SHC Universal
Perfect Data.

Esomar 28 Questions

Company Profile

1 ***What experience does your company have with providing online samples for market research?***

SHC Universal was founded in 1997 and has been growing ever since. Today, we are over 60 full time employees with offices in New York, Idaho and London. SHC Universal's philosophy is based on the ideal of providing the most accurate and cost effective access to the ecosystem of healthcare professionals and their patients for comprehensive market knowledge to affect health outcomes.

We are a client-focused, operations-centered organization, and work proactively to uncover new opportunities and build solutions. We are committed to quality data collection and client satisfaction with each project we undertake. SHC Universal, with our dedicated client teams, works as your partner and as a true extension of your organization. Our White Coats ask smart questions, listen and understand in order to provide unparalleled value, support and service. Our reputation is built on our quality, driven by daily reviews of every study with senior team members' involvement, in all aspects of our client engagements.

2 ***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 list? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?***

When we started in the data collection business, SHC Universal "empaneled" respondents for surveys because so few had internet access and email addresses. Currently, since most respondents have email addresses and internet access, we have built a multi-mode 'access' system which is better statistically, quicker, and more cost efficient to sample respondents across an entire sample frame.

Our Network goes beyond a traditional actively managed panel (nurtured community). Rather, we sample from a population of 2 million plus. We regularly update and validate our sample from standard core sources including the AMA, hospital books/directories, medical directories and verified healthcare internet sites as original sample sources. We also add, update, verify and validate information utilizing bespoke telephone recruitment. As we add and update records, we ask potential respondents if they would like to participate in surveys (opt-in). From here, we verify and validate, and require that they opt-in again (double opt-in). For those that don't opt-in, or we cannot reach directly, we keep their information on file, and seek to add/update their information at other times. We have a stringent sampling procedure in place, linked with our panel management system, ensuring a representative demographic sample based on the universe being researched.

3

If you provide samples for 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?

At times SHC Universal blends our own panel with others. To this end we have developed our own in house technology called "The Hub". "The Hub" enables us to de-duplicate both within and across sources and enables SHC Universal to ensure that appropriately stratified samples can be replicated over time. In addition, SHC Universal institutes a variety of validation techniques including proxy server detection, IP address verification, past survey participation history, survey time testing, and use of unique survey links on each and every survey. We employ the industry standard of Relevant ID.

4

If the sample source is a panel or database, is the panel or database used solely for market research, if not please explain.

Yes, our community is utilized solely for market research.

5

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

We obtain our sample from standard core sources mentioned previously, as well as utilize our multi-mode recruitment practices, in order to maximize sample from hard to reach groups such as Healthcare Professionals (HCP). Our sampling model is a bit unorthodox as compared to the general marketplace as we do not just look at our community population, its response rate and the estimated survey incidence - although all three play a role - but rather we identify the total universe available and what can we deliver from it. Our sampling techniques are based on the qualified universe we have available compared to the quota that is required. We utilize our proprietary recruitment ratio best practices to effectively determine what is possible given our clients' research requirements utilizing our multi-mode approach.

6

If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partner? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

SHC Universal has one of the largest medical market research communities so we can routinely meet all the needs of our clients from our internal asset. SHC Universal is often approached by other firms to help them complete quota as a top up service. When required, and with full transparency with our clients, we will supplement with samples from other providers. When this is the case, our partner providers are held to the same vigorous standards we hold ourselves to in regards to data quality. In these circumstances, SHC Universal would utilize our proprietary "The Hub" technology, industry standard Relevant ID and industry standard non technological practices to ensure deduplication.

All of our partners are verified to ensure they abide by the Codes of Conduct/Guidelines of CASRO, the MRA, ESOMAR, BHBIA, PMRG and PBIRG in all market research activities/practices. All partners must pass our four-step vetting process and are held to the same high quality standards to which our clients expect and we ourselves guarantee, in terms of data quality and customer service.

7 ***What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?***

The sample is selected for each study based on the study specifications provided by the client. We do, however, have procedures within our panel management system to control both the quality and timing of the sample released. When designing our sampling frame, we are careful to prepare a randomly selected sample to insure the outgoing sample mirrors the universe of the study targets. We also suggest releasing the sample in stages and within an appropriate fielding period, so that even the hard to reach are given an opportunity to participate. Samples can be deployed in waves, and can be controlled by time zone, geography (regions, DMAs, postal codes, etc.), and by other means as available, and requested by the client.

8 ***Do you employ a survey router?***

SHC Universal does not employ a survey router for its healthcare professional research.

9 ***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?***

SHC Universal does not employ a survey router for its healthcare professional research.

10 ***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?***

SHC Universal does not employ a survey router for its healthcare professional research.

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

SHC Universal does not employ a survey router for its healthcare professional research.

12 ***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?***

We profile our respondents on a regular basis to update and refine our targeting capabilities. As a rule we maintain name, address, phone, email, as well as our 140 data points obtained through profiling surveys. We also maintain survey history. Updating of personal information happens in a variety of ways including:

- Continuous self-administered updates: Panelists have access to an online community portal where they can update their personal information at any time on demand.
- Automatically: date information such as Year Qualified/Date of Birth is collected in a day/month/year format so as to remain accurate overtime.
- Re-screening respondents by e-mail or phone via our community profiling initiatives.

13 ***Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in 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.***

Respondents are invited to participate in a survey through an email, fax or telephone invitation. The invitation always alerts the respondent to the survey topic, length, honorarium amount and survey link. If there is any part of the survey that requires additional guidance, that information is included in the invitation. Respondents are alerted that their survey responses are confidential and provided in aggregate, unless they give us their explicit permission to release their individual answers. Every email invitation sent from SHC Universal complies with guidelines and rules set forth by the major Market Research associations we belong.

14 ***Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sampling source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?***

Panel members receive an honorarium in the form of cash equivalent credit upon completion of the survey. Respondents can use these cash equivalent credits to redeem for many types of incentives provided within our reward catalogue - from PayPal/Check to online gift cards, such as Amazon and ITunes. Our reward catalogue serves our community by allowing a variety of valued rewards defined by country of residence. The size of the cash equivalent credit depends on the type of respondent, incidence, length of survey and other qualifying criteria.

15

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

SHC Universal works with clients to determine exactly how many respondents can be delivered for the specialty/respondent type requested. Generally our clients will provide us with expected incidence, length of interview, research approach, geography (ies) and quota required for SHC Universal to determine an accurate estimate for feasibility. Our sampling model is a bit unorthodox as compared to the general marketplace as we do not just look at our community population, its response rate and the estimated survey incidence - although all three play a role - but rather we identify the total universe available and what can we deliver from it. Our sampling techniques are based on the qualified universe we have available compared to the quota that is required. We utilize our proprietary recruitment ratio best practices to effectively determine what is possible given our clients' research requirements utilizing our multi-mode approach.

As we have over 2 million community members available, we can often achieve the sample sizes requested. As a standard practice we will always provide guidance as to what is feasible based on the size of the particular universe and/or the goals of the research engagement required.

16

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

We make a very strong effort to keep our panel members satisfied. Even though we cannot control their experience within a particular survey, we respond to all requests for assistance within 48 hours of notice. We periodically run a community satisfaction survey in order to ensure panelist satisfaction. In 2015, we revamped our panel management system in which we invested in a holistic dedicated panel management team in order to ensure maximum satisfaction within our community. Through this dedicated team, panelists are provided detailed instructions on how to contact our panel management team at any time to provide feedback, and to seek technical assistance with a survey or any other panel-related concern. In addition to outbound communications with our community, we also maintain a portal for all members in which we have additional FAQs and information for their on demand reference. Additionally, we pay close attention to project related data and member comments regarding the survey and incentive. Respondent satisfaction data is considered proprietary, and is only shared with a client should any issue arise with a specific project.

17

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

Keeping the client informed is a hallmark of SHC Universal. At the end of each project we provide all information that is relevant to the study dependent on the services requested by our client. Information often requested includes size of sample deployed, number that dropped out, incidence rates, number of completes, screen outs by question number and survey length. This information is provided to the client on an ongoing basis throughout the field period as part of our standard operating procedure. In addition to project level data we routinely conduct debrief meetings with our clients to understand how the research presentation was received, as well as review specific projects to ensure that we can always learn and adapt to ensure we meet every need of our client(s) on an ongoing basis. SHC Universal's number one goal is client satisfaction and we will do all that is necessary to guarantee this satisfaction.

Data Quality and Validation

18 ***Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviors, 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 are dedicated to increasing the quality of our internal processes. Our management team is trained to continuously improve the quality of our systems. We have put together a detailed workflow process from receipt of the RFP through the completion of a study. As a data collection company we do not design the survey instrument and often are only asked to recruit respondents to a survey programmed by others. If we are programming and hosting the survey, we rely on survey programming to guard against straight-lining and loss of concentration, and regularly advise our clients on implanting these verification measures within the survey programming. We also request client feedback on each and every study in order to remove respondents not providing legitimate data so as to never again use these members. Some of our specific data quality measures are highlighted below:

- Relevant ID – sophisticated digital fingerprinting technology that ensures same device is utilized only once per project (http://www.imperium.com/services/relevantid-digital-fingerprinting.php)
- Flat lining – we can flag or terminate respondents in a grid question if same rating is provided. It's suggested to employ when there are 10+ attributes to be rated, but logic can be added for any number of attributes.
- Focus trap – we can flag or terminate respondents in a question if instructions are not being followed. Usually in questions where there are 10+ attributes are shown, we insert 'for quality assurance please enter rating 3 for this row' as one of the instructions. This will ensure that respondents are carefully reading through each question.
- Minimum LOI – we can flag or terminate respondents if length of interview falls below the minimum threshold instructed by client at different points in the survey.
- Custom checks – we can employ any additional or requested checks when provided specific guidelines by our clients.
- Programming QA –The first step in our programming protocol is a thorough review of the questionnaire. The Programmer reviews all logic, skip patterns, design flow, content consistency, etc. All questions from this review are brought up to the client during the kick-off call. Once all questions are answered, the Programmer carefully scripts the survey. When all programming is completed, it is the Programmer's responsibly to run through the survey numerous times to ensure all skip patterns/scripts/logic are working correctly, with a goal to deliver an error-free link. When the Programmer is done, the survey link, along with latest version

of questionnaire, is sent to a separate Quality Assurance (QA) team member, who independently checks the survey for accuracy. Feedback from the QA person is passed back to the Programmer for survey adjustments, if any are required. At this stage, the Programmer sends a survey test link to the Project Manager noting that hidden screens are shown (and clearly marked on page) along with the BACK button and question IDs. This is purposely done so the tester is able to see if respondents are being placed into correct quota groups, scripts are executing correctly, background calculations are accurate, etc. After our internal QA process is complete, the program is sent to our client to review and approve prior to launch. Multi-language surveys are also checked for translation overlay quality in a similar fashion.

- Soft Launch QA – Typically with internally programmed surveys. This step is vital in ensuring that the data is being collected as required/assumed. We use this period to attain 10% of our client's desired quota and vigorously check the data quality to ensure all data is being collected as expected. We also provide this data to our client(s) to review and comment, in case we want to make tweaks to the look/feel of the data layout or tweak the data output format to allow a more efficient analysis on their end

19 ***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?***

As a general rule we do not limit contacts due to the varying demands from our numerous clients as well as looking for highly specialized respondents. Communications vary according to country and specialty. On average, panel members are contacted one to three times per month for GP/FP/PCP's and occasionally more regularly, for specialists where the universe sizes are more limited in size.

20 ***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?***

The answer to this question is often dictated by the group we are recruiting, as well as dictated by the client. SHC Universal does not restrict participation to a set number of studies, but can exclude respondents who have participated within a given time frame. This is often discussed with the client during the bidding stage of the project and is contingent on the universe, sample size and market in which the research is being conducted.

21 ***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 maintain participant and project level data on all respondents and are able to provide this to our clients as requested.

22

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 a 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?

We have a number of procedures for ensuring quality. All new respondents must double opt-in before they can be considered for our community. Once they complete the enrollment process they are placed in a verification queue where the enrollment data is verified to be accurate. Verification sources include the public internet, the AMA database, and state license records. We will also collect copies of medical credentials and call enrollees to verify them. Once they are verified they are activated within the community and are now eligible to take surveys. We also use IP address information to verify our panelists. We use Geolocation to ensure IP addresses are in the expected geographies and flag those respondents whose IP information is outside of expectation. We can provide de-identified IP data if required.

Policies and Compliance

23

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

Respondents are asked to opt-in to participate in market research. All new respondents must double opt-in before they can be considered for our community. Once they complete the enrollment process they are placed in a verification queue where the enrollment data is verified to be accurate. Verification sources include AMA, hospital books/directories, medical directories verified healthcare internet sites and state license records. We will also collect copies of medical credentials and call enrollees to verify them. If a respondent accepts, then they are asked to provide their preferred method of contact (email, phone, fax or regular mail). Their contact information is validated and verified as stated above.

24

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

Respondent privacy is very important to SHC Universal and our policies and practices relating to the management of personal information is readily available to respondents here. Before or at the time of collecting personal information, we will identify the purposes for which information is being collected. We will collect and use personal information solely with the objective of fulfilling those purposes specified and for other compatible purposes. SHC Universal obtains the explicit consent of the individual concerned as required by local laws, regulations, guidelines and dictated by the code of conducts/guidelines that we abide as members of CASRO, the MRA, ESOMAR, BHBIA, PMRG and PBIRG in all our of market research activities/practices.

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

SHC Universal has a number of procedures for ensuring confidentiality and security. All communications with our data collection platforms are encrypted using SSL and we maintain a role based permission system to ensure individuals have only the minimum level of access required to perform their job functions.

We employ a three-tier firewalled architecture to prevent unauthorized activity within the system. The first layer of defense is a set of reverse proxy servers which protect our web servers from attacks. Our web servers and database servers also reside in their own separate firewalled networks. Finally, we employ a near real time back-up system where multiple backups are made each day. Data is also replicated offsite to support our disaster recovery capabilities.

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

There is no infallible method of protecting information that is presented online. However, we do work closely with our clients when the information is perceived to be of a sensitive nature. If the survey contains any sensitive material and/or content, it is clearly mentioned in the survey invitation and where appropriate within the survey - providing panelists the opportunity to opt-out if they cannot or wish not to abide by confidentiality consents. However, ultimately, it is the client's decision whether or not the information is too sensitive to risk disclosure.

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

SHC Universal adheres to several guidelines regarding quality including but not limited to CASRO, the MRA, ESOMAR, BHBIA, PMRG and PBIRG guidelines. Our management team is trained to continuously recommend and improve the quality of our systems. Where applicable SHC Universal abides with local and national guidelines as required. For more information on these guidelines please contact your account representative.

28 ***Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?***

No, we do not.