

Tobacco Advertising

Discussion Guide for Focus Groups with Retailers

1. Introduction

Introduce yourself and purpose of discussion:

- Here to discuss ideas about advertising in stores...not to sell products
- Specifically, we're talking with store owner/managers about in-store advertising and some items sold in your stores. But, you will NOT be asked to disclose confidential information about your store's involvement with vendors.
- Your participation is voluntary and you can decline to answer any question for any reason. There are no risks associated with the study or benefits expected as a result of this study. Your responses will be confidential and will not be used in any marketing or sale of products.
- We will be audio (or video) taping the group.

Ground rules:

- No wrong answers
- Everyone's opinion is important
- Everyone is to talk, but not at one time
- Type of store will be in report, but not name of respondent or specific store

Introduction of group members:

- First name only and type of store
- Owner or manager
- Number of years worked in retail

2. In-Store Advertising Warm-Up

First, could you tell me briefly which types of products that you advertise inside your store?

Okay, let's talk just for a minute about the (salty snacks, soda, beer or some product other than tobacco).

Why do you have ads in your store for these products?

- Do they increase your sales?
- Because the reps/distributors ask/tell you to?
- It's in your contract?

3. In-Store Tobacco Advertising

Now, let's talk about your tobacco products (cigarettes and chewing tobacco).

Why do you have ads in your store for these products?

- Do they increase your sales?
- Because the reps/distributors ask/tell you to?
- It's in your contract?

What kinds of in-store ads work best to bring attention to a product?

- Large displays?
- Posters?
- Functional items: clocks, lane dividers, penny cups?

Would you say that any of these in-store ads increase tobacco sales? Which ones?

How important is product placement for sales of the product?

Does it increase sales or have no effect?

In your experience, are customers willing to change brands for another cheaper brand on sale?

What proportion? Certain types of customers? (probe for age, income)

We were talking earlier about the tobacco ads in your store.

Who decides where the ads will go? You? The owner/manager? The tobacco companies?

What about the actual cigarettes themselves—where are they kept? (overhead bin, shelving behind counter, floor displays, countertop display, under counter, next to candy, at eye-level, etc.)

What would happen if you did not display ads or use shelving provided by the tobacco companies? Would it impact your contract, the promotions offered to you, etc.? Would it affect sales?

What percentage of your annual sales would you say come from tobacco products?

4. Counter Advertising

If some of your regular customers or people from the neighborhood came to you with concerns about what was happening in your store (selling liquor, tobacco, adult magazines to underage buyers), how important would that be and what would you be likely to do in response?

If asked by people in your community (church group, customers, parent groups), how willing would you be to:

- remove tobacco ads?
- replace tobacco ads with pro-health ads?
- remove tobacco ads below 3 feet?
- remove tobacco ads next to things kids buy?
- move tobacco away from products that kids often buy?

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- remove tobacco product displays?
- remove “We Card” signs and replace with other kinds provided to you by community group?

How interested/willing would you be in posting anti-smoking signage?

How interested/willing would you be in using branded functional items, e.g., clocks, penny cups, lane-closed signs, shopping basket, and signs with health messages on them?

What kinds of health-related messages would you be comfortable with placing in your store?

Have you ever had a tobacco rep move any of the ‘We Card’ or other health message signs?

V. Wrap-up

This is what I heard.... Does that sound about right?

Thank you for participating.

We appreciate the insights you provided on these topics.