Office of Management and Budget
Clearance Package

Web-Based Survey Assessment of Features of the

Retirement News for Employers Newsletter

Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities Division
September 11, 2008

Introduction

Background
The *Retirement News for Employers* is an electronic, quarterly newsletter provided by the TE/GE Employee Plans Customer Education and Outreach (EP CE&O) office of the Internal Revenue Service. The newsletter is designed to provide practical retirement plan information to small business owners and their tax advisors.

Each issue of the *Retirement News for Employers* contains timely, educational information regarding legislation, guidance, and IRS initiatives as they relate to retirement plans for small businesses. Additionally, the newsletter features the following recurring columns:

- *The Fix Is In: Fixing Common Plan Mistakes* - tips on how to find, fix, and avoid common plan mistakes
- *Product Profile* - an in-depth look at one of our publications
- *Desk Side Chat with Monika Templeman* - a discussion with the Director of EP Exams
- *The Filing Cabinet* - the latest info on retirement plan forms and publications
- *We're Glad You Asked!* - provides answers to common retirement plan questions
- *Mark Your Calendar* - lists important pension reminders
- *Timing Is Everything* - designed for employers to share with their employees.

EP CE&O has provided the *Retirement News for Employers* since May 2004. Approximately 26,000 readers have registered for the listserv that distributes the newsletter.

Objectives of Data Collection
EP CE&O believes that the newsletter is a valuable and popular resource in the retirement plans community. The Management of EP would like to ascertain the demographics of the readership of the newsletter. The survey will be used to assess the level of interest in articles and educational information provided in the newsletter. Assessing these demographics will also identify areas for improvement to the newsletter.

Methodology

Sample Design
The content of the proposed newsletter survey has been developed by the Managers of EP CE&O and will take a maximum of 5 minutes to complete. The length of the survey will depend on the respondent’s newsletter use. Respondents who have not viewed the newsletter will have a shorter version of the survey, which will take one minute or less to complete. Respondents who have read the newsletter will take a maximum of five minutes to complete the survey.

TE/GE has a contract with a web survey vendor, CVent, a GSA-approved contractor. Using a web-based survey will maximize the response rate by reducing the amount of burden on the respondent, as well as improving the efficiency of the analysis once the survey is completed.

Data Collected
The content of the survey will include questions regarding the following, if applicable:

- Type of subscriber (i.e., plan sponsor, practitioner)
- Type of retirement plan
- Which articles are favorites
- Use of *Timing is Everything* information sheet

The survey will remain anonymous and will not contain taxpayer data.

How Data Is Collected and Used
The survey will be piloted with a group of five subscribers, approximately one month before the actual survey is launched. The purpose of running a pilot is to correct any unforeseen problems with the survey before it goes live to the public. Once the pilot is successfully completed, EP CE&O will advertise the upcoming online survey through the newsletter. To encourage participation, the advertisement will convey to subscribers that their involvement in the survey will help the Service enhance the newsletter.

The survey will launch through a special edition of the newsletter to its 26,000 subscribers, targeting EP practitioners and plan sponsors. CVent will host the survey online, collect the results, and forward the data to the Data Analysis Unit (DAU) of the IRS.

To encourage a high response rate, two weeks following the initial mailing of the survey, EP CE&O will send a follow-up e-mail to the subscribers about participating in the survey. The follow-up will thank those who have already participated and encourage those who have not to take advantage of the opportunity.

Once the data is collected by CVent, EP CE&O, with the assistance of TE/GE DAU, will analyze and provide a report of the results. EP CE&O will utilize feedback from the survey to provide insight on readership, as well as give an indication of the popularity of the newsletter articles and suggestions for improvements.

Survey Dates
The survey will be launched in October 2008. We expect the survey to be launched and follow-up conducted within four weeks from the date of launch.

Who is Conducting the Research
EP CE&O, with the assistance of the TE/GE DAU, will be conducting the research for this study. CVent, the GSA-approved contractor, will be hosting the online survey.

Goal of the Survey
The goal of the survey is to identify the most frequently read articles and to provide feedback to the authors of the articles. In addition, the group would like to identify areas of particular interest to the readers of the newsletter.

Cost of Study
There are no direct expenses associated with this survey. The online survey vendor has already been procured and analysis will be performed in-house.

Recruitment Efforts
Special language has been created to encourage participation in the survey. The language will help potential participants understand the importance of the survey to the enhancement of the newsletter. The recruitment language is as follows:

Tell us what you think about our *Retirement News for Employers* newsletter!

We are looking for feedback on the *Retirement News for Employers* newsletter. IRS Employee Plans is conducting a short, voluntary, and anonymous survey designed to gauge the relevance and usefulness of our employer newsletter. Your participation in this survey will greatly assist us in making our newsletter more responsive to the needs of plan sponsors, employees, and beneficiaries of the retirement plan system.

The anonymous questionnaire includes eleven questions, and should take approximately five minutes to complete. We thank you in advance for your participation and look forward to future improvements that work for you!

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that the IRS display an OMB control number on all public information requests. The OMB Control Number for this study is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the Internal Revenue Service, Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224.

Expected Response Rate
The response rate of a typical community customer satisfaction survey is between 10-30%. Due to positive feedback from subscribers to the newsletter, the short length of the survey and ease of taking the survey online, the group is expecting a response rate of about 30%. The EP newsletter is distributed through a listserv of small business owners and their tax advisors who sign up to receive the newsletter. The listserv has approximately 26,000 subscribers to the newsletter.

Methods to Maximize Response Rate
Typical online surveys of this length and magnitude enjoy a high response. Providing an online survey limits the amount of extra steps necessary to provide survey results. The short amount of time involved encourages a greater response rate.

In addition, a follow-up e-mail will remind those subscribers who may have forgotten to take the survey, to do so in the allotted time frame. The language of the follow-up e-mail will as follows:

Tell us what you think about our *Retirement News for Employers*!

(Two weeks ago), you received a Special Edition of the *Retirement News for Employers* seeking your feedback on our newsletter. If you haven't already done so, there is still time for you to take the survey and provide your valuable input to us. Please click on the link below to access our anonymous questionnaire, which should take less than five minutes to complete. We thank you in advance for your participation and look forward to future improvements that work for you!

The *Retirement News for Employers* newsletter survey is designed to gauge the relevance and usefulness of the newsletter. Your participation in this survey will greatly assist us in to making our newsletter more responsive to the needs of plan sponsors, employees, and beneficiaries of the retirement plan system.

Participant Criteria
Participants of the survey must be plan sponsors or practitioners that serve the retirement plans community. Initial questions on the survey will aid in eliminating respondents that do not meet this criteria.

Privacy/Disclosure/Confidentiality/Security Issues
Participants will be instructed to click on a link that will be provided in the newsletter. No identifying or taxpayer information will be collected.

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement & OMB Control Number will be provided on the actual survey.

Burden Hours
Participants in the study will be required to spend approximately five minutes or less answering questions on the survey. EP CE&O expects a response rate of 30%.

- Approximately 70% of the participants will meet the criteria and will spend a maximum of five minutes on the survey.
- Approximately 30% of participants will not meet the criteria and will spend a maximum of one minute on the survey.

Number of Expected Participants	Total Number of Minutes	Total Burden Hours
26,000 x .30 = 7,800 expected participants	**(full survey) 7,800(.70) = 5,460 participants 5,460 x 5 minutes = 27,300 min. (part survey) 7,800(.30) = 2,340 participants 2,340 X 1 minute = 2,340 total min.**	**27,300 + 2,340 = 29,640 min. 29,640/60 min.= 494 total burden hours**

Study Contact
For questions regarding the study, contact:

Shelley B. Pope
Economist
TEGE, Data Analysis Unit
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, PE-5E3
Washington, DC 20224
(202) 283-9713

Ron Itzkowitz
Analyst, National Employee Plans Customer Partnership
TEGE Employee Plans
Station Plaza #3, 3rd Floor
44 South Clinton Avenue
Trenton, N.J. 08609
(609) 278-7742