

OMB Control No. 0690-0030

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2019 Local Business Roundtables – Discussion Guide

I. Welcome and Introductions

Purpose of meeting

- Today, we're going to talk about surveys you get from the government asking for information about your businesses, specifically surveys from the U.S. Census Bureau. We'll ask for your opinions about these requests, get your feedback on different ideas about the data collection process, and get your reaction to some new marketing materials we have in development.

About this roundtable session

- Discussion will last about 90 minutes
- All comments will be kept anonymous
- We will be recording the session for note taking purposes only
- No right or wrong answers, only your opinion
- Any questions before we begin?

Participant Introductions

- First name
- Type of business BUT do not reveal company name
- Years in business
- Number of employees
- Ice breaker

II. Warm Up (10 minutes)

- *Let's kick things off with a word association exercise – When I say, "U.S. Census Bureau," what's the first thing that comes to mind?*
 - *Participants write down answers, then share and discuss. Probe for attitudes about federal government.*
- *Next warm up question – Does your company receive surveys from the Census Bureau or other government agencies asking for information about your business?*
 - *If yes, do you have a role in responding? Tell us what you know about the process or experience? How do you or people in your company feel about responding?*

- How do you decide which surveys to respond to? *Listen for voluntary vs. mandatory.*
- Is it important to respond to these surveys? Why or why not?
- What are the biggest barriers to responding? *Probe: Security concerns.*

III. Information Requested

- What kind of information is your company asked to provide in these surveys?
- *After open-ended, prompt* – Some surveys ask for a wide range of business data like sales and revenue, employment, payroll, information by location, and ask industry-specific questions. Others are more focused and ask only a few questions about one area of your business. Do you have any direct experience responding to these kinds of surveys?
- If you were asked to provide a wide range of information about your company, do you think it would be better to respond to one survey that asks everything in one questionnaire OR would you prefer to receive several shorter surveys each asking questions in a specific area, e.g. by trade or by type of data collected? Why?
- If you were going to receive multiple surveys, would you prefer to receive them one at a time or all at once, i.e. in one mailing packet or email? Why?
- Also, if you were going to receive multiple surveys asking for different kinds of information, would it be better for all to have the same due date, or should due dates be staggered? Why? Are different types of information available at different times?

IV. Use of the Data

- Do you know why your company is receiving these surveys and being asked for their information – what the data is used for?
- Does your company use economic data provided by the government or other sources? If yes, how do you use it?
 - What is the difference between data from government sources and data you get online, e.g. from a Google search? Do you use it differently?
- Are you aware that the results of the survey and economic data from the Census Bureau is available for your business to use? Online and free of charge?

We're now going to show you a video we've developed that talks about Census Bureau data and these topics we've just discussed.

Show "*James – Economic Surveys*" video

- What is your overall reaction to this video?
- What information or key messages did you take away?
- Do you think it will make people more motivated to respond to Census Bureau surveys? Why or why not?
- Do you think it will change overall impressions of the Census Bureau? If so, how?
- This video would primarily be viewed online. Where would you expect to see it?
- Any suggestions to improve the video – to make it more effective for encouraging survey response?

V. Online Reporting

- Most government surveys can now be conducted online. Is this how you typically submit your responses? Which do you prefer?
- When you do respond online, what materials do you need from us to reference as you prepare your information.
- How do you prefer to receive survey materials and information – regular mail, email, download from website?
- Responding to business surveys now requires setting up an online account using your email address, like you have with your bank or an online retailer. Do you have any questions about this? Would this be a barrier to you responding?
- Should the government agency send you additional instructions and information about your survey at the email address you provided?

VI. Legitimacy

- You get all these requests for information – How do you know if a request is legitimate?
- What makes you skeptical about legitimacy?
- What gives you reassurance that the request is something legitimate/important?
- For envelopes and letters? For email?

Exercise

Show envelope samples

Envelope 1 – Does this envelope look legitimate to you? Why or why not? What elements on the envelope give you this impression?

Envelope 2 – This second envelope has a couple of additional elements. Can you identify them? Do they make a difference – make it appear more or less legitimate? Why?

VII. Differentiating Envelopes

A few follow-up questions about the mailing packet you may receive from Census Bureau –
Imagine you received the following two envelopes from the Census Bureau in the mail
within the same month:

Show envelope samples

- Would you open both envelopes? Why or why not? *Probe for “I got this already.”*
- Would you know they were for two different surveys? Why or why not?
- What could Census do to make sure you knew they were mailings for two different surveys?

VIII. Differentiating Letters

Now let’s take a look at the letters

- The first pair are letters that are currently sent out – at first glance, would you know they were for different surveys? Why or why not?
- The second set includes the name of the survey up top – would this addition help you differentiate between the letters at first glance or not make a difference?

Show sample letters

- These letters from the Census Bureau direct you to a website where you respond online to your survey. Are there any questions about this? *Probe – barriers to going to the website?*

IX. Additional Survey Information

Finally, the Census Bureau would like to provide more information to respondents about the surveys it conducts. If you received an email like this after you set up your online account:

Show sample email

- Would you open it? Read it?
- Save it for future reference?
- Click on the links to learn more?
- Would it motivate you to respond?

- What if this information was delivered as a printed pamphlet in the mailing envelope you received? Would that be better than receiving an email? Why or why not?
Probe – same questions above.

X. Importance of Response

“Trusted Voices” Video

We’d like to wrap up by getting your reaction to one more video we have in development.

Show “Trusted Voices” video

- What is your overall reaction to this video?
- What information or key messages did you take away?
- Do you think it will make people more motivated to respond to Census Bureau surveys? Why or why not?
- Do you think it will change overall impressions of the Census Bureau? If so, how?
- This video would primarily be viewed online. Where would you expect to see it?
- Any suggestions to improve the video – to make it more effective for encouraging survey response?

XI. Wrap Up

- To wrap up, let’s revisit the first question we asked today: When I say, “U.S. Census Bureau,” what’s the first thing that comes to mind?
 - Now, after today’s discussion, would you give the same answer?
 - Have your impressions of the U.S. Census Bureau changed? If so, how?
 - If you had to pick one thing from today’s discussion that most influenced your perceptions of Census Bureau surveys, what would that be?
- THANK YOU!