



INSIDER'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE IN-STORE RESEARCH

PART I. RETAILER COOPERATION AND STORE SELECTION

RULE #1: THERE IS MORE THAN "ONE WAY" TO GET ACCESS TO CONDUCT IN-STORE RESEARCH.

Every retailer and channel requires a different approach that depends on the retail organization and the presence and degree of central control. We use a variety of methods – because those used to gain access to a convenience store may not be successful with an electronics store. Most retailers are paid a cooperation fee for permitting in-store research; however, this payment is more of an expression of gratitude than an incentive.

RULE #2: GO FISHING WHERE THE FISH ARE!

Sorensen Associates identifies specific stores for research by using detailed demographic data that helps identify the best fit with the target audience of the study. This improves efficiency and the speed of data collection. By using multiple cities and multiple stores, fieldwork can often be completed in days rather than weeks.

RULE #3: DO NOT USE THE SAME STORE MORE OFTEN THAN ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS.

This not only avoids the creation of "professional" respondents, it also prevents overuse of a particular host store. Sorensen Associates can obtain retailer access for in-store research by teaming with clients or independent of client involvement. Our established history with many retailers cultivates strong relationships that provide the options clients appreciate.

PART II. COLLECTING THE DATA

RULE #4: THE STOCK CLERK IS MORE POWERFUL THAN THE VICE PRESIDENT.

We are guests at every store. While blending into the store environment is crucial to successful in-store research, a courteous, approachable presence that does not inconvenience store staff is also important. If staff are upset and do not want you in their store, the stock clerk can put you out on the street, even if there is corporate approval!

RULE #5: THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT!

Our interviewers recognize that shoppers are in the store primarily to complete their shopping, and secondarily to provide their opinions within the parameters of a specific study. Interviewers are trained to be customer service representatives for the store while collecting the research data, which is a key reason for our very high retailer cooperation rates. We understand that retailers' number one interest is keeping their customers happy.

RULE #6: WE PAY THE RESPONDENT A COOPERATION PAYMENT, BUT MAYBE THEY SHOULD PAY US.

An interview is something the shopper does to us; not something we do to them. We are a sounding board that allows shoppers to convey their wishes to the manufacturer or retailer.

PART III. VALUE OF THE DATA

RULE #7: SHOPPERS LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT INTERESTS THEM RIGHT NOW!

When a shopper purchases or shops an item or category, their thoughts are top-of-mind and questions about their experience are eminently relevant to them. We cannot truly know what a shopper thought "the last time they purchased" anything if we weren't there! Shoppers' purchase decision recall is transitory. Like butterflies, we must catch them gently and immediately when they make the purchase.

RULE #8: RETAILERS WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEIR CUSTOMERS THINK.

Research is a powerful tool for supporting a manufacturer's category management and sales effort. No research is more persuasive to a retailer than results that reflect the opinions of the customers who shop their stores.

RULE #9: REAL SECURITY COMES FROM HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT.

In-store security breaches are less likely when research is conducted for a day or two in varied markets and retail locations. The chances of security breaches increase when research is conducted at facilities where consumers are intercepted and interviewed every day, year after year.