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## A Guide to Participating in Fieldwork

Thanks for joining our research team in the field. Your participation in this part of the process will benefit the overall results of our collaboration

While fieldwork may appear on the surface to be a straightforward conversation, you will soon see that a lot more is going on. We don't expect you to be an expert interviewer, although you'll find that you get better with practice. Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of your experience, and help us work better together:

- One of us (Portigal Consulting) will be the **lead interviewer**. You will be **second interviewer**. (Kind of like “second chair” on Law and Order!)  
The lead interviewer runs the interview. They also coordinate the participation of the second interviewer.
- **Stay engaged!** Even if you are not asking questions, listen actively. That means thinking about what you are hearing, making eye contact, nodding affirmatively, and taking notes. You aren't just a “fly on the wall” – you are participating.
- Interviews are different from conversation. We'll use a relaxed tone, but we are purposefully guiding the interaction, often thinking several questions ahead. Although you may not see the path the lead interviewer is on, as the second interviewer **it's important not to interject** in a way that can interrupt the flow.
- Write down and hold your questions for the appropriate time. **Interviews unfold like the chapters of a book**. Your questions need to stay within those chapters. It's the job of the lead interviewer to move the interview from one chapter to the next. The lead interviewer will make opportunities – usually at the ends of these chapters – for you to ask questions.
- **We aren't the experts**. The people we are interviewing are the experts. We want to gather their stories and opinions, and to hear what they have to say without influencing them.

Use their language and terminology. If they refer to a product, brand, or feature inaccurately, don't correct them explicitly or implicitly.

- **Use open-ended questions**. Don't presume what you think the answer should be.

Less Good: *“What are three things you liked about using the bus?”*

Good: *“Can you tell me about your experience using the bus?”*

We don't know that they liked anything about their experience on the bus!