

OMB Supporting Statement
IRS Small Business/Self Employed Correspondence (Campus) Exam (CCE)
Improvement Project
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
November 2009-June 2010

Background

As part of its Balanced Measures, the SB/SE Correspondence (Campus) Exam organization has been measuring customer satisfaction since 1998. Although customer satisfaction results have tended to be higher than for other IRS enforcement activities, these results have shown little variation over time. Similarly, improvement priorities identified as part of the survey contractor's reports, have been largely unchanged from quarter to quarter or year-to-year.

Correspondence Exam has formed an action planning improvement team to research and implement a customer satisfaction improvement program. This project will build an enhanced capacity for improvement in Correspondence (Campus) Exam by guiding an improvement project team through a disciplined process of improvement, providing specialized analysis and improvement expertise in support of the teams, and diffusing the lessons that accrue through this experience. This project is based on experience from other improvement projects conducted since FY 2004 in other program areas.

As part of this improvement project, the Correspondence (Campus) Exam Improvement Team will be implementing a pilot involving improvements to the phone service for callers to the Correspondence (Campus) Exam Toll-Free line. This pilot will be implemented at two Correspondence (Campus) Exam call sites. To determine the success of these pilots, a phone survey will be administered to customers whose calls are handled by the two pilot groups and those whose calls are handled by two control groups for comparison.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The phone survey (attached) will be administered by Correspondence (Campus) Exam administrative employees to callers to the Correspondence (Campus) Exam Toll-Free line. Completion of the survey takes approximately three minutes. The questionnaire covers the following areas: satisfaction with the automated answering system, wait time, and IRS representatives. A comparison of the results of the pilot customers and the control customers will help determine whether the pilot program is successful and therefore should be implemented more widely.

Survey scoring for this contract will be based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – “Rate your overall satisfaction with the service you received during this call.” Questions utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. All survey responses generated will be kept anonymous.

Design and Methodology

The survey will be conducted for a three-month period following implementation of the pilot program at two different sites. Each of the two sites will have a pilot group and a control group, for a total of four separate survey segments. For each of the four survey segments, we will obtain 40 completed surveys per week (eight per weekday) for the three-month survey period, for a total of approximately 520 completed surveys per segment, and an overall total of 2,080 completed surveys. A precision margin of 5% and confidence interval of 95% is expected.

Sampling will be performed continuously by IRS quality control monitors in the sites according to the procedures developed by the improvement team.

An IRS administrative employee at each site will administer the survey by phone to respondents who have called the Toll-Free line regarding their correspondence exam, selected according to the sampling plan. Standard procedures will be used in order to obtain the highest response rate possible.

Data Collection Timeframe

The survey will be administered by telephone from December 2009 through February 2010.

Who is Conducting Research

Pacific Consulting Group (PCG) and the IRS will conduct this research. Correspondence (Campus) Exam administrative employees will conduct the telephone survey. PCG will oversee the data collection, conduct analysis and produce all reports.

Evaluation

The contractor will use basic and advanced statistical techniques including, but not limited to, means, frequencies, and t-tests to provide:

- Survey counts and overall response rates.
- Overall level of customer satisfaction, comparing pilot versus control.
- Averages and frequencies for all rating questions, comparing by pilot versus control.
- Analysis of open-ended comments

The methodology will be discussed with and approved by the IRS.

Stipend

No payment or gift will be provided to respondents.

Efforts to Avoid Duplicating Research

This is the only survey that provides a comparison of the pilot and control groups for the Correspondence Exam improvement project.

Privacy, Security, Disclosure, Anonymity

The IRS will ensure compliance with Taxpayer Bill of Rights II. All participants will be treated fairly and appropriately.

We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. The security of the data used in this project and the privacy of participants 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 A7B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Audiotapes are stored in locked cabinets. Transcription of audiotapes 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 participants. This includes criterion 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.

Anonymity will be safeguarded. During the data collection process, participants will not be identified to IRS personnel. In addition, no participant names will be mentioned in the reports or data files. Participants will be advised that comments will be audiotaped, if any conversation is recorded. Anonymity is assured by virtue of agency policy. The terms of IRS's contract with Pacific Consulting Group requires that the anonymity of any data be maintained.

Estimates of the Burden of Data Collection

The survey interview has been designed to minimize burden on the taxpayer. The time that a respondent takes to complete the phone survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The average time of survey completion is expected to be 3 minutes. The questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

We have made every attempt in designing this survey to maximize response rate. Using the response rate of 60%, the total burden in hours is estimated as follows:

Respondents: 2,080 completed surveys x 4 minutes (1 minute invitation to the survey and 3 minute questionnaire) = 139 hours

Non-respondents: 1,387 individuals x 1 minute invitation to the survey = 23 hours

Survey burden hours = 162

Other Information

The following information will be provided to OMB IRS liaison office SOI 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.
- Taxpayer participation (number of requests for taxpayer participation and number of interviews completed).
- Dates on which the data collection began and ended.
- Cost (excluding regular salaries of IRS employees).

Cost

The cost for this survey is \$9,000.

Statistical Contact

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

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