OMB SUPPORTING STATEMENT
FOR THE STUDY TO MEASURE PARTNER SATISFACTION
WITH THE SPEC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
Wage & Investment Division
TIRNO-05-Z-00012
For CY 2007

Introduction

The Wage and Investment (W&I) Division has identified one of its immediate needs is to help its Stakeholder Partnership, Education, and Communication (SPEC) group understand and improve customer satisfaction among its national and local partners. It was recommended that a partner survey be administered to reach this understanding. This initiative is a part of an IRS-wide effort to establish a system of balanced organizational performance measures as mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862, which requires all government agencies to survey their customers and incorporate customer preferences in their process improvement efforts.

The key goals of this survey are to assess current partners' satisfaction with SPEC products and services, and to understand their needs in supporting SPEC initiatives.

There will be two questionnaire instruments used to assess partner satisfaction levels–one for the local partners and one for the national partners.

The vendor, ORC Macro (Calverton, MD), will hold confidential the identities of all respondents and will provide results to W&I in aggregate. In addition, ORC Macro will provide W&I with a dataset that has all personally identifying information removed. The survey will communicate this protection to the respondent in all survey communication.

Efforts Not to Duplicate Research

This is the only formal mechanism by which national and local partners provide feedback to W&I. This information is not currently obtained through any other source.

Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaires for local and national partners are attached. The national partner questionnaire is expected to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The local partner questionnaire is expected to take 20 minutes to complete—either by web or by telephone. Both questionnaires are based on a combination of survey questions from previous partner surveys, discussions among the project team, and additional qualitative research that took place in November 2006. The two surveys are approximately 50% the same, so that results can be compared.

The objective of the partner satisfaction survey is to understand expectations and perceptions about the SPEC partnership from both the national and local levels. The results of the partner satisfaction surveys should facilitate more effective management of SPEC by:

- Providing insight as to what service attributes, such as training, products, and marketing support that relationship management partners value.
- Providing insight from the customer's perspective about possible improvements.
- Providing useful input for program evaluation in the move toward increasing the level of operational self-sufficiency among local partners and continued partner expectations among national partners.

Survey scoring for this contract will be based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the question—"Considering all of your responses to this survey, we would like you to rate your overall satisfaction with IRS SPEC's products and services (5-point unlabeled scale).

Given the differing partnership needs with national partners, the national partner questionnaire focuses more on relationship building with SPEC's Product and Partnership Development (P&PD) group, and with local IRS offices. Key components of this survey are:

- Market Segments and Outreach Statistics
- Relationship Management
- Relationship Building between Local Partners and Local IRS Offices
- Research
- Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security
- Quality Review Process
- Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty

Questions for the local partner survey will cover the following 13 key areas:

- Market Segments and Outreach Statistics
- Relationship Manager
- Relationship Management
- Tax Law Training
- IRS Training Materials
- Research
- E-Filing and Other Products
- Marketing Products and Materials
- Quality of Materials, Products, Services, and Training
- Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security
- Quality Review Process
- Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty
- Resource Needs

Sampling

This is a one-time set of surveys with the goal of reaching a census of all national partners and local partners in the SPEC program. Based on historical data from previous survey administrations, ORC Macro can expect approximately an 85% response rate from the national partner survey and a 60% response rate from the local partner survey. Since both surveys are a census, sampling error and confidence do not apply.

The sources of the sample are lists maintained by the SPEC organization. They will be provided to ORC Macro and will include addresses and telephone numbers for administration.

Administration

The national partner survey questionnaire will be administered via a CATI telephone survey. To achieve the maximum possible response rates the contractor will use the following procedures:

- Pre-notification letter, signed by the SPEC Director on IRS letterhead to all partners

- Driver analysis showing the areas of service, in priority order, SPEC should focus its resources to improve overall satisfaction.
- Analysis of open-ended questions for improvement suggestions. The vendor shall code the responses to the open-ended question and will conduct content analysis in order to provide SPEC with the top categories of concern.
- Other more complex statistical techniques as appropriate (e.g., cluster analysis)

Privacy, Security, Disclosure and Confidentiality

All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II and the contractor will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy of taxpayers will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at the C-2 level is accomplished via the Windows NT operating system. Systems are password protected, users profiled for authorized use, and individual audit trails generated and reviewed periodically.

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure privacy protection of all taxpayers. This includes criteria for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

The survey will not contain tax return or taxpayer information. Survey participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy of the survey respondents. We will apply the fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all survey respondents. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the protection of information as well as its releases to authorized recipients.

Estimates of the Burden of Data Collection

The survey has been designed to minimize burden on the partner. The time that a respondent takes to complete a survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The current selection criteria established in the survey methodology will allow the respondent to participate in only one survey. This will aid in decreasing partner burden.

The national partner survey is expected to take approximately 15 minutes to complete, plus 2 minutes to read the pre-notification letter and 2 minutes to agree to participate in the interview. This is based upon the questionnaire consisting of 34 questions. The local partner questionnaire is expected to take 20 minutes to complete, plus 2 minutes to read the pre-notification letter. This is based upon the questionnaire consisting of approximately 52 questions.

We have made every attempt in designing this survey to maximize response rate. Burden estimates are based on a 28% response rate for local partners and 85% for national partners.

National Partner Survey
Prenotification Letter: 65 x 2 min = 2.17 hrs
Scheduling Call: 65 x 2 min = 2.17 hrs
Survey: 55 x 15 min = 13.75 hrs
Subtotal: 18.09 hrs

Local Partner Survey
Prenotification Letter: 3619 x 2 min = 120.63 hrs
Web Survey*: 1000 x 20 min = 333.33 hrs
Telephone Survey: 300 x 20 min = 100.00 hrs
Subtotal: 553.96 hrs

Total Burden (both surveys) = 572.05 hrs

*Assuming 1,000 completed surveys by web

With regard to the low response rate estimated for the Local Partner survey, the IRS will assume that all data collected from this survey is qualitative in nature, and that no critical decisions will be made by SOI solely from the analysis of data from this survey. The results from this survey are simply one piece of a larger set of information needed to assess practitioner and/or taxpayer needs related to services provided by the IRS. The Local Partner response rate was calculated and based on prior year results. It is anticipated that a higher response rate will be achieved for 2007. This year more qualitative questions have been added to the survey. SPEC relationship managers are reminding their partners to go on the web and take the survey, to increase response rates.

Cost

The contractor cost for the administration of the W&I SPEC Partner survey for the calendar year 2007 is $199,415.00.

Implementation and Action Planning

Following the survey administration, ORC Macro will provide SPEC with guidance on implementing the improvement priorities outlined in the report. The purpose of these sessions will be to assist SPEC staff in effectively using the interview data for building stronger relationships with partner organizations. The vendor will summarize the results of the action-planning sessions and provide a report within 10 business days of the final action-planning meeting.

Follow-Up Summary Report

A Follow-Up Summary Report will be provided to SOI-SSS within 60 days after the close of the survey data collection operations:

- Findings—a brief summary of significant findings that were evidenced in the results
- Actions taken or lessons learned—a brief summary of any action taken or lessons learned as a result of the findings
- Number of completed questionnaires and interviews

PRA Statement and OMB Control Number

For the National Partner Survey, the OMB Control Number and required information will be provided in the script of the CATI program.

For the Local Partner Survey, the OMB Control Number and required information will be provided on the web survey itself and also will be provided in the script of the follow-up CATI survey.

Data Collection Dates
National Partner Survey: February 12, 2007 - March 9, 2007
Local Partner Survey: February 12, 2007 - March 23, 2007

Statistical Contact
For questions regarding the study or questionnaire design or statistical methodology, contact:

Mr. Larry Luskin
Director of Customer and Employee Research
ORC Macro
11785 Beltsville Drive, Suite 300
Calverton, MD 20705
Telephone: 301-572-0334
E-Mail: Larry.A.Luskin@orcmacro.com

Attachments
National Partner Survey Pre-Notification Letter
National Partner Survey (Telephone)
Local Partner Survey Pre-Notification E-Mail
Local Partner Survey (Telephone version)
SOW