NIH⟩ NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

Business Audience Personas and Journey Maps Project Moderator's Guide: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Awardees and Prospects

Session Information

Date	
Time	
Moderator	
Audience Group	
Additional info	

Setup

[The interviews with the small business audience will consist of remote in-depth interviews with Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) awardees and prospective awardees.]

Introduction
Estimated length: 5 minutes

Thank you for participating in this study today. My name is _____, and I am a researcher with the Fors Marsh Group. We are a private research company conducting interviews on behalf of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). NCI is learning more about their business audience to find out how they can best provide support and resources. Today, I'll be asking you questions to learn about your professional experiences with the research and development of cancer technologies. The entire session will last about 60 minutes.

Here are some things to know before we get started.

- If you do not want to answer any of my questions, you do not have to. Please just say so, and we will move on. And of course, you can stop the interview at any time.
- Some people from my team may be listening in remotely to take notes and record your comments. Your honest and candid feedback will be very valuable, so even though people are listening in, please speak openly about your opinions and experience. There are no wrong responses to the questions I'll be asking.
- We will be recording audio from the interview. Only Fors Marsh Group staff will hear or see the recording, and we will not include your name or personal information in the recording or the report. The recordings are a memory aid for me, so I can go back later to recall what happened during each interview. Is it OK with you if we record the interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section A: Professional Background

Estimated length: 10 minutes

Goal: Understand the participant's professional background.

A1. Can you give me a brief description of your educational and professional background?

    a. Can you tell me about your area of expertise?

    b. How did you first become interested in entrepreneurial activities in this area?

    c. How do you go about continuing to grow as a professional?

        i. [If necessary, provide examples.] For example, do you attend professional meetings, conferences, or trainings? Do you subscribe to professional magazines or publications?

        ii. What are the professional affiliations that are most common in your field?

A2. Can you tell me about your business? [If necessary] What are the technologies that you are developing?

    a. What are the reasons for you to interact with NCI?

    b. What role does NCI play in your business strategy? [Moderator note: If participant is not an awardee, phrase as, "What role would NCI play in your business strategy?"]

A3. What are the day-to-day responsibilities in your current position?

    a. What responsibilities of your job do you find the most challenging?

Section B: SBIR Grant Activities

Estimated length: 15 minutes

Goal: Discuss the funding process and activities used to support product research and development.

B1. Can you briefly describe the idea that led to your interest in applying for a Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant with NCI?

    a. [If needed] Can you walk me through the steps you took to start researching and developing your idea for the grant proposal?

    b. [If needed] What resources do you use to learn about new grant opportunities?

B2. How did you become aware of SBIR/STTR grant opportunities with NCI?

B3. For what reasons did you apply (or are you considering applying) to NCI for an SBIR/STTR grant?

B4. [If previously applied for funding] Can you walk me through your steps in the application process?

    a. What resources did you use to build your application?

    b. What was your experience with the application process?

B5. Did you encounter any challenges during the application process? [If so] What were those challenges?

    a. How did you address those challenges?

    b. Did you get in contact with anyone when you had questions about the application process? [If yes] Whom did you contact?

B6. What, if anything, did you learn during the application process that you wish you had known at the start of the application process?

B7. What piece of advice would you give to someone who is considering applying for an SBIR grant?

B8. [If currently funded or funded in the past] Once you were awarded funding, what kind of tasks did you need to complete in order to obtain the funds?

B9. [If awarded funding] What has been your experience with the grant management process?

    a. What resources do you use to manage your grant?

    b. What, if anything, have you learned about the grant management process that you wish you had known at the beginning?

Section C: Collaboration and Networking

Estimated length: 10 minutes

Goal: Discuss collaboration and networking activities used to support product research and development.

[Moderator:] Now, I'd like to switch gears and talk about collaboration and networking activities that are relevant to the development of your new technology.

C1. What are the types of roles of the people you directly collaborate with to support the development process?

C2. How do you identify potential collaborators?

C3. Tell me about any challenges you have encountered when collaborating with others.

C4. What tools and resources do you use to collaborate with others?

C5. What kinds of networking activities do you participate in to stay up to date in your field?

    a. Are there any conferences in your field that you attend? [If yes] Which ones?

C6. How do you learn about these networking opportunities?

Section D: Interactions with SBIR website

Estimated length: 15 minutes

Goal: Discuss the role of SBIR.cancer.gov in the research and development of cancer technology.

D1. Next, I'd like you to visit the NCI's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) website. Please go to sbir.cancer.gov. Have you visited this website before?

    a. [If Yes] How often do you visit this website?

    b. For what reasons do you visit these web pages? [Moderator note: If the participant has not visited, phrase as, "For what reasons would you visit these web pages?"]

    c. What, if any, resources or information have you looked for when you visited these web pages? [Moderator note: If the participant has not visited, phrase as "What, if any, resources or information would you look for if you were to visit these web pages?"]

    d. [If Yes] What has your experience been like when looking for information on these web pages?

        i. [If necessary] Were you successful in finding what you were looking for?

D2. What content do you find valuable on these web pages?

D3. What information is missing, if any, that you would like to see on these web pages?

D4. Who, if anyone, do you reach out to when you have questions that are not addressed on these web pages (e.g., NCI program directors, colleagues)?

D5. What other resources do you use in addition to or instead of these web pages to support a grant application?

    a. [Probe if necessary] What other NCI resources do you use in addition to these web pages?

        i. What other NIH resources do you use?

Section E: Debrief

Estimated length: 5 minutes

Goal: Closing comments, feedback, and debrief from interview.

E1. Before we end our session, do you have any other thoughts about how NCI could make the grant application and grant management processes better for you and others?

Those are all the questions that I have for you today. We appreciate you taking the time to talk to me about this topic. Your insights and feedback have been very helpful.