

Accessible Focus Group Session Recommendations for People with Disabilities

The content below is from “Conducting Accessible Research,” an Ask Like A Pro Alumni event featuring accessibility expert Sheri Byrne-Haber, developed in collaboration with David Fazio. The intent is to integrate this content into standard research materials intended for all participants regardless of disabilities.

Note: It is important for the focus group moderator to ensure that everyone has been provided with the NDA letter to sign in accessible electronic format before the time to start the particular session begins. Docusign is the best way to get signatures in an accessible manner.

Moderator Introduction and Purpose of Group

Hello. My name is <Moderator>. I'd like to start off by thanking you for taking time to participate today. My friends <Participant 1> and <Participant 2> are behind the mirror taking notes. I need to read off this script so that everyone who is participating today gets the exact same information. We'll be here for up to 90 minutes, about 15 minutes to get your mobile device set up and 75 minutes for questions and answers.

The reason we're here today is to gather your opinions and thoughts about issues related to the use of the <Acme Corp> native mobile application and mobile use of its website in the context of your experience as a person with vision loss.

I will be asking you some very specific questions. I want to encourage you to think out loud, the camera can't record what is going on inside your head. Don't worry if you think your comments or questions sound stupid, that's how we get the best insights sometimes.

I would like you to know that while this focus group session will be recorded, your identity will remain confidential at all times. The recording allows us to sync up your facial movements with your hand gestures and also allows us to show clips to our business and program development teams. I also need you to acknowledge on the recording that you consent to being recorded and that you had a chance to review and execute the Non-disclosure agreement.

We want to thank you for bringing your own device today. While we could have given you a device with the app installed on it, the assistive technology probably would not

be set up the way you are accustomed to. This might make feel awkward and uncomfortable using it, which we definitely don't want. I want to ask that you leave the device on the sled while you are using it, the pen camera is very focused on your gestures and is not a wide angle lens. We also want to thank you for setting up your account ahead of time. Our focus today is the purchasing behavior and our time with you is limited so this helps us make the most of our session

Ground Rules

To allow our conversation to flow more freely, I'd like to go over some ground rules. While we are discussing this introductory data, <Participant 1> will come out and install the <Acme Corp> native app on your phone if you don't have it installed already. The app we are looking at today is the publicly available version, so feel free to delete it when you leave if you want to.

1. Think of this room like "Las Vegas". What is said here, stays here. Your name will not be associated with any findings that may be forwarded to <Acme Corp> staff.
2. It is not possible to insult me. I don't work for <Acme Corp>, if you hate something or think it is awful, please say so. Likewise, if you love something please say that too
3. We stress confidentiality because we want an open discussion. We want you to feel free to comment on anything you want without any fear your comments will be repeated later, attached to your name, or possibly taken out of context.
4. There are no "wrong answers," just different opinions. Say what is true for you, even if you think you might be the only one who feels that way. If you change your mind about something after exploring more features, please let me know.
5. Let me know if you need a break. The bathrooms are a little tricky to find, so if you need to use them, someone can guide you there. Feel free to enjoy a beverage and a snack.
6. Do you have any questions?

Introductory Questions

We always try to use "people first" language when conducting these focus groups, if we use any terms like "disabled" or "person with autism" that bother you, please let

us know what terms you prefer. Before we start, I'd like to know a little about you. Please tell me:

1. Your name
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
2. Your age (approximate is OK)
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
3. Some information about your vision loss (again vagueness is OK – preferably we would like to know the age of onset and progression if you are comfortable disclosing that)
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
4. What assistive technology do you use to interact with the Internet?
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
5. What is your level of experience with that assistive technology (low, medium, high, expert)
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
6. How often do you order anything (food, clothing or services) over the internet?
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
7. Do you prefer using a native app or a web site experience?
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
8. When you use the web, do you prefer to use a desktop or your mobile device?
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
9. Do you have any specific experience <whatever you are testing> using the <Acme Corp> mobile app or web?
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
 - a. How about other apps? Whole Foods, Amazon etc.
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
10. If you have ordered food from any grocery store using the web or a mobile app, which company do you think does the best job in making their website/app easy to use? (if the answer is no ask them if they have ever bought anything from a store or online and use that as the example)
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
 - a. Why did you choose that <site/app>?
[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER]
11. In general, as a person with vision loss, what do you find the largest obstacle to interacting with the Internet?

[MODERATOR: PAUSE FOR ANSWER] If they say “I don’t know” offer a few examples such as “timeouts are too fast”, “web sites and mobile apps require too much interaction” and “things can be hard to find”. That will usually stimulate some answers.

Interview Questions

I would like you to start up the app and make sure that your assistive technology is all running to your satisfaction. Let me know when you are ready to proceed.

MODERATOR: Wait until they say go ahead, bring in <Participant 1> if necessary.

1. What do you suppose the process would be for <whatever you are testing>?
2. What are some of the activities that you think you should be able to do using the <Acme Corp> app
3. Do you shop based on what is on sale, or based on what you need?
4. What is the one thing you always get when you go to <Acme Corp>?
 - a. If they don’t say something, tell them for the purposes of this study, you need an iPhone 12.
5. Have you used a <Acme Corp> club card before?
 - a. If they answer no, explain how it is associated with a phone number and that using the card provides you access to general deals, and also special deals based only on their purchasing pattern.
6. First, we need to start by telling the app whether we want delivery or pick up.
7. When you are shopping online, do you prefer to drill down in categories to find the products you are looking for or use the search engine?
 - a. Why?
8. Using your preferred method, find your favorite item and add it to your cart
9. Is there an order minimum? What is it?
10. Please add enough random items to your cart to reach the order minimum
 [MODERATOR: suggest more than Qty 1 or expensive items to fill up the cart faster]
11. Now we would like you to add an item that has a deal associated with it.
 [MODERATOR: point them to deals if they can’t find anything easily.]
12. Now we want to start, but not complete, the checkout process

- a. What is the first step
[MODERATOR – it is to reserve a date and time. The delivery charges are dictated by the delivery window]
 - b. What is the next step?
[MODERATOR – it is to enter the promo code for the deal that was added to the cart in step 11]
 - c. What do you think you would do next?
13. Can you please find the closest <Acme Corp> using the app?
- a. Go through the process with the participant, providing them hints if they get stuck
 - i. Can you tell me where it is located?
 - ii. When do they close today?
 - iii. Is there anything you would want to change about the process you just went for either finding the store or finding out information about the store?

Repeat steps 1-13 for mobile web, time allowing

If all actions are completed and there are more than five minutes left, ask the following questions:

14. If there were a contest as part of an <Acme Corp> promotion, what features would you like to see?
- a. If they don't mention haptics, ask them how they feel about the phone vibrating
15. Have you used Be My Eyes, AIRA, or some type of sighted assistance service?
- a. If yes, ask them for details – what did they use it for, did they like it, in the case of AIRA, who paid for the minutes/glasses
 - b. If no, ask them why not?

Closing

So that is all of our planned questions for today. Before I go check with <Participant 1> and <Participant 2> to see if they have any follow up questions based on our discussion from today, is there anything you would like to add about your experience? Anything else you would like to ask about or try while we are here?

(Leave room)

Thanks for coming today and exploring the <Acme Corp> App and website with us. Your comments have given us lots of ideas about how to improve the experience for people with disabilities. Please see <name> on your way out to receive your gift card as a token of our appreciation for helping us out today.

Addendum: Additional questions to be integrated with standard screening script

Disability related questions

Note: Ask these first 3 questions early as this is the focus of the interview – age, gender, college education is more fungible. Do not push for diagnosis or medical details.

1. To the greatest extent that you feel comfortable, please describe the reason why you use assistive technology
2. How long has this issue affected you?
3. How long have you used assistive technology?

For Mobile-based interviews

Note: The balance of Android v. iPhone participants is important because the assistive technology and code is completely different

1. What kind of smartphone operating system do you use?
2. Do you know what version of the operating system you are currently using?
3. What accessibility features do you use to interact with your smartphone?

For laptop-based interviews

Note: The balance of PC v. Mac participants is important because the assistive technology and code is completely different

1. What kind of laptop system do you use?
2. Do you know what version of the operating system you are currently using?
3. What accessibility features do you use to interact with your laptop?

For all users

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, one being novice, five being expert, how would you rate your knowledge of the assistive technology that you use?

Leave these questions to the end because they are only about logistics.

If the interview is remote:

1. Have you used Zoom before?
 - a. If No, do you have someone who can help you set up your computer and check the lighting

If the interview is in person:

1. Do you have access to transportation to <Location>?
 - a. If the answer is no, paratransit may need to be arranged or rideshare reimbursed