

AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS - AUDIT PROGRAM FOR NEWSPAPER READERSHIP STUDIES, CONDUCTED BY TELEPHONE

Jayne Spittler, Starcom Worldwide
Richard Bennett & John Payne, Audit Bureau of Circulations
Stephen A. Douglas, The Douglas/Jones Group

Abstract

The Audit Bureau of Circulations has launched a Reader Profile service to fulfil a need for credible, standardized readership studies for both newspapers and magazines. Why audit? Advertisers are losing confidence in independent studies. They want to make certain that minimum standards are used for all studies and the same readership and demographic questions are asked.

In developing the Reader Profile service the first step was to prepare a minimum set of research standards for market universe studies of a single paper using RDD (Random Digit Dial telephone surveys). Minimum standards for newspaper readership studies have never been set in the United States; only guidelines have. This process presented a major learning experience for the Audit Bureau of Circulations staff, members and research companies involved. The ABC is a not-for-profit organization with a tripartite membership of agencies, publishers, and advertisers.

This paper is divided into three segments. The first describes what has been learned from the nine test audits conducted to date. This segment will be the focus of the presentation at the upcoming symposium. The second section discusses the political and research issues that are being addressed and resolved prior to the next set of audits being conducted in the Fall of 1999. The third section describes ABC's plans for the launch of the Reader Profile service with a significantly expanded number of audits during the fall of 1999 and beyond.

During the initial test audit phase ABC found that many firms claimed to follow the ARF guidelines, but they all had some unique interpretations. This was especially true on calculating response rate, minimum rates of over sampling and weighting. It is very difficult to set even minimum standards because there are no absolutes. But one thing is certain. The studies now will meet at least a minimum level of quality and will facilitate a fully disclosed methodology.

The law of unintended consequences is also at work. This discussion of the response rate has focused attention on the subject of RDD response rates. That subject is discussed in another paper titled "How Low Can RDD Response Rate Go" by Steve Douglas and David Napior.

Background

To understand why the Audit Bureau of Circulations was directed by its members to develop a program to audit newspaper readership studies conducted by telephone, here is an overview of the U.S. newspaper market and how it is currently measured.

In March 1998, ABC began exploring the development of a newspaper readership profile service. The concept was for ABC to validate the readership research conducted by individual newspapers. This concept was developed in response to the newspaper industry's need to raise the profile of readership information in the advertising buying and selling process. Currently, nearly 1,000 United States daily newspapers are members of ABC. Scarborough provides readership information on less than 400 of these newspapers as a result of the multiple-market continuous readership (syndicated) research that they conduct in some 55 large metropolitan areas. About 100 newspapers are clients of Scarborough, although these tend to be major metropolitan daily newspapers. The balance of ABC member newspapers, as well as many of those measured by Scarborough, provide advertisers with readership information generated by individually conducted newspaper readership studies. As a result, major newspaper advertisers are presented with readership studies from literally hundreds of papers. These studies present information that varies widely from market-to-market and generate two primary concerns from advertisers: They question both the credibility and the comparability of the data.

The concept of the ABC newspaper Reader Profile service was developed by the ABC Board of Directors to address these concerns and, in the process, benefit both ABC advertiser and newspaper members.

Between March and November 1998, guided by an ABC Director Task Force chaired by Jayne Spittler, ABC developed a report format, a research standards document, and an audit methodology, and conducted a test audit of the Shreveport Times. Between November 1998 and July 1999, ABC conducted nine additional readership audits in Raleigh, West Palm Beach, Palm Springs, Oklahoma City, Joliet, Ann Arbor, Knoxville, and Kokomo and with the Pioneer Press Weekly papers in suburban Chicago.

Section I: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE INTIAL SET OF AUDITS

- ◆ The ARF Guidelines were out of date
- ◆ Although everyone claimed to follow them, after conducting these audits we can say no one did it exactly the same way

Some of the major issues that required work included:

- ◆ The sample selection process
- ◆ The “first” question
- ◆ The question order and sequence
- ◆ The readership question
- ◆ The definition of markets
- ◆ The response rate
- ◆ The inclusion of source of copy to provide a means of segregating the readers.
- ◆ Weighting, data processing & projections

The sample Design And Selection Process

Percentage Coverage & Hit-Rate

When picking a sample, these two percentages can greatly influence the manageability and outcome of a phone study. As evidence one of the eight test market studies chose a 100% coverage and subsequent, near 50% hit-rate. During the first three weeks of this study, nearly one-half of all respondents screened-out due to geography and the interview house had less than half of the expected completes. The study was then stopped.

There is a need to provide a standard for percentage inclusion or exclusion of crossover exchanges. Obviously this one case is an extreme, but demonstrated that if every exchange that partially falls within the study geography is included, the results can be disastrous.

The suggestions have been to include an exchange if it is within a given percentage of the study geography (i.e. 50%) or set an overall threshold of exchange inclusion (i.e. 90% of the study area). The ABC concern from an auditing perspective is that low-demo exchanges are excluded purposely to inflate the overall results. (Survey Sampling and Genesys provide exchange reports to test for exchange inclusion/exclusion to match against third party demos).

Compiling telephone numbers

Compiling numbers is another source of discussion. Should 3 numbers per hundred block be used or should 10 per hundred block. The current minimum standard is 10. No filtering by income is not allowed to make certain dispersion is maintained. The rate in the growth in phone numbers and phone lines in the United States, as well as the increase in the number of cell phones, is going to make it increasingly difficult to determine if the geographic area is being properly covered. This problem will only get worse as time goes on. ABC will be working on this problem over the next year. Any suggestions from the symposium attendees are welcome.

Respondent screeners:

With the exception of the Belden study for Raleigh, all research providers used the most recent birthday screener to select the respondent. Belden used the Troldhal Carter method of respondent selection. Every completed study resulted in an over-representation of females requiring weighting of the sample.

There have been several suggestions to aid in the over-representation of females:

- 1 When using the Troldhal Carter method - if a selected respondent refuses, is it possible to substitute, by some form of sampling, the same age/sex individual as the initial respondent?
- 2 Would it be acceptable to use the procedure of always selecting the youngest male?

3 How can quota groups for males and females be incorporated into the screener without biasing the random selection?

At odds with many of the suggestions brought forward is the statement in the Standards (p. 2) –“... the respondent must be selected at random in such a way that *each* adult household member has an equal opportunity of being chosen.”

The First Question

Initially, the ABC Research Standards, consistent with the ARF Guidelines, prohibited any questions, (other than warm-up questions) from being asked prior to those involving newspaper readership. This was retained for the initial set of standards, because it was felt that any question might negatively impact the readership question.

A number of participants suggest that the standards be revised to permit questions regarding, for example, “reliance on media” prior to newspaper readership or radio listening questions. Others disagree. The current recommendation is to permit questions prior to the newspaper readership questions providing that the process of answering these questions does not impact to the newspaper readership questions. This effectively allows the questions to be asked.

Tests with and with out a radio question may be conducted during the Fall 1999 series of 25 markets. ABC is also hoping to include a test, which includes the “reliance on media.”

The Question Order and Sequence

Currently the standards have a very strict order for the yesterday readership question. That will not change. There is some flexibility to add reader quality questions after the completion of the regular readership block of questions for Monday through Friday, Sunday, etc.

The readership question

The read yesterday question will continue to be used. There has been some discussion of changing it to some other form. That issue will not be re-addressed in the next year or so.

The definition of markets

Currently the geographic definition of market must correspond to one of the geographic definitions used in the newspapers circulation audit report. That can be a DMA (Designated Marketing Area), RTA (Retail Trading Area) or NDM (Newspaper Designated Market). The NDM is the most difficult because it can include county and/or zip codes. The continuous market studies use DMAs. The single market studies audited by ABC can use RTA or NDM.

Response Rate Minimum 40% (using the tough APPOR definition)

The ABC research standards call for a 40 percent response rate. Unfortunately, only one of the eight market universe studies will achieve that standard, despite the best efforts of each participant. Some have argued that ABC should continue to maintain the 40 percent standard to maintain reliability. Others contend that the focus should be on the process and its execution rather than on a specific response rate target.

ABC will maintain the 40 percent target, but permit the release of research study results when the participating newspapers research contractor has executed the process correctly and met or exceeded other standards regarding, for example, the minimum number of callbacks. To further address this issue, ABC is working with our consultants The Douglas/Jones Group (Steve Douglas and Val Appel) and several media research groups. ABC consultants will be attending the CASRO/APPOR conference on non-response held in October 1999.

Douglas and Appel are charged with preparing a detailed research plan. Potential elements are discussed in the paper: How Low can response rates go?

The Inclusion of Source of Copy to Provide a Means of Segregating the Readers

The source of copy question is included in the standards by the request of the ABC Buyers Committee. Many retailers particularly wanted to prove that the demographic profile of the newsstand purchaser was of value to their regional and divisional store managers. Retailers of all sizes heavily use newspaper inserts across the United States. Some retailers were not willing to pay for the newsstand circulation because of its perceived transient nature.

Some publishers and their research companies were reluctant to have this question included, because it may have a negative effect

- ◆ Proved the demographics were not valuable
- ◆ Establish that they did not produce many readers

This might seem totally illogical to European or Asian delegates, but that is the way it is.

Weighting: Data Processing & Projections

It is a fair assessment to state that ABC has seen numerous strategies and methodologies when it pertains to weighting. From data cleaning to ascertainment to sample balancing and weighting, the “mix” of variables used to modify the data has differed with each research provider. This was an area that needed some degree of standardization.

It is quite apparent that additional issues need to be addressed in the Standards for guidance in this process. Some of the larger issues looming:

- ◆ **Weighting by Education:** One research provider vehemently refused and others questioned the inclusion of education as a mandatory weight. Others very senior statisticians in the US argue that weighting by education is necessary because education all RDD sampling favors achieving a better educated respondent. The argument against centers on how this data is collected in the Census and Claritas admitting the market information provided on Education is at best, weak. The education question is not on the short census form, only in the long form. It has also been noted that Claritas provides Education data for adults 25 years of age and older in comparison to the 18+ market our report captures.
- ◆ **Pre-Weighting by Number of Adults in the Household:** It was nearly an even split for research providers who did and did not apply this pre-weight. It even differed for those who applied this weight whether 3,4 or 5 was the maximum pre-weight applied to a household (# of adults). It can be argued that our current reported demographics are a mix of household and individual data based on random selection of individuals within the household. Also, how do we account or correct for the selection of one individual per household? There has also been the suggestion to report home-delivery readership simply based on head-of-household demographics and limit demographics of single copy buyers to age, sex, race/ethnicity and perhaps type of dwelling unit. Regardless, wording or a set standard should exist to account for this pre-weight.
- ◆ **Pre-weighting by Number of Phone Lines:** Only one research provider used this pre-weight during the test phase. It was argued by said researcher that this pre-weight corrects for the increased probability of reaching a household (usually a more affluent household) and including it in the sample. Obviously, a question would need to be asked during the study to collect this data. The pre-weight was applied by using the inverse of the number of phone lines in the pre-weight scheme. For example, if three phone lines were present in a household, a pre-weight of one-third is applied to that household. The argument against this procedure is perceived to be the time required to ask the additional question and the negligible change to the data set when applied.
- ◆ **Pre-weighting by Day-of-the-week:** Should there be a set and standard tolerance for the percentage weight each day will carry? We have had researchers adjust each day to exactly 20% and others allow a tolerance of 3% above and below the 20% level. Additionally, there were two research providers who set hard quotas for each day (distributed evenly) such that this pre-weight was not required.

Another consideration, if the day-of-the-week weight is applied near the beginning of the weighting scheme, does it have to be adjusted at the end if its targets have shifted due to other weights?

- ◆ **Ascertainment:** Five of the eight studies ascribed only income, the others ascribed all missing demographic responses. One research provider used a regression equation; however, it applied only to income. The various weighting models use a wide range of variables and priorities for ascertainment. The question is – do you need to ascribe all missing demographic responses and should there be a standard for what variables (and in what priority) are used? There appears to be a growing consensus for ascertainment to be used only if the demographic has a non-response of more than a set percentage threshold (i.e. 5%). The most common six variables for ascertainment were County, age, gender, income, Hispanic and race.
- ◆ **Coding of the Data:** There is some judgement involved by the researchers when compiling verbatim responses and collapsing these coded responses into the breaks for the ABC report (i.e. occupation categories). There have been suggestions to either provide a revised occupation question or specify in the Standards how verbatim responses are to be coded (and from what sources).

ABC also needed to develop recommendations on two additional issues that have surfaced during the expanded test-market audit:

- ◆ The first involves how, if at all, ABC should deal with markets exhibiting significant seasonal population changes.
- ◆ The second involves the development of publicity parameters to address the desires of some participants to report, for example, data on competitive newspapers and/or competitive media in the optional section of the report.

The Audit Process

To adequately address each individually conducted newspaper readership research study; ABC must develop and execute an auditing process designed to answer three basic questions:

- ◆ **Was the sample created appropriately?** Does it represent the market defined by the newspaper and does each household within the market have an equal chance of being selected?
- ◆ **Was the study executed appropriately?** Were the responses or non-responses classified correctly? Were the respondent answers recorded correctly? Were these answers maintained throughout the study?
- ◆ **Were the summations computed appropriately?** Were the data weighted correctly, were the tabulations executed correctly and was the response rate calculated correctly?

All of the research companies fully cooperated and revealed all procedures. This forthright approach was a testament to the professionalism of the firms involved.

Section II: THE READER PROFILE SERVICE: CURRENT STATUS

Since November 1998 ABC has built upon the foundation created in the initial (alpha) test phase of the Reader Profile Service. This process has taken us along two separate tracks. One deals with the development of a service that will verify information generated by individually conducted newspaper readership research studies. The other addresses the desire to integrate data from suppliers of multiple-market continuous readership research (such as Scarborough) into ABC Reader Profile service reports. Although ABC has moved along two distinct paths in pursuing these very different objectives, our goal is to develop a common set of standards applicable to both.

Individually Conducted Newspaper Readership Research Studies

Report Format

Our starting point for developing the Reader Profile Service was the creation of a report format. This specified the necessary data elements and how they should be reported.

Based upon the input ABC has received since November, as well as our experience with the expanded test-market audits, ABC recommend three changes to the original "Shreveport" report format:

- ◆ The first involves showing the total circulation of the newspaper on the first page of the report and adding some additional specifications to the map on the second page. Because a participating newspaper may define the market for its readership research study in a way that best meets its needs, users have asked that the newspaper be required to report not only its circulation within this market, but for the newspaper as a whole. In addition, the map will show not only the readership market, but the newspaper's "Newspaper Designated Market (NDM)" as well.
- ◆ The second recommendation affects the readership summary on the first page of the report. Because the summary reflects statistical projections, our test market participants recommended that error tolerance ranges be added.
- ◆ Finally, many buyers asked that indices be added within the reader profile section to provide a quick comparison between a newspaper's profile and that of the market for specific data elements.

The recommendations are reflected on the revised format contained in Appendix B.

Prior to September 1, ABC must also develop recommendations on three other issues that have arisen during the expanded test:

- ◆ The first involves the source of the market profile data. Claritas projections are based upon the 1990 Census. However, some newspaper participants contend that their research findings, encompassing newspaper readers and non-readers of the newspaper, allow for development of a more accurate market profile.

- ◆ The second issue addresses whether newspapers who (1) cannot segment elements of their total readership (i.e. single-copy purchasers or pass-along readers) due to inadequate sample sizes or (2) opt not to report such breakouts will be required to communicate this within their reports.
- ◆ A number of participants have suggested that the report format could be clarified if some demographic categories, particularly income, were collapsed and fewer data elements were reported.
- ◆ There may well be other format issues that arise as the test market audits are completed and the audit reports released. ABC will identify these and work with Director Spahn to develop recommendations for the approval of the ABC Director Task Force overseeing this project by September 1.

Research Standards

Jayne Spittler (one of ABC's Board Directors) helped guide the development of the ABC Research Standards document that has governed the execution of the expanded test-market audits. ABC also developed a set of standards for newspaper and magazine direct mail (postal) subscriber studies. These will not be discussed in this paper.

The research standards for Market Universe Studies have been slightly modified as a result of both industry input and our experience with the expanded test-market audits. Many of these changes involved technical research issues; others involved modifications to the wording of specific questions to make them more consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau or to make the interviewing process proceed more smoothly.

Building upon the foundation established during the Shreveport audit, ABC used the expanded (beta) test to further develop and refine the ABC audit process. As a result, a 61-step procedure was developed and employed in each of the test audits. (See Appendix B)

The ABC research audit is a "real-time" audit requiring ABC auditor involvement before, during and after the research process. It involves an evaluation of the research design, interviewer training and of the controls in place; approval of the questionnaire, confirmation and validation of interviews, and analysis of daily interviewer activity; and monitoring and evaluation of the past-interview activity and data tabulation. The verification process is executed by ABC auditors in conjunction with our technical consultant. Should Reader Profile gain acceptance, ABC would add internal research expertise.

The "Reader Profile Process Flow and Audit Steps" document contained in Appendix C. ABC is now in the process of developing a Reader Profile Audit Manual, which will be completed by September 1.

Data Dissemination

The audited data that comprises the ABC Reader Profile Service is disseminated via hard-copy reports. These are currently in a four-color "presentation copy" format. ABC is exploring both black-and-white and two color alternatives for those newspapers that do not wish to incur the cost of four-color reproduction. By September 1, ABC will prepare an approach to the hard copy distribution of Reader Profile Reports that feature a variety of report alterations at a variety of price points.

Currently, ABC is working with Claritas to display their market profile data along with the ABC audited reader profile and readership data on the ABC Web site. This would allow for the viewing and printing of the Reader Profile Reports. Responsibility for development of the ABC Web site has recently been assumed by ABC's Publisher Marketing group.

Multiple-Market Continuous Readership Research Studies

There are two primary suppliers of multiple-market continuous research studies: the Media Audit, which has received accreditation from the Media Ratings Council (MRC) and Scarborough, which is seeking MRC accreditation but has not yet received it.

ABC recently met with The Media Audit. They expressed no concern about the ABC Reader Profile Service, nor any interest in working with us.

Initially, Scarborough expressed serious reservations about ABC's initiatives in the readership research arena. ABC would benefit significantly from developing an approach to integrating Scarborough-generated data into ABC Reader Profile reports.

Many large metropolitan ABC newspaper members have asked Scarborough be allowed to participate in the ABC Reader Profile service. Scarborough has approximately 100 clients in the top 64 U.S. markets. Thus, ABC would have the potential to "jump start" Reader Profile by quickly providing reports for many ABC large-market newspaper members.

Because of these potential benefits, ABC has worked hard to address Scarborough's concerns and build a positive relationship with that organization. As a result, Scarborough has publicly endorsed our efforts and ABC is working, in a collaborative fashion, toward an approach, which will allow Scarborough clients to participate in the ABC Service.

Current initiatives/outstanding issues.

ABC has had a number of meetings and have identified and resolved many differences between Scarborough practices and the ABC Research Standards document. However, three substantive issues remain:

- ◆ Scarborough asks radio "listenership" questions prior to questions pertaining to newspaper readership. This practice violates both the ABC Research Standards and the ARF Guidelines upon which they are based.
- ◆ At the behest of several of their newspaper clients, Scarborough objects to asking and reporting the answers to the "source of copy" questions. These are designed to determine reader profile and readership data on subscribers, single-copy purchasers and pass-along readers. To date, advertisers have argued that the information generated by these questions is important to them and needed by them.
- ◆ Finally, should Scarborough receive MRC accreditation, ABC needs to determine what actions, if any, ABC must take to incorporate Scarborough data in ABC Reader Profile Reports with confidence. Should Scarborough fail to receive MRC accreditation, ABC will need to develop an audit plan designed to verify Scarborough information.

SECTION III: WHERE ABC WANTS THE READER PROFILE SERVICE TO GO FROM HERE

ABC's goal is to develop an ABC Newspaper Reader Profile Service that provides:

- ◆ Newspaper advertising buyers with credible readership and reader profile information;
- ◆ All ABC newspaper members with a means to increase the importance of readership information in the advertising buying and selling process.

ABC advertiser buyer members will learn to depend upon ABC audits of readership research studies as readily as they now rely upon ABC circulation audits; and ABC newspaper members will eventually find ABC readership research study audits just as essential as ABC circulation audits. Thus, ABC will continue to be regarded as an important resource as circulation data and readership information converge.

In the process of creating the Reader Profile Service, advertisers and publishers will use ABC as a forum to develop industry-accepted standards for the execution of newspaper research and subscriber profile studies; and become active participants in the process.

ABC will provide audited readership and reader profile information to members via ABC's Web site so that it is available whenever members need to access this data.

ABC will meet with Scarborough in an effort to resolve these issues by early Fall 1999. The ABC Director Task Force, responsible for overseeing the development of the Reader Profile Service, will be involved in this process. Our goal is to integrate the data so that a common standards document, report format, audit procedure and online strategy can evolve.

Reader Profile Service Launch

At its July meeting, the ABC Board of Directors approved the launch the ABC Reader Profile Service at the NAA Marketing Conference on July 20. Newspapers generally conduct readership research during two periods: from Labor Day until about December 15, and following New Year's Day until about June 15. ABC's goal is to perform 25 audits during the fall of 1999 and 55 audits during the first half of 2000. ABC has designed the staggered launch plan because the organizations ability to perform additional audits during 1999 is constrained by their need to acquire and train auditors so that ABC have confidence in the quality of our audits. In addition, ABC has found the initial audits of individual suppliers are quite time-consuming the first time. Based on their conversations with both newspapers and advertisers, ABC is confident they can achieve these objectives.

ABC forecasts the Reader Profile Service to well grow to 150 audits during FY2001 and 200 during FY2002. Given that ABC currently has over 1,000 U.S. daily newspaper members, these objectives may not, at first glance, appear to be ambitious. Further analysis, however, indicates otherwise. As the following table indicates, the majority of ABC daily newspaper members have circulations under 25,000. These are, at best, marginal candidates for the Reader Profile Service. At the same time, about 100 of the largest newspapers are clients of Scarborough. ABC is collaborating with Scarborough to develop an alternative approach to work with many of them.

Market Analysis: ABC Daily U.S. Newspaper Membership

<u>Circulation</u>	<u>Number of ABC Members</u>
Over 250,000	48
100,000 - 249,999	76
75,000 - 99,999	35
50,000 - 74,999	84
25,999 - 49,999	191
under 25,000	<u>252</u>
Total	1,016

If ABC recommendations concerning the “shelf-life” of the audited readership reports (three years for those with less than 50,000 circulation and two years for those with 50,000 or greater circulation) are adopted, the potential market for the service in any given year is dramatically reduced. Thus, ABC believes that its goal of 150 audits in FY2001 and 200 audits in FY2002 are aggressive but achievable.

Appendix A
Audit Bureau of Circulations
ABC Newspaper Reader Profile Service
Research Standards
For Market Universe Studies (RDD Telephone)

June 14, 1999

NOTE: THESE STANDARDS ARE BEING REVISED
IF YOU WISH A CURRENT SET CONTACT THE ABC WEB SITE

INTRODUCTION

The Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) has launched a Newspaper Reader Profile Service to fulfill the newspaper industry's growing need for credible, standardized readership data. This service is designed to permit comparisons of audience composition and size across studies in various markets, conducted by different survey research organizations.

To facilitate comparative analysis, each study must employ identical research procedures satisfying minimum standards of performance and will be subject to ABC verification.

As an initial step, the attached guidelines have been prepared. These guidelines specify acceptable telephone interview procedures for individual local papers seeking to qualify the composition and size of their audience.

In developing these research criteria, ABC wishes to acknowledge the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF), which has granted permission to incorporate portions of their Guidelines for Newspaper Audience Studies revised in 1990 and published in the ARF Guidelines Handbook. ABC will strive to maintain a close working relationship with ARF as guidelines are periodically reviewed and updated.

I. MARKET DEFINITION:

The market for the readership study must be defined as an aggregate of counties or ZIP codes. This will allow for the development of comparable market profile information.

ABC-audited circulation (from the newspaper's latest released ABC Audit Report) must be reported for the market as defined in the readership study, and must include the number of occupied households and the percent of household coverage within the defined market.

II. SAMPLE DESIGN, SELECTION AND SIZE:

The population studied must be all adults, age 18 and over, living in households within the survey area. Any population groups which will be omitted from the survey population must be specified (such as adults in non-telephone households or language screen-outs).

Probability sampling must be used from a frame, which adequately represents the survey population. Random digit dialing ("RDD") must be employed using a frame in which each working hundred block containing at least **ten** listed **telephone** numbers has an equal probability of selection. A working hundred block is defined as the hundred numbers made possible by the last two digits of the telephone number. **Once the final hundred blocks have been selected, as few as ten "Nth"-selected telephone numbers must be used to complete the survey.** Any number, once attempted, must be called six times or until resolved. Although working hundred blocks are not necessary to the selection of random digits, alternate procedures are usually less efficient. The respondents interviewed must all dwell within the ZIP codes and/or counties comprising the survey area. Non-qualified ZIP codes and/or counties must be excluded.

Within the survey area, each household and each adult within the household must have a known (non-zero) probability of being selected for the sample. Sample procedures must eliminate arbitrary judgment in selecting the adult within the household to be interviewed and each eligible adult member within a selected household must have an equal probability of being selected. Interviews are to be conducted only with pre-designated respondents; no substitutions are permitted.

Once contact has been made with an eligible household, the interviewer must obtain the household's ZIP code and county of residence to insure that it is within the boundaries of the survey area.

The interviewer must then identify one member of the household to be interviewed, permitting no substitutions. Within each household, that respondent must be selected at random in such a way that each adult household member has an equal opportunity of being chosen.

Such random selection must be accomplished in one of three ways:

1. Enumerate all adult household members and by some appropriate random method, select one for interview.
2. Interview the adult household member with the most recent birthday.

It must be recognized, however, that these two procedures will likely result in an over-representation of females requiring weighting of the sample. This difficulty could be overcome if in half the interviews, a male respondent were selected and in the other half, a female were selected.

A third alternative would be an adaptation of the Troidahl/Carter method of respondent selection. Basically, this involves asking in each of four successive interviews to speak with either 1) the oldest male in the household, 2) the oldest female, 3) the youngest male and 4) the youngest female. The bias — attributable to the fact that in between aged members where three or more adult persons of the same gender are present have no opportunity to be selected — is negligible.

The research sample must produce a minimum of 500 completed interviews with no more than one interview per household, and a minimum of 100 respondents in each reader category - subscribers, single copy recipients and pass along/other readers. While the newspaper is not obligated to report a separate tabulation for each of these categories, the number of respondents interviewed for each category must be recorded and will be clearly indicated on the ABC audit report. In the event that a completed study does *not* yield 100 respondents in one or more of these categories, the newspaper must choose either to:

- Omit reporting profile data for the category/categories in question, or
- Conduct additional, randomly selected interviews to attain the 100-respondent minimum.

Each additional interview must employ the screening, readership and demographic question sequence (Q. 7-20) listed in Section IV. The sample must then be weighted so that the number of additional interviews, when added to the original sample size, represents only the proportion indicated in the original sample.

For example, suppose that after 500 interviews are completed, a study yields only 57 single copy purchasers representing 11.4 percent of the total sample. In this case, the newspaper may continue interviewing, employing the appropriate RDD method, and only query respondents who identify themselves as single copy purchasers. Once 43 additional interviews are completed - bringing the total number of single copy purchasers interviewed to 100 - these additional interviews are added to the original 500. The 100 single copy respondent interviews must then be weighted so that single copy purchasers represent only 11.4 percent of the total sample (i.e., 543), as established by the original 500 interviews.

111. INTERVIEWING PROCEDURES, TRAINING AND CONTROLS:

Interviews must be conducted by a field service that provides supervision, interview training and monitoring. Interviews must be conducted from one or more central locations with in-house and remote monitoring capabilities. They may not be conducted by employees of the newspaper or any of its affiliates, unless the affiliate 1) is a research firm that is a member of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) or 2) signs an affidavit certifying compliance with CASRO research standards. The verification and monitoring process must determine whether the correct respondent was interviewed; the key questions were asked; and the answers were properly recorded.

In all markets studied, interviewing must be distributed as evenly as possible over a minimum period of four weeks to minimize the impact of weather or special news stories. Interviewing cannot take place when newspapers are conducting unusual promotions or other incentive and sampling programs that would tend to alter survey results. Ongoing radio, television and direct mail promotions; and routine, consistent sampling programs are permitted and will be noted in the report.

Every effort must be made to insure that interviews are assigned randomly by day of week. No interviewing is to be conducted on Monday. On Sunday, only callback attempts may be made, provided that Sunday interviewing is not in conflict with local mores. Between 15 and 25 percent of the interviews (ideally, 20 percent) must be conducted on each day, Tuesday through Friday, and on Saturday and Sunday combined. The sample should be weighted so that each day's interviewing constitutes 20 percent of the weighted total.

Should a single minority comprise more than ten percent of the total adult market population, the newspaper must inform ABC before initiating the research survey so that bilingual interviewing and/or specialized weighting procedures may be considered.

IV. TEXT OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS:

As specified in Section II, the interviewer must determine the household's ZIP code and county of residence to insure that it is within the boundaries of the survey area. Other than these and general warm-up questions designed to put the respondent at ease, additional questions may precede the newspaper readership questions only if 1) they do not impact newspaper readership results, and 2) wording and sequence of the readership questions remains unaltered.* The questionnaire itself must be as concise as possible to maximize the quality and likelihood of response.

To insure the highest degree of comparability and to facilitate the auditing process, interviewers must strictly adhere to the wording and question sequence indicated below. For masking purposes, the readership questions shown must be asked for at least one other newspaper title. The researcher must insert only one title at a time per question, and pose the question as many times as necessary until all titles have been covered. The list of newspapers must be fully rotated, although titles likely to be confused must be presented in close proximity. Depending upon their household penetration within each county, different newspapers may be prelisted for aided questioning. Moreover, under no circumstances is the interviewer permitted to subjectively classify a response to an open-ended question. The interviewer must record the exact reply within the scope of the prompts provided for such a question.

In the interest of comparability, the newspaper readership and demographic classifications must use the wording specified herein. All readership questions must be asked in the order indicated, **and must precede demographic questions. However, demographic question sequence may vary so long as wording remains precise and consistent.** Supplementary content questions may be added provided that 1) they are asked at the conclusion of the readership portion of the questionnaire, and 2) ABC does not consider them biasing to the readership or demographic portions of the interview. The publisher may opt to have this supplementary data included on the final Audit Report, or may choose to exclude the information altogether. In any case, the ABC report will *only* show data pertaining to the newspaper or market being studied; data for competitive newspapers or other media will be omitted. ABC will hold all information in the strictest confidence.

*** With the exception noted between questions 4 and 5a of the Readership Questionnaire, Section IV.**

READER PROFILE QUESTION SEQUENCE:

AFTER DETERMINING THE PROPER SURVEY RESPONDENT (PER PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN SECTION II), INSERT WARM-UP QUESTIONS HERE, OMITTING ANY REFERENCE TO NEWSPAPERS OR OTHER MEDIA MENTIONED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE. REFUSAL TO ANSWER THE FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER READERSHIP QUESTION (Q. 2a) CONSTITUTES AN INVALID INTERVIEW THAT SHOULD BE TERMINATED.

REINTRODUCE YOURSELF IF NECESSARY

2a. First, I'd like to ask some questions about your readership of daily newspapers; that is, newspapers published every Monday through Friday. During the past seven days, which of the following Monday through Friday newspapers, if any, have you read or looked into, either at home or away from home? Have you read or looked into any part of [READ FIRST NEWSPAPER FROM LIST BELOW] in the past seven days? [READ REMAINDER OF LIST AND RECORD RESPONSES BELOW]

[RECORD "YES," "NO" OR "NOT SURE" FOR EACH NEWSPAPER]

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Refused [TERMINATE INTERVIEW]

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER RECORDED "YES" OR "DON'T KNOW," ASK EITHER Q.3a OR 3b]

[ASK EVERYONE]

2b. Have you read or looked into any part of any other daily newspapers in the past seven days? [RECORD RESPONSE BY WRITING IN NAME AND CITY/TOWN BELOW]

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.2a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.2b, IF TODAY IS TUESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, ASK:]

3a. It's important for us to know exactly when you last read these newspapers. When was the last time before today that you read or looked into any part of a weekday copy of the daily (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER)?

- Yesterday [SKIP TO Q.4]
- Before yesterday [SKIP TO Q.4]
- Not sure [SKIP TO Q.5a]

Refused

[IF TODAY IS SUNDAY, ASK Q. 3b. IF NOT, ASK Q.4 FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.2a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.2b.]

- 3b. It's important for us to know exactly when you read these/this newspaper(s). Not counting today, when was the last time you read or looked into **any part of a** weekday, that is Monday through Friday, copy of (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER)?
- Friday (day before yesterday)
 - Saturday (yesterday)
 - Before Friday
 - Not sure

Refused

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.2a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.2b, ASK:]

4. How did you get the (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER) you read or looked into most recently?

Did you pay to have it delivered to your home?

Did you pay to have it delivered to your place of business?

Did you or someone else in your household buy it outside your home?

Did you read a copy, which had been bought by someone who was not a member of your household?

Or did you get it some other way? _____
Specify

[RESEARCHER MAY HERE INSERT OPTIONAL QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO M-F READERSHIP BEFORE PROCEEDING TO SATURDAY/SUNDAY QUESTIONS.]

[ASK EVERYONE]

- 5a. Now I'd like to ask you about Sunday newspapers. During the past four weeks, which of the following Sunday papers, if any, have you read or looked into, either at home or away from home? Have you looked into any part of the Sunday [READ FIRST NEWSPAPER FROM LIST BELOW] in the past four weeks? [READ REMAINDER OF LIST AND RECORD BELOW]

Yes
Not sure

No

Refused

- 5b. Have you read or looked into any part of any other Sunday newspapers in the past four weeks? [WRITE IN NAME AND CITY/TOWN BELOW]

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.5a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.5b, ASK:]

- 5c. Not including today, when was the last time you read or looked into any part of the Sunday (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER)?

One week ago today, or more recently
Before one week ago today
Not sure

Refused

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.5a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.5b, ASK:]

5d. How did you get the Sunday (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER) you read or looked into most recently?

Did you pay to have it delivered to your home?

Did you pay to have it delivered to your place of business?

Did you or someone else in your household buy it outside your home?

Did you read a copy, which had been bought by someone who was not a member of your household?

Or did you get it some other way? _____
Specify

[OPTIONAL: Q.6a - 6d TO BE ASKED IF NEWSPAPER WISHES TO REPORT A SATURDAY NEWSPAPER READER PROFILE. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q.7]

6a. Now I'd like to ask you about Saturday newspapers. During the past four weeks, have you read or looked into any part of the Saturday (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER), either at home or away from home?

Yes
Not sure

No

Refused

6b. Have you read or looked into any part of any other Saturday newspapers in the past four weeks? [WRITE IN NAME AND CITY/TOWN BELOW]

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.6a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.6b, ASK:]

6c. Not including today, when was the last time you read or looked into any part of the Saturday (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER)?

One week ago today, or more recently
Before one week ago today
Not sure

Refused

[FOR EACH NEWSPAPER ANSWERED "YES" OR "NOT SURE" IN Q.6a OR VOLUNTEERED IN Q.6b, ASK:]

6d. How did you get the Saturday (TITLE OF NEWSPAPER) that you read or looked into most recently?

Did you pay to have it delivered to your home?

Did you pay to have it delivered to your place of business?

Did you or someone else in your household buy it outside your home?

Did you read a copy, which had been bought by someone who was not a member of your household?

Or did you get it some other way? _____
Specify

7. For classification purposes only, would you please tell me your age? [RECORD AGE AS GIVEN. IF HESITANT, READ LIST]

- 18 to 20
- 21 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 39
- 40 to 44
- 45 to 49
- 50 to 54
- 55 to 59
- 60 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 and over

8. Currently, are you either employed or self-employed — that is, doing something for which you earn money?

- Yes
- No [SKIP TO Q.9c]

9a. Do you work full time, that is 35 hours or more per week, or do you work part time?

- Full time
- Part time

9b. What kind of work do you do; that is, what is your occupation?

[RECORD VERBATIM]

[TO BE ASKED IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "NO" IN Q.8]

9c. Please tell me which of the following categories best describes you. Are you ...

[READ LIST]

- A homemaker
- Retired
- Unemployed and looking for work
- A full-time student
- Disabled, or
- Something else _____

Specify

[ASK EVERYONE]

10. Which of the following categories describes your marital status? [READ LIST, RECORD RESPONSE]

- Now married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married

11. Including yourself, how many persons 18 years of age and older live in your household?

[RECORD RESPONSE]

12. How many children younger than three years old live in your household?

[RECORD RESPONSE]

13. How many children between the ages of three and 11 live in your household?

[RECORD RESPONSE]

14. How many children between the ages of 12 and 17 live in your household?

[RECORD RESPONSE]

15. What is the last grade or level of school that you completed? [INTERVIEWER: READ LIST. PROBE FOR LAST LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION AND CODE INTO APPROPRIATE CATEGORY] *
- Less than high school (grades 1 - 11)
 - Graduated high school (grade 12)
 - Some college/university (at least one year)
 - Graduated college/university (four or more years)
- * Individual publications may include additional education breaks beyond those indicated here.
16. Is the house or apartment in which you live owned by someone in your household, rented, or is it occupied without payment of rent?
- Owned
 - Rented
 - Neither
17. Do you live in ... [READ LIST]
- A mobile home
 - A one-family house detached from any other house
 - A one-family house attached to one or more other houses
 - A building with two or more apartments
 - A boat, RV, van, etc. _____
- Specify
18. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic origin or descent, that is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American or some other Spanish background?
- Yes
 - No
19. Are you... [READ LIST. ONLY ONE RESPONSE PERMITTED HERE]
- White
 - Black
 - Asian or Pacific Islander
 - American Indian, Eskimo or Alaska native
 - Or some other race _____
- Specify
- 20a. Is your household income before taxes \$35,000 or more, or is it less than \$35,000?
- \$35,000 or more [ASK Q.20b]
 - Less than \$35,000 [ASK Q.20c]
 - Don't know
 - Refused
- 20b. Stop me when I come to the right category. Is your income between [READ LIST]:
- \$35,000 -- \$49,999
 - \$50,000 -- \$74,999
 - \$75,000 -- \$99,999
 - \$100,000 -- \$149,999
 - \$150,000 or more
 - Don't know
 - Refused
- 20c. Stop me when I come to the right category. Is your income between (READ LIST):
- \$30,000 -- \$34,999
 - \$25,000 -- \$29,999
 - \$20,000 -- \$24,999
 - \$15,000 -- \$19,999
 - Less than \$15,000
 - Don't know
 - Refused

V. DATA PROCESSING AND PROJECTIONS:

Quality controls must be used in editing and tabulating the data. Sample weighting and projections must be consistent with the sample design, and the maximum strata weight must not exceed four times the average.

The method of sample weighting and the distribution of sample weights used must be reported. Data must be balanced on up-to-date known demographics: gender, age, education and ethnicity in those cases where one minority comprises at least ten percent of the total adult market population. *Should a single minority comprise more than ten percent of the total adult market population, the newspaper must inform ABC before initiating the research survey so that bilingual interviewing and/or specialized weighting procedures may be considered.* The source used as the basis for the population projections must be stated and approved by ABC.

Failure of a respondent to provide an answer to one or more of the demographic questions must be compensated for either by a process of *ascription*, whereby the response of an otherwise demographically similar cohort is assigned at random to the respondent who failed to answer the question; or by using a regression equation.

Refusals to the seven day screening question for daily newspapers (Q.2a), or to five or more of the twelve demographic questions in the standard questionnaire (i.e., Q. 7, 8, 10, 11-19), constitute incomplete interviews and are to be terminated. Refusals to the other daily, Sunday and Saturday newspaper readership questions are to be considered non-readers.

VI. RESPONSE RATES:

Response rate is defined as the percentage of pre-designated eligible respondents who provide completed interviews as defined in Section V. For those respondents who were not able to be contacted, the percentage must be estimated based upon the percent of eligible respondents who were contacted. The achieved rate must be clearly stated. Where the sample employs disproportionate stratification, separate response rates must be provided by stratum, and a weighted average must be provided for the total sample.

At least six attempts must be made to contact all pre-designated respondents. For telephone interviews, each time a number is dialed, the phone must ring at least six times before the attempt is classified as a "no answer." Every effort must be made to surmount language, cultural, behavioral, and other barriers to successfully completed interviews (such as the use of bilingual interviewers, a special team to deal with difficult respondents, etc.). To the extent feasible, call backs to reach numbers that do not answer (including answering machines) must be made at different times of day and on different days of the week. In this regard, the research firm must keep individual records of success and explanations of failure.

At least one call attempt must be made on Sunday, when respondents who are unavailable during the week might be present. For daily newspapers, these Sunday callbacks would use Friday as a "yesterday" surrogate. (See Question 3b in Section IV.)

An eligible respondent is defined as an adult living in a residence within the survey area. When an interview attempt is frustrated by a telephone answering machine, sometimes it is obvious that the number reached is a residence and sometimes it is not. When it is obvious from the content of the machine's outgoing message that the number is a residence, and repeated attempts fail to reach a live person, the respondent who should have been interviewed must be treated as an eligible respondent who has refused. (See the American Association for Public Opinion Research publication entitled Standard Definitions ...page 26, published in 1998.)

Other telephone answering machine contacts must be classified either as "ineligible" or "eligibility unknown" depending upon the content of the outgoing message.

Although the response rate should be as high as possible, a minimum 40 percent is required. Should a given study fail to achieve this required rate, it may be approved if ABC determines that 1) all reasonable actions were taken to achieve the 40 percent minimum and 2) the results of the study reflect the realities of the corresponding market. Any newspaper denied approval may appeal this decision to an ABC committee composed of research professionals.

The example from the following table will illustrate the calculation process:

Of 1150 telephone numbers originally assigned, 1042 (i.e., 675 + 367) were contacted; 675 of these 1042, or 65%, were established as eligible. The response rate is therefore equal to the 500 respondents who were successfully interviewed, divided by the sum of the 500, plus the 175 eligible respondents who were not interviewed, plus 65% of the 108 respondents (70) whose eligibility was not established because they were never contacted.

$$\text{Response Rate} = 500 \div (500 + 175 + 70) = 67\%$$

Sample Recovery Information:

Telephone numbers assigned		<u>1150</u>
Contacted and established as eligible*		<u>675</u>
Respondent interviewed		500
Respondent not interviewed		175
Respondent never home	35	
Respondent refused/language barrier	58	
Household member refused (either before or after screening)	55	
Miscellaneous (respondent illness, blindness (infirmity, etc.))	27	
Contacted and established as ineligible		<u>367</u>
Non-household number	115	
Non-working number	201	
No eligible individual	51	
Eligibility not established		<u>108</u>
No answer (includes some telephone answering machines*)	30	
Busy line	53	
No adult after six calls	9	
Unreported (not attempted)	16	

Response Rate Calculation:

Numerator =	500	Respondents interviewed
	500	Respondents interviewed
Denominator =	175	Respondents not interviewed
	+ 70	65% of 108 eligibility not established
	<u>745</u>	

Response Rate = $500 \div 745 = 67\%$

• Per definitions and parameters outlined in Section VI.

VII. TECHNICAL APPENDIX

The technical appendix must fully explain the study procedures, including detailed descriptions of the following:

- Survey area
- Sample design, selection and size
- Interviewing procedures, training and controls
- Complete texts of questionnaire and interviewer instructions
- Exact periods during which interviewing was conducted
- Coding and editing procedures
- Data processing including ascription procedures
- Data tabulation
- Methods used to develop reach and frequency estimates, if applicable
- Sample balancing techniques
- Response rates within each reported area
- Respondent counts by demography
- Interview verification
- Sampling tolerances
- Final computer tape and raw data tape (if CATI is employed)

VIII. FILES TO BE RETAINED

The following records must be retained for at least two years:

- Basic sampling materials
- Interviewer assignments and call records
- All study questionnaires (complete or incomplete)
- Verification records
- Statistical computations
- Tabulation forms and/or computer printouts
- Raw data tapes (if CATI was employed)

- Computer tapes
- Raw data tables

These materials must be available for inspection by ABC auditors at their request. An ABC representative may also visit the research facility to review the materials before or after completion of the fieldwork.

IX. DATA LONGEVITY

To provide the most reliable, up-to-date information possible, audited readership data for newspapers with circulation exceeding 50,000 will be maintained in ABC's active database for two years; while data for newspapers with circulation of less than 50,000 will be maintained in ABC's active database for three years. Should a newspaper's circulation deviate by more than 10 percent since its most recent readership audit, however, new readership research would be required within 12 months.

ABC will automatically update its database with the most recent audited figures; a newspaper does not have the option of requesting that older data supersede newer data.

Appendix B
Audit Bureau of Circulations
The Audit Procedures

Reader Profile: Audit Methodology

Scope:

Audit of a market research process including demographic and opinion gathering data for a selected newspaper market. Process reviewed will include newspaper and research process preparation, sample selection, data gathering and input, on-line processes, data storage and integrity. Review will also include observation of operating environment and a high level analysis of information system controls used by the Research supplier. Additionally, an analysis of the tabulation process, including any weighting of data, will be performed.

Preparation:

Control Objective #1:

Prospective Newspaper and Research Supplier understand and comply with ABC Newspaper Reader Profile

Ensure Standards are discussed and reviewed with contributing personnel. Questionnaire to be used in study is supplied and analyzed for potential deviations from Standards. Questionnaire is approved or modifications are made for compliance.

- a) Supply a copy of up-to-date standards to Newspaper & Research Supplier.
- b) Discussion with regards to any concerns pertaining to the standards and general overview of research process as well as key personnel and functions. Begin development of customized audit plan.
- c) Receipt and analysis of questionnaire for eleven mandatory questions and any optional questions desired by the newspaper.
- d) Ensure "warm-up" questions comply with Standards.
- e) Test logical flow of questions to ensure there are no "throw-off" questions or questionable sequences.
- f) Final Questionnaire reviewed by outside research consultants for approval.

Control Objective #2:

Geographic market for readership research matches ABC circulation - defined in terms of counties and/or ZIP codes.

Ensure definition is either by aggregate of counties and/or ZIP codes.

- a) Receive master ZIP/ County list from Newspaper.
- b) Compare geographic parameters and ABC defined market, from Newspaper audit, to ensure a match.
- c) Map preparation of study locale.

Control Objective #3:

Promotional activity by newspaper does not artificially inflate or distort demographics of circulation in period prior to or during readership study.

Ensure circulation promotions and distribution are reasonable and consistent with past periods.

- a) Obtain affidavit from newspaper indicating there were no unusual promotions and/or sampling activity conducted in the period directly prior to or during the readership study.
- b) Review newspaper transcript and trend circulation data, including non-paid distribution, for designated period before, during and after study, as well as year over year comparison. Note and discuss findings.
- c) Should evidence surface that publisher misrepresented the facts on above affidavit, ABC accreditation will be removed from the study. That action will then be publicized.

Sample Design and Process Flow:**Control Objective #4:**

A training process is in place to ensure interviews are conducted properly by trained professionals who are capable of providing accurate and complete results.

On site analysis and overview of the training process; support documentation and policies requested.

- a) Verify that a formal training process has been established. Documentation will be required.
- b) Affidavit signed by a senior representative of the research supplier and newspaper, stating that no employees of the newspaper or non-CASRO affiliates are to be involved in the interview process.
- c) Observe interview training for survey in question.
- d) Review process for interviewer evaluation and availability of follow-up training (if applicable).
- e) Analyze and document level of supervisory / management skills used at survey house.

Control Objective #5:

Sample of telephone numbers selected was created fairly and represents population in question.

Review of sample creation methodology and process. Verification that the sample was randomly drawn and represents the demographics of the population to be studied.

- a) Obtain sample of telephone numbers used for study in question.
- b) Receive master ZIP / telephone number exchanges from third party supplier.
- c) Ensure ZIP codes supplied match agreed upon geographic market to be studied.
- d) Analyze ZIP demos and overall population provided by third party supplier of market research.
- e) Ensure quantity of telephone numbers by ZIP align with population household counts.
- f) Review sample provider methodology and test frame composition of numbers and demographics to population in question for randomness.
- g) Make certain that Random Digit Dialing (RDD) techniques are to be employed (Consultant, if necessary.)
- h) Comprise flow document of sampling process and assess any additional risks.
- i) Verify that no exchanges were left out of sample.
- j) Verify screen out questions are present in survey to avoid interviewees within ZIP yet outside Survey area.

Sample Execution**Control Objective #6**

A process is in place to verify the accurate posting of responses from eligible interviewees.

Monitor and test interview results to validate recording process.

- a) Monitor interviews to ensure questionnaire is properly executed and respondent's answers are correctly recorded. Both on-site and off-site monitoring are to be completed.
- b) Randomly select a sample of completed interviews for validation and callback by ABC.
Using an ABC validation questionnaire, validation callbacks are to be made within two working days of completed interview date. Tabulate a response error rate and expand sample, if necessary.
- c) Review and test error correction procedures.
- d) Track and record number of callbacks at various intervals.

Control Objective #7

All eligible telephone numbers are available for selection and those excluded from sample and response rate are correctly categorized. Telephone numbers in-use are in fact from original sample population.

Validate ineligible phone numbers through random selection to ensure proper categorization.

- a) Obtain file of numbers discarded, such as business or no dial tone, due to ineligible status.
- b) Randomly select a sample of numbers to verify status. Using an ABC telephone number verification log, ABC personnel will contact telephone numbers in question to validate status. Tabulate and analyze any errors. Expand sample, if necessary.
- c) Using analytic software, tie back a random selection of numbers in use and ineligible to initial telephone number sample provided. Record any deviations and discuss with research supplier, if necessary.

Control Objective #8

Completed interview results are random and representative of the population.

Analyze completed interviews from number of different vantage points to determine if there are any patterns that may support the conclusion that results are not representative of the population.

- a) Compare known demographics to study results, by ZIP code, to ensure reasonableness.
- b) Using analytical software, review results using such variables as interviewer, day, and callback attempt number to determine if any questionable patterns exist.
- c) Review distribution of non-responses to responses to ensure all geographic areas are proportionately represented. Further analytic review of refusals and no answers.

Control Objective #9

Data is secure during interview process and is not tampered with or modified incorrectly.

Information system control environment is reviewed to ensure successful storage and reporting of client questionnaire result data and analysis.

- a) Complete ABC IS General Controls Questionnaire and determine any potential weakness in data storage.
- b) Analyze data editing with respect to security, change management and authorization.
- c) Review file aggregation and retention process to ensure data integrity.
- d) Compare preliminary results to final tape to assess and analyze any reconciliation differences. Review daily aggregates to total.

Data Summary and Tabulation**Control Objective #10**

All unweighted figures are summarized correctly.

Obtain a raw data file of the completed study and develop cross tabs of selected responses for comparison to cross tab results provided by third party vendor.

- a) Obtain the tabulation framework to be used for study in question.
- b) Verify the tabulation specifications match ABC audit report requirements.
- c) Ensure identical files are distributed to ABC and third party tabulator (if different from survey house).
- d) Compare known demographics to study results, by ZIP code and circulation category, to ensure reasonableness of results.
- e) Test cross tabulation results to those of tabulator. Investigate any differences.

