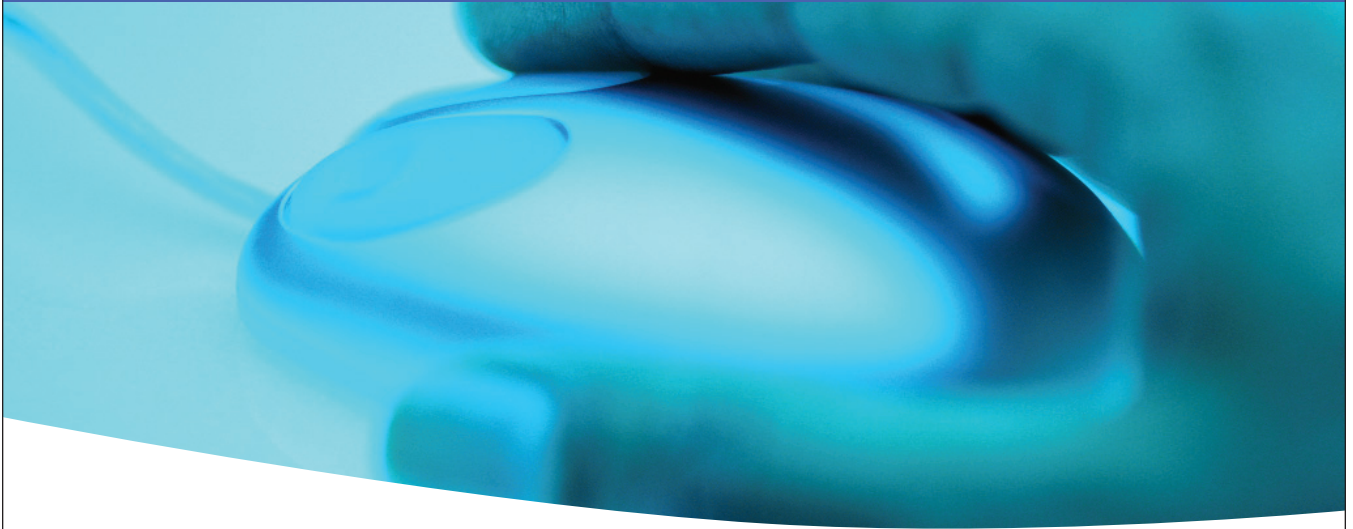


# Point of View



## Building a Quality Customer Research Panel



Many companies are building proprietary online panels. We at Ipsos see the future for this form of research as extremely positive, whether the panels are customer, employee or stakeholders, going it alone with self-serve software or with research partners.

Ipsos is managed by market research professionals and is dedicated to providing the best quality of research possible and this includes helping clients build panels. This Point-of-View shares our managed access panel philosophy, and provides some ideas on how to get the best use from a Customer Research Panel.

**The Ipsos Interactive Forum**



An exclusively owned, custom panel among key stakeholders + A custom, interactive online platform

Build your own Web Community to uncover what customers think...

© Ipsos 2007

### Building a Panel – How hard can it be?

Some believe that almost anyone can build and maintain a panel to conduct survey research with their customers. How hard can it be?

It can be – no, make that, *usually is* – daunting, say many who have tried and abandoned the endeavour. So much for their hope of saving money.

The bottom line is that managing a customer panel is complex and really does require expertise. There are privacy laws, anti-spam regulations, and panelist issues to deal with, among other matters. It takes successful experience and seasoned know-how to recruit panelists – and keep them.

Ultimately, of course, you want to be sure that the survey results you capture are valid. The results of a survey are only as good as the panel sample and survey design.

- **Sample design:** samples need to be representative.
- **Survey design:** you want to limit bias and maximize response.

- **Data analysis:** potential biases must be considered and base sizes should ensure projectable results.

Defining who to recruit to be on a panel is a huge consideration. Those recruited to the panel form the “population universe” from which samples are pulled for individual studies.

Former do-it-yourselfers say they thought, but didn’t really know, how to design a panel recruitment survey or ensure that individual samples from the panel were pulled and balanced properly. Interpreting the results was a whole other matter. Few fully understood, for example, the potential for biases.




And they discovered that while building a panel can be overwhelming, daily management is always time-consuming. How so? You have to answer panelist queries and concerns, ensure they’re not over burdened or under used, administer an incentive program, keep the database clean, and track survey activity.

In addition to managing the panel, there are technical and maintenance issues. Operating a customer panel requires technical infrastructure and people who are experienced in maintaining a database and conducting online surveys. The strength of any panel depends on connectivity and survey accessibility. This all assumes a high deliverability rate of survey invitations and that’s not easy to achieve in today’s junk-mail box environment.




Peace-of-mind is at the heart of why do-it-yourselfers turn to our full-service approach to managing panels and the resulting research. Ipsos knows how to build and administer credible and effective panels, from 400 to 400,000 in size.

**IAF is an online application with 3 parts**


**A database** that is a repository for panelist info and survey data

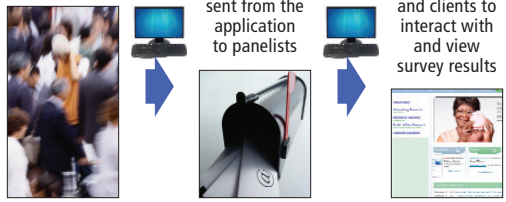




**A mail server** that manages invites to surveys, reminders and newsletters sent from the application to panelists

**A web-based application software** that allows panel managers, researchers and clients to interact with and view survey results





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### The Many Benefits of a Professionally-Managed Customer Panel

A wide variety of research and marketing objectives can be met through the development of a Customer panel, from short-term needs through to long-term planning.

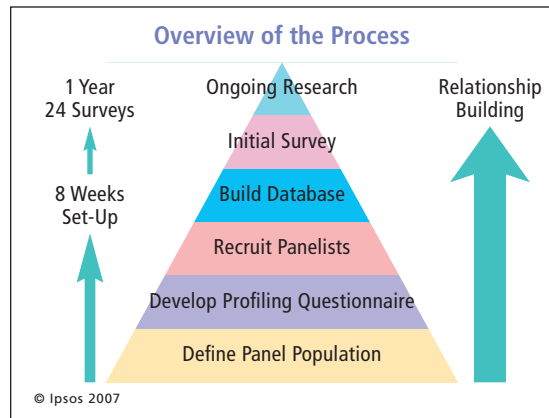
- A customer panel can serve to enhance, replace or be a catalyst for new customer research initiatives.
- You own the panel. You can initiate research at any time.
- Fast, reliable research in response to quick decision-making needs.
- Give customers a voice in building products.
- Observe unprompted discussion about your products and services.
- Test communications.
- Gain insight from existing research.
- Track customer satisfaction.
- Explore feedback re: web community.
- Internalize customers – make them part of your team.
- Collect testimonials.
- Collect complaints and deal with them.

### Ipsos Panel Management Expertise

When considering building a custom proprietary panel, compare Ipsos on the following measures:

- Proven experience in building and maintaining online proprietary panels. Ipsos first developed and implemented an online proprietary panel nearly a decade ago, and has developed panels for a host of Fortune 500 companies.
- As well as managing our own Ipsos offline and online panels in Canada and the U.S., Ipsos North America provides full-service management for many proprietary online panels. A combined panel size of more than 50,000 panelists is actively managed for several key accounts.
- A state-of-the art, Ipsos-built panel and online survey platform, the “Ipsos Interactive Forum” is used to house all our online proprietary panels. Ipsos are the pioneers in designing this type of panel software – it is rooted in our deep knowledge of panels and online research.

- In-house advanced data collection, data processing and analysis capabilities. This means that all data processing and analysis is done with no subcontracting. All data collection is conducted through Ipsos-owned resources, or through Ipsos vendor/partners.
- A dedicated Marketing Sciences group providing best-in-class advanced analytics capabilities where required.



### When You Add It All Up

Naturally, in this business, trust is a big issue. The well-recognized, trusted name of Ipsos as a leading, global market research firm assures panelists that their personal information will be kept private and confidential. No other party, including the client who owns the panel, has access to this information without the express written permission of the panelist.

By using a well-known, trusted research partner like Ipsos, our experience shows that you’ll enjoy better response rates, higher participation rates and more open responses from your panelists.

All things considered, when it comes to managing customer panels, the preferred approach is to go with the expert.

At Ipsos, we pride ourselves in providing the expertise, support and confidence that our clients need. We’ve worked on countless research projects across Canada and look forward to working with you.



North America

Europe

Latin America

Asia-Pacific

Middle East

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