

Survey Do's and Don'ts

Best Practices for Survey Success

DON'T... ask too many questions

It's easy to ask too many questions or include questions that are very complex. Avoid questions that are too granular and try not to incorporate topics without a clear focus. You can easily scare away or confuse respondents and not get the information you are after.

DO... keep surveys simple and focused

Studies show that keeping surveys short—with no more than 30 questions—is the best practice. In many cases surveys can be much shorter. Focus on a single underlying theme and ask questions to gather the exact information you need. Resist the temptation to ask, “Just one more question...”

DON'T... take responses for granted

A survey is not successful without respondents. People have plenty of things to do with their time, and despite the importance you may place on the survey, it is usually not a high priority. If you don't pay sufficient attention to how you recruit respondents, you may be faced with a poor response rate, a high abandonment rate, or both.

DO... invite respondents with care

A strong invitation shows respect for recipients and their time. Studies have shown that most email recipients look at an email for eight seconds before deciding whether or not to take action. If you can't grab a recipient's attention and provide them with a reason to take action in those eight seconds, you've lost them.

DON'T... contribute to the SPAM problem

Everyone hates SPAM...and SPAMmers. But you don't want them to hate you, your survey, or your company. To make sure you are not sending SPAM, take care to avoid violating the CAN-SPAM Act and be sure you know from where your lists are coming.

DO... use lists appropriately

The respondents to your survey will come from either your own lists (your customers or employees, for example), or from outside lists. If you are not using your own list, invite respondents using reputable, third-party list brokers or panel providers. These organizations enable distributions to their lists without directly providing you with the names and addresses of the prospective respondent.

DON'T... substitute data for analysis

Once responses are compiled, many organizations present the data they've gathered in a linear fashion that exactly follows the order of the survey questions. Little analysis is performed and data is merely repeated for everyone to see. The data is not compelling and few people read the reports. In effect, the value of the survey data is severely degraded because people find it hard to see any actionable data in the survey.

DO... analyze results and present a compelling story

Analysis is key to making the data useful, so don't assume the data will speak for itself. Present results by telling a story using a combination of charts, graphs, and narrative. Use visual variety to lead your audience through the information and point out the important results. Don't assume that just because data is presented on the page, people will read it. Use call-outs and brief analyses to show people what's important on each page.

DON'T... underestimate the value of data

All primary data is valuable because it provides information you can't get anywhere else. The data you are collecting may originally have been intended for one purpose only, but most of the time it can have significant uses and value beyond that one project.

DO... repurpose and share the data

As you analyze and report on your data, include colleagues who might benefit from the same information. You can also share it with your customers and prospects, business partners, press, and anyone in your industry who might be interested in the results. Some organizations have developed a reputation for thought leadership in their markets simply by publicizing their survey results..

About Vovici:

Vovici's Enterprise Feedback Management solutions represent 25 years of industry leadership, and our software is the established leader in providing a comprehensive view of customer, partner and employee feedback. The combination of Vovici's software-as-a-service model and the most open feedback platform of any feedback tool on the market make it easy to integrate feedback processes directly into systems and applications. We deliver the enterprise-class requirements demanded by the world's largest organizations in a secure, reliable, and efficient hosted environment.