

Finding Out For Yourself

Focus Groups

CAMPAIGN
BOOTCAMP

Focus groups bring together about 5 to 10 people to discuss a particular issue.

They usually last between one and two hours with one person asking the questions (the facilitator) and another making sure that the conversation is recorded. Open-ended questions are used to stimulate the conversation, for example questions that start with Why? and How?

Focus Groups and Your Campaign

When you are at the stage of designing your campaign, focus groups are a great way of finding out what people (such as the general public) think about your issue. When you are a bit further on with your campaign planning, they are a good way of testing what people think of your argument and solution/s.

Advantages



- Focus groups are great at producing lots of information, as the conversation usually produces many ideas and an exchange of views.
- If an issue is quite complex (they usually are) a focus group allows people to talk an issue through in more detail.

Disadvantages



- The information gathered (usually a recording of the conversation) can be quite difficult and time-consuming to analyse.
- Some people may not feel comfortable talking about some issues (for example mental health).
- Participants for a focus group aren't usually randomly selected so some marginalised voices may be excluded, however efforts can be made to do extra recruitment to make sure marginalised voices are heard

TIPS

1. When deciding your key questions, try to also think of some follow-up questions that will allow you to probe a little deeper



2. Sometimes people need nudging in the conversation, they may need to be probed a bit for example 'I would like to hear more about that', 'how did that make you feel?', 'tell me more about what you mean by that', 'has anybody else got a similar story?'

