An introduction to... Focus Group Interviews

What is a Focus Group Interview (FGI)?
- Group Discussion for 1-2 hours
- Trained Moderator
- Pre-determined Questioning Route
- Formal Analysis
- Determine: Patterns/ Trends that develop among participants/ across groups

Advantages of FGIs
- Fast and relatively cheap
- Great for generating hypotheses
- Drastically reduces distance between respondent and stake-holder
- Flexibility
- Ability to handle contingencies
- Respondents stimulate each other
- Findings easily understood

Disadvantages of FGIs
- Very easily misused
- FGIs are not intended to obtain numbers that represent a population
- Groups vary considerable; Many FGIs may be needed
- Sometimes results can be “wrong”

Steps in Conducting FGIs:
1. Consider your purpose: Put in writing
2. Consider the information users: Know what they want
3. Develop a tentative plan: Chronological and Fiscal

Steps in Conducting FGIs:
4. Identify the questions:
   - Highlight the key questions
   - Establish the context
   - Arrange in logical sequence
   - Begin with unstructured questions
   - “Focus” the Questioning Route
Steps in Conducting FGIs:
5. The Art of Moderating:
   • Moderators are physically alert
   • Small talk before FGI helps
   • "Dominant" versus "Shy" participants
   • Location easy to find, neutral
   • Usually tables and chairs
   • Moderator takes minimal notes

Two Essential Moderator Techniques
1. FIVE SECOND PAUSE
2. PROBE

Steps in Conducting FGIs:
5. The Art of Moderating (continued):
   • Record in two ways: Audio record and written notes (quotes) by Assistant Moderator
   • Moderator must set the tone
   • The first question is designed to engage all participants

Steps in Conducting FGIs:
6. Identify the audience:
   • Develop recruitment strategy
   • Existing groups are not the best
   • Systematic Notification Procedures
   • Incentives
   • Six to nine participants per group

Steps in Conducting FGIs:
7. Conducting the Focus Group:
   • Continue conducting groups until little new information is provided
   • Check recording immediately after the session
   • De-brief
   • IRB

Steps in Conducting FGIs:
8. Analyzing the results consists of four distinct levels:
   1. FINDINGS
   2. INTERPRETATIONS
   3. JUDGEMENTS
   4. RECOMMENDATIONS
Steps in Conducting FGI's:

9. Reporting the Results:
   - Consider your audience
   - Focus on the most important results
   - Attempt to present both written and oral reports

Questions?
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