U.S. Small Business Administration

PREAMBLE

- Thank you for participating in this discussion today. My name is [INTERVIEWER], and I am [TITLE] with LMD. LMD is a strategic marketing communications firm that has been hired by the U.S. Small Business Administration to conduct this research effort on the agency's behalf in order to test receptivity to the SBA's Women's Digital Entrepreneurship online learning platform concept; to identify any barriers to the successful launch, adoption, and ongoing use of the platform; and to understand potential end users' preferences for content, messaging, and marketing outreach channels.

- According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, an agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information (such as this group discussion) and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a current valid OMB Control Number indicating that OMB has approved the collection. The Control Number for this collection of information is 3245-0398, which expires on January 31,2021.

- The expected time commitment for your participation is 30-60 minutes, depending on your availability. You may send any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspects of this collection of information, including suggestions for reduction of the estimated participation time burden, to Patricia Gibson at Patricia.Gibson@sba.gov.

- Your participation in this research is completely voluntary.

- Your insights will be used to develop information and outreach materials that will help encourage the use of a new digital learning platform currently in development by SBA.

- Your name will not be associated with any of your responses. Additionally, we will not collect any information from you or any other sources that could identify who you are. At no point will I try to sell you anything or encourage you to take any action outside of your participation in this discussion.

Unless you have any questions for me, we can start our discussion.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

DISCUSSION TOPICS	QUESTIONS & PROBES
Knowledge acquisition and learning resources	• Where do you get information and knowledge to help you run your business? [PROBES:] o Who influences your decisions? o Who do you consider to be your "trusted advisors"? o What learning or educational resources do you use to help you gain the skills you need to manage and grow your business? • Do you have any prior experience with e-learning platforms/tools? [Probes: Udemy, Lynda, etc.] o What were the pros/cons of those platforms/tools? • What type of active or passive learning do you prefer? [Probes:] o What type of multimedia do you prefer interacting with? (video, podcast, etc.) • How much time do you spend on e-learning? [Probes:] o How much time would you prefer to spend on e-learning?

DISCUSSION TOPICS	QUESTIONS & PROBES

Knowledge and perceptions of SBA	• In your own words, tell me what you know about the U.S. Small Business Administration ("the SBA").
	• What are your perceptions and opinions of the SBA? [PROBES:]
	  o Favorable, unfavorable, neutral? Why do you feel this way?
	  o Do you believe the SBA is a credible information source? Why/why not?
	• Have you used the SBA to help you start, grow, or manage your business? [PROBE:]
	  o Do you use the SBA as an educational resource? Why or why not?

SBA's current e-learning platform	• Are you familiar with the SBA's current e-learning platform? [PROBES:] o Have you used it? What do you think of it?

SBA's new learning platform	• The SBA is currently developing a new, modern, online digital learning platform for women entrepreneurs that will provide counseling, training, networking, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities to help women business owners improve their capabilities as they start, grow, and manage their businesses. The SBA is particularly interested in helping women entrepreneurs who are ready to scale their businesses. The product is set to launch with the following 7 "learning paths":
	  o Entrepreneurial Leadership
	  o Opportunity Identification
	  o Opportunity Assessment
	  o Marketing
	  o People/Becoming an Employer
	  o Financial Literacy
	  o Access to Capital
	• Based on what I've told you so far, would you be interested in this type of a product from SBA? Why or why not?
	• What makes this product appealing to you? [PROBES:]
	  o Do you think the "learning paths" are relevant and interesting to women entrepreneurs?
	  o What other "learning paths" or content would you want to see in a product like this?
	  o Would you be interested taking short, individual lessons within one of these learning paths, or are you more interested in completing a series of lessons?
	• What questions or concerns do you have about this product?
	• What's the likelihood that you would use or at least check out this product?
	• What would make you return to it or use it on an ongoing basis?
	• What is your preferred registration experience with a new platform/app? [Probes:]
	  o What kind of information are you willing to share as part of a registration process?

Names, messaging, and marketing	• The SBA is considering some different names to brand the digital platform. [TEST NAME #1, REPEAT FOR NAMES #2, #3, ETC.] [PROBES:]

DISCUSSION TOPICS	QUESTIONS & PROBES
	o Do you find this name appealing? Why or why not? o Does it make you want to learn more? Why or why not? o Which of these names do you like the best and why? • The following are some messages that the SBA is considering using in its outreach to women entrepreneurs who might find the learning platform helpful. [TEST MESSAGE #1, REPEAT FOR MESSAGES #2, #3, ETC.] [PROBES:] o Do you find this message appealing? o Do you find this message to be believable? o Does this message inspire you to learn more? • What do you think is the best way to reach women entrepreneurs about this product—specifically, what marketing channels should the SBA use to reach women entrepreneurs? *[PROBES: social media, thought leadership, digital advertising, influencer marketing, etc.]*
General questions and final thoughts	• What do you think the SBA needs to do from a marketing perspective to make sure its new learning platform is a success? • Where do you consume content? [*Probes: Twitter, Email, podcast, etc.*] • Any final thoughts before we conclude?

Thank you for your time!