
Discussion Guide

Gov.uk Business Scenarios – User testing with BIS experts

October 30th 2012

Notes on this guide

This document outlines how we plan to run 6 x 45-minute user sessions on typical business scenarios with experts nominated by BIS.

Sessions overview

There will be 6 x 45-minute one-to-one sessions. The sessions will be divided into the following parts, which are listed here and described in more detail in the sections that follow.

Orientation & background information (5 mins)

We introduce ourselves to the participants and ask background questions to set the context for the rest of the session.

Tasks (30-35 mins)

We ask the participant to work through a number of business scenarios on gov.uk

Wrap up (5-10 mins)

We present some wrap-up questions

Overall Research questions

Can participants find content to support the business scenarios?

Do participants think the content they find supports business users sufficiently?

Is there any additional content that needs to be added?

Are there any additional links to related content on gov.uk that need to be

added?

Are there any additional links to external sites that need to be added?

Preparation:

Can we use Google Hangout?

Does anyone from GDS want to sit in on the sessions?

Orientation & background information

5 minutes

Introduction

Welcome. Make sure the participant is comfortable and knows they are appreciated.

Purpose. We're interested in hearing your opinions about some of the content on gov.uk website, specifically around some common business scenarios

Impartial observers. We were not involved with design, and would love to hear what they have to say: positive or negative.

Appreciate honesty. Remind them that we are hoping they'll be comfortable giving us their honest opinion.

Background information

Intro questions

Before we begin, I'd first like to start by understanding a little bit about you ...

Could you please take a minute or so and introduce yourself?

Name, age, occupation, interest in gov.uk

What do you already know about gov.uk? Have you looked at/used the site?

Tasks

30-35 minutes

Specific Questions – what do these experts think about:

The business content on gov.uk, mainstream and specialist (can they find it, does it meet user needs?)

Suggestions for additional content or tools that are needed

Suggestions for related links to other content within gov.uk

Suggestions for external links to other content

And for video content:

Is this format useful for businesses?

Should there be an alternative format?

Usability and accessibility of the video player (play, pause, time frame for forward and rewind, volume controls)

Running the session:

Each participant should start at Google for the first scenario, but from thereon they can use Google or gov.uk homepage, depending on what they say they would do naturally.

Choose minimum of 3 scenarios per participant, aiming to make them as relevant to that person's background as possible, whilst aiming for a spread across all scenarios.

Scenario 1 (Guide):

Imagine that you are a new entrepreneur, and want to find some basic information on the differences between becoming a sole trader, a freelancer under an umbrella company, or setting up a limited company.

Does this information help you to understand what each option would mean for your business?

Note: This sort of information is classed as the 'must know' and the 'should know'. New entrepreneurs want to understand that any of these options mean on a practical level

Scenario 2 (Video):

Imagine that you are a new entrepreneur, and you want to know how to put a business plan together. You need to be confident that your business plan or business model is a solid one.

Would this information be helpful, and does it give you sufficient confidence to do it on your own?

Note: Most new entrepreneurs are aware they have to put a business plan together but aren't always equipped to know whether their business plan / model is a solid one. There were good templates available on BIS but there were questions around the level of detail that was presented in them.

Scenario 3 (Guide/Video):

Imagine that you are a new entrepreneur and you want to test the viability of a business proposition, for example you want to know how to evaluate your competitors and your target markets. You want to know what help is out there, if there are any organisations that can give you advice and guidance.

Would this information help you to understand what research you need to do, and what organisations can help?

Note: A common issue that comes up is around testing the viability of a proposition, knowing how to evaluate competitors and target markets. New entrepreneurs and even those growing a business often fail to do enough research upfront or simply do not know how to even start this process.

Scenario 4 (Video):

Imagine that you have been running your business for a couple of years but you have cash flow problems, and you need some advice or support on keeping your business afloat. You think you probably need a loan, but you want to know if there are other things that you could do, or that you need to think about to help you manage your cash flow better.

Would this information be helpful, does it prompt you to think about what you need to do?

Note: Typically people come to BIS when they have identified cash flow problems and need advice/support on keeping their business afloat. Their immediate response is to seek financial advice on getting a loan however, in many circumstances the cash flow problems are directly related to flaws in the business model/plan.

Scenario 5 (Quick Answer):

You want to grow your business and need some advice on funding. You want some guidance on grant applications and funding propositions in your area. Can you find any information to help?

Would this information help you to understand what is available, and what organisations can help?

Note: Advice on funding in order to grow a business. Many businesses seek advice and guidance on grant applications and funding propositions, however this level of information varies according to regional factors. Having more transparency around what was available UK-wide in terms to access to grants / funding etc would benefit businesses.

Scenario 6 (Video):

You want to grow your business, and are considering buying premises rather than renting. You want to understand the processes around each, and work out which is the better option for your situation. Can you find any information to help you think about the different options?

Does this information help you to understand what each option would mean for your business?

Scenario 7 (Sub category content):

Imagine that you are a small business with a growing number of employees. You realise that there are several factors to be aware of when employing staff, and you're certainly not big enough to employ an HR specialist. Can you find some information that helps you to understand all of the various HR issues that you need to be aware of?

Does this information help you to understand everything that a business should be aware of?

Note: Growing a business and employing staff is another key area for advice/guidance. Many small-medium business do not have HR department to help them with staff training, Health & Safety, Pensions and Employees Rights yet these are essential factors to be aware of when employing staff.

Scenario 8 (Guide):

Imagine that your business needs to find out about your legal obligations on Data Protection – perhaps it's moving to doing business online for example. Can you find any information on this?

Is this information sufficiently clear, that a 'lay person' could understand what are their obligations in this area?

Note: Knowing enough relevant information about Law and Policy to enable the business to grow and be successful. Queries around the Bribery Act, Arbitration Laws, Liability, and Data Protection, are common but also have to be easily accessible / comprehensive enough for the 'lay person' to understand and process.

Scenario 9 (Guide):

Imagine that your business has grown, and you realise that there are significant opportunities to grow further if you were to trade abroad. Can you find any information about expanding your business overseas? Are there any connections that you could make with any organisations or partnerships? What about the legal side of trading abroad, what do you need to do?

Would this information give a business sufficient insight on all the information that they need to consider?

Note: This would include having access to information about tapping into already established organisations, charities and partnerships that can provide funding opportunities or vital connections to foster overseas business growth. For overseas expansion there is also a need for information around law, taxation export duties etc.

Scenario 10 (??):

Imagine that your business needs to keep abreast of any new policies or laws, to see how they might affect your trading. How would you do this?

Does the website help you to find out about changes in law?

Note: People also want to know when new policies or laws come in and how those changes might affect their businesses, currently there is no easy way of knowing this and who they need to speak with when changes in the law come to pass.

Scenario 11 (??):

Imagine that you are just starting up in business, and somebody has suggested to you that you might need to think about insurance. Can you find out what type of insurance you might need?

Does the information identify what insurance a business might need, and help to work out which ones are relevant?

Note: People starting up in business often don't realise that they need insurance, especially liability insurance.

Wrap up

At this stage the facilitator will check whether the observers have any questions.

5 minutes

Before we conclude today, I've just got a few concluding questions

Overall, thinking about the overall website you have reviewed today:

What are your final impressions?

What improvements would suggest if you wanted to change something?

What did you like / dislike about the site?