

# ARF Research Review Fact Sheet

## Overview

Despite the economic downturn, there has been continued growth in the number of new research tools and services offered. Faced with numerous rapid changes in the strategies and tools employed by marketers today, research providers have attempted a higher rate of research innovation, but they are finding that their innovation efforts are frequently met with a slow and inconsistent process of client appraisal. The ARF Research Review makes the end user's appraisal process more effective and efficient by providing a side-by-side comparison of the proposed method or service and the relevant ARF guidelines and principles.

## Provider Benefits

### *Marketing Benefits*

Clients want to know:

- *Does this method work?*
- *How does it work?*
- *Is it right for my needs?*
- *Is it consistent with accepted industry guidelines?*

An ARF Research Review saves time and accelerates the sales process by providing an independent, authoritative assessment of market research offerings. As a result, client communications can focus on the business objectives rather than technical concerns or disparagements by your competitors.

### *Quality Improvement Benefits*

The Review identifies opportunities for improvement. Often, these enhancements can be made in the course of the Review – resulting in a superior product in the marketplace.

### *Internal Process Benefits*

The review process has improved both internal and external communications. The framework for the review has served to align marketing messages with technical documentation and report language.

### *Ongoing Support*

ARF experts are available both to discuss future enhancements as well as to serve as references for clients seeking information or comfort with a reviewed methodology.

### *Confidentiality*

Companies engaged in Research Reviews are guaranteed complete confidentiality. Reviews are made public at the vendor's discretion. An important benefit is that client desire for access to proprietary information can be mitigated by an ARF Review.

## Research Review Process

1. **Phase 1 Launch Meeting:** An ARF senior researcher will meet with Management to discuss/obtain:
  - a. Business objectives
  - b. Research objectives
  - c. Methodology to be reviewed, and innovation(s) it offers
  - d. Document requirements
  - e. Client deliverables
  - f. Basic corporate information

At the conclusion of the launch meeting, the scope of the review will be set, and the timetable for the review will be established.

2. **Phase 1 Discovery Phase:** Upon receipt of required documentation, ARF researchers will review the submitted materials, and apply ARF guidelines and standards to develop preliminary point-of-view document. This Discovery POV will identify areas of strength and concern in the method or service under review, as well as areas where additional information is needed. After this phase of the Review, the ARF may pursue one of three options: (i) Continue the review process; (ii) Continue the review, but after additional information, data, etc. is produced by the submitting Management; (iii) ARF may choose not to continue the Review due to lack of compliance with ARF guidelines and standards observed in the Discovery process.

The Discovery POV document will be a confidential document and both the ARF and Management are restricted from sharing that document with any other parties.

3. **Phase 2 Formal Review Phase:** Once the Discovery Phase is completed, and any additional documentation, methodological revision, or client data are provided to the ARF, the Formal Review Phase will be executed. At the conclusion of this phase of the Review, a confidential draft document will be provided to the client for their comment.
4. **Phase 2 Response:** Management may submit comments regarding the reviewer's interpretation of the facts provided, submit further information, and (as needed) participate in additional discussion with ARF reviewer(s).
5. **Phase 2 Expert Review:** ARF will provide a written point-of-view document for review by Management as well as 4 outside, expert reviewers – often a mix of academics and practitioners with relevant experience and expertise.
6. **Phase 2 Final Research Review:** ARF Final Research Review will be published (with Management permission) on The ARF Website and circulated to the ARF membership and provided in electronic form for Management to distribute.

## Ongoing Consultative Benefits

ARF Research Staff will be available for a discussion of potentially material changes made subsequent to the review – be they in the methodology or the context of its use.

## Timetable

The draft of the ARF Research Review document will be submitted to Management within 6 weeks of the Launch Meeting. The final document should be completed in 6-8 weeks (TBD based on scoping).

## Fees & Payments

The fee for the Research Review is based on the scope of work defined in Phase 1. For Phase 1 the initial payment is due prior to the Launch Meeting and the balance is payable when the Discovery Phase is completed and before the Formal Review Phase 2 is begun. 50% of fees agreed upon for the full Formal Review (Phase 2) will be due upon delivery of the Draft Review and due upon publication of the completed Review.