

UNITED STATES MINT  
QUANTITATIVE CONSUMER RESEARCH –UNITED STATES MINT KENNEDY HALF  
DOLLAR SPECIAL SET SURVEY  
3/14/2013

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

This collection request is for the United States Mint to conduct a new product research study testing customer interest in alternative concepts for a special set commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kennedy Half Dollar. This study is similar to several recent quantitative new product assessments the United States Mint has undertaken. Conducting research to test interest in new product alternatives is imperative before investing substantial resources in developing a new offering.

The United States Mint Kennedy Half Dollar Special Set survey is designed to assess customer interest in alternative executions of a special set commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the minting of the first Kennedy Half Dollar. The results from this research study will assist the United States Mint's Brand Management Division in selecting and developing a product to sell in 2014. The data collection will help ensure that customer interest and preference will inform the development of this potential special product, which will in turn help ensure customer satisfaction and that the investment of organizational resources is maximized.

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 Kennedy Half Dollar Special Set survey is one of these instruments.

Conducting market research in advance of introducing new products and services, or before making changes to existing products and services, is vital to ensuring those decisions are as likely as possible to enhance customer satisfaction and maximize organizational efficiency. The United States Mint knows from experience that making new product and service decisions in the absence of a reliable information collection is likely to lead to undesirable outcomes in terms of customer satisfaction and organizational performance. The United States Mint is placing renewed emphasis on advance testing of new product concepts and changes to existing products to inform our decision making and improve customer and operational outcomes.

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 United States Mint Kennedy Half Dollar Special Set survey is designed to be web-based, with customers and non-customers (who are likely coin buyers) receiving an e-mail invitation to complete the survey. The targeted sample is a total of 2,400 United States Mint customers (which will include two different segments: 1) 1,200 general customers and 2) 1,200 customers who have purchased gold, silver or commemorative coins in the past two years.) In addition, we will survey 800 non-customers from a survey panel who state that they are "very likely" to "consider purchasing any types of collectible coins or coin products (from any source) during the next 12 months."

Because we are only considering offering a single alternative for this anniversary special set and survey respondents (both customers and non-customers) will not have knowledge of the other potential executions, the methodology utilizes a monadic cell design. The monadic cell design allows us to measure the appeal of a concept in absolute terms by testing a single alternative of the special set among a randomly assigned sub-sample of the targeted sample segments. Respondents in each monadic test sub-sample report their interest in the single product alternative. Their responses will thus be free of concept interaction since they will have no knowledge that other possible configurations are being considered for the special set. The reported interest for the alternative evaluated by each individual monadic sub-sample is then compared against the reported interests in alternatives evaluated by all the other monadic sub-samples to identify the most appealing option or options.

A matrix illustrating the monadic division of product alternatives across customer segment samples is as follows:

Monadic Cells A-Q	Sample Segments			Total Sample by Product Alternatives
	Segment 1 - General United States Mint Customers	Segment 2 - silver/gold/com memorative purchasers	Segment 3 - General Non-Customers	
Monadic Cell: A	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: B	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: C	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: D	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: E	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: F	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: G	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: H	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: I	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: J	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: K	100	100	50	250

Monadic Cell: L	100	100	50	250
Monadic Cell: M (control cell for non-customers)	0	0	200	200
Total Sample by Segment	1,200	1,200	800	3,200

The customer sample for the survey will be obtained from the customer database lists and will be selected randomly among the population of customers fitting the defined criteria.

The non-customer sample for the survey will be obtained from the Research Now survey panel which is our research contractor's preferred partner. Research Now (RN) is one of the largest panel companies in the world (38 countries) and in the U.S. (over 3 Million U.S. consumer panelists) and their primary business is providing online research only panels. RN is a member of the major market research organizations, including CASRO, the MRA and ESOMAR, and adheres to all of their quality standards including recruitment, confidentiality, compensation and accuracy of the data. RN's panel is recruited from a diverse group of over 300 online and offline sources including airline clubs, department store and restaurant credit card lists, and website advertising.

Panelists receive either money or redeemable point incentives for completing surveys. All panelists fill out a registration survey when they join which includes demographic and profile questions (such as hobbies, product usage, etc.) as well as name and address. RN performs multiple checks on this information to identify fraudulent or duplicate panelists. The panel is actively managed which means, among other things, that the registration survey is updated periodically and panelists that don't respond to survey invitations over several months are removed from the panel.

In addition, National Analysts has very strict sample requirements and RN is their preferred panel partner because of their consistent ability to adhere to our survey specifications and to provide sample that is balanced to census demographics (e.g., age, income, gender) and representative of our target populations.

Potential customer and non-customer respondents will be sent email invitations to take the survey on-line. The survey should take no more than ten minutes to complete. Based on our historic response rates and our experience with this type of survey, we anticipate inviting 65,000 customers to respond to the survey in order to achieve the targeted 2400 sample size and 30,000 non-customers to achieve the targeted 800 sample size for that group. Collected survey data will be coded, cleaned, weighted and tabulated.

### **III. Survey Design**

As stated, this will be a web-based survey taking approximately ten minutes to complete. The survey is designed to assess interest and determine the most appealing configuration of a special set commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kennedy Half Dollar.

After asking several standard questions pertaining to screening, purchasing history, future intent and purchase likelihood, the survey presents a set of questions exploring interest in and likelihood to purchase a single concept option for the anniversary special set. All respondents see these questions; however, which product concept they are responding to varies by which monadic testing cell they have been assigned to (monadic cell assignment is random within each sample segment). As shown below, respondents in each category will evaluate their interest in, and likelihood to purchase, a single permutation of the potential Kennedy product.

Coins	Production Limit
a. 4 reverse proof 90% silver half dollars (S, W, P, D)	Approx. 100,000
b. 3 clad proof coins (W, P, D) + 1 90% silver reverse proof (S)	
c. 1 clad proof half dollar 1 clad reverse proof half dollar, 1 clad unc half dollar (mint marks aren't specified right now)	
d. 1 90% silver proof half dollar 1 90% silver reverse proof half dollar, 1 90% silver unc half dollar (mint marks aren't specified right now)	Open sell window
e. 1 clad proof half dollar, 1 clad reverse proof half dollar (mint marks aren't specified right now)	
f. 1 90% silver proof half dollar, 1 90% silver reverse proof half dollar (mint marks aren't specified right now)	

**MONADIC CELLS:**

- A. Coins "a" Production "100,000"
- B. Coins "a" Production "Open Sell Window"
- C. Coins "b" Production "100,000"
- D. Coins "b" Production "Open Sell Window"
- E. Coins "c" Production "100,000"
- F. Coins "c" Production "Open Sell Window"
- G. Coins "d" Production "100,000"
- H. Coins "d" Production "Open Sell Window"
- I. Coins "e" Production "100,000"
- J. Coins "e" Production "Open Sell Window"
- K. Coins "f" Production "100,000"
- L. Coins "f" Production "Open Sell Window"
- M. Control cell 1

Following the concept assessment portion of the survey, respondents will be asked more general questions about special sets for future coin anniversaries. Lastly, all respondents are asked a set of standard demographic questions, after which they have completed the survey.

This monadic cell methodology is a research design commonly used in testing price sensitivity but is also useful in product concept testing where evaluation of concept appeal is desired in absolute terms, free from the bias inherent in comparative assessments. The methodology does tend to increase the required sample size;

however, it has the benefit of reducing respondent fatigue since the survey instrument is shorter (i.e., instead of each respondent evaluating all concepts for each product, they only review a single concept for each product). Obtaining unbiased assessments of the various product concepts is a research objective since it is more similar to the conditions in which we will ultimately offer any of these products – that is, we will only offer customers a single special product so customers will not know that the other choices existed. Using the monadic cell methodology, customers will only be asked to assess one product concept, as opposed to thirteen.

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

This survey approach is designed to minimize the amount of intrusion and burden that is placed on customers. Accordingly, calls will not be made to them, nor will other “intrusive” measures that normally might be used to maximize response rates. We plan to send e-mail invitations to respondents explaining that participation is totally voluntary and that their feedback will be used to help improve the products and services we offer. Multiple reminder emails (e.g., two to three) will be sent to potential respondents to invite them to complete the survey. Respondents can complete the survey at a time convenient to them.

No monetary incentive will be offered to customers. Non-customers will receive a non-monetary incentive from the research panel partner.

We ensure that our data provide reliable population-level inferences by carefully designing the sampling plan with appropriate strata and sample sizes and by weighting the data to account for the survey design and to adjust for non-response.

The United States Mint deals with non-response bias in a number of ways. First, question non-response (those who don’t answer a question but would otherwise complete the survey) is minimized by the survey tool, which requires respondents to make a selection for all questions. Second, survey non-response (people who don’t respond to the survey invitation and those who respond but don’t complete the survey) is minimized by keeping the survey short and as simple as practicable, allowing respondents to take the survey at a time convenient to them, and by sending reminder emails (usually one to two) to invitees who have not yet responded.

The monadic cell design utilized in the present study is likely to maximize response rates since it allows the survey to stay relatively short and simple and avoids requiring respondents to complete a long and potentially confusing survey asking them to make fine differentiations among a multitude of product concepts.

As with all of our research, to the extent that a non-response bias is or could be present in this study, we will attempt to identify it by comparing responses among early and late respondents, comparing responses among the targeted segments, and comparing responses along demographic lines. The United States Mint will account for non-response bias by weighting the survey data and applying other adjustment techniques appropriate and available.

## V. Estimate of the Burden Hours

The collection of information will involve completion of the survey via the Internet with up to 2,400 randomly selected customer respondents and 800 randomly selected non-customer respondents. The average time to complete the survey will be approximately 10 minutes. Therefore, the total estimated burden for this survey is 533 hours.

	Kennedy Half Dollar Special Set Survey
All respondents	3200
Average minutes to complete survey	10 mins
Total estimated burden hours	533 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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