

# Holistic Response Management at Statistics Canada



## A strategy to address critical business non-response

Strategies, Tools, and Methods for Improving Response Rates on  
Establishment Surveys

FEDCASIC, March 2008 Janet Hughes, Statistics Canada

# Holistic Response Management

## What was the genesis of the strategy?

- ❑ EPM program proved a co-ordinated, integrated, unduplicated collection approach improves response for large, complex companies
- ❑ Could we apply 'lessons learned' and develop a response management model to focus effort where the return would be greatest?
- ❑ How best to ensure steps taken to address non-response are appropriate & reasonable relative to the size and importance of the business?

## Holistic Response Management

Four tiers identified based on complexity, importance to estimates and eligibility for tax replacement

- **Tier I** - Largest most complex enterprises
- **Tier II** - Other enterprises critical to estimates
- **Tier III** - Non-critical complex & simple singles
- **Tier IV** - Very small, tax only

# Holistic Response Management

## Tier I

- Enterprise Portfolio Manager Program (EPM)
- Responsible for managing the ongoing, overall relationship with 360 of Canada's largest and most complex enterprises.
- Mandate crosses all STC divisions that survey business

March, 2008

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Long-standing programs at Statistics Canada, such as the Enterprise Portfolio Manager Program and the Strategic Response Program, have demonstrated the value of employing a “holistic” approach to managing the relationships we have with important data providers. These programs manage and co-ordinate to varying degrees, the relationships between STC and these respondents to ensure the delivery of timely, accurate, and coherent data. By looking at our largest and most complex businesses as a whole, cross-cutting issues beyond the scope and resources of any individual survey area are addressed, and this benefits all survey areas at STC.

# Enterprise Portfolio Managers

## Benefits of the Program

- Better quality data, coherent profiles, timeliness
- Better knowledge of industry- a 'heads up' for changes that could impact survey programs
- Better relationships with our key respondents
- Better communications among STC stakeholders

# Holistic Response Management

## Tier II

- ❑ Units important/critical to a survey but company lacks complex operational, financial, and reporting structures that demand EPM- level support
- ❑ In 2005 we tested feasibility of applying an enterprise-centric approach to address non-response in Tier II
- ❑ Strategic Response Program was born

# Strategic Response Program

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## Scope

- Tier II companies with significant response issues in our annual business survey program (UES)

# Strategic Response Program

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## Goals

- ▣ Measurable results (deliver the data!)
- ▣ Mend relationships – turn important long-term refusals into good, consistent reporters
- ▣ Research underlying issues; identify opportunities for process improvement



# Strategic Response Program

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## Approach

- ▣ Solicit nominations from survey managers
- ▣ Research company and response history
- ▣ Pull all annual surveys from regular collection
- ▣ Send letter – 'We'd like to help...'

# Strategic Response Program

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## Approach

- ▣ Call company to ascertain their reporting concerns
- ▣ Address issues & negotiate acceptable reporting arrangements – “quid pro quo”
- ▣ Communicate & document arrangement with the company and survey areas

# Strategic Response Program

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## On-going

- ▣ 2nd year respondent stays in SRP- stabilize
- ▣ Thereafter, annually assess & return low risk maintenance cases to mainstream collection
- ▣ Once returned, SRP's role becomes reactive Troubleshoot, rather than actively manage

## Strategic Response Program

And here are *some comments*  
from *'problem' respondents* we  
contacted...

## Strategic Response Program & EPM

- ' **We understand that you need our data and that we have responsibilities...** get your act together... make it simple, we will begin reporting.'
- ' We are **swamped** with (your) demands... multiple calls from different people, everyone says (their survey) is a priority.'
- ' I don't know which survey is most important, and **I don't have time to figure it out.** ... clearly articulate what you want.'

# Strategic Response Program & EPM

## What we learned

- ❑ Not problem companies – **the problem** is our approach
- ❑ Respondents didn't have insurmountable issues providing survey data; their problems were rooted in our "stove-pipe" approach to collection
- ❑ An enterprise-centric approach is an effective strategy in our environment to mitigate important non-response

## Strategic Response Program & EPM

### Why does the approach work?

- ▣ Mandate to address issues at corporate level and staff with the knowledge to back it up
- ▣ Co-ordinate and prioritize collection
- ▣ Address cross-cutting issues
- ▣ Troubleshoot problems frustrating respondents *before* they escalate into across the board refusal

# Holistic Response Management

## Going forward...

- ▣ Tier II - shift to more proactive model – earlier intervention
- ▣ Tier III – minimize service costs for response issues
- ▣ Support move to enterprise centric model for mainstream collection