

Creative Testing Focus Group Discussion Guide

GUIDELINES & INTRODUCTIONS (5 MIN)

Guidelines

Thank you for speaking with me today. My name is _____, and I work for a private research company.

Before we begin, I want to go over a couple of things:

- We've asked you here because we want to know what you think and feel about the topics we're about to discuss. There are no wrong answers. Our whole purpose for being here is to hear what you think, so please speak up, especially if what you have to say is different than what someone else is saying. You may represent what a lot of other folks think.
- Later in the group, we're going to look at some materials that could eventually become ads that I'd like to get your feedback on. These "ads" have not been produced yet and are missing key elements—they currently look like a draft of an ad you might see in a magazine.
- As we're going through these, one important thing I want to point out—I did not create any of the materials that we'll be reviewing today. If you like them or if you don't like them, please say so. Your responses won't affect me either way. Like I mentioned earlier, my whole reason for being here is to learn what you think, not to try and sway you.
- There may be times I ask you to clarify or ask you to tell more about what you just said. This is simply to make sure I understood and accurately capture what you think, not because I'm challenging your point of view.
- Your participation is voluntary. If I ask any questions you do not wish to answer, you do not have to answer them. I do want to hear from everyone though, so I might call on you at some point.
- Everything you share here is confidential. Nothing you say will be tied back to you. Your name and any identifying information will not be used in any of our reports.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0990-0459. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, to review

- There are some other people listening in who are helping me take notes so that I can fully focus on our conversation and be respectful of your time. At the end of the group, they might have a couple clarifying questions for us.
- I'll be recording our conversation. The recordings will be used to confirm our notes. Other project staff may hear the recording at a later date. I love a lively discussion, but I ask that you speak one at a time—although I understand it can be difficult, especially online. I simply want to make sure I hear everything that everyone says. I want this to be a free-flowing discussion, but if there's background noise where you are, please mute your mic. I am going to start the recording now.
- Our discussion should take no more than 90 minutes. Coming out of the focus group, we have additional information and resources available. I appreciate the time that you carved out to be here, and I want to be respectful of that, so I may interrupt us so that we stay on track.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductions/Ice Breaker

I'd like to start by getting to know each of you a bit better. So, I'm going to have everyone go around and share their first name or name you prefer to be called, where in the country you are, and something you enjoy doing.

I can go ahead and get us started.

- **[MODERATOR INTRODUCES SELF AND THEN HAS EACH PARTICIPANT INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AND RESPOND TO ICEBREAKER.]**
 - o **[MODERATOR TO PROBE AS NEEDED TO GET PARTICIPANTS COMFORTABLE AND TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT/ENSURE PARTICIPANTS' VOLUME IS AT THE RIGHT LEVEL.]**

COVID-19 & VACCINE TOP-OF-MIND REACTIONS (20 MIN)

Thank you—I look forward to getting to know you better over the course of the conversation.

- To start off, I'd like for each of you to fill in the blank in the following sentence for me. I feel _____ about the coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic. **[MODERATOR: LISTEN FOR USE OF CORONAVIRUS VS. COVID/COVID-19.]**
 - o Tell me a bit—and to the extent to which you're comfortable and want to share—more about what specifically is causing you to feel this way.
 - To what extent has the pandemic impacted you?

- In what ways has the pandemic affected you and your life?
 - What are you doing—or not doing—now that's different from a year ago?
 - o What, if anything, do you think is going well or being done right?
 - And who's leading those efforts?
 - o What do you think could be done differently or done better?
 - And who would you like to see lead those efforts?
 - o To the extent you feel comfortable sharing, what have been the most challenging aspects of the pandemic to deal with for you personally?
 - What would help make these easier?
 - How has the pandemic impacted your family?
 - How has the pandemic impacted your community?
 - What kind of support would you like to receive?
 - o What are you looking forward to most once the pandemic is behind us?
 - Why that? What about that is important to reclaim or get back to?
- **[MODERATOR: SHARE SCREEN.]** For the rest of our discussion, we're going to focus more on vaccines. You're going to see two sentences on the screen—can everyone see this? I want you to fill in the blanks again. When there is a COVID-19 vaccine available to me, the first thing I'll do _____, and that will make me feel _____.
- o So, let's dig into this more. For those who had a positive feeling for the second blank, what does having a vaccine mean to you?
 - What would it allow you to do, do differently, or do better?
 - o For those more on the fence or not feeling as positive, same question, what does having a vaccine mean to you?
 - What about the vaccine gives you cause for pause?
 - What, if anything, would help you feel more positive?
- **[WHITEBOARD, LIST.]** Let's pretend for a moment that the ideal COVID-19 vaccine has been developed. What words or phrases would describe this ideal vaccine?
 - o **[PROBE ON WORDS LIKE SAFE, TESTED, NO SIDE EFFECTS, EFFECTIVE.]** And when you say **[INSERT WORD]**, what do you mean by that? What would show that the vaccine is **[INSERT WORD]**?
 - o What makes it important to be able to describe a vaccine using these words?
 - o Which of these words or phrases would be you more likely to receive the vaccine once it is available?

- What about that makes the vaccine more appealing?
 - o When an actual vaccine is available, which of these words and phrases do you think will **actually** describe it?
 - What makes you think it'll be more likely that these words or phrases will describe the actual vaccine?
 - o When a vaccine is available, which of these words and phrases do you think will be **less likely to describe it**?
 - What makes you think that it will be less likely that these words and phrases will describe the actual vaccine?
- When a vaccine is available, how likely are you to get it? Write down yes, no, or not sure on that scrap paper we asked you to have.
 - o **[HAND COUNT.]** Who said yes, when a vaccine is available, they are likely to get it? Please raise your hand. Who said no? And who said they are not sure.
 - o What about your kids, parents, or other family members?
 - o What sorts of things encourage or motivate you to go get vaccinated?
 - What information is lacking or would be helpful to know?
 - o What would make it easier to get vaccinated?
 - o What, if anything, would motivate you to encourage others to get vaccinated?
 - o What sorts of things make it harder to get vaccinated?
 - o What, if any, concerns do you have about getting the vaccine once it is available?
- What about the COVID-19 vaccine is similar to—or the same as—any other vaccines that you're aware of?
 - o Is the COVID-19 vaccine the same or similar to any other vaccine you know? How?
 - o Is this similarity a good thing or bad thing?
 - How so?
 - What are the vaccines you're thinking about and comparing this to?
- What about the COVID-19 vaccine is different from other vaccines?
 - o Is this difference a good thing, or not really?
 - How so?

- Who do you trust to give you straight answers about the COVID-19 vaccine?

VACCINE READINESS MESSAGING (25 MIN, ~4 MINUTES FOR EACH)

Now, we're going to look at some messages that could be integrated into an ad like the ones you saw. **[MODERATOR TO SHOW FIVE MESSAGES, ONE PER THEME, ONE AT A TIME.]** If we were together in person, I'd give you a handout with the messages on it, and ask you to circle words and phrases that you like, cross out what you dislike, and put a question mark next to anything you find confusing or unclear. I'm going to have you pull out the piece of scrap paper and pen we asked you to have available, and jot down what you like, dislike, or find confusing. Keep these instructions in mind as we go through each of these, and I'll collect this feedback when we discuss.

[FOR EACH.]

- What is it trying to say?
 - o What words would you have circled—which did you like?
 - o What words would you have crossed out—which didn't you like?
 - o What words or phrases are confusing or could be clearer?
- What was your immediate reaction after reading this?
- How did this make you feel? What emotions does it bring up?
- How important, if at all, is it to send a message like this right now?
 - o Tell me more about that. Why do you think it is/is not an important message to send right now?
 - o How believable is this?
- How convincing is this as a reason to you personally to get a COVID-19 vaccine once it is available?
 - o What would you change to make it better?
- What might the next sentence of this message be to make it stronger?
 - o What sorts of additional information does a message like this need?
 - **[PROBE ON FACTS, STATISTICS, PROOF POINTS, VALIDATORS.]**

VACCINE READINESS AD TESTING (20 MIN, ~6-7 MINUTES PER AD, THREE ADS)

Next, we're going to look at some of the ads I mentioned to you at the beginning. Before the focus group today, you each had a bit of homework to make sure the technology works, and this next part goes smoothly. I'm going to post a link in the chat. I want you to each click that link, which will open a new window that will display the first of the ads to you. Look it over, and there will be a couple questions, I'd like you to answer in that separate window. Once you've finished please minimize that window—do not close out and do not hit next—and wave to me so I know you've finished. **[PLEASE NOTE: THREE ADLOBS WILL BE SHOWN PER GROUP.]**

Okay, now I'd like to discuss what you just saw. I'm going to bring up a copy on my screen. Before we dive into the discussion, I just want to confirm that this is what everyone just saw? Great.

- What was the main message of this ad—what is it trying to tell you?
 - o Is it doing a good job of getting that point across?
 - What's helping get that point across?
 - What's hurting it?
 - o How could it be better or clearer?
- What was your initial reaction to and thoughts on this ad?
 - o **[PROBE AS NECESSARY.]** Tell me more about that. What makes you say that?
 - o What did you like?
 - o What didn't you like?
 - **[PROBE.]** Tell me more about that.
 - o How believable is this?
- How did you feel looking at this?
 - o What's the tone or mood of the ad?
 - How can you tell?
 - o Is that the right tone to be setting for a message like this?
 - Why or why not?

- o What words or phrases jumped out to you?
 - Do they stick out in a good way or a bad way?
- o What, if any, words or phrases would you get rid of?
 - Why aren't those useful to have here?
- Who is this ad geared to?
 - o How can you tell?
 - o Does it do a good job of connecting with this group?
 - What would help it connect?
 - What suggestions do you have to help it connect?
- What, if anything, about this ad grabs your attention?
 - o What do you like or dislike about the look or design?
 - o How could it be better?
- **[TAGLINE]** I want to focus your attention on the text at the bottom of the page specifically now. **[MODERATOR READS ALOUD.]** I'll read it aloud as you follow along and read it to yourself. **[READ.]** What does this line mean to you?
 - o What's the mental picture that you see when you read this line?
 - To what extent does the imagery and design align with this line and help bring this line to life?
 - How, if at all, do the look, feel, and design of the ad work with this line?
 - o Does this line reinforce the main message you noted, or does it take things in a different direction?
 - Tell me more about that.
 - o Here are a couple alternatives that could appear on this ad instead.
 - Which of these do you like best?
 - What about it do you like?
 - What about it don't you like or could be better?
- Now, you're going to bring up that window I had you minimize earlier and click next. **[MODERATOR TO REPEAT THE QUESTIONS ABOVE FOR NEXT TWO ADS.]**

VACCINE READINESS AD COMPARISON (5 MIN)

Thank you. I'd like you to think about all of the ads we have discussed today.

- Sometimes over the course of a conversation, folks change their minds. Just like an activity we did earlier, when a vaccine is available, how likely are you to get it? Write down yes, no, or not sure on that scrap paper we asked you to have.
- **[HAND COUNT.]** Who said yes, when a vaccine is available, they are likely to get it? Please raise your hand. Who said no? And who said they are not sure?
 - o For those who said yes, what is the most convincing reason to get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available?
 - What about that is more compelling than any other rationale or argument?
 - o For those who said no or not sure, what, if anything, would you need to know in order to convince you to get a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available?
- Thinking about all three of the ads we just discussed, which one stood out the most?
 - o What makes it stand out?
 - o Does it stand out in a good way or a bad way?
- Which most motivates you to get vaccinated once a COVID-19 vaccine is available?
 - o What are some of the other ways or reasons why the others fall short?
 - o **[MODERATOR: KEEP THIS DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON COMPARISONS, AND NOT A REPETITION OF THE CONTENT/INFO ALREADY SHARED, ESPECIALLY FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT THEY LIKED/DIDN'T LIKE.]**
- All of the ads mentioned a website. What information would you want available at that website?

VACCINE CLINICAL TRIAL TESTING (10 MIN)

Before I let you go, I have a few last things to show you, that I'd like to get your feedback on. I'm going to pull these up on my screen rather than have you click on a link. Here's the first of them. **[MODERATOR TO RE-ASK THESE QUESTIONS FOR EACH.]**

- What is the main message of this ad?
 - o What is it trying to get you to do?

- o Is this message compelling to you?
 - How, if at all, does it make you think differently about participating in something like this?
 - What, if any, reservations do you have that you would want to have addressed?
- What is your initial reaction to this ad?
 - o What do you like?
 - o What didn't you like?
 - **[PROBE.]** Tell me more about that.
 - o How believable is this?

Now that you've seen all of them, I have a final few questions about just these three.

- Thinking about all three of the ads we just discussed, which one stood out the most?
 - o What makes it stand out?
 - o Does it stand out in a good way or a bad way?
- Which one makes you think differently about the importance participating in clinical trials more so than others?
 - o What are some of the other ways or reasons why the others fall short?
 - o **[MODERATOR: KEEP THIS DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON COMPARISONS, AND NOT A REPETITION OF THE CONTENT/INFO ALREADY SHARED, ESPECIALLY FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT THEY LIKED/DIDN'T LIKE.]**
- Before we dig in more, what is a clinical trial? What happens during one?
- Why is it important for **[INSERT GROUP]** to participate in the COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials?
- How likely are you to ever consider participating in a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial?
 - o What, if any, concerns do you have?
 - o What, if anything, would help alleviate those concerns?

- Who does a message like this need to come from for you to consider participating in a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial?

WRAP-UP (5 MIN)

- Those are all the questions I have for you. I just want to check to see if any of my colleagues have any final questions.
- Is there anything you would like to share that you have not had the chance to before we wrap up?
- Thank you very much for participating in this discussion. I appreciate your time, and your feedback has been extremely helpful. Please remember not to share anything we've discussed here today.
