



SKIM PROJECT GUIDELINES FOR SERVICES PROJECTS

These guidelines apply to all outsourcing of parts of research projects to SKIM. Parts of research projects that may be outsourced are: programming of surveys, hosting, fieldwork or methodological consultancy.

Project Procedure

Steps:

- 1) Initial approach from the client to get a basic idea of what the possibilities are with respect to outsourcing work to SKIM and related costs. This may be via telephone conversation or email.
- 2) Based on the touch base communication with the client SKIM will write an estimated cost proposal within an email. All information known at that point will obviously already be incorporated.
- 3) If the client wishes to proceed, SKIM will receive more details from the client by interacting via email or phone.
- 4) The outcome of the previous phase leads to a project proposal. This will be a pdf and sent by email. For administration purposes, the proposal needs to be signed and returned to SKIM, preferably by fax.
- 5) Changes to the specifics mentioned in the proposal will be treated with flexibility. However, as soon as SKIM perceives a change to result in considerable extra work, SKIM is entitled to increase project costs after discussing the implications with the client. The client will be informed of this immediately.

Some pointers for successful (conjoint) projects:

1. The complete scope of the study

Think about the scope of the study before you start. What parameters need to be evaluated? What do you wish to achieve with this study?

2. The latest market information

In your simulations, you can use current market information such as shares and distribution figures in order to finetune your model.

3. Brands to be included in the survey and in the sample

What are the main brands that you wish to include in your study?

You cannot include "everything".

Your research should attempt to recreate a realistic market situation. Thus, you need to ensure a good representation of the market in your study. When deciding which brands you wish to include, aim to include all the major brands (e.g. 80% of market share). Confidence drops particularly for small brands included in the study, which can affect the reliability of the results, as with any methodology. Therefore, avoid including products/services of <1% volume share.

4. Flexible design

Conjoint analysis is at its best when your design is as flexible as possible. Sometimes, for the sake of recreating a realistic choice environment, the conjoint design is limited. Always try to avoid using too many limitations (prohibitions) in your study. For example, avoid including different pack sizes or promotions only for one brand, vary prices for all the products in the study, etcetera.



5. Wide ranges

If you would only include realistic prices or product characteristics, your study becomes more realistic for the respondent. However, you will encounter problems in the analysis. In case you are trying to estimate price barriers, you need to examine a wider range of prices than the ones where you expect a price barrier. In addition, the market may be changing quickly, making your study design invalid for the new situation. Use wide ranges for things like prices and allow some unrealistic product characteristics in the study.

6. Questionnaire

To prepare the questionnaire, you will need to generate a (Word) document with all the questions you want to ask, with the layout prepared in the same format as required in the final document (including page breaks if you wish). You can even add any comment you may have between the questions (for instance about skip instructions), but please show these in a different colour.

7. Demographic and standard usage, behaviour and awareness questions

Standard demographic, usage and behaviour questions will prove to be good diagnostics in the analysis. The extra questions are usually closed ended, but multiple select responses can also be added.

8. Pictures of the products

If you would like to implement pictures in your questionnaire, than you will need pictures of all the product/service variants to be included in the choice module.

The pictures should be in JPG-format (always avoid Gif format as its colour range is limited to 256 colours). Use true colour 32bit format.

The quality of each picture must be the same, as a difference in picture quality will influence the results.

It is recommended that all products are pictured according to their relative sizes.

All pictures should be taken with the same background and same lighting.

The background should be homogeneous and the most contrast as possible versus the package colours (usually, pure white background is preferable; unless some/all products are white themselves!)