ESOMAR 28 QUESTIONS TO HELP BUYERS OF ONLINE SAMPLES

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INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of these 28 Questions is to increase transparency and raise awareness of the key issues for researchers to consider when deciding whether an online sampling approach is fit for their purpose. Put another way, the aim is to help researchers to ensure that what they receive meets their expectations. The questions are also designed to introduce consistent terminology for providers to state how they maintain quality, to enable buyers to compare the services of different sample suppliers. Notes on the context of the questions explain why the questions should be asked and which issues researchers should expect to be covered in the answer.

These new questions replace ESOMAR's "26 Questions to help Research Buyers of Online Samples". ESOMAR has updated the text to recognize the ongoing development of techniques. While some of the questions remain constant, new questions have been added to incorporate new techniques and new technology in this area. In particular, this revision recognises the broad trend within the industry to build online samples from multiple sources rather than relying on a single panel.

It should be noted that these 28 Questions focus on the questions that need to be asked by those buying online samples. If the sample provider is also hosting the data collection you will need to ask additional questions to ensure that your project is carried out in a way that satisfies your quality requirements.

The 28 Questions complement ESOMAR's Guideline to Online Research which was revised in 2011 to add updated legal and ethical guidance and new sections on privacy notices, cookies, downloadable technology and interactive mobile.

COMPANY PROFILE

1. **What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?**

   Oncofocus is a niche firm that caters to the market research and consulting needs of the Healthcare sector in general and to the Oncology domain in particular. At present, we have more than 55,000 verified and active professionals in our panel from the Asia-pacific region.

   We use our panelists for the market research purpose and for developing in-house research papers. Our survey programming team is well-experienced and can code questions of varying complexity. We also provide data processing services to the client.

SAMPLE SOURCES AND RECRUITMENT

2. **Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?**

   Our panel is an actively managed research panel of healthcare professionals (mainly oncology professionals). In case a project involves recruiting low incidence professionals, we do take help of social networks like LinkedIn to recruit potential respondents to our panel.

3. **If you provide samples from more than one source*:* How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?**

   If it is a single country study, we use only one source for sample.

   If it is a multi-country study, there might be a scenario wherein we have to engage third party, after client's approval, for conducting online surveys. In such cases, we ensure that geographies do not overlap. This takes care of possibility of duplication of respondents.

4. **Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?**

   Our panel is used for following two purposes - market research and developing thought papers/ white papers.

5. **How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?**

   We take help of social networking sites like LinkedIn and other public resources like Pubmed to recruit hard to reach target group. This methodology has helped us in reaching out to respondents which fall under incidence rate category of less than 10%.

6. **If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?**

   We only partner with those who are ESOMAR members so to ensure that our partners share similar values as ours. In case we need to involve a third party in our study, we notify client first and only after the client's approval we go ahead with the collaboration.

SAMPLING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

7. **What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?**

   The process starts with the identification of the target population by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria provided by the client. Thereafter, we apply filters to exclude those respondents who have recently (less than a month) participated in a similar type of survey. Once a target population is identified, we bring in randomization process and email invite is shared with selected respondents.

8. **Do you employ a survey router?**

   No, we do not employ survey router.

9. **If you use a router: Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?**

   Not applicable.

10. **If you use a router: What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?**

    Not applicable.

11. **If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?**

    Not applicable.

12. **What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?**

    During the time of registration, we collect basic profile information like name, age, gender, nationality, professional qualifications, medical speciality, and medical registration number. Later on, the panel member is incentivized to enter further details from his personal dashboard.

    The profile information of a panel member is updated every 6 months. This is either done by our panel development team or by the members themselves (request sent by dashboard notification).

13. **Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given**

in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.

The target respondents from the panel are invited via email which mentions about the objective of the study, the key themes in the questionnaire, the confidentiality clause, LOI and the offered incentive amount.

In case we are not able to reach the desired sample size, we contact those panel members via telephone who have not yet opened their email invitation. This is only done for those respondents who have agreed to be contacted by phone.

14. **Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?**

The incentive depends upon the country of the respondent, targeted speciality and the LOI. For example, incentive offered for a 30-minute online survey will be higher for an Oncologist than a GP. We have an incentive matrix which accounts for the above stated variables.

15. **What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?**

To provide an accurate estimate, we require following information –

- Sub-specialty: Giving us complete information in the beginning will be better for the project estimate than a general overview, for example asking us to recruit HER2+ metastatic Breast Cancer treaters is better than asking us to recruit metastatic Breast Cancer treater
- Other Inclusion/exclusion criteria like number of years of experience
- Sample size
- Timeline

16. **Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?**
Yes, we measure the respondent satisfaction. But this is done once in a six month instead of after completion of every survey.

Our survey platform generates a top-level report and same can be made available to the client upon request (if agreed during the RFQ stage).

17. **What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?**

The end deliverables are defined during the project commissioning process. In most of the cases, it involves providing clients with a detailed report on response rate, drop-outs, and screen-outs. However, our reports are at a top-level only and we do not provide any identifiable information of our panel members.

DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

18. **Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g. "Don't Know") or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.**

The data check is performed internally by the team responsible for running a particular survey. A survey is flagged to the project manager if –

- a survey has predominantly one type of response (like Don't Know or any of the A/B/C option). The project manager will disqualify the survey
- a survey is finished faster than the average time required to complete a survey. The project manager will review the data and in discussion with client will make a decision if survey results are fit for inclusion

19. **How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?**

    During the registration process, we ask our panel members about the survey frequency they are comfortable with. As per data in our panel, most of the General Physicians are OK if they are contacted once in a month while Oncologists, in majority of the cases, are willing to participate only once in two months.

20. **How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?**

    As we are a healthcare market research company, we rarely come across a professional who is willing to participate multiple times in a month. However, to avoid participation of professional survey takers, we limit participation of a healthcare professionals to one survey a month.

    If client is looking for even more stringency, we can modify our process as per the requirement and exclude target respondents not fitting in the client's criteria.

21. **Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?**

    Yes, we capture participation history (number and type of surveys taken, last survey date, typical time required to respond) of each of our panel member. The panel members can access this from their dashboard. We can also share blinded reports with the clients.

22. **Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?**

    The fact that our panel comprises of highly qualified healthcare professionals means that there is a low possibility of fraudulent respondents. But still, we have created multiple checks like confirming identity by a telephone call or online verification of professional ID so to minimize chances of fraudulent respondents entering our system.

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

23. **Please describe the 'opt-in for market research' processes for all your online sample sources.**

    Our opt-in process depends upon the method by which professionals are recruited to our online panels.

    - Through email/website – This is a double opt-in process. The preliminary information received is verified by directly calling the respondent and taking his inputs on various data-points

- Through conferences – This is a single opt-in process. We do the on-spot registration of the conference attendees who are interested in being part of our panel

24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

The respondents are clearly informed about the confidentiality policy in every project related emails shared to them. Our privacy policy for our respondents can be accessed from our panel website (www.verifothesis.com). It would be apt to mention here that we do not sell our panel to any third party.

25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.
This is of utmost importance as failing in this will result in huge loss of reputation. Our trained executives are aware of the data protection laws. We make sure that our in-house knowledge system on data protection is updated from time to time.

Each of our panel member is provided with a code. All information regarding to them is tagged to this code which means that internal teams have access to only parameters and not the complete profile. In addition to this, we also encrypt the collected data and store it securely in our servers.

26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

We employ three-pronged approach when dealing with sensitive information-

- From the client side: We ensure that the client is fully aware about the risk associated with sharing confidential data in an online survey.
- Form the respondents side: Our registration process requires professionals to agree to our confidentiality clause which disallows them to share any survey information with any other person or via any medium
- Internal technical team: The technical team has capability to disable capturing screenshots, right mouse click function, copy and paste function

27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?
No

28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

No, we do not conduct any research activity which involves children or young people.