**Guidelines for conducting a focus group**

**What is a focus group?**

An important tool for acquiring feedback regarding your business or product. It is usually an informal discussion or interview, where a small number of people (4-8) are brought together to focus on a specific [product](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/product.html) or [topic](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/topic.html).

Focus groups [aim](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/aim.html) at having unstructured discussion instead of [individual](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/individual.html) [responses](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/response.html) to [formal](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/formal.html) questions, thus allowing more input as to the participants’ values and preferences.

It can be as informal as asking friends over for an hour or so, serving food and perhaps wine. Make it fun! What matters is that there is flexibility for honest feedback.

**Who to invite**?

Invite your friends, family, or trusted customers. Make sure you invite folks that are positive about you and your business AND folks you consider to be in your target market. Keep the naysayers to a minimum, but do listen for concerns, competition, etc. that you might not have thought about.

**What to ask**?

This depends on your product and your participants. Here are some ideas:

* Would you use this product or service? Is there anything you would like to change about it?
* Is it clear what I’m selling?
* What aspects of this product/service do you like the best?
* What do you think are the intangible aspects of my product/service (i.e., the what am I really selling idea)
* How much would you pay for this product or service?
* Who do you see as my competition?
* What would be a good location for my business?
* What logical expansions of my product or service do you see?