

Welcome Back

And it's Brenda again, and I wanna welcome you back.

Now this will be a very long lesson, but I'm breaking it up into two sections for you. Plus, you can download this in the download area so that you can go over it later if you need to.

So I'm going to get into what you need to know to apply for and book a focus group, and what I'm doing is going over best practices.

What a Screener Is

The first step to booking a focus group is to deal with the screener.

A screener is a survey that you need to take prior to consideration. But not to be confused with the smaller surveys that you may be doing now during the course. These screeners are the prequalification for the bigger focus groups.

How Screeners Work

So let's talk about these screeners.

These screeners are qualifying questionnaires that researchers use to determine whether you are a good fit for a particular focus group study. Before anyone gets invited to participate, they're asked to answer a series of questions — things like age, occupation, purchasing habits, opinions, product usage, and more.

The researchers use those answers to decide who matches their target profile.

Understanding the Goal of the Screener

So to understand what these screeners are really doing, every screener has basically one job. And that is to find the right person for that specific study.

It's not the smartest person. It's not the most qualified person in general. It is the most relevant person.

Researchers are working from a very precise profile. Maybe they need someone who bought a new car in the last six months, or maybe they need somebody who orders takeout at least twice a week, or a parent of kids under five, or a small business owner.

Whatever it is, they're checking boxes, and either we fit or we don't.

Learning to Read the Clues

When you see a screener, make sure that you read it very, very carefully. Let it clue you in.

The screener itself will give you clues as to what they're looking for. Some of these clues are actually in the questions, or they could be in the URL. They could be in an image that they use. You have to really be willing to look very closely.

Pay attention to these clues to figure out if this opportunity is even worth your time.

So, for example, a survey might make it clear that they want homeowners who have purchased a vehicle in the last six months. If you're renting and you haven't bought a car in a few years, just move on.

The sooner that you can determine whether or not this is even going to work with you, the better.

Identifying the Target Persona

Another thing that the screeners are doing is they're identifying the target persona really quickly.

Early questions in a screener are clues. They are not random.

As someone who is looking to book a focus group study, you'll need to learn to identify the target persona of the screener really quickly.

For example:

- Frequency questions — how often you do something
- Brand familiarity questions — how familiar you are with a brand
- Recent behavior questions
- Household role questions — such as whether you are the head of the household

Many studies specifically want the primary decision maker, so this can actually work in your favor.

Recognizing Patterns

The screener questions are used to narrow down a specific type of participant.

Most studies are looking for people who are engaged — not completely inactive, but not extreme either.

The key skill is learning to recognize what direction the screener is going within the first few questions.

And this is something that you will learn over time, so go easy and be patient with yourself.

Why Consistency Matters

As with everything else, consistency is everything. This is one of the most important factors in passing screeners.

Your answers need to tell a consistent and believable story. Researchers will include repeated or layered questions to check for contradictions.

So if your answers don't line up, you will be filtered out immediately.

Just think of your responses as one cohesive profile rather than separate answers.

What's Next

Now this was part one of screener tips. Now I'm going to go to part two.

But before you go on to part two, I would recommend that you download these lessons and take a look at them so you can be prepared.

But, of course, you can go at your own pace.

I really appreciate you being here, and I will see you in the next lesson.