



**Your Say Pays Off**  
 Make your views heard



**A**s society evolves businesses must develop new techniques to communicate with consumers, or risk turning into dinosaurs. Marketing campaigns are increasingly “viral” or even “guerrilla”—relying on word of mouth communication rather than blunderbuss-style mass advertising. Real people sharing real opinions about products and services is far more engaging and compelling than overblown and untailored marketing claims.

The growth of the “blogosphere” (online networks of personal websites) has extended the reach and power of ordinary people to discuss the companies they deal with and the service they receive. Tapping into this new form of communication is essential for accurate research into consumer attitudes.

YourSayPays.co.uk is an innovative new approach to online research, set up by The Leadership Factor to address the needs of clients who need quick access to the views

of a cross-section of consumers. The panel is made up of people of all backgrounds, young and old, from every region. What brings them together is their interest in expressing their opinions and affecting the way businesses work.

#### **More than just a panel**

YourSayPays aims to be more than an online survey and panel site. Built around that is a community of consumers—bloggers, participants and interested readers



## Customer

the articles on the site and share stories of particularly memorable experiences (good and bad).

We're recruiting some star bloggers, so if

you've got a good story, and you think you can tell it well, send it through!

Joe sent us this one about his experience with the Four Seasons hotel in Dublin:

Sadly, if predictably, not all the responses have been so positive. Sally has a familiar story of pushy salespeople:

### Joe

"We visited for 2 nights in March 2007 having previously stayed in 2006. The service was exceptional. The booking in was made very simple and I was asked if I wanted to use the same credit card.

On arriving the car door was opened for my wife, the greeter asked my name and told me he would look after baggage. When I went into reception the lady said 'Good evening Mr XX you are welcome back to the Four Seasons' (obviously my name had been relayed from outside).

Later in the evening as we arrived back at the room, we met an employee who was replenishing the ice. He also greeted us with a 'Good evening Mr & Mrs XX.' All small touches but they do add up to a wonderful customer experience"

### Sally

"Recently I was approached to change my internet provider. The salesman was very persuasive and assured me that everything I had with present provider would be the same but at nearly half the price—no catch. After receiving the information I discovered a couple of things I wasn't happy with and when I contacted the company they admitted I had been given wrong information. Thank goodness I was able to cancel, but I was very annoyed as the salesman had wasted nearly an hour of my time."



Other people, like Ellen, haven't got a particular horror story, but are just fed up with ongoing substandard service:

YourSayPays will be a place for consumers to get together and discuss each other's experiences and points of view.

Do we agree with Adrian, who says?...

**Ellen**

"Maybe I'm the only one, but it always seems to be that when I join a queue I get the woman serving who hasn't got a clue...can't get a price check, puts other people's stuff in with mine, can't get the till to work, has no notes so you have to leave with a handful of shrapnel...no matter what I do I always end up with these types of people!"

**Adrian**

"I am always saddened by customer service in this country. My partner is from N America, and whenever we visit, I encounter what good customer service really is. Not a student who doesn't care, a call centre in India who doesn't understand me, or an automated system which runs me through a rat maze only to cut me off."





Or is it actually better on this side of the Atlantic? Perhaps the good old days of personal service were the halcyon era for service quality, and the CRM systems and IVR technology of the 21st century are heading in the wrong direction?

On top of the survey information that will flow from the panel members, the community at YourSayPays will represent an opportunity for ordinary consumers to share their opinions. Whether it's a horror story, a celebration of great service or simply an opinion on the way things are going it will all contribute to a valuable resource about consumer attitudes.

This also means that organisations that want to get to know what consumers are thinking would do well to spend some time at the site. As well as the survey data there is a huge amount of qualitative, anecdotal, "data" represented in the blogs and comments. It gives businesses a chance to find out what consumers are saying to each other about the service they experience day to day.

### The panel

So how does it work? The panel is made up of a broad cross-section of different types of people, designed to be representative of the population in general. This means that a survey can be opened to a sample of consumers who are representative of everyone in the country, or to just a sub sample if, for example, you only want to test the view of the over 65s.

Panel members log into a special area of the YourSayPays site in order to complete surveys for which they are eligible, to update their details and to check how much money they've earned.

Each member can complete each survey only once. Surveys will take around 5-15 minutes to complete and for each completed survey we will pay between 50p and £2, with the respondents able to choose between earning the money themselves or donating it to charity.

### Panels vs. sample research - what's the difference?

Panels have pros and cons when compared to conventional sample research approaches. The fundamental difference is that panel members are a standing group of people with whom the research agency has an established relationship.

This makes the process of sampling, or selecting people to take part, much easier. It also tends to improve the participation rate. On the other hand there is a danger that panel members may become "professional respondents", meaning that their views are no longer exactly representative of the wider population.

For this reason it is usual to refresh panels by adding new members on an ongoing basis. This also means that the panel approach is more suitable to certain types of research, and is certainly not a replacement for conventional sample research.

### Making the panel work

The Leadership Factor has also invested in a wide-ranging marketing programme to help ensure that the website attracts varied users. Awareness of the website will be generated by ongoing PR activity, as well as an online marketing campaign, which includes search engine optimisation.

Nigel Hill, founder of The Leadership Factor says: "With people of all ages spending more and more time online, search engine optimisation will be an essential ingredient for driving traffic to the website. Once there, the incentive of payment will help to encourage visitors to complete surveys, and regular users will be able to clock up a nice bit of extra pocket money over time."

"The 'donate to charity' option is also an important feature, and we predict that a large percentage of respondents will choose to donate the money rather than keep it for themselves. So every survey posted on the website will not only generate valuable information for The Leadership Factor and our clients, but also raise considerable funds for charity.

In depth research was carried out during development of the YourSayPays website to ensure that the concept was viable and to make the experience for panel members as user friendly as possible. Our research suggested that after attracting an initial base of respondents, the website will be self-perpetuating as more and more users introduce their friends and family to this exciting new way to earn some easy cash or donate to charity. **S**

Visit YourSayPays at [www.yoursaypays.co.uk](http://www.yoursaypays.co.uk) and sign up to get your opinion heard and make some money in the process.

