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## Focus Group Procedure

In advance, set up the two easels with chart paper pads, one with the questions displayed one at a time in sequence, the other blank for recording participants' responses. Put pens, pencils, markers, and sheets of plain paper around the table.

### **A. Introduction**

At the beginning of the session, follow these steps:

- a) Introduce yourself and welcome the participants
- b) Have participants introduce themselves and complete and display their name markers
- c) Explain the purpose of the focus group (this is to reinforce what participants have already been told)
- d) Emphasize that the report will not link ideas to individuals
- e) Distribute the essential skills handout(s) and introduce the skills [Note that they are also called “transferable skills” — because once they are learned, they can support activity in a number of different situations — and “Velcro skills” — because other skills can build on them (stick to them).]
- f) Clarification Q & A as required
- g) Ask permission to audio-record the session so you can double-check information if necessary. The recording will be for your use only and will be destroyed when the TNA is complete.

### **B. Essential Skills**

Display and read each of the questions from the first chart pad. Ask participants to respond, giving you time to record their ideas on the second chart pad. Be sure to give everyone time to add their ideas. If some are being silent, ask for their ideas.

Q.1 Let's start with the “Skills for Success” handout. What are the most important essential skills that you need in your work?

- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.2 Reading

- (a) What sort of reading do you have to do in your work?
- (b) How important is the reading?
- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.3 Writing

- (a) What sort of writing do you have to do in your work?
- (b) How important is the writing?
- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Follow-up to Reading & Writing

- Distribute “Reading & Writing in Your Work” handout
- Ask participants to complete the form & return it

Q.4 Numeracy

- How do you use numeracy (math) in your work?
- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.5 Digital

- How do you use digital devices in your work?
- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.6 Problem Solving

- (a) What sort of problem solving do you have to do in your work?
- (b) Please give examples.
- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.7 Communication

- (a) Who are the people or groups you have to communicate with in your work?
- (b) What is the purpose of the communication?
- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.8 Collaboration

- (a) What teams do you work on?

- (b) What are their purposes?
  - [Whole group—discuss]
  - [Facilitator—record]
- Q.9 Creativity & Innovation
- (a) Have you sometimes seen ways to improve work processes?
  - (b) Were the changes made?
  - (c) Did they work out as you had thought?
  - [Whole group—discuss]
  - [Facilitator—record]

- Q.10 Adaptability
- (a) What changes in the workplace have you seen in the past that have required retraining or improved skills?
  - (b) Was it difficult to adapt to the changes?
  - (c) What supports were you given to help you adapt to the changes?
  - (d) Were there other supports that you wish had been available?
  - [Whole group—discuss]
  - [Facilitator—record]

### **C. Perceived Need of Training**

- Q.11 What changes do you see coming at a future time that may require further training?
- [Whole group—discuss]
  - [Facilitator—record]
- Q.12 In which essential skill areas would you like to see additional training (either for yourself or others)?
- [Whole group—discuss]
  - [Facilitator—record]
- Q.13 What other types of training would you like to see offered?
- [Whole group—discuss]
  - [Facilitator—record]

### **D. Implementation**

- Q.14 (a) What would be a good time to hold courses?

(b) How many hours per week?

(c) Over what period?

- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.15 What could workers and management contribute to the program?

- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.16 What, if any, do you feel may be barriers to people participating in courses?

- [Whole group—brainstorm]
- [Facilitator—record]

Q.17 On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 high), how interested do you think people would be in a course?

- [Whole group—discuss]
- [Facilitator—record]

## **E. Closure**

- a) Thank participants for their input.
- b) Remind participants that the report will not link ideas to individuals.
- c) Invite participants to send an email if there's anything they'd like to add (provide the email address).