

> Directions Research, Inc.

Market research company adopts outsourced model for designing, hosting, and monitoring surveys

Situation

Directions Research, Inc. (Directions) is a full-service, custom market research firm. The company has in-depth expertise in a wide range of industries, including financial services, consumer packaged goods, healthcare, insurance, hospitality, retail, telecommunications, and technology.

Critical Issue

In 1999, Directions recognized that the market research industry was embracing Web-based interviewing as an integral method to conduct surveys. In response to this trend, the organization searched for a cost-effective, outsourced solution that would allow it to conduct customized online market research.

Solution

Directions outsourced its online research function to SPSS Inc.'s online survey research services group. Now, once Directions has designed a survey, it forwards it to SPSS Inc., which programs and deploys it, and then returns the survey results to Directions for analysis. This allows Directions' staff to focus on interpreting the results and providing superior consultation services to their clients.

Results

- Reduced the time needed to conduct surveys by 50 percent
- Secured new business projects due, in part, to SPSS Inc.

□ "We won a client last year that is going to be a top five or six client this year, and half of their business will be online. We wouldn't have won it without SPSS Inc."

— Steve Wilde
Vice President of Operations
Directions Research, Inc.

* PASW Data Collection, formerly called Dimensions™, is part of SPSS Inc.'s Predictive Analytics Software portfolio.

At a glance

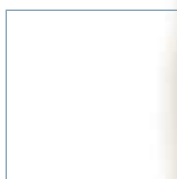
Country: United States
Industry: Market research
Date Founded: 1988
Company Type: Private
Revenues: \$18 million
Employees: 82

Application

Survey research

Solutions used

PASW® Data Collection*
SPSS Online Services



■ Survey research

Cincinnati, Ohio-based Directions Research, Inc. is a full-service, custom marketing research firm. The company regularly conducts a wide variety of studies, ranging from market segmentation to customer satisfaction. Directions is staffed with seasoned professionals who have in-depth industry expertise in financial services, consumer packaged goods, healthcare, insurance, hospitality, retail, telecommunications, and technology. Since 1996, Directions has made the Honomichl Top 50 report, widely regarded in the industry as the list of the nation's top market research firms.

In 1999, Directions recognized that the market research industry was embracing Web-based interviewing as an integral method to conduct surveys. In response, it partnered with SPSS Online Service to conduct its surveys. Directions now develops the questions and designs the survey, and SPSS Inc. then programs and deploys it. Once completed, SPSS Inc. returns the survey results, including data files and verbatim files, to Directions for analysis. Since SPSS Inc. makes the survey results available on the Web, Directions can immediately access them online.

"We rely on partners such as SPSS Inc. to program and deploy our surveys because we don't have the infrastructure," said Lisa Spaulding, vice president for Directions Research. "This helps us to focus on the design, execution, and interpretation of results with a competence that we believe is unmatched in our industry."

Reduced the time needed to conduct surveys by 50 percent

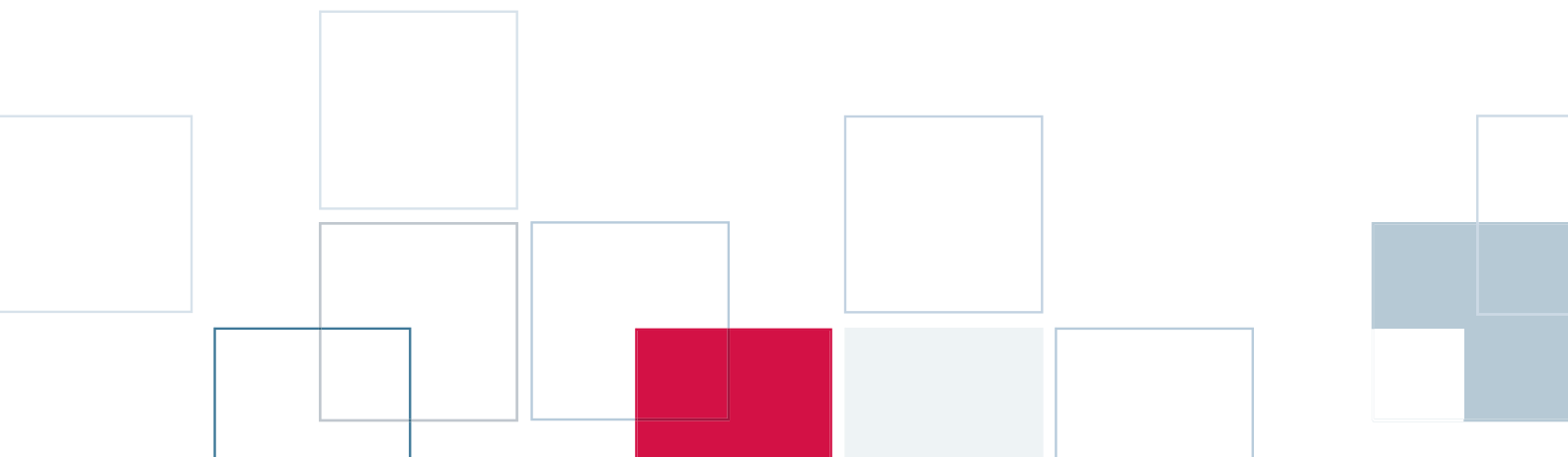
Internet-based research has substantially reduced the time it takes to gather data. Working with SPSS Inc., Directions has reduced turnaround time from two weeks to one week. Julie Thrash, senior research manager for Directions, credits the teamwork between Directions and SPSS for the increased level of efficiency.

"There is a tremendous synergy between Directions Research and SPSS Inc.," said Thrash. "After drafting our client's questionnaires, SPSS Inc. makes them Web-friendly for respondents, conducts the survey, and obtains the results. The combined strengths of both companies allow us to turn around projects very quickly."

In addition, the move to online surveys has opened new avenues of market research that were previously unavailable via phone interviews. For instance, financial services respondents do not typically divulge information related to debt loads and credit cards to a live person. Yet they tend to reveal this same information when providing answers online.

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Vice President
Directions Research, Inc.



Secured new business projects due, in part, to SPSS Inc.

A large customer, whose new research director had previously worked with Directions, contacted Directions with an urgent need to field a research project within 24 hours. In order to meet the customer's needs, Directions realized it required the expertise of SPSS Inc.

"SPSS Inc.'s willingness to work nights and weekends in order to get the job done fits well with Directions' and our clients' business cultures," said Steve Wilde, vice president of operations at Directions Research. "The SPSS Inc. team has worked well to adapt to our schedules. In fact, I view the SPSS Inc. staff as an extension of my internal team working on our customers' projects."

The project was programmed and went live within 24 hours. In the course of just six months following the completion of that project, 21 other research projects were completed for the same client, many of them with similar degrees of urgency.

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"We have asked for the seemingly impossible and SPSS Inc. has accomplished it for us with flying colors. In turn, we have rewarded them with more business. We have a strong partnership and our relationship is continuously expanding," said Spaulding.

For more customer stories, visit www.spss.com/success.

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