

ATTACHMENT D

Moderator's Guide for Consumer Focus Group Session

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Moderator's Guide for Consumer Focus Group Session – General Adult Consumers
Testing Awareness and Perceptions of EPA Safer Choice Program
DRAFT – June 11, 2013

Need in the room: Pencils and highlighters for all participants; an easel for the moderator.

Introduction [15 minutes]

Welcome and thank you for joining us. My name is _____ and I will be your moderator for this focus group session, which is about providing information to help consumers select products that are safer and better for families, pets, and the environment. I'd like to hear how you feel about this topic, and I'm also interested in your perceptions about some visual materials, which I will show you a bit later. I want to let you know that I am not an expert in this topic; rather, I am an independent moderator trained to facilitate our discussion.

Our client for this research is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), located in Washington, D.C. The EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment. This research has been approved by the OMB, and the control number is _____. I have a copy of the burden statement associated with this research for you [hand out].

Our discussion should take about 1.5 hours.

Disclosure

- Observation: There is a one-way mirror with observers in the next room who are interested in hearing your views, but don't want to interrupt the conversation.
- Audio taping: This session will be recorded by audio to enable us to capture everything that is being said today. We will use the tape to write our report to our client.
- Your answers will be private to the extent permitted by law, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. Nothing will be attributed to any particular person in our aggregated report; however, we will be sharing all results with our client.

Ground rules

- Need to hear from everyone, one at a time please
- No right or wrong answers, want personal opinions
- Moderator is impartial, please be candid
- It's okay to be critical. If you dislike something you hear, it's fine to disagree but please be willing to offer your own views and opinions.
- If anyone needs to use the rest room, they are located [specify]. There is no need to stop the discussion.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Participant introductions

- Brief introductions around the table – tell us a little about yourself (e.g., name, occupation, family, pets)

Awareness and Use of Certification Seals [10 minutes]

Let's start our session by taking a look at some products you may have seen in a local supermarket or retail store.

[Show several products in a category, perhaps cleaning products – include at least one with a green certification and at least one without]

- Which one of these products would you choose to purchase in the supermarket?
 - o Why?
- Let's look more closely at this product [pick up a product that has a green certification mark on it]
 - o Have you seen this mark before?
 - o What does it mean?

The mark on this product indicates a green certification program, which is a program intended to help consumers purchase safer and/or more environmentally sustainable products. These programs are also known as “eco-label” programs.

Are you familiar with green certification programs?

- Which ones are you familiar with? [Prompt if necessary: Green Seal, Good Housekeeping Green Ratings, EcoLogo, Home Depot's Eco Options, USDA Organic, Energy Star]
- Have you ever used any of these programs to help you decide which products to buy?

Perceptions of Safer Choice Program [15 minutes]

Different certification programs have different purposes – for example, EnergyStar specifically helps consumer purchase products that are more energy efficient, whereas the USDA Organic program lets consumers know which products are certified organic. I want to talk about an EPA program intended to help consumers select products that can help protect the environment and are safer for people, families, and pets. I'll distribute a description of this program, and you can read along with me.

The U.S. EPA's Safer Choice program is a voluntary program that works in partnership with industry, environmental groups, and academia to help protect people and the planet by identifying safer chemicals and allowing safer chemical-based products to carry the Safer Choice label. For more than 15 years, the EPA has been evaluating the human health and environmental concerns associated with traditional and alternative chemicals and empowering businesses to make safer chemical-based products. When you see the Safer Choice label on a product it means the Safer Choice scientific review team has screened each ingredient for potential human health and environmental effects and that the product contains only the safest chemical ingredients available.

- Has anyone ever heard of the Safer Choice program?
 - o Have you used it to help you decide which products to buy?
- What's your overall impression of this program?
 - o Does it sound useful to you?
- As you shop in your local supermarket or retail outlet, would it be helpful to you to have some easy way of knowing if a product has been determined to be safer for people or if it can help protect the environment?
 - o If you could get that information at a glance just by looking at the product, do you think it might influence your purchase decision?
 - Why or why not?
 - o If the products in a particular category all cost about the same, do you think you'd choose the product that has been certified by the EPA to be safer for people and the environment?

- Which of those two claims would motivate you more to purchase a certified product
 - safer for people or protects the environment?

Testing Safer Choice Logo (45 minutes)

I'd like to show you the Safer Choice label, which appears on product packages to let consumers know which products have been certified under this program to be safer for people and the environment. I'd like to get your thoughts regarding this label and whether it is effective in communicating the goals of this program.

Label



- How would you sum up your first impression of this label?
 - o Would you notice it if you saw it on a product?
 - o Is it attractive?
 - Why or why not?
- What does this label mean to you, the consumer?
 - o How well do you think the message comes across in this label?
 - o Is it easy to understand at a glance?
- Is this label credible? Do you believe it will deliver on what the label conveys?
 - o Why or why not?
- Does this label give you any information about the safety of the product?
 - o If so, what does it tell you?
- Does this label give you any information about the product's impact on the environment?
 - o If so, what does it tell you?
- Does this label provide enough information to help you choose between various products in a category?
 - o Why or why not?
- How well do you think the name conveys what the program is trying to do?
- How well do you think the visual label conveys what the program is trying to do?
- How likely would you be to use this label to help you decide on a product to purchase?
 - o Why or why not?
- Have you seen products in store with this label on it?
 - o Where? When? Was it prominently displayed? Was there an abundance of product stock?
- Have you purchased a product with this design on it?
 - o When? Which product? Which store? Did you enjoy the product?
 - o Why did you purchase? What motivated you?

- Have you seen promotions for products with this label?
 - o Where? When? Was it compelling? Why? Why not?
- What would it take for you seek out a product with this label?
 - o Why is this important to you? Unimportant to you?
- What is most important to you when deciding which products in this category you would purchase?
 - o Why? Is this always the case? Why or Why not?
 - o What is your thought process when deciding to purchase these products? Are you apprehensive? Do you not give it much thought? Why? Why not?
 - o Do you discuss these purchasing decisions in your family? Among friends? Neighbors?
 - o Who or what do you consider influential in terms of impacting your purchasing decisions or attitudes toward products? Why?

Now that we've talked about the Safer Choice Label, let's dig a little deeper to variations of the logo. (PROBE FOR FEEDBACK ON LABELS INCLUDING VARIATIONS SUCH AS FRAGRANCE FREE OR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS)

Alternate design:



- How would you sum up your first impression of this label?
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 - o Is it easy to understand at a glance?
- Is this label credible? Do you believe it will deliver on what the label conveys?
 - o Why or why not?
- Does this label give you any information about the safety of the product?
 - o If so, what does it tell you?
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 - o If so, what does it tell you?
- Does this label provide enough information to help you choose between various products in a category?
 - o Why or why not?
- How well do you think the name conveys what the program is trying to do?
- How well do you think the visual label conveys what the program is trying to do?
- How likely would you be to use this label to help you decide on a product to purchase?
 - o Why or why not?
- Have you seen products in store with this label on it?
 - o Where? When? Was it prominently displayed? Was there an abundance of product stock?
- Have you purchased a product with this design on it?
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 - o What is your thought process when deciding to purchase these products? Are you apprehensive? Do you not give it much thought? Why? Why not?
 - o Do you discuss these purchasing decisions in your family? Among friends? Neighbors?
 - o Who or what do you consider influential in terms of impacting your purchasing decisions or attitudes toward products? Why?

Communication Preferences and Wrap Up (5 minutes)

As a result of our discussion tonight, are you interested in learning more about the EPA program we have discussed this evening?

What would be the best way to provide additional information for you? Where would you be most likely to pay attention to it? [E.g., web site, product packaging, point of purchase information or display, magazines or newspapers]

On behalf of the U.S. EPA, I want to thank all of you for your input today. Please stop by the reception desk to receive an incentive for joining us this evening. [Collect all materials]