

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Client satisfaction with agency service delivery

Project outline

This government agency interacts with clients and potential clients in Australia and overseas, using a combination of telephone, web, letter, email, and face-to-face contact. The agency wanted to understand how effective its different service channels were and what additional information, if any, its clients needed.

No studies had been done before in this area, so little was known about the concepts that needed to be researched. However, the agency had the email addresses of many clients, with more than enough to generate a representative sample.

Research Strategy

A number of focus groups were conducted to better understand the key service issues. These were followed by telephone interviews with peak bodies and organisations which regularly interacted with the agency, and a national web survey of clients.

As it was unlikely that clients of this agency were included in existing web panels, ASR built a web panel specifically for this project. We used the email addresses provided by the agency to recruit the participants for focus groups. More than 300 participants registered their interest within 48 hours, and a representative cross section of people were chosen and invited to attend groups.

Two client focus groups were conducted in both Melbourne and Sydney. Two focus groups were also conducted amongst staff chosen from a wide range of programs within the agency, as it was considered that they would have considerable insight into service issues through their daily interaction with clients. These groups were conducted in Melbourne and Sydney, but included staff from Adelaide and Canberra.

Staff quickly identified key strengths and areas for improvement. Using this information and the insights obtained from the client focus groups, a detailed web questionnaire was developed. A large sample was required because the agency wanted to compare how people from different ethnic backgrounds viewed client service.

More than 5,000 people responded over 10 days. Rather than sending reminders, several rounds of invitations were emailed to randomly chosen samples from the large number of email addresses provided.

Outcomes

The survey results revealed several key areas for improvement at both operational and policy levels. There were clear and consistent service themes across all respondent categories.

The client also gained valuable insights into the differences between ethnic groups, particularly concerning ways of making contact and service priorities. For example, some groups preferred face-to-face meetings, while others were happy with email contact; some groups indicated politeness and courtesy as first priorities while others were more interested in getting answers quickly.

“A novel way to recruit participants for market research”