

2008 *Research Trends Survey*: Current State of Client-Side Market Research

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YOU WILL LEARN

- What types of survey research investments are most prevalent
- How companies are using Outsourced vs. In-House solutions
- The three most important factors in driving research client satisfaction

Study Overview

This study, conducted in early Spring 2008, and is designed to serve as a "snapshot" of the client-side research industry. While numerous studies of research suppliers are conducted each year, we believe that this study is the first of its kind.

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UNDERSTANDING USER TRENDS

In making daily business decisions, it is often important to benchmark against other companies to determine best practices as well as set new standards. Understanding user trends related to key aspects of product and service delivery is an important step in determining whether current resource allocations are steering your company toward a prosperous future. This inaugural report identifies what types of marketing research investments are most prevalent, how companies are conducting this research, as well as important factors in driving satisfaction with current marketing research efforts.

Specific Methodologies:

In the spring of 2008, Infosurv, Inc invited business leaders from various industries to participate in an online survey related to their company's research efforts. The brief survey consisted of 14 questions and used various techniques to ensure data integrity. A total of 507 business professionals completed the survey. Study results are reliable at the 95% confidence level with a $\pm 4\%$ margin of error.

Study Results:

Almost three out of every four companies surveyed invest in [customer surveys](#). At 74% usage, customer research was by far the most utilized form when compared to [employee surveys](#) and B2B/B2C [market research](#). Intriguingly, 54% of respondents reported an investment in employee research, with only 39% investing in both customer and employee research. This poses the question: Are businesses placing more value on customer research than employee research?

Numerous studies have shown that between 40% and 80% of customer satisfaction is determined by the customer-employee relationship, depending upon industry and market segment. We know that improving employee satisfaction and engagement will increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, so why not start here? Our guess is that most companies choose to go "straight to the source" in an attempt to increase customer satisfaction rather than counting on the indirect effects experienced through increasing [employee engagement](#). We'll be following up on this issue soon, so stay tuned...

In regards to research solutions, 40% of companies surveyed primarily rely on an external supplier. As you'll see illustrated in the graphs below, those utilizing an external supplier were also more satisfied with their research solution than those utilizing other methods (e.g. in-house staff or do-it-yourself software).

Which of the following best describes the survey research solution you use most often:



Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following aspects of your research survey provider: Overall Satisfaction



Responses based on 1-5 scale, with 5 representing "Extremely Satisfied". Percentages based on number of respondents indicated "4" or "5".

For all sources of research, we asked respondents to indicate the importance they place on certain attributes. Correspondingly, we asked for their current satisfaction level with these same attributes. Using regression analysis, the most important attributes in driving overall satisfaction were identified as responsiveness, data integrity, and analytics quality.

Interestingly enough, of the eight attributes rated, these three also had the largest gaps in importance rating and satisfaction rating. Clearly, these are key areas of improvement that need to be addressed by research suppliers, both internal and external.

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction with Research Survey Provider				
Attribute	Correlation Coefficient	Importance Rating	Satisfaction Rating	Rating Gap
Responsiveness	0.732	87.8	78	9.8
Data integrity	0.726	91.2	79.3	11.9
Analytics quality	0.715	86.3	72.4	13.9

Variance by Budget:



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In regards to research budget level, several interesting themes were observed. For those respondents with a budget of \$100K+:

- Overall satisfaction with their primary research solution was similar for external suppliers (86.36%) when compared to in-house solutions (85%) and in-house staff (83.87%).
- Researchers placed more importance on in-house analytics quality (81.06) than supplier analytics quality (73.96).
- For both in-house and outsourced solutions, price was one of the least important attributes.

For researchers with budgets of less than \$100K, several differences were observed, such as:

- Lower volume of research
- Less importance placed on supplier attributes
- More price sensitive
- More volatility in research budget and survey volume
- Higher level of satisfaction with external suppliers (83.82%) than in-house solutions (72.53%)

Next Steps:

This inaugural *Research Trends™* survey will serve as a baseline assessment for an annual study of client-side research trends. Based on these findings, we are already making plans for next year's assessment and looking forward to observing how client needs are growing and changing. While the instrument will change and improve over time, our goal will be consistent: to provide an annual "snapshot" of client-side research in order to better serve our clients and better inform the research community. If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please contact Kathy Fitzpatrick at kathy.fitzpatrick@infosurv.com.