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# focus groups

Focus groups can provide an extremely valuable means for performing market research.  
  
A focus group is essentially a small group interview with between six and ten participants *from outside your organization* and a moderator. The moderator (facilitator) is someone from your program who is responsible for leading the session and asking questions of the participants. You will need to determine which member of your marketing team might be best suited to serve the role of moderator.  
  
Effective focus group management requires four important steps:

1. Preparation
2. Planning
3. Activating (implementation)
4. Evaluating

In this activity, the marketing team will develop a plan for conducting a successful focus group using the worksheets below to guide you. Remember, like any other market research performed by the marketing team, all results and data should be shared with each and every other team within your program. Clear communication is an important characteristic shared by any and all successful organizations.

**Step 1: Preparing for Session**

What is the primary objective of this focus group?

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What information do you hope to gather? What questions will you ask?

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How will that information be used?

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Who will the participants be? How will you contact them? Will gaining participation require some incentive such as free lunch or a ticket to a game?

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**Step 2: Planning your Session**

Schedule the session – plan for one half hour or one full hour

Session Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Team Assignments:

* Room setup / cleanup
* Recorder
* Moderator
* Question writers
* Agenda creator

Which group member will be responsible for downloading a recording app on their phone or tracking down another recording device? Who will be responsible for doing the recording? Your moderator must be sure to encourage equal participation from all participants and those responsible for recording should test the equipment in advance to make sure they know how it operates and that the recording is clear and audible.

Team member name (finding the device): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Team member name (recording): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Who will be the moderator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Who will write the questions (it is generally a best practice to have all team members contribute)?

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What questions will you ask (identify five to ten questions below)?

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Invite attendees (list the names of six to ten focus group participants below):

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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Who will create the agenda for your focus group? The team member(s) responsible should write down the agenda in the space below. Refer to the graphic below as a guide.

Graphical user interface, application

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**FOCUS GROUP AGENDA:**

Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Action: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Action: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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In the space below, describe the room preparation – food, beverages etc. (you want participants to be comfortable) – and assign a team member (or members) for room setup and clean up.

Team Member(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Step 3: Activate**

* The moderator (facilitator) should introduce themselves
* Make sure everyone is comfortable and seated before beginning
* Communicate the goals for the session and make sure everyone knows the session is being recorded
* Follow agenda – ask questions and record answers while encouraging equal participation
* Close the session, making sure to thank all participants

**Step 4: Evaluate:**

* Verify that the session was recorded
* Review and clarify any additional notes that were taken
* Make note of any additional observations
* Was the session effective? Did you get the information you had hoped to get?
* Communicate the results of the session to the rest of the members of your program and discuss
* Determine whether an additional session(s) will be necessary