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NIH Recruitment Branding Project – Moderator’s Guide

Objective: Fors Marsh Group (FMG) will obtain first-person feedback evaluating the effectiveness of two NIH OHR creative concepts (topline testing insights). Use this data as input to help determine creative direction for the new recruitment marketing campaign, and to inform campaign development.

Test creative concepts among internal audiences (NIH employees, specifically new hires) and external audiences (jobseekers, both active and passive).

Study Overview

Participant Population

- New hires and recently hired NIH employees (< 3 years with agency). NIH internal audience.
- NIH recruitment influencers or ambassadors, i.e., OHR staff, hiring managers, recruiters, executive recruiting. NIH internal audience.
 - NIH Support Requested: (For both a and b) Identify and schedule employees based on FMG-provided segments to participate in the remote study (via Zoom).
- General market jobseekers – those actively or passively seeking employment at biomedical research organizations or health sciences companies, in identified priority job fields. Audience external to NIH.
 - FMG will recruit external participants or work with a vendor to do so. Approximate time to recruit is 2-3 weeks.
 - FMG expects that an external IRB of this study will be required; we will allot time in the schedule for it.

Planned Sessions & Segments

- Between six and nine 60-min virtual focus groups with 6-8 participants per group; mix of race/ethnicity, gender, and age.
 - *Internal: New-recent NIH hires*
 - Segments can be re-categorized, if needed.
 - One group of scientists, biomedical research and clinical staff
 - One group of admin, business operations and campus services staff
 - One group of interns and trainees (across function areas)

- *External: General market jobseekers*
- Five groups total with a mix of professionals who are actively or passively job-seeking; groups will include:
 - Professionals in health science and clinical or biomedical research
 - Professionals in admin and business operations
 - Professionals in campus services or facilities management

Study Samples

- Focus Groups
 - NIH New/Recent Hires Sample
 - $n = 35$, ages 18+
 - 17 Male, 18 Female
 - General Market Jobseekers Sample
 - $n = 40$, ages 18+
 - 20 Male, 20 Female

Study Recruitment & Screening

The NIH OHR team will handle recruitment of recent/new hires to participate in the internal audience focus groups, as well as recruitment of any NIH OHR/recruitment stakeholders to participate in the in-depth interviews. NIH OHR and FMG will work together on scheduling these study sessions.

FMG will recruit for the general market jobseekers to participate in virtual focus groups. FMG participant recruiters will recruit from our FMG Insights panel, and supplement with posts on social media sites like Reddit or LinkedIn to find additional (hard-to-reach) participants. The recruitment screener and recruitment details are attached.

Themes for Feedback from Participants

- What are the factors of *[a job ad]* that *[make it stand out]* during a job search?
- What do the campaign concepts communicate about the NIH's mission and organizational culture?
- How do new hires and prospective job seekers react to the representation of the NIH in these campaign concepts?

Methods

- Qualitative assessments via focus groups, with participants who span applicable NIH job categories—and optional in-depth interviews with recruitment staff who have a role in supporting the campaign.
- Ultimate goals of the recruitment marketing campaign will be:
 - **Awareness:** Add the NIH experience into jobseekers' employer-consideration set by explaining its mission, culture, and jobs availability.
 - **Value Cognizance:** Increase time on website, social media and viewing informational videos to ensure accurate and relevant information is being presented in a way that is believable and relatable.
 - **Impact:** Empower job seekers to “take that next step” by offering clear instruction, expectations, and action buttons to increase the recruitment of highly qualified, eligible applicants who follow through and become candidates.

- We will test the creative concepts against these goals: **awareness, value cognizance and impact.**
 - Does the campaign message resonate? What's missing?
 - What about the messaging or concept is memorable?
 - Who does the concept attract?
 - What do you think/feel when see/hear the concept?
 - What have you seen, heard or been told about NIH? About federal employment?

Moderator's Guide Procedures

Creative Concept Testing Moderator's Guide

Introduction [3 Minutes]

Thank you for participating in this session today. My name is _____ and I will be your moderator. I work for Fors Marsh Group, a private research firm based in Arlington, VA, and we are helping the National Institutes of Health (NIH) understand views of jobseekers.

Today we will review some potential recruitment materials and concepts. I will show you some images and then ask a series of questions about the images so I can learn what works well and what may need to change.

Before we begin, I want to go over a few things:

- We're interested in both your positive and negative reactions to the concepts. I did not create these concepts, nor was I involved in their development, so please do not feel that you have to hold back on your comments.
- Your participation is completely voluntary, meaning you don't have to answer every question and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. However, I do encourage your full participation today to ensure that I am getting every perspective.
- For those of you who have never been in a focus group like this before, let me tell you about our setup. There will be a video recording of this session. Only those of us associated with this project will see the recordings, and we will not share your name or personal information. The recordings are mainly used as a memory aid for me so I can go back later to recall what happened during each session.
- My teammate is also on this video chat taking notes, and other members of the project team may join to observe. Your candid feedback will be very valuable, so even though people are observing, please speak openly about your opinions and experience.
- Video recordings and notes transcripts will be maintained for future use; however, responses will not be linked to you personally. Your name and other personally identifiable information will be removed from notes and you will not be associated with any particular comment or statement.
- The entire session should last about 60 minutes.
- Any questions so far?

Is it ok if I begin recording? [YES] I am going to start the recording now.

[Moderator: SHOW ON SLIDE] To allow the conversation to flow smoothly, please review these ground rules:

1. Do your best to speak one at a time.
2. Speak at least as loudly as me, the Moderator, so we can all hear.
3. You are not required to answer every question; however, I'd like to hear from everyone.
4. Everyone gets equal time to speak, so that nobody is talking significantly more than others or less than others.
5. There are no wrong answers. Please express your beliefs, regardless of whether everyone agrees with you or not.
6. If you need to step away from the session, send a private message in the chat.
7. Try to have only one person away from the session at a time.

Icebreaker [7 Minutes]

First, we will get to know each other a little today. Please introduce yourself to the group and tell us:

1. Your first name or what you prefer to be called
2. Your dream job

Job Search [8 Minutes]

3. Let's start with a thought exercise: You are thinking of finding a new job. How do you start your job search?
 - a. (Probe) What are the steps you take to find out more about an employer?
4. What are some websites you use to look for new job opportunities?
5. Tell me some things you look for when reviewing job postings?
 - a. (Probe) What makes one stand out over another?

Employer Brand [12 Minutes]

6. What is important about an employer or company when you are choosing to submit a job application to them?
 - a. (Probe and follow up on benefits, culture, and professional growth opportunities)
7. What can you tell about a company's/organization's work culture from its website?
8. What can you tell about a company's/organization's work culture from its social media? Any differences?
 - a. (Probe) What, if anything, jumps out for you, positively or negatively, when you come across it?
9. When I say, "recruitment advertising," what comes to mind?
 - a. (Probe) What information/content from a company or a brand would you consider to be recruitment advertising? What makes you say that?
10. When you have encountered examples of that, what made certain (recruitment advertising/employer branding/job seeker messaging) stand out?
 - a. (Probe) What made that messaging memorable?

11. (For internal participants) What had you seen, heard, or been told about NIH prior to being hired? (For external participants) What have you seen, heard, or been told about NIH?
- a. (Probe and listen for topics related to the experience of working at NIH)

Recruitment Campaign Themes & Resonance [20 Minutes]

[Moderator, SHOW CONCEPT ONE, ASK ALL QUESTIONS; THEN REPEAT AND SHOW CONCEPT TWO]

Instructions: Present the Manifesto slide for the concept first, read it aloud, then advance the slides showing the ad mockups and social media mockups for the concept. Ask participants the associated follow-up questions below. Then repeat the process for the second concept and stim.

The order in which concepts are shown will alternate for each group. Stim will be packaged accordingly and provided to moderator.

[Moderator, READ ALOUD] I will show you two concepts that NIH may use in a messaging campaign. These materials are not finalized and the finished product may not look like this. Take a moment to view this image/text. (Read the concept aloud and advance slides. Wait 30 seconds.)

12. What is your immediate reaction to this image/text? Raise your hand with a thumbs up or thumbs down. (Count the number of thumbs up/down for the recording)
- a. (Probe) How did this concept make you feel? (Follow up for thumbs up/thumbs down)
- b. (Probe) If you gave this a thumbs down, how would you change it to a thumbs up?
- c. (Probe) What changes could be made to make this a thumbs up?
13. In your own words, what is the main message in this concept?
- a. (Probe) What does the concept tell you about NIH as a place to work? (Connect with earlier discussion of what is important when choosing an employer, i.e., benefits, culture, growth opportunity)
- b. (Probe) What is helping to get that point across?
- c. (Probe) How could it be better? Clearer?
- d. (Probe) Would you say this message gives a convincing reason to apply to the NIH?

Message-specific probes

- a. (Probe) What type of job/work environment/company would you expect to be "innovation driven"? What does that mean?
1. What other words/concepts would you use to describe this type of job/work environment/company?
- b. (Probe) What type of job/work environment/company would you expect to "discover what's next?" What does that mean?
1. What other words would you use to describe this type of job/work environment/company?

[Moderator: REPEAT CONCEPT REVIEW AND PROBING]

14. Let's go back to the earlier exercise where we discussed the steps you take when looking for a new job. In what ways, if any, does this concept connect to that process?
15. What is missing in these concepts/What part of researching an employer do these concepts not speak to?
16. Who would you say would respond positively to these concepts?
 - a. (Probe) Who would respond negatively?
 - b. (Probe) Describe who you'd expect to be interested in this concept.
 - c. (Probe) What would somebody who is interested in this concept value?
17. If this concept/these concepts becomes a full advertising campaign, where would you expect to view it?
18. Where would you expect to see the concept on a company's website or careers portal?
19. How would you come across this information when browsing LinkedIn or Facebook?
 - a. (Probe) How likely are you to interact with this content/these posts?
 - b. (Probe) What actions might you take/think about taking if this were a Facebook/LinkedIn ad? Organic post on a timeline?
20. What are the key differences between viewing this concept on a company's website and viewing it on a company's social media?
21. Considering everything we have talked about today, if you had to choose one detail that stands out to you the most when viewing an advertising campaign, what would it be?

Conclusion [2 MINUTES]

[FALSE CLOSE, check if there's any additional questions] Those are all the questions I have for you – is there anything you would like to share that you have not had the chance to before we wrap up? Thank you so much for your participation in this group. I will pass along your helpful feedback. I hope all of you have a wonderful day.