

Research New Zealand Call Centre

Introduction

Research New Zealand has operated a call centre for the last 20 years. Despite trends towards online surveying, Research New Zealand strongly believes that telephone surveying still has a place, especially:

1. When representativeness is critical. This contributes to the accuracy and, therefore, the confidence one can have in the results of a survey.
2. When response rate/accuracy is important. This also contributes to the accuracy of the results.
3. When the (depth and validity) of the interviewing would benefit from the voice interaction between an interviewer and a respondent.
4. Generally, when the survey audience is the general public (despite high rates of Internet connectivity, when given a choice, most New Zealanders still prefer to be interviewed by telephone).

Notwithstanding this, note that Research New Zealand is conducting between 5-10 online surveys at any particular point in time, mostly for defined audiences for whom email addresses are available.

Key features of the Research New Zealand call centre

1. Centralised, secure facility:
 - ◆ Our call centre is located on Level 4, Resimac House, 45 Johnston Street, Wellington. This is an earthquake sound building that exceeds WCC's code requirements.
 - ◆ Access to Level 4 is via card access (out of hours) and then, access to the call centre is via a bio-metric (digital) scanner.
 - ◆ Access to our offices (located on Level 7, Resimac House) is controlled by a card-activated security system which controls out-of-hours lift access. Access to the main work area from Reception is controlled by a key pad security door system. The entire office is electronically monitored out-of-hours when no one is present.

2. Management:

- ◆ Research New Zealand employs a full-time Field Manager who manages the call centre with a team of supervisors.
- ◆ The call centre:
 - ◆ operates in two shifts, from 9.00 AM to 8.30 PM weekdays, and weekends as required
 - ◆ employs over 75 casual part-time interviewers.
- ◆ The large majority of the call centre's work involves the completion of on-going surveys for our public sector clients. We believe this brings with it significant expertise

3. Field traffic:

- ◆ On average, the call centre will have 5-6 surveys in field at any one time.
- ◆ Research staff and the Field Manager meet twice a week to discuss resource requirements (Monday morning) and the progress of surveys (Thursday morning).
- ◆ The Field Manager uses a proprietary project management tool, developed in-house, to monitor the resource allocation across current surveys, monitor the performance of individual interviewers, and monitor contact and conversion rates for current surveys and their impact on the available sample.
- ◆ This information is used to provide research staff with daily reports on their surveys. These reports are, in turn, used to provide progress reports to clients.

4. Accreditation:

- ◆ Our call centre is accredited with the Interviewer Quality Standard (IQS). This covers all aspects of running a successful call centre, from the recruitment and training of interviewers, their on-job supervision and the verification of completed interviews. IQS ensures all our survey work is completed in conformance with ISO 20252.
- ◆ IQS is independently audited every year. We have held our accreditation for over 12 consecutive years.

5. Technological platform:

- ◆ Our call centre's technological platform is based on the best-in-class IBM Data Collection system (formerly Dimensions), indirectly linked to a PC-based softphone that provides a quick and easy shortcut to telephone dialling. The IBM Data Collection system is also the basis of our online survey platform and uses a proprietary Visual Basic scripting language.
- ◆ Research New Zealand employs a full-time IT Manager who provides technical support to the call centre and our Survey Scripting Team, and is responsible for maintaining the integrity of our IT infrastructure in general.
- ◆ Our office server infrastructure is made up of both Windows Server 2008 R2 and 2012 servers along with VMware ESXi Servers and a SAN. It is constantly being monitored, regularly updated (OS, software and hardware updates) and back-ups are completed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis (Realttime).
- ◆ In terms of security, we use a Juniper Networks Firewall which is a purpose-built, modular VPN security platform. Protection is delivered by proven unified threat management (UTM) security features that are backed by best-in-class partners. We use the latest virus software (AntiVirus and AntiSpyware) which is automatically updated as new virus definitions are available.
- ◆ Internal security requirements are met by security zones, virtual routers and VLANs. We then have policies with access control rules either allowing, denying or restricting access to certain security zones. These are continuously being inspected by UTM security features.

6. File security:

Given the fact that our client base mainly comprises public sector organisations, file security is an area of particular concern to us and, accordingly, we have developed particular policies, protocols and processes to manage this area of our business:

- ◆ Files of confidential administrative information (e.g. files containing the names and contact details of customers), provided by clients for the purposes of completing their research projects, are only accepted by us in an encrypted, password protected form, either on a memory stick or through a secure client-only area of our website.
- ◆ Internal access to files is restricted to those researchers working on the project that the file relates to.
- ◆ If administrative information is included on the file, in addition to contact names and details, we ensure this is the absolute minimum required for the purposes of the project.

- ◆ As soon as a file is received, it is copied. This ensures that any work completed on the file (e.g. to prepare for a mail out) does not run the risk of corrupting the original file and a master is available for checking purposes.
- ◆ Survey data relating to individuals is removed from the administrative information as soon as is practically possible following the completion of the interviewing for a project (i.e. the survey data is de-personalised). This is a requirement under the Code of practice of the Research Association of New Zealand Inc.
- ◆ When a project has been completed, the file of administrative information (including copies) relating to that project is either returned to the client or destroyed, and the client advised so. This is also a requirement under the Code of practice of the Research Association of New Zealand Inc.
- ◆ Where a client's administrative data is required to be integrated with their survey data this is completed by us on the basis of the original sample received from the client rather than the achieved sample, with the resulting file depersonalised before it is provided to the client. This is a requirement under the Code of practice of the Research Association of New Zealand Inc.

7. Data security:

As is the case with file security, data security is also an area of particular concern to us. Similarly, we have developed particular policies, protocols and processes to manage this area of our business:

- ◆ For security reasons, all files and all data is held on site and is not at any stage stored in any other location.
- ◆ At no stage do files of administrative data or files of survey data go off-site. All work is completed in our offices which are located on Level 7, Resimac House, 45 Johnston Street, Wellington¹.
- ◆ All survey data is stored indefinitely as required by the Research Association of New Zealand Inc. As outlined above, note that this does not include files of confidential administrative information provided by clients for the purposes of completing their research projects.

8. Other:

- ◆ Call centre staff are also responsible for:
 - ◆ Post survey activities such as editing and coding, and data entry.
 - ◆ Specialised face-to-face interviewing.

¹ As a general rule, we do not employ sub-contractors to assist us with our survey research.