

***Notice simplification web-based survey
understanding the effectiveness of notice redesigns***

Internal Revenue Service

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I. Introduction

Background/Overview

From February 2010–March 2010, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) TACT team, with assistance from Porter Novelli Public Services, Siegel+Gale, and GMI Research will conduct a web-based research study to determine the effectiveness of IRS notice redesigns.

Objectives of testing

The primary objective of this web-based research is to understand respondent perception and comprehension of IRS notices. Notices will be tested in pairs whereby each pair would include an existing notice along with a redesigned version. This would enable us to evaluate differences in perception and comprehension. By comparing differences in perception and comprehension among pairs or against S+G benchmarks, we can meet our secondary objective of this research, which is to identify areas of notices that could be improved and what those potential refinements might be.

II. Methodology

Porter Novelli Public Services and Siegel+Gale will work with GMI Research and IRS TACT to develop a web-based research tool to collect comments from general US consumers. The research will be based on voluntary participation by a specific segment of the population that GMI Research has identified as qualified respondents.

An estimated 3,600 taxpayers will be participating. This refers to the estimated number of people receiving invitations to participate in the survey.

Data collection date

- Research will be conducted from February 2010—March 2010. For each survey, we will need responses from 400 participants. When this number is met, the survey will be closed. Since there are 6 surveys, a total of 2,400 responses is necessary.
- For ease of programming the surveys and analyzing data, we will test the surveys in two separate “waves”. The first wave will include 3 surveys; the second wave will include 3 surveys. Participants will not participate in multiple surveys, nor will these waves affect participant numbers; they only aid our programming and analysis efforts.

To meet the schedule outlined in the contract, the survey must be completed within this targeted time frame. A delay in completing this research will alter the time line and extend the delivery date.

Data to be collected:

The web-based research study will collect answers related to perception and comprehension for both “before” and “after” versions of the following IRS notices:

- CP08
- CP59
- CP14
- CP501
- CP11
- Initial Contact Letter from Field Exam

How data will be used

The research data and findings will be used to:

1. Validate and/or quantify the degree of improvement of redesigned IRS notices
2. Identify problem areas in notices and provide guidance and insight on specific refinements
3. Enhance an already established perception and comprehension benchmark of IRS notices

How data will be analyzed

Porter Novelli Public Services and Siegel+Gale along with GMI will use the research as a source for notice redesign. The web-based research will be reviewed, analyzed, and the answers will be summarized. GMI will document the summary findings of the research and develop recommendations. Summary analysis will validate the proposed content and design direction, with suggested areas for improvement.

Who is conducting the research

GMI, working closely with Porter Novelli Public Services, Siegel+Gale, and IRS TACT.

Location

Research respondents will be drawn from all locations in the United States.

Stipend

A point stipend worth a minimum of \$10.00 will be provided for each completed survey. Points can be redeemed for a check that is mailed to the respondent or can

be redeemed online. The stipend aims to encourage participation and to thank respondents for sharing their time and contributions to our research.

Recruitment efforts

Recruitment efforts are nonexistent as individuals who comprised the GMI-MR panel have already agreed to participate in web-based surveys and receive survey invites.

Expected response rates

Approximately 70%

Survey structure

Porter Novelli Public Services, Siegel+Gale, and IRS TACT will test up to six notices in comparison and stand-alone testing in two phases of testing. When conducting comparison testing, “Before” and “After” versions of documents will be rotated to eliminate any order effect bias. The average length of time to complete a survey will be 20 minutes.

Efforts to not duplicate research

This research is unique and is needed to understand the effect that simplifying notices has on taxpayer behavior and comprehension.

III. Participant criteria

Participants in this survey will be limited to individuals over the age of 18 that reside in the US and have filed a tax return in the last five (5) years.

IV. Privacy/disclosure/confidentiality/security issues

Porter Novelli Public Services and Siegel+Gale will ensure compliance with the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II. All participants will be treated fairly; Porter Novelli Public Services and Siegel+Gale will maintain anonymity without attribution of respondents and protect their data from inappropriate usage. Participants will be instructed not to provide any private or taxpayer data, any identifying information, nor will any questions be asked about the taxpayer’s specific situation. The survey data will be protected on a survey deployment server, its integrity maintained during data capture, analysis, and usage, as well as sharing and transmission to the IRS.

V. Burden hours

Participants in the web-based survey will be required to respond to the specific questions on the survey. They will not have to provide any information prior to the survey, nor will they be contacted for additional information after the survey.

The desired response per survey is 400 participants. It is estimated that a typical survey including initial contact will take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Therefore, the total burden involved in each survey will be 133 hours (400

participants X 20 minutes per survey equals 8,000 minutes; 8,000 divided by 60 minutes/hour = 133 hours).

Estimated Burden Hours Per Survey	
133 hours	For participants to complete the web-based survey
800 hours	Total estimated burden for six surveys

VI. Research cost

Estimated \$45,000 total cost plus a 13.75% markup in accordance with the IRS/Porter Novelli Public Services