

MRC Accreditation Shines a Light on Scarborough's Commitment to Quality



Accredited by
Media
Rating Council®

In September 2006, the Scarborough service received complete Media Rating Council (MRC) accreditation.* MRC accreditation is a significant milestone in Scarborough's on-going commitment to research quality, and represents formal recognition of that commitment by the toughest jury of all – our customers.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MRC IS TO:

- Secure for the media industry and related users audience measurement services that are valid, reliable and effective.
- Evolve and determine minimum disclosure and ethical criteria for media audience measurement services.
- Provide and administer an audit system designed to inform users as to whether such audience measurements are conducted in conformance with the criteria and procedures developed.

WHY IS QUALITY IMPORTANT?

Media companies use syndicated research to make sales and generate revenues. Your advertiser customers are scrutinizing every dollar spent, looking for increased effectiveness and ROI. Advertising and media decisions based on quality research are more likely to deliver advertising that works.

SCARBOROUGH AND THE MRC

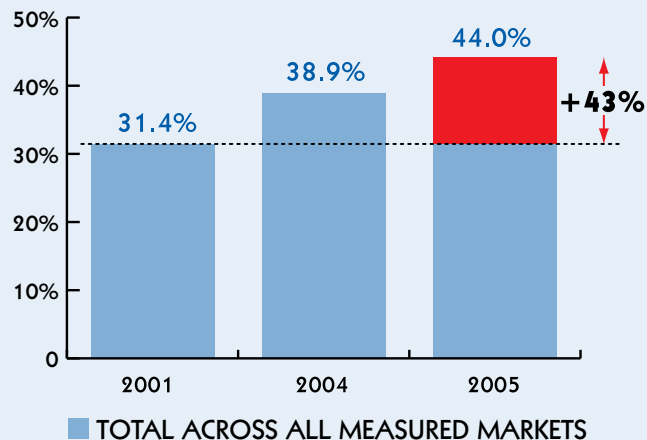
When Scarborough began the MRC audit process, no other "qualitative" service had been accredited. Over time, different components of the Scarborough service received accreditation:

- 2001: Newspaper data, radio AQH (the phone call)
- 2003: PRIME NExT software; radio cume
- 2004: The consumer survey
- September 2006: TV diary; FULL SERVICE IS ACCREDITED

Scarborough's product, procedures, and methodologies have evolved over time – in response to an increasingly complex marketplace, and in pursuit of research excellence. The MRC has been a key driver of that evolution.

SCARBOROUGH INCREASES TELEPHONE RESPONSE RATE

In an environment of generally declining response rates, Scarborough has managed to raise telephone response rates 43% in five years.



HOW DID SCARBOROUGH ACHIEVE THIS RESPONSE RATE PERFORMANCE?

"The success we achieved is not due to any one single 'magic bullet' procedure that dramatically increased our response rates, but is rather the summation of many different initiatives across varied aspects of the survey process..."[‡]

From the White Paper entitled "You Don't Have to Accept Low Survey Response Rates" co-authored by: Jane Traub, Kathy Pilhuj, Dan Mallett at the 2005 AAPOR Conference, free copy available at: <http://scarborough.com/freeStudies.php>

*Scarborough accredited services include the individual local market studies, and Multi-Market.

AN ON-GOING INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Many factors contributed to improvements in response rate: enhanced supervisor training, enhanced interviewer training, improved monitoring and coaching of interviewers; enhanced respondent contacts; and increased respondent incentives.

SOME OF THE RECENT SCARBOROUGH INVESTMENTS IN RESPONSE RATE PERFORMANCE AND SURVEY QUALITY:

- Tested, then added refusal letter with cash incentive in 53 markets with lowest response rates
- All calls from Scarborough interviewing centers display the Scarborough caller ID
- Option for respondent call-back on Sunday
- Added an 800 number for respondents to call in and take survey as convenient
- Developed a systematic approach for enabling interviewers to overcome respondent objections to participation
- Overhauled the interviewer hiring, training, and supervisory process – including increasing salaries
- Added an additional phone call to reach household, pre-designated respondent (now up to 14 calls)
- Instituted an additional conversion attempt to refusal households (now up to 4 conversion calls)



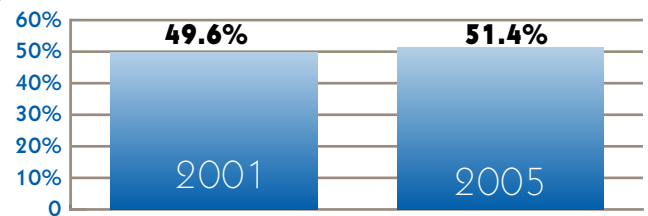
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SCARBOROUGH CONSUMER SURVEY BOOKLET RETURN RATE PASSES 50%

Scarborough has managed to maintain and increase the response rate to the consumer survey portion of the methodology, breaking the 50% barrier. At the same time, Scarborough has added numerous new measurements and categories, to reflect the changing consumer landscape in media, shopping, retail, and service marketing.



SOME OF THE RECENT SCARBOROUGH INVESTMENTS IN BOOKLET RESPONSE:

- Increased standard incentive enclosed with original booklet mailing
- Added a second booklet and/or TV diary mailing to non-responders with promise of cash incentive contingent upon completion and return of materials
- Added a third mailing to non-responders with promise of \$35 for return of completed booklet and TV diary
- Implemented additional call to booklet returners, reminding them to return the TV diary

CONTINUOUS TESTING

Respondents are harder to reach than ever before. In today's increasingly challenging survey environment, there are no shortcuts to quality. Scarborough is committed to a continuous program of testing and investment. Some of Scarborough's recent Research methods tests have included:

- Urban mailer test (2006)
- TV diary re-design (2006)
- Respondent data example one-sheet (2006)
- Cell phone sample (planned for 2007)
- 18-34 response rate tests (planned for 2007)

RESEARCH QUALITY SUPPORTS BETTER BUSINESS DECISIONS

The commitment to quality is an on-going process. For Scarborough, the MRC audit and accreditation has been an important part of that process. For Scarborough users, research quality means that decisions about advertising, marketing, and media selection may be made with increased confidence.