How did you decide which option to select?
- Did you notice the addition of “unmarried partners?”
- What do you think is meant by spouses/unmarried partners?
- How does this definition of family match or differ from what you consider to be family?
- Is there anything else you would include or exclude from this definition?

Joint Ownership

- How did you decide which option to select?

Equal Operation

- What do you think is meant by “operated equally?”
- How did you decide which option to select?
- In your opinion, how does operation differ from ownership?

Business Aspirations

- What is this question asking?
- What does each answer category mean?
- How did you decide which option to select?
- If you chose Other (specify), please tell me more about your answer.

Funding From Owner(s)

- How did you come up with your answer?
- Where did the money come from that the owner put into the business?
- What time frame were you thinking of?
- *If answering for an owner that isn't present* – How would you answer this question on behalf of another owner? Would you consult the owner?

Funding From Family, Friends, and Employees

- How did you come up with your answer?
- *If answering for an owner that isn't present* – How would you answer this question on behalf of another owner? Would you consult the owner?

Funding From Banks Or Other Financial Institutions

- How did you come up with your answer?
- What types of funding were you including in your response?

Funding From Outside Investors

- How did you come up with your answer?
- Prior to reading this question, had you ever heard of the term “angel investor?”
- In your own words, what is a venture capitalist?

Funding From Government Grants

- How did you come up with your answer?
- Which government grants did you include in your answer?

New Funding Relationships

- How did you come up with your answer?
- What do you think is meant by “new funding relationship?”
- Have you ever heard of “trade credit?”
- What do you think is meant by “trade credit?”
- What is a “Crowdfunding platform?”
- If selected Other (Specify), please explain.

Avoidance of Additional Financing

- How did you come up with your answer?

Reasons for Avoidance of Additional Financing

- How did you come up with your answer?
- Are there other options that are not available that would be applicable to your current situation or even a similar situation in the past?

Profitability

- How did you come up with your answer?

Negative Impact On Profitability

- How did you come up with an answer for each of the categories?
- If selected Other (Specify), please explain.

Types of Customers

- How did you decide which option(s) to select?
- If selected Other businesses, please explain.
- If selected Other organizations, please explain.

Types of Workers

- Are you able to differentiate which full and part-time employees receive a W-2?
- Are you able to differentiate between contractors, subcontractors or outside consultants who did and did not receive a 1099 or payment from another company?
- Are there any other types of workers that are listed as options that you used in 2017?

Website

- Can you provide more background about the types of activities that you do over the Web?
- Which activities are for promotion?
- Which activities are for conducting business?

Wrap-up

For businesses with a proxy respondent during the interview:

- Now that you have seen this survey, would you typically be the one who would be responsible for answering this survey?
- *If so*, would you involve the owner(s) in answering these questions? Which questions?
- How would you go about asking the owner(s) to answer these questions? Would you provide them with a copy of the question/survey?
- Would you have the owner(s) review the completed form before it was submitted?
- Would you have any concerns or hesitancy about answering any of the questions about the owners without their input?

All businesses:

- Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make about anything we have gone over today?

Thank the respondent for their time.