

A truly multi-cultural global village

Every year Opticom conducts over 60 000 telephone interviews with respondents all over the world. In addition to this Opticom staff travels across the world interviewing our clients' customers, printers, converters, merchants, advertising agencies, paper mills, doctors, patients, purchasers, retailers, and end-users on behalf of our clients.

Opticom's competitive edge lies in conducting all fieldwork with our in-house native speaking work force. In 2013 over 60 researchers with about 30 different nationalities were engaged in these projects. All researchers are recruited in Sweden and are stationed at our company headquarters in central Stockholm. As a matter of fact, with such an international workforce, operating from one location, Opticom is one of the most international companies in Sweden. Around 75% of salaries paid by Opticom are to employees who are a foreign national - a truly multi-cultural global village.

In order to facilitate such an ongoing international operation Opticom invests considerable resources into recruiting and training well-educated and professional researchers. Safeguarding quality in the interview process is for obvious reasons one of our main concerns at Opticom. The old wisdom that an analysis is never better than the information it is based on, makes recruiting talents extremely important.

Anette Eng, HR Manager and Head of Research Department, is in charge of this momentous task at Opticom. Anette Eng, born in Sweden but raised in Sweden as well as Greece has a multi-cultural heritage herself. Besides growing up in a bicultural family, she spent extensive periods abroad studying in Italy, Spain and France. Her studies in marketing, human resource management as well as languages provide her with the perfect background for managing Opticom's international staff. In her daily work, Anette Eng makes it her business to create the perfect team of researchers for every project, regardless of project size, type, industry



segment and geographical region.

Working with so many nationalities at one single location sounds very interesting but how does your staff feel about that? It is true that it is very interesting and I feel very privileged to be able



to meet with, recruit and work with such talented and well-educated people from all over the world. I think that most of those choosing to work at Opticom feel the same way and often choose to continue to work here because they enjoy being in our international environment.

How do the respondents react when someone, speaking their language perfectly, calls them from Sweden?

Respondents often compliment our interviewers on their excellent language skills. When they realise that the interviewer is actually from their own country, a conversation about this naturally evolves. This works as an ice-breaker and often forms a good starting point for the rest of the conversation.

What kind of personalities are you looking for when hiring researchers?

First and foremost it is important that they have a positive attitude and good communication skills. We are very well aware of the importance of our interviewers sounding professional, but they also need to sound glad, since a smile can even be heard over the telephone. Besides these essential skills in communication, we require our interviewers to be very efficient and accurate. Finally, experience and a background in marketing or sales or within one of our specific fields is of course a merit.

Is it not better to subcontract fieldwork to local research companies throughout the world?

In some cases this might be a good alternative, but we find that managing and conducting all parts of the research from one single location is more cost-effective and provides better quality. With one project team for all local markets, Opticom makes sure that no tasks (e.g. project management) are duplicated. This also minimises the risk of performing the tasks in different ways that would negatively affect the consistency and reliability of the study's results.