

**Focus Group – Potential Customers**  
**Moderator Guide**  
**[Location]**  
**September \_\_, 2008**  
**Moderator: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Ground rules and Introduction**

- ✓ Thank respondents for taking time out of their schedules
- ✓ Explain purpose of discussion: Working with the folks who design and make the coins used in the United States to make the institution meaningful to you and to fulfill its mission.
- ✓ Tell them how long group will last (2 hours)
- ✓ No right or wrong answers
- ✓ Goal is to hear a variety of viewpoints, not to reach consensus
- ✓ Confidentiality assurance, inform of audio & video taping, observers, notes
- ✓ Speak as loudly as moderator, and speak one at a time
- ✓ Warn talkative and quiet people that everyone gets a chance to speak
- ✓ Observe common courtesy
- ✓ Logistical information on drinks and bathroom use

**(READ:)** This collection has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and if you would like, I can provide you with more information about that approval. The valid OMB control number for this survey is 1525-0012-XX.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, you are not required to respond to a survey like this one unless you are given a valid OMB control

Introductions: State your first name, what you get paid to do, and your experience with coins – use to buy, collect, purchase, gifts, etc.

**I. Awareness of the institution**

- A. What name and words come to mind when you think about the organization that makes the coins for the United States?
- B. What are the roles or functions that you think this organization performs?  
(MODERATOR: PROBE FOR ALL THREE – Coins, guarding nations reserves and collectables)
- C. I'm going to give you a sheet of paper with four different name options. Given what you know now, please make a check mark by the name that you think is most appropriate to use when referring to this institution:
  - a. U.S. Mint
  - b. US Mint
  - c. United States Mint

- d. The Mint
- D. Now let's discuss what made you choose the name that you chose.
- E. What comes to mind that is unique or different about each of these names?
- F. How does the mint differ from other organizations that produce collectable coins (e.g. Franklin mint)?
- G. Have you ever made a purchase directly from the mint? What did you buy?

## II. Current Perception of the “Brand Personality” of the United States Mint

Now we're going to have some fun. To get us ready to talk about the Mint (the shorthand that we will use *for now* for the name), I'd like us to talk about the idea of “brand.”

- A. Tell me your favorite “brand” of anything and a personality that goes along with it. For example, Maytag has the “personality” of a reliable, trusted, repairman. Southwest Airlines has the personality of a fun, rule-breaking, get the job done pal. What is your favorite brand and its personality?
- B. Now that we have the idea, tell me about the “personality” of the Mint?
- C. What makes you say that?
- D. What is positive about that personality?
- E. What do you wish would be different about it?

## III. Aspirational positioning

A. Now that we have a picture of what you each thinks of the Mint brand currently, we are going to talk about what the Mint might be, could be, or maybe already is in your mind. This entire exercise is about “Brand positioning.” The folks at the mint have come up with three different statements about what this mint intends to be. That means that they will be communicating this, designing products and programs to support it and even making certain that the men and women who work for the Mint will live up to it. What we are doing is to try and help them understand what each of these statements would mean to citizens, if they are believable, and most importantly if the mint lived up to these – would you care? So just like before when we started with a brand and you told me about the personality that goes along with that, I'm going to read to you (and it will be written on a flip chart) a statement. I would like you to tell me about the “personality” that would go along with each one.

- a. To individuals who want to share in the American Spirit (that would be you!), the US Mint is trusted to create and supply American coins and medals that embody beauty, history, and quality for daily use and to treasure for a lifetime.
  - i. What is the personality shown by this statement?
  - ii. Do you believe it?
  - iii. Do you care about it?
  - iv. Are there any pieces that you would add or delete?
- b. The US Mint has been trusted since 1792 to exclusively embody the American spirit through the creation of authentic, beautiful, highest

quality American coins and medals to use daily and cherish over a lifetime.

- i. What is the personality shown by this statement?
  - ii. Do you believe it?
  - iii. Do you care about it?
  - iv. Are there any pieces that you would add or delete?
  - v. What is different, in your mind between this and the first?
- c. To individuals who want to share in the American Spirit, the US Mint is the trusted government institution since 1792 that provides beautiful and highest quality coins and medals to all Americans for daily use and to treasure for a lifetime.
- i. What is the personality shown by this statement?
  - ii. Do you believe it?
  - iii. Do you care about it?
  - iv. Are there any pieces that you would add or delete?
  - v. What is different, in your mind, between this and the first two?
- d. If forced to choose just one of these and its “personality,” which one would you choose? What makes you say that?

B. Now thinking about the statement that you just chose above, let’s think about what support points matter to you. Since this is what the Mint wants to be to you, which of the following 1) support the statement and 2) is something that matters to you. We will first vote on your 5 support points that support or link up to your statement above and that matter to you. Then we will go back and discuss them in order of their importance to this group.

- Highest quality
  - Defined by experts
- Artistic excellence
  - Winner of international and national coin awards
- Timeless value
  - Purchase for legacy collection
  - Worth at least face value
- Exclusively backed and protected by the U.S. Government
  - Established by the Congress in 1792
- Captures American history/ “Historic”
- Connected to all Americans
  - Through daily use
- Established by America’s founding fathers in 1792
- Enables commerce
- Trusted

- C. Tell me why \_\_\_\_\_ (from above) supports the brand statement you chose.
- D. What is it about that support item that matters to you?
- E. What does it mean in your own words?

#### **IV. Explore logos and taglines**

- A. We are now going to look at some logos that have been used by the Mint, are being used by the mint or might be used. Again considering the statement that you chose above as the base “personality” of the Mint, do any of these logos portray the picture of what the Mint intends to be?
- B. Which one(s)? Why do you pick those?  
(Note: We need mounted versions of the Mint logos)
- C. Now looking at some “tag lines” about the mint, tell me which, if any, represent the statement that you chose above. What makes you say that?  
(Note: We need mounted versions of past and possible tag lines to minimally include “To use daily and cherish for a lifetime” as well as the current, “\_\_\_\_\_.”)

#### **V. Final view on the positioning and its impact on you.**

- A. Finally, in thinking about the positioning/personality statement that you chose above, would this create more, less or the same level of interest in you in purchasing coins and medals from the Mint or collecting?

#### **VI. Revisiting the Name**

Having spent almost two hours discussing the positioning of the Mint brand and the accompanying personality, let’s look again at the preferred name. It is absolutely fine to have the same opinion as at the beginning of our conversation. Knowing what you know now about what the Mint want to be for you and all individuals who want to share in the American Spirit, which name should the Mint use in the future?

- a. U.S. Mint
- b. US Mint
- c. United States Mint
- d. The Mint

#### **VII. Closing**

- A. To close, let’s go around the room, and have each of you share one piece of advice that you would give to the U.S. Mint about what they could do to convey this new brand positioning/personality to you that would make a difference.
- B. Thanks!