

Introduction To Focus Groups

Innovation Engine Program
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Ed Burghard

eburghard@me.com



- ❑ BA – State University of New York @ Potsdam in **Mathematics**
- ❑ MBA – Syracuse University in **Innovation Management and Marketing**
- ❑ Retired Marketing Director P&G Pharmaceuticals
- ❑ Retired Executive Director, Ohio Business Development Coalition
- ❑ **CEO and Manager, The Burghard Group LLC**
- ❑ 33 years brand building experience in P&G, lifetime appointment as a Harley Procter Marketer
- ❑ Member of the Association of Ohio Commodores
- ❑ Founding Board member, Nemaclin Energy Institute
- ❑ Nonresident Fellow, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University

A Focus Group Is ...

- A carefully planned discussion to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest.
- Typically conducted by a trained professional.
- Considered qualitative rather than quantitative.
- Intended to inform decisions/actions.
- Generally groups are comprised of typically 4 – 12 people

Role of Focus Groups

- To determine feelings, perceptions and how people think about a product, service, program or positioning concept.
- To better understand the language used by your target customer to describe their problem/need.
- To better understand your target customer purchase decision process.
- Generate information to use in the design of a quantitative research study.

Planning a Focus Group

- Determine the purpose – write it down!
- Define the target customer audience.
- Write a protocol (procedure) for the moderator to follow and the questions to ask.
- Establish a budget.
- Figure out how many focus groups to hold (minimum 3 is the rule of thumb).
- Decide if you want to hire a professional moderator.

Typical Focus Group Structure

- 1 – 2 hours
- Moderator led
- Open ended questions
- Moderator makes certain all players participate
- Team observes and takes notes behind 1-way glass
- Team debriefs and summarizes learning
- Sometimes focus groups are taped

Focus Group Limitations

- Small sample and not projectable.
- Group dynamics can skew results.
- Interpretation is subjective, important key stakeholders are part of the observation team.

Focus Group Cost

	Low	Medium	High
Facility	\$700	\$800	\$1,000
Recruiting	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$1,800
Incentives	\$600	\$900	\$3,000
Moderator Services	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
Totals	\$4,000	\$5,200	\$8,300

Source: Jeffandersonconsulting.com

My Personal Advice

All research is an aid to judgment. It is intended to reduce the risk of making a bad decision. But, research does not relieve you of the responsibility for making a decision.

Resources

- <http://www.greenbook.org/focus-group-facilities.cfm//Ohio>
- <http://www.cse.lehigh.edu/~glennb/mm/FocusGroups.htm>
- <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/cepublications/wrep0128/wrep0128.html>