

Metropolitan Transit Authority New York City Customer Survey



Objective

NuStats conducted a study to provide trip origins and destination, trips purposes, and travel and socio-economic characteristics for nearly more than 20,000 residents of the five boroughs comprising New York City to provide data to MTA for use to update transportation models, refine services, and better understand its customers.

Approach

This was a retrospective survey approach, in which respondents reported their trips via recall. The one-stage retrospective approach ensured that once we had a willing respondent we did not lose him or her at a later stage in the survey process. However, the approach places great reliance on the interviewer's ability to capture accurate and comprehensive trip data. "Sounding like a New Yorker," exhibiting local knowledge, and demonstrating familiarity with New York City and its transit systems were crucial elements of this project's success. NuStats utilized TripTracer™ software, an interactive trip capture software that contains not only street coverage file information such as street names, intersections, and landmarks, it also contains overlays of bus lines/routes (with detailed information about each bus stop) and subways or rail lines (with detailed information about each station) to give our interviewers local knowledge at their fingertips. After two weeks of testing interviewers in NYC and NuStats' Texas-based interviewers, MTA staff conducted a thorough review and determined that NuStats' interviewers' effective use of TripTracer™, expert interviewing skills, and ability to obtain detailed trip data outperformed the NYC interviewers.

Outcome

The survey captured more than 20,000 linked transit trips that were all verified using the TrueRoute™ software, and the resulting data matched census demographics. MTA will use the data to update transportation models and enhance its services based upon its customer's needs and desires.

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