



FOCUS GROUPS

PLANNING GUIDE

Employee focus groups are a type of qualitative research method that involves gathering a small group of employees together to discuss a specific topic. Focus groups are often used to understand employee engagement levels and to identify areas for improvement.

Running focus groups with teams within your organisation is a proactive approach to engaging employees, gathering insights, and addressing various aspects of organisational management. It helps drive a culture of open communication, collaboration, and continuous improvement, ultimately contributing to the success of business initiatives.

Having run a number of these sessions over the years, we have seen first-hand the benefits of listening to the Employee Voice and so have put together this guidance to support you in setting up your own focus groups - helping you understand your people and drive positive change within your organisation.

PRE-FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITIES

Objective

Clearly define the purpose and goals of the focus group. What specific information or insights are you seeking to gather? Develop clear questions.

Participant Recruitment

Identify the target audience for the focus group. Create a list of potential participants and ensure diversity in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

Participant Selection

Select participants based on the criteria established during recruitment. Send invitations with session details, including date, time, location (virtual or physical), and duration. Send reminders a few days before the session is due to begin.

Facilitator(s)

Assign one or more skilled facilitators to lead the focus group. Ensure they have experience in moderating discussions and are knowledgeable about the topic.

Discussion Guide

Develop a structured discussion guide that includes open-ended questions and prompts. The guide should cover key topics related to the research objectives. Sample sections include:

- Introduction: Warm-up questions to build rapport. Ground rules. Set the Agenda.
- Main Questions: Address the core research objectives.
- Probing: Follow-up questions to delve deeper.
- Closing: Final thoughts and feedback.

Logistics

Ensure all logistical details are in place:

- Arrange the venue or virtual meeting platform
- Prepare any necessary materials, such as notepads, pens, or digital tools.
- Arrange for audio/video recording with participants' consent.
- Set up refreshments or snacks if applicable.

Session Agenda

Outline the flow of the focus group session:

Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome participants.
- Explain the purpose and rules (e.g., respect, confidentiality).
- Introduce facilitator(s).

Icebreaker Activity (10 minutes)

- A brief activity to help participants feel comfortable and engage with one another.

Main Discussion (30-45 minutes)

- Follow the discussion guide.
- Encourage all participants to share their opinions.
- Ensure a balance of speaking time among participants.
- Use probing questions to explore topics in depth.

Wrap-up and Feedback (10 minutes)

- Summarise key points discussed.
- Invite additional comments or insights.
- Thank participants for their participation.

Facilitation Techniques

Facilitators should be skilled in:

- Active listening.
- Neutral and unbiased moderation.
- Managing group dynamics.
- Encouraging quieter participants.
- Redirecting off-topic discussions.

Recording and Note-Taking

Assign someone to take detailed notes during the focus group. If possible, record audio or video with participants' consent for later reference.

Analysis and Reporting

After the focus group, analyse the data collected. Identify common themes, trends, and insights. Prepare a report summarising findings, which can inform decision-making.

Follow-up

Consider sending a summary of the findings to participants as a token of appreciation for their time and insights. If necessary, schedule follow-up focus groups or individual interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Ensure that ethical guidelines are followed, including informed consent, participant confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the session.

Budget

Create a budget for focus group expenses, including participant incentives, facilitator fees, and logistical costs.

Timeline

Establish a timeline that includes all planning, recruitment, and session dates. Stick to the schedule to ensure timely data collection and analysis.

Running effective focus groups is a valuable research method for gathering qualitative data and insights. Proper planning, facilitation, and analysis are key to achieving successful outcomes. Please adjust the template to suit the specific needs and goals of your focus group research.

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At Corvus People, our consultants are ready to support you at any stage of your employee lifecycle. From recruitment and onboarding right through to ongoing development and succession planning - we can help you build engaged, motivated, and retained teams.

Our experts can deliver strategic initiatives on your behalf or support and develop your teams to carry out effective people processes.

For more information on our services or a free consultation with one of our advisors, contact us at hello@corvuspeople.com.



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