

**Example of a Moderator Guide**

This moderator guide was adapted from research that was conducted for a large apartment complex. Focus groups were conducted with current tenants. In essence, there were two guiding research questions:

(1) What are the concerns tenants have with the experience of requesting and receiving apartment maintenance?

(2) How strongly does the maintenance experience influence the decision to renew the lease?

The moderator guide begins with some “intro” questions. Rather than jumping right into the questions of interest, participants are given a chance to get comfortable with some “ice-breaker” questions. The intro questions also give the moderator a chance to see how talkative each participants is, helping the moderator see who will need to be drawn out and who will need to be dialed back during the conversation.

This moderator guide follows good principles for focus groups:

(1) Ask open-ended questions, not closed-ended questions

(2) Ask general questions before specific ones

(3) Ask positive questions before negative ones

(4) Keep questions simple (avoiding jargon)

(5) Avoid being overly controlling of the moderator

(6) Rely on the moderator to (a) clarify and (b) probe where necessary

(7) Indicate which topics are more (and less) managerially important

Moderator Guide

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| **Intro** | Your experiences looking for an apartment?  Condition of your apartment at move-in? |
| **Importance** | What is most important to you when looking for an apartment? |
| **Recommend** | If a friend were looking to rent an apartment, would you recommend renting at your current apartment complex? Why or why not? |
| **Best/Worst** | The **best** thing that you’ve experienced in your relationship w/ your landlord?  The **worst** thing that you’ve experienced in that relationship? |
| **Maintenance**  **\*\* Important \*\*** | Tell me about where you live. How well is your building maintained?  How important is the appearance of the common areas of your building?  What improvements would you make to your buildings?  Have you requested maintenance?  The best thing about the maintenance experience?  The worst thing about it?  Were your maintenance experiences ...  … prompt to start?  … prompt to finish the job?  … courteous?  … efficient?  … professional?  … knowledgeable? |
| **Lease**  **experience** | What were your experiences with signing the lease?  Good things about the experience? Bad things?  When you signed your lease, how well was the paperwork explained to you? |
| **Renewal**  **Decision**  **\*\* Important \*\*** | Will you be renewing your lease? Why or why not?  How will you make this decision?  - What will you be considering?  - Who will influence your decision? |