PRODEGE MR

ESOMAR 28 Guidelines

2014

28 Questions To Assist Research Buyers Of Online Sample

The ESOMAR 28 is designed to provide a standard set of questions a buyer can ask to determine whether a sample provider's practices and samples fit with their research objectives. The questions help research buyers think about the issues relating to online samples.

Company Profile

1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?

Context: This answer might help you to form an opinion about the relevant experience of the sample provider. How long has the sample provider been providing this service and do they have for example a market research, direct marketing or more technological background? Are the samples solely provided for third party research, or does the company also conduct proprietary work using their panels?

Voted by Deloitte and Inc. as one of the fastest growing companies in 2013, Prodege's proprietary panel ProdegeMR has been delivering online sample to the world's largest panel companies since 2009. Prodege, established in 2005, is the world's leading people powered influence network and is the holding company for a variety of online properties including ProdegeMR, our online sample provider. In 2013, ProdegeMR developed its own operating panel, delivering sample directly to marketing research clients. In 2013, ProdegeMR delivered over 6 million survey completes.

Sample Sources And Recruitment

2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?

Context: The description of the types of sources a provider uses for delivering an online sample will provide insight into the quality of the sample.

ProdegeMR leverages Swagbucks.com, Prodege's rewards company, as their direct and sole source for recruitment. Swagbucks.com, made up of 10+ million members, offers a variety of member engagement activities, including online surveys, videos, daily deals, and shopping for which members are rewarded for their participation. In October 2013, SwagBucks.com was ranked by Alexa Internet as the 110th most visited website in the United States and the 539th most trafficked website globally, providing ProdegeMR with a vast wholly owned recruitment source. Swagbucks.com does not source any other panel.

Swagbucks.com members are presented with the opportunity to join the panel and participate in online surveys. This unique and proprietary web property enables ProdegeMR to have a richly profiled panel with a high level of respondent engagement. ProdegeMR panel is available in 5 countries: U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and Ireland.

3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?

Context: The variation in data coming from different sources has been well documented. Overlap between different panel providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents.

ProdegeMR differentiates itself by committing to providing sample exclusively from its own self sourced panel and therefore does not blend sample at this time. Clients may blend sample independent of ProdegeMR.

To avoid duplication within our own panel we have a dedicated compliance team that continuously monitors our users to prevent fraud and user duplication. These checks include a number of proprietary techniques and software as well as mobile verification.

4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

Context: Combining respondents from sources set up primarily for different purposes (like direct marketing for example) may cause undesirable survey effects.

What makes ProdegeMR unique from other panel companies is our innovative approach to manage panelist engagement, tenure and panelist satisfaction. Utilizing Swagbucks.com, our panelists are provided with diverse experiences beyond survey taking such as watching videos, playing games, online shopping, and online daily deals. These other experiences keep panelists motivated to remain engaged as a panelist with a high level of satisfaction of survey taking and their membership.

5. How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?

Context: Ensuring the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups on the internet (like ethnic minority groups, young people, seniors etc.) may increase population coverage and improve the quality of the sample provided.

Our sole recruitment source, the 10+ million member base of Swagbucks.com, offers a broad spectrum of diverse panelists to participate in surveys, including a sufficient number of hard to reach people (teens, young adults, Hispanics). Recognizing that motivations may be different across demographic groups, ProdegeMR leverages Swagbucks.com activities (videos, games) to keep panelists engaged, which increases active panelist participation across segments.

6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

Context: Many providers work with third parties. This means that the quality of the sample is also dependent on the quality of sample providers that the buyer did not select. Transparency

is essential in this situation. Overlap between different providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents. Providers who observe process standards like the ISO standards are required to give you this information.

A key component of our sampling philosophy is to provide clients with a sample source we can control; therefore we do not currently supplement our sample. ProdegeMR promises to deliver sample according to what is bid to meet feasibility and quota requirements.

Sampling And Project Management

7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?

Context: The sampling processes (i.e. how individuals are selected or allocated from the sample sources) used are the main factor in sample provision. A systematic approach based on market research fundamentals may increase sample quality.

Through our wide range of recruitment channels and offerings, ProdegeMR ensures a diverse composition of people that represent the population of the U.S. (as well as U.K., Canada, Australia, and Ireland). ProdegeMR maintains a database of over 1000 demographic and behavioral attributes that are utilized to pull sample for your project. With each sample order, your Account Manager starts with understanding your targeting requirements (e.g. a nationally representative sample, or a specific targeted group) and the number of responses needed, ensuring your sample plan is optimized and executed accurately. Throughout the course of the project, needs are actively monitored and sample is adjusted to meet your requirements.

8. Do you employ a survey router?

Context: A survey router is a software system that allocates willing respondents to surveys for which they are likely to qualify. Respondents will have been directed to the router for different reasons, perhaps after not qualifying for another survey in which they had been directly invited to participate, or maybe as a result of a general invitation from the router itself. There is no consensus at present about whether and how the use of a router affects the responses that individuals give to survey questions.

ProdegeMR does not employ an internal survey router. However, there are cases where ProdegeMR sample is delivered via a third party router (client or partner). If a router is utilized, we establish the router management rules to control the experience of our panelists, including, but not limited to how long they can be in the router.

9. If you use a router: Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?

Context: Biases of varying severity may arise from the prioritization in choices of surveys to present to respondents and the method of allocation.

Working with third-party routers, ProdegeMR panelists receive surveys based on their ability to meet survey qualification criteria. Based on these criteria, respondents are randomly matched to a study they're most likely to complete. If they do not qualify for a study, they may be presented with the chance to participate in another survey. There are not business rules set to prioritize one study over another.

10. If you use a router: What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?

Context: If Person A is allocated to Survey X on the basis of some characteristic then they may not be allowed to also do Survey Y. The sample for Survey Y is potentially biased by the absence of people like Person A.

Our clients and third-party routing partners who utilize a router minimize risk by closely monitoring for consistency, employing a large volume of diverse projects and presenting surveys on a random basis, all of which reduce bias.

11. If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

Context: It may be necessary to try to replicate your project in the future with as many of the parameters as possible set to the same values. How difficult or easy will this be?

ProdegeMR Account Mangers work with clients and third-party routing partners to implement both account level and project level routing rules based on ProdegeMR business rules and customer requirements.

12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

Context: The usefulness to your project of pre-profiled information will depend on the precise question asked and may also depend on when it was asked. If real time profiling is used, what control do you have over what question is actually asked?

ProdegeMR tracks and stores thousands of demographic and behavioral attributes through a number of channels. Our users engage in our Daily Poll in which we receive up to 100k+ unique responses in a day. In addition, we monitor behavioral data points through our Search, Offers viewed and Shopping to create data points. If a project has extremely specific needs we can prescreen on the fly and gather tens of thousands of responses within a matter of hours.

Panelist profiles are updated on an ongoing basis, with continuous refreshing to ensure data remains current. Utilizing our proprietary technology, panelist data is collected and stored real-time during the registration process, in a follow-up surveys, and on the panelist website. Panelists can proactively update their profile at anytime, or we may send out a push notification letting them know their profile is not complete, or needs updating. Additionally, profiling data collected in a survey can be sent to our database and updated real-time.

A more comprehensive list of attributes can be found in our panel book (provided upon request).

13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.

Context: The type of proposition (and associated rewards) could influence the type of people who agree to take part in specific projects and can therefore influence sample quality. The level of detail given about the project may also influence response.

A ProdegeMR Account Manager is responsible for managing and deploying survey invitations for your project.

Members of ProdegeMR are invited to participate in surveys the following ways:
1. An invite is delivered via an email invitation
2. A message is delivered to the panelist's inbox on the panel website (login/password required)

A survey invitation template is used for consistency so the panelist knows what to expect when they receive an invite from ProdegeMR. The invites include the following information pertaining to the study:
- Amount of incentive offered for participation
- Approximate amount of time it will take to complete the survey
- Link to survey
- Opportunity to decline survey via a "Decline Survey" button located at the bottom of the invite

To prevent bias, we do not divulge the subject of the survey or the target audience. The amount of incentive offered to the panelist is based off the length and/or difficulty of the survey.

Every email invitation contains opt-out information in compliance with CAN-SPAM, access information about ProdegeMR including contact information, FAQ, our privacy policy and how to prevent survey invitations from being blocked by SPAM filters.

14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?

Context: The reward or incentive system may impact on the reasons why people participate in a specific project and these effects can cause bias to the sample.

Our clients find value in our panelists' opinions and ideas and in return for that value, our panelists earn rewards. ProdegeMR's incentive program is Swagbucks.com, the leading reward community, where panelists can earn and accumulate virtual currency (Swag Bucks) for

participating in surveys, completing and updating their profile as well as other online activities. Swag Bucks can be redeemed for gift cards to popular retailers (online and offline) and/or used for donations towards charities.

Swag Bucks offered vary according to survey length, amount of effort required, and the nature of the project. Panelists have the opportunity to reach a redemption level at a reasonable rate, which creates loyalty and a positive panel experience.

15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

Context: The "size" of any panel or source may not necessarily be an accurate indicator that your specific project can be completed or completed within your desired time frame.

To run feasibility on a project, your ProdegeMR Account Manager requires the following specifications to determine the sample size and field time for completion:

- Survey length and difficulty
- Number of completed interviews required
- Demographic criteria
- Non-demographic targeting, or behavioral criteria
- Projected incidence on the population

ProdegeMR commits to feasibility based on using its own panel and no other source.

16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

Context: Respondent satisfaction may be an indicator of willingness to take future surveys. Respondent reactions to your survey from self-reported feedback or from an analysis of suspend points might be very valuable to help understand survey results.

Creating a positive member experience is core to everything we do at Prodege. ProdegeMR extends that principle to our panelists and actively measures respondent satisfaction both through quantitative and qualitative data. In addition to measuring satisfaction through metrics (activity/churn), we actively engage real-time with our panelists in online chats, blogs and social media to gauge satisfaction.

ProdegeMR will share respondent satisfaction reporting with clients upon request.

17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

Context: One should expect a full sample provider debrief report, including gross sample, start rate, participation rate, drop-out rate, the invitation/contact text, a description of the field work process, and so on. Sample providers should be able to list the standard reports and metrics that they make available.

Clients monitor sample performance and create reports through the survey platform they use to run the survey.

By the end of the year 2014, ProdegeMR will have a project management dashboard in place to internally manage and track projects during fielding and provide clients with a project summary report.

Data Quality And Validation

18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviors, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g. "Don't Know") or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.

Context: The use of such procedures may increase the reliability and validity of the survey data.

At ProdegeMR, we take data quality very seriously. We have our own in-house compliance department dedicated to monitoring and eliminating fraudulent panel members. We combine industry standard data quality solutions provided by third-party partners, along with our own proprietary techniques to ensure our panel meets the highest level of standards. Because our panel originated from the success of our rewards program, Swagbucks.com, we are vigilant about detecting fraud. Observed offenders of fraud are removed from the panel and not allowed to re-register with the panel.

In addition to data quality methods that we can control for on our panel, we cooperate with our clients if undesirable survey taking behavior is detected in their surveys. Any undesirable respondents are reconciled, so clients do not pay for poor quality survey completes. These respondents are then flagged, and monitored within our panel. Any repeat offenders of fraud or questionable survey taking behavior will be removed from survey taking opportunities.

19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

Context: Over solicitation may have an impact on respondent engagement or on self-selection and non-response bias.

The majority of our users' survey opportunities are presented onsite; this allows users to take surveys when they meet the following criteria: (1) there are surveys available for them, (2) they are logged in to the site, and (3) they choose to participate. The number of surveys available is highly varied dependent on current inventory and respondent demographics. If our users opt in to our e-mail survey offering, they will receive an average of 4 invites per month. ProdegeMR has the ability to manage how many surveys are sent to each panelist and frequently implements business rules, on behalf of our clients, in order to comply with their best practices. If a survey isn't available for a panelist, they have the opportunity to participate in other Swagbucks.com activities such as shopping online and watching videos to keep them engaged.

20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?

Context: Frequency of survey participation may increase the risk of undesirable conditioning effects or other potential biases.

A panelist may only complete the same survey once. The exception to this rule is pre-determined studies such as longitudinal studies, diaries, or trackers when the survey will be deployed to panelists more than once over a specified period of time.

To manage category or time sensitive periods, in advance of a project we review feasibility and apply exclusions to the sample pull. Exclusions allow us to control how frequently respondents are eligible to take a given survey. In some cases respondents can take the survey monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. These decisions are made in collaboration with our clients to adhere to their market research requirements and best practices.

21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?

Context: This type of data per respondent including how the total population is defined and how the sample was selected and drawn, may increase the possibilities for analysis of data quality.

Our proprietary panel and management system maintains individual respondent level data within our panel database and allows us to automatically update the history panelist activity including join date, emails opened, survey activity, profiling data, engagement with Swagbucks.com and incentives.

Upon request, ProdegeMR can supply clients with unique panelist IDs to conduct project level analysis. We do not share or sell personally identifiable information (PII) on our panelists and/or rewards program members.

22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

Context: Confirmation of identity can increase quality by decreasing multiple entries, fraudulent panelists etc.

ProdegeMR, a consumer panel, has a series of processes to handle panelist identity and detect fraud. To confirm respondent identities, ProdegeMR works with third-party industry standard data quality solutions to ensure a panelist is real and unique upon registration. Panelists are subject to a double opt-in process by initially joining Swagbucks.com, then opting into the

panel to take surveys. Panelists cannot enroll more than once, meaning they cannot have more than one profile account in the panel database.

In addition, our in-house compliance department continuously monitors fraud and eliminates threats. This may result in removing panel members or shutting out alien technologies caught cheating the system. As part of our reward verification procedure, ProdegeMR's compliance team has also implemented IP address and mobile phone verification. ProdegeMR continues to evaluate and/or implement additional data quality procedures as new capabilities emerge.

Policies And Compliance

23. Please describe the 'opt-in for market research' processes for all your online sample sources.

Context: The opt-in process indicates the respondents' relationship with the sample source provider. The market generally makes a distinction between single and double opt-in. Double opt-in refers to the process by which a check is made to confirm that the person joining a panel or database wishes to be a member and understands what to expect (in advance of participating in an actual survey for a paying client).

Panelists are by default subject to a double opt-in process by initially joining Swagbucks.com (first opt-in), confirming their membership, and then accepting the opportunity to join the panel (second opt-in) to take surveys. Subsequent to the Swagbucks.com registration process, members are invited to register with ProdegeMR with the clear understanding that they will be invited to participate in market research studies.

24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

Context: Not complying with local and international privacy laws might mean the sample provider is operating illegally. An example privacy policy is given in the ESOMAR Guideline for Online Research.

Privacy is an integral part of our well-established online business. Our Privacy Policy is provided to panelists in survey invitations, incentive communications, Terms and Conditions, on Swagbucks.com, and on Prodege.com. Our Privacy Policy is a blanket policy for ProdegeMR and Swagbucks.com. When a panelist signs up to participate in surveys, they agree to adhere to the Terms and Conditions, which includes the Privacy Policy.

ProdegeMR's Privacy Policy: http://www.swagbucks.com/g/privacy

25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

Context: The sample provider usually stores sensitive and confidential information on panelists and clients in databases. These data need to be properly secured and backed-up, as does any confidential information provided by the client. The sample provider should be able to provide you with the latest date at which their security has been evaluated by a credible third-party

Security is a top priority for Prodege, and we know that member data is one of our most valuable assets. Our security starts with our network. Our database, where member data is stored, including personally identifiable information (PII), is separated from the Internet by a firewall. Only the application servers can access the database servers from outside our network. Prodege utilizes 256 bit encryption that is primarily asymmetric. The private key was generated by our security admin and only our CTO and the security admin know the key. We also secure data by limiting the number of people who can access the data to only those who need to in order to perform their job. This is then limited to those who support our production environment and those who analyze the data. All user accounts are required to have complex passwords. Data is backed up digitally and stored on machines with even more restricted access.

26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

Context: There are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys. In today's social media world, clients should be aware that the combination of technology solutions and respondent confidentiality agreements are "speed bumps" that mitigate but cannot guarantee that a client's stimuli will not be shared or described in social media.

ProdegeMR recommends our clients inform panel respondents that they may be presented with sensitive and/or confidential material. We advise clients to include a confidentiality question in the survey asking panelists to agree not to share concepts they are shown. The panelist has the opportunity to opt-out, or accept the terms of confidentiality. If the panelist accepts the agreement, and then posts the confidential information on the Internet, ProdegeMR will take immediate and necessary action. This could include but is not limited to requesting immediate removal of the post and penalizing the panelist with removal of rewards funds, elimination from panel, and possible legal action.

27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

Context: Being certified may require the supplier to perform tasks in a pre-determined manner and document procedures that should be followed.

ProdegeMR is not certified to any specific quality system. Our clients and partners utilize solutions on their end that fit their needs.

28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

Context: The ICC/ESOMAR International Code requires special permissions for interviewing children. These are described in the ESOMAR Online Research Guideline. In the USA researchers must adhere to the requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Act (COPPA). Further information on legislation and codes of practice can be found in Section 6 of ESOMAR's Guideline for Online Research.

ProdegeMR complies with applicable laws and codes relating to the protection of children's privacy, including the United States Children's' Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and ESOMAR association guidelines.

In compliance with state and local sweepstakes rules, ProdegeMR allows ages 13 and above to participate in web activities and take surveys for rewards. ProdegeMR only conducts research with trusted Market Research companies and our Account Managers work closely with clients to QA each survey, in advance of fielding, to insure studies are appropriate for our panel audience.

Prodege's research partners follow ESOMAR guidelines for online market research and are COPPA compliant when conducting studies amongst young people.