

MEMORANDUM

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Re: Cognitive Testing of the Types of Workers and Management Practices questions for 2015 Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs

This memorandum summarizes the research conducted by the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch on the Types of Workers and Management Practices questions being considered for the 2015 ASE. We conducted cognitive interviews with 20 companies in the Dallas, Texas and Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan areas. The distribution of companies by size (number of employees) and NAICS sector is summarized in the tables below. Data for number of employees were included in the recruiting files provided by EWD based on prior responses either to the 2012 SBO or the 2014 ASE, and may not reflect the most accurate data for the companies we interviewed.

Number of employees	Number of companies
0 employees	2
1 to 4 employees	4
10 to 19 employees	3
20 to 49 employees	5
100 to 249 employees	3
250 to 499 employees	1
500 to 999 employees	1
2,500 to 4,999 employees	1
Total	20

Sectors	Number of companies
23: Construction	1
31-33: Manufacturing	3
42: Wholesale Trade	1
44-45: Retail Trade	2
52: Finance and Insurance	2
53: Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1
54: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5
55: Management of Companies and Enterprises	2
56: Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1
61: Educational Services	1
72: Accommodation and Food Services	1
Total	20

We summarize the findings of the research and provide recommendations below. The interview protocol and test questionnaire used for the interviews are included as appendices to this memorandum.

Types of Workers section

The “types of workers” questions (1-7) were generally interpreted by respondents as intended. All respondents correctly understood the tasks identifying the types of workers used by their businesses and reporting the percentage of each type of worker. The main problems with this section have to do with confusion between how the categories relate to what they consider to be their employees, some variations in interpretation of certain categories, and appropriate methods for calculating percentages.

Finding #1: Full-time vs. part-time paid employees

Some respondents asked for clarification on the distinction between full-time and part-time employees. We also observed some variation in how respondents distinguished between full-time and part-time employees. In addition, some respondents had more than one way of distinguishing between full- and part-time employees depending on the application. Several respondents mentioned the Affordable Care Act (though all of them referred to it as “Obamacare”).

Recommendation: We recommend adding some text to the effect of “however your company defines full-time/part-time” at the end of each category, to reassure respondents that it is acceptable to apply their own definitions.

Finding #2: Temporary vs. leased employees

A few respondents were not clear as to the distinctions between temporary and leased employees. When asked to describe the difference, most could not cite any distinguishing features. A few respondents were familiar with the difference as they had some direct experience with or other knowledge specifically of leased employment. One respondent’s company has only leased employees; he selected full-time, part-time, and leased employees, and commented that he was not sure whether the categories were mutually exclusive.

The respondents who understood leased employment tended to define it as a way of reducing or eliminating the costs for administering payroll and benefits, and/or as a way of creating larger pools of employees in order to offer them better benefits. In contrast, they tended to define temporary employment as having one or a small number of employees work for their business on a short-term basis, usually low-skilled tasks.

Recommendations: We recommend adding some clarification of the difference between the two concepts.

With regard to the issue of respondent who selected more than one category when the company only has leased employees, this is addressed by the recommendation for Finding #4.

Finding #3: Contractors, subcontractors, independent contractors, or outside consultants

Most respondents thought of this category in terms of other firms doing work for them (e.g., grounds maintenance, construction sub-contractors, contracting manufacturing or other processes associated with production, etc.). “Contractors” and “sub-contractors” are widely-used terms for work that is outsourced to other firms, and do not appear to be associated with individual workers who join businesses’ workforces under contract. The terms appear to be so salient that the additional terms “independent contractors” and “outside consultants” do not appear to be effective in affecting the scope of respondents’ interpretations of the item. Based on the first two terms, respondents arrive at an interpretation of what they are being asked, instantly and with high confidence, and do not need to expend any more effort in understanding what the category means.

A few respondents mentioned that they have contract employees and defined them as receiving a 1099 form. One respondent made the distinction that on one occasion, employees from a contract firm worked at the respondent business’ site and took instruction from the business’ staff.

Recommendation: We recommend adding some clarification of what this category is intended to collect. The sponsors’ addition of “workers who received a 1099” may be sufficient, but we recommend consideration of additional criteria, such as:

- Contract employees who become part of the business’ workforce
- Contract employees who work at the business’ own locations
- Contract employees who work alongside the business’ own staff
- Contract employees who take orders directly from the business’ staff
- Exclude contract arrangements in which work is outsourced to another firm

Finding #4: Calculating percentages

During our interviews, all respondents reported “top-of-head” estimates of their headcounts, but said they would use their records to report precise figures. They generally appeared to think of their workforces only as those on the payroll, namely full-time and part-time employees. They first reported an estimate for full-time employees, and those who had part-time employees reported the difference of full-time from 100%. This was easy for them to do. However, when confronted with the task of reporting percentages for the other categories, some respondents were not sure how to go about it. The reason appears to be that the presumed denominator, which includes all the types of workers, is not intuitive to respondents. As they tended to think only in terms of their actual payroll employees, it was not natural for them to think of the other types as their employees. Those who marked any category besides full-time or part-time would have to reconsider how they calculated full-time and part-time employees in order to report percentages for the other types.

In addition, some respondents were unsure how to derive percentages for particular situations. For example, one respondent considered the business’ employee turnover and wondered whether he should count the number of different people they employed throughout the year, or the number of positions. Similarly, another respondent occasionally subcontracts installation of his business’ products

work for short periods throughout the year: “We contract out installation of our product. Typically 2-4 guys on a job, 2-3 weeks for entire project, a few times a year. It would be hard to put a percent on that. I would have to do some kind of hours calculation.”

Some respondents noticed that the questions ask for an average, and said they would instead choose the headcount on a particular date such as March 12.

We observed that respondents who were owners of small businesses tended not to include themselves as employees of their companies.

Recommendations: The sponsors’ creation of a new item that asks for percentages for the full list of categories may be effective in conveying the idea that all types of workers selected should be considered the denominator. We recommend adding “100%” at the bottom of the column of response fields to further reinforce this idea. It may also be helpful to include an instruction to the effect of “For the purposes of this survey, we consider any workers working for your business to be part of your workforce, even if they are not payrolled employees.” Include an instruction for owners to count themselves as employees.

We strongly recommend that the questions that follow the screener do not include any categories not selected in the screener. Reactions to being presented with categories which were not selected can range from minor irritation to concerns that the instrument does not work, and may cause some respondents to go back to the previous page to ensure that they reported correctly on the screener. As the ASE is a fairly lengthy survey, the possibility that the additional burden and frustration might lead to break-offs should not be ignored.

On the basis of such observations as noted above, we conclude that respondents may be willing to go to burdensome lengths to calculate precise figures. Such burden should be considered in light of the intended uses of these data and the level of precision needed. If precise figures are not needed, we recommend the use of closed-ended response options with intervals instead of open-ended fields asking for exact figures. At a minimum, we recommend that addition of a prominent instruction indicating that estimates are acceptable for these items.

Finding #5: Tasks performed by workers

The list of tasks was generally interpreted correctly by respondents, with a few exceptions. “Operations” was unclear to a few respondents, who found it too vague, and did not associate it with the core revenue-generating activities of their businesses. A few respondents also were not sure where to report employees in accounting and finance roles.

Recommendations: To clarify “Operations”, we recommend adding text to expand on and clarify the intended meaning, such as “related to the primary revenue-generating activity of this business” or “related to providing this business’ products or services.” During a recent meeting it was suggested that BLS’ definition of “operations” be used, but we do not recommend that the definition be used in its entirety as it was too lengthy, technical, and manufacturing-focused.

Consider revising the seventh option as something to the effect of “General management, for example, administration, accounting, human resources, infrastructure, etc.”

Management Practices section

Overall, most of the questions in this section performed fairly well, and were interpreted and answered correctly. Some over-arching findings follow, and then question-specific findings.

Finding #6: Focus on manufacturing and other process-oriented industries

One over-arching finding is that most respondents observed that the questions and response options seem oriented toward manufacturing or other process- or logistics-oriented types of businesses. They often struggled to find meaningful categories, especially at service sector businesses.

Recommendations: Specific findings and recommendations are offered below.

Finding #7: Double-barreled and complex questions

Several of the questions in this section are double-barreled to some degree, that is, they presume the presence of the activity or characteristic at the focus of the question. Several respondents commented on this with regard to some questions. Although all of the questions have response options to indicate “not applicable,” they appear at the end of the options. All respondents were eventually able to find the “not applicable” options, though in some cases they attempted to make their interpretation of the questions fit such that they could provide a positive answer. This is a common risk in survey research, and best practice is to add screener questions to ascertain the existence of the conditions before asking respondents to provide qualifying information.

In addition, the combination of unfamiliar concepts with additional qualifying dimensions results in complex questions. We observed respondents having to re-read questions and consider them at length, but often they were not confident that they had the right understanding and asked us to confirm their interpretations. As respondents must consider multiple dimensions within the same question simultaneously, they may not expend the effort necessary to understand fully what the question asks, and the risk of misinterpretation and false-positive responses increases. Further, we observed instances in which respondents appeared to lose track of the reference period for specific questions and may have been thinking in general terms and/or including prior events (a phenomenon known as “telescoping”) rather than thinking specifically about what happened in the reference year.

Recommendations: We recommend consideration of measures to address the complexity of questions in this section, including creating screener questions to first ascertain the existence of each condition in the reference year before asking for more information.

Although it is best practice to place the reference period at the beginning of a question, in this case it leads to somewhat awkward structure due to the multiple clauses (“what best describes” and “what happened at this business”). “In 2015” modifies “what happened” but is removed from the latter by its placement at the beginning of the sentence. We suggest consideration of restructuring these questions so that “in 2015” follows “what happened at this business.”

Additional question-specific recommendations follow.

Finding #8: Service or Production Problems

Most respondents chose one of the first three options, and some of them indicated that there is a “right” answer, suggesting social desirability and/or other similar biases in the way answers are chosen. Also, as noted above, some respondents appeared to be thinking in general terms rather than about actual, specific problems and how they were addressed.

We observed some misinterpretation of “continuous improvement process.” Some respondents applied this concept in a general way, and not in the sense of a formal program of continuous monitoring and improving efficiency. Respondents without formal processes tended to consider various kinds of improvements large and small, whether formal or informal.

The example following the question appeared to narrow respondents’ interpretation in an unintended way. Respondents often focused on the example of “equipment breaking down” to the exclusion of considering other specific instances where problems arose. The example also caused some respondents to remark that this item appears to be focused on manufacturing and did not seem to apply to service sector businesses.

Recommendations: Clarify the third option to mean “formal continuous improvement process/program” if appropriate. Replace one of the examples with one or more examples related to the service sector.

Finding #9: Number of Key Performance Indicators

As with “continuous improvement” in the prior question, most respondents interpreted “key performance indicators” broadly and not in the sense of formal business performance metrics. Respondents at larger businesses appeared more likely to consider and report formal metrics than those at smaller businesses. One respondent described what this question is looking for as “measurable and quantifiable” metrics.

Also like the prior question, the examples following the question affected how respondents interpreted the question and the types of metrics they thought of and considered. Respondents, especially at smaller companies, often considered only the types of KPI’s presented as examples and did not consider other types not on the list.

Recommendations: We recommend adding some clarification of what is meant by “key performance indicator,” such as that they are formal, quantifiable, planned, regular, etc., as appropriate.

We also recommend that the number of examples be limited to three and that they include examples that are easily applicable to service sector businesses.

We recommend consideration of a screener question. Comprehension of the concept of KPI may be improved by creating a screener that first attempts to ascertain whether the business uses any KPI’s, which would focus respondents’ attention on the concept by itself with no other dimension.

Finding #10: Frequency of Key Performance Indicators

Most respondents selected more than one response, but a few wondered whether they were supposed to select only one.

Recommendations: Add instruction to “select all that apply.”

Finding #11: Business Targets

The inclusion of examples following the question affected some respondents the same way as with the Key Performance Indicators question, i.e., filtered and limited the types of targets they considered.

With regard to the time frames in the response options of the first part, everyone appeared to interpret them correctly.

In the second part, several respondents read the second response option (“with some effort”) colloquially and interpreted it to mean a normal or more than normal level of effort, and selected that option.

Recommendations: We recommend limiting the number of examples and including service sector examples.

Per the discussion at a recent meeting, we recommend changing the response options in the second part. We also suggest removing “Possible to achieve” from each option and placing it on the line above the options, to reduce the amount of text respondents must read in each response option. In addition, we recommend adding an option for “Did not achieve production targets.” Here is the recommended revision to the response options in full:

Possible to achieve...

- ...with minimal effort
- ...with less than normal effort
- ...with a normal amount of effort
- ...with more than normal effort
- ...with extraordinary effort

Did not achieve production targets

Finding #12: Employee Promotion

Respondents generally interpreted this item as intended, though a few expressed disapproval at the inclusion of “family connections” in the response options. Other respondents expanded on the idea of “other factors” to include things like office politics and poor management as factors affecting promotion.

Recommendations: No recommendation needed, but be aware of the possibility of bias due to the socially unacceptable perception of family connections with regard to promotion.

Finding #13: Underperforming Employees

No problems were detected with this question, although a few respondents pointed out that it is awkwardly constructed. This awkwardness is related to its double-barreled nature, as it presumes that the business had under-performing employees.

Recommendations: Consider creating a screener question to ascertain whether the business had to deal with underperforming employees in the reference year.

Finding #14: Record-keeping and Decision-making

These questions were generally understood as intended. The main problem we observed was that a few respondents did not limit consideration of the first question to record-keeping and decision-making just to sales and purchase. When they got to the second question they realized that they had also been considering records for other purpose and included, e.g., accounting records in their consideration of the first question. Some reported that they consider sales and purchases records to be a subset of the broader category of budget and finance records.

Recommendations: We recommend that the order of these two questions be reversed. Placing the broader category of budget and finance records first should eliminate the issue of “scope creep” in the narrower category of sales and budget records.

Finding #15: Time to complete the draft questions

Respondents were asked to estimate the amount of time it would take to complete the Types of Workers and Management Practices questions. They reported a range of 5 to 60 minutes, with an average of 24 minutes.

Recommendations: No recommendation needed.

Finding #16: Web-only reporting option

Respondents were asked how the Economic Directorate’s move toward electronic-only reporting would affect their ability to complete a survey like the draft questions we reviewed. All respondents said they prefer online reporting. Most said they could complete the survey all online, but some said they would

prefer to have a downloadable PDF version for various reasons – because they prefer to read the questions and write their answers on paper before entering them online, or they may need to take a copy to someone else for information they may not have. Some said they would also want to download a copy of the survey with their reported data for their records.

Recommendations: Continue to offer a downloadable PDF version of the survey to support offline response preparation and documentation of submitted responses.

2015 Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs

Part I – Types of Workers

1. Types of Workers

In 2015, which of the following types of workers were used by this business?

Select all that apply.

- Full-time paid employees
- Part-time paid employees
- Paid by day laborers
- Temporary staffing obtained from a temporary help service
- Leased employees from a leasing service or a professional employer organization
- Contractors, subcontractors, independent contractors, or outside consultants
- None of the above

The following questions would only apply if you checked the corresponding options in question 1.

2. Full-Time Paid Employees

- a. In 2015, on average what percent of the total number of workers was accounted for by **full-time paid employees**?

Round to the nearest whole percent. Your best estimate is fine. If none, report “0”.

____%

- b. In 2015, what types of tasks did **full-time paid employees** perform?

Select all that apply.

- Procurement, logistics, and distribution
- Operations
- Marketing, sales, and customer accounts
- Customer and after sales service
- Product or service development
- Technology and process development
- General management and firm infrastructure
- Human resources management
- Strategic management
- None of the above

3. Part-Time Paid Employees

- a. In 2015, on average what percent of the total number of workers was accounted for by **part-time paid employees**?

Round to the nearest whole percent. Your best estimate is fine. If none, report "0".

____%

- b. In 2015, what types of tasks did **part-time paid employees** perform?

Select all that apply.

- Procurement, logistics, and distribution
- Operations
- Marketing, sales, and customer accounts
- Customer and after sales service
- Product or service development
- Technology and process development
- General management and firm infrastructure
- Human resources management
- Strategic management
- None of the above

4. Paid by Day Laborers

- a. In 2015, on average what percent of the total number of workers was accounted for by **paid by day laborers**?

Round to the nearest whole percent. Your best estimate is fine. If none, report "0".

____%

- b. In 2015, what types of tasks did **paid by day laborers** perform?

Select all that apply.

- Procurement, logistics, and distribution
- Operations
- Marketing, sales, and customer accounts
- Customer and after sales service
- Product or service development
- Technology and process development
- General management and firm infrastructure
- Human resources management
- Strategic management
- None of the above

5. Temporary Staffing Obtained from a Temporary Help Service

- a. In 2015, on average what percent of the total number of workers was accounted for by **temporary staff obtained from a temporary help service**?

Round to the nearest whole percent. Your best estimate is fine. If none, report "0".

____%

- b. In 2015, what types of tasks did **temporary staff obtained from a temporary help service** perform?

Select all that apply.

- Procurement, logistics, and distribution
- Operations
- Marketing, sales, and customer accounts
- Customer and after sales service
- Product or service development
- Technology and process development
- General management and firm infrastructure
- Human resources management
- Strategic management
- None of the above

6. Leased Employees from a Leasing Service or Professional Employer Organization

- a. In 2015, on average what percent of the total number of workers was accounted for by **leased employees from a leasing service or a professional employer organization**?

Round to the nearest whole percent. Your best estimate is fine. If none, report "0".

____%

- b. In 2015, what types of tasks did **leased employees from a leasing service or a professional employer organization** perform?

Select all that apply.

- Procurement, logistics, and distribution
- Operations
- Marketing, sales, and customer accounts
- Customer and after sales service
- Product or service development
- Technology and process development
- General management and firm infrastructure
- Human resources management
- Strategic management
- None of the above

7. Contractors, Subcontractors, Independent Contractors, or Outside Consultants

- a. In 2015, on average what percent of the total number of workers was accounted for by **contractors, subcontractors, independent contractors, or outside consultants**?

Round to the nearest whole percent. Your best estimate is fine. If none, report "0".

____%

- b. In 2015, what types of tasks did **contractors, subcontractors, independent contractors, or outside consultants** perform?

Select all that apply.

- Procurement, logistics, and distribution
- Operations
- Marketing, sales, and customer accounts
- Customer and after sales service
- Product or service development
- Technology and process development
- General management and firm infrastructure
- Human resources management
- Strategic management
- None of the above

Part II – Management Practices

1. Service or Production Problems

In 2015, what best describes what happened at this business when a service or production problem arose? For example, finding a quality defect in a product or piece of equipment breaking down.

- We fixed it but did not take further action
- We fixed it and took action to make sure that it did not happen again
- We fixed it and took action to make sure that it did not happen again, and had a continuous improvement process to anticipate problems like these in advance
- No action was taken

2. Number of Key Performance Indicators

In 2015, how many key performance indicators were monitored at this business? For example, metrics on sales, production, cost, quality, inventory, customer satisfaction, absenteeism and deliveries on time.

- 1-2 key performance indicators
- 3-9 key performance indicators
- 10 or more key performance indicators
- No key performance indicators

3. Frequency of Key Performance Indicators

During 2015, how frequently were the key performance indicators reviewed at this business?

- Yearly
- Quarterly
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily
- Hourly or more frequently

- Never

4. Business Targets

- a. In 2015, what best describes the time frame of business, service, or production targets at this business? Examples of business, service, or production targets include number of customers, production, quality, efficiency, waste, on-time delivery.

- Main focus was on short term (less than one year) targets
- Main focus was on long term (one year or more) targets
- Combination of short-term and long-term targets
- No targets – *Skip to Employee Promotion*

- b. In 2015, how easy or difficult was it for this business to achieve its service or production targets?

- Possible to achieve without much effort
- Possible to achieve with some effort
- Possible to achieve with normal amount of effort
- Possible to achieve with more than normal effort
- Possible to achieve with extraordinary effort

5. Employee Promotion

In 2015, what was the primary way employees were promoted at this business?

- Promotions were based solely on performance and ability
- Promotions were based partly on performance and ability and partly on other factors (for example, tenure or family connections)
- Promotions were based mainly on factors other than performance and ability (for example, tenure or family connections)
- Employees are not normally promoted

6. Under-Performing Employee

In 2015, when was an under-performing employee reassigned or dismissed?

- Within 6 months of identifying employee under-performance
- After 6 months of identifying employee under-performance
- Rarely
- Never

7. Record-keeping and Decision Making for Sales and Purchases Activities

- a. In 2015, how did this business handle its record-keeping for sales and purchases activities?

Select all that apply.

- Kept paper records
- Kept electronic records
- Records handled by another business
- Records not kept for sales and purchases activities – *Skip to Record-keeping and Decision Making for Budgeting and Financing Activities*

- b. In 2015, were data from records for this business's sales and purchases activities used in decisions regarding each of the following?

Select all that apply.

- Design of new products or services
- Forecasting demand for products or services
- Ordering supplies or materials
- Scheduling or managing deliveries
- Financial planning
- Targeting potential customers
- Preparing this business's taxes
- Other (specify) – _____

8. Record-keeping and Decision Making for Budgeting and Finance Activities

- a. In 2015, how did this business handle its record-keeping for budgeting and finance activities?

Select all that apply.

- Kept paper records
- Kept electronic records
- Records handled by another business
- Records not kept for budgeting and finance activities – *Skip next question*

- b. In 2015, were data from records for this business's budgeting and finance activities used in decisions regarding each of the following?

Select all that apply.

- Design of new products or services
- Forecasting demand for products or services
- Ordering supplies or materials
- Scheduling or managing deliveries
- Financial planning
- Targeting potential customers
- Preparing this business's taxes
- Other (specify) – _____

2015 Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs – Cognitive Interview Protocol

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?
- How much time do respondents estimate they will need to complete the survey?
- How does the web-only reporting option affect the response process? What substitute for a mailed form should be provided, if any?

Materials:

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

Procedure:

- Note whether R responded to the 2014 ASE.
- 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 Web-Only Reporting and 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 will 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 services does this business provide?
- (*If employer*) Approximately how many employees does this business have?
- What is your role in the company? What kind of responsibilities do you have?
- Have you completed other surveys from the Census Bureau or other agencies? If so, which ones?

- *(If previous ASE respondent)* 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 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.

Part I – Types of Workers

Q1 – Types of workers

- What does each category listed here mean to you?
- Is "leased employee" a concept that is familiar to you? *(If yes)* What term do you use for "leased employee"?

Q2a – Full-time paid employees

- How did you arrive at this figure?

Q2b

- How did you decide which options to select?
- What does each category listed here mean to you?

Q3 – Q7

- *For each percentage:* How did you arrive at this figure?
- *For the task list:* How did you decide which options to select?

Q7a

- Do you recall seeing the text below the question? ("Round to the nearest..." etc.)

Q7b

- Do you recall seeing the text below the question? ("Select all that apply.")

Part II – Management Practices

Q1 – Service or production problems

- How did you decide which option to select?
- What does “service or production problem” mean to you?
- What are some examples of such problems encountered at your business, if any?
- What does each option mean to you?
- What does “continuous improvement process” mean to you? Is that a concept you are familiar with? *(If yes)* What term do you use for this concept?
- Do you recall reading the example after the question? Do you find this example helpful or not helpful?

Q2 – Number of key performance indicators

- What does “key performance indicator” mean to you?
- *(If one or more selected)* What are some examples of the indicators you were thinking of?
- Do you recall reading the example after the question? Do you find this example helpful or not helpful?

Q3 – Frequency of key performance indicators

- *(For any responses besides Never)* Can you tell me more about the type(s) of review you had in mind when you selected your response(s)?

Q4a – Business targets

- What does “business, service, or production targets” mean to you?
- What are some examples of such targets used at your business, if any?
- What does “time frame” mean to you?
- Do you recall reading the example after the question? Do you find this example helpful or not helpful?
- *Note whether R indicates any confusion between “targets” and “performance indicators” in Q2-3.*

Q4b

- What does each category mean to you?

Q5 – Employee promotion

- How did you decide which answer to select?

Q6 – Under-performing employee

- What does “under-performing employee” mean to you?

Q7a – Record-keeping and decision making for sales and purchase activities

- What does “record-keeping” mean to you?
- What does “sales and purchases activities” mean to you?

Q7b

- Please tell me in your own words what each of these answer categories means to you.
- *(For each category selected)* What were you thinking about when you selected that category? How does your business use data to affect decisions about that category?
- *If 'Other' is selected but R does not write in Specify blank:* What other sales and purchases activities that are not listed do you keep records of?

Q8a – Record-keeping and decision making for budgeting and finance activities

- What does “budgeting and finance activities” mean to you?

Q8b

- Please tell me in your own words what each of these answer categories means to you.
- *(For each category selected)* What were you thinking about when you selected that category? How does your business use data to affect decisions about that category?
- *If 'Other' is selected but R does not write in Specify blank:* What other budgeting and finance activities that are not listed do you keep records of?

Web-Only Reporting

- *Adjust the tense of these questions according to whether R responded to the 2014 ASE.*
- This survey only has an internet reporting option. How [would/did] that work for you?
- [Will/did] it make any difference that we [will/did] not send a paper form?
- Thinking about the questions we have been going over today, would you have any need for something to download or print to assist you in preparing your responses?
 - *(If yes)* What sort of downloadable/printable document would you want to have? What would it look like? What would you do with it? What level of detail should it contain?
- Do you want to keep copies of your response to this survey for your records?
 - *(If yes)* What format would you prefer?
- What has been your experience with using internet reporting systems for surveys or other reporting?

Wrap-up Questions

- *(If previous R)* About how long did it take you to complete the survey before?
- How long do you think it would take you to complete these questions?
- Any other feedback you would like to give us on these questions or *(If 2014 R)* your experiences with the survey?

Thanks for your time!