

UNITED STATES MINT  
QUANTITATIVE CONSUMER RESEARCH –UNITED STATES MINT CUSTOMER SPEND  
TRAJECTORY RESEARCH – PART I  
3/14/2013

## **I. Introduction /Purpose of the Research**

This collection request is for the United States Mint to conduct a new research study that aims to inventory the various multi-year spend trajectories (e.g., spend increases substantially, spend decreases substantially, customer stops purchasing altogether, etc.) observed in the United States Mint customer base and to understand the factors that contribute to these trajectories. This research project will be conducted in two phases – the first phase will consist of qualitative in-depth interviews while the second phase will use the responses from the first phase to inform a web-based quantitative survey. This collection request only covers the first phase of research as the questionnaire for the second phase of research cannot be fully written until we begin the qualitative interviews. There is a skeleton of the quantitative survey included so that OMB can see the types of questions we plan to include but we will send a separate collection request for that portion when it is ready.

The United States Mint customer base has been shrinking substantially over the past ten years. It is critical to our mission to understand why the public is less interested in the numismatic products we produce and how we can improve our products and services to meet the standards they are expecting.

Part of the United States Mint's mission is to produce and make collectible coin products available directly to the American public. Executive Order No. 12862 (September 1993), titled "Setting Customer Service Standards," establishes a mandate for the government to improve and adhere to best practices when providing customer service directly to the American people, such as by conducting research to determine satisfaction with existing services and to ensure the kind and quality of services offered are aligned with those the public wants (Section 1b). To effectively accomplish these goals, the United States Mint utilizes a combination of accepted research methods that shed light on the awareness, satisfaction and preferences among the public as they relate to collectible coin products and services. The United States Mint Customer Spend Trajectory Research will be a valuable tool to help us reach the levels of customer demand that we experienced in the early 2000s.

The United States Mint Customer Spend Trajectory Research is designed to help the Mint understand the factors that contribute to different customer spend trajectories that have been observed over the past 10 years. The results from this research study will assist the United States Mint's Office of Sales and Marketing to ensure that the products and services we provide match our customers' interests, needs and expectations. The data collection will help ensure that customer interest and preference will inform the development of future products and improvements to customer services, which will in turn help ensure customer satisfaction and that the investment of organizational resources is maximized.

As was mentioned above, this research will be conducted in two phases. The first phase of research will involve 16 30-45 minute telephone interviews of United States Mint past and present customers to understand the motivations and reasons behind changes in their purchasing patterns. The majority of these interviews will be with customers who have decreased their amount of purchases or have stopped purchasing products altogether, with the primary objective being to ensure we understand the full breadth of factors and dynamics surrounding their decrease in purchasing. The results of this qualitative research will provide a basis of understanding that will guide the development of the quantitative survey. In the second phase of research, customers (including those who have lapsed) will be invited by an e-mail to an 18 minute Internet survey which will give us more generalizable, statistically reliable data to use in making decisions about new products and improvements to customer services.

The consequences of not performing this collection are the United States Mint's diminished ability to produce and offer collectible coin products that the public is interested in, and to maintain service levels that satisfy customers.

## **II. Sample Design and Methodology**

The first phase of research will involve 16 30-45 minute telephone interviews of United States Mint past and present customers to understand the motivations and reasons behind changes in their purchasing patterns. The majority of these interviews will be with customers who have decreased their amount of purchases or have stopped purchasing products altogether, with the primary objective being to ensure we understand the full breadth of factors and dynamics surrounding their decrease in purchasing. The sample for these customers will be obtained from U.S. Mint lists. This qualitative research will provide a basis of understanding that will guide the development of the quantitative survey.

## **III. Survey Design**

The Customer Spend Trajectory in-depth interviews customer survey will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. The discussion will cover the following general topic areas:

- Purchase history – including the products they have purchased, approximate spend level now and in the past
- Reasons for increased or decreased spending - circumstances around a change in spend level such as salary change, change in the quality of coins, bad experience with the Mint, etc.
- Win-back opportunities - things the Mint can do differently to win back lapsed customers such as change customer service practices, produce new products, etc.

## **IV. Methods to Maximize Response Rates**

This survey approach is designed to minimize the amount of intrusion and burden that is placed on customers. We use experienced interviewers to ensure that the discussion

goes smoothly and is a pleasant experience for customers. Interviewers will explain that participation is totally voluntary and that their feedback will be used to help improve the products and services we offer. Respondents can schedule calls so that they can talk to the interviewers at a time that is convenient and will be offered a \$50 honorarium for their participation.

## V. Estimate of the Burden Hours

The collection of information will involve a phone interview with 16 customers, most of whom have spent less on Mint products in recent years. The average time to complete the survey will be approximately 45 minutes. Therefore, the total estimated burden for this survey is 12 hours.

	Customer Spend Trajectory Qualitative Research
All respondents	16
Average minutes to complete survey	45 mins
Total estimated burden hours	12 hrs

*If you have questions related to the review of this collection request, you may contact any of the following individuals at the United States Mint's Sales and Marketing Department:*

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