Validation Interview Script Checklist

Validation Interview Script

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it from this script to make sure that I cover everything and don't give off any bias.

You probably already have a good idea of why we asked you here, but let me go over it again briefly. We're trying to validate a business idea we have pertaining to … [introduce broad topic like parking or student fees]. The session should take about 45 to 60 minutes.

We've chosen you because you are a leader in this area and we think you can add a lot of valuable advice. That said, we are testing the idea here and not trying to quiz you on your knowledge of…If you don't know any of the answers to the questions or don't have any opinion you can just tell us.

Also, please don't worry that you're going to hurt our feelings. We're doing this to help improve people's lives, so we need to hear your honest reactions. We encourage you to use descriptive adjectives but please avoid profanity if you can. This will be a big help to us.

If you have any questions as we go along, just ask them. I may not be able to answer them right away, since we don't want to give off our bias. But if you still have any questions when we're done I'll try to answer them then. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

You may have noticed the microphone. With your permission, we're going to record what happens on the screen and our conversation. The recording will only be used to help us validate this ideal, and it won't be seen by anyone except the people working on this project. And it helps me, because I don't have to take as many notes.

Questions

Disclosure: People are only good at answering two basic types of questions: what they don't like and what they've done in the past. Structure all your questions

around these two basic concepts. People are not very good at predicting what they will do in the future or understanding what they even want as a consumer. If Henry Ford asked people what they wanted or would buy, they would say faster horses.

Example:

Tell me about the time when...
Tell me about the day when...
Tell me the story of..
Tell me about the day your realized...
What were the steps that got you to...
Describe the conversation when...
What was it like when you told your family or wife that...
Explain to me a bit more..
What did you learn from that...
How did that make you feel...
If the old you could see the new you, what would the new you say...
You seem very confident now, was that always the case...
If you had to describe a debate in your head about [], how would you describe it...
Tell me what you are looking for when it comes to...
Tell us what you think about...
If you were to improve anything in...what would it be?
If you were given a magic tool to make ... better, what would it be?
What's your biggest frustration with...?
Why don't you do this anymore...?
How pleased are you with...?
I'm going to read this statement/study/quote, how does that make you feel?
Can you walk us through your normal day?
How much time do you spend?
How much money do you spend on?
If you could have …. or …. what would you pick?
Tell me something I don't know about...
Look at these completely unrelated images (websites) and tell me what you see...
If you could disrupt this market what would you build...?
Draw it out for me...
What other technologies does this remind you of...?

Which of the following would you choose…?

Option 1	*Option 2*	*Option 3*
Save time	*Save time*	*Takes time*
Save money	*Expensive*	*Saves money*
Low quality	*High quality*	*High quality*

If you could spend $100 on the following features, how would you divvy up the money?

What do you expect this would do…?

Managing Responses

You're not absolutely sure you know what the participant is thinking: What are you thinking?

You state something that seems to surprise them or they are passionate about: Is that what you expected to happen? Tell us why you had that reaction? Tell us what makes you feel that way?

The participant is trying to get you to give him a clue: We don't want to bias the results and our solution may slightly adapt to what we learn here today?

The participant makes a comment, and you're not sure what triggered it: Was there something in particular that made you think that?

The participant suggests concern that he's not giving you what you need: "No, this is very helpful. This is exactly what we need.

The participant seems to have wandered away from the task: What are you trying to do now?

Other Ways to Manage Responses

Acknowledgment tokens: You can say things like "uh huh," "OK," and "mm hmm" as often as you think necessary. These signal that you're taking in what the participant is saying and you'd like them to continue along the same lines. Note that they're meant to indicate that you understand what the participant is saying, not that you necessarily agree with it. It's "OK." Not "OK!!!"

Paraphrasing: Sometimes it helps to give a little summary of what the participant just said ("So you're saying that the boxes on the bottom are hard to read?") to make sure that you've heard and understood correctly.

Clarifying for observers: If the user makes a vague reference to something, you may want to do a little bit of narration to make it easier for the observers to follow the action. For instance, when the user says "I love this," you can say, "The list over here on the right?" (Since you're sitting next to the participant, you sometimes have a better sense of what they're looking at.)