WHAT IS A FOCUS GROUP?
A structured discussion protocol that brings together a group of people, typically unfamiliar with each other but with a common interest, to give their opinions on a particular topic or area.

FOCUS GROUP VS QUESTIONNAIRE
Focus groups can capture more qualitative information than a questionnaire because discussion is organized around an interview approach. Questionnaires, however, are better for reaching a much larger audience; you don’t have to schedule face time (virtual or face-to-face).

FOCUS GROUP VS INTERVIEW
A key difference between focus groups and interviews is that focus groups include multiple participants, which allows a discussion with several perspectives about a project or a topic. Unlike interviews, focus groups allow participants to build upon one another’s responses and come up with ideas they may not have thought of on their own.

A FOCUS GROUP IS ORGANIZED
» generally for groups of six to eight.
» with a facilitator experienced in focus-group processes.
» as a facilitated interview-based interaction that also allows for group discussion.
» to be brief; however, it should last at least one hour.
» to record the discussion and its outcomes.

USE IT TO
» test assumptions for improved decision-making.
» test target audience response/reaction to products/services/campaigns before they are launched.
» support development of a strategic focus.
» encourage participants to build on each other’s perspectives.

HOW TO USE IT
» Find an experienced facilitator who can
  › be objective.
  › listen well.
  › draw people into conversations in a group environment.
  › foster an atmosphere that enables information sharing.
  › Prepare an introduction script that
    › explains the purpose.
    › explains how the focus group will be conducted.
    › describes the facilitator’s role.
  › Make sure you explain to participants how you will capture their opinions.
  › Consider using consent forms, especially if the focus group is to be audio or video recorded.
  › Select a room that is conducive to discussion.
  › Prepare minutes or a summary document in a timely fashion (within three to five days after the focus group session is completed); review carefully before making decisions about next steps.