NIH⟩ NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

Business Audience Personas and Journey Maps Project Moderator's Guide: Businesses Seeking to Invest in Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)

Session Information

Date	
Time	
Moderator	
Audience Group	
Additional info	

Setup

[This guide will be used for remote in-depth interviews with participants who work for businesses looking to invest in other businesses developing cancer technology.]

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 process of investing in businesses that are developing cancer technology. 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 who are associated with this project 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 types of technologies that you are investing in?

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

    b. What role does NCI play in your investment strategy?

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

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

Section B. Investing in Technology and Other Companies

Estimated length: 15 minutes

Goal: Understand the goals, needs, and behaviors of companies looking to invest in other companies and technology.

B1. Can you briefly describe the types of businesses and technology that you are investing in that are in the NCI Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program?

    a. What are the steps that you take to research the technology and businesses available for investment?

    b. After learning about a business or technology, how do you decide whether or not to move forward with investing?

    c. [If necessary] What resources do you use to learn about a technology?

B2. How did you become aware of businesses that are available for investment that are in the NCI SBIR program?

B3. For what reasons have you invested in companies in the NCI SBIR program?

B4. Can you walk me through your steps to investing in a business that is in the NCI SBIR program? [If necessary]

a. How did you decide which opportunity to invest in?

b. Whom did you contact to inquire about an investment opportunity from the NCI SBIR program?

c. What was your experience like in investing in a business in the NCI SBIR program?

B5. Did you encounter any challenges in the process of making the investment? [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? [If yes] Whom did you contact?

B6. What, if anything, did you learn during the investing process that you wish you knew at the start of the process?

B7. What advice would you give to someone who is considering investing in businesses funded by the NCI SBIR program?

B8. Once your investment was in place, did you need to complete any additional tasks? [If yes] What were they?

B9. Have you had any additional interactions with NCI after making the investment in the SBIR?

Section C: Collaborating and Networking

Estimated length: 10 minutes

Goal: Discuss collaboration and networking activities used to support investments in SBIRs.

[Moderator] Now, I'd like to switch gears and talk about any potential partnerships with other organizations that you engage with as you invest in new businesses and cancer technology.

C1. What are the types of roles of people you directly collaborate with or partner with when you are looking to invest in an SBIR?

C2. How do you identify potential partners or collaborators?

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

C4. What tools and resources do you use to partner and 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 use of sbir.cancer.gov in the investment of businesses and cancer technology.

D1. Next, I'd like you to visit NCI's 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 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 when you are looking to invest in a business and technology?

    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 process of investing in SBIRs 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.