

OMB SUPPORTING STATEMENT
STUDY TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
INJURED SPOUSE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY- CY2011
JANUARY 1, 2011 - DECEMBER 31, 2011
TIRNO-10-Z-00010

Introduction

IRS engages a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. The Injured Spouse function within the Accounts Management (AM) function of the Customer Accounts Services (CAS) Operating Unit of Wage and Investment (W&I) Business Operating Division (BOD) is responsible for responding to customer technical and account inquiries, resolving customer account inquiries, resolving customer account issues, and working issues related to Injured Spouse Allocations. W&I desires feedback from customers to continually improve the Injured Spouse Allocation process. This initiative is part of the Service-wide system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862, which requires all government agencies to survey their customers and incorporate customer preferences in their process improvement efforts. As an important customer interface for W&I, Injured Spouse will need feedback from customers (taxpayers) to improve its operations.

The key goals of the Injured Spouse Customer Satisfaction Survey are:

1. to survey and track customer satisfaction at all W&I Injured Spouse sites;
2. to investigate actions IRS can take to improve customer satisfaction with the W&I Injured Spouse service; and
3. to gauge the effectiveness of changes to the W&I Injured Spouse service.

Customer Satisfaction Survey results will also be used to track changes in customer satisfaction attributable to specific changes made to this service.

Methodology

Sample Design

The Injured Spouse Customer Satisfaction Survey is a mail survey. The sample plan will be developed by the contractor based on volumes of Injured Spouse claims at the 8 sites. This sampling plan will include the target population and sampling frame, sampling specifications, expected reliability of the sample estimates, preliminary sampling weights, and the strategy of achieving target quotas within key strata. The sampling plan will be designed to result in 20,000 mail-outs per year, with an expected response of 5,000. The sample design will provide a precision margin of 5% and confidence interval of 95%.

The Accounts Management Injured Spouse function will provide the contractor a complete database each month from which a random sample can be drawn. The database will consist of a unique identifying number, customer name and address, and relevant database information about each Injured Spouse case, all in a single record. Upon receipt of the data file, the vendor will run the file through standard checks to ensure a complete mailing address and to remove duplicate cases both within the file, and across files of other surveys that are being conducted.

The contractor provides the sampling specifications to W&I to apply to the sampling databases. Each site reports its sampling efforts to the vendor on a weekly basis. The contractor will monitor the sampling process to ensure the procedures are producing the desired number of respondents and will coordinate with appropriate W&I personnel on sampling and related matters.

Data to be Collected

Injured Spouse customer satisfaction respondent data is collected from closed cases.

How Data Collected & Used

The sample universe will consist of taxpayers with closed Innocent Spouse cases stratified by the 8 W&I Accounts Management /Injured Spouse sites. The vendor will administer the survey by mail on a monthly basis. Standard procedures will be used in order to obtain the highest response rate possible for these surveys. These will include: 1) an advance letter (pre-note) about the survey; 2) a cover letter with the survey; 3) a postcard reminder; and, 4) a second letter and survey to non-respondents. The vendor will ensure that taxpayers responding to the survey are guaranteed anonymity. Survey scoring for this contract is based on the Customer Satisfaction Survey Score response average to the keystone question – “Everything considered, 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 are released only as summaries. The contractor shall hold the identities of the taxpayers responding to the survey private to the extent permitted by law. . Completion of the survey takes approximately seven minutes. It contains a standard set of questions, but allows certain “drill down” questions that vary as needed. To maintain the ability to compare results from quarter to quarter or month to month depending contract options to be exercised, changes that impact the meaning of questions will occur minimally

The vendor will, as an optional task, summarize the quantitative ratings and produce a national report showing customer satisfaction scores on all Injured Spouse survey items, some site information, and overall improvement priorities for the function. Also, as optional tasks the contractor may be required to provide monthly, quarterly and/or semi-annual reports. The vendor will include any relevant database variables in the analysis and will weight the survey responses as necessary to accurately reflect the entire customer base. The contractor will also produce a one-page quarterly summary report to distribute to specified IRS personnel. On an annual basis, the contractor will prepare one national report and eight site level reports. The national report will show the calculation of a weighted fiscal year cumulative score for Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction.

Dates of Collection Begin/End

Data collection runs the 2011 calendar year from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

Who is Conducting the Research/Where

The survey is conducted by the contractor PCG based on cases from the 8 Injured Spouse sites located across the country.

Cost of Study

The estimated cost for this survey is \$180,000.00.

Expected Response Rate

The estimated response rate is 25%.

Methods to Maximize Response Rate

The mail survey has traditionally had a low response rate compared to other survey modes such as phone and web. However, at this time it is not feasible to convert the Injured Spouse mode from mail to another means due to limited access to customer information. For example, Injured Spouse does not provide phone numbers. However, the Injured Spouse survey has been designed to minimize the burden on the taxpayer. The time a respondent takes to complete the survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The average time of survey completion is expected to be approximately 7 minutes, plus 2 minutes to read the pre-notification letter. All questions are one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level.

Test Structure and Design

The Injured Spouse questionnaire is an established and tested survey instrument. If changes are made to the questionnaire, only minor changes are expected. Revising the coding scheme for open-ended questions is an example.

Efforts to not Duplicate Research

The Injured Spouse Customer Satisfaction survey is currently the only study being conducted with the Injured Spouse customers by W&I CAS.

Participants Criteria

Participants are Injured Spouse customers from the most recently closed cases.

Privacy, Disclosure and Security Issues

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

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 appropriate levels has been accomplished. 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. Privacy will be safeguarded; 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 audio taped. Privacy is assured by virtue of agency policy.

Pursuant to the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), Title III of the E-Government Act of 2002, P.L. 107-347, the contractor shall provide minimum security controls required to protect Federal information and information systems. The term 'information security' means protecting information and information systems from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction in order to provide anonymity, integrity and availability.

The contractor shall provide information security protections commensurate with the risk and magnitude of the harm resulting from the unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information collected or maintained by or on behalf of the agency; or information systems used or operated by an agency or by a contractor of an agency. This applies to individuals and organizations having contractual arrangements with the IRS, including employees, contractors, vendors, and outsourcing providers, which use or operate information technology systems containing IRS data. The contractor shall comply with Department of Treasury Directive TD P 85-01, Treasury Security Manual TDP 71-10, and Internal Revenue Manual 10.8.1 Information Technology Security Policy and Guidance. The contractor shall comply with IRS Internal Revenue Manuals (IRM) and Law Enforcement Manuals (LEM) when developing or administering IRS information and information systems. The contractor shall comply with the Taxpayer Browsing Protection Act of 1997 - Unauthorized Access (UNAX), the Act amends the Internal Revenue Code 6103 of 1986 to prevent the unauthorized inspection of taxpayer returns or tax return information. Contractors systems that collect, maintain, operate or use agency information or an information system on behalf of the agency (a General Support System (GSS), Major or Minor Application with a FIPS 199 security categorization) must ensure annual reviews, risk assessments, security plans, control testing, a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), contingency planning, and certification and accreditation, at a minimum meet NIST guidance, if required by the IRS.

The contractor shall be subject to at the option / discretion of the agency, to periodically test, (but no less than annually) and evaluate the effectiveness of information security controls and techniques. The assessment of information security controls may be performed by an agency independent auditor, security team or Inspector General, and shall include testing of management, operational, and technical controls of every information system that maintain, collect, operate or use federal information on behalf of the agency. The agency and contractor shall document and maintain a remedial action plan, also known as a Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) to address any deficiencies identified during the test and evaluation. The contractor must cost-effectively reduce information security risks to an acceptable level within the scope, terms and conditions of the contract. The contractor shall maintain procedures for detecting, reporting, and responding to security incidents, and mitigating risks associated with such incidents before substantial damage is done to federal information or information systems. The contractor shall immediately report all computer security incidents that involve IRS information systems to the IRS Computer Security Incident Response Center (CSIRC). Any theft or loss of IT equipment with federal information / data must be reported within one hour of the incident to CSIRC. Those incidents involving the loss or theft of sensitive but unclassified (SBU) data (i.e. taxpayer,

PII) shall be reported to CSIRC, first-line manager, and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA). Based on the computer security incident type, CSIRC may further notify the Treasury Computer Security Incident Response Capability (TCSIRC) in accordance with TCSIRC procedures.

Burden Hours

The survey instrument is designed to minimize burden on the taxpayer. The time that a respondent takes to complete the mailed survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The average time to complete the survey is 7 minutes, plus 2 minutes to read the pre-notification letter. The questions are generally one sentence in structure and on an elementary concept level. We have made every attempt in designing this survey instrument to maximize response rates.

The goal is to obtain a response rate of 50%; however, the practical experience with IRS mail surveys tends to be a lower response rate. Using the historical response rate of 25%, the total burden in hours is estimated to be 1,250 hours. For respondents, the estimated annual burden is expected to be 750 hours (5,000 survey responses x 7 minutes / 60 minutes) + (5,000 pre-notification letters x 2 minutes/60 minutes). The number of burden hours for non-respondents is estimated to be approximately 500 hours (15,000 x 2 minutes/60minutes).

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Attachments

Injured Spouse Customer Satisfaction Survey

Injured Spouse pre-notification letter

Injured Spouse post card