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ABSORBING RISK:

An Examination of Health and Safety Policy and Practice of Survey Workers in two New Zealand Market Research Organisations

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Master of Philosophy
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

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2002

ABSTRACT

This qualitative enquiry explores the health and safety issues of survey workers in New Zealand. There is a dearth of literature concerning the acceptance and absorption of risk in this work environment; this thesis discusses the extent to which these workers both recognise and absorb risks inherent in their occupation. It presents a study of survey workers from two national organisations fictitiously named OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix. Who are these people who knock on doors and phone for our opinions? Are there significant hazards, and are survey workers aware of these? Analysis of the data suggests that survey workers recognise some obvious risks such as dogs and verbal abuse. Yet, many are ill prepared for less predictable dangers, whether from attempted assault, overt sexual overtures, or the road washing away. Recommendations emerging from the research relate to the provision of cellphones; systems for tracking the whereabouts of employees working in the field; and adequate coverage, in training, of the full range of risks that survey workers may encounter. Survey workers are pivotal to the success of their organisations. Without them, the entire process would cease to function.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank the many survey workers who participated in this project. Their time, experiences and thoughts enabled me to undertake this thesis, and without their cooperation, it could not have happened.

I would like to thank the management and supervisors at OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix for granting me permission to undertake this project.

My grateful thanks to Dr. Martin Tolich, my supervisor, for his expertise, advice, enthusiasm, encouragement, availability and time.

The College of Business, Massey University, for providing a Wellington Advanced Degree Award without which the task of contacting and interviewing survey workers would have been very much more onerous.

My head of department, Associate Professor Andrea McIlroy, for her financial and moral support.

Finally, my husband Robert, for encouraging me to study and supporting me with great patience and tolerance on my educational journey, particularly this thesis - how can I thank you?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One:	Introduction	1
Chapter Two:	The Risk literature	6
Chapter Three:	Methodology	25
Chapter Four:	Recruitment, Training and Management Safety Policies	35
Chapter Five:	Survey Worker Practice: Joseph and Dawn	48
Chapter Six:	Dogs, Abusive People and other Everyday Risks	64
Chapter Seven:	Analysis of Policy and Practice	82
Chapter Eight:	Conclusion	101
Appendix One	Information Sheet	110
Appendix Two	Consent Form	112
Appendix Three	Participation Form	113
Appendix Four	Letter of thanks to informants	114
Appendix Five	The Suzy Lamplugh Trust – Wearing Name Badges	115
Appendix Six	The Suzy Lamplugh Trust Mobile Phone Safety at Work	116
References		117

Chapter One: Introduction

Survey workers are exposed to risks in all shapes and sizes.

Dawn: He didn't have tattoos; he looked all right. When I got inside he said 'sit down' and there's this very explicit calendar, it took up almost the whole of the seat, so I just sat on it and pretended it wasn't there.

Nina: I went to this house and there was this young man ... there was no sign that there was any problem. He would have been eighteen or nineteen and he invited me in. I thought: 'gosh, I wish he'd stop - keep still' - and then (she whispered) I realised he was masturbating. I thought: God, what do I do now - pretend it isn't happening? What do I do? I hurried up and got through the interview. If I'd panicked it might have made him realise, he might have acted. So I rushed the interview then charged through the house. I opened the wrong door and he said, 'yes, that's my bedroom, if that's fine with you.' I said 'like Hell,' and ran out of the door.

Joseph: I had not sat down when the man lunged at me with a knife. Because of my background and experience, I was able to disarm him before he could use the knife. I moved outside quickly and called the police on my cellphone.

These experiences, while extreme, would come as no surprise to survey workers in New Zealand. Threats, abuse, innuendo and dog bites are the daily experience of those who seek our opinions on everything from airlines to toothpaste. Their story, and that of their employers, is the subject of this thesis. All names, whether of survey workers or organisations, are fictitious. The events are not.

At the time of interviewing informants¹ for my study, the risk of lone workers was topical. The front pages of newspapers told of Michael Choy, a Pizza delivery worker killed on the job. On delivering the pizza, he was attacked and beaten by a group of youths with a baseball bat. He had no means of telephoning for help, and staggered to a neighbour's door. Because the elderly occupants were frightened,

¹ For the purpose of this study I chose 'informant' to avoid confusion with the survey workers' role of interviewing respondents.

they did not answer but did call the police. But by the time they arrived, Michael had struggled to reach his parents' home. He was unable to alert them and was found unconscious on their doorstep some hours later. He died in hospital twenty-four hours after the beating. Had he been able to call for help from a cellphone, the turn of events might have been less tragic. The policy of that organisation was not to supply cellphones to their workers because they were employed as contractors on a casual basis.

A schizophrenic client at Accident Compensation Corporation in Auckland fatally stabbed Janet Pyke, an office worker in June 1999. As a result of this tragedy, ACC and other government agencies reviewed and changed their policies in an effort to protect their staff. In 2001 Marcus Doig, a pizza maker was shot and killed. His manager was the only other person present. Postal delivery workers at Otara, South Auckland, are now accompanied by dog rangers to protect them from roaming dogs owing to the increasing number of dog bites they have sustained.

Organisations wishing to create a culture, in which people feel valued, must guard the health, safety and welfare of their staff. Only then can they be expected to achieve desired goals, and the organisation further benefits by attracting and retaining high calibre employees. Conversely, organisations with a high accident rate are viewed as poor employers, and quality staff may leave. Human resource managers state that people are their greatest asset; that business depends on human capital to achieve and sustain a competitive edge.

When employees resign, they take much of their intellectual capital with them, a wealth of experience not easily replaced. People who perceive themselves as being at risk of harm are likely to be poorly motivated, under-productive and uncommitted. Poor morale results in high labour turnover, absenteeism and recruitment difficulties. The informants in this study demonstrated loyalty to their organisations by their length of service, their commitment to the job, and persistence in seeking out respondents in order to achieve high response rates.

The human resources manager of OpinionQuest², (one of the two organisations who agree to be part of this thesis), and I discussed a number of possible topics for my thesis. The organisation was conducting a safety and health study of survey workers, and the topic sparked my interest. I had always been very proactive in managing my own safety both in the workplace and outside. We discussed the possibility of my researching the health and safety issues of a group of survey workers. The human resources manager considered this a good topic, providing a second avenue for studying the survey workers. At the end of my study the findings could be compared with the organisation's own findings. I liked the idea of researching an area that would possibly result in improving the safety of workers. A second similar organisation, MarketMatrix, also agreed to take part.

Joseph, Dawn and Nina's stories above illustrate non-injurious assault, and how these three survey workers absorbed risk. The heart of this thesis is about how survey workers recognise and absorb risk. The risks encountered by survey workers can be a mix of emotional, physical and health issues; risk is not always violence. To many people, 'violence' means physical assault - but this is only one form. "The full spectrum includes verbal abuse; verbal abuse with specific threats; physical abuse such as pushing or obstructing but without injury; physical assault with minor injury, for example cuts or bruises; physical assault with severe injury, for example being punched and requiring medical treatment; and physical assault resulting in death" (Mullen 1997, p. 27).

In the following seven chapters of this thesis, I examine the risks faced by survey workers in two organisations (OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix), the actions taken by workers and their employers to minimise risk, draw parallels with comparable groups of workers, and recommend changes in policy and practice.

Chapter two reviews the risk literature relating to groups of disparate yet comparable workers, facing similar occupational hazards as they go about their work. Their common factor is their workplace environment; they work alone. Legislation

² OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix are fictitious names.

protecting such employees does exist, for example the New Zealand Health and Safety Act 1992. This legislation provides a framework for organisations to manage the health and safety of their employees.

In chapter three, I discuss the methodology of the study: the appropriateness of the qualitative method in this context; the selection of participants; meeting both the requirements of the organisations involved, and the ethical requirements of Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC). I describe the process of conducting interviews and, because the study involved visiting informants in their homes, often away from my home area, I outline a plan for my own safety. As the research proceeded, I became aware of a recursive quality to the study: in interviewing survey workers, I adopted the very role I was investigating. Meanwhile, the survey workers would experience a role reversal, becoming the informants.

Chapter four examines the recruitment, selection, induction and training policies of both organisations involved in the study, with particular regard to their risk minimisation. Both OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix have similar policies. It is not the purpose of this study to compare the organisations but rather to contrast the organisations' policies with the workers' health and safety practices.

Chapter five focuses on the daily round of survey workers. To what extent are organisational policies in relation to safety and health being practised by the survey workers? The chapter tells the stories of how they recognise and absorb physical, psychological and economic risks. Highlighted are some of the actual risks as identified by them.

Chapter six discusses the survey workers' experience with everyday risks such as problems associated with dogs, abusive people, the terrain, the weather, the social and physical isolation, and economic stresses. Some of these risks are accepted as part of the job; they are recognised and absorbed. For some survey workers they absorb the risks unwittingly.

Chapter seven analyses organisational policies in terms of legislation, exploring the degree to which these policies were practised in the field. And when they are implemented, do they work? I explore the survey workers' perception of their organisations' policies, and outline employees' needs. Sometimes organisational policies were not documented, and areas of survey worker practice not covered by policies are identified. For example, cellphones are not provided to all survey workers yet OpinionQuest has provided cellphones to some staff; there is no firm policy on how to deal with mechanical breakdowns; OpinionQuest has provided rental vehicles but this is not widely communicated.

Chapter eight outlines recommendations that, if adopted, would improve the safety and health of survey workers. These involve altering, defining or monitoring existing policies. There must be recognition of survey work as hazardous, and in many cases, a primary cause of risk is isolation. Minimising isolation by way of cellphones may also minimise risk. Suggestions for further research are identified following the conclusions of this study.

Chapter Two: The Risk Literature

Every day, an army of workers is exposed to danger when visiting people in their homes or working in isolation. Police, social workers, general medical practitioners, community nurses, real estate agents, survey interviewers and sex workers belong within these disparate ranks; this literature review focuses on the safety and health risks to which they may be exposed and the steps they and their employers take to ensure a safe environment. Occupational health and safety is defined as an attempt to ensure that people at work return home in at least as good a condition as when they departed, over the period of their working life (Bateman 2002, p. 34).

In New Zealand the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 provides a legislative framework for these workers. In addition, companies have policies that seek to minimise the risk to their workers and workers themselves have techniques that allow them to both recognise and absorb these risks.

Few would dispute that we live in an increasingly violent world. Predictably, society's woes have spilled into the workplace, emerging as an important safety and health issue. It is conspicuous in the United States where shooting incidents account for 17% of all workplace fatalities (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2001). In the US workplace, violence is viewed as an epidemic (Greenberg & Baron, 1995). In the UK, the British Crime Survey found the number of assaults at work had more than doubled between 1991 and 1998 (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999). Concerns about the health and safety of employees in the workplace include work-related aggression from clients, customers or the public. Violence is not always physical. "Even where staff are not physically harmed, a daily diet of swearing, threats and verbal abuse can lead to depression, stress, low morale and absenteeism" (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999, p. 46).

Two factors contributing to employee risk at work are contact with the public and working alone or in small numbers (Saul, 2000; Micco, 1997; Brownlie in Diaz, 2000, Zaichkowski & Eng, 2002). For example, one group at risk are real estate

agents. In the UK in 1986, Suzy Lamplugh, a real estate agent, disappeared when she went to meet an unknown client. She never returned. There were no systems in place to monitor and track real estate agents like her in their mobile workplace. Lamplugh's disappearance highlighted risks faced by almost every worker, and revealed the inadequacy of employers in protecting their staff (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999).

The medical profession is not immune from risk. A study of general practitioners in the United Kingdom found increased fear and increased intimidation during night visits. This was significantly greater for women doctors (Hobbs, 1994).

Employees' working alone often arises out of a need for employers to save costs. In rural areas of New Zealand, police often work alone, particularly at night. Four out of five New Zealand police officers killed on duty were working alone (Brownlie in Diaz, 2000). A 1996 staff survey of social workers in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services revealed that ninety-five percent of them had experienced violence at work. Steve Maharey, the current Social Services Minister, rejected the request for \$750 a year 'danger money' (Haines, 2001). Maharey said: "the goal should be to make social workers' jobs safer instead of paying them extra.... I would not like us just to accept danger as something that we can compensate for." The request for danger money has since been dropped. In general, workers lack the bargaining power to secure hazard pay (Harcourt in Wren, 2000).

Women are at a disproportionate risk of work-based violence. Whether physical or psychological, they are at greater danger of job-related stress, musculo-skeletal injuries, inflicted violence and other workplace hazards than their male co-workers. For example, Swanson (1998) found that women might experience a range of psychological and physical symptoms following sexual harassment. Women are also more likely to be murdered at work than men according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (1998) in (Rabasca, 2000). In 1998 one hundred and sixty-three women were murdered at work according to the US Department of Labor (Rabasca, 2000).

Sex workers represent an extreme on the continuum of risk for employees in non-standard workplaces. They tend to underestimate potential hazards, and their contributory factors. The location of their work is the crucial factor in determining their risk of violence. Those who choose the street as their place to solicit clients are at much greater danger than those in massage parlours, brothels, or on outcalls to hotel-dwelling clients (Kinnell, 2001; Plumridge & Abel, 2001). Sex workers stated they were “in control” of risks and dangers on the streets but did not acknowledge their personal vulnerability (Plumridge, 2001). A study on female sex workers in Christchurch found that eighty-five percent of the women get information from other sex workers on how to remain safe from violence and disease. The New Zealand Prostitutes’ Collective was another source of information. About half of the women surveyed said they did not have sufficient information when they first began working the streets (Plumridge & Abel, 2000). Overseas social values make sex workers more vulnerable. In Vancouver, Canada, sex workers operating on the streets could be murdered and it is unlikely that anyone would be prosecuted (Cler-Cunningham & Christenson, 2001). In New Zealand a greater number of assaults and threats take place on the street than elsewhere. This is applicable to both men and women (Young, Morris, Cameron & Haslett, 1996).

In New Zealand, most survey workers employed in market research are women. From a health and safety standpoint, this is significant, as women are more vulnerable to physical attack - in particular rape. Men face dangers too. In particular, they endure the possible risk of being falsely accused of inappropriate behaviour, harassment, or sexual assault by either female or male respondents. Why, then, are more women than men employed in this hazardous task? Are they an accessible casual labour force? Are they better research assistants? Is it because women are better emotion managers? It is beyond the scope of this study to answer these questions. Perhaps these questions are true but what is important is that the gender of the interviewer does not influence the quality of the data. The interviewer’s gender and survey content can and does influence the likelihood of harassment and it is the threat of danger that is the focus of this thesis. There are other risks. Green, Barbour, Barnard & Kitzinger (1993) researched sexual harassment in research settings and found that age and gender as well as ‘sexy’

subject matter and in-depth interviewing, increased the researchers' vulnerability. For example, preparing to meet people on their territory may necessitate a degree of 'psyching themselves up' - giving the impression that they are delighted to meet the person. Hochschild (1983) noted that women do more emotion managing than men. Women are able to adapt their roles to suit the clients, for example nurturing as mothers; using sexuality to enhance the status of men. Illich in Hochschild (1983) suggests this "shadow labour" is an unseen effort, crucial to getting things done.

Stress is a modern occupational disease. Ostell (1986) in Rudman (1999) defines stress as: "the state of affairs which exists when the way people attempt to manage problems taxes or exceeds their coping resources." Capel & Gurnsey (1988) in Rudman (1999) identify four key contributors to stress in the workplace: environmental factors, job design factors, contractual factors and relationship factors.

Specific occupations and work settings generate their own stress. Nurses (McGrath, Reid & Boore, 1989), teachers (Blasé, 1986; Brenner & Bartell, 1984; Friesen & Sarros, 1989; Mykletun, 1984), caregivers (Chiriboga, Weiler, & Nielsen, 1989), occupational therapists (Rogers & Dodson, 1988), paramedics (Grigsby & McKnew, 1988), firemen (Lim, 1987) hospice staff (Yancik, 1984), correctional workers (Brodsky, 1982), and South African educational psychologists (Basson, 1988, in Cooper & Locke, 2000 p. 41). In spite of the diversity of the work, common factors emerge as core stressors. "Unhealthy environments are those that threaten safety, that undermine the creation of social ties, and that are conflictual, abusive, or violent" (Taylor, Repetti & Seeman, 1997 in Cooper & Locke, 2000 p. 41).

The Legislative Framework

The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 is the key legislation applicable to workers visiting people in their homes. Other legislation that directly affects them is the Trespass Act 1980, the Dog Control Act 1996, and the Smoke-Free Environment Act 1990. Each is addressed here.

Prior to the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, legislation covering workplace health and safety issues was fragmented. Many statutes were industry-specific such as the Agricultural Workers Act 1977, Bush Workers Act 1945, Mining Act 1971, and Shearers' Act 1962. One intention of the 1992 Act was changing the emphasis from control of specific hazards to managing risks in relation to work activities. The new focus provided a more comprehensive and manageable framework. Its principal objective was the prevention of harm to employees at work, and aimed to promote excellence in health and safety management by employers. The Act classifies both incidents and accidents as accidents. Organisations were then free to develop their own codes of practice relating to hazards, conditional on employers taking all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees while at work. Employees were also required to take all reasonable steps to ensure their own safety. They were expected to be provided with information about hazards to which they might be exposed and to be given the results of any safety and health monitoring of the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Service of the Department of Labour (OSH) administer the Act (Rudman, 2002). Employees working off-site have the same rights and responsibilities under the Act.

Currently there is "amending legislation before Parliament seeking to extend the definition of 'harm' to include physical or mental harm caused by work-related stress" (Rudman, 2002 p. 598). Attorney General Margaret Wilson (2001) in her media statement for "New laws for Safer Workplaces" states,

that the definitions of 'harm' and 'hazard' will be extended to confirm that they cover mental harm, and a hazard arising through physical or mental fatigue. OSH is preparing a best practice document for the effective management of stress and fatigue in the workplace.

In the UK, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 also sprang from a need to bring together many different statutes and provide wider coverage for workers. Before the current UK legislation, only two-thirds of workers were covered (Howells & Barrett, 1982). Previous statutes did not include the provision for people who were harmed as a result of activities of people at work. The UK Act has similar requirements of

both employers and employees. One crucial difference between the New Zealand Act and the UK Act is that the New Zealand Act covers people in all places of work. The term “workplace” in the New Zealand Act was changed to “place of work” recognising that wherever people are working they should not be at risk of harm. In contrast the UK Act states:

The duty extends so far as is reasonably practicable as regards any place of work under the employer’s control, the maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risks to health, and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks (Howells & Barrett, 1982, p. 21).

It could be argued that survey workers knocking on doors are beyond the control of employers. They are not. Employers are expected to inform employees of hazards and recommend precautions to reduce or eliminate them (Wrigglesworth & Earl, 1978).

The UK Act makes employers identify and measure risk in various ways. For example The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 (UK) obliges employers to examine employees’ work activities, record findings and assess risks, following this up with preventative and protective measures and management arrangements. However, one of the main deficiencies of The New Zealand Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 is the lack of recognition it gives to workers who work in other peoples’ homes. The occupier of the home is not subject to the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, even if the occupier of the house is paying the person for a job. Examples of this are cleaning personnel or tradespersons. But workers employed by external organisations such as survey workers, are fully covered by the Act.

There is still room for additional legislation. Wren (2000) argues that legislation needs to be introduced to acknowledge the rights of workers to refuse dangerous work. Wren contends that it is time for the representatives of NZ employers to take responsibility and acknowledge that their workers have a right to protest and participate in decisions about their own health and safety. Wren states:

quality health and safety management demands meaningful worker participation, and given the history of employer's intransigence, the only way this can be achieved is to legislate for it (2000, p. 18).

Employees working outside the workplace have rights and constraints. They have the same limited entitlement as any other person to enter someone else's property under the Trespass Act 1980. They must leave the property when asked to do so by the occupier. The Act states that a person commits an offence against this Act if she/he refuses to leave a property. The occupier has the right to warn that person not to return to the property and the person contravenes the Trespass Act if she/he returns within two years after the warning. In addition, when entering properties it is a requirement under the Act to leave gates as they are found - that is, to shut gates where they were found shut and to leave gates open if they were found open. People entering other peoples' properties must also provide their names if asked.

Dogs are a constant risk to mobile workers. Anyone whose work takes them onto other peoples' properties is at risk of sudden and unprovoked attack. Dogs are the bane of these workers' lives. The Dog Control Act 1996 endeavours to make better provision for the care and control of dogs. It requires dogs to be registered, makes special provision for dangerous dogs and imposes responsibilities on owners to ensure that dogs do not cause a nuisance to anyone, whether through injury, danger, or distress (Section 4). Dog owners must ensure that the dog is kept under control at all times; (Section 5 (b)) and take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not injure, endanger, intimidate, or cause distress (Section 5 (f)). Local authorities are required to appoint dog control officers (Section 11).¹

¹ Given the focus on dogs by the survey workers in this study, I contacted two local authorities in which several respondents were located to discover if there had been an increase in the number of dogs registered. Porirua City Council registers approximately three thousand six hundred dogs each year and states that their figures remain reasonably static. Wellington City Council showed a steady increase in dog registrations over the last four years: 7,200 (1997/1998); 7,700 (1998/1999); 8,000 (1999/2000); 8,000 (2000/2001). Their statistics showed that the breeds that caused the most problems in descending order were: Labradors and Labrador cross, German Shepherds and German Shepherd cross, a drop to Staffordshire Bull terrier and Staffordshire Bull terrier cross, Boxers, Collies, Fox terriers and Jack Russell terriers. Entire dogs caused more problems than de-sexed dogs. More than half the impounded dogs in Wellington were entire; for this reason Council favours de-sexing. These dogs are also less likely to roam.

Cigarette smoke poses a potential risk to survey workers who visit people in their homes. These workers find that many of their clients continue to smoke while being interviewed. People do have the right to smoke in their own homes and it would be inappropriate for the workers to ask them not to, given that, (like the dogs), they are on their territory. However, cigarette smoke does expose survey workers to passive smoking as a hazard. These mobile workers are not operating under the same conditions as employees whose workplaces are subject to The Smoke-Free Environment Act 1990. This Act determines where and when people can smoke at work. Many organisations have no-smoking policies that ban smoking on the premises. Employees often go outside to smoke.

When appropriate cognisance is taken of the quality of data inputs, the increase in lung cancer risk from workplace exposure to environment tobacco smoke is about the same as that from household exposure (Wells, 1998, p. 1025).

Overseas studies show a small but consistent increased risk of lung cancer in women as a result of passive smoking (Brownson & Alavanja, 1992). Non-smokers exposed to tobacco smoke have a twenty-six per cent higher risk of getting lung cancer. Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) consists of (1) sidestream smoke, which comes from the lit end of a cigarette, (2) smoke that escapes from the non-burning end and (3) mainstream smoke, which has been inhaled by smokers and then exhaled. Sidestream smoke has higher levels of cancer-causing chemicals per microgram than direct smoke. Eye and throat irritation can result from being in the presence of smokers as can the detection of unpleasant odours. This can alter a person's sense of well-being and comfort (Ballard, 1992). Passive smoking can result in people being subject to the same diseases as smokers (Bateman, 2001). Workers who are exposed to passive smoking absorb the risks of lung cancer and associated diseases. They also absorb the costs of drycleaning their clothes as a result of being exposed to smoke.

Employer Risk Management

In response to increasing workplace violence in New Zealand, employers are forced to review their physical security arrangements (Rudman, 1999). This responsibility still applies when they have no direct control over their employees' working environment such as in another's house. The New Zealand Act dictates that

employers must do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure their employees safety at work, wherever the workplace may be (Setchell, 2002). Reflecting on the eight work-related homicides in 2001, working alone among strangers is identified as making employees more vulnerable (Bateman, 2002).

OSHA general manager, Bob Hill, has been quoted as saying work-related homicides 'now feature much more prominently ... than any of us would like', and the possibility of intentional harm should be included when identifying hazards in the workplace (Bateman, 2002, p. 4).

Risk can be analysed from a statistical or environmental viewpoint but it also has a subjective component. The fear of being assaulted is one of the four fundamental fears for human beings (Koestenbaum, in Block, 2000).

Risk is the experience of anxiety, and that anxiety is a natural and inevitable aspect of knowing that we are capable of choosing freedom, (Block, 2000, p. 45).

Common sources of risk include a difficult client base, a heightened probability of robbery due to the presence of money or valuables, or working alone. Such circumstances require vigilance from both employers and workers. Complacency is a poor ally. Employers must identify potential workplace hazards, and take steps to isolate or minimise these. Employees too should assess each situation for themselves, matching any implicit danger with their own level of risk tolerance.

Banks, in the face of a constant risk of robbery, have taken drastic measures to safeguard employees. Security guards are often present outside banks. Bank staff are trained to cope with hold-ups. Technology-based protection such as security cameras and panic buttons are extensively used; links to security companies are standard practice. Some banks have double doors, enabling the staff to control entry. Yet, despite these measures, bank workers have been killed on the job. In May 2002, despite following protocol and giving the robber money, a teller was killed at his counter during a hold-up (Bateman, 2002).

Security guards protecting banks are themselves at danger. "Don't put yourself in a risky situation," advises Gary Morrison of GM Armourguard (Diaz, 2000).

Morrison identifies the key safety issues as training and communication. He states “training does not include self defence techniques because staff should withdraw from a situation rather than taking on an intruder” (Diaz, 2000). In contrast, Lindner & Koehler (1992) note that fieldwork policies for probation officers are being changed to include the supply and encouraged use of defensive weapons when working away from the office. Smith & Alpert (2000) discuss the place of pepper spray for police. In New Zealand it is an offence to use pepper spray or similar product in self-defence. It is also illegal to carry a knife. The police motto is ‘maximise safety by minimising risk’.

Less institutionalised workers, whose hazards stem from potentially aggressive members of the public, may have fewer safeguards (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999). Only when workplace assaults and fatalities do occur, are organisations confronted with the reality of employee risk. These events may force employers to review their policies, engaging in a dialogue with their staff to address safety and risk management.

Like banks, service station attendants are regularly exposed to the possibility of physical assault. Security cameras are standard equipment in Mobil service stations, whose staff face about one confrontation a week (Jones in Diaz, 2000). At twenty-four hour stations, the staff operate protected by kiosks, reducing the risk of assault.

Paradoxically, the caring professions experience the front line of social violence. Nurses, social workers, staff from the Accident Compensation Corporation, Housing New Zealand, and the Ministry of Social Development (formerly WINZ) operate in the community in the face of risk. All recognise that risky situations may arise due to the nature of their clients who often live in stressful situations. Clients are more likely to be poor, have financial difficulties and feel marginalised. These grievances may be exacerbated by mental health problems, physical disabilities and isolation in the community - an emotional Molotov cocktail leading to instability and a propensity for violence.

The Ministry of Social Development issues a booklet, "STAFFsecure Guidelines," that accompanies staff training in safety and security at work. All employees must sign a declaration stating that they have completed the programme; this form is then placed on the employee's personal file. The course covers a range of safety issues including the potential hazards of home visits. For example, there are specific guidelines on how employees should operate with the public. The policy clearly states that wherever possible, the initial meeting with the client should take place in a Ministry of Social Development office. If this is not possible, two staff must attend the initial meeting, although in follow-up interviews only one staff member is required to visit. Staff members are expected to seek direction from their manager if they feel uncertain about a situation.

The Ministry of Social Development has clear procedures defined for field visits. These include: recording in a log book the name of staff member, the make and number of cellphone provided by the employer, details of the vehicle being used, the name, address and appointment time of client being visited. If a number of visits are scheduled then an itinerary is required. Staff are expected to give an approximate time for their return to the office, and a checking system requires managers to ensure that staff members return safely. The organisation operates an audit system to ensure that policies are being practised. Systems are in place that activate if a staff member fails to report their return.

Central to this audit system is the requirement that no staff member working away from the office will do so without a cellphone for his/her personal safety. The Ministry of Social Development guidelines state that a cellphone should be carried and the telephone pre-programmed with a short dial code for the police and the office. This policy focuses on employees protecting themselves from harm from clients. There is also the potential for clients to accuse employees of harassment or assault, particularly when men are interviewing female clients. Any incidents must be recorded in a register.

By contrast, North Island district nurses in Wilkinson's study (2001) had to share cellphones, and these were only available to them after-hours or at the weekends.

Wilkinson noted that their managers were provided with cellphones, yet spent much of their time in offices and were certainly not working in risky situations. The devices, Wilkinson claimed, were perceived as 'toys for the boys' (Wilkinson, 2001). District nurses identified a number of uses for cellphones other than personal safety, although the situations identified could result in more amenable clients had the nurses been able to make contact. A nurse who was delayed in traffic or whose previous client had taken longer than anticipated could use the cellphone to advise clients of the delay. District nurses could also check in and out of base, indicating that they had completed their visits for the day and that they were on their way home.

The Occupational Safety and Health Service (OSH) Department Medical Practitioners of New Zealand have recommended measures to minimise risk to general medical practitioners carrying out domiciliary visits. These include avoiding the use of their own car, travelling by taxi and asking the taxi driver to wait during the consultation and until the doctor is ready to return home (Dryson & Walls, 2000).

Statistics UK has issued a 'Staying Safe' guide to personal safety and protection of property. It covers a wide range of topics, urging survey workers to take responsibility for their own safety. Topics include: information on staying safe in public places, the best places to park, what to do in the event of a breakdown, accessing properties, the potential dangers of aggression, and how to avoid dog attacks.

In the UK real estate industry Allen (2002) has focused on the issue of personal safety where agents work alone with strangers. She reiterates simple things that have become standard practice in the real estate industry since the 1986 disappearance of Suzy Lamplugh. Allen cautions that, in the busyness of business, these simple precautions can be overlooked. For example, staff going out of the office without letting anyone know where they are going or their expected time back; scribbling names and telephone numbers on paper that are illegible or failing to recharge the cellphone so that contact is impossible.

As a result of Lamplugh's disappearance, her mother, Diana Lamplugh, set up the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Its mission is "to create a safer society and enable all people to live safer lives." The Trust produces videos, publications, runs workshops, organises training programmes and has earned itself a good reputation among UK organisations. A booklet, "Working Safely in Other People's Homes," gives practical advice for those whose jobs involve working in this environment (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999).

For people working alone in the forestry industry, a checking in and out system by telephone or radio contact is standard practice (Kirk in Diaz, 2000). This may appear unnecessary and onerous for both worker and manager. Yet this wise practice, maintaining contact between both worker and manager. Kenyon & Hawker (1999) reports academic researchers rely primarily on family and close friends to intervene should they not report back at the appropriate time. Family, they think, would be more concerned about their welfare than employers or colleagues.

Organisations taking a proactive stance in safeguarding their employees involve their employees in devising policies. This ensures that new systems work well for both employees and managers. Employees in the workplace are more likely to be able to identify the hazards because they have met them or shared information with colleagues. A system that invites employees to voice their concerns through a suggestion/complaint procedure and providing feedback on their comments, without judgement or criticism, has been found to be successful (Brady, 1995). Employees are the best source of ideas for making their lives simpler (Lamplugh, 1999). Plus, Brady stressed the importance of following up incidents quickly and reporting to upper management. Identifying and reporting suspicious behaviour should form part of an ongoing training programme (Roberts, 2001).

In 1995 a British study found that sites with some form of employee participation had a consistently lower injury rate than those whose management took sole responsibility (Brown-Haysom, 2000). Employees are often the best people to identify the hazards as they have first-hand experience of their workplaces (Baker in Brown-Haysom, 2000). However, safety should not be left to committees. Baker

noted “those organisations with Total Quality Management integrate safety into the whole process rather than pigeon-holing it with a committee” (2000, p. 51).

Ridgley (1997) identifies compulsory comprehensive safety programs as the best way to ensure employee safety. Key elements of a workplace violence prevention program include management commitment, employee involvement and education and training. In addition, it is important for employers to identify personnel who are likely to encounter the greatest aggression on the job (Byrnes, 1997). Being alert to the warning signs of danger and knowing whether employees fall into a high-risk group demonstrates a pro-active stance (Boyd, 1996).

Collaboration between employers and employees, devising measures to make their lives safer constitutes one proactive initiative. Continuous improvement as a process in safety management is also desirable (Fuller, 1999). For workers working alone personal safety alarms should be provided; systems created to record where everyone is and how they can be contacted and training provided in handling and defusing aggression (Lamplugh, 1999). If organisations consider that it is appropriate for their employees to have safety equipment, in the case of survey workers, personal alarms, McDonald (2000) states that they should provide them and ensure that they are carried for use if required.

Some organisations develop their own programmes to raise awareness of the risks and to provide staff with coping strategies to help them keep themselves safe. The Waitemata Health Training Programme for staff working in the community includes topics on how to defuse a heated situation, how to restrain someone and when to call in a specialist incident team (Diaz, 2000).

Social Workers in the UK use a proactive seven-step action plan for personal safety drawn up for employees and employers to work together on (Bibby, 1994). These steps were:

- Find out if there is a problem
- Record all incidents
- Classify all incidents

- Search for preventive measures
- Decide what to do
- Put measures into practice
- Check that measures work

Employee Risk Management

Employees can do a raft of activities to make themselves safer when working alone. For example being proactive in taking care involves recognizing and avoiding danger. Physical well-being impacts on one's safety. Being fit, exercising regularly, eating properly, sleeping well and relaxing contribute to optimal well-being (Stone, 2002).

Cultivating an awareness of the immediate environment can also alert survey workers to possible dangers (Bibby, 1994). Employees need to be aware of the messages they send out when walking on the streets and on how these could be interpreted in terms of vulnerability. Making judgements about people based on previous experiences, stereotypes and first impressions may or may not be accurate but it is wise to act on those impressions when posed with a potentially dangerous situation. Reading signs and signals alerts survey workers to possible dangers.

McDonald (2001, p. 35) states "there are things you can do to be safe, and being prepared is one of them." Being aware minimises the risk of being attacked. However, if women do find themselves confronted by an attacker they should be aware of what to do to reduce the risk of rape. Women often imagine, quite wrongly, that they will freeze and not be able to do anything. It is wise to have the knowledge of how to deal with this situation so that if it does ever arise women are able to act appropriately. However, in the event of a possible attack "knowledge may be the only weapon a victim has in a highly dangerous situation." Firm verbal confrontation should be the first line of response. Aggression with action such as kicking, punching or biting should only be attempted if verbal confrontation does not work (Ressler, Burgess & Douglas in Sanders, 2001, p. 69, 70). Training in defence

mechanisms can be an effective way of coping with aggressive confrontations (Leadbetter & Trewartha, 1996).

Bart & O'Brien (in Sanders, 2001, p. 67) in a study of ninety-four women found that "Women who used physical force together with another technique increased their chances of avoiding rape. In fact, the more additional strategies they used, the greater their chances Yelling and screaming together with using force was the most effective *combination* to avoid rape." Bart & O'Brien (in Sanders, 2001), refer to other studies that had similar findings.

Organisations that encourage employees to report incidents immediately and accurately, even when no injury has occurred, reduce risks in the future, providing the incidents are acted upon (Brady, 1995; Wallace, 2000). Anonymous incident (near miss) monitoring has proved successful in highly dangerous or risky industries by reducing accidents (Gorman, 2002).

Under-reporting of incidents by employees gives employers a false impression of the level of abuse experienced by staff. Yet on the other end of the spectrum, exposure to threatening behaviour is often accepted as part of the job. It is seen as the norm. Victims sometimes feel it is an indication of their incompetence or they feel that management will not respond appropriately (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999; Wilkinson, 2002). Dolly, a black nursing sister, (in the UK) noted "I did feel terrible about all the abuse at first, but in all my years as a nurse I never reported any of these incidents to anybody. You just develop your own ways of dealing with it" (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999, p. 48). Silvia, a senior manager in a local authority housing department, experienced sexual harassment from a client. He then discovered her home telephone number and started making a series of abusive phone calls. Silvia ignored the threats and carried on work as usual. In hindsight, she felt "that the situation had exposed a policy vacuum, and the incident led to a thorough review of policy in this area" (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999, p. 49).

It is from this literature and stories like Dolly and Silvia that this thesis begins. What are the experiences of New Zealand survey workers and how do their experiences

mirror or depart from organisational policy? How much does organisational policy protect employees in the field from risk? How do survey workers recognise risk and how much do they absorb risk like Silvia and Dolly?

Numbers and People

The survey research literature writes extensively about methodological issues like interview bias produced by the effects of gender and race and other issues concerning a robust questionnaire but they write little about the health and safety of interviewers on the street. “The personal safety of the interviewer is mostly neglected in the literature” (Jones, 1991, p. 209 in Kenyon & Walker, p. 315). Williams, Dunlap, Johnson & Hamid (1992) note that personal safety during fieldwork is seldom addressed directly in the literature. They discuss strategies for avoiding or handling dangerous situations and suggest that ethnographers can routinely create a safety zone for themselves in the field: recognise the preferred time to work is daylight; recognise the danger areas of lifts, unlit stairwells; the hazards of public transport; preferred places to park; ensuring that vehicles are reliable and maintained.

The New Zealand Market Research Society has a Code of Practice (1994) that covers the Rights of Respondents and the Professional Responsibilities of Researchers to ensure the integrity of Marketing Research, yet the issue of health and safety of researchers does not feature. A critique of this code is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Survey workers and academic researchers have much in common when they engage in face-to-face interviews in respondents’ homes (Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000). Survey workers are surveying the population at large and academic researchers are targeting specific people within the population at large. Often both groups are undertaking interviews alone. For example, Kenyon & Hawker (1999) investigated academic researchers. They conducted an e-mail survey of social researchers exploring the issue of safety for lone academic researchers. They had 46 responses, 13 from male and 33 from females. Four female respondents had experienced incidents of a very serious nature - a serious sexual assault, a physical assault, and a

near rape, a shooting. In one case where a researcher was seriously assaulted she received little support from colleagues. There were also nine descriptions of near incidents.

Although the chance of a dangerous encounter is low, social researchers do have fears whilst conducting interviews in isolated places, particularly peoples' homes. The researchers found that ethnographers were expected to rely on their common sense for their safety. These researchers encountered criticism of creating awareness that might fuel fear. One respondent:

I'm a lone female researcher concerned about safety. I try not to think about it or I get too nervous. I'm planning to interview in public places ... I'm s-s-s-s-s-s-scared (female researcher) (p. 317).

The need to develop a code of practice for researchers working in the field is essential. "The strongest and clearest message from this study was that respondents advised researchers to inform others of their whereabouts and movements at all times during fieldwork" (Kenyon & Hawker, 1999, p. 323). They state that individual researchers, project leaders and institutions appear to be in a state of ignorance or denial. How to turn policy into practice needs to go beyond legislation.

A significant number of respondents in Kenyon & Hawker's study pointed out that social research is only a job and that "the safety of the researcher has to be viewed as more important than accessing data Advice on this subject ranged from 'look after yourself - institutions don't have any idea what researchers face' (female researcher) to 'on occasions I've had to run like hell and I believe this to be the best strategy.'" (male researcher) (Kenyon & Hawker, 1999 p. 324).

Survey workers work in isolation much of the time either cold calling people in their homes or telephoning people from their own home base. The health and safety issues presented in these environments may not be obvious. Imminent danger is not the rule but the exception to the rule. Bill Bryson said as much when discussing danger on the Appalachian Trail. He said:

Now, it is important to establish right away that the possibility of a serious bear attack on the Appalachian Trail is remote ... Black bears rarely attack. But here's the thing. Sometimes they do ... That doesn't happen often, but ... And here is the absolutely salient point - once would be enough (Bryson, 1997, p. 23-24 in Kenyon & Hawker, 1999).

Survey workers seldom get hurt, yet the potential for harm is ever present.

Once would be enough.

In chapter three I outline the methods used to conduct the study and how I took on the role that I was studying.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The qualitative approach was the appropriate method for undertaking this research given that I wanted to explore how survey workers experience risk in their everyday working lives. In the context of this study, qualitative methods provide richer data and deeper insights than can be achieved by quantitative methods. Data gathering was enhanced by the researcher's ability to be flexible and open-ended in questioning informants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Unstructured interviews result in the content being defined by what the informants choose to tell the researcher. They are more than conversations as they do have a loose structure (Opie, in Tolich & Davidson, 1999). I chose semi-structured in-depth interviews. I began broadly defining the topic to the informants. This provided a context for the interviews. Open-ended questions were then used to stimulate the informants' memories of safety and health issues they might have met. This still provided freedom for informants to tell their own stories of safety without departing from the study's boundaries. Face-to-face interviews were carried out when the distances from home were not unduly great, and by telephone with survey workers who lived a considerable distance from my base in the Wellington region.

Prior to the study, I conducted three pilot interviews with people who had experience working as survey workers but were not engaged in this work now. The three interviews provided valuable information on the issues, as they perceived them, on health and safety. This gave me a clearer picture of what I was likely to encounter when I started the study. All informants related risk experiences of problems with dogs and abusive people.

Selection and Entry

Initially, I approached the organisation referred to as OpinionQuest. On my behalf, the human resources manager contacted the manager responsible for survey workers. Several layers of organisational hierarchy later, I was granted qualified approval to research the safety and health issues of survey workers. The conditions were: that

the research would be restricted to safety and health issues; that employees selected for the research would not be limited to the Wellington region but would be drawn from a wider area; that OpinionQuest would not be the only organisation studied; and that the organisation would not be identified by name.

I then approached MarketMatrix, another market research organisation with survey workers employed throughout the country. I indicated that MarketMatrix would be one of two organisations involved in the study, and approval was given to research the safety and health issues of their survey workers. The sample interviewed was drawn from the North Island.

To protect the privacy of their employees, both OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix agreed to distribute invitations to participate in the study. I only accessed employees who had elected to be interviewed. Through its regular newsletter, OpinionQuest advised survey workers that my study carried organisational endorsement, that they would receive invitations to participate in the study posted by OpinionQuest, but that their participation would not be reported back to the organisation. This level of input may have contributed to the high response rate from OpinionQuest.

I supplied letters and an information sheet to both OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix for distribution to survey workers. These documents provided full details of the study and contact details for both study supervisors and myself (Appendix 1). A consent form (Appendix 2) and participation form were enclosed, along with a stamped addressed envelope to my home address (Appendix 3). The same information was provided for MarketMatrix survey workers except that the envelope was addressed to my business address. This avoided any problem identifying the organisation to which the survey worker was associated when the participation forms were returned. I used white paper - studies have shown that there is no significance difference in response rates when using coloured paper (Buttle & Thomas, 1997). I did not include any inducements because I have ethical reservations about their use. Studies have shown that the inclusion of a coin does increase response rates in mail surveys, but the inclusion of such objects as tea bags does not (Gendall, Hoek, & Brennan, 1998).

The response rate from OpinionQuest was seventy-five percent, and fairly rapid. I suspect this reflects the interest in the topic and the endorsement given by the organisation. The response rate from MarketMatrix was much slower, necessitating a second mail-out to attract sufficient informants from this organisation. The response rate was twenty percent.

Ethics

Massey University require anyone conducting research involving human participants to seek the approval of the University ethics committee. Thus ethics approval was sought and granted by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) at the Turitea Campus, Palmerston North. Minor changes were required before final approval was granted. Letters of support for the study were presented from OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix. Once final approval had been granted, the two organisations proceeded to distribute participation letters. Thus, a number of steps had to be reached before I was able to reach the informants.

One ethical consideration that concerned me was that my proposed study was from a human resource management perspective. Informants might view me as being 'on the side of management'. I was careful to distance myself from management and reinforced the fact that I was there to find out their experiences and to compare with policy, not to offer advice.

Informants

Forty-five survey workers agreed to participate in the study from OpinionQuest, ten from MarketMatrix. As the number of informants from OpinionQuest was higher than expected, I sampled thirty informants representing the diversity of survey workers and their location of work. The number of informants suggests that they viewed safety and health issues as significant in their daily work and that they wanted changes to existing practice. I interviewed ten from MarketMatrix. These interviews took place between June and December 2001. MarketMatrix informants were located in both urban and rural settings in the North Island and at the top of the South Island.

Thirty-five percent of the informants in this study were male and sixty-five percent female reflecting the increasing number of males entering survey work. The age range was mid twenties to early seventies, with most being concentrated in the older age group - over fifty. Survey workers were predominantly European but did include other ethnic groups. To preserve the identities of the informants, these groups are not identified. The length of time in the job ranged from new entrants - one had been in the job for only a week - to seventeen years. Many had been with the organisation in excess of three years. Experience results in higher response rates (Groves & Couper, 1998).

Most survey workers participating from OpinionQuest were engaged in face-to-face interviewing while most of those in MarketMatrix interviewed by telephone. This was a significant point of difference between the two organisations.

When informants indicated their willingness to participate, I contacted them by telephone to arrange a mutually convenient time and place, advising them that the interview would take between forty and sixty minutes. When a face-to-face interview was feasible, I gave three options for interview location: my office, my home or their home. For more distant informants, I travelled to their homes if I could drive there and back in a day. All others were interviewed by telephone. To maintain the confidentiality of informants I have not indicated the numbers falling into different categories.

I started all face-to-face interviews by going through the consent form and asking them to sign it if they had not already done so. Each informant received a copy of the signed form. Telephone interviewees were sent a copy of the signed consent form before undertaking the interview. I asked all informants if they would agree to the interview being taped. Only three did not wish to be recorded: one was a telephone interview and two were face-to-face. For these I took notes which was problematic as it was difficult to capture what would have been rich quotes from these interviews. I felt that I had 'missed' something and was agreeably pleased that only three informants did not wish to be tape-recorded. Before the interview started, informants were asked to choose pseudonyms for confidentiality. Three preferred to

use their true names, but for privacy reasons I have also assigned pseudonyms to them. Should they wish, they may reveal their identities in their own time; it would be inappropriate in a study of this nature. I changed two pseudonyms because one was not a credible name and the other was the name of a dog! Including such names would have risked disclosure of their true identities. In some parts of the thesis, composite characters are used to protect the identities of informants. 'Dawn', for instance, is more than one person. Accessing two organisations made it possible to keep the participant group confidential.

For the twelve telephone interviews, I brought my office telephone home as it had a loudspeaker that made it easy to tape-record. I chose to do the interviews at home because it was cheaper, (\$3 per call maximum off-peak rates) and because I could rely on not having interruptions.

At the beginning of the interview, I provided an overview of the study. I then asked informants to tell me about their work. They were to imagine themselves introducing me to the role of survey worker. What kind of things should I look out for? I allowed the informants to decide the flow of the interview. However, if I felt that they were deviating from the topic, I asked them to identify the safety and health issues in their work before focusing on specific experiences when they had felt their safety was at risk. I asked them whether they had reported the incidents, how the reports were received, what was done, and what changes were implemented because of the reporting. I inquired about their initial and ongoing training in safety and health. What proactive measures did they take to keep safe and well while working? I asked them to comment on current management policies and practices in terms of safety and health issues; to identify what is working well; what needs to be improved and the changes that they would recommend. I tailored the interview according to the informants' responses and their verbal and nonverbal cues (Groves & Couper, 1998).

After each interview I reflected on each conversation. What had I learned, and how could I improve the next one? I learned to probe issues in-depth rather than move on to another topic. One advantage of qualitative research is that it empowers the

informant to tell their story in their own way and to provide richer data. An advantage for the researcher is that each informant's story provides the basis for the next interview. One informant could raise issues that another might not have considered. These were likely to provide a new direction to be explored. In the initial interviews, they made me aware that 'dogs' were a major issue for survey workers and I encouraged each informant to tell their own 'dog' story. However, I was aware of the time and encouraged informants to reflect on other issues. A number of informants raised the issue of the mileage allowance and remuneration. Initially I steered away from these topics, believing that they were outside the boundaries of my study. However, on reflection I realised that these were legitimate health issues because they were sources of stress to some informants. I was very conscious not to exceed the one-hour maximum that I had said would be required.

Tape-recording interviews can lead to complacency. Researchers can sometimes miss an opportunity to follow through on an answer because they are focusing on the next question (Tolich & Davidson, 1999).

After the interviews, I sent letters of thanks to the informants and included a small gift of a drawer sachet as a token of my appreciation (Appendix 4).

In addition to interviewing survey workers, I interviewed three supervisors, two from OpinionQuest and one from MarketMatrix, each of whom is responsible for a team. They are in first line management positions, responsible for the training and day-to-day management of survey workers. The questions I asked the supervisors were similar to those asked of the survey workers.

I transcribed the interviews verbatim within days of the interviews, erasing them as soon as two hard copies were printed. No other person had access to the tapes. Pseudonyms were used in the transcripts thus removing the identifiers (Fowler, 2002; Warren, 1977 in Lofland & Lofland, 1995). A list of the informants' names was kept separate from the data but in a way that could be cross-referenced. I retained the data in a locked filing cabinet in my office. All computer files were password protected.

Each interview was saved as a separate file on a floppy disk as well as the hard disk on my computer. I coded sections of each transcript to identify themes, then organised the interviews into one file, using the search facility to find references to each theme: 'dogs', 'verbal abuse', 'physical threats', etc. I gathered all the material from each theme in a new file. By having all the 'dog' material in one place I was able to identify common problems and patterns in the data. I highlighted quotes that I thought might be appropriate to include in the text.

Personal Experience

During the course of the study I had several experiences of market research companies approaching me both by telephone and face-to-face. I agreed to participate and I was able to experience being a respondent, yet able to appraise the survey workers' approaches in a new way. The telephone survey worker identified herself and the company. She provided me with information on the survey and specified how long it was likely to take. It was very straightforward and involved answering a number of questions on eating-out habits. The face-to-face survey worker at the door also named his company and showed his ID badge which contained his full name. Sam was looking for respondents who had purchased a new car recently. He appeared to be relieved when I fitted the category. When I invited him inside, he removed his shoes at the door. I invited him to sit at a table in the family room and he put down a cloth to cover the highly polished table. He told me that the interview would take approximately twenty minutes. The questions were straightforward but involved Sam turning cards and pages according to my answers. At the end of the interview we spent about ten minutes in conversation when I told him about my research study. Dogs were the biggest risk to him. Sam was in his seventies and had worked for the company for eight years, working every weekend. He said that if he were lucky and could find targeted respondents easily, he could complete his work on a Saturday. Otherwise he had to return to the area on the Sunday.

‘Going Native’ - A Personal Plan

As I planned my data-collecting journey, I realised that I was placing myself in a similar situation to the informants I was interviewing. I had the benefit of knowing that the interviewees were employees of reputable organisations, and that they would have been checked out on appointment to their positions. So, I was comfortable about conducting the interviews in the informants’ homes. All the same, I took several precautions. Each day before I left, I wrote down the name, address and telephone number of each informant and the time of the interview. I placed this information in a sealed envelope and put it in the top drawer of my study desk at home. I told my husband where it was, and we agreed that he would only open it if I did not return home at the expected time. I was not prepared to leave home and go on a journey with no one knowing my whereabouts. This is a practice commonly recommended (Green et al. 1993).

I wore business clothes, either a jacket and skirt or jacket and trousers. I considered that this would be similar to what the survey workers’ would wear for their work. I always checked to make sure I had sufficient petrol in the tank and checked the oil and tyres before a longer journey. I carried a bottle of water in the car. I carry a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sheets, blanket and rubber gloves in the boot.

Safety Strategies

I am not the owner of a cellphone. I did consider purchasing one before starting the study, but questioned why I should incur this expense if I had not required a cellphone before this research. When I made this decision, I was unaware of its significance in relation to my study – that survey workers face exactly the same dilemma.

Since 1987 I have carried a screech alarm in my handbag. It is always there, although I have never had cause to use it. I carry it in my hand or pocket when I am walking in unfamiliar areas, when I think I may be in a potentially risky place or when I am walking in an isolated area. The alarm also has a torch attached.

My car has remote key access, making it easy to enter the car quickly. When travelling in the country or at night I always lock the car doors. On entering, I routinely look in the back seat. I leave nothing of any value in my car.

I carry very little money in my purse as I make purchases by credit card or EFTPOS. On travelling away from home, I visited cafes for refreshments and used the toilet facilities there in preference to asking informants. I do not drink tea or coffee, drinking herbal tea in preference, so I usually declined refreshments when offered, although on one occasion I accepted a glass of water.

On entering the house, I was often invited to sit at a table or near to a power socket for ease of use of the tape recorder. Most informants offered me electricity for my tape recorder, and I asked others if I could plug it in. I was reluctant to rely on batteries in case I lost valuable data. Sometimes the placement of the tape recorder was some distance from the informant and on occasions, some of the discussion was unclear. I soon learned to position the recorder as close to the informant as possible.

I did not take detailed notes while talking but developed a shorthand code for recording changes in expression or body language, features that would not be captured on the tape.

Establishing a rapport with the informants was generally very easy. I was aware of being on their territory and felt privileged that they had invited me into their homes. I did have a few scary moments on approaching some houses when barking dogs greeted me. The owners were quick to call them under control and I came to no harm. I interviewed several men who were at home on their own and I was careful to position myself opposite them rather than alongside. I felt at no risk from any of them. Only one caused me to be somewhat anxious when he grabbed my ankle to demonstrate how a dog had attacked him. However, as the interview took place in his office within a building where other workers were nearby, I was not unduly alarmed. However, it illustrated how one can be caught unawares.

I realised that my informants were in a 'reversed role'. They had taken on the role of informant and I was in the role of interviewer. I had 'gone native', adopting the role that I was studying. How did this exchange feel for me and how did it feel for the informants? Studying survey workers meant that my informants would be assessing me by the standards that they set for themselves. I felt comfortable asking them for the use of electricity when I knew that most of them did this as a matter of course in their daily work. Their interviews differ from mine in that they ask specific questions of respondents. I was friendly, but limited the conversation to general pleasantries about the weather or garden, and did not divulge very much of myself. This was not difficult. Perhaps the fact that the survey workers practise this themselves ensured that they did not seek out information. I was careful to distance myself from management and reinforced the fact that I was there to find out their experiences, not to offer advice. One survey worker asked me what I thought of personal alarms. I said that I was there to find out what the survey workers thought of them. I was tempted to show her mine from my handbag! I avoided the situation of creating interviewer bias (Sinclair, 1990 in Reid, 1993). My goal was to locate the difference in policy and practice within their own personal stories.

The next chapter looks at the policies of the two organisations.

Chapter Four:

Recruitment, Training and Management Safety Policies

Recruitment

Both OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix engage survey workers through newspaper advertisements. Recruits are also obtained through referrals from existing employees. Regional Field Supervisors are responsible for interviewing and selecting applicants; if successful they then arrange for the recruits to undergo initial training.

Both organisations cover similar areas in this induction. OpinionQuest has a formal induction system, training groups of new survey workers together at one of the main centres. The training programme is formally set out so that each group will cover topics in the same way. A number of people from other parts of the organisation as well as the direct reporting supervisors are involved in this initial training. MarketMatrix prepare their survey workers in a more informal way, primarily because there are fewer numbers being trained at one time, and the first-line supervisor is responsible for the training in this organisation. Training is often done in the supervisor's home.

At OpinionQuest the recruitment and training of survey workers is the responsibility of the Regional Field Supervisors. Training is expensive; (approximately \$5,000 per recruit) so at the recruitment stage, managers interviewed reported it was important to identify people who are likely to remain with the organisation for some time. Profiling the current employees that have remained with the organisation in excess of five years has shown a number of common criteria:

- older survey workers, including a high percentage aged over sixty;
- survey workers who either have no other employment or have employment that complements survey work;
- survey workers engaged in 'portfolio work' who combine survey interviewing with their own small businesses.

OpinionQuest prides itself in its high retention rates among older survey workers and therefore considers maturity as a preferred criterion. Only eight percent of survey workers are under age forty. Thirty-six percent are aged fifty to fifty-nine, with a further thirty-six percent being aged over sixty, a third of those concentrated in the over seventy age bracket. On the other hand, managers state that students and young people tend to view survey work as a short-term option until better opportunities arise. People who are unable to work evenings or during school holidays are seen as not being appropriate. Applicants already committed to or seeking full-time employment are usually also excluded. For these reasons these groups are not considered ideal.

The task of interviewing formerly fell predominantly to females. Now, OpinionQuest actively seeks to recruit both genders. Currently seventy-five percent of survey workers are female and twenty-five percent male, but there is a trend toward older men entering survey work, particularly in urban areas. They have often held good positions in full-time work. They have been made redundant or opted for early retirement from full-time positions, but wish to pursue part-time employment.

Equal Employment Opportunities policies are practised; OpinionQuest endeavours to recruit from diverse ethnic backgrounds in order to reflect the general population from which their respondents are drawn. English is the key medium of communication with respondents, and a good command of the language is expected. Those whose first language is not English are not excluded. In particular, some surveys require Maori language speakers.

Supervisors stressed that confidence to cold call was an essential attribute. This may be reflected in previous experience with market research companies, as charity collectors or in selling door-to-door. Previous experience, while advantageous, is not essential. With the expanding usage of laptops, computer literacy and keyboarding skills are also desirable.

By its nature, survey work requires that survey workers are flexible about hours and are available to conduct interviews during the day, evenings and at weekends.

Interviewers need to be willing to make appointments at any time that is convenient to respondents (Fowler, 2002). Societal changes in work patterns and social life often entail survey workers calling in the evenings or during the weekends. Survey workers are not required to call on Sundays, but it is an option. OpinionQuest stipulates that they must not call in person or by telephone on public holidays or after 8.40 pm except by arrangement.

At the selection process and again at induction, OpinionQuest managers state that survey workers are expected to dress appropriately, according to their respondent groups (Babbie, 2002). Managers suggest survey workers adopt smart casual attire while interviewing, with a tie optional for males. Female interviewers may choose to wear trousers to give them added protection against dogs and the organisation is comfortable with this choice provided that the trousers are smart. Jeans, jandals and tee shirts are considered inappropriate.

The selection interview is part induction to the OpinionQuest culture and part training. Applicants are told that they are never expected to put themselves at risk. If they feel uncomfortable for any reason, they are not obliged to enter any property. They are expected to use their own judgement, and the regional field supervisor will follow-up the respondents by telephone if the interviewer does not wish to. This is reiterated at the initial training session.

Interview Training

Initially, OpinionQuest survey workers undergo four days intensive residential training, including work on two evenings, for up to twelve recruits at a time. A manual is provided that contains policies and procedures. Topics can roughly be divided into training and safety. They include:

- Background to the organisation (not discussed here to protect special nature of the organisation involved)
- Door-to-door interview techniques
- Administration and Supervision

- Survey work policies, practices and procedures - best practice
- Safety and health issues

Training in door-to-door interview techniques forms most of the training. For example, the selection of the respondents is done on a random basis determined by an address given to the survey workers by their managers. This means that if follow-up interviews are required and the previous residents have moved, the survey worker interviews the current residents and does not follow-up the previous residents. Survey workers are not expected to deviate from these addresses for any reason. Random selection is done in a highly professional and scientific way, and is the basis on which the data collected is deemed valid.

The supervisors stressed that courtesy, friendliness, sensitivity and a smile are essential and also the survey worker's ability to establish and maintain a good rapport and gain the respondents' cooperation. These tacit skills are widely held in the academic literature. The impact of the survey worker as a person is recognised as a crucial factor in achieving good response rates and rich data (Sturgis & Campanelli, 1998). Response rate targets are set according to the survey performed, and may be as high as 90%. Survey workers are told to visit a household three times before documenting that the householder could not be contacted. In the case of telephone interviews, survey workers are expected to allow the telephone to ring fifteen times and to make four telephone calls at different times of the day.

A great deal of training involves emphasising to trainees the importance of common courtesy. Survey workers are expected to refrain from parking on driveways unless the house is at the end of a long drive.

Training is provided on the use of the questionnaires and how to ask questions. For interviews to be successful, the survey workers themselves must be convinced of the survey's value. They must have an understanding of the questions asked. They need to familiarise themselves with all the instructions and carry out the work clearly,

accurately and without modifications. An important part of the training is that survey workers remain neutral to the responses, both verbally and by expressions.

Attention is given to developing techniques for probing in a controlled way while remaining neutral and not introducing bias. Role-plays are used to simulate interview situations. In addition, the training includes hands-on experience where the new recruits experience both telephone and face-to-face interviews in the field, accompanied by the supervisors who encourage and support.

Respondents may reflect the whole population and are therefore likely to represent diversity in gender, age, ethnic groups, socio-economic status, religions, sexual orientation, and disabilities. Training in communication and cultural sensitivity to different ethnic groups is provided. Written material in the one hundred page plus manual provides information on body language, gestures, eye contact, and attitudes to gender of different ethnic groups in an attempt to educate the interviewers in how to approach respondents.

Administration Training

Survey workers learn that a great deal of their work involves trust. They are relied on to be honest in their claims for time and mileage. They are paid an hourly rate from the time they leave their homes until they return. Careful documentation of times is essential. Survey workers are expected to provide their own reliable vehicles and are paid a mileage allowance by the organisation. Mileage allowance is paid at the rate of 67 cents per kilometre up to 3,000 kilometres in any one year. For mileage in excess of 3,000 kilometres 19 cents is paid per kilometre. In rural areas, particularly, survey workers can clock-up large numbers of kilometres over difficult terrain. If their own vehicles break down, the supervisors allow them to hire rental cars. This practice is not documented in training and is not widely conveyed to survey workers. Reimbursement is paid for telephone calls, postage and fares. Survey workers are expected to provide their own landlines. Survey workers send claims to their regional field supervisors who authorise payment. Fares are paid for attendance at training courses and \$200 is paid on completion of a training course.

Regional field supervisors check the work quality, and accurate, complete and legible recording is expected. Deadlines are set for the submission of documentation and these are expected to be met or justification given for deviation. In some circumstances, the survey workers may negotiate altered deadlines.

Survey workers are expected to carry only the documentation pertaining to the household that they are visiting. All other documentation required for that day's work should be locked in the car, preferably in the boot but certainly out of sight. At home, survey workers are expected to lock up all documentation. OpinionQuest will provide a lockable cabinet if the survey worker requests this.

Each survey has its own unique set of documents, and further training is provided before the start of each new survey. Increasingly, recording data is done directly onto laptops, and the survey workers are required to send the information by computer to Head Office. This too is part of the training.

Fieldwork policies, practices and procedures form the second half of the training. All survey workers are supplied with an ID badge, which they are required to produce when they introduce themselves to the respondents. The ID is on a lanyard and can be worn around the neck or attached to the clipboard. It must be visibly displayed. Until recently, both first name and surname were invariably shown on the ID, but survey workers may request that only their first name be displayed.

At OpinionQuest confidentiality is paramount in relation to all work. The organization prides itself in maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of respondents and the information that they provide. Survey workers are required to sign a confidentiality document which covers not only the period for which they are employed by OpinionQuest, but also promising to maintain confidentiality should they leave the organisation. Breach of confidentiality results in dismissal and may also lead to prosecution.

A code of conduct is given to all trainees. It outlines the rights and obligations of survey workers. It stipulates how survey workers are expected to behave on the job

and behaviours that would result in termination of employment without notice. Examples of these are theft, fighting or assaulting another person while employed on survey work, wilfully falsifying organisational documents or records or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Behaviours that attract warnings but may constitute grounds for dismissal include, conduct which injures the organisation's reputation in the community, failure to complete assigned work within designated time frames without good reason, and unsatisfactory work performance.

Trainees learn that performance management supervision of survey workers is the role of the regional field supervisors. Supervisors assess the work of the survey workers on the job and by monitoring the quality of the documentation they submit. Competencies are measured against specific criteria. The competencies cover: interviewing skills as observed by the supervisors; data quality in terms of accuracy, completeness, legibility and avoiding the need for the work to be rewritten or corrected. An error rate, not exceeding two percent is expected. Additional competencies cover judgement and decision-making, survey knowledge, technical knowledge and organisational knowledge. On appointment, survey workers are classed as Level 1 (no experience). They progress to Level 2 when they meet the standard for competencies, usually within three to six months after appointment. Level 3 is assigned to interviewers who exceed competencies, and the number on this level is limited. Survey workers receive performance-related pay. If their response rate is consistently high, a higher pay rate rewards this. Pay is not related to service. There is no allowance for the fact that much of the work is conducted in the evenings and at weekends, times that are considered anti-social hours. No links between lower than expected response rates and safety issues have so far been made.

Health and Safety features promoted in the training range over a variety of topics but dogs are recognised by trainers as the most common problem for survey workers. The Dog Control Act 1996 is not mentioned specifically in training but the essence of it - an expectation that dog owners undertake to keep their dogs under control - is. In the interview with the supervisors they said they believed there was an increase in people who keep dogs for personal protection rather than just pets (SPCA, Dominion 14 January 2002). Survey workers are trained to look out for evidence of dogs on

the property. For example, 'beware of the dog' notices on the gate are obvious. More subtle techniques taught included rattling the gate, if there is one, and to stand back from the door. An information pamphlet is provided on dog behaviour and how to read dog body language. A video is also available for trainees and is used by one of the regional supervisors. Viewing by recruits is optional.

In the event of a dog bite, survey workers are told to seek medical attention, notify the supervisor, and complete an accident form. The organisation reimburses survey workers for costs incurred such as doctors' fees and tetanus injections. Reimbursement is also given for dry-cleaning or replacement of torn clothing. There is no policy documenting what to do concerning contacting the Dog Ranger though from interviews with survey workers the survey workers will do this themselves or involve the police if necessary.

OpinionQuest records this information on the accident form on the database, puts a copy on the survey worker's personal file, and notifies the Human Resource Department. The figures can be accessed if required. There is no follow-up beyond these procedures.

Dogs are a known quantity. Humans are not. There is no specific training in how to handle difficult or aggressive people. Nor is there training in how to recognise when people might be on drugs or may be in a bad mental state. Survey workers are expected to call on their own experience and judgement. They are expected to approach the nearest door of the property. If survey workers discover illegal activity or the breaking of bylaws during the course of their work, they are not expected to take any action. No defensive driving or self-defence courses are available for survey workers. Courses offered by the organisation for its in-house staff such as keyboarding skills and stress management are not made available to survey workers.

Dog dazers and personal alarms are provided as standard equipment and are in boxes in the briefcases provided at the end of the initial training. A dog dazer, when activated, emits a high-pitched tone which can be heard by dogs and the noise deflects the dog to provide an opportunity for the person to escape. Similarly, a

personal alarm, sometimes called a personal shriek alarm, emits an ear-piercing shriek that hopefully, shocks and deflects an attacker and provides an opportunity for the victim to escape. It may also attract passers-by to help. Use of dog dazers and personal alarms is optional. There is no expectation by management that they will be used and management is aware that many survey workers do not use them.

Cellphones are not provided as standard equipment but if survey workers approach their supervisor, consideration will be given to providing them. This has happened for two survey workers. However, this practice does not feature on written material provided to the survey workers nor is it raised at general training or follow-up briefings. The survey workers themselves had to initiate the request. This policy/practice is not generally publicised. The organisation does pay for work-related telephone calls made by survey workers from their own cellphones, a non-documented policy that is conveyed orally. The organisation provides a 0800 number that survey workers are expected to use when calling to report in.

A policy requiring survey workers to leave details about the specific location in which they are working is not part of either training or policy. It is expected that many will indicate their general area of activity to their partner, if they have one. It is accepted practice that two interviewers may go to a house together, but only the one authorised to undertake the survey should enter the house. Confidentiality debars survey workers from being accompanied by children, partners or friends with them in the car while they are working. This is because the person would have knowledge of the specific location of the survey respondent though they would not know what was said in the interview.

Flu vaccines have been available to survey workers at OpinionQuest for a number of years. This service is communicated in written material sent to the survey workers, and is documented. As many of these are in the older age group, they already have free access to flu vaccines provided by the government. Survey workers who elect to have a vaccine may organise this through their own medical practitioner and send the account to the organisation. Those living within reasonable distance of the organisation's offices may have the vaccine when the in-house staff is serviced.

Occupational Overuse Syndrome has become more prominent in survey worker training presentation. With the move toward recording information by laptop, instruction in the prevention of OOS is emphasised at the training and documented in the manual provided to survey workers. During the training sessions the supervisor integrates the OOS training by having micropauses, where the recruits practise the flexing and stretching exercises. The survey workers are encouraged to be proactive in the prevention of OOS by taking regular breaks and practising the exercises. The organisation provides ergonomically designed furniture for in-house staff. However, this is impracticable for survey workers, as their workplace is in the community, and they carry out their work in respondents' homes. Training in keyboard skills is not supplied, nor are keyboard software programs or regular eye tests available to survey workers. Important in terms of health and safety, these training aids and checks are available to in-house OpinionQuest staff.

When in a respondent's home, survey workers using laptops can choose whether to ask for power or rely on the batteries. While conducting an interview, they are expected to choose the most appropriate place available for the laptop, the best place, they are told, is a high table (they are asked to provide a cloth to avoid scratching the table). However, it is up to the individual survey worker to decide where they are going to work, based on what the respondent offers and what is available. In some houses, there may only be a low coffee table or indeed no table at all, and survey workers may have to use the laptop on their lap. The organisation recognises that this contravenes recommended practice.

When the survey workers log on to their laptops, both their first name and surname appear. The system has been set up this way and it is standard practice. The Information Technology department manager at OpinionQuest states that it would be "too difficult" to change this so that only the first name is displayed. This technical point is mentioned here because it is a safety issue. Some survey workers prefer their surname not to be revealed. Another safety issue is identification when telephoning calls respondents who have the caller display facility. Telephone companies offer a facility to withhold access to telephone numbers, yet this is not

mentioned at initial training meetings. It has been mentioned at briefings. Not all survey workers are aware of this, and it is not documented in the manual.

The Trespass Act 1980 is not explicitly mentioned in training. However, survey workers are trained to leave the property if asked to do so, which is in accordance with the Trespass Act. Trespass can be a grey area. One area of concern identified by management is the ability to access apartment buildings. Because of security, it is almost impossible for survey workers to gain authorised access. They often have to 'coat-tail' people into these apartment buildings. There is no documented policy on this, but the organisation recognises that the practice is not ideal.

For a number of surveys, pre-notification of the survey is being introduced. A letter is sent to the address stating that the survey worker will call within a certain period. This can have both positive and negative effects, and is in a trialling stage. One positive aspect is that the respondents are aware that a survey worker will call and will be prepared. The negative aspect is that respondents who do not wish to engage in surveys will ensure that they are not available when the survey worker calls.

The Code of Conduct specifies that no alcohol or drugs may be consumed on the job. Whether or not to accept refreshments offered by respondents is left to the discretion of survey workers - there is no documented policy. Nor is there a policy regarding the use of toilets in respondents' homes.

One supervisor commented at the end of our interview:

There is not too much emphasis on risk at the training as we don't want to scare them off.

Training focuses on what the survey worker does.

Ongoing training is limited. Until a few years ago, the organization held large, annual briefings when all survey workers got the opportunity to meet each other. Budgetary constraints resulted in these being curtailed. Management circulates all survey workers with a list of the other survey workers working in their area. They

may elect to make contact and organise their own informal meetings. No permission is sought from the survey workers to go on this list.

MarketMatrix has similar recruitment, selection and training policies to OpinionQuest though they are covered in a more informal way. A dog ranger is often invited to speak to new recruits. Face-to-face survey workers often work in pairs or teams. Some of the surveys are conducted in public places. MarketMatrix survey workers are provided with a meal allowance if their work takes them out of the area. The mileage allowance is paid at a flat rate of 48 cents per kilometre, irrespective of the number of kilometres travelled.

As a market research company, the aim of MarketMatrix is to help businesses know what people think. They provide specialist interviewing and provide fast, efficient, quality service. They have a range of interviewer services but this study focuses on door-to-door and telephone-based survey workers. MarketMatrix operates in a similar way to OpinionQuest but on reaching the specific house, they look for their target groups - respondents in a defined age band; respondents with children; smokers; or users of specified products. Employees are required to fulfil a quota for each. They are required to adhere to the Code of Practice of the Market Research Society of New Zealand (2002). Survey workers at MarketMatrix may choose not to engage in a particular study if it conflicts with their own values or if it may make them feel uncomfortable. For example, a non-smoker may not wish to seek out smokers to interview.

MarketMatrix has a documented health and safety programme. This is covered in the organisation's induction course. All employees are expected to work in a safe manner taking practical steps to minimise injuries. Some accident prevention policies are more relevant to call centre staff and employees working within the organisation rather than in the field. These cover workstations, telephone and computer cables, building related illness, security issues arising from a twenty-four hour operation, and evacuation of buildings in the event of emergencies. Two areas directly applicable to survey workers are policies on dealing with abusive respondents and occupational stress.

Abusive respondents are recognised as part of the job, but MarketMatrix does not expect its staff to accept abuse. Their policy indicates that all instances of abuse must be reported to supervisors. The supervisors are required to take appropriate action to enable the survey worker to “recover” from the incident. At MarketMatrix, all personal injuries must be reported and recorded. This extends to a survey worker applying a band-aid. Supervisors keep the records of minor injuries, but more serious injuries are entered on the main accident register.

MarketMatrix recognises that occupational stress may occur when there is pressure to achieve tight deadlines. To offset this, MarketMatrix recognises and celebrates achievements and offers training opportunities. Unlike OpinionQuest the organization holds regular meetings of survey workers in the regions and morning teas are provided. A Christmas get-together is also a feature of the culture at MarketMatrix.

It is said that no battle plan survives contact with the enemy. The success of health and safety policies can only be measured when we look at how these policies are interpreted and practised by the survey workers in the field. This will be studied in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Survey Worker Practices

Survey Worker Practice: Joseph and Dawn

OpinionQuest conducts ongoing surveys, but in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of single surveys contracted. Some of these are highly specialised and may require specific skills - such as the ability to speak Maori. For new surveys, the regional supervisors conduct training sessions with the survey workers. Deadlines are set according to the survey; for ongoing surveys, the interviewers often have an allocation of interviews for one week. A month is allowed for longer surveys. At OpinionQuest, the regional field supervisors distribute the work to survey workers approximately ten days before the interviews need to be done. The nature of the work means the workload is erratic and survey workers accept this as part of the job.

The volume of work assigned to each depends on the number of surveys being undertaken, the location of the survey workers, whether the survey workers are engaged in ongoing surveys, and whether survey data is to be recorded by laptop. Survey workers consider the deadlines fair and reasonable and they negotiate with their supervisors when deadlines cannot be met. They expect to have one free week in six as stipulated in the contract.

At the time of conducting this study, many of the survey workers had just started entering data on the computer laptops. Some had participated in the pilot study. In the case of surveys that collect data via laptop, only trained personnel with laptops can be assigned the work; thus workloads vary for individual survey workers. Only one survey worker commented that the workload was excessive. Some would have appreciated having more work as they are paid according to the total number of hours on the job. Many accept that the job is changing, and that if they wish to continue working for OpinionQuest new skills need to be acquired. Some viewed the laptop as an unnecessary distraction; others were technophobic and would

consider leaving the job if they were forced to learn laptop entry. Others could not envisage the laptop in the rural environment. Sally said:

I just have this vision of having a computer, finding a farmer way out in the paddock somewhere, sitting down on a step somewhere and tapping away..... modern technology in the midst of a farm doesn't seem to click.

Survey workers expect to carry out their work without danger to themselves. However, some survey workers acknowledge that there are potential risks in the job and recognise that they need to be alert and proactive. Only one survey worker made the comment that she considers face-to-face interviewing in homes is a very dangerous job and thinks that the job should be done in pairs, or greater use made of telephone interviewing. Other survey workers appear to be oblivious to the potential hazards of the job, particularly with regard to possible violent attack.

Joseph and Dawn are survey workers with OpinionQuest. Their jobs are the same, yet the circumstances under which each work are very different. Joseph works in an urban area within thirty minutes drive of his home while Dawn works in both rural and urban areas, necessitating travel time of up to two hours or more over hilly terrain and into isolated areas. They encounter a range of people, from yuppies to unemployed, all socio-economic statuses, ages, ethnic groups and family compositions; such is the nature of the business. Respondents are an unknown quantity. Their behaviour is unpredictable and may vary according to circumstance, mood or a whole raft of other reasons. For the most part, respondents are pleasant, reasonable and accepting of others who call at their doors, although initially they may view strangers at the door suspiciously (Groves & Couper, 1998). Some respondents choose not to participate in surveys, yet remain polite while declining, while others become aggressive and rude, targeting survey workers with their anger.

Survey workers as individuals are as different from each other as their respondents. They have chosen to engage in work that is primarily cold calling, which indicates that they are not afraid to approach strangers in their homes. Nevertheless, they vary in their attitudes to risks, ability to cope with dangers and their willingness to put the

job ahead of their own personal safety. Survey workers are not provided with the names, telephone numbers or details of the occupants.

Joseph is a tall, fit man in his sixties, well built, articulate and well spoken. He has held senior management positions in previous careers, and has worked for OpinionQuest for ten years. Joseph works in an inner city area and many of his respondents live in luxury apartment blocks, city council flats, student rentals and inner city suburban housing. Gangs occupy some of the houses. On his assigned territory the respondents are drawn from all socio-economic groups and he has a greater representation of ethnic groups than one would find in a provincial town. Some of his respondents include traumatised refugees who are very suspicious of people collecting information. An example of one of these meetings is described on the opening page.

Joseph prefers to commit several days at the beginning of the week to work for OpinionQuest. If he completes his interviews early, he spends the remainder of the week pursuing his passions of golf perfection or indulging his grandchildren. This is the ideal, but it seldom happens; he frequently finds that not all respondents are at home at the first call and if they are, it may not be a convenient time to interview them.

For new surveys, Joseph attends training sessions carried out by the regional field supervisor. By the end of these training sessions, Joseph is thoroughly familiar with the content of the survey and is prepared to answer any questions he may be asked. He is also familiar with the manner in which the interview should be conducted and aware of how long it is likely to take.

When Joseph receives the list of addresses from OpinionQuest, he checks them and tries to cluster interviews together according to location. He takes into account the possibility of absent occupiers, negative responses and respondents asking if they can reschedule appointments. This is in an effort to save time, petrol and associated car costs. Joseph is fortunate that his territory is within thirty minutes' drive of his home, so he can return home during the middle of the day for refreshments. High-

density urban living is the norm in Joseph's territory, which he knows well. He also has a good knowledge of the types of respondents located in his territory. As a security measure Joseph lets his wife know the general area but not the exact location of his work. She can contact him by cellphone at any time. Joseph has his cellphone pre-programmed to telephone home if he encounters problems. He recharges his cellphone regularly to ensure that it operates.

Most survey workers, like Joseph, leave information on their general whereabouts with families so that, if a problem occurs, people are able to get in touch with them. But this is not always the case. Nina, who lives alone, when out on the job has nobody who knows where she is. She may mention to a family member where she is going to work but does not do this as a regular practice. Going alone to interviews is the norm, but on occasions, survey workers take family members with them, especially if they feel the area is unsafe or they have had a bad experience with a particular respondent. But this is not always practical. Jean takes her husband "once in a blue moon." And Lynne said that her supervisor suggested she take her partner with her for safety, but considered this unreasonable. Sheila resisted the suggestion:

You can take someone with you. Survey workers do if they think the area is dodgy. It annoys me that the job is set up this way. We should work in pairs.

Sheila and Lynne both disliked the practice of using sole survey workers and depending on using partners. "They (OpinionQuest) are getting two people for the price of one," they commented, independently.

Kelly, an attractive woman, who had only recently started the job at the time of the study, telephoned her husband before and after every interview. She named the address of the house that she was about to approach. She realised that she was breaking confidentiality but decided that her personal safety was more important. Kelly had already decided that the risks of the job were greater than she was prepared to take. She had handed in her resignation and was working until she had completed her current schedule of interviews. The expense of her newly acquired cellphone calls ate into the already low hourly rate of pay.

Joseph drives to his assigned locations in the morning. By travelling in daylight, he is able to see the location of the houses and identify any difficulties with access. If the respondents are not at home, he has at least visited the property by day and can make a note about lighting, difficult access, steps, warnings about dogs, condition of property and places to park.

Many of the respondents in Joseph's territory are at work during the day and he needs to schedule appointments for the evening. There are practical problems with evening interviewing, and like most survey workers, Joseph tries to avoid a first meeting at this time. Because people are so busy and many work outside the house, evenings and weekends are the most likely times to find people at home. One survey worker, Susan, considered that she did 70-80% of her interviews in the evenings. There is a sense of being "on call" - respondents can contact survey workers at their homes if they have left their telephone numbers. Respondents may return calls at inconvenient times - when the survey workers are preparing meals for their families, for example. Survey workers feel obliged to make themselves available to respondents in order to complete the interviews, no matter when they call.

Joseph is very committed to his job and he does his utmost to achieve an excellent response rate, accommodating the respondent's situation ahead of his own personal preferences. Joseph has interviewed at 1.30 am or 2 am to accommodate respondents who work in restaurants or nightclubs, and would be asleep in the middle of the day. Often the respondent's work location is the most suitable place to interview. For people whose work is in the evenings and into the early hours of the mornings, interviews following work are often appropriate.

When Joseph arrives at his location, he tries to park his car within easy reach of the house. Parking the car near to the designated house is standard practice. In common with most other survey workers, he never parks on driveways unless invited to do otherwise. Urban areas may provide parking on only one side of the street; this can mean walking some distance to houses, many of which have pedestrian access only. Sometimes he parks on grass verges just to get off the road. Lynne, who regularly

surveys in high-density housing, finds that “driving in some areas can be intimidating because of the presence of teenage youths.”

In some areas, survey workers feel uneasy about leaving their cars for fear of damage to the vehicle, or having the tyres slashed or let down. None of the survey workers in this study had encountered this problem but apparently this is an issue in South Auckland and there is a fear that this problem could spread.

Joseph is careful not to leave anything of value visible in the car. He leaves his briefcase in the boot or covered in the backseat. He takes only his laptop and, as instructed, he carries the laptop across the body rather than on one shoulder. Lightweight computers are not perceived as a problem; laptops weigh around two and a half kilograms. Marilyn used a different process. She likes to identify that the person is at home and able to participate in the interview before returning to her car for the laptop. For her this reduces the carrying time. So the weight of the laptop can be an issue for some. For confidentiality reasons Joseph takes the paperwork relating only to the address he is approaching and carries minimal personal money. He approaches houses purposefully and confidently.

In some dwellings entrances are difficult to identify. Walking up a hundred steps to access houses is common - steps that can be uneven, broken, wet or covered in foliage. Tree branches may stretch across pathways. Joseph always carries a strong torch with him, one that was provided by OpinionQuest. He said:

Watch where you put your feet. Take extra care in certain situations. Look at the building - if it appears shonky, watch out for broken boards on verandas.

Joseph approaches the prospect's door in a positive frame of mind. He expects a warm greeting and he exudes an air of warmth and optimism. He enjoys meeting people and finds them fascinating. Each interview presents an opportunity to meet a new person, in a new situation, and each survey poses its own challenges. Approaching a door with a smile is common. Joseph's 'smile before you dial' expression on the telephone is transferred to the door. Approaches that are non-confrontational, congenial and low key are more likely to meet with success.

(Groves & Couper, 1998) say it helps if survey workers have a positive approach and expect a positive outcome. This is the usual practice for the survey workers' in this study. They are not preoccupied with risks but are alert to them as they stand on the doorstep. Few have had bad experiences, and therefore the longer they are in the job the less they expect to meet with problems. All the same, good past experiences can be a cause for complacency. Each interview is a new experience, a new challenge.

OpinionQuest survey workers assert that they are expected to wear their identification badges around their necks. Joseph carries his identification badge on his clipboard. Some survey workers comply, reluctantly. Sally continued to wear it around her neck... **"This is a rule. I hate it.** You don't want a person coming nose to nose." Many deviated from this practice. TomJack, a robust looking man in his seventies, said:

Well I'm afraid mine (ID badge) is still attached to my clipboard because I don't like fronting up to a respondent and sticking my chest out. I was told that I had to do it, it is a rule.

George, who finds the part-time job fits in very easily with his rural lifestyle, says: "We are meant to have it around our necks. There's no way ..." William, who would not wear it around his neck, said that he "didn't want to look like something from the zoo." Even in the smallest details of the job differences emerged between organisational policy and survey workers' practice.

After knocking on the prospect's door survey workers frequently stand to the side on the doorstep, so that if a dog in the house leaps out, the survey worker is not in its line. Being alert and prepared for action are critical in preventing dog attacks. Joseph has a policy of speaking to any dog first, before addressing the interviewee, in order to gain its acceptance. Acceptance from prospects is more straightforward. Most respondents are cooperative and most invite Joseph into their homes.

OpinionQuest survey workers are trained not to do interviews on the doorstep but a number of survey workers always adopt this stance for various reasons. It may depend on the length of the survey and the amount of paper involved. Jean, a survey worker of fifteen years who appears to take everything in her stride and does not

anticipate problems, says that she does not like to invade people's privacy. She gave the impression that the doorstep is her preferred method of interviewing. Sean says that he is never invited into houses; he expects to conduct interviews on the doorstep. However, the recent introduction of a laptop precludes doorstep interviewing.

When the respondent opens the door Joseph first identifies himself and his organisation, shows his ID and explains the nature of the survey and the time required for the interview. He prefers to conduct the interview at the first meeting. However, by informing the respondent of the time involved, he respects the respondent's wishes if the time is inconvenient, making another date and time for appointment. Joseph finds that on most occasions when respondents are at home they make the time to carry out an interview. One possible reason for people being at home is that they are unwell and have flu, or are at home with sick children. This significantly increases the health risk to Joseph. If the house is unoccupied, Joseph makes a decision as to whether or not he should leave a card in the mailbox, inviting the person to contact him by telephone to make an appointment or whether he should plan to return on another day at a different time. The majority of survey workers in this study do not identify leaving a card with contact details as a potential source of risk.

Joseph is conscious of how a man at the door may be viewed by a woman at home by herself. He finds that his age is an advantage in winning the confidence of women. Before the use of laptops, Joseph used to wait to be invited into the house and would willingly complete a short interview on the doorstep or in the porch. In summer, people are often happy to sit outside and complete interviews, but the need to use the respondent's electricity to power the laptop and the preference for a table, has made this situation unworkable.

Once inside the home, Joseph starts the interview by commenting on the weather or garden to put the respondent at ease and to win their confidence. He emphasises the confidential nature of the survey and reiterates this several times throughout, indicating that the individual is not identified and information collected is not linked

with the respondent. Joseph invites the respondent to ask any questions. He provides respondents with details of his supervisor and the 0800 number for contact.

Joseph tries to find the best place to sit so as not to put his back at risk - generally a straight back chair at a table. He knows that if the interview is going to take more than half an hour, he should seek a table and high chair rather than sitting on the first seat offered. Respondents often take him to a dining table, although Joseph has conducted interviews on the floor or at low coffee tables and in low settees. Of course, some houses do not have these facilities. Some student flats pose problems in locating floor-space, let alone a table and chair. Even when there is a table present, it is often piled up with a week's supply of dirty dishes. He finds that some respondents are suspicious of laptops while others are intrigued, watching over his shoulder as he enters the answers. Once he explains that he needs to use a laptop, the respondent usually offers the use of electricity. There is no offer to pay for this; batteries are to be used only when a respondent refuses the use of their electricity. This seldom happens. (The laptop can operate for two interviews without the battery being recharged). At the time of this study there were electricity shortages and users were being urged to conserve supplies. Joseph is always polite and respectful of the fact that he is in peoples' homes and on their territory. He wipes his feet before entering and, as instructed at training, he uses a cloth to protect tables from laptop scratching.

Survey workers sometimes resort to putting the laptops on their knees. This is far from ideal health wise. Maree says: "I don't like sitting on a low couch but if that's what they offer, you take it. I try to sit with a good posture." Sitting in a lounge settee balancing a laptop on the knees creates a bunched up position. Computer screens can create further problems for bifocal wearers, who find difficulty in positioning their head in relation to the screen.

Respondents sometimes offer refreshments and Joseph considers it more polite to accept. This too is a risk, a health issue. Infections can result from drinking from unclean teacups. Even cups that appear clean may not have been washed in hot

water and may still harbour germs that transmit to the next person who drinks from the cup. Joseph said:

I size up the cleanliness of the place before I decide. There are some places where I wouldn't risk it and there are others.... If there's a dear old lady who's very alert in her 70s, she has a dishwasher that you can see and she's got Royal Albert China, it would be most unhelpful not to accept. If you're the only visitor she has that day and she's pleased to see you, you do nothing that would be negative in terms of interpretation.

Although these interactive exchanges were not part of training, Joseph accepts their hospitality in the belief that this creates a good rapport, thus providing a better quality of interview. Joseph is a professional. This sociability can sometimes mean having a cup of tea when he does not really want it. He is forever conscious of being at work and not on a social visit, and tries to direct the respondent to keep on track with the interview. Joseph never asks to use the toilet. He is aware of the location of public toilets in his territory.

Having a cup of tea is at the discretion of the survey worker. Practices varied. Maree said:

I always would (accept a cup of tea) because I think it is an insult if people don't. I do, because they wouldn't offer you one if they didn't want to have one and I feel it is a little bit standoffish if I say no and it actually helps to melt them down a bit for the interview. There are sometimes when I look at the bench ...(Maree laughs and laughs).

Sally had an experience that changed her view on accepting hospitality.

It always used to happen with me and I thought they are being polite so I will have a cup of tea until one day I saw a fly swimming around in the tea. I didn't drink it all but I knew I'd drunk quite a lot so I always say no and take a glass of water. That was a horrible experience. You often go into a house and it's not clean and you have to talk like this. (Sally demonstrates not breathing through her nose). There are dirty little kids with their hands all over you, and lots of cats and dogs. (Sally laughs).

Joseph breaks his work day in two and goes home for lunch. Living close is a perk Joseph appreciates. Joseph tries to complete his allocation of interviews for the day,

although he seldom finds everyone at home. This means slotting return visits into his schedule for the remainder of the week. He is expected to make up to three visits to the same house. He has no other way of contacting the person unless there is evidence of the name, such as on a gate, and then Joseph can check the telephone book for a contact number. This circumstance is unusual.

At the end of each day, Joseph leaves time to check his work and he uses his computer modem at home to send the data he has collected to his regional field supervisor in Wellington. Only the data is sent. No information on the individual respondents is attached. If Joseph recognises that he has omitted a question he may contact the respondent by telephone. Joseph then recharges the batteries in the laptop and organises his material for the following day. He may have telephone calls to make to respondents who have left messages for him.

During the week, the supervisor checks the data for completeness and accuracy, which is recorded and assessed. If crucial questions have been left blank, the supervisor contacts the survey worker. In other cases, the supervisor forwards the data to another section of OpinionQuest that processes the information. In the transmission, Joseph also records his hours worked for the day and mileage on the forms on his computer. Other expenses, such as toll calls or calls from his cellphone, are also recorded. At the end of each week, Joseph forwards claims to his regional field supervisor who authorises payment for wages and expenses. Joseph receives reimbursement within two weeks.

Dawn's terrain is different. She is a rural survey worker who often travels two hours to reach her respondents. Dawn is groomed immaculately for our interview, with stylish work clothes. Her appearance belies the fact that she is in her early sixties. She has worked for OpinionQuest for the past fifteen years and did similar work for another company before that.

Dawn is very aware of some of the risks of the job. This became apparent during our interview, although she herself did not recognise that some of the ways she

operated were safety measures. Dawn just considered that they were common sense, yet this was how most of the informants dealt with the risks of the job.

Like Joseph, Dawn plans her interviews in clusters to reduce the need for return journeys to the same area. Despite being paid by the hour, Dawn considers the wear and tear on her car and petrol costs are more important considerations than earning extra dollars. She makes sure that the petrol tank is full and that the oil level and the tyres have been checked before leaving home to work in distant, rural areas. She, like some other survey workers in rural areas, carries equipment to cope with possible car-related problems, such as ropes, sacks, and bottled water, as well as the standard toolkit.

Unlike Joseph, Dawn reaches the 3,000 kilometres level early in the year, and regards 19 cents per kilometre as insufficient to cover the cost of her travel. She is very conscious of the cost of running her vehicle, and maintains and services it regularly in an effort to avoid the risk of mechanical breakdown. On two occasions when her car did break down, she was within easy reach of houses and accessed a telephone to contact her son who was available to rescue her. This breakdown meant a wait of over an hour. On this occasion her son was able to fix the car so she could finish her interviews meaning she was not left without transport. Dawn is not a member of the Automobile Association: she views this as an additional expense that she cannot afford. Jean regularly locked her keys in the car. Fortunately, she has a kind husband who responds to her plight.

Although infrequent, breakdowns do happen, forcing workers to seek help from breakdown services, family, friends or passers-by. They may cause them to be in vulnerable positions while they remain with the vehicle at the side of the road. When breakdowns occur, the survey workers' first call is to their families. Partners or grown-up children have usually been available to come to the rescue. Sally, an experienced survey worker in her late 60s, had the unhappy experience of being stuck in the mud and unable to break free. Fortunately, she had a sack with her, and put the sack under the wheels and gradually got herself out. She was in an isolated

area and it was highly likely that it would be several hours before anyone passed by. Sally thought - "a cellphone would have been wonderful then."

On one occasion, Gordon had to reverse five kilometres because the road had disappeared. "There was no way I could go sideways, forwards or turn. Quite scary - a narrow road, about 2,500 feet above sea level." On another occasion he had problems with the radiator drying up, so he had to go to a creek to fetch water, as the nearest town was ten kilometres away.

Dawn lives alone and does not tell anyone where she is interviewing respondents, considering this an unnecessary burden on others. For years, she has left home to do her job without really thinking about the need to plan for meals during her interview schedule, or if she were delayed. One day Dawn nearly drove off the road, then realised she had not eaten for several hours. Dawn had always been in good health, so when she began feeling unwell she was shocked to be diagnosed as hypoglycaemic. Her doctor recognised that the demands of her job had led to her irregular eating patterns, which subsequently caused her health problems. OpinionQuest does not provide meal allowances for staff that work long distances from home and are required to be away all day. Now, Dawn always carries a supply of snack foods and water in the car.

Dawn dresses according to the area that she is working in, and is likely to wear smart business wear in upper socio-economic urban areas. For rural areas she chooses trousers, a warm jacket for colder days, and strong shoes that stand up to walking across paddocks and climbing wire fences. She carries a change of shoes with her. Most women elect smart casual that they consider appropriate for the majority of households. Many chose trousers for convenience as well as for extra protection in the event of dog bites. Maree, who has similar views on dress, like Dawn, went to the extreme of carrying different clothing changes in the car and changing according to the area. By contrast, most male survey workers opted for the smart casual look, with some of the older men wearing a shirt and tie. Survey workers in rural areas opted for thicker jackets. They also recognised that the nature of work often means

that small children or animals crawl over them so they wear clothes that can be readily washed.

Social changes prevalent in urban society also affect rural New Zealand. For example, women are often out at work whereas in the past they were at home. Travelling long distances to an address to find that the householder is not at home is very time-consuming, frustrating, stressful and of course, expensive. TomJack commented on the benefit of going out in bad weather. "It's hard to catch farming people in the house unless it's a stinking wet day and that's the day you don't want to be out in it."

There are positive aspects of interviewing rural people, for example Dawn said rural folk had a general willingness to spend time engaging in the survey and having a chat. Like Joseph, Dawn liked that aspect of her job.

In rural areas, there is a huge range of socio-economic groups from affluent farmers and lifestylers to unemployed people and gang members. Some of the properties Dawn visits are very unkempt, run down and uninviting. In such cases, she proceeds with care. Dawn makes lengthy journeys along narrow, twisty rural roads to locate her isolated respondents. She may not meet other cars for miles. She takes some precautions choosing to lock the car doors while travelling. Depending on the area and the availability of a police station, it is common practice for survey workers to let the police know of their presence in the area. Dawn chooses not to do that yet police appreciate the check-in as the general public may report survey workers as possible criminals who are casing the area.

On locating the assigned address, Dawn's preference is to park her car as near as possible to the dwelling. The state of the drive determines whether she parks in it. As a safety precaution she turns her car so that it is pointing in the direction for leaving and positioning it ready for a quick getaway should she need to. She then appraises the house and gardens. Many houses on rural properties have well manicured lawns and flowerbeds. She looks for evidence of anyone at home before approaching the door. Dawn carries her handbag, laptop and paperwork pertaining

to the particular house. She knocks on the door or rings the bell and stands back and waits. If the householder is indoors, she is usually invited in. If the weather is fine and there is a garden seat nearby, she suggests doing the interview outside - although, this is more difficult with laptop entry and dependent on her battery supply.

Personal, as well as mechanical fitness, is deemed important for rural survey workers. Sometimes Dawn finds it difficult to locate the farmer on the property - he may be in hills, paddocks or cowsheds. This is when Dawn fulfils her 'fieldworker' role in its literal sense. She may have to cross paddocks, even scaling barbed wire fences to access farm buildings or distant fields in an effort to locate the farmer. Hill climbing is required on occasions for rural survey workers. When Dawn does locate a resident at home she carries out the interview while the respondent continues working in the hay barn or docking sheep. Joseph, similarly, carried out interviews while respondents were washing dishes or ironing.

The survey workers are aware that they are asking people to give of their time, thus they are likely to work around other people's tasks, especially if they call without announcement. Respondents do not benefit financially from an interview, unlike some of the focus groups that market research companies like MarketMatrix arrange. In these focus groups the respondents often receive some financial benefit for attending. Some respondents ask the OpinionQuest survey workers if they are to be paid for taking part - but most are joking.

If Dawn cannot locate the householders, she leaves a card with her contact details, including name and telephone number. As a safety precaution, she does not leave her address. Her surname in the telephone book is different from the one she uses for her work. Dawn then makes her way to the next location in the hope that that householder will be at home. She frequently works long hours when in rural locations in an attempt to reduce the number of days that she has to travel long distances from home. She sets off early and tries to do her interviews before darkness falls. Unlike Joseph, who often starts interviews at this time to meet his respondents' needs, Dawn's preference is to drive home in daylight but this is

seldom possible. On a rare day, Dawn feels very satisfied if she finds all her respondents at home and has a good response rate. Affluent respondents in rural areas are more likely to offer refreshments and she finds the social conversation stimulating. This compensates for the negative experiences sometimes encountered when she approaches unemployed respondents who are often suspicious of anyone collecting information as they feel they are being tracked. Dawn is aware of gang houses in the area and is careful approaching these. She is also aware that in rural areas she may stumble on illegal drug activity. Thus in the contrast between working in rural areas with the risk associated with working in a crowded urban area there are similarities. Survey workers are always on the lookout for danger.

Joseph and Dawn provide an insight into two different survey workers. The next chapter explores different aspects of their employment - how they and other survey workers are active agents in their work. The chapter focuses on recognising the hazards and illustrates how they absorb these risks.

Chapter Six: Absorbing risk

Dogs, Abusive People and other Everyday Risks

This chapter focuses on recognising the risks involved in the everyday work of survey workers and illustrates how they absorb these risks in the course of interviewing people in their homes. Daily encounters with dogs and abusive people are well recognised but there are health risks and subtle risks of psychological abuse and economic risks facing survey workers that present very real potential for harm.

Hutt City Councillor Scott Dalziell was campaigning door to door when a dog savaged him and he needed a skin graft to repair his finger. The dog was on a lead fifteen to twenty metres long, giving it scope to move. There were no warning signs on the gate and even so, the gate was open (Evening Post 14 July 2001). With the exception of postal delivery staff a dog, it is claimed, is man's best friend. All those whose work takes them to residential properties would express similar reservations.

Calling on people in their homes is central to many people's work, both voluntary and paid. Doctors, community nurses, social workers, charity collectors, amongst others, require to visit properties, face the risk of being confronted by dogs. Survey workers identify dogs as the most common risk to their safety. The dog dazer, as described in chapter four, is one protection available. Dawn does not carry a dog dazer. Recently she was provided with a personal alarm because she was surveying in what is regarded by management as a high risk area. (Areas of low socio-economic housing and areas with high unemployment are regarded as high risk). She has not, however, asked for a dog dazer to be supplied as she is very comfortable around dogs and has not experienced any problems.

Unlike many of her colleagues, Dawn has never been bitten. Dog ownership seems to be a protection. Some survey workers who own dogs consider that this prevents them from having such difficulties. They are likely to be more confident in dealing

with other dogs and may carry a doggy scent. Similarly, Joseph has never had a problem with dogs. He said:

I've got a dog and I usually find that the smell of dogs on my clothing, in particular since my dogs are female, has been quite helpful. They need to smell that, and it gives sufficient time to assess the situation. I've never met a rottweiler.

Frank, an older, experienced survey worker who has worked in different locations, echoed this view. He said:

psychologically I don't mind dogs - In fact I feel more concerned about the safety of ladies who do the surveys. They may be more intimidated by them.

For most survey workers interviewed dogs were the bane of their lives. Vigilance in approaching a property is paramount. Looking and listening for signs of the presence of dogs is the key to being proactive. Indications of dogs include signs on gates and mail boxes warning that dogs may be present, although this cannot always be foolproof. In some cases, people have 'beware of the dog' signs as protection and security in the belief that burglars (and survey workers!) avoid them, but in fact, they do not own dogs. Dogs are considered a danger to burglars as they make a noise and may alert neighbours. Also, burglars do not want to put themselves at risk of being attacked by dogs. One sign survey workers use to indicate dogs is the presentation of the garden. Immaculate lawns and flowerbeds are incompatible with dogs. Faeces on the lawns indicate a 'dog' house. Gates that are difficult to open may also be an indicator to keep out.

For some survey workers there is an inherent belief that they can influence a dog's behaviour by their own conduct, and the dog can sense human fear. Although Dawn and Joseph had not been bitten, dog bites are a common occurrence and are regarded by some survey workers as part of the job. Some of the bites necessitate the survey workers' interrupting their duties to seek medical attention while others continue with their work and seek medical attention at the end of the day. Others deal with dog bites themselves.

Most survey workers report dog incidents to their regional field supervisors who send the survey workers an accident form to complete. Survey workers are also

asked to include information on any costs incurred such as medical or pharmaceutical fees, and these are reimbursed. On each summary interview sheet the survey workers routinely record if dogs are present on the properties, alerting future survey workers to be prepared. Kamake, an older, very experienced survey worker whose work is predominantly in lower socio-economic areas where dogs roam freely is very conscious to note the territory. "I always make a remark about menacing dogs on the property."

A few informants were subject to vicious attacks by dogs that resulted in serious injury and damage to clothing. Lynne, who has made OpinionQuest her second job for many years, experienced the most serious attack when two Alsatian dogs leapt on her, one on each thigh. She said the dogs "took a chunk out of me" and she was very miserable for some time afterwards. This incident has made her more wary of dogs. Survey workers usually speak to the owners but often this is met with ambivalence and comments such as "the dog has never bitten anyone before." Most survey workers considered that OpinionQuest does as much as they can following dog bites. However, Lynne felt that the organization could have done more. She was left to communicate with the dog ranger herself. In retrospect she felt that she should have claimed for a new jacket rather than just the dry-cleaning, as the jacket was relatively new.

The size of the dog is not always indicative of the threat. Sally is in her seventies and has been with OpinionQuest for nearly two decades. She too is very committed to her job. "I've been bitten four times, especially by little terriers." As Mark Twain said: "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, but it's the size of the fight in the dog."

Survey workers are not allowed to carry mace or pepper spray to ward off dogs but the clipboard is useful as a first line of defence. Frank, a gentleman in his early sixties, has been doing fieldwork for three years and has relied on his clipboard more than once.

Often you will come to a house that says 'beware of the dog' and 'do not enter.' Well, you do enter because there is no other way to

get to the door, but you go through that gate. Nine times out of ten, the dog is small and friendly, but the few times when they are not small and not friendly, all you've got really is your clipboard. You just sort of fend it off with the clipboard.

One enterprising survey worker, Maree, a smartly dressed, petite survey worker of considerable experience, always carried a dog biscuit in her left hand pocket. She transferred it to her hand when walking up the path so that if any dogs approach her unawares she can "chuck the biscuit at them and find an escape." Survey workers were full of such clever examples of personal protection from the risks that they routinely experience.

As the city councillor (above) found, a dog on a chain can give a visitor to the house a false sense of security. Chains are often long and give the dog plenty of scope for movement. Peter, a slightly built, dapper gentleman in his sixties, was caught this way and was bitten on the chest unprepared to ward the dog off.

You can tell by their body language really, what they're thinking. Well a dog gives out a sense of what he is going to do. You look at him and You can see if his fur is bristling and it generally indicates that it is not a good idea to go in there. But if a dog's tail is wagging and he is looking at you and his ears are flapping, okay, no problem.

Risk management can be as simple as rattling the gate on approaching a property to see if this attracts a dog that is on the property or listening for barking is useful to test if a dog may be inside the house. Kamake is very proactive.

If I hear dogs barking inside, [the house] I usually still knock. I went to one place and I didn't like the look of the property. I thought I'd knock on the door and there was a cat door there. I was standing there knocking on the door and this enormous Alsatian head shot out the cat door, of course it couldn't get through the cat door but it gave me such a fright.

Unfortunately it is not just the assigned address that needs to be checked out. On another occasion Kamake found herself in a very hazardous lateral situation.

A pit bull terrier approached from a neighbouring property. It tried to have a go at me. I had a long skirt on. It went for my legs and I shoved my briefcase

There is no place on the end-of-day report to report frights. These too must be absorbed by the survey worker.

Survey workers who were bitten were not usually bitten through the skin, their thick clothing taking the brunt of the bite. Of course, this is much more difficult in summer when it is more appropriate to wear lighter clothes.

Sean, a middle-aged, assertive and very experienced survey worker, reacted very aggressively when he was bitten, as the owner of the dog denied the attack.

If I see that dog again I'll kill it. I would; I've got no problems with that. The dog was a little fox terrier, a Jack Russell. It grabbed me and wouldn't let go. I yelled out, 'Get the f..... dog off me'.

Sean was the informant mentioned above who grabbed my ankle to demonstrate!

Jade, who has worked for OpinionQuest in distinctly different parts of the country for a considerable time, was bitten twice in a six-week period. The first happened when she was asking a person for directions, and several dogs circled her and "one of them bit my arse." She was unable to identify which dog had bitten her. She reported the dog bite to the supervisor but nothing happened. She did not see the point of reporting the second bite although in fact this second bite was more severe. Nor did she present the doctor's bills for payment, as she had not remembered the organisation policy of reimbursement of medical expenses nor had she been reminded of the policy by the supervisor. Later she regretted not reporting the incident. Bitten twice!

Another dog strategy used by survey workers when they identify that dogs on the property may be a potential problem, is that they sometimes approach the house next door and ask the occupier if the dog is likely to be a problem. Another strategy is to ask the neighbour to telephone the householder they want to locate. This does not happen frequently, and is likely to be a last resort. Survey workers in MarketMatrix are most fortunate as they have the liberty to miss out houses where there is concern about dogs. Survey workers in OpinionQuest are required by their employer to be

more persistent. There is a very strong expectation of them and commitment by them to achieving a result from the houses allocated. Only in extreme circumstances did they say that they omitted a house and they always record it on the summary sheet. One example is when it is obvious that there is a 'domestic' going on and a couple are having an argument. Another example is when there is a large gathering of people having a raucous party.

Survey workers may possess dog dazers, but they are often in inaccessible places such as in the drawer at home, in the briefcase, in the car, or still in the box - policies and practice did not mesh. Jim, an enthusiastic, committed and confident survey worker, who had been in the job for about a year, experienced his first dog bite the week I interviewed him for this study. After receiving no response at the front door, he went to the back door that was wide open. Someone was obviously around. As he knocked on the door, a dog appeared from the washhouse opposite. He spoke to the dog and even patted it on the head before turning to knock at the door. "The next thing the dog just came straight at me and took a chunk of my leg." This was an instance where there was no time to use the dog dazer despite the fact that Jim had one on his person.

Win, a new survey worker in her first month in the job, commented that people are ambivalent about using them. She said that "at the training it didn't come across as a useful piece of equipment." She formed the impression that carrying one was hardly worth the effort - so she does not. Policy is not practised.

Most survey workers consider it unfair to use a dazer as the dogs are on their own territories. Tony went as far to say that veterinary personnel have no confidence in dazers - and that the dazer may lead to the dog becoming more vicious. In some instances, the use of dazers may lead to dogs on nearby properties also becoming involved. Only a few survey workers carry the device on their person, in a pocket, and only one survey worker admits to always carrying it in the hand at the ready. Dogs are unpredictable, even with a dazer, one can be caught unawares by dogs appearing quickly from nowhere. In one case, Frank was fending off one dog successfully when another appeared and bit him on the ankle. The dazers are not

widely used but even when survey workers' have them in their possession and ready for action, dogs can bite them before the dazers can be activated. Normal practice is to approach the nearest door. Jim's approach to a back door, in an effort to secure an interview, resulted in him being bitten. The policies on recognising the signs for dogs and reading dogs are practised well. Survey workers are always alert to the possibility that a dog will be on the property. The policy of providing dog dazers has not transferred to practice because many of the survey workers do not carry the dazers. Jim, who did carry his dazer, was bitten, raising the question of the effectiveness of dazers. Dogs can be unpredictable but survey workers report that the people they meet can cause unpredictable events.

Verbal abuse, the threat of violence and unpleasant events are common experiences that survey workers face as they go about their work. Essentially survey workers are emotion labourers (Hochschild, 1983) and the survey workers must cope with their own and the respondent's emotion. Doors slammed in their face are an accepted part of the job. Some respondents have an aversion to participating in surveys feeling that their space is being invaded and that their privacy is at risk. Survey workers interpret overt antagonism as a sign to go no further. Survey workers record these adverse experiences on the summary sheet and the supervisor follows up the interview, if necessary, by telephone.

Survey workers accept verbal abuse as part of the job. Fortunately suggestive lewd comments are less common in face-to-face interviews than with telephone interviews where suggestive comments are common. The survey workers do not feel that their safety is compromised. Ignoring comments is the most common way of dealing with them. Like reading dogs, survey workers interpret respondent body language as a good indication as to whether to proceed or retreat. Women, in particular, attract verbal abuse from male respondents. This is irrespective of the age of the survey worker. Kamake, a sixty year old, said one man just "wanted a woman." Recognising the risk in the comment, she chose to ignore it, and treated the interview as a conversation. By absorbing this risk she was thus able to elicit answers to the questions that she filled in afterwards. Unwittingly, the respondent was very cooperative. Risk was averted yet potential risk was absorbed.

Ethnicity too, can present its own particular issues. Pakeha survey workers interviewing Maori respondents occasionally encounter racial abuse from them. “Who do you think you are, Pakeha, and who sent you?” was one response.

Survey workers are always prepared to retreat if for any reason they feel uncomfortable with the situation. In the case of MarketMatrix, survey workers are trained to thank the potential respondent, stating that they have reached their quota for the person’s particular age group and gender, and retire quickly and quietly. OpinionQuest do not have this option. In the course of interviewing, OpinionQuest survey workers who become uncomfortable retain the right to terminate the interviews, given respondents do not know that they have not been asked all the questions.

Danger may emerge for the survey worker with the arrival of a third party. For example, a partner returning home to find their partner engaging in conversation with a member of the opposite sex may vent jealousy. In this situation giving out personal information to a stranger may be viewed by the partner as being disloyal. Survey workers know that some people guard their privacy jealously. Also flatmates returning home may feel that their space is being invaded and taken over, and are sometimes abusive. Sullen teenagers are another group that resent intrusion, and if asked to participate may be rude and uncooperative. Johnny, an older, very experienced gentleman survey worker, a most charming man, was engaged in an interview with a woman who was very obliging. Her partner came in and said “get out of here”, so the survey worker left immediately. There was no point in remonstrating and adding to the embarrassment of the otherwise obliging respondent. An explanation to the supervisor was accepted.

Unusual but potentially alarming incidents are not the norm but they do occur to survey workers. Dawn’s experience with the masturbator, described on page one, is one example that is likely to be a rare event. Joseph’s confrontation with the respondent with the knife, described on page one, is another rare event. Sally met with a potentially very risky situation involving drug or alcohol consumption.

I find the worst part is to be very careful about being female and being invited inside, particularly if you can see or smell that they are on drugs. I backtracked... It was hard to get out. You've got to be aware of these things and read people all the time.

Sheila called on a student flat and found that:

They were stoned on drugs and out of their trees. They were very friendly but their brains were not in gear. Their speech was slurred.

Sometimes appearances can be deceptive. Megan tells of one experience where she initially read the person as being potentially threatening yet this proved to be false.

I interviewed a man who had full facial tattoos with the 'F' word written across the bridge of his nose. I thought 'oh, what have we got here?' He was a really nice guy.

Harry was interviewing in a low socio-economic area and in the first three interviews he experienced unusual circumstances.

In the space of three interviews I interviewed an alcoholic, a guy who'd been out of prison for one month for manslaughter and the third one had changed houses because they'd burned the last one down so that was three consecutive people and I got interviews from all three.

Alison was undertaking an interview that appeared to be going all right although the respondent said that she had a headache. Alison offered to come back another day but the respondent wanted to continue. The respondent asked Alison to make a cup of tea.

I said no, let's do this and half way through she suddenly lost control and she started running around the house throwing things and I said it was obviously not a good time and I made my way to go. I was very shaken and sat in the car. I found it threatening on my own physical safety. I didn't know what to do. I wondered what I'd done wrong. Now I am much more careful, if they say they've got a headache I'd make an appointment to go later.

Blocks of flats and apartments present risk given that survey workers are enclosed. Some survey workers choose never to use the lift in apartment buildings for fear that they might be trapped. In the event of fire, no one would know that they are in the building. Jean found herself being followed by a person she identified as a 'loony'

in a block of flats. She went round and round until she could escape into the lift. She has since learned always to identify an exit as soon as entering a block of flats or apartment building.

Patricia, a MarketMatrix employee for four years, found on one occasion she was re-interviewing in a block of flats in a less desirable part of the city because she had not completed the survey on the first visit. Visibly trembling, Patricia told of her second call.

I returned to the flats the following day and there was writing in fresh blood on the wall. I got out of there quickly because something had been going on. There was no physical danger, but the writing in blood terrified me. You could even smell it. I got out; I got out.

Dawn, the woman mentioned on page one, had other experiences. She approached a house early one evening and found a woman being assaulted by her husband. The woman shouted "call the police, call the police" so Dawn responded promptly. Dawn walked some distance to a telephone box as she does not have a cellphone. When police respond to such incidents they charge the aggressor. On returning to the same house three months later, the woman berated Dawn for calling the police. Survey workers encounter such dilemmas from time to time.

Respondent sexual overtures happen occasionally for both female and male survey workers. An invitation to lunch or dinner when declined is usually accepted graciously. An elderly gentleman invited one survey worker into the bedroom. However, it was all above board as Cindy said the man had recently been widowed and just wanted to show her some photographs of his wife. Survey workers take precautions. Joseph pre-programs his telephone to ring him when he presses one number. He has used this on two occasions when he felt he was being drawn into an encounter that he did not want. He was able to retreat by saying that he was needed urgently at home. He thought the sexual situations were "crazy at my age." Catherine said "men flirt all the time but I can handle it. There's never been anything that's made me feel uncomfortable."

Private dwellings are sometimes more than family homes as Nina found when she was interviewing a very fat lady, and a very slim blonde young woman kept passing through to answer a constantly ringing telephone. The fat lady announced that the house was a brothel and that she did “fantasy telephone calls,” but the blonde “took them to the bedroom.” The survey worker was taken aback, although she had been not surprised by the popularity of the young woman. Nina did not feel threatened by being in a brothel and completed her survey. Catherine also came upon a brothel, “obvious by the ‘Visa’ sign on the door.” The occupants were very cooperative with the survey. Survey workers try never to show surprise or shock whatever the situation.

Telephone work is an integral part of the survey workers’ duties. In ongoing quarterly surveys with OpinionQuest, telephone contact follows initial face-to-face interviews. In MarketMatrix, some survey workers are engaged only in telephone work. Engaging with respondents on the telephone poses a different set of risks for survey workers. Abuse on the telephone is common. This too is considered “part of the job” and the survey workers are trained to defuse situations by doing role plays at training sessions. An example of a role play of a common situation is dealing with a prospect who dislikes surveys and becomes angry and aggressive, shouting abuse at the survey worker. Some feel that experience helps them to become immune to it.

MarketMatrix survey workers engaged in telephone work do not give out their personal telephone numbers, as the survey worker would not make follow-up calls. Apart from the risk associated with divulging personal telephone numbers, it is unlikely that people would return telephone calls to market research companies. When making telephone contact with respondents, survey workers use their first names only to avoid the respondent being able to find out where they live, either through the telephone book or the electoral roll.

Slamming the telephone down can be irritating to survey workers and harsh on their ears. This is especially troublesome for survey workers who are engaged solely in telephone work and may get a number of ‘slams’ in succession. Georgie said:

Why are they so bloody rude? Why can't they say they're not interested? I sometimes feel like ringing them back and slamming the phone down to let them see what it feels like.

Trifiletti (2002, p. 36) has found "audioshock, also known as acoustic shock, can lead to symptoms of nausea, vomiting, vertigo, tinnitus, facial/neck pain and hyperacusis (increased noise sensitivity)."

The Caller Display facility is a threat to survey workers' anonymity, as any respondent they call who has this feature may display their home phone numbers. Neither organisation's training had made the survey workers aware of this nor of the potential issues involved in their personal telephone numbers being exposed to respondents. Nor had they informed staff that they could ask telephone companies to place a block on lines, preventing their home numbers being revealed this way. Providing this information in training would have minimised risk enabling a survey worker to arrive at a decision about what to do according to their circumstances. Alternatively, when making outbound calls the caller can dial 0197 for a Number Withheld. It is unlikely that a survey worker would want to do this before every call, given the number of calls they are making. Caller Display reveals the calling party's telephone number, area code, and the time and date of the call on the screen. This number registers after the second ring.

Survey workers' opinion differed of the need to block the Caller Display. Patricia was aware of caller display units but thought that she need not worry about them.

When caller display units first came in, I didn't worry about them. I thought - well, I'm trying to be honest with people; I won't block my number. But a gentleman rang me back very late at night, very drunk. The next night his wife rang me. The gentleman was suspicious of his wife having an affair - somehow I had got into a marital dispute, and she and I ended up going to the police together.

Patricia continued:

Around about the same time I got two or three other sets of calls asking for people whose names were like my own but not quite the same. I got so upset about it that I contacted Telecom, who were not helpful at all. I ended up changing phone numbers and permanently blocking my phone number so that even when I ring

my friends, if they have a caller display unit it doesn't show up.
That was to protect my husband and me.

Patricia informed her MarketMatrix supervisor of the problem and they were "quite alarmed." They responded supportively by bringing this to the notice of other survey workers in the organisation through the newsletter.

Georgie, a MarketMatrix telephone survey worker, has an unlisted number as she is with TelstraClear and therefore not automatically included in the Telecom book. She feels safe knowing respondents can never reach her number.

Respondents may hold onto a survey worker's phone number for some time. For example, Nina told of a disturbing event involving an ex-psychiatric patient that she had interviewed some time before. Nina had also given the person a lift on one occasion. Three years after the last meeting the person called Nina at about one o'clock in the morning. The person rambled on about a body being buried in the garden. Nina was disturbed that the respondent had retained her telephone number but she continues to make her number available to respondents because she feels protected in that her address in the telephone book is listed under a different name. Not all hazards are human or even animal.

Occupational overuse syndrome (OOS), isolation, stress, natural disasters and weather extremes all pose risks. OOS is a range of conditions, which involve discomfort or persistent pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues. It affects people in a wide range of occupations, particularly those requiring the constant use of the fingers, hands or arms. It has been recognised by New Zealand Courts as a workplace hazard under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, and employers have been prosecuted for failure to take all practicable steps to minimise the risk to workers because of their work or workplace (Rudman, 1999). Employers generally recognise OOS as a potential problem. They endeavour to minimise its impact by educating staff and providing appropriate ergonomically designed workstations. Survey workers are on the move and rely on respondents to provide a suitable place to put their laptop.

At the time of this study, OpinionQuest had only recently moved from paper-based data collection methods to laptop entry, and insufficient time has passed to assess the impact of OOS on survey workers. Not all such workers are involved in laptop entry; some are reluctant to adopt this mode of collection. Jean considers it “a backward step.” This is a minority opinion, but given that Jean usually does her interviews on the doorstep, the viewpoint is understandable. One reported advantage of laptop entry is the reduction in paper handling. Most survey workers in the study consider that OOS is adequately covered in the training. It is practised at the training sessions, and the subject is well documented in the manual for survey workers. George is positive about one particular aspect of the training for OOS.

The training was very good (for OOS). We looked at a pamphlet showing the different exercises to do at different times at 15-minute intervals. There was a stress on breaks. It was very, very good, actually.

However, Marilyn disagreed. She said that the half an hour’s “so-called training” is inadequate. OOS has been given a higher profile since the introduction of laptops but OOS can result from other activities that the survey workers engage in daily.

A survey worker primarily engaged in telephone surveys may average seventy calls an hour and three hundred calls per day. Spending long periods on the telephone, the repetitive movements of calling many numbers, holding the telephone in one position, cradling the telephone between one’s neck and shoulder, while trying to write at the same time, may lead to occupational overuse syndrome. This may take the form of a sore neck, painful shoulders, or painful wrists. Survey workers are aware of this risk and the majority take steps to minimise it by doing exercises, changing tasks and limiting the time they spent on the telephone to no more than three hours at a stretch. Miriam had a water drink beside her, which was her way of introducing exercise. Georgie, who averages seventy calls an hour, has experienced neck and shoulder pain. She stopped using a cordless phone and purchased a headset, but it broke as she was moving from room to room in her house, trying to catch the warmth of the sun. She has not purchased another as she considers it too expensive, nor has she asked MarketMatrix to purchase one for her. Georgie has

ongoing OOS problems. She described waking up at night with pain going down her arms and wrists and pain in her shoulders.

Some survey workers who collect information in businesses report fatigue from standing for long periods and sore wrists from holding a clipboard. Recording information in the car can also present challenges. Some solutions are home made. Maree has a wooden “desk” fitment her husband made for her, which hooks over the steering wheel. She had found that twisting to write on top of her briefcase on the passenger seat gave sciatica. Alex commented on the importance of trying to minimise stretching or twisting of the body.

A few survey workers identified passive smoking as an issue. However, they recognised that they could not ask people not to smoke in their own homes. William said:

It can be a real haze that you’ve got to sort of wipe away to see somebody. And of course for those in the younger age group who like the stuff that is green and it grows, you’re smelling that as well.

Maree commented on the need to dry clean her clothes after being in the presence of smokers and the subsequent cost, an economic cost she absorbed.

Constant loud music in a few businesses caused some survey workers to have painful ears. John enjoys his work, which involves visiting businesses. “The music gets on your nerves sometimes. I stick tissue in my ears, I just get fed up with it - the repetitious singing.”

The lack of opportunity to engage with other survey workers was identified as a major issue. OpinionQuest used to have an annual get-together of survey workers in each region. These occasions provided valuable opportunities to interact with people undertaking the same work. Sharing ideas on work practices and voicing concerns about work problems and conditions, highlighted the fact that they were not alone and that others had similar experiences.

Maree used to enjoy the social aspects of the job but now she feels increasingly isolated. The network she had built up with nearby survey workers has disintegrated because of changes in staff and the reporting relationships to regional supervisors.

When I first started we used to have regular briefings, a couple of times a year we knew that we'd get together. In those days they used to be two-day ones, so you were away for an overnight function. We used to get together and discuss informally the same sorts of issues that you had. We don't get that any more. We get a briefing ... we've got to race to the place, do the work and then you're back off again because of the deadline. It's changed because of money, money. Quite basically, it's money.

TomJack held similar views.

It's funding of course, that is the difficulty with courses these days. The benefit of those sort of things (courses) is not so much what you learn from the top down but what you learn with your peers, swapping experiences over a beer, a meal or something like that.

Tim felt very strongly about the lack of regular meetings with other survey workers.

If you saw some of the correspondence of concerns, that's one of the main issues. We feel the system is letting us down and they are letting us down badly. We've just come back from doing training for another project and we get together then. There's no cohesion in the group. We used to have regular meetings. It's devastating really, to be honest with you, in my opinion, we're expected to provide our own support services. There's a fairly high concern about this. I think it's right across the board. When we are together it doesn't take long for issues of mutual concern about the mileage and all of these things to come to the fore. It's pretty high on the agenda. And this is the thing about those types of meetings is that somebody may be sensitive to an issues and others say 'yes me too.' You are inclined to bottle it up and think well that's my problem. We don't have an outlet for those sorts of things.

Tim went on to say that the survey workers did take these issues to their supervisors who take the issues to the next level. Tim said:

To be brutally frank, it's the next level where the problem lies. The supervisor takes it (to management) and that's where things come unstuck. There's a high level of frustration; there's a boiling point.

All the informants are very positive about the value of meeting up with other survey workers although Jean commented that the briefings were "a load of old rope." This

is not the view of the majority. Often these occasions are described as rushed with little opportunity for social interaction. Much frustration has resulted. Survey workers in small towns often have their informal networks in place. They support each other and this is greatly valued.

Stress from relationship factors is a contentious issue. Survey workers recognise and in many instances value their autonomous role. Their 'people' contact is primarily with respondents in their homes. Survey workers adopt a positive view of being left to do their own thing. However, people who work in organisations usually have colleagues with whom they interact on a daily basis. This may be through meetings, team activities or during tea and lunch breaks. The camaraderie that is established in the workplace may contribute to the well-being and productivity of the workers. For survey workers this cannot be. The confidential nature of the job means that they are not building relationships with colleagues or clients; social contact is limited. The confidential aspect of the job also precludes them from going home and offloading to their families. They may 'bottle up' some of their feelings about their work. Supervisors are available and supportive, but survey workers tend to contact them when there is a problem.

Erratic workloads are identified as stressors by survey workers in MarketMatrix. Too much or too little work each presents its own problems. Too much work creates pressure to meet deadlines sometimes viewed as unreasonable. Poor weather can mean that surveys are delayed, thus putting extra pressure on the survey workers when the surveys do go ahead. Clients set timeframes for the organisation, which has to pass these onto the survey workers. On the other hand, too little work means that pay cannot be guaranteed. This creates dilemmas for survey workers whose other income is a domestic purposes benefit, as they are often assessed on what they have earned in the past. Past income was not necessarily an indication of future income. OpinionQuest survey workers are, in the main, happy with their workload, both the number of interviews that they are expected to do and the deadlines that are expected.

The physical terrain is fraught with hazards for rural survey workers in particular. They accept remoteness, long distances and vagaries of the weather as an integral part of the job. In New Zealand only five percent of the roads are divided, which increases the risk factor. "A US study found rural arterial roads – comparable to most New Zealand's state highway network – had an accident rate three times that of interstate highways, where traffic flows were divided" (Bass in Brown-Haysom, 2002, p. 20).

Gordon is a seasoned survey worker and travels longer distances to reach his respondents. He does not believe that managers located in Auckland and Wellington appreciate the isolation and context of the job, or the economic risks for rural survey workers. He states:

Supervisors have not been to the really remote areas. Because they haven't been there, they don't understand what it is like. They don't understand the extent of the problems.

Black ice, snow, howling gales and heavy rainfall are common weather hazards that prevent survey workers from working. Roads may flood or break up completely.

Gordon states:

The weather is a safety risk. When I know the weather is going to break up or it's going to rain, I don't go out. You don't know whether the road is going to be there or not.

Frank's territory takes him to lifestyle blocks where the soil is clay.

I went down there on a pouring wet afternoon and I was concerned about going down the side of a hill with the weather and I wondered what would happen. I rang my supervisor and was told that it was on my insurance; that bothered me. On the news the next day I heard that the same roadway that I was on had slipped onto the road. I could have been injured. Those sorts of issues are of concern. It's a challenge to meet the response rates, goals for ourselves.

Economic costs were mentioned above by Dawn as additional expenses. Cellphones, landline rentals, insurance excess, increased insurance premiums, electricity for recharging of laptops and car running costs are examples of the costs that survey workers absorb. Dawn said mileage in excess of 3000 kilometres at 19 cents put the onus of risk on her. Survey workers like Dawn are responsible for the provision and

maintenance of their own cars. Survey workers whose cars are damaged during the course of their work, for example on stony roads, bear the costs and are liable for any insurance excess. Premiums may be charged at a higher rate because vehicles are used for work purposes. Membership of the Automobile Association is common. Some pay an additional amount for Silver Class, which entitles them to a rental car in the event of breakdown. The organisations provide mileage allowances only.

Dawn has chosen not to absorb the cost of buying a cellphone but she thinks a cellphone would be very useful and considers that the organisation should provide them for all survey workers. Many survey workers purchased cellphones when they began the job. Only one survey worker was adamant that the organisations should not provide cellphones because she considered they would be abused. Many considered that it was an essential item for the job, others considered it desirable, and should be provided by the organisations. Miriam, who does both telephone and face-to-face interviewing, contended that she was subsidising MarketMatrix. The organisation was saving money by using residential telephones for business purposes. People working in their own homes were responsible for the cost of heating and lighting. "There is a lack of awareness of costs. They tend to rely on our resources." At the time of the interview Miriam had been given a cellphone from her daughter.

George considers that it would be preferable for OpinionQuest to employ full-time interviewers and provide them with a car and appropriate remuneration. When he started with the organisation fifteen years ago, fieldwork was expected to be the main job. Casualisation of the work has deprived survey workers of redundancy or any of the usual conditions that full-time workers enjoy. George says, "the pay for the car is rubbish but you can't tell them that." (The survey workers do tell OpinionQuest this but it is to no avail).

Chapter seven compares the practice of being a survey worker with all its risks with the legal and organisational policies. In some cases they mesh, in others the workers absorb risk.

Chapter Seven: Analysis of Policy and Practice

In this chapter I compare the legal and organisational policies of two organisations with the actual practice of the two groups of workers outlined in chapters five and six. Specifically I explore the economic, psychological and physical risks they face in the course of their work. It is not the purpose of this study to compare the organisations with each other but rather to contrast practice with policy. I also outline the legislative context within which OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix operate in relation to health and safety

The primary concern of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 is the prevention of harm to employees while at work. Employers are required to provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment and are expected to identify, eliminate, isolate, or minimise hazards, as appropriate. The legislation has comprehensive coverage for all work situations, recognising and addressing the problems of workers operating away from their workplace. In providing such comprehensive coverage of places of work, the Act indicates that employers are responsible for employees wherever they are working.

Each party in the employment relationship has clearly defined responsibilities. The Act requires employers to train employees to have them manage their own safety at work. Employees are required to take care not to cause themselves or others harm. There is the provision for organisations to draw up their own codes of practice that can be approved by Occupational Health and Safety. Before employees begin employment, employers are required to inform them of emergency procedures, hazards that they may be exposed to while at work, and the location of safety equipment (Department of Labour, 1993).

In most industries such as manufacturing and retail, workers are located on-site. Some employees travel in the course of their work; others may work on different sites yet their whereabouts are easily identified. Most probably, they are working alongside other employees. Survey work requires a constantly shifting workplace.

Survey workers in OpinionQuest operate alone - in their own houses, in respondents' homes and to a lesser extent, in public places. MarketMatrix employees often work in pairs or groups, particularly when they are in new areas or shopping precincts.

Information assembled from interviews with managers and reading manuals, show both organisations comply with the 1992 Act. They take legal requirements seriously, instilling health and safety policies during recruitment, selection, induction, training and ongoing practice. Both recruit suitable people to apply for survey work; in OpinionQuest, selection focuses on choosing people who would be comfortable with cold calling, who would enjoy working alone, cope with the fluctuating nature of the workload and who are likely to commit themselves to the organisation for a reasonable length of time. The person specification they devised was a sound one, reflecting the current workforce.

The retention rate in OpinionQuest is high and the tendency towards employing people in the older age group is demonstrably successful. OpinionQuest complies with the equal employment opportunity policies operating in the organisation. Depending on the location of the survey work, people are selected who could operate happily there. In smaller towns and rural areas, survey workers often have to travel considerable distances to work, so the manager must determine that applicants can fulfil the physical requirements of the job. All their survey workers are expected to have access to a reliable vehicle.

In OpinionQuest's induction and training programme, survey workers are provided with a briefcase containing a dog dazer and personal alarm. Safety and health issues are reinforced at the initial training session, in particular, occupational overuse syndrome - the nature of it and how to take steps to avoid it. Dogs are identified as a common source of problems and instruction given on how to read dog body language. All survey workers are issued with a manual at the initial training session, which includes information on occupational overuse syndrome with details of exercises to practise, how to interpret dog body language, and procedures on the reporting of incidents and accidents. OpinionQuest state, both at the selection interviews and the training sessions, that survey workers are not expected to put

themselves at risk and that they should use their judgement. They may terminate an interview early if they feel unsafe. This broad policy covers the organisation. It is left to the survey worker to decide when a situation is unsafe.

MarketMatrix policies are similar in most respects, the major difference being in the medium of the survey. The informants in this study were mainly engaged in telephone interviewing. MarketMatrix advise workers engaged in face-to-face interviews not to call at the specified houses if they feel unsafe or if a dog present makes them feel uncomfortable. They did not provide dog dazers or personal alarms.

Both organisations see themselves as good employers. They fulfil the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 in that they aim to provide a safe and healthy work environment. It is, however, impossible for them to control the work environment at all times when the survey worker's location is constantly changing. Organisations cannot possibly control the homes of respondents. They can only alert employees to potential hazards and train them in how to manage the corresponding risks. Both organisations do so, but to a limited extent. At the initial training, both identify dogs as being the main hazard of the job and provide training in how to deal with them. Neither organisation appears to be wholly effective in raising worker awareness of some potential dangers with people, other than verbal abuse. Ugly events are rare but they do happen.

Some policy areas work very well as evidenced by practice; others are disregarded or interpreted broadly. Occasionally, policies may be open to reinterpretation; they may not be sufficiently specific. And situations arise for which no clear, written policies exist, where implementation may vary from one survey worker to another.

The organisations do not appear to follow up training to ensure that some policies are practised as they were intended. Brake (2001) in Bateman (2001) states that an essential component of good training is follow-up to ensure that knowledge has transferred to practice.

Successfully implemented policies

Neither organisation expects its staff to take unnecessary risks. If for any reason survey workers feel uncomfortable, they are advised not to proceed with the interview, though many do. However, specific circumstances are not identified that should alert the survey worker to retreat quickly. OpinionQuest have the right to terminate an interview at any time during the course of the interview. MarketMatrix staff use the pretext that they have already interviewed their quota for the day in a particular group if they feel uncomfortable with the person at the door. They could terminate the interview at any time as the respondent would not be aware that all the questions have not been asked.

Survey workers are consistent in identifying themselves at the door with suitable identification. MarketMatrix does not have any specific requirement of where to place the ID badge. Their survey workers identify themselves to respondents by first names only, both on the telephone and on their badges. Survey workers may choose pseudonyms but none of the informants in this study did, suggesting that they were happy to expose their own names.

Policies on dogs are well practised. MarketMatrix alerts survey workers to some of the issues arising from dogs at its initial training session and sometimes includes a talk from a dog ranger. OpinionQuest includes a discussion on how to be alert for the signs of dogs on properties; how to read dogs; how to avoid attack, what to do if one is attacked and the reporting of dog incidents. A video on dog body language is available at the initial training, but attendance is optional as it is played during the lunch break. Information on canine body language is contained in its manual, and shows how to interpret the signs of impending problems with dogs. It also documents what to do in the event of sustaining dog bites.

Survey workers mentioned that they take precautions saying they approach houses cautiously, and stand to the side of doors in case dogs bound out. They are diligent in reporting dog incidents, and subsequent follow-up is generally carried out. Despite good practices, an increasing number of survey workers are being bitten. TrustPower, Tauranga (pers.com. 19 November 2001) require customers to indicate

if they have a dog on the property. The meter readers have a hand held computer and it automatically flashes up when a dog is on the property. Despite this system, meter readers get bitten, one had his arms torn to shreds by a pitbull terrier which was tied up and the owner was on the property (Dominion, 17 November 2001).

Occupational overuse syndrome is a well identified health risk and both organisations cover OOS issues in their initial training. Both organisations include a section in their manuals related to preventing the condition, showing helpful exercises. OOS is covered early in the initial training, and exercises are practised regularly in the induction during the course of initial training. All informants with OpinionQuest recognise the real risks of OOS and, with one exception, comment positively on this aspect of training. At the time of the study this organisation has only recently embarked on data collection by laptop, thus no occurrences of OOS have been reported. Survey workers were new to laptop entry, and most were diligent at carrying out their exercises. Some informants at MarketMatrix were also involved in laptop entry and understood the need to exercise to avoid OOS.

All the survey workers in the study who had laptops were happy with them. They follow the policy with regard to carrying and storage. They are trained to carry the laptops over the shoulder, across the body, which helps distribute the weight evenly. Survey workers put laptops and briefcases in the back of the car, behind the driver's seat, to eliminate the need for stretching to reach them. This reduces the risk of back strain. In selecting lightweight computers, OpinionQuest has sought to minimise this hazard.

OpinionQuest has a policy of providing headsets for telephone interviews if survey workers request them. Survey workers who do use them find them very useful. But they must be requested.

Overall the workload policy works well at OpinionQuest. The volume of work may vary, creating periods when there is much work and others when there is very little, and the employment contract does allow for this variation. The survey workers interviewed were happy with this. Some said that the workload has increased but

were accepting of this. One informant who had been overloaded said that the supervisor had hired another survey worker in the area to lessen the load. This provided an additional benefit of having a co-worker nearby.

MarketMatrix has regular meetings of survey workers in informal settings including a Christmas party. Such events provide opportunities for friendships to develop among co-workers and for them to discuss their work experiences. The way the work is structured at MarketMatrix often means that survey workers work in pairs or in groups, so there are opportunities to mix with people doing the same job. When there are pressures on deadlines, MarketMatrix rewards its staff with morning teas or other tokens of appreciation. OpinionQuest no longer have regular get-togethers of survey workers. Meetings only take place when new surveys come on board and social time at meetings is limited.

MarketMatrix provides meal allowances for survey workers when they are engaged in surveys requiring their absence from home for the whole day. This is often the case when teams of survey workers undertake work at the weekends.

Both organisations have policies that allow survey workers' discretion on whether to have cups of tea/coffee offered by respondents. Some survey workers have a personal policy of always accepting hospitality because they consider it polite, and believe that it helps to establish a good rapport with respondents. This demonstrates their commitment to achieving the best results. Others never accept cups of tea, sometimes due to previous negative experiences. Most survey workers decide on each occasion whether to accept hospitality, depending on such factors as the cleanliness of the house and whether they actually want a cup or tea. Drinking from respondents' cups is one area identified by survey workers as a potential source of infection. However, because they are aware of the risk they actively manage it.

All survey workers refrained from using respondents' toilets except in exceptional circumstances. Several reasons are offered for this: they do not want to further intrude in respondents' homes; they do not want to expose themselves to risk by putting themselves in vulnerable situations - for example, the toilets may not have

locks or may not be clean. All survey workers managed risks by familiarising themselves with the location of public toilets or use toilets at service stations.

Unsuccessfully implemented policies

Policy areas exist in both organisations that would benefit from review. They may be inadequate, misinterpreted, ignored, or applied inconsistently. In some areas of activity, survey workers are unaware that specific policies exist at all. In particular, unwritten policies may not be communicated to all survey workers, and safety measures, once taken, are not followed through. OpinionQuest is spending money on safety equipment without ensuring that it is used.

The policy of not providing cellphones to all survey workers is the strongest and most contentious issue raised by informants in this study. One survey worker had been issued with a cellphone by the organisation but was asked not to communicate this to other survey workers. All but two survey workers engaged in face-to-face interviewing were of the opinion that the organisations should provide these. Forty-five percent of the informants in this study had purchased their own cellphones, some as a direct result of starting survey work, recognising risk and absorbing this economic cost to ensure their own safety at work. Cellphones are often pre-programmed to family and the police so that in the event of a crisis, the survey worker can access help quickly.

When cellphones came onto the market initially, they were perceived as a fashion accessory, a toy for the young upwardly mobile professionals (Yuppies). However, cellphone companies realised that if they were to increase their sales they would need to appeal to wider markets. In recent times individuals and organisations have recognised the value of cellphones as a safety device. Many organisations whose employees are in lone work situations have changed their policies and have provided cell phones. For example, The Ministry of Social Development and Accident Compensation Corporation provide cellphones for staff that work in the community. Sadly, this policy was initiated only after a client with a knife killed an ACC staff member in their office. The murder prompted a complete review of safety procedures (pers.com. ACC staff member, October 2001).

In the incident with the knife, detailed on page one, the survey worker Joseph appraised the situation and acted quickly to avoid danger. He was fortunate to have his own cellphone that he could use to call the police and access help quickly. Wilkinson (2001) identified the need for cellphones as standard tools for district nurses. Community midwives in the United Kingdom had called for the issuing of cellphones in 1995 (Rickford, 1995). Unions in the United Kingdom have given strong support to health departments to gain extra government funding to provide nurses working in the community with cellphones, indicating that this is not yet standard practice (Duffin, 2000). Shacklady (1997 in Beale, Fletcher, Leather & Cox, 1998) found that seventeen percent of respondents, in her study of community health workers, had purchased their own cellphones.

Lamplugh (2000) (Appendix 6) cites examples of how a cellphone can assist a lone worker. The worker can dial emergency services directly; the worker can use the cellphone as a means of checking in with the office when they reach a client's home and can alert the office to the situation in the client's home by using codes. For example, there could be codes to alert extreme danger and send help urgently; or the worker is all right but would like the office to call back in five minutes. Joseph uses this technique. If the worker is still uneasy when the call is returned, that can be used as a reason to leave. Prevention is better than cure. It is preferable for employers to undertake risk assessment and provide a cellphone with an alarm facility rather than to offer counselling after a staff member has been beaten up (Valios, 2003).

Cellphones are recognised as an essential tool for survey workers even before tragedy intervenes. The willingness of many workers to obtain their own, sometimes when they begin work as survey workers, demonstrates their conviction that cellphones are an essential item. Only one survey worker was adamant that cellphones should not be provided because she feels that they could be abused. This is a risk - but should be weighed against possible injury or loss of life. The benefits of supplying cellphones outweigh the costs. Currently, survey workers are voting with their wallets, bearing the cost of their own safety.

OpinionQuest issues dog dazers and personal alarms with torches in them as standard safety equipment to all new survey workers. For many, the dog dazers and the personal alarms remain in the briefcase, are placed in the drawers at home, the glove compartment of the car or in some other inaccessible place. Only a very few carry the dog dazer and personal alarm at all times; most consider dazers to be of little use. To be effective they must (of course) be carried so that they can be activated quickly if required. Even survey workers who have dazers at the ready, have experienced dogs catching them unawares, sometimes from behind, resulting in dog bites. OpinionQuest provide them in the belief that they are useful, yet their policy does not extend to stating that the dazers should be carried at all times. MarketMatrix does not provide this device, and from the experience of their usage in OpinionQuest, it would be inappropriate to recommend that they consider doing so.

The cost of providing these safety devices is considerable, yet OpinionQuest does not monitor the survey workers' practice in carrying these standard tools. This lack of usage means the organisation is currently spending money unproductively. It also sends signals to survey workers that these devices are optional. In this respect, neither employee nor employer is meeting its obligations. McDonald states, (2000, p. 48) "It is important to note that once suitable clothing and equipment are provided, employees have a legal obligation to use it." Carr (2002, p. 3) states that "successful hazard management should be founded on the assumption that employees will not do as they are told." Carr suggests that employers need to put a strong emphasis on policing safety procedures. To be effective, a policy needs to be practised; to ensure that the practice is working, it needs to be monitored. Green et al. (1993) suggest that a personal alarm is essential for survey workers engaged in research. Any lone worker would benefit from having a personal alarm. If OpinionQuest believes that survey workers should always carry the dog dazers and personal alarms, it should include the monitoring of this in its performance management system.

Training included not only personal safety but the safety of respondents and confidentiality issues are addressed. Survey workers must, on appointment, sign a declaration guaranteeing confidentiality both during and after the employment

period. One aspect is that survey workers should not be accompanied by any outside person in the course of their work. This policy is not always adhered to - two survey workers do have family members accompanying them on occasions, with the full knowledge of their supervisors. Survey workers in this study never take people accompanying them into respondents' homes. In all other respects, confidentiality is well practised by all but one survey worker, who informs her husband of the addresses she is visiting (though not the content of information received). In this case, the survey worker is giving priority to her own safety. Survey workers are likely to inform their families of the general area in which they will be working, but not specific streets or addresses. This would make it very difficult to find a survey worker in the course of their work if they do not possess a cellphone.

There are issues of confidentiality surrounding the survey workers themselves that cause risk. At OpinionQuest, survey workers are issued with identification badges featuring both names. Sheila asked for only her first name to feature on the badge, but when received it featured both names. Staff should be consulted about the use of name badges and decide on a policy. There are various options that can be considered: use of first name only; use of first name with an assumed surname; use of assumed first name and surname; or alternatively a number with the name of the organisation. Staff should be discouraged from displaying name badges to the general public, for example, wearing them in the street (The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, 2000) (Appendix 5).

Also, according to Marilyn, the Information Technology department has set up the laptop computers so that survey workers' full names are displayed. Marilyn asked that her surname be removed, but was told that this was too difficult. She does not like having her full name revealed to respondents who may look at the screen. Marilyn has not pursued this further with the organisation, nor has she has discussed the issue with other survey workers. A further confidentiality issue involved distributing names, addresses and telephone numbers of survey workers to other survey workers without seeking the permission of each. This has been practised at OpinionQuest. The practice is not working well and contravenes the Privacy Act 1993.

In an office environment, employers' health and safety commitments have them provide ergonomic furniture. New employees often receive an assessment of their work area by an occupational health nurse, to ensure that the furniture is appropriate for the individual. Adjustable keyboards and gas ergonomic chairs allow an optimum position to be attained, but this is not possible when workers are mobile. Survey workers do not get this support. When working in people's homes they have to assess risk, adapting to the circumstances they meet. Organisational policy recommends that they aim for a table with a high back chair, but survey workers are unlikely to be offered this optimal situation - even if respondents have ergonomic furniture. There is a wide gap between what is desirable and what is realistic. Most respondents invite survey workers into the lounge or dining room with low sofas or chairs, while low coffee tables may be the only usable surfaces in sight. Even when there is a dining table it may be littered with papers or set for a meal. This issue needs addressing as it is only a matter of time before survey workers develop OOS. OpinionQuest's policy is that survey workers provide their own cloth or towel to cover the table, to avoid scratches to the surface. This is a further instance of workers absorbing the cost. The organisation should provide an appropriate cover to accompany the laptop.

MarketMatrix survey workers use battery-powered laptops for data entry whereas OpinionQuest policy requires survey workers to ask respondents for the use of electricity rather than relying on batteries to operate the laptops. Most respondents agree, and the location of power points often determines where survey workers sit.

Laptop screens can present difficulties to wearers of bifocals. Although OpinionQuest has a policy of providing regular eye checks for office-based computer users, this has not been extended to survey workers - or if it has, they are not aware of the policy.

For those survey workers who visit businesses as part of their work issues involve noise from loud music or from standing for lengthy periods with no seats available. In general, survey workers tolerate these stresses and have not reported them to their

supervisors. They are irritating rather than injurious, and no specific policies cover these issues. Earplugs could be provided.

Survey workers identify the risk of catching infections as a health issue in the job. Respondents at home during the day could be there because they or their children are sick. When respondents identify that they are at home owing to sickness, survey workers are reluctant to turn down the opportunity for an interview. They knowingly expose themselves to the risk of infection, putting job needs ahead of their own personal protection.

Despite a greater exposure to infections than many other work groups, the survey workers were aware of them but few chose to have the free flu vaccine provided by OpinionQuest. Indeed, many survey workers in the study held a negative view of vaccines. Many are in the age range for which the government provides free flu vaccines, yet decline this offer too. Some take alternative homoeopathic medicine in an attempt to boost their immune systems. Flu vaccines do reduce absenteeism but to be effective need to be given in early autumn (Trifiletti, 2002). MarketMatrix does not offer free flu vaccines.

At OpinionQuest one of the roles of the supervisors is to be accessible to survey workers to offer advice, support and to provide information. Supervisors may work from offices in Auckland or Wellington, physically far removed from many of their survey workers. The policy is for survey workers to use a 0800 number to contact supervisors. This works well for some purposes, but there is no provision for access to help in the event of breakdown or danger. Telephoning someone in Auckland or Wellington to advise of a breakdown outside Mangaweka would not in any case be a productive activity. Telephoning the AA or a nearby garage would be more practical.

Survey workers in both organisations are expected to report incidents yet this policy is not practised. Under-reporting of incidents results in the organisations having an incomplete picture of what actually happens in the field. Verbal abuse is often ignored (Beale et al. 1998). One common reason for non-reporting is the belief that

the victim has contributed to the incident and secondly that management will not take the issue seriously (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999).

OpinionQuest survey workers believe that they are expected to wear their ID around their necks. There appears to be a lack of clarity here, as the supervisors were not of this view. Organisational policy requires survey workers to display their ID badges prominently and to show identification on meeting the prospect. This is practised consistently. Some survey workers who wear the ID badge around their necks feel there is the potential for someone to grab it. The issues of where the ID is to be placed needs to be discussed and documented in the manual. Currently there are survey workers wearing it around their necks when there appears no requirement to do so. Other survey workers attach the ID badge to their clipboards. The ID badges are on lanyards, suggesting they should be worn around the neck..

As stated above, OpinionQuest workload policy worked well but MarketMatrix survey workers identify workload issues as causing stress. Either there was too much or too little. This led to complications for survey workers on government benefits. Although survey work is very much a part-time job, the working week extends over six days in MarketMatrix, and OpinionQuest allows survey workers to work on Sundays, making it potentially a seven-day week commitment. MarketMatrix often undertakes large-scale surveys at weekends, the success of which are dependent on good weather. A wet weekend can put pressure on survey workers to meet tight deadlines.

Hours are restricted. Neither organization expects its workers to work in the dark. Interviews are expected to be conducted between the hours of 9.00 am and 8.40 pm. OpinionQuest survey workers are supposed to visit up to three times in an attempt to find respondents at home. In MarketMatrix with telephone interviews survey workers' are expected to telephone up to ten times, trying on different days and at different times in an attempt to secure the interview. The nature of the job means that interviewers may work over an extended period. Survey workers from both organisations feel they are 'on call' because they can receive telephone calls on any day of the week at any time. Survey workers may wish to restrict the days and times

that they work or are available on the telephone, but if this means that their response rates are affected, they face a dilemma. This availability factor means that their private lives are constantly being intruded on. Time with children and partners may be interrupted by telephone calls at inconvenient moments. The commitment to the job is often overridden by the desire to preserve personal time. This was a source of annoyance to some survey workers who feel that their jobs are “too casual” to be expected to be available seven days a week and during times that they regard as leisure time.

Issues without policies

Areas that have no policy involve economic, physical, psychological, and health risks to survey workers. Currently survey workers are both recognising risks and absorbing these risks.

There is no requirement for survey workers to notify supervisors where and when they are working. Lack of reporting systems means that survey workers whereabouts’ cannot be tracked. Although many of the informants in this study did tell family members of their general whereabouts, it would be very difficult to locate the survey workers during the course of their work. This is a major risk to their safety. The survey workers could only be contacted if they had cellphones. If a survey worker did not return home it would be very difficult to track their movements for that day.

One area in OpinionQuest that appears to be devoid of policy is the ‘economic risk’ factor of their work, absorbing many work-related costs. This may cause stress through a build-up of resentment and a sense of powerlessness in their ability to effect change. Survey workers engaged in face-to-face interviews are required to provide a sound, reliable vehicle for their work. This entails costs in servicing their vehicles more frequently than would otherwise be necessary. They pay for vehicle insurance, and the organisational policies state that survey workers must inform the insurance companies at the beginning of employment that they will be using their vehicles for work. Insurance companies may increase the premium by ten percent to cover the additional risk (Liddle, pers.com. 24 January, 2003). Survey workers are

responsible for costs incurred by damage to their vehicles in the course of their work. Little cognisance is given to the risks survey workers face in travelling in inclement weather and over difficult terrain. They are likely to choose to belong to the Automobile Association for the breakdown service it provides, and must bear this cost.

There is no clear written policy on how to deal with breakdowns. Survey workers are expected to use their commonsense; some of those who experienced a breakdown on the job had to call on their families to rescue them. Families are inconvenienced and face the cost of travelling to and from the site of breakdown, yet no provision is made for reimbursement of costs incurred. Again, the survey workers and their families absorb the cost. If a survey worker is left without a car because of a breakdown, OpinionQuest provide a rental vehicle - but this is not a documented policy and it is not communicated widely to survey workers. If the policy is to provide a car, then this practice should be stated in the policy manual. Survey workers who have been in this predicament may have preferred the option of having a rental car.

Survey workers are expected to install their own landlines at home prior to being hired. This features in advertisements for survey workers as an essential requirement for the job. Neither organisation contributes towards telephone rental costs but both reimburse employees for calls incurred in the course of their work, whether toll calls or calls to mobile phones.

OpinionQuest does not provide meal allowances. Nor is there an existing policy that alerts researchers of the need to eat at regular intervals when they are working away from home for the whole day. It is left to the survey workers to make provision for their own refreshments if they cannot return home. In rural areas, this is not always possible.

There is no policy that alerts survey workers to the potential risk of respondents finding out their telephone numbers from the caller display facility. Survey workers need to know their options for minimising this risk. The manuals could include

information recommending that the telecommunications company place a bar on their telephone so that they would not reveal their telephone number to respondents with the caller display facility. Alternatively they may precede each call by dialling 0127 to avoid their number being displayed. The risks associated with respondents' being able to access survey workers' in their own homes must, at least, be made known to them so they can make a decision on what they should do. MarketMatrix did caution survey workers through their newsletter after one survey worker had an unpleasant incident that resulted in her changing her telephone number to protect both herself and her family.

In OpinionQuest currently there is no policy on how to access respondents who live in security controlled apartment buildings. The practice of coat-tailing people into apartment buildings needs to be stopped and a firm policy initiated to specify how survey workers are expected to access these buildings without risk of trespass or danger.

There are some risks that have no solution. Survey workers appear to be of the opinion that if they are working in middle to higher socio-economic areas, they are less at risk than if they are in lower socio-economic areas. This may be true, but it may also mean that survey workers could become complacent in such areas. The risk of stereotyping needs to be emphasised at the initial training. As Win commented, a run down ill-kempt house can be in between two half-million dollar homes. Gang houses present their own special problems. Some of the features of gang houses are gates, long grass, many vehicles on the grass, and many people on the property. Survey workers appear quite willing to locate respondents in gang houses but do retreat if there are signs of alcohol or drug intake. The unease felt by some informants in this study suggests that a policy on gang houses should be introduced.

MarketMatrix does not provide headsets, yet many of their survey workers are primarily engaged in telephone interviewing. Some of their employees would certainly appreciate headsets. Georgie provided one for herself, but when it broke, she could not afford to replace it. Given that much of the survey work done by

MarketMatrix staff is via the telephone, it would be appropriate to provide headsets for such staff. OpinionQuest issues headsets, and these are appreciated.

In many workplaces, the company of colleagues can promote camaraderie, reducing the sense of isolation and stress in a pressured work environment. Survey workers do not enjoy this luxury. In most circumstances, survey workers work alone; the only people they meet during their working day are respondents. The nature of the work requires them to be unbiased and to create a professional environment for the interviews. They cannot engage in meaningful conversations; exchanges between respondents and survey workers are limited to superficial pleasantries. Further, the confidential nature of their work means that survey workers cannot offload the experiences of their daily work to friends or families. This exacerbates the stress they may experience from one bad interview, yet they are unlikely to telephone supervisors just to unload. Regular contact from supervisors could provide an avenue for survey workers to offload their unpleasant or difficult experiences and would also keep the supervisors in touch with what happens in the field. House (1981) found that the status differential between supervisor and staff member can prevent a truly supportive relationship developing. A buddy system between two survey workers would work, provided that the organisations bear the cost of telephone calls.

OpinionQuest survey workers identify the lack of contact with other survey workers as a major issue. The organisation used to have a policy of providing for an annual gathering of survey workers from around the country. This took the form of at least two nights in a hotel, with opportunities to socialise and swap experiences. Survey workers viewed this as a de-stressor. As they told their stories, they found that many shared similar experiences. They discovered that they shared common problems. This change in policy has resulted in survey workers feeling isolated and remote from colleagues. Survey workers in OpinionQuest now only meet at training sessions for smaller groups, and time does not permit much social interaction. Those surveyed considered that the policy change was a decision by management rather than their supervisors, and that the motive was cost saving. Their relative isolation means they have no one to 'lobby' for them. The lack of contact with others is

viewed as a barrier to collectivism and considered as a deliberate construct by management to keep them quiet and to keep the lid on the real issues.

Survey workers are hired as part-time employees on an 'as required' basis. The nature of the job means that work cannot be guaranteed, resulting in a certain amount of stress, as income cannot be guaranteed. Survey workers who are dependent on their incomes, such as single people and solo parents, find it very difficult to plan ahead. For survey workers on social welfare benefits, the fluctuation in income levels pose problems with the Department of Work and Income. Benefits can be stopped quickly but take much longer to restart. A slight increase in income can mean a substantial loss of welfare benefits.

Payment is on an hourly rate and survey workers are paid for the time between leaving home until their return from work. A mileage allowance of 67 cents is paid up to 3,000 kilometres and 19 cents per kilometre in excess of that. Three thousand kilometres is quickly exceeded by rural survey workers who travel long distances to access respondents. A bone of contention is the number of times survey workers have to call on respondents if they are not at home the first time. They are expected to make three attempts. This can vastly add to the mileage they clock up in their vehicles. The IRD recognises and approves mileage allowances to the level paid currently without a requirement to pay tax. If payments were to be increased then organisations would have to pay tax on what they pay to individuals.

In sum, there are many policies that work yet there are policies that need improvement.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Much has been written about survey work: design, data collection, analysis, the role of survey workers and how they can influence response rates and the collection of the data. However, there is a paucity of information on the health and safety risks that survey workers face in their daily task of knocking on the doors of strangers to collect this valuable data. They appear to have been overlooked. Yet other groups of workers face similar risks; the literature related to them is discussed in chapter two.

This study resulted from a personal interest in health and safety and a desire to find out how managers manage the risks of staff who are lone workers and whose territory is constantly shifting. This study is not (of course) a statistical exercise. It is impossible to conclude that $82 \pm 5\%$ of informants require cellphones, or $65 \pm 4\%$ experienced dog bites in the last six months. At the outset, I could not have known which issues were relevant; my objective was to discover how the organisations' policies were practised by survey workers. In the preceding chapter I have documented their stories, their issues: what worked and what did not.

The survey workers recognise and routinely absorb physical, psychological, emotional and economic risk. They frequently took steps to absorb these risks with their own means. Forty-five percent of survey workers, both urban and rural, purchased cellphones, sometimes only after commencing survey work. Rural workers joined the Automobile Association and had their vehicles serviced more frequently than would otherwise be the case, in an effort to avoid the risks associated with mechanical breakdown. On occasions survey workers continued with their interviews to maximise their response rates when, on hindsight, it would have been safer for them to retreat at an earlier stage when the early signs of danger emerged. Verbal abuse was often tolerated and accepted as part of the job. The isolation of the job was both positive and negative. Autonomy and the ability to choose when one works is very appealing but the reality is that survey workers must accommodate themselves to the availability of their respondents. This was a source of annoyance

to some of the survey workers who felt that their jobs were “too casual” to be expected to be available seven days a week and during times that they regard as “leisure time.” Lack of contact with other survey workers was highlighted as an area of discontent.

Chapter seven reviewed the policies of MarketMatrix and OpinionQuest, and the degree of compliance with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. In general terms, both organisations meet their legislative requirements in both policy and intent.

Yet, in both, problems arise when translating policy into practice. Areas exist where policy is insufficiently precise. Sometimes, lines of communication between survey workers and headquarters are inadequate; their doorstep warriors may feel vulnerable and at risk. Yet the informants in this study are strongly committed to their jobs, judging from the length of service, the strong desire to meet the targets set for response rates within the time frames set and the sheer persistence to locate the assigned respondents, even when it takes several visits or numerous telephone calls.

At OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix, policies and practices need to be made more transparent and be fully documented in the manuals provided to survey workers. Monitoring the practice is essential on an ongoing basis. Procedures for dealing with deviations from best practice need to be instituted. Others need review.

At the initial training, survey workers are informed of some potential dangers of the job, and are advised against taking risks. Both organisations cover the dangers and body language of dogs extensively. Both caution against the hazards of OOS, and recommend strategies to avoid it. Their survey workers are consistent in identifying themselves to respondents. MarketMatrix training takes place in a less formal setting than with OpinionQuest, but both approaches appear to be effective.

Supervisors are careful when recruiting and selecting new workers. They have person profiles of successful survey workers, and the loyalty shown to OpinionQuest suggests that they choose well. Survey workers were, in the main, happy with their

workloads, noting that it had increased over the years. Most survey workers welcomed the increase in work. At MarketMatrix the informants identified workload issues as causing stress. Either there was too much or too little. As some were in receipt of a welfare benefit, fluctuating earned income levels created difficulties. Benefits are, in general, quick to stop but slow to restart if earned income fell again. The system for payment and claiming of mileage allowance works well although the remuneration is considered inadequate for the skills and commitment required for the job. Remuneration was outside the brief of this study so I did not pursue this other than to recognise that it did cause stress to survey workers, particularly at OpinionQuest.

Provision previously existed for annual meetings of survey workers in the regions, but this has stopped in recent years. Survey workers identify the lack of contact with other survey workers as a major issue, and meetings of this nature would help remedy it. Regular contact from supervisors could provide another avenue for survey workers to offload their unpleasant or difficult experiences and would also keep the supervisors in touch with what happens in the field. The supervisors are always available for survey workers and the manual states that survey workers should report incidents to supervisors but informants in this study do not appear to use this avenue to offload and debrief after unpleasant encounters. This means that the supervisors of both organisations are not aware of the nature or number of incidents.

The relationship between survey workers and MarketMatrix seemed more relaxed and informal. MarketMatrix sometimes requires surveys to be completed within tight deadlines, and celebrates success with morning teas or other tokens of appreciation. Many surveys are so structured that people work in pairs or in groups, so there are opportunities to mix. They hold regular meetings in informal settings, and have a Christmas party, allowing friendships to develop among co-workers. MarketMatrix uses first names only for identification and survey workers may opt for a pseudonym if they wish. The company also provides meal allowances for survey workers when work requires their absence from home for a whole day. No

meal allowances are available at OpinionQuest for survey workers whose work involves extended absence from home.

The perceived need for cellphones is the strongest, most consistently voiced need encountered in this study. These could be pre-programmed to the office and the police so that in the event of a crisis, the survey worker can access help quickly. Clearly, others might have to be called - a nearby garage, the AA, the ambulance service, a partner or relative. As indicated earlier in the thesis, a number of organisations have changed their practices to include the provision of cellphones as a result of recognising the risk to their lone workers who visit clients in their homes.

Informants in this study did not recognise the risks they were exposing themselves to by leaving home for work without anyone knowing their precise whereabouts. Often they would indicate to family members their general location but not specific location, to preserve confidentiality. Neither organisation had a policy of requiring survey workers to report in to say where they were going to work, nor of reporting in when they had completed their work. The OpinionQuest manual states that survey workers should let a family member know an expected time of arrival home. This makes no provision for workers who live alone. It also seeks to shift the responsibility for safety from the employer to employees and their families. The respondents in Kenyon & Hawker's study (1999) considered that their families and friends were more interested in their welfare than their employers. Some employers of workers in similar situations, such as the Ministry of Social Development, have instituted policies that require staff to report in and to report when they had completed work for the day and were going home.

Two issues exist with ID badges at OpinionQuest: where they should be displayed and what information they should carry. Perhaps the positioning of the badge should be a matter of personal choice; if so, this should be stated. Many believed that they had to wear it around their necks, which would raise immediate safety issues if tugged. The second concern relates to the present policy of displaying the survey worker's full name. Many were ill at ease with the potential loss of privacy this implied. A related issue concerns the laptop screen's display of the survey worker's

full name. Entering a pseudonym would be very easy for IT if they require two names to be entered to satisfy the system. In addition, on occasions, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of survey workers have been distributed to other survey workers without permission being sought.

Provision of dog dazers and personal alarms, while well-intentioned, has not been followed up with consistency. Most survey workers considered the dazers ineffectual. The majority of informants in this study did not carry personal alarms. Personal alarms are strongly recommended for lone workers (Lamplugh, 2000; Kenyon & Hawker, 1999; Green et al. 1993).

OpinionQuest provides headsets and they are widely used. MarketMatrix does not currently provide headsets yet most of the informants were primarily engaged in telephone surveys. As the extended use of a handheld telephone while writing can lead to OOS, the provision of headsets would appear to be justified.

If a survey worker does not have a car because of a breakdown, OpinionQuest provide a rental vehicle - but this is not a documented policy. There can be no dispute about the merits of the policy; it should, however, be documented.

Informants report risks associated with respondents identifying them through caller display. They may, however, ask the telecommunications company to place a bar on their number being displayed, or dial 0127 each time before making a call. Both OpinionQuest and MarketMatrix need to include this information in their manuals.

Recommendations

Major

- Both organisations should provide cellphones to survey workers with a policy for usage. Cellphone companies are likely to provide discount deals to bulk buyers.
- The whereabouts of survey workers should be known at all times when they are on the job. For example, survey workers could leave the addresses to which they

are going in a sealed envelope in a place that it can be found should they disappear.

- A more comprehensive review of job risks should be included in training sessions. This would include examples of incidents and how survey workers can misinterpret social stereotypes and body language. Emphasise that survey workers should not be complacent when working in middle to higher socio-economic areas. Involve current survey workers in the training sessions to share experiences with new recruits.
- A review of the mileage allowance is required for travel in excess of 3,000 kilometres. The payment for travel beyond this limit is considered inadequate and is a source of stress.
- Include information in the manual on how to block access to their personal telephone numbers.
- Provide a space on the summary sheet for recording incidents such as frights and verbal abuse so that the organisations can monitor their frequency and disseminate the information to all survey workers. Incident reporting needs to be formalised. Information on incidents could then be disseminated to all survey workers, not to alarm, but to inform them of what can happen.
- Reinstate the annual meeting of survey workers at OpinionQuest to provide the opportunity of sharing experiences and providing support to peers.

Minor

- Remind survey workers of the confidentiality expectations on a regular basis and monitor that it is being practised.
- Review the practice of distributing the names and particulars of survey workers to other survey workers without first gaining their permission.
- Include the video on dogs and subsequent discussion as an integral part of the initial training at OpinionQuest. Consider inviting a dog ranger to talk at training sessions. Consider using a dog video at MarketMatrix.
- The practice of coat-tailing people into apartment buildings requires to be reviewed and a firm policy initiated to specify how survey workers are expected

to access such buildings. Currently there is no policy, and the researchers are breaching the security rules of the buildings.

- OpinionQuest should offer training or courses that are already available to in-house staff, for example keyboarding software programs for staff undertaking laptop entry; defensive driving for survey workers in rural areas; stress management. Organisations have been slow to recognise stress as work-related and instead attribute stress to personal factors (Cooper and Locke, 2000) but the impending changes in legislation are likely to see a shift in this viewpoint.
- Monitor deadlines for MarketMatrix staff to identify how often survey workers have pressured deadlines because of the weather.
- Documented policy on dealing with vehicle breakdown. Rental car provision to be included in the manual at OpinionQuest.
- Part payment towards Automobile Association subscription for rural workers. An allowance to cover expenses that survey workers absorb: for example, the landline rental, the increased premium for insurance as a result of using their vehicle for work; the electricity used to recharge laptop batteries and to send material to supervisors via the modem.
- Review policy on flu vaccines at OpinionQuest and redirect money if insufficient uptake. Annual eye-checks for OpinionQuest staff engaged in laptop entry as standard practice. Provide hearing checks at MarketMatrix for those involved in telephone work. Provide earplugs for survey workers working in shopping malls.
- Review the universal issue of dog dazers and personal alarms. The lack of usage of these tools means that the organisation is spending money unnecessarily. If OpinionQuest considers that survey workers should carry dog dazers and personal alarms with them, the monitoring of this should feature in the performance appraisal system.
- Provision of personal alarms at MarketMatrix.

Further studies

This study was limited to the safety and health issues of survey workers employed by two organisations. The purpose of research is to answer questions, yet often in the process it raises unanswered issues. From this study a number of questions emerged that could be the focus of future research. Topics include:

- How the implementation of cellphones in organisations that have recently adopted this practice has benefited workers and impacted on organisations.
- Groups of workers who are required to provide their own vehicles for work and how the economics are managed.
- The changes in the management of mobile workers as a result of the amendment to the Health and Safety in Employment Act 2002.
- The morale of survey workers and other workers who work in isolation.

Are survey workers on the way out? The increasing use of the telephone for interviewing may see a decline in door-to-door interviewing. "Two thirds of all ad hoc surveys are now done by telephone" (Mercieca (2002, p. 29). This is probably driven by economics rather than an attempt to reduce the risks to survey workers on the streets. Face-to-face interviewers achieve a higher response rate than mail surveys as respondents are likely to be more positive towards someone standing on their doorstep (Babbie, 2001). Survey workers in face-to-face interviews contribute to the quality of the data (Curasi, 2001). The survey worker at the door is likely to be around for a long time, and the risks to their personal safety are likely to increase if current trends in crime continue.

The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 had an amendment passed in Parliament in December 2002 that comes into effect on 5 May 2003. The amendment deals specifically with mobile employees.

A person is in a place of work whenever and wherever the person performs work, including a place that the person moves through or which itself moves.

The amendment also specifies that employers should include employee participation in health and safety.

Every employer must provide reasonable opportunities for the employer's employees to participate effectively in ongoing processes for improvement of health and safety in employees' places of work.

Employers of survey workers would be wise to set up clearer reporting systems for tracking workers in the field rather than relying on families. Involving survey workers in the management of the hazards would also fulfil the requirements of the amendment in the Health and Safety in Employment Act.

Appendix 1

Health and Safety Issues of Survey Fieldworkers

INFORMATION SHEET

Hello, my name is Jacqui Campbell, and I am a Masters Student at Massey University. I am undertaking research into the health and safety issues of survey fieldworkers and how the fieldworkers perceive management policies and practices on these issues. The changing environment in terms of increased crime and violence against persons whilst at work and the fact that little research has been done on this topic in New Zealand, makes it timely to undertake such a study.

This research is being conducted to assess how fieldworkers perceive the policies and practices of management with regard to health and safety issues. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study. Information thus gained may facilitate the development of policies and practices, which enhance fieldworkers' safety, provide additional training, which may lead to greater empowerment thus minimising risks to fieldworkers. The findings could be of benefit to other organisations whose employees work in similar environments. If you are invited to take part in the focus groups you will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure that the information exchanged within the group remains confidential to the group and the researcher.

The results of this research will be used for a Masters' thesis and may be published in relevant journals. A summary of the findings will be mailed to each participant at the end of the study.

Massey University Human Ethics Committee has approved this study.

If you elect to take part in this research you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview that will last approximately one hour. The interview will be audio-taped if you agree. The interview will take place at a mutually convenient time and place. A small number of participants will be invited to participate in a focus group.

You have the right:

- to refuse to answer any particular questions
- to withdraw from the study at any stage during or after the interview but before the research has been completed
- to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation

- to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher
- to turn off the tape recorder at any time
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded

You may choose a pseudonym for use in the study. The information gathered will be tape-recorded and will be transcribed by the researcher. Only the researcher and the two supervisors will have access to the information. Confidentiality is assured. Your company will not know that you have participated. The data collected will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the researcher at Massey University, Wellington. Following the transcription the tapes will be erased and at the end of the study the researcher will shred the data.

If you have further questions you may contact my supervisors or myself.

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Appendix 2

Health and Safety Issues of Survey Fieldworkers

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

If I choose to participate I have the right:

- to refuse to answer any particular questions
- to withdraw from the study at any time
- to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation
- to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.

I agree to be tape-recorded. I know I can turn off the tape recorder at any time.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 3

*'Health and Safety Issues of Survey Fieldworkers
and their perceived views on management policies and practices.'*

I would like to participate in your research study.

My name is

My telephone number is

Please return in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope. Thanks.

Appendix 4

Home Address

Date

Informant's name and address

Dear

Re: Research Study – Health and Safety Issues of Fieldworkers

Thank you for giving your time and sharing your experiences with me for my study.

As indicated on the Information Sheet, you will receive a copy of my findings at the end of the study.

Please accept the gift enclosed as a token of my appreciation.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Jacquelyn A Campbell

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

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<p>PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDANCE</p>
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Wearing Name Badges

Use of name badges can increase an individual's personal safety risk. A risk assessment should be carried out to determine whether wearing name badges poses an unacceptable personal safety risk. If it is considered to pose such a risk, an employer cannot insist that staff wear name badges.

If staff are required to wear name badges as part of their work, clients have been known to use this information to harass staff. It can also lead to a feeling of vulnerability and stress by staff.

Staff should be consulted about the use of name badges and should decide on a policy they feel suitable. It is safer to use only first names on the badges, or you may decide to use a title and surname. Staff should be able to use an assumed name if they prefer, or may decide they prefer to use their own first name but an assumed surname. Different staff members may make differing decisions about their own name badge.

Staff may decide that a "no name" or "no surname" policy is safest, in which case names or surnames should not be given out. It must be explained to clients that this is the organisation's policy if they request the surname of a staff member.

Rather than wearing name badges, staff could wear badges which indicate their position and department, and a code could be determined if needed to differentiate between different staff members - e.g. one staff member could wear a red triangle on their badge, whilst another wears a blue dot. "Checkout No. 3 Operator" or similar could be used if necessary.

Name badges should always be removed before leaving your place of work / conference venue / wherever it is that you have been given a name badge to wear! You are put at a disadvantage if someone reads your name badge and pretends to know you.

Under the 1976 Health and Safety at Work Act, employers are obliged to exercise a reasonable duty of care with respect to the safety of their employees. Whilst clients may find it helpful to have full names of staff printed on name badges, this should not be done if staff feel this is done at the expense of risk to their own safety.

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**PERSONAL SAFETY
GUIDANCE**

Mobile Phone Safety at Work

Mobile phones are extremely useful as a Personal Safety tool if used properly as part of a whole plan to keep yourself safer.

Mobile phones enable you to:

Dial 999 in an emergency from your own phone rather than trying to get access to the client's phone (even if they have one).

Phone the office to check in eg "I'm at J Bloggs house at 73 Smith Street in at the moment, just checking to see if there are any messages". This logs you in as being at that address, and the client is aware that this has occurred without feeling threatened.

Give planned codes in case of a threatening situation eg "Could you please check my red file?" might be a code to say "I'm in danger - please call the Police for me?" or "Could you please check my blue file?" might mean, "I feel uneasy, please ring and check on me in five minutes". When they ring back, you can use this excuse to leave - "Oh I'm sorry, I've just been called back to the office - I'll have to go now".

Remember that mobile phones are sometimes out of range and cannot be depended on entirely. Use them as a key for confidence but do not let that confidence drop if your mobile isn't working.

The costs of providing mobile phones need not be large, especially if they are only used occasionally. If you are buying a mobile mainly to be used only in an emergency, choose phones which are free to purchase or cheap to rent but have higher costs in call charges. These calls can then be itemised.

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