

ONS business-centred approach to research recruitment methods to understand engagement needs

Challenges and successes

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ONS Business Surveys

- 77 business surveys
- 2.6 million questionnaires per year (85% online)
- 380,000 businesses selected per year



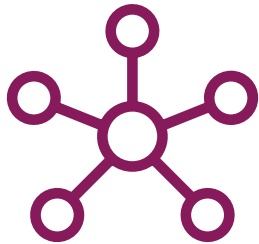
Burden on businesses

Of the 380,000 businesses:

- Most businesses (72%) are only selected for one business survey per year, 1% (38k) receive around 10
- Those that have multiple sampling units receive on average 76 questionnaires
- One business is selected across 240 surveys and receives over 1000 questionnaires per year!

Business Survey Strategy: Underlying principles

Integrated Survey Design



Huge opportunity for radical re-design

Business-centred



Business burden is a growing strategic issue - with high levels of Ministerial focus

Engagement, Understanding and Education



Best practice is building effective relationships based on mutual understanding

BSS Research Strategy: Methods



Desk review of previous research



Engagement with topic experts



Qualitative Interviews



Feedback from business survey respondents



Paradata



Engagement with industry bodies



Analysis of other NSI approaches

Traditional approach to business survey research

- **Survey by survey** approach to research and data collection
- Sample typically an extract from **one** ONS database
- Survey specific business contact
- Telephone recruitment

Challenges

- Limited engagement from businesses
- Difficulties recruiting via telephone
- **Silo'd** approach to research



Holistic business-centred approach to research

- Business as the **sampling unit**
- Merging several ONS administrative data sets to create a “master sample”
- **Tailored** approach to recruitment
- Coordinated **email campaign** followed by telephone recruitment



Challenges

- **Agile** approach to establishing a new process
- Complexity of **merging and cleaning** the sample
- **GDPR** and legal considerations
- Rigorous quality assurance process



Tailored recruitment strategy

Consultation with the Office for National Statistics – Invitation to help with Business Surveys redesign annual surveys



Roarson, Gentiana

To [Redacted]
Cc [Redacted]



Good morning [Redacted]

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is reviewing how we engage with businesses like yours, to make it easier for you to provide us data and to improve our service and statistics.

We understand that you are the contact at the business [Redacted] for the following surveys: Annual Business Survey (ABS), Annual Survey of International Trade in Services (AITIS), Annual Purchases Survey (APS), Annual Survey of Goods and Services (ASGS), Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD), Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) and Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Survey (LCREE).

How can you help?

We would like to arrange a virtual consultation meeting with you to help us understand the processes your business goes through to complete these surveys, any challenges you may have and how we might make it easier for your business to provide the data.

The consultation should take no longer than an hour but can be shorter if needed. We appreciate that you may be busy. We will not ask for any figures from you and everything you say will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Why do we need your help?

The data you provide when answering ONS surveys is used in producing statistics that measure important economic indicators such as inflation and GDP. These statistics are subsequently used to inform important decisions, for example interest rates changes.

This consultation is part of the wider focus on ONS's ongoing drive towards a more business-centred approach. Better understanding the steps your business takes when completing ONS surveys will help us to minimise the time you spend on ONS surveys, as well as improve our service to better meet your needs and the needs of other businesses like yours. This may also benefit your business, as these ONS surveys are a legal requirement for your business to complete.

Next steps

Please respond to this e-mail confirming if you can help, so we can agree a suitable time. If you are unable to help, please let us know by responding to this e-mail.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kind regards,

Gentiana D. Roarson | Head of Business Survey Research and Design Branch |

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- **Email addresses** of all survey contacts within a business
- **Names** of all survey contacts within a business
- List of all annual **surveys** the business completes

Challenges

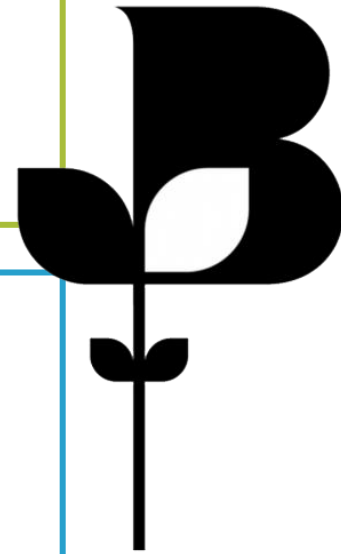
- Dependent on sample preparation work
- Time consuming compared to other blanket approaches

Engagement with industry bodies

- Enable access to businesses for research through industry bodies
- Focus groups with businesses at British Chambers of Commerce regular meetings

Challenges

- Time consuming
- Can be difficult to recruit businesses that meet specific sampling criteria



British
Chambers of
Commerce

Successes and impact

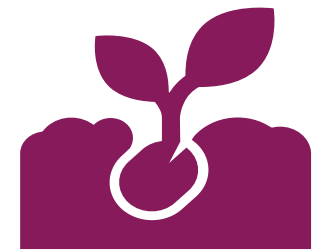
Marked **increase** in successful recruitment

- Roughly 1 in 10 businesses approached agreed to participate in research



Interviews with **multiple** survey contacts within a business, reducing burden for both the business and ONS researchers

Developing a **new** business-centred recruitment approach which will be adopted wider



Thank you!

Welcome any questions and comments

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