Module 5 – Clients and Project Management

As a recruiter your clients can come from a variety of companies but the following are the most common. The company that originally commissioned the research is called “the end client”. If the recruitment is straightforward the end client might come directly to the recruiter. Alternatively, the end client could commission a research agency to develop the methodology for the research, conduct the research and present the findings. The research agency could then go directly to a recruiter, or if the recruitment is complex, or over multiple locations, they might appoint a fieldwork agency to organise the venues and the recruitment. The fieldwork agency might appoint one recruiter or several recruiters to recruit in different locations.

Contracts between clients and recruiters

Your client is the company who asks you to do the recruitment. Your contract will be with them and all queries should be directed to them.

You should always have a written contract between yourself as the recruiter and your client. This is a requirement within the MRS Code of Conduct:

- Rule 9: Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of themselves, clients and sub-contractors are governed by a written contract and/or internal commissioning document.

It is also a requirement within the Data Protection Act 1998 (and the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation) for the collection of personal data to be regulated by the use of formal contracts and policies.

Accepting a project for recruitment

Recruiters have a vital role to play in the outcomes of research projects. Once you have accepted a project for recruitment your client will expect you to be responsible for the management of the recruitment. Your role will be to recruit participants to the correct quotas, follow data protection legislation, and ensure that participants turn up well prepared and on time with any pre-tasks completed.

The communication that you have at the beginning of a project is key to a successful outcome. Establish at the outset when your client wants any recruitment to be completed and at what intervals they want updates. Some clients may only want to know the number of participants you have recruited each day, whilst others may want recruited participants’ profiles on a daily update.

Clients should brief you on any project’s aims and objectives. They should provide written details of their exact requirements with the number of participants required, dates, times, venues, incentives and any pre- or post-tasks. These requirements are commonly called “the spec” or “the brief”. The client should provide you with a questionnaire, “the screener”, for use when recruiting participants, although some companies do not write screeners and may want you to recruit directly from their spec.

Once you have received all the documents for a project read them through carefully. Clients may have forgotten to tell you, or miscommunicated, vital information that impacts on your ability to recruit for a project e.g. that there is a two week pre-task starting tomorrow! Always cross-reference the spec with the screener to make sure that the quotas, timings etc. listed on the spec match the ones in the screener. If there is any discrepancy don't try to second guess which is correct, always check with your client.

Be inquisitive about the types of participants the client is looking for as this will help you when you start screening. The more you can ask about the research project and the types of people the client wants to speak to the better – they may even have a pen portrait or person specification that they would be happy to share with you. If there are attitudinal statements spend some time asking questions around them so that you can really understand what attitudes or behaviours are required. All this additional information will offer you reassurance that participants are on spec when you are screening.

Clients occasionally want recruiters to start recruitment before all quotas or venues (if applicable) are finalised. It is advisable not to start recruitment until everything is signed-off by your client as the spec may change and quotas may be different which means you may have to cancel participants you have already recruited. You may then find yourself in a conversation with your client about payment for those participants. Always make sure you get final sign off in writing rather than verbally for this very reason.

Sometimes a client may ask you to recruit a project that you don't think you can fulfil. You need to assess what, in your professional judgement, is achievable and be honest with the client at the beginning of such discussions. It is worth negotiating about what you can achieve e.g. you may be able to find three high net worth participants but not two groups of eight. You may wish to agree with the client that you accept the project on a "best efforts" basis. The client may then split the recruitment between two or more recruiters.

Clients may want projects recruited using certain recruitment methods and some clients may specify that they do not want recruiters to use social media for recruitment. When recruiting from a client list or database that has email addresses it is tempting to email the list. However, there are legal data restrictions as to whether you can email people on a client list or database, depending on what contact methods were agreed initially and also consent permissions in place (see the separate module for data protection). Never email a client list or database without prior agreement from your client.

What you should expect from clients before recruitment starts:

- A briefing on a project's aims and objectives.
- A schedule with the number of participants required, quota profile (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity etc.) dates, times, venues, incentives and any pre- or post-tasks.
- The ratio of gender requirements if recruiting a mixed sex group.

- The pre-task or post-task document or details so that you can read it and answer any queries from participants.
- Any unusual or unexpected aspects planned during a research session e.g. physical activity.
- Whether pre-tasks are to be sent to moderators before any research session or to be brought along to a session.
- If recruiting individual depth interviews (IDIs), or telephone interviews, dates and times when moderators are available.
- If recruiting for online sessions, or telephone interviews, confirmation as to who is responsible for sending joining/logging in instructions, what email address will be used to send them and when they will be sent.
- A clear explanation of the type of online tool and/or platform being used so you are equipped to brief participants.
- Arrangements for chasing participants for online sessions if they are not contributing, or not contributing fully, once sessions have started.
- Arrangements for paying incentives for online sessions, telephone interviews or if incentives aren't being paid at an attended session. Participants need to be told these arrangements during initial recruitment calls otherwise a lot of time can be wasted taking calls from participants later.
- Who is responsible for sending confirmation emails or letters to recruited participants? This particularly applies to client samples where confirmations may need to be sent by the client. If a confirmation email comes from a private email address it may look like spam, or a scam.
- Details of client incentive payment. This should include any requirements regarding non-payment – both for participants and recruiters. For example what happens if participants arrive late to a session due to circumstances beyond their control e.g. tube disruption in London – will participants still be paid? Will you be paid for the recruitment?
- How much clients will pay you per participant recruited. Policies for paying you (or not) for participants who have confirmed but don't attend.
- If using hostess home facilities amounts to be paid per hour or session and whether this will be paid to hostesses after sessions or is to be added to your pay claims or invoices. There is no set amount for this but remember that most moderators tend to arrive well before the beginning of sessions and you may need to charge for this time as well.
- If using hostess home facilities whether any products or materials will be arriving before the session. If a hostess is required to wait in for delivery you will need to cost for this in your initial quote for services.
- If perishable products, or products which require refrigeration, need to be delivered to a hostess home facility make sure well in advance that the hostesses have the capability to store the products correctly.
- If using hostess home facilities what refreshments are required and how much will be paid for any refreshments.
- If using hostess home facilities, or for in home interviews, how many observers will be attending, if any. Moderators sometimes bring clients with them and it could be intimidating for a sole participant if they weren't advised of this beforehand.
- If the client is conducting pre-checks when they will be completed. There needs to be sufficient time to sort out queries about quotas or to re-recruit if a participant is off spec.
- When your pay claim or invoice will be paid.

And after the market research sessions are completed:

- Feedback on the quality of recruitment, any participants who didn't meet the quota or any participants who were late or a no show. Always ask for feedback if you don't receive any.

What the client will expect from you before and during recruitment:

- That you will read the paperwork carefully and raise any concerns immediately.
- That you understand the subject matter of any research. This is particularly relevant where research is about new technologies that you have no experience of. An internet search may prove useful but always check with clients if you are uncertain about the research subject matter.
- That you will start recruitment early enough to identify any problems and feedback to clients as soon as possible.
- That you will be pro-active with solutions to problems e.g. "I can't find enough participants aged 20-24 years with three children but if the age was increased to 20-30 it would be no problem."
- That you don't swop the order of sessions without client permission. It could be that an end client is coming to see a particular group and can only attend at the specified time.
- That you will provide regular updates and the completed recruitment profiles according to the timescales agreed and if you are unable to do that inform the client so that they are aware of this.
- That you don't hand back a project that you are unable to recruit with insufficient time for clients to find replacement recruiters.
- That you will remind participants the day before any session is due to take place, and if there is a pre-task check, that participants have received and completed it.
- That you will replace any participants who cancel before a session where it is possible to do so.
- That you will be flexible about reasonable requests e.g. if hostessing at home, ringing for taxis for the moderator, etc.
- And if your experience tells you that something won't be achievable or give the best results, offer your advice, especially if you have recruited similar types of projects or consumers in the past. To a new researcher the information may be very valuable. But remember never to compromise another client's confidentiality.

Additional services that you may be asked to do

Recruiters may be asked to do additional tasks or provide services apart from recruiting participants. You may be willing to do these but should cost for them separately. There are some requirements that arise from additional requirements and some potential pitfalls you should be aware of.

- **Recommend venues.** You can suggest venues that you have used before but it is the client's responsibility to make sure that they are suitable for their purposes.
- **Book venues.** It is advisable for the client to book venues. If you book a venue in your name you may be liable for payment.
- **Provide incentives.** Incentives should be provided by your client. If you agree to provide the incentives you should agree a handling fee with the client, typically between 10%-20% of the total of the incentives.
- **Note-taking.** This is usually charged at the same rate as the incentive for a session. If an incentive for a two hour group is £50 a note-taker would get £50 as well. Notes are usually

input straight onto a laptop and should be available to the moderator at the end of the session.

- **Be a waitress.** If a client wants help with a tasting session e.g. giving out samples, clearing away, etc. you should agree a cost for this service.
- **Childminding for participants' children whilst they are in a research session**. Recruiters are not recommended to offer childminding services unless they are suitably qualified and have all the necessary legal checks in place.
- **Cooking.** There are strict food safety requirements about the preparation of food See MRS guidance on preparing food and drink for research purposes: https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/Food%20and%20Drink%20Hall%20Test%20Check%20List.pdf

General rules for screening participants

The recruitment rules in this section apply to all market and social research projects irrespective of whether they are online, groups or IDIs.

Excluding potential participants due to previous participation in research

Clients may have their own rules on taking participants who have taken part in market or social research previously so make sure that you know your clients' repeat or previous attendance criteria. Some clients may not want participants who have attended a qualitative research event in the preceding six months, or in the previous year, or have ever done research on the same subject. However, it is always worth checking if clients can relax their rules if the type of research being undertaken is different to that previously undertaken or if you are struggling with recruitment, especially with hard to reach participants. For instance if you find a participant who has a specific make and model of a new car the client may not be concerned that they did an online session on supermarkets six months ago. Always be up front and honest with your client about this and ask them if they are happy for you to recruit using such assumptions.

You are allowed to keep records of participants (with participant consent) who attended previous research sessions including who the client was and the subject areas being researched. This is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

All participants should be unknown to each other unless the client has specified otherwise. Clients may specify if they require you to recruit members of a family or friendship pairs. Snowballing, where a recruited participant suggests others who might be eligible, is not usually allowed by clients except in specific circumstances. Exceptions to this might be recruiting in a specific sector e.g. Heads of Departments in schools where a participant might contact a local networking group on the recruiter's behalf, or for a minority sport or interest. There may be situations sometimes where you are struggling to find participants but feel you can get them if it is snowballed. If this is the case always check with the client first that they are happy for you to proceed on this basis.

Excluding potential participants due to occupation

Some clients have participant recruitment policies which do not allow participants to be recruited (or their close friends or members of their immediate family) who work in sectors, industries and/or competing businesses related to the subject being researched. In such cases, at the beginning of screening such participants must be identified and removed from any recruitment exercises. The reason for these exclusions is that clients want unbiased opinions from the participants and not opinions from participants who know either research or are familiar with a particular industry or business being researched. Research sessions may reveal prototype products so it is especially important that you don't recruit anyone who works for a competitor to an end client.

Social Grades

This is one of the areas of recruitment that new recruiters find difficult to understand as there seem to be a lot of rules, some interpretation of the rules is required and then there are some exceptions to the rules! The following information gives you guidelines but it will take experience for social grading to become second nature to you.

The social and market research sector, marketing and advertising industries use social grades as a 'common currency' for social classification. For recruiters it is important to understand how this works as you will usually be asked to recruit participants according to this system. The classification gives every household, or person, a grade usually based upon the occupation and employment status of the Chief Income Earner in that household.

MRS is responsible for maintaining and updating social grades using occupational groupings. They publish a booklet called Occupational Groupings, A Job Dictionary. This is the basis for social grading participants and the social and market research industry use it as their standard. The publication is available from the Market Research Society - www.mrs.org.uk at £20 per copy (correct at May 2017).

Social grading on occupation is a three stage process where you need to:

- Determine the household a participant lives in. A household consists of one or more people who live in the same dwelling place and also share meals or living accommodation.
- Determine who the Chief Income Earner is in that household. This is the person in the household with the largest income. This can come from any source - employment, pensions, state benefits.
- Then allocate a social grade to the Chief Income Earner according to the occupation group they are in. This will be the social grade of the whole household including your participant. There are six occupation groups:

A	Professionals; very senior managers in business; top-level civil servants. Retired people who worked in a grade A job. People whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade A job.	Approximately **4%** of the population
B	Middle-management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications. Principal officers in local government and the civil service. Top management or owners of small businesses and educational and service establishments. Retired people who worked in a grade B job. People whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade B job.	Approximately **23%** of the population
C1	Junior management, owners of small establishments and all other non-manual workers.	Approximately **27%** of the population

	Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements. Retired people who worked in a grade C1 job. People whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade C1 job.	
C2	Skilled manual workers. Manual workers with responsibility for other people. Retired people who worked in a grade C2 job and who now receive an occupational pension. Retired people whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade C2 job and who now themselves receive a pension based on that job.	Approximately **21%** of the population
D	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, apprentices and trainees of skilled workers. Retired people who worked in a grade D job and who now receive an occupational pension. Retired people whose spouse or civil partner worked in a grade D job and who now themselves receive a pension based on that job.	Approximately **16%** of the population
E	Long-term recipients of state benefits. Unemployed for more than six months (otherwise classify on previous occupation). Off sick for six months or more (unless they are still being paid by their employer). Casual workers and those without a regular income. Intermittent workers in receipt of income support.	Approximately **9%** of the population

Source: – Main table - Market Research Society Occupation Groupings, A Job Dictionary. 7th edition. 2010

Source: - Percentages - British National Readership Survey. 2008

There are some occupations and life stages where the social grade isn't immediately obvious such as:

- **Students.** If living away from the family home they are always graded as C1 whatever the occupation of their parents.
- **People sharing accommodation** e.g. young people all in work living in a flat or house share who pay their own proportion of the bills and provide their own food. They are graded on their own occupations.
- **Retired people.** If they receive only the standard basic rate retirement pension they are classified as E. If they have a company pension, private pension, state earnings related pension (SERPS) or who have private means they are graded on their previous occupation. If participants' give their occupation as retired always ask what their occupation was before retirement.
- **Widowed, divorced or separated people.** They are graded according to their own occupation.
- **Cohabiting couples.** They are treated as being related for classification purposes.
- **Managers.** The term "manager" covers a whole range of occupations and you will often need to do additional questioning to find out exactly what it encompasses. For instance a sole trader with a market stall working part-time may designate themselves as a "Managing Director". This probably won't fit the client's expectation of a B participant.

- Occasionally a client may want the participant to be socially graded on their own occupation immaterial of the occupation of the Chief Income Earner in their household.

Working Status

Working status is defined as follows:

- Full-time work = 30+ hours
- Part-time work = 8-29 hours
- Non-working people = less than 8 hours per week
- Maternity/paternity leave. Clients' vary as to whether they wish to include participants on parental leave. Although their social grade won't change, the nature of a research subject might require participants who are actively working.

Pre-tasks/Post-tasks

Pre-tasks are exercises which are conducted in advance of market research sessions. The purpose of a pre-task varies so always make sure you understand what the aim of pre-tasks are before you start recruitment. Typically a pre-task could be a simple warm-up exercise before a group, a diary or scrapbook to create a log of usage or behaviour, either in a physical format or digitally, or a visit to a store to refresh participants' memories or make comparisons between stores. Pre-tasks help researchers understand the lifestyles and motivations of participants before meeting them. You should always make participants aware of any pre-tasks at the recruitment stage because if participants are not willing to complete such tasks they would disqualify as participants.

Check the format of any pre-task e.g. if a task is in PowerPoint, not all participants may be able to open it and alternative formats may need to be supplied such as posting the task.

If a pre-task requires downloading a mobile app check with clients what version of a mobile operating system is required. Older operating systems may not be compatible with all client-supplied mobile apps.

Pre-tasks make a major contribution to research findings, they are included in project analysis sessions and researchers will often include snapshots of the pre-task responses in final reports to end clients. They are usually incentivised separately and may appear to be optional but they are usually mandatory to complete and this, along with the importance of the pre-task in the overall project, should be explained to participants. It is also important to accurately inform participants how long they are expected to spend on a pre-task, i.e. if it is a three day diary and they will be required to spend twenty minutes a day, participants must be told this at the recruitment stage and agree to it in order to qualify for the session.

Post-tasks are exercises that are conducted after research sessions. All participants may be expected to complete such tasks or clients may select a few participants to take part. Check when and how payment for post-tasks will be made.

Confirmations

Once participants have been screened and accepted for a research session, a confirmation letter or email must be sent to them confirming the day, date, time, venue, incentive, pre-task, any particular arrangements for that project and a contact number.

It is useful to include within confirmations a website link to venues used for research as these will usually include information such as a map of the venue, directions, parking arrangements, etc.

Ensuring participant attendance

There is nothing worse than spending hours recruiting participants for them then not to attend. You need to satisfy yourself that you have done everything possible to encourage attendance. Different types of sessions have different confirmation and reminder requirements so below are some checklists for what participants need to know.

For all types of sessions

- The MRS Code of Conduct stipulates that participants have the right to withdraw from research at any point. Advise all participants during recruitment to let you know as soon as possible if they are unable to attend so that you can re-recruit.
- Confirmation communications should be sent as soon as possible after recruitment.
- Confirmation communications should always have a contact number for venues or moderators in case participants get lost going to a venue or have trouble logging into an online session.
- If you are emailing participants confirmation details ask them to reply to the email so that you can see it has been received.
- If a pre-task is sent, ask participants to look at tasks as soon as they receive it and get back to you as soon as possible if they have any queries or won't have time to complete it.
- Reminder telephone calls or texts should be done the day before the session in plenty of time to replace anyone who cancels. If a participant doesn't reply keep trying them.

For online sessions

- Confirmation communications should include any additional technical information such as joining/logging in details. If such details are coming directly from clients include the email address they are coming from and when participants should expect to receive such communications.
- For online blogs/diaries always state exactly how much input will be required from participants as they won't get full payment (or any payment) if it isn't completed.
- Confirmation communications should include type of incentive e.g.(including amount), and arrangements when the participant should expect to receive incentives.

For telephone interviews

- Confirmation communications should include relevant telephone numbers that are to be used for telephone interviews (to avoid being screened out by participants) and who will be telephoning them.
- Confirmation communications should include type of incentive (including amount), and arrangements when the participant should expect to receive incentives.

For in home interviews

- Confirmation communications should include the name of the interviewer, the company name and the telephone number they will be calling from.

For children sessions

- Responsible adult consent forms need to be signed before any child attends a research session. The signed form is usually brought to the session.
- Confirmation communications should include type of incentive (including amount), and arrangements when the participant i.e. the child should expect to receive incentives. Parents must have consented to any incentive arrangements during recruitment.

Venues

Hostess homes

- You may use your home or a hostess venue for holding research as long as it is suitable e.g. has suitable access if any participants have mobility restrictions.
- Check if there are any parking restrictions so that participants can be advised accordingly.
- You should take advice about public liability insurance before using a venue for research.
- Your role or your hostess's role is vital. If you have agreed to hostess do not delegate it to partners, children or friends. You need to be there to welcome people, organise refreshments and keep waiting participants happy and most importantly contacting participants who haven't arrived.
- Any room that is used to hold a research session must be a separate, private room which is isolated from other rooms to avoid interruptions.
- If there is a telephone in a room unplug it (with permission) otherwise calls coming through may create a disturbance during any research.
- On arrival moderators may need to arrange his or her materials and prepare themselves. Participants should be assembled in another room until moderators are ready to start. Where there are second groups, participants should not be able to overhear moderators in other rooms or see any ads or display material before the research starts.
- Once in progress, research sessions should not be not be interrupted unless participants are running late and moderators have instructed you to bring them in.
- Please make sure that every participant signs a signature sheet to confirm receipt of their incentives. This must be done just before participants depart and most moderators will have their own signature sheet.
- Refreshments are usually served to participants on arrival while they are being assembled or sometimes served in the location for research sessions before moderators begin any research. Please check with your client prior to the research to confirm what refreshments need to be provided and how. Always check the dietary requirements of participants especially if they have any allergies, intolerances, are vegetarian or vegan, or because of their religious beliefs.

Hotels and meeting rooms

- Recruiters are not usually expected to book hotels or meeting rooms although you may be asked to recommend venues that you have used before.

- It is advisable not to send participant profiles to hotels or meeting rooms as you won't have a contract with them and if there is a data breach you, as the data controller, would be responsible.

Viewing Facilities

- Recruiters are not expected to book viewing facilities.
- It is advisable not to send participant profiles to viewing facilities as you won't have a contract with them and if there is a data breach you, as the data controller, would be responsible.

Observers

- Whatever venue is used participants must be told who is observing. If there are to be observers from an end client, but the end client wishes to remain anonymous, participants must be told this at the recruitment stage. Participants can then decide if they wish to take part on this basis.
- However, where the sample universe is small, e.g. in business-to-business (B2B) or employee research, issues of identification may need to be taken into account to prevent adversely affecting participants' interests and/or wellbeing. In these circumstances, Rule 43 of the MRS Code of Conduct applies:

> *Rule 43 There are some situations where observers could adversely affect participants' interests and/or wellbeing and in such circumstances, members must*
>
> *a. ensure that participants are told at an appropriate stage the identity of any observer who might be present during the exercise.*
>
> *b. where observers may know participants, ensure that participants are informed before the start of the data collection that they are to be observed, with a warning that the observers may include clients who already know them.*
>
> *c. where observers know, or are likely to know, participants, ensure that observers are introduced before the data collection begins and participants are given a chance to withdraw.*

Incentives

With the increase in online market and social research sessions it is important that incentives are paid when promised. Otherwise you will receive a lot of telephone calls from unhappy participants.

From the outset of a project ensure you have confirmed the following with your client:

- Who is providing the incentives.
- By what method the incentive will be paid by i.e. cash, cheque, bank transfer, voucher etc. Client goods, services or vouchers to purchase client goods or services must not be used as incentives for research projects or provided as gifts for participants.
- When incentives are due to be paid e.g. at the end of the group or depth or in the case of online or telephone interviews when exactly they will be paid.

- The client policy on paying incentives if a session is cancelled. If a client's policy is not to pay incentives for cancelled sessions this should be communicated to participants at the recruitment stage. However, if participants have incurred costs in order to attend a session cancelled by a client, clients are obliged to cover these expenses, irrespective of their incentive policy. This is covered in rule 6 of the MRS Code of Conduct:

  > *Rule 6 – members must take all reasonable precautions to ensure that participants are not harmed or adversely affected by the member's professional activities.*

  (This rule includes all types of harm including financial harm).
- If incentives are to be paid by bank transfer after research sessions ask clients if there is also the possibility of paying by cheque as some participants are reluctant to give personal bank details to recruiters.
- If recruiting for an online research project make sure that you emphasise to participants that if they don't do all the tasks, forums etc. that they may not be paid the full amount. Give participants an approximate amount of time that they will be expected to take on each activity.
- If cheques are being sent always check the spelling of participant names and addresses.

When things get challenging

Recruiting for market and social research and getting the right participants involves a lot of interacting variables. Add to this tight time schedules and high client expectations then it is inevitable that sometimes things won't go as smoothly as you and your clients expect.

If there is a problem during a research session clients will usually contact you afterwards. Sometimes your clients may refuse to pay for certain participants. It is worth taking the time to look at your processes and reflect on whether there is anything you could have done differently. Also is there anything that your client could have done to help your recruitment process? Below are some common problems and things to consider for future recruitment. Once you have investigated any problems reply to your clients with the facts. Most clients will be grateful for your honesty and a compromise over payment can usually be reached.

Low turnout rate:

- Was the incentive sufficient for the session/pre-task?
- Was the time of the group correct for the demographic? For example a 10.30pm finish time in a city centre for older participants would not be ideal.
- Were reminder calls done in sufficient time to re-recruit?
- Were there problems with public transport, traffic, weather etc?

The participant didn't fit the criteria:

- Did you understand exactly the type of participants, behaviour or lifestyle that your client was looking for?
- Did your client do an in depth briefing with you?
- Was your client's brief and screener adequate for what they wanted?

A participant was over dominant in the session and took over:

- If you have recorded your recruitment listen back to the recording and assess for any clues that you could have picked up on.
- Usually you will have no indication during a recruitment call about a participant's likely behaviour in a research session but if you do experience such problems you may want to exclude such participants from future research.

One or more participants were late:

- Were the directions to the venue clear and was there was a contact number?
- Did you advise the participants to arrive ten to fifteen minutes before the session was due to start?
- Did you advise participants that if they were late they may not be allowed in to the session?

Participant Complaints

Participants usually enjoy market and social research sessions. However, there are times when you will get a complaint and this is usually when the participant feels they have been misled, they have had a bad experience either before or during a group and/or feel they have been treated unfairly. They may think that you have not been transparent with them at the recruitment stage. Some common issues are:

- A client or moderator using audio or visual recording equipment without prior notice to the participant at the recruitment stage. This is not allowed either under the Data Protection Act or the MRS Code of Conduct. If this comes to your attention you must tell the client that they cannot use the recording equipment, unless all of the participants present agree to the recording. It is not acceptable to retrospectively obtain permission from participants to use the recordings after any audio or visual recording has taken place.
- Changing the pre-task, or adding a pre-task, during recruitment. If a participant no longer wants to take part because of these changes you should charge for the recruitment of the participant and also the replacement.
- Being kept longer at a session than stated during recruitment. Participants should get an extra incentive if they are kept significantly longer than they expected. Participants should also be reimbursed if delays have resulted in financial harm e.g. parking tickets, extra childcare costs.

Summary

We hope that this module was useful to you and of help in developing good relationships with your clients. There is now a short test on this module – INSTRUCTIONS REQUIRED

PROCESS REQUIRED FOR FEEDBACK

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT