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Focus Group/IDI Video Summary Reports: Pre-Production Instructions and Guidelines

There are many ways to approach the task of preparing for a Focus Group/IDI Video Summary Report. This document will walk you through each of those scenarios. However, there are some fundamental things that need to be done to prepare for a report that will make it easier to construct and of higher quality.

Before and after your sessions

First, the ideal format for session recording is DVD. DVDs are the easiest format to navigate for you or I to find the clips to use, and are of the highest possible technical quality. After sessions, ask the facility or videographer to "finalize" the DVDs. This makes DVDs compatible with other DVD players. They should know about this, but if they have questions, have them call me any time of day or night at 503.492.3610.

If sessions are recorded on VHS tape, <u>make sure that the facility or videographer records the tapes in SP (2-hour) mode.</u> This will ensure the highest possible video and audio quality. Also, make sure that there is nothing superimposed on the videotape, such as the time and date, or the counter/timer. If they can record more than one copy at a time, see if you can have one of the copies recorded WITH the timer or time-of-day. This tape can then be used to find and catalog the selected clips. If this is not possible, you can send us the original tape, and we will make a "timecode dub" (sometimes called a "window dub"). This tape will have the timecode superimposed over the video so that cataloging clips is easy.

The third alternative is to send us the original tape with marked transcripts. However, since the times of the clips are not cataloged, this takes considerably more time to find the clips.

And finally, there is the option to allow us to find clips from the sessions. With your executive summary or topline report, we will view each session and pick clips that substantiate your findings. If using this method, it is much easier if we have a copy of the transcripts as Word files.

Logging clips from your sessions

The best method to log and organize the clips to be used is to use a "shot sheet" that we can provide you. One method is to initially use the shot sheets to log the tapes or DVDs as you are viewing them. Once your shots are selected, you can transfer the information from these sheets to new sheets so that the individual shots are in the order you would like them on the final production.

The shot sheet is fairly self-explanatory. You simply write down the hour, minute and second of the approximate starting point of each clip. It is not necessary to be absolutely accurate, but try to be within 5 seconds or so of when you want the clip to start and end. Then, write down the first 3 or 4 words that are said at the beginning of the clip and the last 3 or 4 words at the end of the clip. It usually isn't necessary to put anything in the "Description/Notes" box unless there is something specific about that shot that you would like to tell me.

Use separate shot sheets for each segment. Segments are usually separate categories in the report and are usually separated by graphics and narration. It is best to write out the graphics/narration on separate sheets (such as Word documents) and reference them on the shots sheets where you would like them to be inserted into the video.

If viewing tapes and logging them manually, d**o not use a VCR that just has a counter.** These counter numbers differ from machine to machine and will do us no good. Rewind the original focus group tape all the way to the beginning and zero/reset the clock. Then use this clock to log your clips. This is a much less accurate method of logging clips, so it will be easier for us if you are very accurate with writing down the first and last 5 or 6 words of a clip on the shot sheet. It is also very helpful in this case if we have a copy of the transcripts in Word format. If you think it will help, use the "Description/Notes" section on the shot sheet to help identify the shot, such as "Man in back on right in red shirt". Also, if you are using this method of logging your clips, you will have to send us the original tapes after you have completed logging them.

Tips and tricks

- **Keep the graphics (bullet slides, etc.) simple.** This is especially true if there is going to be narration. Remember that the resolution of a television is not nearly as high as that of a computer monitor. Too much and/or too small just doesn't work well.

- Feel free to include graphs from PowerPoint. However, just like bullet point slides, these have to be kept simple and with large fonts. Most likely, I would redo these graphs to work best with video.

- If you are doing Perception Analyzer groups, keep in mind that any of the graphs generated by the PA software can be included in a summary report, including Moment-To-Moment video overlays.

- It is a nice touch to add a "bug" on your video clips. A bug is a small graphic in the corner of the screen that identifies the group. This can be the city, date, type of group (such as "Baby Boomers"), any combination of these, or anything else that you think will help identify the group.

- Be sure to send information on what to include as an introductory graphic and matching tape/DVD label. This is usually the client name, project name, something like "Summary of Focus Group Discussions", and the dates and locations of the sessions.

- If possible, see if you can get a copy of your client's logo in either an electronic version or on paper. Even letterhead will often work. We can sometimes extract a decent logo from web sites. The inclusion of your client's logo is a nice touch.

- When selecting the video clips, try to remember that **it is better to use a few sentences or a whole concept rather than one quick sentence or 2 or 3 words.** The longer clips not only make the content more comprehensible and coherent, but it also cuts down on the time it takes to produce the video, thereby lowering your costs. It is sometimes good to include the moderator's question, especially at the beginning of a segment, if that will help the viewer understand what is being talked about.

- Once you have all the information ready – shot sheets, graphics, etc. – email me or fax the information to 503-492-3610. If you used window dubs that we made to log your clips, there is no need to send us back the window dub or original tapes. Feel free to take the dubs home to record your favorite soap operas. If we made the window dubs, we have captured all of the video onto our editing computers from which we will make the video.

Simple, right? Don't let all of this intimidate you. Following these simple guidelines will not only save us both time, it will ensure that you get exactly what you are expecting out of your video summary report.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

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