



The RESEARCH CORNER

A Newsletter about Custom Public Opinion Research (POR)
in the Government of Canada

GIVING YOUTH A VOICE THROUGH ONLINE COMMUNITIES

*On October 3, Peter Dixon of HBS Marketing gave a presentation on
The Voice, an online community for youth, to the POR Community of Practice.*

An ongoing concern with focus groups is that the room's dynamics may influence the outcome and potentially skew the interpretation of the results. For example, a very vocal participant may unknowingly intimidate more modest individuals into refraining from expressing their true opinions. The potential for something like this happening is very real in a teenage environment. The format of *The Voice* is able to address this problem by providing a medium that youth are comfortable with: the Internet.

The Voice is a Web 2.0 social media tool designed specifically for organizations that serve youth, whilst meeting the unique communication needs of youth themselves. It utilizes social media technologies to involve selected youth audiences in iterative, longitudinal discussions and are different from traditional focus groups, which have been criticized for being a contrived environment. *The Voice* provides youth with an opportunity to engage in an organic environment that is respectful, rewarding, empowering, anonymous, free from peer influence, and safe. Participants are also paid for their time to provide them with a rewarding sense of agency and ensure participation. It attempts to foster genuine communication and to lead to deeper insights on both problems AND solutions to inform the outcomes of policy and communications.

For example, if one wanted to get the opinion of youth on smoking cigarettes, one would provide a forum where youth can engage with the topic. One might ask on this forum "What do you think of the size of the health warning on cigarette packages?" After monitoring posts from youth on the subject, one can take the conversation in another direction, perhaps asking "How can health warnings be more effective?" By asking youth how they feel about important social marketing campaigns through a medium with which they are comfortable, a department or agency can get fresh and actionable insights.

Online communities are on the way to becoming a proven research tool for younger audiences. The challenge in the future will be to successfully develop online communities with groups such as businesspeople, scientists and professionals, among others and ultimately, the general population.

Note: Peter Dixon was in Canada on a temporary assignment and has since returned to his homeland of New Zealand.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

THE PORD SPEAKERS' SERIES

March 25, 2009

TOPIC

Scale Measures in Questionnaire
Design and SPSS Software

SPEAKER

Dr. Mahmoud Eid
Department of Communications
University of Ottawa

LOCATION

Constitution Room
2nd floor
Constitution Square
350 Albert Street
Corner of Albert and Kent

DATE

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

TIME

9:00 to 10:30

Please confirm with
Stéphanie Charette at

stephanie.charette@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca

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THE ACET REVIEW

Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool

PORD, in collaboration with PCO, recently commissioned a study to review the Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) used to evaluate the impact of the Government of Canada's larger advertising initiatives. Given that the ACET had been in place since 2002, it was considered timely to reassess its effectiveness. In brief, the aim of the review was to help determine the extent to which the tool met the government's current evaluation needs, and whether any improvements should be made.

The study involved: 1) a review of literature, including numerous academic and industry publications and GC post-campaign evaluation reports; 2) a set of in-depth phone interviews with individuals from GC departments and agencies that used the ACET, academics that have expertise related to advertising, representatives of other governments responsible for advertising campaigns, advertising research suppliers, and representatives of private sector firms; 3) testing of both the proposed interviewer-assisted and self-administered versions of the ACET, developed through the first two phases of research; 4) a review of two pilot tests of the proposed revised tool.

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INNOVATION IN RESEARCH:

Reaching Aboriginal People

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in Canada in gauging the views of Aboriginal people on such topics as self-government, quality of community services, access to secondary and post-secondary education and training, as well as labour and employment issues. To contact those who may be living on-reserve and often difficult to reach by landline, innovative methods are sometimes necessary. Chris Adams of Probe Research Inc., a Winnipeg-based research firm, was invited in February 2008 to explain to the Community of Practice for Public Opinion Research the methods he uses to address this problem.

Prompted by a request to conduct opinion research with Aboriginal people living off-reserve in Manitoba, Probe Research decided to design a syndicated research service to capture the attitudes and perceptions of Aboriginal people across the entire province of Manitoba on a full spectrum of topics.

The syndicated study was also intended to provide information on key demographics, including Winnipeg vs. Non-Winnipeg, on/off reserve, and Métis. The two main challenges the firm faced were:

- to design a survey that was suited to the needs of community stakeholders, service providers, and policy makers; and
- carry out a telephone survey that would reach individuals in remote and semi-remote areas or persons who live in populated areas but are difficult to contact by telephone.

The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics indicated 56 percent of registered First Nations lived on-reserve in 2004, some of whom are more difficult to reach via



Note: This flyer was available in English only.

traditional landline surveys. To get around this problem, Probe Research utilized innovative 'Booster' methodologies. This meant that as well as conducting outbound random-digit-dialling (RDD), the firm used 'in-bound' strategies to encourage potential participants *to call them*.

Meetings were set up with leaders and members of Aboriginal communities, academics, Aboriginal business consultants, and Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in order to receive further guidance on the methodology and questionnaire design. Probe Research advertised in Manitoba's weekly Aboriginal newspaper, *Grassroots News* and the Aboriginal radio station, Native Communications Inc. (NCI), and sent invitations to Band Council Offices in Manitoba's First Nations communities. Originally, offering an incentive of \$10, Probe revised the incentive amount upward to \$15. One cheque of \$15 was issued per address that participated and a cap was placed on the number of interviews for each First Nation community to ensure that the breadth of the survey, based on a sample, 80 percent of which was completed through random

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THE ADVISORY PANEL ON ONLINE PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY QUALITY

On May 13, 2008, Anita Pollak and Rick Robson of Sage Research Corporation presented the results of Advisory Panel on Online Public Opinion Survey Quality to the Community of Practice for Public Opinion Research.

The work of the Advisory Panel on Online Public Opinion Survey Quality builds on the work of the 2006–2007 Advisory Panel on Telephone Public Opinion Survey Quality. The Online Advisory Panel focused on areas where standards and guidelines specific to online surveys are required.

The role of the Panel was to reach consensus where possible, although this was not an essential outcome of the work of the Panel. The report summarizes the recommendations of the Panel, expressed as standards or guidelines.

STANDARDS

Practices that should be requirements for all online studies conducted by the Government of Canada.

GUIDELINES

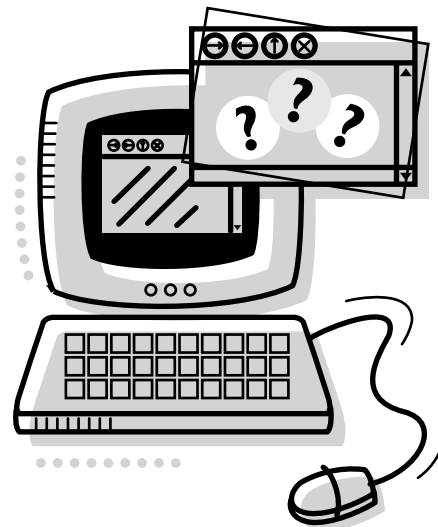
Practices that are recommended, but would not be requirements; that is, known good practices or criteria that serve as a checklist to ensure quality research, but are not necessarily applied to every study.

The standards and guidelines are organized under six main sections:

- Pre-field planning, Preparation and Documentation
- Sampling
- Data Collection
- Success Rate
- Data Management and Processing
- Data Analysis/Reporting and Survey Documentation

Some of the key recommendations of this report were:

- Research firms must clearly state the target group for the research study; in the case of online surveys, this includes explicit identification of whether or not Internet users are part of the target group definition.
- There can be no statements about margins of error or statistical significance tests in surveys where non-probability samples are used. Nevertheless, it is permissible to use descriptive statistics, including descriptive differences, appropriate to the types of variables and relations involved in the analysis.
- When a choice is made to use a non-probability sample, that choice must be justified, in both the research proposal and the research report. The justification should take into account the statistical limitations in reporting the data from a non-probability sample, and limitations in generating the results to the target group population.



PORD is very grateful for the feedback received from the Community of Practice on this project. So far we have received responses from 17 different institutions. All amendments will be posted in this newsletter.

The final report was made available through the Library and Archives Canada Website: www.porr-rrop.gc.ca in August 2008. To obtain copies of the presentation, please send e-mail to the following address: por-rop@pwgsc.gc.ca

The Public Opinion Research Directorate wishes to thank the Community of Practice for Public Opinion Research for their very useful comments on the draft standards for telephone and online survey research, to be included in the renewal of the contracting instruments in 2009.

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COURSES

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) is offering the three following courses in Ottawa at a special rate for members of the Government of Canada's Community of Practice for Public Opinion Research.

May 1, 2009

Course: 202. Qualitative Marketing Research
(English)

Duration: 1 day

Registration fees (before GST):

Early Bird rate \$449

Regular rate \$599

For the regular 1 day courses:
discount of \$50 on the early bird
member rate.

May 8, 2009

Course: 101. Introduction to Marketing Research
(English)

Duration: 1 day

Registration fees (before GST):

Early Bird rate \$449

Regular rate \$599

For the regular 1 day courses:
discount of \$50 on the early bird
member rate.

May 21-22, 2009

Course: 402. Marketing Management for Researchers
(English)

Duration: 2 days

Registration fees (before GST):

Early Bird rate \$759

Regular rate \$909

For the regular 2 day courses:
discount of \$50 on the early bird
member rate.

CONTACT: Julia Savitch at
905-602-6854, extension 8729
or jsavitch@mria-arim.ca

Algonquin College to Offer New Program in Research in Autumn 2009

Algonquin College will be offering the new program, Marketing and Business Intelligence Research, in Autumn 2009. The program offers courses in marketing and public opinion research at its Woodroffe Campus from September to April, followed by a work term. The courses will be presented on Fridays and Saturdays so that students can continue to work full-time. Students in this program earn an Ontario College Graduate Certificate, and gain the foundation to write the Certified Marketing Research Professional examination.

http://extraweb.algonquincollege.com/fulltime_programs/programOverview.aspx?id=1303X01FWO&

The Qualitative Research Registry (QRR)

QRR is the comprehensive "Do-Not-Call" list of those who have recently participated in qualitative research studies, those who have asked not to be contacted further, and those felt by recruiters and moderators to be best served by not being contacted. These respondents are marked as "Do-Not-Call" in accordance with established MRIA Standards.

All field and full-service companies are encouraged to submit a list of their qualitative respondents for entry into the QRR system each month, including those who do not wish to be contacted.

Participating firms will receive monthly updates of respondents to be screened from qualitative recruitment samples. QRR works effectively to increase the quality and integrity of the qualitative research process, by serving as a control to ensure respondents are not contacted more frequently than is necessary.

<http://www.mria-arim.ca/qrd/qualresearchregistry.asp>

The Survey Registration System (SRS)

The SRS was initiated to provide an easy and accessible way for the public to verify a research call, inform themselves about the industry and/or register a complaint by calling 1-800-554-9996.

Service representatives will provide interested respondents with information about survey practices, the principles by which research firms operate, and the important role research plays in developing Canadian products and services.

Comments about registered research projects will be recorded and MRIA representatives will mediate to resolve complaints. Respondents wishing to register a complaint about non-registered research will be given the information they need to contact their local telephone company, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and/or the Canadian Marketing Association (CMA).

<http://www.mria-arim.ca/surveyregistration/surveyregoverview.asp>

Questions? Comments?
Project you want
highlighted?
Contact the editor at
por-rop@pwgsc.gc.ca

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sampling and the remainder through stratified quota sampling, was representative of Manitoba's Aboriginal population.¹

If one multiplies the number of surveys done in 2005 (120) by each cheque mailed out (\$15) the cost of the augmented research was just \$1,800, not including advertising costs. The 120 in-bound callers made up more than a quarter of all people interviewed and after weighting the data, regardless of whether the participants lived on-reserve or off-reserve. A representative sample of Aboriginal people was attained, despite the fact that 20 percent of the completed sample was based on non-random methods of selection.

The public sector will continually need new research methods to connect with people, be it through investing in new technologies to keep up with the Web 2.0 society, or by developing methods, such as "boosters", to reach Canadians that may otherwise slip under the radar.

¹ *The completed sample in Indigenous Voices contained a portion (20 percent) of respondents who were selected through nonprobability methods (stratified quota). Probe Research concluded that a nonprobability method of sampling was necessary for this survey and surveys of this type given the difficulties in contacting some respondents. Probe Research had conducted an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents who were selected through the stratified quota method and has concluded that this portion of the sample is representative of the Aboriginal population of Manitoba, as is the portion that was selected through probability methods (RDD).*

Chris Adams, Research Director of Probe Research Inc., presented the findings of the *2005 Indigenous Voices Report* to the Community of Practice for Public Opinion Research on February 22, 2008.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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As a result of this study, a new advertising evaluation instrument was produced. The revised version is now shorter and more flexible than the original ACET, saving money on questionnaire design, fieldwork and translation costs. Also, a self-administered version of the instrument has been developed and is now available from PORD. The self-administered version can be managed via kiosks or the Web and thus has the potential to offer considerable cost savings.

The Executive Summary is available here: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/public_works/2008/211-07/summary.pdf



NEW REPORTS

Library and Archives Canada is the repository for all custom research reports completed by the Government of Canada. The reports can be accessed through the Library and Archives Canada website: www.porr-rrop.gc.ca, or copies can be requested using an inter-library loan through your departmental library. These are useful resources for the Government of Canada research community. Below is a sample of the reports.

- *Stanley Park National Historical Site of Canada: 2008 Telephone Survey of Metro Vancouver Residents* (Parks Canada, August 2008, POR 405-07)
- *Survey of Travellers on Key Issues Related to Travel Health* (Health Canada, August 2008, POR 461-07)
- *Survey of Corporate Food Buyers in Russia* (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, August 2008, POR 312-07)
- *Survey of Corporate Food Buyers in the Middle East* (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, August 2008, POR 312-07)
- *Solar Domestic Water Cooler Market Demand Study* (Natural Resources Canada, August 2008, POR 510-06)
- *Focus Groups on Canada Access Grants to Students from Low-Income Families* (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, July 2008, (POR 412-07)
- *Qualitative Research: Police Officer and Prosecutor Training Needs for Combating Organized Crime in Canada* (Public Safety Canada, July 2008, POR 411-07)
- *Focus Testing of Radio and Print Creatives for the Parent Component of the National Anti Drug Strategy* (Health Canada, July 2008, POR 400-07)
- *Examining Spillover and Recall of Tobacco Industry Advertising Among Youth* (Health Canada, June 2008, POR 288-07)
- *Exit Survey Interviews With Auto Show Visitors* (Natural Resources Canada, April 2008, POR 306-07)
- *The State of Exporting in Northern Ontario* (Industry Canada, March 2008, POR 348-08)
- *Exploring the Needs and Perceptions of Canadian Municipalities on Community Corrections* (Correction Services Canada, March 2008, POR 440-07)
- *The Advisory Panel on Online Public Opinion Survey Quality* (Public Works and Government Services Canada, June 2008 POR 262-07)
- *HIV/AIDS Website Concept Testing* (Public Health Agency of Canada, March 2008, POR 242-07)

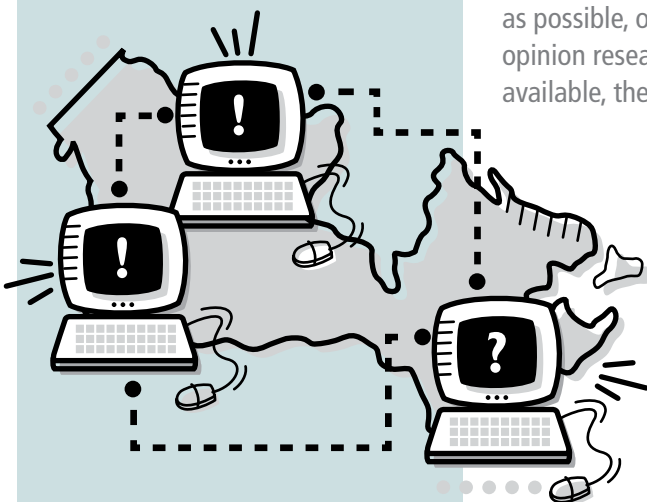
THE RESEARCH CORNER

The Research Corner is produced by the Public Opinion Research Directorate, Consulting, Information and Shared Services Branch of PWGSC for the public opinion research community in the Government of Canada. It provides information about custom research projects, offers ideas and information about research developments, and provides a forum for the exchange of experiences and best practices.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of PWGSC. They are intended to stimulate discussion about public opinion research within the Community of Practice.

Submissions and correspondence should be addressed to the Editor at:

**por-rop@pwgsc.gc.ca
or 613-996-3207**



MORE INNOVATIVE RESEARCH:

Opinion Research in Post-Conflict Areas

Chad Rogers and Robin Sears, of Toronto-based research firm **Navigator**, gave a presentation to the Community of Practice (a joint presentation by PORD and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) on June 18, describing methodologies of public opinion research in post-conflict areas, specifically Gaza and Kosovo.

The election of Hamas in Palestine was the opposite of what externally-sponsored research had up till then predicted. Sears suggests that the problem was not the amount of research done (there was plenty) but **how** it was done. Many of the research groups failed to engage with whom they were researching, and did not establish the level of trust necessary in such a charged, conflicted area. Sears explained to the audience: **"The problem wasn't vendors, it was instruments."** As opposed to simply parachuting researchers into the area and getting them out as quickly as possible, or depending on what opinion research capacity was locally available, the **Navigator** team would

embed itself in the area, taking their time to set up an infrastructure of trusted contacts across cultural divides.

Switch the scene over to Kosovo, where problems of displacement and ethnic rifts between Albanians and Serbians have made assembling acuity of public opinion equally problematic. As in Gaza, there was apprehension toward Western research firms in some cases. Trust had to be established before questions could be asked. **Qualitative research was done to understand what sort of questions could be asked and to ensure answers were not given as impulse reaction to socially and culturally insensitive questions.** Through the establishment of confidence with the respondent, valuable insight was gained into the workings and political perceptions of Kosovo society.

Although both case studies took place overseas, there are important lessons for Government of Canada researchers. If meaningful research can be performed in areas like Gaza or Kosovo, there are encouraging reasons to believe it can be done in hard-to-reach communities in Canada through innovative methodologies and establishing trust with the research audience.

LISTENING TO OUR CLIENTS

As a mandatory service provider, PWGSC is required to evaluate its performance regularly through means such as client satisfaction studies. In early 2008, PORD conducted its third annual client satisfaction survey entitled *2006–2007 PWGSC Public Opinion Research Directorate Client Satisfaction Study*. The study was undertaken to track key performance indicators and departments' knowledge of the laws, policies and procedures governing POR. The results will help PWGSC to adapt its services to assist departments in obtaining quality research and value for money.

The survey posed a number of questions to the Directorate's clients who consist of departmental POR coordinators and other persons responsible for public opinion research projects in the Government of Canada. The questions covered the following topics:

- Use of the Directorate's services;
- Satisfaction with services provided by the Directorate;
- Future requirements for services provided by the Directorate; and
- Interest in participating in different types of skill-building activities.

The online client satisfaction survey was sent to 71 clients of the Public Opinion Research Directorate. Forty-four clients completed the survey, representing a response rate of 62 percent. Because the survey was based on a census sample, calculation of the margin of error and confidence interval is not appropriate.

The study found that 95 percent of departmental clients (up from 91 percent in 2005–2006) indicated being very familiar or somewhat familiar with GC policies and procedures.

On a scale of 0 to 100, the survey found a satisfaction rating of 81 with PORD staff's helpfulness. For both usefulness of the advice offered and for overall satisfaction, the rating was 82 out of 100.

The results have been used by PORD:

- To understand the views of its clients across the Government of Canada;
- As performance indicators to measure the Directorate's effectiveness and were published in the PWGSC Departmental Performance Report for fiscal 2007–2008;
- As internal measures of PORD's effectiveness in performing the core areas of its mandate in order to serve departments and agencies as a technical advisory body in the Government of Canada; and
- To plan educational events, speakers program and knowledge transfer initiatives in the 2008–2009 fiscal year.

http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/public_works/2008/193-07/summary.pdf

Share Your Data with Canadians!

The Canadian Opinion Research Archive (CORA) makes available the results from commercial and independent surveys to academic, research and journalistic communities. Founded in 1992, CORA contains hundreds of surveys including thousands of discrete items collected by major Canadian research firms dating back to the 1970s. It is administered through the Queen's School of Policy and the McGill School of Political Science, and receives support from public and private organizations.

The Director of CORA, Dr. Stuart Soroka, spoke to the POR Community of Practice in June about the progress CORA has made, including updating its archives, continued support from the private sector, and acquiring the SPSS data from three government departments: Environment, Health, and Industry. Noting how the site is used by universities and students as part of their regular curriculum, and its potential as a search engine and research tool for departments depositing their data in the archive, Dr. Soroka encouraged more departments to deposit their data with CORA and take advantage of its archival and analytical capacities themselves.

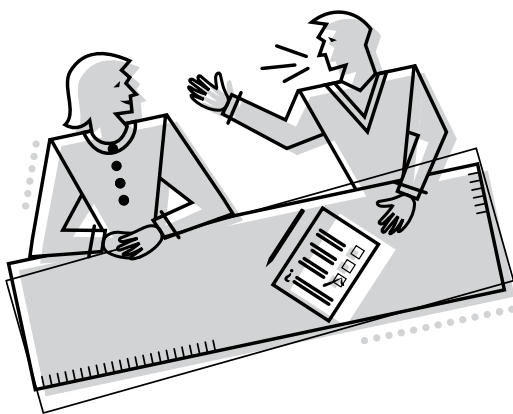
www.queensu.ca/cora/index.html

Public Opinion Research Directorate

SERVICE STANDARDS

PORD has developed a set of 13 client-based service standards. In developing these standards, it has tried to make them simple, meaningful, measurable and attainable. Data sources for the standards' indicators will in some cases be the annual client satisfaction survey, and in others be a review of project files, evaluation forms at seminars or a review of data contained in the Research Information Management System (RIMS).

The following are service standards which PORD intends to meet or exceed in our relationship with clients. Clients include anyone in the Government of Canada who seeks PORD assistance or uses PORD products or tools.



SERVICE COMMITMENT

- 1** PORD serves its clients, in the official language of their choice.
- 2** PORD treats its clients with courtesy and respect.
- 3** The Research Information Management System (RIMS) is operational 24 hours a day seven days a week, and help is available during normal business hours, Eastern Time.
- 4** Reminders to clients about reports which are due to be sent to Library and Archives Canada and the Library of Parliament are sent in a timely manner.
- 5** Clients contacting PORD via fax, phone or email receive an acknowledgement reply within two business days.
- 6** Outgoing email and faxes from PORD include three different ways for clients to contact the sender.
- 7a** In the case of projects involving one supplier proposal, PORD provides feedback on statements of work and proposals within three business days of receipt.
- 7b** In the case of projects involving multiple proposals, PORD provides an estimate about when advice will be forthcoming within three business days of receipt.
- 8** Each GC research project received by PORD is reviewed by a PORD advisor and, for quality assurance purposes, the PORD manager, advisory services. Research projects typically include statements of work and supplier proposals.
- 9** PORD will, within two business days, assign a project a POR Registration Number, transmit the requirement to the Communications Procurement Directorate, and notify the client of these developments after all of the following have taken place:
 - 1** PORD receiving information required for the award of a POR contract¹;
 - 2** managerial review taking place within PORD for quality assurance purposes; and
 - 3** the client having had the opportunity to respond to PORD questions/advice.
- 10** PORD provides advice on draft research instruments within two business days of receipt.
- 11** PORD advice is useful to clients.
- 12** The PORD Speaker's Series is useful to clients.
- 13** PORD products and tools such as the annual report, material on the intranet site and RIMS are useful to clients.

¹ Required information includes approval of the head of the applicable institution, statement of work, supplier proposal (where applicable) and duly completed requisition.