

The Online Bulletin Board



Lets You Explore Marketing Issues In Depth
Even When Your Target Is Hard to Reach

A Powerful Tool

- The online bulletin board allows you to:
 - Explore a wide range of topics in depth.
 - Interview a geographically diverse and/or hard-to-reach sample.
 - Conveniently observe discussion at all times, from desktop, home, or remote computer.

How It Works

- ❑ A very sophisticated interview/discussion tool.
- ❑ No special software needed by participants or observers – just Internet access and web browser.
- ❑ Takes place over several days or longer.
- ❑ 20 – 25 (or more) respondents log in twice or more daily, at times of their convenience.
- ❑ Discussion does *not* occur in real time.

Snippet from Online Bulletin Board

1.5. *Phil (Moderator)* 06-Apr-2006 12:00 AM

Has the issue of security on the Internet caused you to avoid doing certain things on the Internet? Please explain.

1.5.1. Debra J. 06-Apr-2006 01:15 AM

To some degree, I am tenious about releasing some info onto the net.

1.5.1.1. *Phil (Moderator)* 06-Apr-2006 06:21 AM

Debra, please explain that a bit more.

1.5.1.1.1. Debra J. 06-Apr-2006 12:50 PM

Giving credit info on the net. I think it is possible for hackers to capture that info anbd use it. There are three things my husband says NEVER to give out over the phone especially if the other party is the one who initiated the call. 1.Mothers maiden name, 2. Birthdate. 3. SS#

1.5.2. Dana G. 06-Apr-2006 02:22 AM

no - I feel that is is pretty safe at most sites.

1.5.3. Patty O. 06-Apr-2006 07:58 AM

yes, it worries me.. I really try to avoid using my credit card on the internet and i don't do any of my bill paying online

1.5.4. Tara D. 06-Apr-2006 08:17 AM

Yes, I so far haven't done banking online because I feel that yes, even though breaches don't happen that often, it will only take one time for my financial life to be supremely messed up.

1.5.5. Joanne W. 06-Apr-2006 11:46 AM

I only release personal information on websites if they are secured, but other than that the answer would be no.

More On How It Works

- Approximately 12 main topics per day.
- Visuals/graphics/web sites can be shown.
 - Tasks/exercises can be done on web sites.
- Respondents react to the main topics, moderator's probes, and the comments of other participants.
- Electronic transcripts available immediately after discussion concludes.

Benefits: Hard-To-Reach Targets, Geographic Diversity, No Travel, No Influencer Effect

- ❑ **Hard-to-reach targets.** Participation online at respondent's convenience allows research among hard-to-reach professionals and people in remote areas.
- ❑ **Geographic diversity among respondents.** Allows exploration of regional differences on key issues.
 - Participants can be in different time zones and even on different continents.
- ❑ **Time and cost efficient for client.** No travel time, no juggling schedules, no travel expenses.
- ❑ **Virtually eliminates influencer effect.** One respondent cannot type louder than everyone else.

Benefits: Range of Topics/Depth of Responses

- **Wide range of topics.** Respondents are engaged over several days or longer, allowing for detailed discussion of many issues.
 - Discussion guide is customizable, and topics for upcoming days can be refined or added.
- **More depth than traditional qualitative research.** Participants can take time formulating comments, because discussion is not in real time (unlike a traditional or online focus group).
 - Yet, interaction with other respondents enriches responses as it does during a traditional focus group.

Benefits: Individual question settings can be tailored to maximize learning.

- **Sequential:** Respondents cannot see the question until they have answered the previous question.
 - Helps the moderator control the flow of the discussion; we almost always use this setting.
- **Uninfluenced:** Respondents cannot see other responses until they have posted an answer.
 - Typically used when respondents are reacting to concepts.
- **Interview:** Respondents can never see other responses.
 - We use this setting on all questions to conduct one-on-ones.

Applications

- ❑ *As a Voice of the Customer* medium – to explore perceptions, problems, and needs in an industry.
- ❑ Exploring new product concepts and features.
- ❑ Assessing attitudes toward brands and products.
- ❑ Assessing reactions to advertising, promotions, logos, package designs, and other marketing communications.
- ❑ Exploring internal issues with staff (conducted on anonymous basis to promote candid feedback).
- ❑ Getting reactions to web sites/online content of competitors.

Some Online Bulletin Board Clients

- Alberto-Culver
- Air Products & Chemicals
- American Express
- Amtrak
- BIC International
- CenturyTel
- Chrysler
- Dial
- GE
- HP
- Hormel Foods
- Krispy Kreme
- Lowe's
- MasterCard
- Reynolds Packaging Group
- Sony
- Sprint
- VeriSign

The Process

1. Establish objectives.
2. Decide on respondent requirements (e.g., must work in certain industry, in certain size company, etc.)
3. Create discussion guide.
4. Recruit 20 – 25 respondents. (Professionals typically recruited by phone; consumers recruited by phone or from online panels.)
5. Each participant receives log-in name and password.

The Process

6. Each day's discussion becomes active at 12:01 a.m.
 - ♦ Respondents log in at varying times.
 - ♦ Moderator logs in every one to two hours to post probes and keep discussion moving in right direction.
7. Topics can be added or changed as needed.
 - E.g., Show a product description on Day 1, revise it based on comments, then explore it again on Day 3.
8. Electronic transcripts of entire discussion available soon after project's conclusion.
9. Final report with recommendations presented within 10 days. Total project timing is approximately one month.

Online Bulletin Board: Summing Up Benefits

- ❑ Allows you to interview hard-to-reach targets
- ❑ Provides in-depth feedback
- ❑ Time and cost efficient; no travel
- ❑ Allows you to explore a wide range of topics in depth
- ❑ Virtually eliminates influencer effect
- ❑ Actionable recommendations
- ❑ Proven track record at Fortune 500 firms