

Third City Roasting Focus Group Guide

Part 1: Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to attend this focus group. I am [Insert group member name here], a researcher working with a small coffee roastery in State College, Pennsylvania. The purpose of this focus group is to gain a better understanding of coffee consumers' coffee drinking preferences, purchasing habits, and price perceptions when it comes to buying coffee beans.

Before we begin the focus group, I want to make sure you understand your right as a participant in this study.

Participant Statement of Research and Their Rights

- The purpose of this study is to understand more about coffee consumers' purchasing habits, coffee drinking preferences, and price perceptions when it comes to buying coffee beans. The focus group should take between 45-60 minutes.
- Your participation in this research is confidential. I will not ask any information that would identify who the responses belong to. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses.
- This conversation will be recorded (both audio and video) via zoom for research purposes. Your name or personal information will not be identified on the audio recordings, and confidentiality will be strictly maintained. However, when these audio recordings are heard, others may be able to identify you. The video and audio recording will be stored on secure servers and deleted as soon as it has been transcribed.
- I cannot guarantee that all group members will treat the discussion as confidential. However, I am asking each of you not to share or disclose any identifying details about experiences or incidents discussed today.
- Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

- You should feel free to express your thoughts and feelings without any expectations from me. I am interested in hearing your thoughts and points of view even if they are different from what others express in the group.
- I am going to make every effort to keep the discussion focused and within our set time frame. If too much time is being spent on one question or topic, I may move on and try to ensure that all participants have a chance to give their individual input.

Part 2: Coffee Preferences

To start off, let's dive into your personal coffee preferences.

- How often do you drink coffee in general?
- What kind of coffee (medium roast, dark roast, blonde roast, whole beans, grinded beans, cold brew packets, etc) do you buy?
 - Why do you gravitate towards that type of coffee?
- Do you have a go-to coffee brand?
 - If yes: what is it you like about this brand?
 - If not: do you enjoy trying new things?
- Do you prefer small-batch roasted coffee, or big-name brands like Starbucks or Folgers?
 - Why do you prefer that?
 - If yes to big-name brands: Do you gravitate towards the brand because of the credibility/ you have heard of the brand before?
 - If yes to big-name brands: Would you be open to trying small-batch roasted coffee?
 - If yes to small-batch roasted coffee: What are some factors that influence you to buy that brand?
- Why are they your favorite coffee brands?
 - Taste: what are some of your favorite tastes in coffee? Do you care about the taste?
- In person: *Give them a coffee and ask them what they like/dislike and notice about it, be aware of their rhetoric and lingo when describing the coffee.*

- In Zoom: What are some things you notice when you drink coffee? Flavour profiles? Texture? Temperature?

Part 3: Coffee Purchases

We will now be discussing your coffee purchases and price perceptions when it comes to buying coffee.

- Do you prefer making coffee yourself at home or buying from a cafe? And why?
 - Does price deter you from purchasing a cup of coffee or a bag of beans?
 - What factors would make you want to spend more on coffee?
 - If yes to cafe: what factors inform your decision?
 - *If they are unsure of the question:* For example, does the location of the store where you bought it from play a factor?
 - Would anything influence you to start making coffee at home?
 - If yes to making it at home: What factors inform your decision?
 - *If they are unsure of the question:* For example, does the location of the store where you bought it from play a factor?
 - If yes to making it at home: Walk me through how you make your coffee at home.
 - What benefits are there to making your coffee at home? How about any negatives?
- This next question is regarding the packaging of coffee, and is open to at-home and cafe purchasers
 - When buying coffee, how important is the packaging? This could include the logo, bag color, size, etc.
 - What about the packaging caught your eye? What did you like about it?
 - In person: *Pass around coffee packaging mockups and ask which they would more likely gravitate towards.*
 - On Zoom: *Share screen for coffee packaging mockups and ask which they would more likely gravitate towards.*

- Thinking about what you all have touched on (insert what participants have touched on), what would you say the most important factor is when purchasing coffee?
 - Please explain...
- Are you familiar with any local roasteries?
 - How did you learn about this roastery?
 - Have you had their coffee?
 - If yes: where did you purchase it?
 - If not: why not?
- When thinking about coffee from a local roastery, is there anything that makes you want to buy it?
 - If yes: could you please describe those in detail?
 - If no: why not?
- Off the top of your head, what is the most you will buy for a cup of coffee?
- If you buy bagged beans (grinded or whole), what bag size do you typically purchase and what is the average you spend? *Show average coffee bean bag sizes.*
 - How often do you buy your bag of beans?

Part 4: Ethical Coffee

We will now be discussing ethical coffee purchases. Fair trade coffee is sourced following a strict set of rules that ensure products improve the living conditions of small farmers and are produced with sustainable practices.

- Were you aware that fair trade coffee is a ‘thing’?
 - If yes: where did you learn about it?
 - If not: does this make you question your coffee purchasing habits?
- In what ways do your environmental beliefs affect your purchasing decisions?
 - Could you please explain that in more detail?
 - If no: could you please explain why?
- In what ways do your ethical beliefs affect your purchasing decisions? For example, underpaid workers.

- Imagine that you learn that your favorite coffee brand is underpaying the farmers that grow their beans. Would this change your purchase decisions with this brand? If so, why?

This is the end of the focus group. Thank you very much for the time you took to participate in this focus group today. This was very insightful. Let's dismiss from here.