



Case Study: The Center for Shelter Dogs on Kinesis Survey™

Challenge

The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARLB) is a non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing domesticated animals and wildlife from suffering, cruelty, abandonment, and neglect. One of ARLB's leading programs is the Center for Shelter Dogs (<http://www.centerforshelterdogs.org/>), which works to improve the welfare of homeless dogs cared for by humane organizations, animal control facilities, and rescue groups throughout the U.S.

In order for the Center for Shelter Dogs to optimally serve the various sheltering facilities, the adopting public, and of course the dogs themselves, significant research is conducted. In 2009, a new Research Director, Seana Dowling, was hired to both continue and expand the Center's research programs. A survey software solution was already being utilized to conduct online research, however Ms. Dowling quickly ascertained that the functionality of that solution was too limited to meet the Center's expanding research needs. The Center sought a more comprehensive and advanced solution that could support its research objectives and programs including:

- The validation of methods to identify, evaluate and treat behavior problems, in order to increase the dogs' chances for adoption
- The identification of canine personality traits in order to best match shelter dogs and adoptive families
- Investigation as to how environmental and emotional stressors impact the behavior of shelter dogs, and identification of ways to reduce stress
- Investigation of potential adopters' perceptions and attitudes toward shelter dogs, in order to examine which characteristics are preferred and by which adopter segments, as well as which canine behaviors aid or hinder adoption

Additionally, the Center was ready to embark on its largest research endeavor to date, in support of The Match-Up II Shelter Dog Rehoming Program. The goal of this first of its kind program is to provide shelters across the country with a consistent and thorough means of evaluating the personality and behaviors of dogs, so that behavioral interventions can be implemented as needed to improve adoption rates.

For the Match-Up II program and all of the other ongoing research projects, the Center desired a survey software solution that met the following criteria: flexible survey design and reporting features, the ability for multiple users to manage multiple survey projects from the same platform with ease, and intuitive programming capabilities.

Kinesis Differentiator

"Kinesis Survey™ is an extremely robust survey platform, yet it is very easy to use. Its flexibility enables the Center for Shelter Dogs to conduct research in unique ways that would not be possible with other solutions."

- *Seana Dowling, Research Director at the Center for Shelter Dogs*

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Solution

As a research professional with more than seventeen years of experience, Ms. Dowling was familiar with several online survey software tools including Kinesis Survey™. Having previously worked for one of the world's largest market research firms where Kinesis Survey™ is utilized for highly complex survey research, she knew that it was more than capable of supporting the Center's research programs as well.

With the desire to self-manage nearly all aspects of its research, the Center would be able to utilize Kinesis Survey™ to run multiple survey projects of varying programming and reporting complexity, and provide the automation and ease of use necessary for a research team with differing levels of market research and survey programming experience.

In addition, because Kinesis Survey™ is a multimode and multilingual solution that can support high-volume survey traffic, it is a platform that will grow with the Center as its research needs evolve. Although the Center is not currently utilizing Kinesis Survey™ functionality such as mobile surveys, multilingual surveys, or a community portal for potential adopters, these features are available if and when they are desired. Because of all of these benefits, and Ms. Dowling's previous experience with the outstanding Kinesis customer support team, the Center selected Kinesis Survey™ as its exclusive online survey software tool.

The Center for Shelter Dogs' top reasons for choosing Kinesis

Functionality:

"The robust programming and design capabilities of Kinesis Survey™ provide us with great flexibility. We can readily tailor each of our survey projects to ensure that all of our research objectives are met."

Ease of Use:

"The Kinesis Survey™ software is highly intuitive and enables even new users to get up-to-speed quickly."

Customer Service:

"Everyone at Kinesis is extremely knowledgeable and responsive. Their team is committed to customer service excellence. They have always gone above and beyond to make my projects successful."

- Seana Dowling,
Research Director at the
Center for Shelter Dogs

Results

Kinesis Survey™ is successfully enabling the Center to meet its research objectives, and therefore realize its ultimate goal - to improve the lives of shelter dogs.

One of the Center's primary requirements was flexible survey programming, and with Kinesis Survey™ it is readily achieved. The numerous question types and style sheet options available in Kinesis Survey™ enable the Center to design each survey to meet its research objectives, and to engage the target response groups. It also allows for easy editing of live surveys and re-use of templates to further optimize programming tasks.

Because the Center designs its surveys internally, an intuitive solution was also desired. The Center has been very pleased with ease of use; Ms. Dowling reports that even novice survey programmers are able to get up-to-speed very quickly with Kinesis Survey™. The solution's user interface is well-organized and easy to maneuver, and the on-page Context Help functionality readily explains each capability. In cases where further assistance is needed, the Center has direct access to the skilled Kinesis customer support team.

Kinesis Survey™ also enables the Center to achieve its goal of managing multiple survey projects using a single platform. The Center utilizes surveys for adopters of shelter dogs to measure new owner satisfaction, and also to analyze if/how canine behaviors differ between the shelter and the home environment. The Center administers surveys to shelters, rescue facilities and animal control agencies to understand how each organization operates, as well as to determine best practices for behavioral training and care. The Center provides surveys for prospective adopters to help match owners and dogs, with the goal of achieving a higher permanent placement rate. The general public is also surveyed to understand which canine characteristics are most and least desirable, so that dogs' potential and barriers for adoption are better identified.

Using the Kinesis Survey™ reporting tools, custom reports are automatically generated via simple point-and-click execution. Reports include dynamic charts and graphs that can easily be incorporated into research presentations, and data can be exported using a variety of file formats. Top line reports provide a summary overview of the project status, and drilldown menus allow for detailed information about specific respondents or subsets of respondents. Built-in support for Google Analytics is also offered to track survey traffic on multitude of criteria. All of these tools enable the Center to readily analyze its collected data, and use it to improve the conditions and processes of sheltering facilities, as well as to increase successful adoption rates.

For the Match-Up II program, Kinesis Survey™ was utilized to design a proof of concept, multi-segment online survey used in dog behavioral analysis. Shelter workers are able to access Kinesis Survey™ and assess many aspects of behavior and record the results in real-time. Upon completion of each survey, an automated scoring

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Results – cont.

system immediately calculates corresponding trait scores that can be used to determine next steps for training and/or placement.

The proof-of-concept Match-Up II program has been tremendously well-received. Although Kinesis Survey™ will not be utilized in the program's final version, as it was always intended to evolve into a custom, proprietary software application, Ms. Dowling reports that Kinesis Survey™ was instrumental in demonstrating to shelters the validity of this program and its potential for success. The Match-Up II program will be rolled out nationally beginning this May at the Humane Society of the United States' annual Expo.

The Center for Shelter Dogs is extremely satisfied with the online survey solution it selected to execute its research projects. The Center will continue to expand its usage of the solution as its programs and outreach grows. "Kinesis Survey™ is a superior survey solution," says Dowling. "It more than meets our research needs, and we look forward to a long-term partnership with Kinesis."

For more information about the Center for Shelter dogs, visit <http://www.centerforshelterdogs.org/>.



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