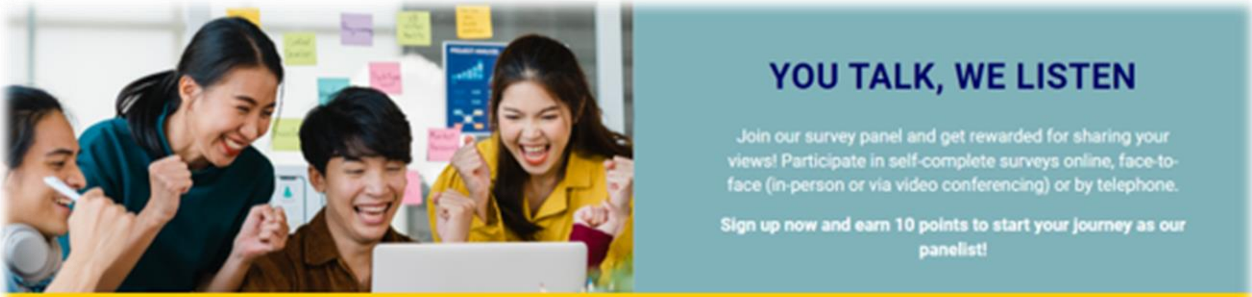

ML Research Consultants Pte. Ltd. (MLRC) answers ESOMAR 28 Questions to Help Buyers of Online Sample

A. COMPANY PROFILE

Q1. What experience does your company have with providing online samples for market research?

MLRC began switching from the traditional hardcopy self-administered survey booklets to online surveys in 2008, as the widespread availability and use of 4G technology made it easier and more popular to do so.

We have been running online panels for more than 10 years. As an independent, one-stop market research agency, our services extend beyond providing clients with sample listings for online surveys. They include hosting online surveys, survey design, advice on sampling methodologies, data analysis, data visualisation, reporting, and presentation of survey results.

Our panel team provides our clients with samples of various demographics or geographical locations (in Singapore), for targeted sample, general population sample or enterprise sample, as per clients' specifications. Many of our clients have benefitted from our extensive experience in conducting online surveys and we have successfully delivered online surveys for government agencies, institutes of higher learning, non-profit organisations and businesses.

We will continue to invest in evolving and further developing our online panels. We differ from other panels in the fact that our panels spread over Singapore by geographical locations and have more subsegments with specific demographics. In addition, most of our listings also contain mobile phone numbers, so we are able to reach them by email and SMS, and obtain higher response rates, quicker response and avoid multiple responses from one individual.

MLRC is a member of Market Research Society Singapore (MRSS) and The Research Society Australia (TRS). We also respect and observe all ESOMAR rules and we follow the guidelines related with the Online Market Research.

B. SAMPLE SOURCES AND RECRUITMENT

Q2. 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?

Our panel is curated from various sources so that we can provide our clients with the most diverse online panel that we can achieve. Our respondents follow a double opt-in procedure whenever they sign up. We keep the panel active by engaging them through a retention program, based on trust and honesty.

In order to guarantee a well-represented sample, MLRC chooses to use a variety of recruitment and contact methodologies (offline, online, targeted & non-targeted). The most frequent recruitment channels are mail invitations/flyers, SMS advertisements, e-mail list mailing, (offline) telephone recruitment, website, banner and pop-up adverts on popular internet sites (search engine marketing), as well as on-site recruitment.

When evaluating the priority of sources, the recruitment process takes the following into consideration:

- Panel parameters: response rates, attrition, data quality, demographics and geographical locations
- Census representativity: age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, dwelling types, etc
- Targeted Sample: people with certain ailments or parents with young children, etc.

Q3. 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?

When necessary, MLRC will utilize multiple sample sources to support client needs. The sample blend is controlled by a number of rules to ensure both source bias and panel usage risks are mitigated. Our platform uses a suite of technologies and controls that ensure that duplicates are not present in any online sample (such as IP address, mobile phone, postal code).

We manage our sample so that it will be representative of a population, i.e., age, gender ethnicity, dwelling type, geographical location, education, etc. Our results also show that our blended sample is stable and sensitive enough to accurately reflect survey results over time.

Q4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

MLRC panels are used solely for market research purposes. Panelists are recruited exclusively for market research and social studies. We never share individual details to clients or any associates.

We do not use our panel for other purposes, such as, direct marketing. Hence this makes our panel less limited by the PDPA and our panelists are more likely to respond and provide frank opinions.

Q5. How do you source groups that may be hard-to-reach on the internet?

If the target groups are general public but hard-to-reach on the internet (such as non-tech savvy audiences, elderly, etc), we recommend to send SMS advertisements and follow up by telephone to recruit the participants. Alternatively, we use central location method to employ recruiters at strategic locations to recruit panelists and guide them to the online survey.

If the target groups have certain criteria, such as persons with disability/illness and their caregiver, we will seek related organisations' support to recruit the participants.

We only use methodologies that are approved by our clients.

Q6. 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?

We rarely use third-party sample. If that becomes necessary, we will evaluate how robust the listings are and how representative it is of target groups.

We have a tightly controlled supplier vetting process through which we identify companies who adhere to quality and respondent management process which closely mirror our own. Companies selected as preferred partners adhere to stringent guidelines on each project commissioned.

The client is notified and is included in the decision-making process with a total transparency.

C. SAMPLING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Q7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?

Our initial sample selection is inclusive, based on profiling specifications as confirmed by the client. The first step is to extract all active and available panelists that meet the screening criteria as required by the client. We then exclude respondents based on frequency of participation, total number of surveys completed in a time period, etc.

Secondly, we check whether the profile of sample pool matches the census statistics or profiles as requested by the client. If matched, random sampling method is used to select the sample listings. If not matched, stratified random sampling method (stratified by demographics, geographic locations) is used to select the sample listings to ensure the profile of sample listings matches the profile of target respondents required by the client.

Thirdly, the sample would be deployed in batches (1 main sample + 2 buffer listings). Only the main sample is utilised, the buffer listings will be released in the fieldwork, as and when required.

We can also control the number of completes for any specific cells by setting desired end quotas on any specified criteria (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity). Once a target quota is achieved, the survey will close for respondents within that target.

Q8. Do you employ a survey router?

MLRC does not use a survey router.

Q9. 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?

NA.

Q10. 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?

NA.

Q11. If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

NA.

Q12. 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?

When panelists enrol, MLRC uses a recruitment survey to collect basic demographics data, contact details, as well as, topics of interest for online surveys. This includes age/birth year, gender, ethnicity, dwelling type, home location (first 2 digits of postcode), family status, education level, email, mobile phone number, etc.

Also, after responding to a survey (as a complete, quota-full or screened-out participant), panellists are presented with the opportunity to complete additional questions from the questions list, to ensure their profile is kept up to date.

Q13. 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.

Panelists receive an invitation email with the following information (we reference ISO 20252):

- A general description of the purpose of the project
- An explanation if the invitation is sent out on behalf of client who commissioned this survey
- How respondent be selected for this survey
- A statement of the confidentiality and anonymity of each respondent's responses
- The estimated length of interview
- The closing date for completed responses (if applicable)
- A unique URL, QR code and login ID (if any) that provides access to the online survey
- Full disclosure of incentive terms and conditions applying to the project
- A support hotline, WhatsApp, email address for any queries relating to the survey
- Client's contact information for respondent to authenticate this survey
- For panel members, the opportunity to unsubscribe or opt out of future research
- An appropriate privacy policy or statement
- A flyer regarding research results related to survey topic (if any)

There are also clear instructions within the invite if the respondent is required to undertake a particular task, or is required to have a specific software or capability on their PC, laptop, mobile or other device.

For those who do not wish to take part in the survey, there is a 'decline' option that is embedded in the email.

Q14. 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?

MLRC rewards panelists for taking out time to share their opinions. We incentivise each respondent who participates in our survey and completes it. The amount of incentive is driven by the length of interview (LOI), complexity of survey and profile of target groups. The usual incentives would be supermarket shopping vouchers, such as shopping eVoucher, eGift Card, etc which is sent out through SMS/ email.

The exact incentive amount/ value is clearly stated at the beginning of each survey.

Q15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

To provide an accurate estimate, the following information would be required:

- Survey topic/ content
- Estimate length of Interview (LOI)
- Respondent type - general population or targeted group
- If targeted group, requirement of demographics details should be provided (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
- Any non-demographic targeting or behavioural criteria necessary to qualify (elderly, parents with children, caregiver, etc)
- Any quotas, sub-quotas, booster (minority group, HDB 1-2 rooms, etc) requirement
- Incidence Rate (IR)
- Survey period & timeline
- Sampling method and sample size
- Translations (Chinese, Malay and Tamil version)
- Any special stimuli involved (e.g image files, audios, videos)

Q16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

- MLRC measures respondent satisfaction through the review of completion / abandon rate for each survey and three standard questions: (a) overall survey satisfaction using a 5-point scale, (b) hotline support experience (via 5-point scale), and (c) general comments/feedback about the survey.
- Abandon rate is an indirect measure of respondents' satisfaction. High abandon rates imply that respondents are dissatisfied with the questions presented to them and can lead to data quality concerns around non response bias. In addition, high abandon rates for given questions can trigger the re-thinking and re-designing of questions to be more user friendly to respondents.
- All the above information can be made available to clients on request without any personally identifiable information.

Q17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

A de-brief report will include following:

- **Introduction**: Purpose of survey, objectives, date of appointed by client
- **Survey methodology**: target group, data collection method & supplemented method (if any), sampling method, sample size, fieldwork period (start and end date)
- **Questionnaire**: languages used and average time taken to complete the survey (overall, by age groups)
- **Final fieldwork status report**: sample listings used, sample size achieved, rejection rate, incomplete cases, eligible cases, bad sample listings, response rate
- **Clean data set and Data analysis**: Key demographics distribution of respondents and Census/ quota required, weights (if required), descriptives results (if required)
- **Difficulties and limitation**: Any difficulties meet in the fieldwork, factors to limit the accession of respondents, statistics of target respondents is not available or not able to obtain, languages constraints (e.g., tourists, work permit holders)

D. DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

Q18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours, 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.

We do take care of all the quality measures within the survey to make sure that no imposter is allowed to complete the survey. If we find cheaters in a survey, we will remove their responses from the survey and their profile from the panel and tag them as 'Blacklisted'.

Extensive quality procedures are in place with MLRC to ensure that the survey inputs (sample and questionnaire design) allow for high quality survey outputs (survey data).

We commit our efforts to ensure that our respondents are **REAL, FRESH, UNIQUE and ENGAGED** via the following measures:

a. **REAL** - They are who they say they are

   - **Country Geo IP validation:** a respondent connected from an IP outside the country of survey is removed from the data.

   - **Date and Time survey:** Survey date and time will be recorded by the online survey system. We review them and seek out any unusual survey timing/duration.

b. **UNIQUE and FRESH -** Panelists only take the survey once and they must not have participated recently in similar surveys.

   -**Strict panel usage rules** are employed to avoid interviewing the same people too often and prevent them from becoming too used to a type of survey or product category.

   - **Unique link/ login ID**: Send the unique link/ login ID to each respondent, if possible**.**

   - Duplicate devices detection through browser information (IP address).

   - **Duplicate emails / telephone number / home address postcode & unit identification**: cross-check all contact information if available.

c. **ENGAGED - They complete surveys seriously:** each respondent's survey taking behaviour is evaluated. The worst offenders are removed from the data deliverables; they are not counted against quotas.

   - **Speeding detection**: to identify someone who displays inattentive survey taking behaviour through completing a survey too quickly. We measure not only the time spent in the survey overall, but also the number of answers provided. This allows us to calculate a completion speed for each respondent (e.g., the number of answers provided per minute).

   A speeder is someone who completes the survey more than 3 times quicker than the median speed for the survey. We identify and remove speeders from surveys. The process starts from the beginning of fieldwork and is standardised across all MLRC surveys, from all sample sources. On our panel, we deactivate panelist accounts that record speeding across multiple surveys.

   Responses that are much faster than the rest of the sample, for example,

   - Flag out outliers, such as 2 sigma above/below the average time taken for <60 year olds, 3 sigma above & 2 sigma below average time taken for >60 year olds.

   -**Straight lining detection**: to identify someone who displays inattentive survey taking behaviour through providing identical answers across multiple questions within and across multiple grids, we measure straight lining response patterns.

   A straight liner is someone who provides a straight-line response pattern across one or more grids and has completed the survey more than 2 times quicker than the median speed registered for the survey, or regardless of their survey completion speed if the grid has opposite statements that encourage the respondent to use a range of scale points across the grid.

   -Open end evaluation: to identify someone who displays inattentive survey taking behaviour, we measure the quality of answers to open ended questions. The system detects unusable verbatim through a pre-defined dictionary of words including "no comment" "unknown" "do not remember" "not sure" "no answer", "none", "Nil", "no idea", and is available for surveys.

   We identify and remove inattentive respondents that provide unusable responses from more than 4 open ended questions within a survey, if we are unable to call back to follow up on these answers. We deactivate panelist accounts that record unusable open-ended responses across multiple surveys.

MLRC constantly monitors and reviews the performance of our quality measures and updates, and integrates new ones as respondents' behaviours and the online landscape evolve.

Q19. 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?

We monitor the frequency of participation of all panel members in our platform. Every panelist is also given a score based on their responsiveness. We hold detailed data for each panelist on which survey they have taken part in; therefore, a panelist can easily be included or excluded in another survey.

Typically, panelists are assigned no more than 3 surveys per month.

Once a panelist has completed a survey, they do not typically receive another survey invitation for at least one week. This is our minimum exclusion period; other factors (e.g., surveys within the same topic/category, surveys of the same methodology such as ad tests or product tests) require longer exclusion periods, e.g., 2 weeks to 1 months.

However, if a panelist replies but disqualifies, then they are still eligible to receive further survey invitations at any time.

Q20. 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?

Depending on the settings on both the panel and the panelist, this ranges from once a month to once a week.

Panelist may only complete the same survey once. De-duplication, re-use and the lock-out period for quota-full or terminates is set on a per-project basis based on client-preference. The default allows no re-entry once an official status (complete, terminate, etc.) is achieved.

For tracking surveys, de-duplication, re-use or lock-out period for subsequent waves is set according to client-preference.

Q21. 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?

Yes, we do maintain data related to contact and participation history. We maintain databases that record all aspects of a panelist's survey history and experience on our panel: their recruitment date, last participation date, their complete demographic profile, their response history, etc.

This data is analysed for panel maintenance and monitoring purposes and, if a client requests it, we can provide them with the results.

Q22. 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?

Respondent identity confirmation procedure begins when an individual joins the panel and continues through panel management and survey response.

Double-opt in email confirmation to ensure validity of the email address provided. Respondents who want to join our panel receive a confirmation link on the email address provided. Once they click on the confirmation link, they are allowed to continue.

Country Geo-IP validation: A respondent connected from an IP outside the surveyed country is not allowed to participate.

Removal of MLRC's blacklisted emails: The list includes survey cheaters, email extensions of clients, competitors and MLRC's employees.

Anonymous open proxy detection: Someone connected from an open anonymous proxy is hiding her/his device identity and geo location. This behaviour is highly correlated with deliberate fraud attempts and will be removed from the panel.

Detection of anomalies and patterns in panel registration data, such as names/email/IP/demos collected at registration.

Duplicate emails identification: Our panelists cannot create multiple accounts with the same email address.

Duplicate contact details detection: At panel registration, respondents provide name, surname, street address, phone numbers and email address. Using this information we can identify panelist accounts that are very likely to be duplicates.

Panelists history is monitored across surveys and used for panel purge removing inactive respondents. Constant speeders, straight liners, duplicates, those providing robotic answers and offensive words are deactivated from the panel (see response to #18 for more information).

We have a range of features to deal with professional/duplicate respondents. The system includes stratified sampling to get various types of respondents, including active and less-active panelists. The length of the survey is evaluated and compared against individual answers. The system identifies and excludes multiple panel respondents both through email address and by name. Postal address or mobile number is also investigated if the (incentive) payment method supports this. Our panel quality team continuously analyses panel data to identify 'fraudulent' or 'inattentive' panelists.

Our project managers provide feedback to clients of all potential issues which could affect fieldwork, both before project launch as well as on project completion.

E. POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

Q23. Please describe the 'opt-in for market research' processes for all your online sample sources.

We use a standard "double opt-in" procedure, to ensure respondents are fully qualified and highly responsive.

Individuals wishing to join the MLRC panel would follow the following panel recruitment process:

I. First complete the online recruitment survey and accept the terms and conditions of membership to join the panel. We inform our panelists that MLRC agrees to keep all personal information confidential (their profile, mobile phone, personal addresses, etc) and that this information is used only for MLRC's research purposes. Likewise, panelists are requested to adhere to rules regarding the confidentiality of our surveys. Agreement to these terms and conditions provides the first "opt in" to panel membership.

II. Complete a basic background and demographic survey.

III. Send a follow up email confirmation to double opt-in the panel.

IV. Multimodal verification of details given by panelists.

V. Provide dedicated hotline, WhatsApp, Email, Website where they can send any queries to.

Q24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

MLRC's privacy policy is publicly available on our corporate website: https://mlresearch.com.sg/ml-research-privacy-policy/

The users can read our Privacy Policy before signing up in our Panel. In addition, a shortened version of our privacy policy is included in panelist recruitment invitations. As members of the Market Research Society Singapore (MRSS) and The Research Society Australia (TRS), MLRC undertakes to observe and comply with personal data protection practices that these professional bodies uphold, as well as, the Personal Data Protection Act 2012.

Q25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

MLRC applies strict data protection and security processes to protect both client and panelists' data.

MLRC would comply with the Personal Data Protection Act 2012 ("PDPA") and the subsidiary legislation related thereto (collectively "Data Protection Legislation") with regard to any and all personal data (as defined in the PDPA) that it receives from the Customer and would abide with the rules in the conduct of surveys.

MLRC delivers anonymised survey response data to clients (unless respondents have given permission to share their personal information/data). Direct identifier data is securely and separately stored in survey databases, and the two sets of data can only be linked by identifiers. Links between this information is for the purpose of supporting the review of panelists participation and any inquiries from panelists.

All survey data that is no longer necessary for the purposes of performing the client's contract would be destroyed and erased from MLRC storage media within 7 days upon project completion.

Data security measures include password-protected files, least privilege access, regular backup of data, data transfer and in-situ encryption, secured server rooms with 2 level access, etc. Utilization of SSL is standard practice for viewing survey websites.

Q26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

If the survey contains any sensitive material or content, that is clearly cited in the survey invitation and, where appropriate within the survey, giving panelists the opportunity to opt-out.

If panelists opt-in, we exercise Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) with clients and panelists, highlighting the sensitivity of the material. These NDAs mandate that all information within the survey must be kept confidential and any breach of proprietary information may be cause for legal action.

Even with NDAs, when we expose new to the world product visuals, descriptions, or ideas to a group of people to collect their opinions, it necessarily takes some small chance that survey respondents may act on that information independently once the survey is over.

In such cases, we may suggest using an alternative survey methodology. The degree of risk is lower in situations where we control the environment in which the respondent takes the survey, such as door-to-door, mall intercept, or central location testing at a controlled research facility. Telephone surveys by their very nature limit the exposure of stimuli to verbal descriptions. But there is no methodology that guarantees total stimuli security, be it within an online or offline environment. Hence, we inform clients that exposing proprietary information to respondents does put that information into the public domain.

Q27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

MLRC has documented all procedures related to the survey and sample process. These procedures are strictly followed. In addition, staff members receive training as new procedures are developed, or as existing procedures are improved.

Q28. 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?

Yes, in some cases. Children aged under 18 years, may only be reached through explicit permission (signed informed consent) from a parent/ guardian who is a panel member and must be present to introduce their child to the survey. Thereafter, we would obtain the children's signed assent before they participate in the survey. Children are never directly targeted.

We respect all ESOMAR rules and we follow all the guidelines related with the Online Market Research.

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