

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The modest research activities under this clearance involve quota samples, with respondents selected either to cover a broad range of Census Bureau customers or to include specific characteristics related to certain products or services. Results will not be used to make nationally representative statements or to generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample.

Customer satisfaction surveys are in-house tools used by program managers to change or improve programs, products or services. The accuracy and reliability of the results of these surveys is adequate to their purpose.

Customer satisfaction samples are not subjected to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples where estimates are externally published.____

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Data collection methods and procedures vary. The Census Bureau, using commercial survey-specific software, has been able to automate its collection and analysis of customer satisfaction research. Questionnaires are electronically mailed and/or posted on target pages of the Census Bureau's Web site. The Census Bureau sends research pre-notification announcements and letters to intended recipients to increase response rates and to eliminate, in the case of e-mailed surveys, undeliverable addresses. In the recent past, response rates for customer satisfaction assessments have improved. The average responses rate is about 30 percent and is considered adequate for program and product decision making purposes. Non-response follow-up efforts, when employed, ensure adequate representation of the targeted customers in a study's results. Telephone scripts, personal interviews, and focus groups with professional guidance and moderation are expected to be continued in future customer research efforts.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

The Census Bureau alpha and beta tests research instruments, questions, and instructions to ensure clarity, brevity, relevance, and user-friendliness. Internal staff, other colleagues, and a small sample of the intended universe participate in alpha and beta tests. On occasion, follow-up data collection activities have been anticipated and the Census Bureau includes a question to ask the respondent if they would agree to be contacted to clarify a specific response or to participate in follow-up research or an additional research activity.

4. Testing of Procedures

Census Bureau statisticians who routinely design census and survey other research studies review all research methodology and documentation. Pretesting is done with

internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with the programs and products being studied.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

Thomas J. Smith, Census Forms Clearance Office, (301) 763-1181, and Joanne C. Dickinson, Chief, Marketing Branch, CLMSO, (301) 763-4094, assist Census Bureau staff on administrative questions and issues regarding the use of the generic clearance.

Attachments:

A-List of Previous Customer Surveys