

## ABS 2017 Respondent Debriefing Interviews - Fall 2018

### Required Materials

- Copy of questionnaire
- Information on Respondent's answers (these can be screen shots or some other form of record of the participants' responses)
- Recording device

### Introduction

Introduce all attendees and include brief overview of why the survey exists and role of NSF and Census:

The Annual Business Survey (ABS) is conducted jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation. ABS provides information on selected economic and demographic characteristics for businesses and business owners. Additionally, the survey measures research and development, innovation and technology, as well as other business characteristics.

Thank respondent for completing the survey

Tell respondent why we asked to speak with them

- Understand how they developed their answers
- Refine questions and make them easier to answer

Ask about recording the interview: We would like to record this interview so that we have a record of an accurate record of your feedback. We plan to use your feedback to improve the design and layout of the form for future data collections. Only staff involved in this data collection will have access to the recording. Would that be okay? If respondent says no, move on.

### General Questions

Introduction:

Can you tell us a little bit about your business, what types of goods or services does this business provide?

What is your role in the company? What kind of responsibilities do you have?

Have you completed other surveys for the Census Bureau or other agencies? If so, which ones?

What was your role in the process for responding to this questionnaire? (*Gathering data? Entering data? Consulting with data providers? Etc.*)

About how long did it take for you to complete the survey? Were others involved in completing the survey? If yes, approximately how many? If yes, was their time included in your estimate?

### General questions about the process of completing the survey:

Can you tell me about your process for filling out the Annual Business Survey? What did you do once you receive the survey invitation in the mail?

Did you have any comments or concerns about the letter you initially received about the survey?

Can you tell me about how you accessed the survey? How easy or difficult was that process? Tell me about your experience with the online website to complete the survey? How easy or difficult was it for you to enter in your data online? How easy or difficult was it for you to navigate through the survey?

Now I would like to ask you about your responses to some specific questions from the ABS.

#### **General Probes:**

- What did this question mean to you?
- How did you go about answering this question?
- Were you able to answer this question yourself? *(If no)* Who did you consult to help you answer this question?
- *(If R appears to have had a problem/confusion with a specific question)* What are you thinking about?
- *Reflect R's specific answer:* You said \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell me more about that?

Item specific Probes:

### Questions about number of Owners and Number of Employees

#### Number of Owners

How did you go about answering this question?

Who did you include in your response and what is their role in this business?

Where did you get the data in order to answer this question?

Is there anything else we should know about the answer you provided?

#### Number of Paid Owners

Did you need to reference a W-2 to help you understand which owners to include in your response?

#### Number of employees

Who did you include in your response to this question?

Where did you/would you get the data needed to answer this question? How did you distinguish between employees (a) and non-employees (b and c)? Did you reference a W-2 to help understand where to put employees' vs non-employees?

Are you familiar with a 1099 form? (If yes, did you utilize this in your response to this question?)

## **Innovation**

### **Product Innovation**

How did you determine your response to this question?

Where did you get the data in order to answer this question?

Did you need to consult with any records or anyone else while answering this question?

Can you provide an example of either the goods or services you were thinking of when you responded yes to this question?

How was this innovation created? How successful (or not) has it been? Who are customers, and where are they located?

When you were responding to this question, did you notice that it was asking you to consider a three-year time frame?

Was three years too long for you to recall in your response to this question

### **Business Product Innovation**

How did you determine your response to this question?

Where did you get the data in order to answer this question?

Did you need to consult with any records or anyone else while answering this question?

In this question, the phrases "new to market" and "only new to this business" are used.

What did the phrase "new to the market" mean to you, in your own words? What did the phrase "new to the industry" mean to you in your own words?

Did you need to do any type of research on your businesses' market to respond to this question?

NOTE: Questions have been excluded that are not being included on ABS 2018.

## **Research & Development**

### **R&D Activities**

Does your business have a definition of research and development (R&D) that it uses? (If yes) Please describe that definition.

How did you determine your response to this question?

Where did you get the data in order to answer this question?

Did you need to consult with any records or anyone else while answering this question? (*If the respondent answered yes for any R & D activities*): I see that you responded yes to the

following research and development activity: \_\_\_\_\_, can you provide me an example of the specific activities you were thinking of in your response?

When you were responding to this question, did you notice that it was asking you to consider a one-year time frame? Previous questions in the survey asked for you to consider a three-year recall period, how easy or difficult was it for you to switch between a three-year and one-year recall period?

#### R&D Costs

How did you determine your response to this question?

Where did you get the data in order to answer this question? Did you need to consult with any records or anyone else while answering this question?

How clear did you think the instructions were on what to include and not to include in your response? \*

How does this business typically maintain financial records?

Do you have any other recommendations for improving the survey that we didn't get a chance to talk about?

That is all the questions I have for you today. Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this evaluation and provide valuable feedback.