

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction Research
IRS Media and Publications 2014 – Option Year 3

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October 25, 2013

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Background

The IRS Media and Publications Customer Satisfaction Surveys were approved by OMB in August 28, 2012, for Optional Period 2 of the requirement. This survey has been conducted on a continuous basis for several years.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) enlists a balanced measurement system consisting of business results, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. This initiative is part of the Service-wide effort to maintain a system of balanced organizational performance measures mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act (RRA) of 1998. This is also a result of Executive Order 12862 that requires all government agencies to survey their customers.

The mode and administration of the survey is not the same as last year. For the base year, we had a web panel for Individual. In 2013, we moved to a mail survey. This year the survey was revised to delete and add questions with no net change in the number of questions, just a different emphasis on some areas of the questionnaire. However, the burden hour estimate increased this year due to a larger sample size. The period of data collection will be from April 2014 to September 2014.

Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Media and Publications (M&P) Division of the IRS is conducting a customer survey to measure external customer satisfaction with publications, forms, and other documents it produces and distributes. Feedback from customers is important in order to assess perceptions of M&P products and service to help the various program areas develop product and service improvement actions.

There will be four questionnaire instruments used to assess customer satisfaction levels—one for each of the following four audiences: individual taxpayers, business taxpayers, tax preparers, and forms distributors.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The primary goals of the survey are to survey external customers who use the documents and services provided by M&P (i.e., individual taxpayers, business taxpayers, tax preparers and forms distributors). More specifically to:

- Assess the level of customer satisfaction with M&P's products and services.
- Provide M&P with suggestions for product and service improvements.
- Produce actionable results that can be used to improve specific products and business processes.
- Generate an understanding of customer satisfaction with all aspects of a document (e.g., ease of use, readability, clarity of language) or service (forms distribution).

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology Sample Design

The M&P questionnaire for forms distributors will be administered via a web survey. Individual taxpayers, business taxpayers, and tax preparers will be offered the option of responding to the survey via the web or to a mail survey.

Segment	List Source	Mode of Administration
Individual Taxpayers	Provided by IRS	Web/Mail
Businesses	Provided by IRS	Web/Mail
Tax Preparers	Provided by IRS	Web/Mail
Forms Distributors	Provided by IRS (TFOP)	Web

4. Efforts Not to Duplicate Research

This is the only study conducted by the IRS to measure customer satisfaction with IRS tax forms, instructions, publications, other documents and forms distribution.

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

The M&P Customer Satisfaction Survey has been designed to minimize the burden on small entities. The time that a respondent takes to complete the survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed.

We will attempt to achieve an overall 30% response rate in the surveys. We have enhanced protocols to maximize the response rate. The business taxpayer and tax preparer survey questionnaires will be administered via mail with the option to complete the survey via web. To achieve the maximum possible response rates, the contractor will send pre-notification letters and e-mails in addition to two reminder letters and e-mails where appropriate.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

The M&P Division of the IRS will not be able to measure external customer satisfaction with publications, forms, and other documents it produces. Feedback from customers is important in order to assess perceptions of M&P products and service to help the various program areas develop service improvement actions. If the survey is not conducted, the primary goals of the M&P organization to survey external customers who use the documents and services provided by M&P will not be achieved (i.e., individual taxpayers, business taxpayers, tax preparers and forms distributors).

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. The information collected will be voluntary. The statistics could be used in making management decisions such as in business improvement opportunities.

8. Consultations with Persons Outside M&P and Contractor

N/A

9. Payment of Gift

N/A

10. Confidentiality

All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II during this study and the vendor will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy as allowed by law of taxpayers 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 A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded. Data security at the C-2 level is accomplished via the Windows NT operating system. 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 taxpayers as allowed by law. This includes criteria 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.

The survey will not contain tax return or taxpayer information. Survey participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy as allowed by law of the survey respondents. We will apply the fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all survey respondents. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the protection of information as well as its releases to authorized recipients.

11. Sensitive Nature

No questions will be asked that are of personal or sensitive nature.

12. Burden of Information Collection

The M&P Customer Satisfaction Survey has been designed to minimize burden. The time that a respondent takes to complete the survey has been carefully considered and only the most important areas are being surveyed. The surveys contain demographic questions, and one reason for this is to determine what kinds of taxpayers are responding to the survey.

Individual Taxpayer Survey

Pre-notification Letter: 7,139 x 2 min = 238 hrs

Survey: 1,214 x 15 min = 304 hrs

Follow-up Postcard: 7,117 x 1 min = 119 hrs

Follow-up Letter: 6,455 x 1 min = 108 hrs

Subtotal: 769 hrs

Business Survey

Pre-notification Letter: 6,933 x 2 min = 231 hrs

Survey: 1,179 x 15 min = 295 hrs

Follow-up Postcard: 6,850 x 1 min = 114 hrs

Follow-up Letter: 6,107 x 1 min = 102 hrs

Subtotal: 742 hrs

Tax Preparer Survey

Pre-notification Letter: 3,896 x 2 min = 130 hrs
Survey: 1,364 x 15 min = 341 hrs
Follow-up Postcard: 3,499 x 1 min = 58 hrs
Follow-up Letter: 2,832 x 1 min = 47 hrs
Subtotal: 576 hrs

Forms Distributors Survey

Pre-notification E-mail: 2,062 x 2 min = 69 hrs
Survey: 1,134 x 10 min = 189 hrs
First Reminder E-mail: 1,604 x 1 min = 27 hrs
Second Reminder E-mail: 1,261 x 1 min = 21 hrs
Subtotal: 306 hrs

TOTAL BURDEN = 2,393 hours

Average Response Rate: 30%

13. Costs to Respondents

N/A

14. Costs to Federal Government

\$108,927.91

15. Reason for Change

N/A

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, and Analysis Plans

Contractor will draw a sample from each population. Based on the previous survey and our experience within the IRS for the four populations and 2 survey fielding methods (mail and web), we estimate the following response rates, which vary by population: 17% for individual taxpayers, 17% for businesses, 35% for tax preparers, and 55% for forms distributors.

For each population, we will attempt to achieve a maximum response rate in the survey. We have enhanced protocols to maximize the response rate. The individual taxpayer, business taxpayer, and tax preparer survey questionnaires will be administered via mail with the option to complete the survey via web. We have historically sent this population surveys via mail and web. This has not been changed. To achieve the maximum possible response rates, the contractor will send pre-notification letters/e-mails in addition to two reminder letters/e-mails where appropriate.

With regard to the low response rate, the IRS will assume that all data collected from this survey is **qualitative in nature**, and that no critical decisions will be made by this office solely from the analysis of data from this survey. The results from this survey are simply one piece of a larger set of information needed to assess the needs related to services provided by the IRS. The contractor will hold the identities of respondents private to the extent allowed by law.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

N/A

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

N/A

19. Dates collection will begin and end

April 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014 (includes time allotted for analysis and reporting)

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

Data collection methods and procedures will vary; however, the primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information. The M&P satisfaction surveys are attached. The survey asks respondents to evaluate various aspects of their experience with content, usefulness, format, graphics, delivery, mode, availability, and other aspects of the production and delivery of information to enable taxpayers to understand and meet their obligations under Federal tax law. The results should facilitate more effective products and services of M&P by providing insight from the customer's perspective about possible improvements. The surveys include several rating questions evaluating service and document use as well as several demographic questions. In addition, ample space will be provided for suggestions for improvement. Satisfaction questions will utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied.

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

Contractor will draw a sample from each population to include individual taxpayers, business taxpayers, tax preparers and forms distributors.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The contractor will be responsible for collecting the data and conducting data analysis. The contractor will be responsible for hosting and administering the web survey. This mail study will be multi-wave to increase the response rate.

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Individual Taxpayers	Provided by IRS	Web/Mail
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Forms Distributors	Provided by IRS (TFOP)	Web

3. Methods to Maximize Response

We will attempt to achieve an overall 30% response rate in the surveys. We have enhanced protocols to maximize the response rate. The business taxpayer and tax preparer survey questionnaires will be administered via mail with the option to complete the survey via web. To achieve the maximum possible response rates, the contractor will send pre-notification letters and e-mails in addition to two reminder letters and e-mails where appropriate.

4. Testing of Procedures

The Contractor will internally test that the web survey program functions as intended. The Contractor and W&I staff will jointly test the survey exactly as it will be viewed by the

respondents—on multiple browsers, etc. Upon launch, the contractor will monitor the number of completed surveys and the dispositions on a daily basis. The M&P satisfaction surveys are attached. The survey asks respondents to evaluate various aspects of their experience with content, usefulness, format, graphics, delivery, mode, availability, and other aspects of the production and delivery of information to enable taxpayers to understand and meet their obligations under Federal tax law. The results should facilitate more effective products and services of M&P by providing insight from the customer's perspective about possible improvements. The surveys include several rating questions evaluating service and document use as well as several demographic questions. In addition, ample space will be provided for suggestions for improvement. Satisfaction questions will utilize a 5-point rating scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

For questions regarding the study or questionnaire design or statistical methodology, contact:

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