

**OMB SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
FOR THE STUDY TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
OF IRS SB/SE AUTOMATED COLLECTION SYSTEM (ACS) CUSTOMERS  
April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009**

**Introduction**

IRS has replaced the traditional measures of accomplishment with a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. The Automated Collection Service (ACS) Section within the Compliance Services organization of Small Business and Self-Employed (SB/SE) will be responsible for responding to customer technical and account inquiries, resolving customer account issues, providing account settlement (payment options), and working related issues. As an important customer interface for W&I and SB/SE, ACS will need feedback from customers to continuously improve its operations. This project has two primary goals: 1) to identify improvement opportunities and 2) to track customer satisfaction at six ACS sites and nationwide.

**Customer Satisfaction Survey**

The phone survey (attached) will be conducted via an automated computer system. Completion of the survey is expected to take approximately ten minutes. The phone survey was developed based on inputs from several focus groups with SB/SE ACS customers. The questionnaire covers the following areas: satisfaction with the automated answering system, wait time, IRS representative; clarity of the notice (if applicable); and various demographics. The results should facilitate more effective management of SB/SE by:

- Providing insight from the customer's perspective about possible improvements.
- Providing useful input for program evaluation and execution at the programmatic and area office level of service delivery.

Survey scoring for this contract will be based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – “How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the service you received during this call?” Questions will utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. All survey responses generated will be confidential. The contractor shall ensure that taxpayers responding to the survey interview are guaranteed anonymity.

## **Design and Methodology**

The automated telephone survey, conducted from April 2008 through March 2009, will sample 7,800 taxpayers who have called the Automated Collection System phone line in an attempt to obtain 4,680 completed interviews. Quality reviewers will use random number tables (customized for each site) to select at least 5 calls for participation in the survey. These estimates assume a 60% response rate, which the contractor will aim to achieve.

The contractor will, on a quarterly basis, summarize the quantitative ratings and produce a national report showing customer satisfaction scores on all ACS survey items and overall improvement priorities for the function. The contractor will deliver one national report with any appropriate site-level data. The project contractor will weight the survey responses as necessary to reflect accurately the entire customer base. The contractor will deliver each quarter's reports within 30 business days after receipt of the last survey data for the quarter.

## **Evaluation**

The contractor will use basic and advanced statistical techniques including, but not limited to, analysis of variance and the prioritization of improvement priorities using contractor's established technique.

- Survey counts and overall response rates for the 6 sites.
- The overall level of customer satisfaction with services provided by SB/SE.
- The averages and frequencies for all ratings questions.
- The differences in satisfaction ratings and attitudes across customer segments.
- Which areas of service, in priority order, SB/SE should focus their resources to improve overall satisfaction.
- Cross tabulations of variables for the customer surveys.
- Analysis of the relationship between survey responses.

## **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 10 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 percent, for respondents, the burden in hours is estimated to be 858 hours (4,680 surveys x 11 minutes / 60 minutes). Note that 11 minutes reflects the time to get into the automated survey (1 minute) as well as the time to complete the survey (10 minutes).

For non-respondents, the total number of burden hours is estimated to be 52 hours (3,120 surveys X 1 minute / 60 minutes).

The grand total is estimated to be 910 hours.

### **Privacy, Security, Disclosure and Confidentiality**

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

Confidentiality 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 if comments will be audiotaped. Confidentiality is assured by virtue of agency policy. The terms of IRS's contract with Pacific Consulting Group requires that the confidentiality of any data be maintained.

Participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. The contractor will limit and control the amount of information collected to those items that are necessary to answer the research questions. The contractor will carefully safeguard the security of data used as well as the privacy of the survey respondents. The contractor 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 release to authorized recipients.

### **Other Information**

The following information will be provided to the Performance Planning and Analysis Section within 60 days after the close of the survey data collection operations:

- 1) Purpose
- 2) Findings: a brief summary of significant (important) findings that were evidenced in the survey results
- 3) Actions taken or lessons learned: a brief summary of any actions taken or lessons learned as a result of the survey findings
- 4) Number of requests or attempts for taxpayer participation for surveys

- 5) Number of questionnaires returned or number of focus group participants
- 6) Date the data collection began
- 7) Date the data collection ended
- 8) Response rate
- 9) Actual burden hours
- 5) Cost: including reproduction costs, travel, overtime payments, stipends, and any other costs incurred as a direct result of the survey (does not include regular salaries of IRS employees or those of contractors).

The estimated cost for this project is \$87,511.

**Statistical Contact**

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

*Beruria Novich  
Pacific Consulting Group  
399 Sherman Avenue, Suite 1  
Palo Alto, California 94306  
(650) 327-8108*