



Nuans: Research on Client Satisfaction and Client Profiles

Executive Summary

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Background and Objectives

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) commissioned public opinion research with clients of Nuans. Nuans is an online service of the federal government that new businesses, or their representatives, use at the time of their incorporation to compare their proposed name with already existing names and trademarks. The purpose of the research was to help ISED better understand the different expectations of Nuans audience segments.

The research was designed to generate information and insights on: 1) profiles of typical Nuans clients; and 2) client satisfaction, program expectations, channel and website feature preferences by audience segment.

The specific objectives of the research were to:

- Create Nuans descriptive client profiles (personas);
- Better understand Nuans clients' needs and expectations;
- Gather client perspectives on Nuans digital service offerings; and
- Better communicate Nuans service offerings to each target audience.

The research results will be used to improve the services offered by Nuans and to address Nuans' underused services through awareness raising and/or program changes.

1.2. Methodology

A set of 20 one-on-one in-depth interviews was conducted with the target population: Nuans clients who had completed at least one transaction in the 12 months preceding the research. This included three types of clients:

- self-serve;
- jurisdictional; and
- intermediaries.

Self-serve clients are individual entrepreneurs; jurisdictional clients are provincial corporate law administrators; and intermediaries are private sector business users who offer their services to clients that wish to obtain a report and/or an opinion in the process seeking approval on a corporate name.

The breakdown of interviews by client group was as follows: four interviews with self-serve clients, four interviews with jurisdictional users, and 12 interviews with intermediaries. This distribution was designed to reflect the population of Nuans clients.

Interviews were conducted by telephone by senior researchers from Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI) and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The fieldwork was conducted between April and June 2018.

This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of Nuans clients.



1.3. Key Findings

Resources used to search for corporate names and trademarks

In addition to Nuans, interview participants mentioned a variety of websites or online resources that they use when looking for existing corporate names, business names and trademarks. The resources mentioned with the greatest frequency were the Internet, specifically Google, Corporations Canada's federal incorporations database, and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). The reasons participants use these specific resources are varied, ranging from cost factors, to ease of use, to necessity.

Reasons for using Nuans

There are two main reasons clients use Nuans: first, to check name availability and reservation, primarily for the purpose of facilitating incorporation; and second, to search for corporate or business names for trademarking purposes.

Awareness and knowledge of Nuans

When asked how they first heard about Nuans, self-serve clients pointed to the Internet or, specifically, to Corporations Canada website while private sector and jurisdictional users tended to mention their workplace. Beyond name searches and name reservation, very few participants were aware of any other services offered by Nuans. Those who claimed knowledge of other services offered by Nuans mentioned corporate name pre-approval and trademark reports.

Overall satisfaction with Nuans

All interview participants were satisfied with Nuans, at least to some extent. They characterized Nuans as easy to use, fast, user-friendly, and available 24/7. When asked what they like about using Nuans, most participants mentioned the speed of the report generation (reports are generated immediately, in real-time). Widespread satisfaction notwithstanding, participants also pointed to areas or aspects of Nuans in need of improvement (e.g., the level of detail in the Nuans reports) or technical issues they have encountered using Nuans (e.g., signing in).

Contact with Nuans

None of the self-serve clients interviewed had been in contact with a Nuans representative during the past 12 months. In contrast, most of the intermediaries and jurisdictional clients interviewed said they had been in contact with Nuans. Reasons for contacting a Nuans representative during the past 12 months include the following: to address a login issue; to ask about retrieving a report; to inquire about billing or to report an issue with billing; and to add or remove users from their account. Most participants in contact with Nuans used email and were satisfied with their service experience.

Service channels

Regarding their preferred service channel for dealing with a Nuans representative, participants were divided between telephone and email, with some preferring either channel and others preferring one over the other. In general, telephone is preferred because it is direct and can lead to quick problem resolution. Email, on the other hand, is preferred because it provides a written record of the inquiry/transaction.

Client Profiles

The findings from the interviews were used to construct four profiles of those who use Nuans—personas.

- **Persona 1:** Self-serve users are the most varied persona. What these clients have in common is that they are owners of (or involved with) a start-up business and have chosen to do the name search as a precursor to incorporating their business. These individuals are comfortable enough operating online to have decided to undertake this step in the incorporation process on their own. Beyond this, self-serve users have very little in common. They represent businesses from different industries across the country.
- **Persona 2:** Casual users are a sub-set of Nuans' intermediary clients. On average, they use Nuans once per month. Casual users typically provide services to businesses, such as accounting, bookkeeping, payroll, and/or incorporation. They represent clients operating in different sectors of the economy, but these companies tend to be micro-businesses in the start-up stage of their lifecycle. Casual users have a high level of online expertise, conducting personal and professional transactions online every day.
- **Persona 3:** Power users are also a sub-set of Nuans' intermediary clients who typically work for business registration firms, name search firms, or for provincial governments (jurisdictional). Power users are very sophisticated users of Nuans, in large part as a result of the frequency with which they use the service. They represent clients operating in different sectors of the economy, although some may focus on specific industries. The businesses they provide services to can be start-ups or well-established companies, although some power users work primarily with companies in the start-up stage. When it comes to the size of these businesses, once again, power users' clients run the gamut from micro-businesses to large businesses.
- **Persona 4:** Trademark users are also a sub-set of Nuans' intermediary clients. These clients are sophisticated searchers who use specialized databases to research and protect trademarks on behalf of their clients. These clients tend to use Nuans as one source among others, and do so on a weekly basis. They represent clients operating in different sectors of the economy. Their clients can be start-ups or well-established companies, small or large in terms of corporate size and Canadian or international.

These profiles are based on the information collected through the interviews. They cannot be considered representative of the full population of Nuans clients and should be used with this in mind.

The contract value was \$46,262.20 (including HST).

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