

# NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

## CASE STUDY

### HOCKEY FANS FACE OFF IN ONLINE PANEL

After the lockout in 2004-05, the National Hockey League (NHL) decided that the best way to re-connect with fans was to bring them together within a custom online panel. Today almost 15,000 fans have joined the NHL Fan Face Off panel to voice their opinions on rule changes, marketing, how they watch the playoffs on TV and gauge local buzz for the sport. Since the panel launch in December 2005, the league has done over 50 studies along with a series of mini-polls called “Slap Shot Studies” on fun topics to keep the panelists engaged (for example, who has the hardest shot or who is the fastest skater).

The fan response on the panel has been incredible. Response rates were as high as 65% during the playoffs when only half the teams were still playing. For the NHL, the panel is helping all departments by providing a faster turnaround and better management of research. Instead of taking 2 weeks to develop a study in a few select cities, they are able to develop, deploy and see results in 2 days from the all over the U.S. and Canada. In addition to surveying their fans on various subjects the NHL is also re-connecting with fans by delivering a newsletter every 6 months.

#### **Benefits of an Online Advisory Panel to National Hockey League:**

- Getting immediate feedback from fans
- Showing appreciation of fans by asking for their input
- Engaging fans in a new way
- Making informed corporate decisions

#### **National Hockey League Uses Their Online Advisory Panel for:**

- Investigating attitudes and behaviors
- Determining online consumption habits
- Testing ads and marketing
- Developing the fan experience
- Planning game schedules

#### **What National Hockey League Says About Vision Critical**

“An online panel is a quick and cost effective way of getting the pulse on our fan base. By having a panel, we are seeing savings of over \$100,000 per year compared to doing focus groups in several cities. Plus, with a panel we get a report the next day, with an average of 500 responses. Vision Critical has a team of people who understand my business and have a high regard for customer relations.”

Mark Erlichson, Senior Director of Research  
National Hockey League