

Alpha Panel

In today's increasingly market-centric business environment, companies need efficient ways of maintaining regular substantive contact with one or more of their various constituent groups - e.g., current customers, prospects, employees, channel partners, suppliers.

A DRI qualitative research "Alpha Panel" can help fill this need. Typically composed of 100-200 individuals "cherry-picked," from past research and/or new recruiting, for their intelligence and articulateness, the panel can accommodate a fairly large number of separate sample segments. The segments represented as well as the topics investigated can be changed from session to session in accordance with the company's changing planning, activities or concerns.

Examples of Alpha Panel appropriate applications include:

- New product/service idea generation
- Testing new product/service/communications concepts
- Advertising testing
- Corporate/brand image assessment
- Web site development and testing (content, features, functionality)
- Etc.

How It Works

Qualified panel candidates are told they might be asked to participate in a research study - via telephone, Internet, or in person - on a regular basis (three times a year, or quarterly, or every other month). In addition to those scheduled sessions, their occasional ad hoc participation might be required, if and as special, time-sensitive informational needs arise.

Panelists are contacted on a monthly basis in order to sustain interest, as well as to gauge attrition rates. Supplemental recruiting is conducted throughout the year to maintain the desired participant segment numbers.

As an incentive for basic participation, a random drawing of, say, 25 cash gifts of \$100 each is held each quarter. In addition, individuals who are selected for *ad hoc* investigations receive cash incentives for each study.

DRI handles the recruiting of the panel; database management and maintenance; and moderating, analysis and reporting of the information obtained.

An Alpha Panel is an invaluable tool for predicting and evaluating "what's going on" in your company's customer and shareholder groups.

Dialogue Resource is a marketing research and consulting firm located in Boston MA.

