

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: END USER RESEARCH AND USABILITY TESTING ON CORDED WINDOW COVERING PRODUCTS

The general objective of this research is to conduct focus group research to provide the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) with consumer/user data regarding their experiences with existing window covering products in the home.

The information gathered from the proposed research will be used by the CPSC staff to make recommendations on window covering technologies with a goal of providing safer products, and also providing products that consumer/users find easy to operate and aesthetically appealing and thus are more likely to be installed.

BACKGROUND / PURPOSE

Window covering products that employ corded control mechanisms have created significant levels of concern among a wide range of trade and governmental agencies responsible for monitoring overall product safety. Corded window coverings are household products which do not usually pose a risk to older children, teens or adults in their intended use of operation. However incidents of fatal and non-fatal strangulation in households utilizing corded window covering products, with children 8 years old and younger, have caused levels of concern and resulted in a petition to the CPSC to take regulatory action. Investigations into specific incidents involving children and corded products point to horizontal blinds and vertical blinds that are controlled by straight hanging pull cords or continuous loops as the predominant types of products presenting the greatest risks. A project titled: Technical Feasibility and Cost Improvement Analysis of Safer Window Covering Technologies, has been initiated by the CPSC and awarded to The Motiv Design.

The overall objective of the total project is to conduct technical feasibility and cost improvement analysis on the available safer technologies that address child strangulation on a wide variety of window covering types and sizes. Many currently available technological options eliminate hazardous operating cords, or make hazardous cords non-hazardous or inaccessible. Therefore, CPSC Staff is most interested in evaluating consumer/user perspectives on the usability of the safer technologies available as well as their aesthetic appeal, as negative perceptions on either could result in the safety benefits being foregone.

Important specific goals of the project are to provide information on the cost of safer technologies, options to reduce that cost, and how widely the technological options can be implemented in terms of window covering type, size, and weight.

The goal of the consumer/user research and usability testing will be to determine how alternative window covering technological options affect the consumer's/user's hands-on operation, perceptions of ease of use, safety and aesthetic appeal.

FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

To provide consumer/end user data to satisfy the above mentioned goals, CPSC's contractor, The Motiv Design, will conduct a series of three Focus Group Discussion Sessions (10 respondents per group totaling 30 subjects). Fifteen of the respondents will be males, and 15 females. All respondents will be required to be heads of households who have corded window covering products in their homes, and young children (under age 5) living there or visiting frequently. The discussion will be designed to address the following:

- I. Consumer/user experiences with existing corded window coverings in their homes; likes, dislikes, problem areas
- II. Levels of concern with current window covering cords; their views of hazards with young children present, or who visit frequently
- III. A number of actual window covering products with alternative control mechanisms will be set up in the focus group facility. Respondents will be asked to examine, operate, test and evaluate each product on display. (Number and type of products to be tested and evaluated TBD). Respondents will then be asked to discuss:
 - a) Reactions to the operation of each product
 - b) Reactions to the aesthetic appeal of each product
 - c) Their degree of interest in purchasing and using each product
 - d) Their one "preferred choice" product, and why preferred

Each focus group session will last approximately 2 hours (120 minutes). Participants will only be permitted to attend one group. Participants will be recruited locally (Boston MA and surrounding suburban area). CPSC's contractor, The Motiv Design, will employ a professional focus group recruiting firm, Cambridge Focus, located in Maynard MA for this purpose.

As is the common practice in focus group recruiting, participants will be contacted by phone, and screened using a carefully prepared and approved screening questionnaire to identify and qualify potential respondents. If a potential study participant qualifies, the Cambridge Focus recruiter will then briefly describe the study, the time and place of the session, the length of the session time, and the amount of the cash incentive. If qualified participants express interest and willingness, they are invited to participate in one of the three focus group sessions. Qualified respondents will then be given the address of the focus group facility, and the date and time for their session.

The Motiv Design, CPSC’s contractor, will execute all necessary preparatory and logistical activities to recruit for and conduct the focus groups, including developing the hands-on exposure protocol, preparing the moderator’s guide, securing facilities, acquiring the window coverings, preparing support materials, and recruiting participants.

At the conclusion of the focus groups, The Motiv Design will analyze the results and develop a report for presentation to the CPSC staff and project team.

DESCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP RESPONDENTS

The recruitment goal is to identify and recruit a total of 30 focus group respondents who:

- a) Are homeowners
- b) Currently have and use window covering products with corded operating systems in their home

The above 30 respondent total will be evenly split between 15 males and 15 females, and further divided and assigned to one of the following 3 groups:

- Group A: 10 men between the ages of 25 and 49
Are the male head of their household
Make or share the buying decision on major household purchases
Have at least one child under age 5 living in their home

- Group B: 10 women between the ages of 25 and 49
Are the female head of their household
Make or share the buying decision on major household purchases
Have at least one child under age 5 living in their home

- Group C: 5 women and 5 men age 62 and older
Are the male and or female head of their household
Make or share the buying decision on major household purchases
Have at least one grandchild or any other child under age 5 visiting their home regularly

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent No. of Respondents Participation Time Burden

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FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

Moderator's Instructions:

This guide will be used to steer discussion to the topic areas to be covered, and the specific questions of interest within each topic area. The moderator does not need to ask the questions exactly as worded here. Focus group discussions are more like a conversation than a set of structured questions. The discussion should be as informal as possible and participants should be encouraged to speak openly and freely. The moderator will also need to make sure that all participants in the group have an opportunity to express their opinions. Because each group of participants may be different, a responsive and flexible approach should be used for the focus group discussion.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hello my name is Bob Pietrzak, and I will be leading our discussion today. First let me thank you for your time and participation in this session. I work for The Motiv Design, a marketing research and product design firm which has been hired to talk with people like you about their use, experiences, and attitudes toward corded window covering products in their homes. Our session will last about 1.5 to 2 hours.

Let me assure you this is not a sales meeting of any kind. I don't have anything to sell you. There are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. I am interested only in your opinions, experiences and views. So we need you to tell us what you really think about what we will discuss and show you today. It is important that you share with us your honest opinions, and understand that we will not make any judgments of you for your opinions. Also, since we will be talking about your personal opinions, it is not important that you must agree with each other.

Guidelines:

To make this session work smoothly, there are some important guidelines to follow:

- 1. Please talk in a voice at least as loud as mine.*
- 2. There are no right or wrong answers – just what you think. Say what you believe.*
- 3. We will observe the no smoking rule during this session.*
- 4. Please silence your cell phones or pagers.*
- 5. As we move through the session, I may need to move to another area of the discussion sooner than you are ready. So I may have to interrupt you, but know that it's not personal; I just need to cover everything that's on the agenda.*

Disclosures:

1. *We will be video and audio taping this session. This is so that I can write an accurate report, not of who said what, but about what was said. Your name will not be used in the report. In the written report no one will be able to attribute anything that was said in this room today to a specific individual; your comments will be anonymous.*
2. *Mention other associates who may be sitting in the room listening to our discussion, or passing the discussion leader notes to suggest questions or clarifications.*

Permissions:

You may excuse yourself at any time to go to the restroom, or to get more food or beverages.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

II. RESPONDENT INTRODUCTIONS/WARM UP

Before we get started, I'd like to learn a little more about you. I'd like to go around the table and have each of you introduce yourself, and in making your introduction, please share with me and the group:

- *Your first name*
- *Where you live*
- *Are you married, single etc. and how many children live with you (older Group C how many grand kids do you have or children who visit you regularly)*
- *What type and size of house do you live in*
- *How long you've lived there*

III. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Experiences with corded window coverings in your home.

- a. *What types of window coverings and how many do you have in your home?*
- b. *Did you buy any of the window coverings in your home? If no, skip to 1.d.*
- c. *Why did you buy this particular type of window covering?*
- d. *Tell me about the corded mechanisms that you use to control them?*

- e. *Have you encountered any problems with your window coverings, or their corded controls? If you did, what are they?*
- f. *What things do you like about your window coverings, and the corded mechanisms you use to control them?*
- g. *Do you have any concerns about the cords? How about when young children are in your home?*
- h. *If you had no young children living or visiting in your home, would you feel the same, or differently?*
- i. *How happy or satisfied are you with your current window coverings?*
- j. *Are there any things you'd like to see changed with your window coverings and their corded controls?*

2. Experiences and evaluations of window covering products on display in the room.

1. *In the room along the wall behind you are a number of window covering products on display. I'd like to ask you to get up from your chairs and examine each one of the products. I'd like you to try it out just as you would in the store.*

- a) *Raise the covering, then lower the covering back down.*
- b) *Actually use the mechanism to adjust the amount of light, or darkness that you would like in the room.*
- c) *Then decide how you feel about the performance of each one of the products and control mechanisms, and assign it a rating using this 5 point rating scale:*

- 5 = Extremely satisfied*
- 4 = Satisfied*
- 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*
- 2 = Dissatisfied*
- 1 = Extremely dissatisfied*

I have provided you with a simple form for each product for you to fill in your ratings, and jot down any notes or comments about each one you might have.

- d) *Provide a rating for aesthetic appearance of the control mechanism using the same scale above.*

- e) *For each product rating, jot down why you gave it that rating.*
- f) *After you have examined, tested and rated each window covering product on display, bring your forms back to your chair; then sort through them and choose the one product you would select as your preferred choice. Then write down why this product was your preferred choice.*

3. Discussion of each one of the window covering products on display

- a) *Now that you have finished your evaluations and tested each window covering product and its control mechanisms, refer to your rating sheets and notes, and let's discuss your evaluations, ratings and feelings about each one.*
- b) *For your preferred choice product, please rate for me your level of interest in purchasing and using this product in your home.*
 - 5 = *Extremely likely*
 - 4 = *Likely*
 - 3 = *Neutral*
 - 2 = *Unlikely*
 - 1 = *Extremely unlikely*

4. Are there any other questions or comments about the products you examined and tested, which we haven't brought up.

END OF SESSION. THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK.

**END USER RESEARCH and USEABILITY TESTING ON CORDED WINDOW
COVERING PRODUCTS**

**Advertising or Direct Mail Recruitment Text To Be Used by Recruiter:
Cambridge Focus**

**To Help Locate and Identify Potential Focus Group Candidates
To Be Screened by Phone**

Cambridge Focus, a professional marketing research recruiting firm located in Maynard MA, is looking for participants to take part in a research study aimed at understanding consumers/users of window treatment products in their homes.

There is no special knowledge or ability required to participate. If you have and use window treatment products in your home, and are interested in taking part in the study, please contact us at:

CAMBRIDGE FOCUS
Two Clock Tower Place
Maynard MA 01754
(617) 494-0310
email: details@cambridgefocus.com

or click on the following link: (specific link to be developed)

1a. How many rooms in your home use window coverings which are “horizontal” or “vertical” blind types, and are operated with cords or loops?

- a) No full rooms; only 1 to 2 windows covered___ **(Thank and Terminate)**
- b) No full rooms; 3 or more windows covered_____
- c) One full room; more than 3 windows covered__
- d) Two full rooms _____
- e) Three or more rooms _____

2. What is your gender? Male_____ Female_____

2a. Are you the male/female head of your household?

Yes_____ No___ **(Thank and Terminate)**

2b. Would you be the one in your household who makes or shares in the decision to make major purchases for the household, such as window covering products?

Yes_____ No___ **(Thank and Terminate)**

3. Which of the following categories best describes your age?

- a. 18 to 24 _____ **(Thank and Terminate)**
- b. 25 to 34 _____ **(ask Q. 4 and 4a)**
- c. 35 to 40 _____ **(ask Q. 4 and 4a)**
- d. 41 to 49 _____ **(ask Q. 4 and 4a)**
- e. 50 to 61 _____ **(Thank and Terminate)**
- f. 62 to 69 _____ **(skip Q. 4, go to Q 5 and 5a)**
- g. 70 + _____ **(skip Q. 4, go to Q 5 and 5a)**

4. Do you have any children living with you who are under 8 years old ?

Yes_____ No_____ **(Thank and Terminate)**

4a. How many children in each of the following age groups currently live at home with you?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>How Many</u>
a. Age 5	_____	_____
b. Age 6	_____	_____
c. Age 7	_____	_____
d. Age 8	_____	_____
e. Between 2 and 4	_____	_____

8. For statistical purposes only, could you please tell me which of the following categories best represents your total family annual income?

- a. Less than \$25,000 _____
- b. Between \$25,000 and \$34,999 _____
- c. Between \$35,000 and \$49,999 _____
- d. Between \$50,000 and \$75,999 _____
- e. Between \$76,000 and \$100,000 _____
- f. Between \$101,000 and \$150,000 _____
- g. Over \$150,000 _____
- h. Prefer not to answer _____

NOTE TO RECRUITER: IF RESPONDENT QUALIFIES, ASK IF THEY WILL READ, SIGN AND RETURN TWO RELEASE FORMS DESCRIBED BELOW, BEFORE THE SESSIONS. IF YES, SCHEDULE FOR ONE OF THE GROUPS, A, B, OR C. IF NO, THANK AND TERMINATE.

9. As one of the session participation requirements, you will be sent a consent form before the session, which must be carefully read, understood, signed and returned to Cambridge Focus before being allowed to enter and participate in the session.

Will you agree to carefully read, understand, sign and return the above described form before the session?

Yes _____ No _____ (**Thank and Terminate**)

Respondent Name _____

Street Address _____

City/Town/State/ZIP Code _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Participant Recruited By: Name _____

Consent to Participate in a Focus Group

Title of the Project: End User Research and Usability Testing on Corded Window Covering Products

Researcher: The Motiv Design, LLC, under contract with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (“CPSC”)

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

The Motiv Design invites you to be part of a focus group to investigate the use of corded window covering products in the home. The study is funded by the CPSC.

Description of Your Involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to discuss your experiences with the use of window coverings. In addition there will be several types of window covering products set up on display in the interview room. You will be asked to approach each product, operate the lifting, lowering and light control mechanisms on each product and then rate their performance. We have placed video cameras in the room and you will be videotaped when you are working with the window coverings on display, as well as during the discussion. Reviewing these recordings will help us to better understand how people interact with these products. You will be asked to talk out loud to share your thought processes during your interactions with the window shades and blinds and related devices. We also will take notes during the focus groups. The entire session will last up to 120 minutes.

Benefits of Participation

Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because the findings of this study may be used to improve the safety of window shades and blinds.

Risks and Discomforts of Participation

We do not believe that there are any risks or discomforts from participating in this research.

Compensation for Participation

You will be given \$75 if you complete the entire focus group session. If you leave before the focus group ends, you will not be compensated. You will be expected to pay for your own transportation and parking.

Confidentiality

The results of this study may be published or made public. You will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

There are some reasons why people other than The Motiv Design researchers may need to see information that you provided as part of the study, including audio/visual recordings of your participation. This includes personnel at the CPSC, which is sponsoring the study.

To keep your information safe, your name will not be attached to any data, but a study number will be used instead.

Please be advised that although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. Please respect the privacy of your fellow participants and do not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer a question that you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data that you provided will be destroyed.

Audio/Visual Recording

Audio/visual recording will be done as part of the study procedures. Upon completion of the study, these recordings may be used for educational purposes in the classroom, in professional conferences and presentations, and for similar purposes.

You may not participate in this study if you are not willing to be recorded.

Please sign below if you are willing to be recorded.

Storage and Future Use of Data

The researchers will destroy any information containing identifying information about you within six months after completion of the study.

Audio/visual recordings will be archived for potential use for the purposes described above.

Contact Information for the Study Team

If you have any questions about this study, please contact

James McGee at The Motiv Design at (617) 263-2211 Extension 549.

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researchers, please call The Motiv Design at (617) 263-2211. Please leave a message with your full name and the name of the study, "End user Research and Usability Testing on Window Covering Products," and your phone number, beginning with the area code. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.

Consent

By signing below, you are agreeing to be in the study, and you are giving permission to be recorded. You will be given a copy of this document for your records, and one copy will be kept with the study records.

Be sure that any questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in the study.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

I agree to be audio/video recorded.

Yes

No

Printed Name

Signature

Date