FOCUS GROUPS

3rd Edition
A Practical Guide for Applied Research

Richard A. Krueger & Mary Anne Casey

Sage Publications, Inc.
Thousand Oaks, CA
2000

(215 pages)
The book considered “the standard” for learning how to conduct a focus group has been completely revised and given a new look that includes playful illustrations and more “how-tos” than ever before. New to this edition are:

- **New Chapter 8** that compares and contrasts four different approaches (market research, academic, nonprofit, and participatory) to focus group research
- **Expanded description** of how to plan focus group studies and do the analysis, including step-by-step procedures
- **Examples of questions** that ask participants to do more than just discuss
- **Suggestions** on how to answer questions about your focus group research
# CONTENTS

1. Overview of Focus Groups
   Description of:
   - Who the focus group is
   - The story behind focus group interviews
   - Why focus groups work
   - Characteristics of focus groups
   - The uses of focus groups (e.g., decision making, customer satisfaction)

2. Planning the Focus Group Study
   Description of:
   - Determining the purpose
   - Deciding if focus group interviewing is the right method
   - Identifying information-rich participants
   - Determining how many groups to conduct
   - Balancing the design with the resources available
   - Design options (e.g., single-category, multiple-category)
   - Listening to your target audience
   - Developing a written plan

3. Developing a Questioning Route
   Description of:
   - Qualities of good questions (e.g., are clear, sound conversational)
   - Qualities of a good questioning route (e.g., is sequenced, uses the time available wisely)
   - Categories of questions (e.g., opening questions, key questions)
   - Questions that engage participants (e.g., listing things, drawing a picture)
   - The process we use to develop a questioning route (e.g., brainstorming, phrasing the questions)
   - Changing questions

4. Participants in a Focus Group
   Description of:
   - Purpose driving the study
   - Composition of the group
   - Size of a focus group
   - Strategies for finding participants (e.g., the list, on location)
   - Strategies for selecting participants (e.g., beware of bias, balance cost and quality)
   - Sampling procedures for focus groups
   - Getting people to attend focus groups (e.g., set the meeting dates, times, and locations)
   - Incentives to participate
5. Moderating Skills
Description of:
What’s needed when planning
What’s needed just before the group (e.g., mental preparation, snacks and meals)
What’s needed during the group (e.g., anticipating the flow of the discussion, head nodding)
Responding to participants’ questions (e.g., questions after the introduction, questions during the focus group)
Be ready for the unexpected (e.g., nobody shows up, participants bring children)

Practice Hints:
Checklist for focus group interviews
Responsibilities of assistant moderators
Tips on using money as an incentive

6. Analyzing Focus Group Results
Description of:
The purpose drives analysis
Understanding analysis (e.g., analysis is verifiable, analysis is a continuing process)
What gets used as the basis for analysis (e.g., transcript based, note based)
Analysis strategies (e.g., long-table approach, rapid approach)
Some tips to consider (e.g., being there is best, leave the numbers out)

Practice Hints:
Transcribing focus groups

7. Reporting
Description of:
Five principles of reporting (e.g., provide enlightenment, use multiple reporting strategies)
Written reports (e.g., study popular writing, find what helps you write)
Types of written reports (e.g., narrative report, bulleted report)
Oral reports (e.g., limit your points, allow time for questions)
Electronic reporting

8. Styles of Focus Group Research
Description of:
Market research, academic research, public/nonprofit, and participatory approaches
9. Adapting Focus Groups to Audiences and Environments  
   Description of:  
   Focus groups with existing groups and organizations, with young people, 
   with ethnic or minority racial groups, and with international groups and 
   organizations

10. Modifications of Focus Groups  
   Description of:  
   Periodically repeated focus groups  
   Two moderators  
   Telephone, internet, and media focus groups  
   Issues when adapting focus groups

11. Answering Questions About the Quality of Focus Group Research  
   Description of:  
   Common questions (e.g., is this scientific research, can you generalize)

References
Index
About the Authors