

Focus Group Moderator Checklist

Purpose

This checklist will help moderators stay organized and ensure that the focus group discussion runs smoothly, remains on track, and produces valuable insights.

1 Before the session

☐ Review the research objectives

Understand the purpose of the focus group and key insights you need to gather.

☐ Prepare the discussion guide

Familiarize yourself with the questions and follow-up prompts. Be ready to adapt the guide if necessary.

☐ Test equipment

Check the recording devices (audio/video) to ensure they're working properly. Test microphones, cameras, and any online platforms (e.g., Zoom).

☐ Set the room

Ensure the room is comfortable, quiet, and free of distractions. If it's an online session, ensure all participants have access to the correct link and understand how to use the platform.

☐ Review participants profiles

Understand the demographics and background of your participants to tailor your approach.

☐ Prepare icebreakers

Plan a few icebreaker questions to help participants feel comfortable at the start.

2 During the session

☐ Welcome participants

Introduce yourself, explain the purpose of the focus group, and go over the ground rules (e.g., one speaker at a time, respect for all opinions).

☐ **Create a comfortable environment**

Ensure participants feel at ease. Encourage openness and make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

☐ **Manage group dynamics**

Keep the discussion balanced by drawing out quieter participants and gently steering dominant participants to allow others to speak.

☐ **Stay neutral and objective**

As the moderator, avoid expressing personal opinions. Ensure your questions are neutral and open-ended.

☐ **Encourage interaction**

Prompt participants to build on each other's ideas by saying things like, "What do others think about this?" or "Can someone add to that?".

☐ **Probe when necessary**

Use follow-up questions like "Can you explain that further?" or "Why do you think that?" to dig deeper into responses.

☐ **Stay on track**

Refer back to your discussion guide to make sure you cover all key topics, but remain flexible if interesting new areas arise.

☐ **Time management**

Keep an eye on the time to ensure you cover all topics within the allotted time. If necessary, gently steer the discussion to stay on track.

3 After the session

☐ **Thank participants**

Express your appreciation for their time and contributions. Let them know how their feedback will be used.

☐ **Review notes and observations**

Immediately after the session, review any notes you took and jot down any important observations that were not captured in the recording.

☐ **Check recordings**

Ensure that the recording devices were properly functioning throughout the session. If anything was missed, note any gaps for follow-up.

☐ **Report back**

Once the data has been transcribed, review the key themes and insights, and contribute to the analysis process.