ESOMAR 28 Questions To Help Buyers Of Online Sample

Answered by Branded Research Inc &
Branded Surveys

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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?

Branded has over 25 years of online market research experience, sampling, and building and managing online panels. Humanizing data collection by leveraging trusted, social communities, Branded is able to provide reliable and powerful metrics to both consumer and business clients. Through proven and innovative methods, as well as proprietary technologies like Branded Surveys, Branded is able to actively engage with consumers and reach specified target audiences and business profiles, resulting in more precise and complete end data.

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?

Branded Surveys, our proprietary online research community, is a primary source of sample in which we actively coordinate community members looking to participate in market research surveys, product testing, service trials, polls, and focus groups. We leverage social networks, most notably Facebook, and search marketing to recruit for our community of sample. All panelists are verified through local phone and identity databases to ensure the participants are who they say they are. Branded Surveys currently supports panelists in the US, UK, and Canada, for additional reach we've hand-curated trusted partners in our global network. The responsive web is allowing us to reach more international audiences in our geographic expansion.

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?

Branded leverages proprietary technology, such as BrandedID, to ensure the validity of blended responses from Branded Surveys and any partner suppliers. With several technical indications - from IP Address spoofing, to browser detection and response time tracking, to activity modelling

- we are able to check for malicious intent and block respondents before entering the client's research survey. Branded also takes into consideration source bias, and works with the client to ensure balanced sample are deployed for each wave.

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

Branded panels are primarily used to engage community members in targeted market research surveys, product testing, and focus groups.

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

We employ specific tactics to balance incoming sources and ensure hard to reach groups are similarly represented. Our acquisition efforts are laser focused for the many different demographics for common research surveys. We continually test, organize, and analyse the acquisition and activation process to provide highly engaged panelists to our market research partners.

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?

Partner selection is based on capabilities, feasibility, client specification, and budget. Our goal is to provide our clients with the best sample seamlessly from our vetted list of approved partners. Our team works closely with the client to ensure that selected partners meet all requirements. The client is included in the decision making process when qualified partners are brought on to provide additional transparency into respondents being provided. We're able to remove duplicate traffic across partners on the fly so traffic that may overlap won't reach the client's research.

Sampling and Project Management

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

Branded considers the makeup of the target audience when providing insights on how to accurately target a representative sample. Quotas, nested quotas and weighting are implemented to achieve an optimal mix of our community members. After discussions with the client and analysts, we'll coordinate these strategies on a project-to-project basis. Initial sample sends can be used to determine consistency to be delivered at the time of full launch.

8. Do you employ a survey router?

Survey routing is an optimal experience for panel respondents, so Branded utilizes this technology to the highest degree. We continually optimize the profile of our panel and provide clients with richer profiles for which to qualify our community members in their research. We've found timely notifications of available research opportunities to still be a highly-regarded touch point for panelists, and directing them into other timely opportunities with the router allows us to complete relevant studies on all aspects of community members' professional and personal lives.

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?

Priority in the router comes from highly engaging and highly rewarding opportunities for our community members. Performance, client, and audience are taken into account for projects on an individual basis to assess whether or not to prioritize specific surveys. Using rich qualification sets, we can furnish respondents with significantly better opportunities, and reduce fatigue and bias among panelists allocated.

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?

Any indication of suspected bias from router use results in an immediate review, and an institution of a manual invitation process, or removal of the survey in question, if necessary. All surveys within the router have their key metrics monitored throughout the survey run to determine and mitigate potential issues as quickly as possible.

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?

Minimum guard rails are established through negotiation between the client and panelist experience teams. The router is strictly based on this input data and individual project performance to allocate panelists to the best possible opportunities that match their profile.

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?

Demographic and psychographic profiles are kept on all community members, and are updated regularly, so clients have fresh resources for qualifying the Branded community. Extensive sets of qualification questions have been added to facilitate business, consumer, political, entertainment, and leisure projects. These rich data sets allow for precise targeting of niche communities, generally regarded as impossible to target.

When our rich targeting abilities don't quite get our collective teams to comfortable project stats, we'll employ pre-screened targeting to further qualify respondent before they reach the client's research. These collective questions are kept for furthering our profile on the community at large.

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.

Panelists are invited to participate in our research opportunities through invitations and through our proprietary router. Invitations are sent through email, SMS, browser and social network notifications. The invitations include information about the project itself including topic, length of time required and available reward. A simple graphic and unique link to the client's survey is included with each notification. We'll also include an opportunity for the panelist to opt-out of future notifications, reach our member experience team, and find resources for our program's terms, conditions, and privacy policy.

The router itself stands as an always-available notification. When the router is loaded on the panelist's survey dashboard, we immediately call all of our research partners and ask for all pertinent opportunities. The available projects are ranked, displayed to the panelist – with only the first opportunity presented initially – and they're invited to begin right away. After completing the initial survey, they can continue into the next until they've exhausted their quota for the time being.

Rewards are delivered on an aggregate basis, so notifications are sent with the amount to be received and we'll adjust for local currency and respective denominations with retailers when the panelist is ready to claim their reward.

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?

Community members can claim rewards like cash payments to their bank account, Paypal or electronic gift cards to a variety of retailers including restaurants, clothing, home goods, and movie theaters. Surveys are designated with individual rewards that can be collected as points, with longer surveys and surveys with niche targeting typically offering larger rewards. Individual requests for rewards are analysed for approval of responses from the client, accurate geographic and demographic information provided, and uniqueness of accounts and transactions within any specific time period.

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

In order to provide the best opportunity to match our community members to a client's projects we'll request some information to determine feasibility:

- Target audience
- Expected number of completed responses
- Expected incidence rate
- Expected time in field
- Survey length
- Type of survey
- Any desired quotas or expected representation

16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

Satisfaction among our community members is a top priority. We constantly optimize efforts to communicate new processes and acquaint new panelists with Branded Surveys. We maintain an open dialogue and adhere to a general policy of transparency with the community. On regular intervals, we survey our panelists for their direct opinion of our research community. This feedback is not directly available to clients, but we're happy to accommodate any requests for this type of information.

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

Our standard reporting includes:

- When the survey launched
- When the desired responses were collected
- Outgo sample size
- Completion rates
- Incidence rate
- Information of the average survey length

Upon request, we're happy to furnish additional demographic information about respondents, invitation and reward examples, and additional projects statistics.

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.

Branded applies strict security protocols to ensure the integrity of our data quality. We constantly check respondents for fraudulent behavior. Some of the measures we're able to reduce:

- Speeding
- Duplicate IP addresses
- Duplicate browsers
- Failing trap questions
- Providing duplicate address or phone data

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?

Strict polices have been implemented to monitor and track many metrics associated with our panel members, including frequency of surveys issued and participation history. We ensure that panelists are coming from where they say they are with proxy detection and geography checks. Looking for device manipulation and altered IP addresses we can detect individuals attempting to reach a survey through malicious intent. Utilizing the same browser is blocked across more than one account.

We limit participation based on client needs, but generally ask the panelist how they would like to be notified. Can be waves of surveys that require unique participation in each wave, or exclusions from previous projects that update the projects based on the needs of the client. We often have strict limits for the number of interviews available to a panelist in a given time frame, and for varying the types of research in which the panelist is participating.

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?

We encourage our panelists to attempt to complete all surveys that they are eligible for. Restrictions are implemented on an as-needed basis; we have full control over the frequency of notifications and participation.

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?

We maintain data on all our panelists to ensure their participation is returning quality data for clients. Upon request, we're happy to provide additional data around the community at large and their participation efforts.

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?

Throughout the panelist's lifecycle we conduct varying audits of their credentials and eligibility. After thoroughly reducing redundant accounts, we're able to pass good accounts through a final filter to ensure the most genuine information is being provided.

Policies and Compliance

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

At Branded Surveys, we take pride in welcoming the panelist and setting them up for success. After registering and completing a short initial bio, we'll confirm their email address to ensure we can reach them for upcoming survey notifications.

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

We make sure panelists are aware of the measures we take with their data to ensure privacy. As a part of the onboarding process, we take time to explain how privacy is handled at Branded Surveys, who has access to sensitive data and what panelists can do to protect themselves within market research surveys.

https://surveys.gobranded.com/page/branded-surveys-privacy-policy

25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

We make sure to handle panelist information with the utmost care.

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?

All of our clients are advised that, even with the best security measures, information presented online is not always entirely secure. As long as the client is willing to accept the potential risk, we employ a number of measures to reduce the risk. We also include terms in our member Terms & Conditions to make sure members understand that information shared through surveys and our systems are proprietary and protected.

27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

Our security and quality measures are proprietary through BrandedID.

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?

We strictly adhere to each ESOMAR, CASRO, and COPPA law, and employ a strict practice of obtaining parental consent prior to engaging any minors in market research activities.