

**ONLINE CASE 2.13 ASWU AND HARRIS INTERACTIVE EUROPE ONLINE  
OMNIBUS SERVICE\*\***

supplemental material to the text of

**Modern Marketing Research: Concepts, Methods, and Cases**

by Feinberg, Kinnear, and Taylor

Ye Chang, the business unit director of ASWU, a major Chinese electronics manufacturer, was on the way to his office from an urgently assembled meeting of the firm's top executives. His thoughts were occupied by the decision that he would have to make two weeks hence, a momentous one for him and ASWU.

The main topic of the meeting concerned a product that was under the umbrella of his business unit, an MP3 player. Based on the industry projections and the internal reports available in the company, the MP3 player market was expected to experience explosive growth, especially with continuous price drops typical of the category and high-tech consumer electronics in general. The product manufactured by ASWU was already distributed across Europe, with the exception of Great Britain. The decision to enter Great Britain was clear. However, decisions regarding the mode of entry were all assigned to Ye.

ASWU made its MP3 player available in European countries through a co-branding partnership with a company whose electronics brand names enjoyed enormous awareness among European consumers, with low regional variation. The decision to co-brand was based on a survey conducted several years ago, indicating that European consumers desired the reassurance of a familiar brand name when purchasing such relatively new products as MP3 players. However, the penetration of the product category had increased dramatically since the survey had been conducted, and Ye wondered whether this change had gradually ushered in a change in consumer attitudes as well. After all, MP3 players were no longer a new product. He asked himself what role brand name played in the purchasing decision-making of MP3 player buyers, in Great Britain in particular. If the European MP3 player market was close to reaching the same level of commoditization that already dominated the PC industry, would it be wiser to enter Great Britain without a co-branding agreement and instead use the ASWU brand to identify its MP3 players? Doing so would certainly entail lower cost, and more channel control, consistent with market commoditization, if indeed it was occurring.

The more he thought about this matter, the more he realized the need for a new, perhaps updated consumer survey to understand the current state of consumer attitudes in Great Britain. Finding a research provider in a market he knew nothing about and completing a survey in two weeks seemed almost impossible. Ye entered his office and picked up the phone and asked his secretary to set up a meeting with the MP3 player brand management team the next morning.

The meeting produced an interesting idea, devised by an assistant brand manager, Sammy Yuke, who was hired six months earlier after completing his graduate studies in England. Sammy suggested that the survey be conducted via e-mail, which would save a great deal of time. After the meeting, Sammy forwarded Ye a link with the information about Harris Interactive Europe, specifically its online omnibus research service.

Searching through the Harris Interactive (HI) Europe website, Ye discovered that it is a global market research and consulting company, with headquarters in London, known for

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\* All information about Harris Interactive's Omnibus Services refer to Ye's observations in 2005. For up-to-date information about current Omnibus Services, please visit [www.harrisinteractive.com/europe/services.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/europe/services.asp) or [www.harrisinteractive.com/](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/).

decades for its expertise in strategic business and consumer research. HI Europe's website touted its application of innovative methodologies and sophisticated technology, focusing on those that are Internet-based. Harris Interactive, among the world's 15 largest market research firms, with more than \$150 million in annual revenue and based in Rochester, N.Y., was the parent company of HI Europe, and this alone added credibility to HI Europe's image in Ye's eyes. Harris Interactive's acquisition of Novatris, a Paris-based online market research firm, added one million Novatris panel members to Harris Interactive's current European panel of 700,000, creating a panel of 1.7 million members, believed to be the largest in Europe.

After reading about HI Europe, Ye thought that the firm could be trusted to ably carry out the assignment. Now, he had to evaluate if the firm's online omnibus service was appropriate for his needs. Among all the other information posted on the firm's website, Ye read the following with interest.

### ***QuickQuery™ Great Britain (GB)***

Get accurate, projectable answers from 2,000 people within just 8 days.

HI Europe's QuickQuery GB is an online omnibus service that enables you to ask questions and get projectable answers from a representative sample of British adults (aged 16+). Although all respondents are Internet users, our ongoing parallel studies and extensive experience enable us to weight the sample to represent the GB adult population.

You'll get meaningful information for low-incidence populations or for specific target audiences. HI Europe's extensive online panel enables cost-effective access to hard-to-reach respondents.

Here is how QuickQuery GB works:

1. You submit and finalize your questions with our online survey consultants by midday on the second Tuesday of the month and receive results the following Wednesday.
2. Your questions are transformed into an electronic questionnaire and fielded a random subset of more than 140,000 cooperative respondents in Great Britain.
3. Eight days later, the data is tabulated and delivered to you electronically.

When should you use QuickQuery GB?

Here are a few scenarios:

- Market segmentation analyses
- Attitudes and usage studies
- Tracking studies
- Name testing
- Consumer trend analyses
- New product research
- Disaster checks
- Incidence testing
- Evaluating purchase intent
- Public opinion issues

**Source:** ©Harris Interactive Inc.

Ye was contemplating contacting HI Europe for more details. As he prepared to call the relevant personnel in HI Europe, he considered the additional information that he needed to evaluate the suitability of the survey for this objective.

### Case Questions

- 1 What information should Ye Chang request from HI Europe to evaluate the potential of assigning them the research project?
- 2 Do you believe that the QuickQuery omnibus service was appropriate for ASWU's purpose? Explain your answer and discuss advantages and disadvantages of the service.
- 3 The sample size of the QuickQuery service was 2,000 people. Do you think this allowed for a large enough sample for ASWU's survey objective? Was the sample representative of the population ASWU wished to learn about? What information would Ye need to ask from HI Europe to evaluate the suitability of the sample for his needs? What statistical procedures may be employed to test whether the sample was at least approximately representative?
- 4 QuickQuery's sample was stratified by age, gender, and region. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of a stratified sample in general and by the aforementioned criteria in particular. Would you recommend any other way to construct the sample for ASWU's survey? How?
- 5 The QuickQuery online omnibus standard service offered clients the option to include up to 25 questions. Design a questionnaire that addresses the ASWU survey's objective and information needs, keeping to this relatively tight constraint.
- 6 The QuickQuery service provided clients answers to their questions for the (aggregated) total sample and broken-out by standard demographic variables, including
  - age within gender
  - household size
  - marital status
  - region
  - social class
  - income
  - age and presence of children
  - employment status
  - education

Which of these demographic variables were most relevant for this survey? Are there any other variables that you would add to ASWU's questionnaire? Finally, were pre-specified geodemographic categories the best way to segment this market?

**Sources:** "China to Lead Global MP3 Market Growth." *Macworld*, November 3, 2004.

Harris Interactive Europe ([www.hieurope.com](http://www.hieurope.com))

"Lavod's MP3 Players Boast Superior Sound Quality, Fashionable Designs." *Computex Taipei*, 2005.

MP3 player product listings: <http://chinasuppliers.alibaba.com>.