

AIES Communications Research

Moderated Interview Protocol

Introduction

If respondent has not yet signed the consent form: I sent you a consent form in an email today – could you please review and sign that now before we get started?

Thank you so much for agreeing to talk with me today!

I am part of a research group within the Census Bureau that provides feedback to other parts of the Bureau about ways to improve the overall experience. I'm talking with you today to evaluate some of our communications about one of our surveys.

Remember, my job is to improve the survey experience. Please be candid and frank in your responses. Our interview is being conducted under the authority of Title 13, which means that your responses are confidential, and your name and any identifying information about your company will be included in any of our findings.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

I'd like to record our session today so that when I go to analyze the results of these interviews, I can use the recording to pick up on anything I may have missed in my notes. Do I have your permission to record our session today?

Background Information

- Tell me a little bit about your business. What types of goods or services does this business provide?
- What is your role in the company?
 - How long have you been in this role?

Routing of survey requests

- What is your role in responding to Census Bureau surveys for this company?

- Do you complete the surveys on your own, or do you work with or delegate this to colleagues? Do you involve others outside your company, such as an accountant?
- Please tell me how you receive survey requests and communications. Do they come directly to you, or to someone else?
 - o If requests go to someone else, how do survey requests usually get to you?
 - How long does that process usually take?
- Do you tend to receive emails, letters via mail, or both? Do you prefer email or letters, or does it not make a difference?
- Does your company generally respond to all survey requests? If not, how do you decide which surveys to respond to?

Name of Survey

During this meeting we will be talking about the AIES. AIES stands for Annual Integrated Economic Survey. We are considering calling it a report or filing instead of a survey.

- Do you think that survey, report, and filing mean the same thing? Or do you think that they mean different things?
 - o In your own words, can you tell me what you think is meant by:
 - Survey?
 - Report?
 - Filing?
- Which of these terms sound the most official: survey, report, or filing? Or does it not make a difference?
- Do any of the terms do a better job implying that the AIES is mandatory, or does it not make a difference?

Reactions to emails

Now I'm going to show you the current emails we use to ask companies to participate in the AIES. I'm going to have you read the email, and click on parts that stand out most to you.

First, I'd like to do a quick test round. Can you please click on the smiley face?

Initial Email

- What stands out to you in this email? Please click on what stands out the most.
- What piece of information in this email do you think is the most important?
- In your own words, what is this email asking you to do?
- [IF NEEDED] Did you notice the due date for the survey?
- What do you think of where the due date is placed? Is it noticeable, or would you prefer the due date to be placed somewhere else?
- Is there anything in this email that is confusing, or does not make sense?
- Is there any information that you think is missing from this email that would be important in supporting your response to the AIES?
- [IF NEEDED] Is it clear that the AIES is mandatory?

Reminder Email

- What stands out to you in this email? Please click on what stands out the most.
- What piece of information in this email do you think is the most important?
- In your own words, what is this email saying?
- [IF NEEDED] Did you notice that it says you can request an extension?
 - In your own words, can you tell me what you think that means?
 - How long would you expect the extension to be?
- Is there anything in this email that is confusing, or does not make sense?
- Is there any information that you think is missing from this email that would be important in supporting your response to the AIES?
- [IF NEEDED] Is it clear that the AIES is mandatory?

Nudge Email

- What stands out to you in this email? Please click on what stands out the most.
- What piece of information in this email do you think is the most important?
- In your own words, what is this email saying?
- [IF NEEDED] Did you notice that it says you can request an extension?
 - In your own words, can you tell me what you think that means?
 - How long would you expect the extension to be?
- Is there anything in this email that is confusing, or does not make sense?
- Is there any information that you think is missing from this email that would be important in supporting your response to the AIES?
- [IF NEEDED] Is it clear that the AIES is mandatory?

Final Email

- What stands out to you in this email? Please click on what stands out the most.
- What piece of information in this email do you think is the most important?
- In your own words, what is this email saying?
- Is there anything in this email that is confusing, or does not make sense?
- Is there any information that you think is missing from this email that would be important in supporting your response to the AIES?
- [IF NEEDED] Is it clear that the AIES is mandatory?

Motivation to complete AIES

- What would motivate you to complete the AIES?
- Is there any information we could include in the AIES emails that would help motivate you to complete the survey?
- Do you have any concerns about completing the AIES? Tell me more about that.
 - [If yes] What information would you need to help alleviate those concerns?

- Do you personally use business or economic statistics as part of your job? To your knowledge, does someone else in your company use them?
- Does knowing that the Census Bureau has these statistics for you and your company affect your interest in responding to Census Bureau Surveys?

Confidentiality and Data Security

[If participant does not mention confidentiality or data security during the interview, probe about it.]

- Do you have any concerns about the confidentiality and security of your data? If yes, what concerns do you have?
- Do you feel that the e-mails sufficiently addressed your concerns of confidentiality and data security? If not, what information would you like to see in the e-mails about confidentiality and data security?
- If you had additional questions about the Census Bureau's confidentiality and/or data security, how or where do you think you could find this information?

Example data visualizations

Here are some examples of data visualizations that I would like you to look at. These are not from the AIES because those data are not ready, but we wanted to include examples of potential data visualizations that could be included in the AIES communications. We would only include one visualization per email.

- What do you think of when you look at these data visualizations? Please just give me your first impression.
- What do you think is the main message these visualizations are trying to convey?
 - How do you feel about this message? Is it important or meaningful to you?
- Would any of these visualizations help motivate you to complete the AIES?
- Which visualization do you find the most engaging?
- Are there any data visualizations that you especially like? Or dislike?
- Is there anything in any of these data visualizations that is confusing, or does not make sense?

- If you saw one of these visualizations as part of an email, would you expect the visualization to be clickable, and link to a website?
 - o IF YES: Would you click the image?
 - o What would you expect to see on the website?
- Are there other types of data visualizations you would prefer to see?

Moving to email only

- We are considering removing postal mail contacts for the AIES and moving to email only. How do you feel about that?
- Do you think you would be more likely to receive email messages about the AIES, less likely, or would it not make a difference?
- We are concerned that some respondents may not realize that our emails are legitimate requests from the Census Bureau. How do you decide whether an email is legitimate?
 - o What email characteristics make you think that the email is likely legitimate?
 - o What email characteristics make you think that the email is likely a scam?
- How often would you like to receive reminder emails for the survey?

Conclusion

- Are there other ways that the Census Bureau could make it easier for you to answer their surveys?
- Are there other ways that the Census Bureau could help you feel more motivated to respond?
- Is there anything else you wanted to share with me?

Thanks so much for your time today!