Report on Focus Group Findings

ARF FOQ 2 Router Initiative

ABSTRACT

This report will detail the findings of a focus group conducted on behalf of the Advertising Research Foundation on August 8, 2012 in New York City. The discussion was led by Steve Gittelman.

Those taking part in the discussion were chosen from a group of online sample users including account managers and researchers drawn from a random sample of the top 50 Honomichl companies. Eight companies participated in the forum. All participants met the following criteria:

1. Have direct client contact
2. Be responsible for proposing and or designing research projects that involve online sample
3. Be accountable to clients for online research projects conducted by their firms
4. Have some say in the design and online sample employed for projects
5. Have some familiarity with routers

While participants were not required to have employed routers for studies for which they were accountable, or to have ever used routed sample, they had to be familiar with them. Also, some participants were familiar with routers, but had rejected their use.

The subject of interest was participants' thoughts and comments on the use of sample routers, a technology-based approach to assigning sample to surveys. Routers typically:

1. Maximize the likelihood that anyone who wants to do a survey has the chance to do so
2. Increase the chances of filling all quotas and delivering within project schedules
3. Automate sample frame design to incorporate a set of well thought-out rules so that the process is less ad hoc than in the past (when this was done manually, often by project managers and in inconsistent ways)
4. Centralize decision making about how to optimize use of the available pool of respondents and provide metrics so that decision makers are aware of how the router is performing.

Participants recognized that routers could increase the number of interviews that a sample provider can yield, thereby lowering costs. They also understood that routers could provide a better experience for respondents since there are fewer screen outs and a higher degree of participation in surveys – both of which can lower respondent frustration. However, participants expressed apprehension regarding the use of routers as the bias that routers can introduce into the sample frame remains unclear.

Although it was accepted as fact by the participants that there were benefits to be gained by the use of routers, the researchers were alarmed by the lack of transparency from sample or technology providers