Conducting Focus Groups
Chapter Objectives

1. Introduce the advantages and disadvantages of conducting focus groups
2. Describe the focus group process from planning to analysis
3. Explain the steps in conducting a focus group
4. Explore the importance of the moderator’s role
5. Discuss the handling of conflict in focus groups
Focus Groups

- Exploring the cause of a problem
- New market segments to target
- Enhancing the product to increase appeal
- Developing effective promotional campaigns
Advantages vs. Disadvantages

- **Advantages**
  - Probes issues in depth
  - Interaction between participants
  - Combine with projective technique

- **Disadvantages**
  - Can’t be used to prove facts
  - Results depends on skill of moderator
Preparation of Focus Group

- Discuss issues with management
- Decide participant profile
- Chose moderator
- Write focus group script
Conducting Focus Group

- Prepare facility
- Prepare materials and techniques
- Moderate proceedings
- Collect and organize data
Focus Group Analysis

- Transcribe information
- Organize written data
- Code for themes
- Write report
- Make presentation
Focus Group Location

- No need for specialized facility
- Should be convenient for participants
- Location should build trust and show respect
- Ensure facility has comfortable seating and all needed supplies
Greeting Participants

- Sincere welcome
- Inform of seating, refreshments
- Introductions based on first names
- Answer questions
- Inform summary of findings will be made available
Building Rapport

- Welcome and general discussion
- Easy to answer question asked
- Moderator encourages participation
Probing

• Uncover useful information

• Challenging questions asking both why and what if

• Probing questions to get at underlying attitudes

• Projective techniques used
Closing

- Move group towards closure
- Gives moderator last chance to get information
- Allows participants to disengage from process
Moderator Personal Traits

- Interest in research process
- Curiosity about people’s ideas
- Adaptability
- Empathy
Moderator Skills

- Knowledge of research methods
- Knowledge of the topic under discussion
- Skill in group dynamics
- Ability to analyze and report
Handling Difficult Participants

- **Incessant talker**
  - Moderator must redirect conversation

- **Group expert**
  - Moderator provides support for all participant opinion
Stages of Group Formation

- **Forming**
  - Participants make snap decisions about others

- **Storming**
  - Snap decisions result in arguments

- **Norming**
  - Moderator establishes limits on behavior

- **Performing**
  - Group ready to work on task