

## Article

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Data Collection: Challenges, Achievements and New Directions

### **Prioritizing Business Respondents to Target Important Non-Response**

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## Prioritizing Business Respondents to Target Important Non-Response

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### Abstract

The Enterprise Portfolio Manager (EPM) Program at Statistics Canada demonstrated the value of employing a “holistic” approach to managing the relationships we have with our largest and most complex business respondents. This program manages and co-ordinates the overall relationship between the business and STC to ensure the delivery of timely, accurate, and coherent data. It was clear that building relationships and providing a focal point with the mandate to resolve cross-cutting issues was invaluable in addressing response issues and improving the quality and timeliness of the reported data. With the success of the EPM program, it was decided to extend the approach.

Understanding that different types of respondents should receive different levels of intervention and having learnt the value of employing an ‘enterprise-centric’ approach to managing relationships with important, complex data providers, STC has embraced a response management strategy that divides its business population into four tiers based on size, complexity and importance to survey estimates. Thus segmented, different response management approaches have been developed appropriate to the relative contribution of the segment. This allows STC to target resources to the areas where it stands to achieve the greatest return on investment. Tier I and Tier II have been defined as critical to survey estimates.

- Tier I represent the largest, most complex businesses in Canada and is managed through the Enterprise Portfolio Management Program.
- Tier II represents businesses that are smaller or less complex than Tier I but still significant in developing accurate measures of the activities of individual industries.
- Tier III includes more medium-sized businesses, those that form the bulk of survey samples.
- Tier IV represents the smallest businesses which are excluded from collection; for these STC relies entirely on tax information.

A Strategic Response (SR) Program was initiated to target non-response in Tier II companies, adapting the EPM model to one appropriate to these less complex but none the less important data providers. Providing a focal point to resolve problems and dealing with underlying issues that cut across survey boundaries has had very positive results. Initially, important but problematic collection units were nominated to the SR program by survey managers. Work then began to define an appropriate methodology by which to more formally segment the survey population (Tier I-IV).

Refinements are continuing and next steps include adding identifiers to the business register to distinguish critical collection entities, those in Tier I and Tier II, from less important units. This will support important changes with respect to managing respondent complaints for Tier III units. The plan is to reduce the time spent resolving complaints for the less important Tier III respondents, while improving the turnaround time for resolution. The Business Respondent Relations team will have the mandate to resolve complaints from Tier III respondents directly. In the past, all complaints, except for those from EPM companies, were put through the same consultative process involving multiple survey analysts to ensure important respondents were not inappropriately relieved of the responsibility to report. As part of the strategy to focus resources where the greatest payoff exists, this change allows the program to shift resources to the SR work in support of important data providers.

The presentation will outline:

- It works! Results and metrics from the programs that have operationalized the Holistic Response Management strategy.
- Developing a less subjective, methodological approach to segment the business survey population for HRM. The project team’s work to capture the complexity factors intrinsically used by experienced staff to rank respondents.
- What our so called ‘problem’ respondents have told us about the issues underlying non-response.

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