

interviewer's work is monitored and verified. Central local supervision and monitoring ensure quality control for each interview conducted and strict adherence to the sample design, respondent selection criteria and proper administration of the questionnaire.

In addition, telephoning from Environics' central location telephone facilities permits the use of CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing), the state-of-the-art method of conducting telephone interviews. Details of our DASH CATI system are described below.

A minimum of five calls are made before dead-ending a potential interview, with up to four call-backs to obtain an interview with the respondent identified using the Trolldahl-Carter respondent selection technique. This high number of call-backs results in high response rates, thus ensuring a reliable sample.

Interviewing is conducted by a professional team of experienced and trained interviewers, many of whom are proficient in a second language. In order to obtain an accurate understanding and representation of the entire population of Canada, it is important to interview in each official language and in minority languages as well. Environics routinely interviews in Italian, Portuguese, Greek and Chinese, as the need arises.

All the completed interviews are checked for ambiguities, completeness and proper following of skip patterns. If problems are uncovered, respondents are telephoned again to clarify responses and correct errors. With the DASH CATI system, however, checks are programmed into the questionnaire and these errors are almost impossible to make.

Also, with the DASH CATI system, data are automatically entered into our in-house minicomputers with each answer a respondent gives, thus combining the interviewing and data entry stages of the methodology, eliminating the possibility of mispunches and saving time.

Postal Surveys

For postal surveys, Environics recommends the following procedures for achieving high quality returns, and a high response rate:

- o an introductory letter from the client and/or Environics, stating the purpose and importance of the study assuring confidentiality and anonymity of all participants accompanies the questionnaire. The letter introduces Environics as an independent research firm contracted by the client to conduct the survey;
- o clear and concise written instructions are given to respondents to simplify questionnaire completion. General instructions are written at the beginning of the questionnaire and more precise instructions are used as required for individual questions;