

**Date:** February 26, 2003  
**Instructor:** Jeffrey Pinegar  
**Class:** BUS-483 Marketing Research  
**Phone:** 717.358.4460  
**Due Date:** Tuesday, March 11, 2003  
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**Subject:** Exploratory Research

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**Description:**

Now that you have your research questions it is time to start your exploratory research. In general, you need to do as much research as necessary to understand the problem presented to you. As you know, your exploration can take you into secondary and primary research. As you also know, secondary is faster and less expensive and is therefore conducted first so that your primary research may be informed by your secondary research.

For this assignment, you will actually conduct your secondary research but only prepare for your primary research. The one minimum that I am setting is, you must plan for two focus groups. These focus groups will be conducted after this assignment is returned to you. In addition, you may also identify additional primary research that you feel is required, such as interviews with key informants.

**Write-up:**

Your write-up should include

- a description and justification of your group research questions. You should be able to capture much of this from your first papers but it needs to be reworded into this paper. Write these as if were a separate section of your final report (that way it can be).
- a distillation of your secondary exploratory research. Your secondary research may *fill in some blanks*, and justify your primary research.
- a justification for your primary exploratory research. In overview form you should explain who do you need to talk to, why are they the right people to talk to, what do you want to ask them, why these people, why these questions.
- If you identify additional primary research that needs to be done, give me the who, what, and why.

**Focus Groups:**

1. Purpose (as part of the write-up)– What is the purpose of the focus group. What information do you hope to extract from this collection of people
2. Screener (Included as an exhibit) – You must prepare a screener that you will use to select respondents for your focus group. A screener is a list of question that you ask (or observe) prospective respondents to determine if they have the desired attributes for the group. If there are any issue such as gender balance, grade balance etc., these should be included as well. To say in another way if you gave a “man on the street” your screener he should be able to select a set of respondents that will make you happy.
3. Discussion Guide (Included as an exhibit) – The discussion guide is a plan for how the focus group will be run. It may be helpful if you think of the discussion guide as a plan

script where all YOUR words and action are spelled out but it only says *respondents talk here* for the respondents. The discussion guide should include:

- the question you are going to ask the group
- the amount of time you want to dedicate to each question
- a description of any stimuli that you will use. For example, if you want show students a list of past senior class gifts list it and make it clear when you will distribute this to the respondents.
- If you want to give the respondent homework to complete before they come, describe the homework. For example, prepare a list of all the volunteer activities you have participated in the past year. If you give homework say, where it will be used.

### **Quasi-Presentation (Due March 12)**

- A well wordsmithed statement of purpose for your focus groups – on a transparence
- Your discussion guide on transparencies.
- We will act as consultant for each other to refine our research and look for gaps.

### **Evaluation**

Your assignment will be evaluated on:

1. Completeness – does the secondary and planned primary research adequately explore the issue contained in your research question.
2. Exhibits – Can your screener and discussion guide be used to select respondents and conduct the focus group?
3. Writing – professional high standards expected of seniors.