

# SURVEY SOLUTIONS

## Harlequin Mills and Boon develops sales team using Survey Solutions

### BACKGROUND

Mills & Boon, now a subsidiary of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd, has grown to become the UK's undisputed market leader in romance fiction publishing. Every five seconds there is a new Mills & Boon book sold within the UK. The aim of Harlequin Mills and Boon is to strive to exceed their consumers' expectations. They hope to achieve this through a working environment which attracts the best people and fully develops individual and team talents.

Our client, Archimedes Consulting, is a consultancy firm specialising in working with clients to support their sales organisations by diagnosing issues, opportunities and designing solutions based on getting their people, processes and skills right. HM&B called upon Archimedes Consulting to help further develop an already strong sales team and help them to work at a more strategic level, which they felt was necessary to defend against growing competitive threats.

### TOOL AND APPROACH

ConsultingTools' Survey Solutions was used to undertake the project. Survey Solutions can be used to undertake qualitative or quantitative research. The customisable on-line system takes the client's questions and response scales, together with the logos and text, and provides a web-based questionnaire. Respondents receive an e-mail inviting them to complete the questionnaire and, once data has been captured, reports are produced which can be split by demographic options. The data is also available for further statistical analysis to identify trends and key findings.

Archimedes Consulting wanted to run a training programme on strategic account management and, as part of that, they needed a benchmark to understand how key customers currently viewed HM&B on a scale from transactional and tactical through to embedded strategic partner. A customer relationship questionnaire was therefore designed to probe and quantify the nature of the relationship and gather feedback that mapped onto, and illuminated, key concepts of the account management programme.



## OUTCOME

The survey was successfully completed with a more than 50% customer completion rate which, for a customer survey, is well above average. Archimedes Consulting had to work very hard and go through several iterations of the process to achieve that number, with ConsultingTools supporting them all the way. Archimedes Consulting liaised closely with Harlequin Mills & Boon and ConsultingTools to ensure that the right balance between detail and acceptable time commitment from the respondents was struck, and to ensure that the logistics and administration of the survey ran smoothly.

Harlequin Mills & Boon was very satisfied with the outcome which, confirmed some of their beliefs and cast light on some of the development areas. The output has now been fed into the strategic selling programme, and illustrates key aspects with client-specific data.

In the words of Patricia Seabright, principle at Archimedes Consulting:

“This was the fourth project we’ve used ConsultingTools for, and all have had successful outcomes and have helped us deliver on our customers’ requirements. The communication and responsiveness of the staff at ConsultingTools throughout the process enabled us to address any issues that cropped up along the way and achieve a successful result.”

