

SEC INTERROGATORY #86

INTERROGATORY

[B/6/2, p. 15] Please summarize any research known to the expert on biases in vendor/trade ally answers in triangulation surveys.

RESPONSE

Just as there are concerns regarding response bias in customer/participant surveys, there are concerns with trade ally surveys. The same approaches to mitigate biases used in customer surveys are also used in trade ally surveys. One concern that has been raised is that trade allies might more closely align themselves with program implementers (e.g., utilities) and might sway their answers to be more in line with the utilities' point of view; however, this concern is generally mitigated by the fact that trade ally views can help identify biases in customer responses to self-report surveys. In addition, trade allies can be among the most severe critics of utility EE programs. Overall, it is not clear that there are generally one-directional or systematic biases across the responses of a group of trade allies nor that the biases in vendor/trade ally surveys are more significant and difficult to address than customer/participant surveys.

The general view among the evaluation community is that triangulation is beneficial in NTG studies. The different perspectives and experiences with the program and the way it influences EE actions have proven to be valuable. The three state case studies in Exhibit B, Tab 6, Schedule 1 indicated that triangulation was an approach used in all three states as part of NTG evaluation. Best practice approaches for trade ally and market actor surveys are discussed in Exhibit B, Tab 6, Schedule 4, page 41.

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