



SBA | Ascent Pre-launch Product Beta Testing | Testing Guide | 05.04.2019

INTRO PARAGRAPH

Thank you for your interest in testing the beta version of Ascent, the new online learning platform for women entrepreneurs created by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA has designed Ascent to meet the specific needs of female small business owners like you, so your feedback and participation in this testing is critical to Ascent's success.

For the product beta test, you'll be asked some pre-test questions. Then you'll have a few minutes to freely explore the site. For the testing, you'll get a few tasks to complete, and then you'll answer a few more general questions about your impressions of the site. The whole process should take no longer than 45 minutes. Thank you for your time!

NEXT SCREEN: PRA INFORMATION

- This research is sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Subject to the guidelines of the Paperwork Reduction Act, an agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection, such as this beta test, and you are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a current valid OMB Control Number. This survey is approved under OMB Control # 3245-0398, which expires on January 31, 2021. .
- The estimated time for completing this beta test is 45 minutes, including the time to review instructions and completing and submitting the information. Send any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspects of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden to Vicky Mundt (Victoria.Mundt@sba.gov).
- Your participation in this beta test 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.

PRIVACY POLICY/SYSTEMS OF RECORD NOTICE

- While testing Ascent, we will not collect any personal information about you unless you choose to provide that information to us. If you choose to provide this information, it will be used for the express purpose for which it was intended.
- As a testing participant, you are subject to [TESTING TOOL TBD] privacy policies [LINK TBD].
- Learn more about the SBA's privacy policy [here](#).

PRE-TEST QUESTIONS/DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tell us a little about yourself.

1. How did you hear about Ascent beta testing? [RANDOMIZE]

- I attended an in-person listening session
 - Which one? Please specify:
- Through an SBA partner/stakeholder
 - Which one? [PICK LIST OF SELECT SBA PARTNERS/STAKEHOLDER GROUPS]
- Through a federal government agency
 - Which one? [PICK LIST OF SELECT FEDERAL AGENCIES]

- Through a professional/industry association
 - o Which one? [PICK LIST OF SELECT PROFESSIONAL/INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS]
- Through a college/university
 - o Which one? [PICK LIST OF SELECT COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES]
- Other, please specify:

2. What is your state of residence? Check only one.

- [LIST OF STATES]

3. How long have you been in business? Check only one.

- Started this year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-11 years
- 12-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

4. Other than yourself, how many employees does your business have? Check only one.

- It's just me
- 1-5 employees
- 6-10 employees
- 11-20 employees
- 21-50 employees
- More than 50 employees

5. What industry is your business in? Check only one. [RANDOMIZE]

- STEM (science/technology/engineering/mathematics)
- Financial services (e.g., wealth management, financial advising, accounting)
- Construction and related services (design/build, architecture)
- Information technology
- Advertising/marketing/communications
- Law/legal services
- Manufacturing
- Transportation
- Retail
- Hospitality (hotel, restaurant)
- Healthcare
- Other, please specify:

6. What was your business' estimated annual revenue in the last fiscal year? Check only one.

- Under \$100,000
- \$100,000-\$249,999
- \$250,000-\$499,999
- \$500,000-\$999,999
- \$1,000,000+
- Prefer not to say

USABILITY TESTING TASKS

[CONTEXT SETTING/USER FRAME OF MIND] Now you'll have the opportunity to explore Ascent. You'll be given some tasks to complete and asked some questions about your overall impressions of the site and about the tasks. As you are exploring and completing the tasks, think about how Ascent could be helpful to you as a woman small business owner who is looking to grow her business.

7. Before we start you on the tasks...

- What internet browser are you using?
 - Chrome
 - Safari
 - Firefox
 - Internet Explorer
 - Bing
 - Other, please specify:
- What device are you using to complete the tasks?
 - Desktop or laptop computer
 - Tablet
 - Cell phone

8. Task 1: HOMEPAGE. This is Ascent's homepage. Feel free to explore this page as you normally would by scrolling around with your mouse. *Please don't click on anything just yet.*

- *Inquire about overall impressions of the homepage, including the following elements. Vet and validate:*
 - Page layout: Is the organization of the information on the homepage logical and intuitive?
 - Design:
 - Do you think the homepage design (colors, images, graphics) is attractive and attention-getting?
 - Is the font easy to read?
 - Content:
 - Does the homepage provide useful information and context about the product?
 - Does the homepage's content make you want to explore the site further?
 - Is the purpose of the site clear on the homepage?
 - Is it clear from the homepage who the site's intended audience is?
 - Navigation: Do you think the navigation buttons are logically labeled?
- Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered when exploring the homepage.
- What would you improve about the homepage?

9. Task 2: SITE EXPLORATION/OVERALL IMPRESSION. Please take a few minutes to freely explore Ascent. Browse and interact with any information you may find helpful. You may click on anything you like.

- *Inquire about overall impressions of the following aspects of the site. Vet and validate:*
 - Design:
 - Do you think the site's design is attractive and modern?
 - Do you think the site has a good balance of graphics and text?
 - Navigation:
 - Is it easy to navigate and find your way around the site?
 - Are navigation labels logical and clear?

- Is it fun to explore the site?
 - Could you get to the information that interested you quickly and easily?
 - Content: Overall, is it clear what the purpose and intent of the site is?
 - [FOR MOBILE TESTERS]: Overall, is the site mobile friendly?
- Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered when exploring the site.
- What's your overall impression about the site? What would you improve?

10. Task 3: SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY. Please navigate to the search bar and enter a term. For example, some terms you might enter include:

- Example search term #1
 - Example search term #2
 - Example search term #3
- *Inquire about search functionality. Vet and validate:*
 - Was it easy to use the search function to find the terms you were looking for?
 - Did the search function provide the results you expected?
- Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered when using the search function.
- Is there anything you would change or improve about the search function?

11. Task 4: REGISTRATION. Please navigate to the registration link and click on it. Then register for an account/create a user profile. (*User profiles will not be saved.*)

- *Inquire about registration process. Vet and validate:*
 - Was the registration process easy to complete?
 - Are you comfortable with the amount of information you were asked to provide? Why or why not?
 - Are the benefits of registering and creating a user profile clear?
- Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered during the registration process.
- Is there anything you would change or improve about the registration process?

12. Task 5: CONTENT.

- Task 5a: **LEARNING PATHS “JOURNEYS”**. Click on the main navigation (“Browse Journeys”) and describe the results. Take a few minutes to explore the “Journeys” section and its content.
 - *Inquire about course content. Vet and validate:*
 - Is the content written in a style that's easy to understand?
 - Is the content relevant to your professional needs?
 - Do you think this content would be helpful to you when running your business?
 - Is the content interesting and useful?
 - Do you think the content is designed with women business owners like you in mind?
 - The content would keep me coming back.
 - I would recommend this content to another user.
 - The terms and descriptions used—such as “journeys” and “excursions” make sense; I understand what these terms mean and are referring to.
 - Which of the seven journeys sounds most interesting to you?
 - Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered when exploring the “Journeys” section of the site.

- Is there anything you would suggest we do to improve this content?
- **Task 5b: INFOGRAPHICS.**
 - Find and download the [EXAMPLE INFOGRAPHIC].
 - *Inquire about infographics. Vet and validate:*
 - Was it easy to find and access the correct infographic?
 - Was it easy to download and view the infographic?
 - Do you think the infographic's content would be useful to you in running your business?
 - [FOR MOBILE TESTERS] Was it easy to download and view the infographic on your mobile device?
 - Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered with finding, viewing, and downloading the infographic.
 - Is there anything you would suggest we do to improve the infographics?
- **Task 5c: WORKSHEETS.**
 - Find and download the [EXAMPLE WORKSHEET].
 - *Inquire about worksheets. Vet and validate:*
 - Was it easy to find and access the correct worksheet?
 - Was it easy to view and download the worksheet?
 - Do you think the worksheet's content would be interesting and useful to you in running your business?
 - [FOR MOBILE TESTERS] Was it easy to view and download the worksheet on your mobile device?
 - Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered with finding, viewing, and downloading the worksheet.
 - Is there anything you would suggest we do to improve the worksheets?
- **Task 5d: VIDEOS.**
 - Find and download the [EXAMPLE VIDEO].
 - *Inquire about videos. Vet and validate:*
 - It was easy to find and access the correct video.
 - It was easy to view and download the video.
 - The video's content is interesting and useful to me in my business.
 - [FOR MOBILE TESTERS] It was easy to view and download the video on my mobile device.
 - Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered with finding, viewing, and downloading the video.
 - Is there anything you would suggest we do to improve the videos?
- **Task 5e: SELF ASSESSMENTS.**
 - Find and take [EXAMPLE SELF ASSESSMENT].
 - *Inquire about self assessments. Vet and validate:*
 - Was it easy to find and access the correct self-assessment?
 - Was it easy to complete the self-assessment?
 - Were the questions clear and easy to understand?
 - Was taking the self-assessment helpful and interesting?
 - [FOR MOBILE TESTERS] Was it easy to find, view, and take the self-assessment on your mobile device?
 - Tell us about any challenges you had or frustrations you encountered with finding, viewing, and taking the quiz.
 - Is there anything you would suggest we do to improve the quizzes?
- **Task 5f: FIRESIDE CHATS/AUDIO FILES.**
 - Find and take [EXAMPLE FIRESIDE CHAT/AUDIO FILE].

- *Inquire about fireside chats/audio files. Vet and validate:*
 - Was it easy to find and access the correct fireside chat?
 - Was it easy to download/listen to the fireside chat?
 - Is the term “fireside chat” is appealing?
 - Is the meaning of “fireside chat” clear?
 - Did the fireside chat provide useful and interesting information?
 - [FOR MOBILE TESTERS] Was it easy to find and listen to the fireside chat on your mobile device?

POST-TEST QUESTIONS

Now that you’ve had a chance to try out Ascent...

13. How likely are you to use Ascent after it is launched?

- Likert scale: Extremely likely/Very likely/Somewhat likely/Slightly likely/Not at all likely
 - o [BRANCH LOGIC] If you said “Not at all likely,” why? Check all that apply. [RANDOMIZE]
 - Too busy/lack of time
 - Currently using other resources that meet my learning needs and goals
 - Prefer in-person learning opportunities vs. online
 - Prefer learning opportunities that are specific to my industry
 - Not relevant to my current learning needs
 - Prefer to use resources from the private sector or higher education
 - Other, please specify:
 - o [BRANCH LOGIC] If you said “Extremely likely” or “very likely,” would you be interested in providing a video-taped testimonial about Ascent?
 - Yes
 - [BRANCH LOGIC] If yes, please provide your contact information below. We’ll reach out to you via email to invite you to sign up as a product tester:
 - o First name
 - o Last name
 - o Email address
 - No

14. How likely are you to recommend Ascent to someone you know?

- Likert scale: Extremely likely/Very likely/Somewhat likely/Slightly likely/Not at all likely
 - o If you said “Not at all likely,” why? [open-ended response]

15. What other content or features would you like to see added to Ascent? [OPEN ENDED]

16. Please provide any other feedback or comments you may have for us about how we can improve Ascent. [OPEN ENDED]

Thank you for your time!