

Intelligent Research Coordination in up to 50 countries

Vincent Ravet, Jörg Ruske

As one of the leading worldwide market research groups, Ipsos is a major player in the international research business (570 million Euro in 2003 and number 3 in the survey-based market). This sector has definitely been increasing for many years because of the market globalisation, the harmonisation of the branding and advertising strategies, the new emergent regions like Asia etc. Although it is not easy to exactly estimate the international market research expenses, it is usually said to represent about 20 to 25 % of the global market for market research i.e. about 4.2 billion Euro in 2003.

We have faced a continuous increase in demand for international research in all of its five business lines (Marketing, Media, Advertising/ASI, Loyalty, Public Affairs) during the last years. Ipsos Global Studies (IGS) initiative is the Ipsos answer to the growth in international activities which require a specific expertise as well as a large network.

The launching of this special IGS programme started in 2003 and was based on three major stages.

The first one was the concept design phase. During several months the international experts of the main American, Canadian and European Ipsos agencies exchanged views and experience in order to develop a common and more efficient working platform for all international project management across the world. The analysis was not limited to the coordination and methodological aspects, the financial issues were also reviewed to cope with this very price sensitive market area where the budgets are always significantly larger than for any local survey.

Curriculum Vitae



Vincent Ravet

is Managing Director of Ipsos-Inra Belgium. He is in charge of Ipsos Global Studies (IGS) as Regional Coordinator for Europe. Vincent joined the INRA-Group in 1991. Having started as a Research manager he constantly moved up to the position of a Managing Director of INRA (EUROPE), Brussels, in 2000. Besides his job Vincent used to be a lecturer of Psychometry and Applied Statistics at the University of Brussels until 1997. Since 2003 Vincent has been President of The European Federation of Associations of Market Research Organisations (EFAMRO).



Jörg Ruske

is Managing Director of Ipsos Observer and Head of the Quality Research Department (Postal Business) of Ipsos GmbH. Within Observer he is responsible for International Global Studies (Country-Coordinator IGS), Omnibus-Research, Ipsos Access Panels including the Online Business and for Syndicated Surveys. He is member of the Executive Board of Ipsos GmbH in Germany. Jörg Ruske started his career in the IT industry. He worked as Managing Director, CEO and Chairman in several IT companies for many years.

Combining all factors and outcomes, Ipsos set up a special and very actionable structure for international issues which relies on 3 fundamentals:

- In each Ipsos country, an IGS Coordinator and a dedicated inflow and outflow team are responsible for quoting, coordinating and supporting the business units in their international projects.

- Specific and mandatory tools for briefing and quoting in order to get the same international standards and pricing in all IGS agencies.
- Perfectly harmonized communication by one central IGS unit per region with a regional IGS coordinator.

On top of these three IGS pillars, the general philosophy is to provide a truly international solution to clients based on full transparency between agencies which really work as one global team with the same tools, rules and rate cards.

As a second key step, the IGS related organisation, tools and processes have been tested in the main markets (USA, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, UK) during six months and adjusted when necessary for meeting all financial and technical requirements. Comparisons and pre-tests were made either to analyse the gaps and the improvements compared to our usual offers, response time, and market price positioning or to better understand the local issues to improve the communication and the workflow. This new international system is now being progressively implemented in all Ipsos agencies, region by region, business line by business line.

Today, most Ipsos agencies are able to provide IGS services in North America and Europe which represent 82% of the total market including the international one.

In order to ensure the successful implementation, a special support and training programme was handled with the relevant local international teams by the central IGS management. The local IGS implementation process and development is systematically monitored and supported by the regional management in order to guarantee the best possible related services and prices for the Ipsos clients.

After nearly six months, IGS is more and more used by our commercial teams in all business lines. IGS has already convinced some new blue chip clients to work with Ipsos. Our success rate with IGS offers is better by 33% and the numbers of IGS projects is increasing each month in all possible sectors (automotive, telecoms, food, FMCG, services, etc.) because this new international offer is not only financially and technically competitive. Another reason that convinces clients are the specially trained regional coordination teams which are working on a high professional standard. One regional team is able to coordinate international projects in up to 50 countries - which is a challenge for the IGS team and a big chance for our clients!

The illustration shows the areas of added value by IGS.

		without IGS	with IGS
generally		different people involved with shared responsibilities	clearly defined network led by coordinating country
quoting phase	quoting model	∑ of individual quotes to be integrated by coordinating country	homogenous and consistent global offer based on quoting form
	calculation model	∑ of individual calculations per country + coordinating country calculation	homogenous and consistent global calculation based on calculation tool
	quoting time	individually, depending on the slowest country	2 days per country
	price level / structure	∑ of market prices per country + market price of coordinating country	calculated market price for the total project based on costs per country
project phase	design, methodology, reporting	less consistent, room for interpretation per country	consistent and homogenous but still taking local needs into account
	quality + processes	no common level	common global quality standards, best practices
	project time	depending on slowest country	led by coordinating country
	workflow, teams	individual workflow for different people of different teams in different countries	clear workflow and network in- and outflow teams know each other