# **FOCUS GROUPS**

3<sup>rd</sup> 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

(Book Cover)

#### **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

#### **Practice Hints:**

Telephone screening questionnaire

Follow-up recruitment letter

#### 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