

Seven Deadly Survey Sins

And How to Avoid Them

Anti-Success Stories

- Over 200 Clients invited to take a Customer Satisfaction Survey—Only two responded.
- A 44-question open-text survey no one could analyze.
- An 81-question, 10-minute survey only completed by 11% of those who began responding.
- A survey sent to 2,500 potential respondents—only 22 completions.
- A collection of data no one knows how to analyze.

The First Deadly Sin Interrogating Instead of Asking

- Asking leading Questions - “Do you enjoy cheating on your taxes?”
- Showing bias - “You like your new product.”
- Using judgmental phrases - “Are you very satisfied or just satisfied?”
- Confusing the survey taker - “Only one answer per question unless more than one answer is applicable.”

How to Avoid It

Don't assume you know the answer to every question. Make sure your responses are balanced. Have a third-party review the questions and responses. Conduct a test prior to inviting participants

The Second Deadly Sin Colombo Syndrome

- Just one more question.
- Too many questions.
- Complex questions.
- Unclear focus.

How to Avoid It

A good survey typically has no more than 30 question and has a unifying theme. Be sure to make good use of skip logic and conditional logic. Avoid overly complex questions.

The Third Deadly Sin “Field of Dreams” Fallacy—“If you build it, they will come”

- Poor response rates.
- Unrealistic expectations.
- High abandonment rates.
- It's all about “me.”

How to Avoid It

The invitation is critical. Be sure it is clear, concise, and compelling. Pay attention to the subject line. Keep it short—under 60 characters—make it accurate, and beware of SPAM filters.

Offer an incentive. Don't assume people have nothing better to do. Be creative. Avoid phrases such as “You may be eligible to win” and “You will be entered into a pool.” A large number of small incentives is better than a small number of large incentives.

The Fourth Deadly Sin Monty Python Disease—SPAM

- Using non-permission based lists.
- Buying lists without knowing the source.
- Non-compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act.

How to Avoid It

An email must contain the physical street address of the sender. The subject line must be accurate. The From line must have the name of the company or the representative sending the email. There must be an opt-out or unsubscribe link. Lastly, a suppression list must be maintained.

The Fifth Deadly Sin

Data Worship

- An expectation that data will reveal “the answer.”
- An expectation that poorly constructed surveys will yield good data.

How to Avoid It

Think about the survey design before building. Be sure to opt for quality over quantity. And, don't substitute data for analysis.

The Sixth Deadly Sin

All substance. No Style.

- Data presentation follows the order of survey questions.
- Data is not presented in a compelling fashion.
- Reports that no one reads.

How to Avoid It

Make presentations readable and compelling. Use the data to tell a story. Write in the present tense. Make the data dynamic.

The Seventh Deadly Sin

Mr. Magoo Syndrome—Data Myopia

- Using data for one purpose.
- Not seeing the value in repurposing data.
- Underestimating the value of information.

How to Avoid It

Be sure to repeat surveys to get year-over-year comparisons. Share data with your customers and prospects, and press and analysts. Use research to attract prospective customer. Repurpose data wherever possible. Share data with those who provided. Conduct ongoing check to see how you've moved the needle and report on it.

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.