



ARTICLE

Research panel increases advertiser buys

by Irene Fogarty 12 October 2011

In a tough economic climate, panel research at The Irish Times proves invaluable in showing local advertisers how Times readers champion domestic products and services.


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Every cloud has a silver lining, they say. In an Irish context, this is evidenced by the positive effects of a tough economic climate on consumer loyalty toward domestic tourism and locally produced goods. We are emerging as a nation of domestic product champions. The population of Irish main shoppers agreeing they purchase Irish produce whenever possible has gone from 59% in 2009 to 63% in 2011. Meanwhile the percentage of Irish adults who have stayed in an Irish hotel in a given year has gone from 40.3% in 2009 to 41.6% in 2011 (Kantar Media ROI TGI Survey, 2009 and 2011 data).

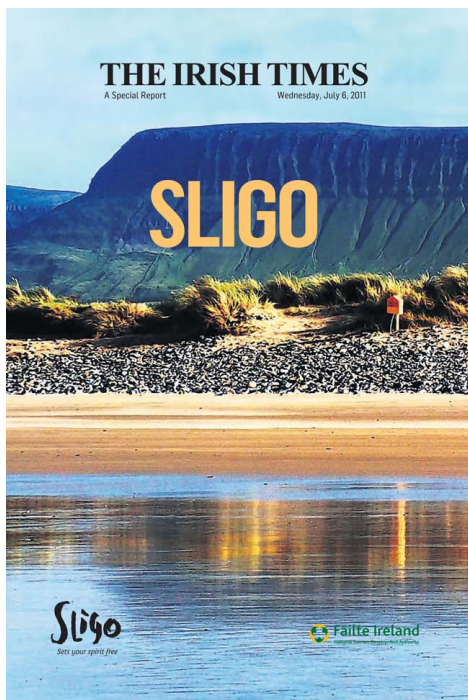
In a market where seismic economic changes can rapidly shift consumer sentiment, The Irish Times Consumer Panel (operated through www.rampanel.com) has proved an invaluable currency in gaining leverage with advertisers. We can provide positive reader opinion and action vis-à-vis the above-mentioned sectors in a fast turnaround time.

In September 2011, the panel answered two questionnaires probing grocery purchase habits and attitudes. Response was extremely healthy at 365 and 370 respondents per wave and showed strong loyalty among main shopper readers toward domestic goods.

- 87% are encouraged to purchase a grocery item if it is clearly marked as Irish in origin.
- 61% actively check that grocery goods are produced in Ireland when shopping.
- 63% pay more attention to advertising for offers in the newspaper or on irishtimes.com if the advertised items showcase their Irish origin.
- 85% say it's "very important" to them that a grocery store stocks locally sourced products.

A campaign by Fáilte Ireland (The Irish Tourist Board) artfully harnessed growth in the Irish population of "staycationers" by inserting a series of high-quality, quarter-broadsheet booklets in the newspaper, showcasing Irish regions and their unique features. Our ad hoc research on reader reaction to the booklets elicited fantastic results for Fáilte. Of those who read one or more booklets, 91% agreed the campaign is a good initiative by the tourist board in drawing attention to regions and their highlights. Meanwhile, an overwhelming 90% agree these booklets encourage them to visit the regions highlighted.

The depth and speed of data obtained through panel research is invaluable in the current climate. We can react swiftly to positive market trends, offering advertisers real-time market insight and simultaneously gaining a strong competitive advantage. Stand-alone ad hoc research is syndicated to Irish Times sales and marketing executives to use in pitches. Recent findings from our main shopper readers currently are being utilised to secure advertising from a number of national grocery retailers.



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Meanwhile, complementing panel surveys on specific advertising campaigns (such as Fáilte Ireland's) with bespoke research tailored to client needs gives us a unique angle to strengthen existing relationships with our advertisers and grow relationships with new ones. In addition to showing clients that we are a successful media platform for their published ad or campaign, we can position ourselves as a research partner, showing real-time reader sentiment contextualised within current market trends, thereby offering superb granularity of data to clients at no extra cost to them.

As our inserts manager, Pier Wall, explains: "We gave a national supermarket chain their panel feedback on a Monday and secured three further ad bookings from them by the Wednesday. The Irish Times Consumer Panel is a great opening for us in accessing clients. Instead of just selling to them, we can offer them research on their brand, which gets us appointments."

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