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Redefining Reach and Insights

Response to ESOMAR 37 Questions to Help Research Buyers

Company Profile

1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research? How long have you been providing this service? Do you also provide similar services for other uses such as direct marketing? If so, what proportion of your work is for market research?

Borderless Access is an award-winning pure-play market research company with its digital-first products and solutions for agile research. We cater to our global clientele of MR firms, Ad Agencies, Consultancy firms and End Enterprises, who need rich, intelligent and actionable quant-qual insights along with our technology and ML-driven research solutions. Our 7 million+ hyper-niche digital panels across 40+ developed and growing economies of the world cater to our portfolio of B2C, B2B and Healthcare research and insights verticals.

With over 14 years of experience and a deep understanding of cultural nuances in hard-to-reach markets and segments, we have developed research products and solutions that interpret data to provide actionable insights that are perfect for brands' and businesses' bespoke insight needs in this connected consumer world.

We use our panels 100% for market research and do not share panellists' information with third parties for any other marketing activities.

2. Do you have staff with responsibility for developing and monitoring the performance of the sampling algorithms and related automated functions who also have knowledge and experience in this area? What sort of training in sampling techniques do you provide to your frontline staff?

Yes, we have dedicated resources to manage sampling performance. Our sampling is driven via machine learning algorithms i.e., factors such as samples per invite, incentives per panellist, and sample saturation per project are determined by the machine learning algorithms. Our sampling executives are divided by the regions where we operate and are trained to use these algorithms to optimize the response/completion rates within the prescribed guidelines. Every new joiner is taken through their respective region's sample metrics, audience targeting benchmarks and incentive thresholds. Subsequently, they are assigned to a seasoned lead whom they are required to shadow for a period of 2 weeks before they can execute a live project.

3. What other services do you offer? Do you cover sample-only, or do you offer a broad range of data collection and analysis services?

Borderless Access offers a wide spectrum of digital-first products and solutions for agile research –

1. **Insightz -** Consumer research and insights
2. **Health -** Healthcare Research & Analytics vertical
3. **Smartech -** AI & ML-driven community management and analytics, amongst others
4. **Connect -** B2C and B2B sample only vertical.

Sample sources and Recruitment

Answers to the questions in this section will help you understand the types of sample available from different sample providers in the market and the sources they rely on. This will help you evaluate the quality of the sample being offered, whether it is suitable for measuring change over time, and whether there are any specific constraints you need to consider when using it. It will also allow you to understand whether the sample provider is drawing the sample from its own sources or aggregating sources from other providers. We recommend that you first identify the sample types being offered and then ask the relevant questions for all sources.

Broadly speaking, there are two models of sample sources and recruitment:

Panels

These are databases of potential participants who declare that they will cooperate for future data collection if selected, generally in exchange for a reward/incentive. This includes traditional access panels, co-branded panels, or opt-in databases of individuals who agreed to complete research projects and also undertake other non-market research activities (watch ads, download an app, complete marketing offers, etc, also known as loyalty programs, or rewards communities within GPT (Get paid to) sites.) Loyalty card and subscription databases are included here if there is a continuous relationship with members who understand the commitment asked of them.

Intercepts

This includes intercepts from offer walls, affiliate networks, social media or other platforms to drive traffic to a survey. Intercept is an approach where potential participants are asked to take a survey for a reward while they are engaged in another activity such as playing an online game, reading news, or some other online activity. Intercepted participants may be previously unknown to the sample provider or may have been pre-identified and profiled through a prior survey experience.

4. Using the broad classifications above, from what sources of online sample do you derive participants?

Borderless Access actively manages research panels in 40+ markets. The panel is drawn from multiple sources and recruitment involves the use of a broad array of techniques to select unique and responsive members. Recruitment is designed to meet the demographic needs of a panel that is closely representative of the online population of the market.

Our recruitment methodology is an optimum mix of both online as well as offline methodologies (largely to recruit C-level executives/decision-makers/healthcare audiences and low-incidence groups). Our recruitment sources are primarily banner advertisements on leading portals/vertical websites including top-ranked websites, global job portals, through referral programs search and content networks, email campaigns, and social networking sites. The sampling frame for online recruitment represents over 95% of the country's online users. We monitor our demand-supply projections each month and target our consumer and B2B panel supply as per the changes to the demand projections.

5. Which of these sources are proprietary or exclusive and what is the percent share of each in the total sample provided to a buyer? *(Assume proprietary to mean that the sample provider owns the asset. Assume exclusive to mean that the sample provider has an exclusive agreement to manage/provide access to sample originally collected by another entity.)*

We operate proprietary B2C/B2B panels in over 40+ markets where we devise and manage all of the processes involving panel recruitment, engagement and incentivization. We also have exclusive partnerships on a case-to-case basis and based on the market demand-supply situation, we use these partnerships to supplement the output we get from our proprietary panels. The use of these partnerships is dynamic depending on the capability of their respective sources.

6. What recruitment channels are you using for each of the sources you have described? Is the recruitment process 'open to all' or by invitation only? Are you using probabilistic methods? Are you using affiliate networks and referral programs and in what proportions? How does your use of these channels vary by geography?

Understanding the method of recruitment and whether the recruitment is by invitation only will help you to understand the quality of the sample and how it may be used.

Our recruitment channels comprise affiliate networks, leading portals/vertical websites including top-ranked websites, global job portals, referral programs search and content networks, email campaigns and social networking sites. The composition of recruitment sources varies by each market/audience but on an overall level, our mix is:

- Affiliate – 35%
- Top Rank Websites/Job Portals – 10%
- Email Marketing/Invite Only Campaigns- 10%
- SEO/Referral Programs – 5%
- Social Networking Sites - 40%

Our recruitment process is based on quotas/filters and targeting but we do run specific campaigns that are via invitation only (Decision makers in specific industries).

Our ML-driven panel management platform, SmartSight, has the foundational elements of probabilistic classification methods. It incorporates techniques such as supervised learning, clustering, dimensionality reduction, structured prediction, anomaly detection and reinforcement learning with recruitment and sample monitoring methods.

7. What form of validation do you use in recruitment to ensure that participants are real, unique, and are who they say they are? Describe this both in terms of the practical steps you take within your own organisation and the technologies you are using. Please try to be as specific and quantify as much as you can.

We adhere to the following rules during recruitment:

1. Double opt-in – We verify every new registration request by generating an authentication link to the respondent's email. Once the respondent clicks on the link and authenticates the email address, the respondent is considered to be a double opted-in panellist.
2. Profiling - After the initial enrolment, new members are taken through a series of profiling questionnaires that validates their profile. Close to 30% of respondents are flushed out by our system due to contradictions in the responses during this process and it also helps in further in-depth profiling
3. Quality Score – Every recruit is parsed through a quality score algorithm which evaluates the individual's essential parameters against those already present in the system. This system assigns a quality score to the individual based on matching parameters and flags for duplicate respondents (score of 100). These scores are refreshed every week and help us identify genuine respondents at every step, thus allowing us to maintain quality samples across projects.
4. Dummy surveys - All respondents are taken through a series of dummy surveys periodically that check for inconsistencies in responses. This filters dubious and uninterested respondents.
5. Mobile number verification – Respondents need to verify a PIN shared on their mobile phones during the recruitment and at the time of redemption. Respondents who fail to verify the pin are screened out. This feature is active for markets such as India and US and we are extending this to other markets in the APAC, LATAM and Africa regions.
6. Social media verification – Respondents are given bonus points for connecting their social media profile with their panellist account. The information provided during recruitment is verified against their social media profiles. This gives us a more accurate understanding of respondents.
7. Physical address verification - The member information is cross-checked against the government and third-party postal information. This applies only to our India panels.
8. Digital fingerprinting – Our proprietary community management solution – SmartSight, includes a digital fingerprinting tool that is implemented at the recruitment stage. This ensures genuine respondents.
9. Block fake email addresses – SmartSight is programmed to recognize temporary inboxes and email domains. These are flagged in our database and constantly refreshed.

8 . **What brand (domain) and/or app are you using with proprietary sources?** Summarise, by source, the proportion of sample accessing surveys by mobile app, email or other specified means.

By understanding the domain/app and method the sample provider is using with members, you will gain an indication of the extent of activity with those members and the quality of their relationship with the sample.

We have different brands for B2C, B2B, and Healthcare research. Our B2C panel brand is called 'The Panel Station'. The ratio of surveys via mobile app versus desktop (email) is 45%:55%.

9 . **Which model(s) do you offer to deliver sample? Managed service, self-serve, or API integration?**

Sample provision is offered through three main channels: managed service, self-serve, and API (Application Planning Interface) integrations. In a self-serve model, buyers are given access to a platform which they can use to specify the audience they want to access, and manage all the steps of a research project, from sample design to launch to fieldwork management to closing. In a managed service model, sample providers will provide that service. API integrations are the mechanics which allow sample providers, buyers and data collection platforms to automate some aspects of the process.

Our primary method of delivering samples is via the managed service model. In certain exceptional scenario, we deliver samples via API integration.

10 . **If offering intercepts, or providing access to more than one source, what level of transparency do you offer over the composition of your sample (sample sources, sample providers included in the blend). Do you let buyers control which sources of sample to include in their projects, and if so, how?**
Do you have any integration mechanisms with third-party sources offered?

It is well documented that different sources can produce different results. Consistency in source blending can be vital for tracking studies or other inter- survey comparisons. The use of a single, narrow source, such as a single supermarket's loyalty scheme, may result in unintended bias.

In most cases, we use proprietary panel sources to deliver samples to a client. Our AI-ML enabled sample management tool – SmartSight selects the pool of respondents from the required audience group based on their propensity to respond to a survey. Whenever necessary, especially on markets that are non-proprietary, we seek client approvals to utilize the available third-party sample sources and support client requirements. Consistent and measured blending across multiple sample sources is an established research exercise. By blending across a defined mix of panels /sample sources, we ensure access to a larger pool of quality sample and maintain uniformity. But we do so only based on requirements and necessary client approvals.

11. Of the sample sources you have available, how would you describe the suitability of each for different research applications? For example, is there sample suitable for product testing or other recruit/recall situations where the buyer may need to go back again to the same sample? Is the sample suitable for shorter or longer questionnaires? For mobile-only or desktop- only questionnaires? Is it suitable to recruit for communities? For online focus groups?

By understanding the constraints of the sample being offered, you can understand if the actual sample available from the provider meets your particular research needs and changes any of the answers given previously to this section.

Our panel management platform allows for all of the conditions involving management of specific audiences for sample delivery, sample locking scenarios for specific buyers/projects, product/qualitative research, and repeat testing. We design a variety of programs to engage with our audiences to ensure a high participation rate.

Questions to help buyers of online samples

Sampling and Project Management

What this section is about

Answers to the questions in this section will help you understand the processes and procedures that are undertaken to provide you with a sample of participants for your survey. You should understand what biases may be inherent in, or as a result of, the approaches taken and the likely severity of those biases.

12 . Briefly describe your overall process from invitation to survey completion. What steps do you take to achieve a sample that "looks like" the target population? What demographic quota controls, if any, do you recommend?

Our Survey invitation process is as follows:

- A sample matching the client's requirements is taken from the database
- The sample is then checked for frequency limiters. Our Panellists do not take more than 4 surveys a month. Frequency limiters ensure that this condition is met.
- The shortlisted group of Panellists is sent direct invites at their validated email addresses with project details and a timeline for completion.
- Reminders are sent as per predefined conditions.

Panellists are given points per survey. Points are calculated as per the length of the interview, target audience and complexity of the study.

Lower points are given for "screen-outs" and "quote-full"; higher points are given for completing the survey. The point value associated with each survey/interview is calculated to ensure that Panellists are satisfied with their incentives.

Email invites sent to panellists include details viz. points for completing the survey, the validity of the survey, terms and conditions, privacy policy, login details, points in current account and timeline for redeeming them.

We send SMS reminders to panellists that are part of our mobile-verified panels and have agreed to receive communication from us.

13. What profiling information do you hold on at least 80% of your panel members plus any intercepts known to you through prior contact? How does this differ by the sources you offer? How often is each of those data points updated? Can you supply these data points as appends to the data set? Do you collect this profiling information directly or is it supplied by a third party?

Targeting samples based on pre-existing profiles increases efficiency. Some bias may result depending on the precise questions asked, when they were asked, and to how many people. Appending existing information reduces the burden on the panellists in the survey itself.

We have the name, email, gender, age/date of birth, city of residence, country, annual income & education of 100% of our respondents. Additionally, we profile our panel members across 160 data points. These data points are defined based on the demand originating from our buyers. ~45% of our respondents are profiled across all of these 160 data points. About ~30% of these data points need to be refreshed periodically and we do that once every 6 months. The profiling aspect is common to all the data sources and we collect this information directly. Yes, these data points can be provided as appends to the data set.

14. What information do you need about a project in order to provide an estimate of feasibility? What, if anything, do you do to give upper or lower boundaries around these estimates?

To predict the project feasibility accurately, the specifications need to be clearly stated at the bidding stage. These specifications include:

- Target group
- Incidence rate
- Quotas
- Questionnaire/ Objective (for questionnaire designing and survey programming)

We are transparent in sharing feasibility estimates with our clients. We share the feasibility information at the bidding stage itself and suggest an alternative approach if required. We engage with partners only after the client's approval.

15. What do you do if the project proves impossible for you to complete in field? Do you inform the sample buyer as to who you would use to complete the project? In such circumstances, how do you maintain and certify third party sources/-sub-contractors?

Whenever we fall short of the target completes, we request our client's permission to take assistance from our partner sample providers. We have integrations available with API partners where we can detail the audience type requirements so the sample buy is similar to those of our sample. We enforce all of our quality algorithms such as digital fingerprinting on the partner sample also to ensure that the sample responses are from genuine respondents. Our partners are subjected to an elaborate quality screening process. Only those vendors who score above the required threshold are accepted as qualified. The sample quality from vendors is continually monitored on our panel management platform, SmartSight, using a quality scoring mechanism and vendors have to stay above a particular quality index to be considered for projects. The system generates automated warnings to vendors whenever the quality score drops below the required threshold value.

16. Do you employ a survey router or any yield management techniques? If yes, please describe how you go about allocating participants to surveys. How are potential participants asked to participate in a study? Please specify how this is done for each of the sources you offer.

We do not use survey routers. Our community management platform, SmartSight, employs AI/ML & loyalty modelling techniques to optimize research design and yield management. The platform uses these advanced features to ensure that our 7 million+ double opt-in panellists are optimally engaged within the panel and available to respond to surveys at the right time, right time and using the right medium.

17. Do you set limits on the amount of time a participant can be in the router before they qualify for a survey?

This question is not applicable since we do not employ survey routers.

18. What information is given to a potential participant before they choose whether to take the survey or not? How does this differ by the sources you offer?

The information about the survey (and associated rewards) may influence the type of people who agree to take part, creating the potential for bias.

Panellists are given points per survey. Points are calculated as per the length of the interview, target audience and complexity of the study.

Lower points are given for "screen-outs" and "quote-full"; higher points are given for completing the survey. The point value associated with each survey/interview is calculated to ensure that Panellists are satisfied with their incentives.

Email invites sent to panellists include details viz. points for completing the survey, the validity of the survey, terms and conditions, privacy policy, login details, points in current account and timeline for redeeming them.

We send SMS/WhatsApp reminders to panellists that are part of our mobile/WhatsApp verified panels and have agreed to receive communication from us.

19. Do you allow participants to choose a survey from a selection of available surveys? If so, what are they told about each survey that helps them to make that choice?

The level of detail and the nature of the information given about a project may influence who responds, creating the potential for bias.

Our sample management platform picks panellists for a survey based on their profiling attribute match. The survey dashboard of the panellist allows the panellist to pick from a variety of surveys he/she has qualified for. To avoid survey bias, we only reveal the topic of the survey, the length of the interview and the incentives associated with the survey as part of the dashboard detail.

20. What ability do you have to increase (or decrease) incentives being offered to potential participants (or sub-groups of participants) during the course of a survey? If so, can this be flagged at the participant level in the dataset?

Our incentives platform is ML-driven which evaluates a variety of parameters to design the right incentive structure for every panellist. It rewards longevity, good survey behaviour and participation and adds additional parameters such as length of the interview, target audience, CPI, etc to arrive at the incentive structure for every panellist. The machine learning-driven incentive can be overridden manually (if need be) to increase or decrease the incentives for each project.

21 . Do you measure participant satisfaction at the individual project level? If so, can you provide normative data for similar projects (by length, by type, by subject, by target group)?

Participant satisfaction may be an indicator of willingness to take future surveys. Participant reactions to your survey from self-reported feedback or from an analysis of the points where participants drop out of the survey may enhance your understanding of the survey results and lead to improvements in questionnaire design for future surveys.

We measure participant satisfaction in a survey group and to a large extent at an individual level as well. Our feedback mechanism includes polls, feedback surveys, and social media updates. All panellists are encouraged to give their feedback on the channel of their choice. Our exit process ensures that unsubscribes are thoroughly analysed. This information is shared with clients on request.

We also measure respondent satisfaction quarterly using feedback surveys. Respondent satisfaction is an important part of our “Panel Quality Maintenance Policy”. This policy ensures:

All respondents have attractive and easy-to-redeem incentives

All respondents are actively engaged (birthday wishes, season’s greetings, latest offers, etc.)

Whenever possible, Panellists are informed of the context of the study they have participated in All customer queries are addressed by our support teams

Social media engagement and customer support are carried out through social networks. We encourage respondents to share their feedback on social networks

Incentives are based on respondent feedback and preferences.

22 . Do you provide a debrief report about a project after it has completed? If yes, can you provide an example?

You should expect a full sample debrief report. Sample providers should be able to list the standard reports and metrics that they make available.

A debrief report that includes details of responses is shared with clients at their request.

A clean Data Map is provided for all surveys programmed by us. A customer satisfaction survey is sent to all clients after completing each project to ensure we are aware of our shortfalls and improve the customer experience going forward. Responses to all CSAT surveys are monitored and analysed.

Questions to help buyers of online samples

Data quality and Validation

What this section is about

This section focuses on the quality of the in-survey data. In-survey data quality includes project-level data validity and representativeness, survey-taking behaviours, sample blends, participant characteristics, and project-level data health and audit practices.

23. How often can the same individual participate in a survey? How does this vary across your sample sources? What is the mean and maximum amount of time a person may have already been taking surveys before they entered this survey? How do you manage this?

Answers to this question may alert you to about the potential for bias due to the participation of professional participants, simply survey fatigue, or category bias.

We pay special attention to Panel response quality and have developed a system to ensure all quality checks are followed. We invite our panellists to choose the number of surveys they wish to receive on an ongoing basis and we do not exceed the upper threshold at any point in time; an active panellist is not enrolled in any other open survey simultaneously. This is done to ensure our panellists do not become professional respondents by repeatedly answering surveys or adding any potential biases to the survey data. This also keeps burn-out incidents in check and helps maintain equilibrium.

24. What data do you maintain on individual participants such as recent participation history, date(s) of entry, source/channel, etc? Are you able to supply buyers with a project analysis of such individual level data? Are you able to append such data points to your participant records?

You may wish to append data that enables you to analyse and trend data to look for potential biases based on participation levels, sources, tenure, and other data the provider may hold.

Our proprietary community management platform – SmartSight captures participation history, date of entry, source, etc. We maintain such records for internal analysis of respondent activity. For e.g., a low-level participation will be followed by a small feedback survey and if the issue persists the respondent will be removed from the panel.

This individual-level data is shared with our clients on request.

25. Please describe your procedures for confirmation of participant identity at the project level. Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at the point of entry to a survey or router.

Given the widely acknowledged risk of fraud in online research, buyers should understand identity and fraud controls, not just at recruitment, but at the point of survey entry. It is essential that there be measures in place to ensure that participants are who they say they are and that the member or email account has not been hacked, is not a duplicate with other accounts from other channels or panels, and whether or not the account is shared by other members of the household.

We implement anti-fraud security at the time of registration as well survey entry to ensure that our respondents are genuine and authentic. At the point of entry into the panel, we have enabled security systems such as

- Duplicate IP prevention
- Re-captcha
- Digital Fingerprinting
- Duplicate email
- VPN block
- Double/Triple Opt-in

All of the respondent data is encrypted using SHA-256 bit and Triple-DES encryption methods. At the time of entry into the survey, in addition to Re-captcha and digital fingerprinting, we add profile validation and randomised attentiveness pre-screeners to ensure data integrity and authenticity. In addition, our panel management platform, SmartSight, monitors the survey speedsters/jumpers, removes those responses from the data set and generates a notification to the panel quality team for further action against the panellist.

26 . How do you manage source consistency and blend at the project level? With regard to trackers, how do you ensure that the nature and composition of sample sources remain the same over time? Do you have reports on blends and sources that can be provided to buyers? Can source be appended to the participant data records?

Participant source is a known contributor to data representativeness. Knowing all the sources used for the project, especially for tracking and longitudinal research, and that the proportions from each source are known and reportable over time, will allow you to understand any population biases that might exist.

Our panel management platform allows for the locking of audiences for projects that require the same audience for all the waves of the study. If the client so requires, we turn on the feature and allow for a large sample size so the available pool is enough for the future waves of the project. We design engagement mechanisms to ensure that this locked pool remains warm throughout the tracker period. If the need is not to lock the audience but review changing trends over a period, we are also able to ensure that sharp audience targeting is performed for every wave so the audience mix doesn't change. We are able to put together reports that highlight the profiling mix of the panellists who have participated in each wave, the table of responses for each participant mix and the changing trends on each source with every wave of the project. All of this is made possible by our intelligent community management platform, SmartSight.

27 . Please describe your participant/member quality tracking, along with any health metrics you maintain on members/participants, and how those metrics are used to invite, track, quarantine, and block people from entering the platform, router, or a survey. What processes do you have in place to compare profiled and known data to in-survey responses?

Buyers and providers often work together to track individual survey response quality, so buyers should understand what data the provider uses to confirm survey answers, block or remove a member, and how to enable that information exchange.
Every panellist is parsed through a quality score algorithm which evaluates the individual's essential parameters against those already present in the system. Factors such as the panellist's response rates, completion rates, changing digital fingerprints, survey quality parameters etc are monitored continuously and a quality score is assigned to the panellist. These scores are updated weekly and sample invitations are refreshed to factor in the change so genuine respondents enter the survey and fraudulent respondents are removed from the panel.

The profiling attributes captured in-survey are compared in real time against the panel to flag erroneous responses which are then manually evaluated by the panel quality team for further decision making. Randomized attentiveness pre-screeners are added across all of the projects to eliminate one of the key sources of bad data on the survey.

28. For work where you program, host, and deliver the survey data, what processes do you have in place to reduce or eliminate undesired in-survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non- response (e.g.,"Don't Know") (d) inaccurate or inconsistent responding, (e) incomplete responding, or (f) too rapid survey completion?

Data cleansing methods are often built into survey programs and platforms. Some of those methods are set up to automatically remove responses, while others are optional or manual. Understanding what tools will be used will aid buyers in understanding how much cleaning they should plan to do once they receive the final dataset, and what biases might be introduced by automated cleaning practices.

Our Panel Building and Panel Engagement teams keep a check on panel data quality at all stages of the survey.

Our validation checks measure inattentive respondents, overuse of non-response and speedsters and remove them from our database. Few of these validation checks are:

- Every project (full-service or ad-hoc) goes through a randomized attentiveness pre-screener to ensure that random responders are removed even before they enter the survey.
- For full-service projects, we use a combination of red-herring questions, audio and video recording questions to understand if respondents understand the general theme of the survey, profiling questions to verify the responses against what is captured on the panel and search questions that require respondents to use the search engine to find answers.
- For ad-hoc studies, we recommend that our clients add quality checks within their surveys so that bad respondents can be screened out during the survey participation stage itself.
- Our proprietary digital fingerprinting tool screens out professional respondents from taking the survey. It also blocks multiple responses from the same computer.

For detailed information on validation checks refer our Whitepaper on Panel Quality here.

Questions to help buyers of online samples

Policies And Compliance

What this section is about

Sample providers, buyers, and their clients are subject to data protection and related information security requirements imposed by data protection laws and regulations. In addition, they may be subject to laws and regulations that may impact incentives paid to participants.

These laws and regulations vary by jurisdiction with different laws and regulations applying in different countries or states within countries, and are generally interpreted based on where the participant resides.

Applicable data protection laws and regulations include, but are not limited to: the Act on the Protection of Personal Information or APPI (Japan); the Australian Privacy Act (Australia); the California Consumer Protection Act or CCPA (state of California in the United States); the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act or COPPA (United States); the Data Protection Act (United Kingdom); amendments regarding data localisation requirements to the Data Protection Act (Russian Federation); the General Data Protection Law (Brazil); the EU General Data Protection Regulation or EU-GDPR (EU/ EEA); the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA (United States); the Graham-Leach Bliley Act or GLBA (United States); and PIPEDA (Canada). AB 2257 (the state of California in the United States) is an example of law and regulation related to employment which may impact incentives paid to participants.

Information security frameworks and standards include, but are not limited to COBIT, HITRUST, ISO 27001, the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and SOC 2.

Answers to the questions in this section can help you understand the data protection, information security and compliance policies, procedures and practices that a sample provider has implemented.

29 . **Please provide the link to your participant privacy notice (sometimes referred to as a privacy policy) as well as a summary of the key concepts it addresses.** (Note: If your company uses different privacy notices for different products or services, please provide an example relevant to the products or services covered in your response to this question).

Being a leading online research agency, we are an active member of key global industry bodies such as ESOMAR, Insights Association, BHBIA, EPHMRA, MRSI, PAMRO and SAMRA and adhere to their respective codes/guidelines.

We comply with the Data Privacy Laws (including GDPR and CCPA) of the countries in which we operate:

Borderless Access - www.borderlessaccess.com/privacy-policy

Panel - www.thepanelstation.com/in/privacypolicy

30 . **How do you comply with key data protection laws and regulations that apply in the various jurisdictions in which you operate? How do you address requirements regarding consent or other legal bases for the processing personal data? *How do you address requirements for data breach response, cross-border transfer, and data retention? Have you appointed a data protection officer?***

As noted above, buyers and sample providers are subject to data protection and related information security requirements imposed by data protection laws and regulations, other laws and regulations as well as clients. Understanding a sample provider's compliance position with these laws and regulations is essential.

We have a dedicated Data Privacy team headed by the Data Protection Officer who ensures that the newer jurisdiction requirements are met. This team along with the operations & technology teams implement the changes. The team also seeks assistance from third-party consultants to adhere to such compliance requirements:

We are sensitive towards maintaining the confidentiality of our client's Intellectual Property and instil the following features (on the client's request) that help secure the data:

- **Password Protection**
  We enable password protection that gives one common password for respondents to which only they will have access. Post participation, this password will expire and respondents will not be able to access the survey again.
- **Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Option**
  We protect online surveys by taking advantage of secure socket surveys, which is the industry-standard encryption technology. SSL adds another layer of security and ensures that no one else has access to the data. The technology encrypts the online survey and data during the respondent's session.
- **Locking Text / Images**
  We implant a security feature that protects the text/images of the survey to prevent users from stealing online survey content. This prevents anyone from copying or saving (either through drag-and-drop or by right-clicking on a computer) any text or image from an online survey.

31. How can participants provide, manage and revise consent for the processing of their personal data? What support channels do you provide for participants?

In your response, please address the sample sources you wholly own, as well as those owned by other parties to whom you provide access.

Consent for the collection and processing of personal data has long been required by market research industry codes. It is also explicitly required by some data protection laws and regulations. Some data protection laws and regulations, including EU-GDPR and CCPA as examples, also provide for access rights for participants to correct, update, or delete their data. Implementation of a participant support channel is also required by ISO 20252 (ISO 20252:2019: Market, Opinion and Social Research, Including Insights and Data Analytics - Vocabulary and Service Requirements).

We have an elaborate consent collection process that we manage on our panel portals. At the time of joining, we explicitly explain the personal data we collect and use, and the necessary implications for the panellists in joining the panel so they can make informed decisions. At any point in time, we allow the panellists to unsubscribe as well as edit/delete their preferences and data as per the respective compliance policies of our panel portals. We actively use cookie management tools on our websites for handling respondent cookie preferences. Additionally, we have a dedicated email id to address panellist queries on consent management processes.

32. How do you track and comply with other applicable laws and regulations, such as those that might impact the incentives paid to participants?

As stated above, buyers and sample providers are subject to laws and regulations such as those that may impact incentives paid to participants.

Our legal, compliance, finance, and operations teams track the implications of incentivisation in every country and advise us periodically on changes to be made to the incentivization frameworks.

We provide forms/disclaimers to panellists based on those recommendations to comply with the rules and regulations in every country where we operate a panel.

For example – In the US, every respondent who exceeds USD 600 in withdrawn incentives in a fiscal year has to submit form W-9 to comply with local tax regulations. Our panellist portals are custom developed to collect such forms and the confidential PII information submitted by the respondents such as SSN or TIN is encrypted and provided to the finance/tax team (only) to process such forms further.

33. What is your approach to collecting and processing the personal data of children and young people? Do you adhere to standards and guidelines provided by ESOMAR or GRBN member associations? How do you comply with applicable data protection laws and regulations?

Some data protection laws and regulations (for example COPPA and EU-GDPR) impose specific requirements with the respect to the collection and processing of the personal data of children and young people. These requirements include specific age definitions as well as a requirement for verifiable parental consent. See the ESOMAR & GRBN Guideline on Research and Data Analytics with Children, Young People, and Other Vulnerable Individuals for further discussion.

We conduct surveys with children and young people only after obtaining consent from their parent/legal guardian and in the presence of the parent/legal guardian. However, there is increased complexity in conducting these surveys. We seek consent and send the survey invites to the parents/ responsible adults/ legal guardians requesting them to chaperone the surveys their child or young people take. We ensure the highest ethical standards, avoiding harm or abuse of the data subjects involved. However, the response rates for such surveys are significantly lower.

34. Do you implement "data protection by design" (sometimes referred to as "privacy by design") in your systems and processes? If so, please describe how.

Data protection by design (which may also be referred to as "privacy by design") is an approach that requires the consideration of privacy and data protection issues at the design phase of any system, service, product or process and then throughout the lifecycle. Understanding sample providers use or lack of use of "data protection by design" can help you understand its data protection compliance posture.

Borderless Access over a period has been able to design such a system that is privacy compliant. We have two major processes where privacy is of utmost importance.

- Panellists (users) signing up at our websites- We not only have been able to create a dedicated team to address data privacy issues but also have automated processes where the users can delete/unsubscribe their data in one click.
- Project Level- We ensure that no PII is shared with any of our clients but in rare cases, if we have to share PII, our surveys are programmed in such a way that explicit consent is taken from panellists and the client signs the data protection addendum. We further share the PII with the clients in a secure environment.

Our legal team conducts regular internal data protection reviews to confirm we are delivering on our privacy commitments. We follow the development of emerging privacy regulations around the world, so we can plan for how we will meet or exceed them.

Similarly, the information collected from the user is very limited and is accessible and editable only by them, these details are not shared with any third party. The PII information is by default encrypted and stored in a database accessible only by the authorized personnel from our technology team. The emails and messages sent from the system are end-to-end encrypted. The user identification data stored in the system is deleted permanently, upon the user's written request under privacy regulations.

The policies and regulations of our systems are kept transparently in our Privacy Policy, Terms & Conditions and FAQs, and updated as and when any changes are made.

35. What are the key elements of your information security compliance program? Please specify the framework(s) or auditing procedure(s) you comply with or certify to. Does your program include an asset-based risk assessment and internal audit process?

Information security frameworks such as ISO 27001, ISO 27701 or SOC 2 are accepted and recognized frameworks for information security compliance. Understanding which framework(s) a sample provider uses or if a sample provider doesn't use such a framework can help you understand the sample provider's information security compliance posture.

We are an ISO 27001 and ISO 27701 certified company and strictly follow the security compliance programs. One internal audit is performed during the year, while a surveillance audit is conducted by the certification body (external) every year to ensure compliance with the policies, processes and procedures.

36. Do you certify to or comply with a quality framework such as ISO 20252?

ISO 20252 is an international quality standard recognised by many market research industry associations. In addition to requirement for a system to manage research processes, it explicitly addresses requirements for data protection and information security compliance.

Borderless Access has been awarded the Grand Mean Project Certification from Sample Source Auditors (Mktg Inc.) for exceeding their quality parameters as a sample source that does not exhibit outlier characteristics.

Questions to help buyers of online samples

Metrics

What this section is about

This section lists common sample and data health metrics. Reviewing metrics periodically can serve as the basis for a conversation with sample providers about consistency and reliability, as well as whether the sample is appropriate for the population and business question being examined. Unexpected or unexplained shifts in metrics may also indicate the potential for bias or error. While not all of these metrics are required and there are no benchmarks on the "right answers," providing transparency over time will create a meaningful dialogue about quality and utility.

37. Which of the following are you able to provide to buyers, in aggregate and by country and source? Please include a link or attach a file of a sample report for each of the metrics you use.

1 Average qualifying or completion rate, trended by month

Answer: Yes.

2 Percent of paid completes rejected per month/project,

Answer: As a process, we raise invoices with our clients only after clients confirm the count of accepted completes. Therefore, we do not encounter this situation.

3 Percent of paid accounts removed/quarantined,

Answer: Yes.

4 Percent of paid completes from 0-3 months tenure,

Answer: Yes.

5 Percent of paid completes from smartphones, trended by month

Answer: Yes.

6 Percent of paid completes from owned/branded member relationships versus intercept participants trended by months.

Answer: Yes, for owned and branded member relationships. We do not use intercept participants to get completes.

7 Average number of dispositions (survey attempts, screen outs, and completes) per member, trended by month (potentially by cohort)

Answer: Yes.

8 Average number of paid completes per member, trended by month (potentially by cohort)

Answer: Yes.

9 Active unique participants in the last 30 days

Answer: Yes.

10 Active unique 18-24 male participants in the last 30 days

Answer: Yes.

11 Maximum feasibility in a specific country with net rep quotas, seven days in field, 100% incidence, 10-minute interview

Answer: As a process, we raise invoices with our clients only after clients confirm the count of accepted completes. Therefore, we do not encounter this situation.

12 Percentage of quotas that reached full quota at time of delivery, trended by month

Answer: Yes.

We are able to offer all of the aforesaid reports (wherever mentioned as 'Yes') to our clients. We do so upon request, on a case-to-case basis, inclusive of applicable costs to develop them. We offer the report attached below at no cost to client.

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