

Moderator's Guide for Focus Groups

OMB Control No: 2127-0682: Focus Groups for Assessment of Creative Concepts Supporting a National Awareness Campaign to Reduce Fatalities at Railroad Crossings

FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

NOTE TO MODERATOR: *When group is fully assembled, read:*

This focus group is being conducted to collect information that will help us better understand your opinions about an important highway safety issue.

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used for formative purposes only so that we may develop communications programs designed to reduce the number of traffic-related injuries and deaths. A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2127-0682. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 75 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E., Washington, DC, 20590

“Warm-up” discussion topic:

What is the one thing about other drivers that annoys you the most?

Probe for brief explanation if response is just a few words

Transition to discussion about advertising concepts:

Another annoyance we all face as drivers are railroad crossings. My guess is that we all, from time to time, have raced under a crossing arm that's dropping down or driven around one. Unfortunately, though, across the U.S., there has been an increase in people killed when their vehicles are hit by trains. So, we need your help as “experts” to tell us what you think about some TV commercial ideas that are intended to discourage folks from trying to beat an on-coming train.

NOTES TO MODERATOR:

Transition to set-up about animatics. Because the concepts will be presented in the form of animatics, it will be helpful to show respondents an example of an animatic and the final commercial that came from it. Therefore, show “Speeding/Life Flashes” animatic, then finished commercial. This will help respondents be accustomed to mentally linking an animatic iteration with a finished version.

Then proceed to each of the four concepts for the rail grade campaign. Label/refer to each as “A,” “B,” “C,” and “D” to avoid potential bias that could be associated with each concept’s internal name.

“A” will be “You Know It’s True”

“B” will be “Car vs Train”

“C” will be “Inner Voice”

“D” will be “Legendary Last Words”

Among the different groups, rotate the order of presentation so no particular concept is always shown first or last.

Show each – one at a time – just once. Then distribute notes sheet for that commercial to each respondent for his initial independent, written comments. (see last page of this document for example of handout).

After all respondents have finished noting comments, facilitate discussion:

How many of you graded this an “A?” “B?” --- etc. for all grades

NOTES TO MODERATOR:

For each of the highest and lowest grades, probe for reasons why

If commercial gets high grades from most participants, probe those who graded it “B” or “C” relative to, “What would need to be done to the commercial so that you might give it a higher grade?”

Assume the idea’s main intent is to remind people that trying to race an oncoming train is extremely dangerous. What one or two things in the idea help convey a message that would get people to think that?

What one or two things in this commercial really stick out in your mind?

Does the commercial remind you of anything you’ve seen or heard before?

NOTE TO MODERATOR: *Play the commercial again. Then ask:*

What other thoughts do you have about this after seeing it a second time?

Probe as appropriate.

NOTE TO MODERATOR: Repeat the above steps for each of the other ideas.

NOTE TO MODERATOR: *After all ideas have been shown and discussed:*

Which of these ideas is best? How many say “A?” ... “B?” ... “C?” ... “D?”

Those who picked “A”: Please share your reasons for picking that.

Ask each person who picked “A” to give his reasons.

Repeat the above for those selecting each of the others

(Hand out for each group member to independently comment on each commercial after it's shown the first time)

Notes for commercial "A" *(same sheets will be prepared and distributed for commercials "B," "C," and "D")*

Things you especially like about this commercial

Things you don't like about this commercial

The main thing that sticks out in your mind

Grade it. If its main purpose is to **remind people that trying to race an oncoming train is extremely dangerous**, give it a grade of A, B, C, D or F: