

## Hot Topic: Custom Panels Deliver Better Quality Especially Within an Exchange

Access panels today are facing huge challenges, and the trends are working against them. These challenges include higher attrition, lower response rates, more fraud and duplication, weak relationships with their members, and a higher cost of online recruitment. Recent estimates are that approximately 50% of an access panel needs to be replenished every year. With online marketing and advertising being the predominant source for recruitment, and with these rates increasing as online advertising becomes more effective for so many other businesses, the costs for replenishment continue to rise.

Although some methods have been introduced to address potential duplication of respondents within each project, there continues to be efforts on the part of fraudsters to enter surveys to which they have not been invited and to participate as many times as possible in order to receive an incentive. These attempts and challenges to current systems will continue, and access panels will have to respond.

Access panelists are also typically contacted far more often than desired, and most would characterize this as harassment. With many access panels, the number of invitations has grown dramatically in recent months and years to the point where multiple invitations per day are the norm. Being contacted multiple times per day and rarely responding to those invitations cannot be good for the relationship, and this has contributed to further diminishing of response rates and higher attrition.

Custom panels, in contrast, are recruited from a company's customer or consumer database whereby there is an existing relationship that is based on a strong interest the customer or consumer has in the company's products and services. Custom Panels are also typically branded, thereby reinforcing the relationship with the company even further.

Since there is typically a relationship associated with the company's products and services, there is more in-depth and relevant profiling that can be collected and known about the custom panel member. Importantly, results from each survey can be stored and utilized so that the annoying and disrespectful habit with access panels of re-asking basic questions such as gender and age can be completely avoided. Response rates are far superior with Custom Panels because of the pre-existing relationship based on more than just participating in a research panel and the more careful and respectful way in which these panels are typically managed.

An Exchange platform (at EasyInsites this is called EasyExchange) enables Custom Panels to be managed in a high quality and consistent manner, unlike the disparate access panels which are typically sourced from different companies with different rules. When panels all sit within the same environment, usage rules can be easily applied and enforced and the combination of these panels can provide the depth and breadth that is needed for representative research. With EasyExchange, these include:

- ☺ *Panel Blending* – sample is drawn from multiple panels simultaneously to reach hard target groups and to remove source bias and reaching panelists with different motivations for participating
- ☺ *Random & Stratified Sampling* – within the required targets, sample is always randomly generated as well as being stratified by high, medium, and low responders
- ☺ *Quarantine and Contact Settings* – both panelists and panel owners can set the maximum number of survey contacts per month, standard rule is a minimum of 7 day quarantine period
- ☺ *Exclusions* – panelists are automatically excluded from taking part in surveys in the same subject category or project regardless of the panel they belong to
- ☺ *Survey Length Limit* – 25 minute limit, nothing longer is permitted