

## SURVEY TIPS

The following tips can help you decide when or if a survey is right for your circumstances as well as give you ideas on the best ways to ask questions to garner the results that you desire.

### **When is a survey a useful tool to measure my event, initiative or project?**

Surveys are a good tool when you want to quickly assess participants' attitudes, behaviors and/or beliefs. Surveys are helpful for capturing information that is neatly grouped together; however, they are limited in scope and can not always provide in-depth data about an event, program or material.

### **What kinds of questions should I ask?**

There is a variety of ways that you can ask survey questions. Basically, there are four types of questions.

#### **1. Open-ended questions**

- The advantages of these questions are they give respondents an opportunity to express their opinion in the way they want to and you are able get a feel for what people think. You will usually want to have 1-3 open-ended questions, but more than that is generally not recommended.
- The disadvantages of these questions are that it takes respondents longer to answer them, which can lessen the number of respondents overall if you ask too many; they are more difficult to analyze; the data may be incomplete and potentially irrelevant.

#### **2. Close-ended (multiple choice, true/false, etc.)**

- The advantages of these questions are that they are easy to answer and analyze and they can provide a wealth of information in a short period of time.
- The disadvantage of these questions is that you may omit some data. You can address this in most cases by adding "other" with a short text box as an answer choice.

#### **3. Scaled (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)**

- The advantages of these questions are that they are easy to answer and analyze and they can often provide more information than traditional close-ended questions.
- The disadvantage is that you need to have a good understanding about the topic and what questions you are trying to have answered in order to write the survey questions. Also, while not impossible, it can be difficult to include "other" as an option.

#### **4. Ranking (1 is highest, 5 is lowest)**

- The advantages of these questions are that they are easy to analyze, provide a significant amount of information, and allow respondents to rate things about an experience in relation to another.
- The disadvantages to these questions are that they can be difficult to answer and may limit the responses.

#### **What is Skip Logic?**

Skip Logic is used to collect data on specific survey participants by directing respondents through the survey based on responses to previous questions. This allows you to route respondents to a page of follow-up questions intended only for them. For example, if a respondent chooses a specific answer, then the respondent is directed to another section to drill down or get more detailed information.

#### **How do I know if I should use a paper survey or an online survey?**

There are many times that you might want to consider using an online survey, such as when you want to survey visitors who are actively using your website. However, if you are holding an event, such as a conference or training, where people are actively captured and seated at the end of the event, then you may want to use a paper survey. You would also want to build in time in your event for people to complete the survey. Be prepared to have a clearly identified area for people to turn in their surveys.

#### **How do I figure out the estimated time it will take my constituents to complete the survey?**

The time it takes to complete surveys is dependent on the length of the survey and the type of questions asked. Multiple choice questions usually take about 1-2 minutes to answer. Open ended questions usually take about 3-5 minutes to answer depending on the amount of space respondents are given.

#### **How long do I keep the survey open?**

You will want to give people at least 2 weeks to respond to your survey. You will always want to send your survey close to the time of a related event. A general rule is that a good day to send electronic surveys is mid-week and mid-afternoon, but this depends somewhat on your population and your needs.

#### **How do I figure out the estimated number of participants in my survey?**

If you are emailing the survey or you have a paper based survey, you can base your number of participants on the number of people who receive the survey. If you are posting the survey to the internet, know how many people come to your website daily. Although this may not be the same number of

people who will take the survey, this number is a basis to assess what percentage of your audience is taking it.

### **Should I use an incentive with my survey?**

Incentives can almost always help to increase the number of respondents to your survey. Something with a small monetary value, about \$5, can have the same impact as something much bigger. An incentive can make the difference between getting *all* of the information you want and *some* of the information that you want.

### **How will I see my results?**

If you develop an online survey tool, you can view your results regularly. You will have immediate real time access to all of your results.

### **What can I do with my survey data?**

After you have collected your survey data, you can use it to help inform future decisions, to share your results with others, to fulfill obligations of grants that require this type of data be collected, or for a number of other purposes dependent on your needs. Be sure you know how you will use the data before it is collected so you can ensure that you capture the appropriate information.

### **Why use Survey Monkey or Zoomerang?**

*Survey Monkey* and *Zoomerang* are user friendly survey systems. They make it easy to create surveys, it is easy for respondents to use, and it is easy to use for analyzing your data. On *Survey Monkey's* website, [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), they have several guided tutorials (that do not require logging in) that may help you to understand the system for both survey creation and analysis.