



# DESIGNING AN ASSOCIATION SURVEY PROGRAM

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# Agenda

- Survey Basics
  - Planning a Survey Program
  - Administering a Survey
- The Questions
  - Types of Questions
  - Types of Surveys
  - How to ask the Questions

# Planning a Survey Program

- Find out what you already know
- Figure out what you don't already know
- Determine what you need to know

# Find out what you already know...

- Determine what information already exists
- Gather existing statistics and samples
- Tap into other sources

# Figure out what you don't already know...

- Identify the “holes” in existing information
- Brainstorm
- Call in your members

# Determine what you need to know...

- Focus on what you don't already know
- Determine what is truly feasible, given your resources

# Administering a Survey

- Form a committee
- Design a survey
- Build up interest
- Execute the survey
- Report the results
- Act on the results

# Form a Committee

- Committees expand the usefulness of the survey
  - by bringing more people into the process
  - by bringing more points of view
- Vary the committee's membership
  - staff/professionals
  - users of surveys
  - non-users of surveys

# Design a Survey

- Reach agreement on your needs
- Determine where to gather the information
- Organize your topics
- Start with everything you want and cut it back
- Test the questionnaire

# Reach agreement on your needs....

- Remember what you decided you needed
- Don't try to do too much
- Don't scrimp, particularly on your first attempt
  - remember that the first is always the one they remember
  - a poor product gets poor results

# Organize your topics...

- Types of questions
  - demographics
  - continuing information
  - special “hot button” information
- Order of questions
  - build in layering
  - follow a logical pattern

# Start with everything you want...

- and cut back...
  - ask “do I really need to know that”
  - ask “how will I use this information”
- and look at how you’ll report it back...
  - ask questions that will get answers you can report back
  - ask questions that will get answers that reflect positively as well

# Test the Questionnaire

- Have everyone on the committee try it out
- Get a sample of others to test it on
- Calculate trial results and see how they will be reported

# Build up Interest

- Publicize well before you start
  - publicize the committee's work
  - publicize the survey
- Use all your resources in advance
  - newsletter/magazine
  - fax/email broadcast
  - personal letters

# Executing a Survey

- Send it to everyone at one time
- Give enough time to respond
- Send reminders twice...
  - once about halfway through
  - once just before the deadline (and always extend the deadline)

# Report the Results

- Analyze all the data
- Report only the useful data
- Understand the need for visual appeal
  - what type of information is best conveyed what way
  - use graphics to make points

# Act on the Results

- Feed back the results as soon as possible
- Take at least some kind of action

# The Questions

- Types of Questions
  - demographics
  - baseline
  - hot topics
- Types of Surveys
- How to Ask the Questions

# Types of Questions

- Demographics
  - everything relevant about...
    - the organization
    - the participant(s)
  - questions will differ depending on who is being surveyed
    - individual responses work best for professional groups
    - organizational responses work better for gathering “group information”

# Types of Questions (cont.)

- What's relevant varies
  - example: age??? or time in profession??
  - but the participant profile should be a representative sample... so...
- Compromise
  - enough to see if your sample is representative
  - enough to analyze and report the results

# Types of Questions (cont.)

- **Baseline information**
  - full spectrum of relevant data concerning the topic you are surveying
  - it must be comprehensive, or it isn't worth doing
  - ask exactly what needs to be asked, but do not ask for things that are already available in useful form elsewhere

# Types of Questions (cont.)

- Hot Button Issues
  - current trends/issues
  - “real” need for this type of information vs. panic, media coverage or sales efforts by consultants/suppliers

# Types of Surveys

- Full Scale
  - continuous process to minimize effort
  - “one-time”
- “Flash”
  - serves to update and focus attention
  - loses continuity

# Types of Surveys (cont.)

- How Long Should it Be?
  - It depends!!
  - Consider how important the results will be to the participants
  - The more often you survey, the more time-sensitive you should be
  - Test your early drafts to find out if they're "too long"

# How to Ask the Questions

- For each question...
  - Exactly what do you want to know
  - Exactly what are you going to do with the results
  - Exactly what point are you going to prove with the results

# How to Ask the Questions (cont.)

- Question forms:
  - forced single answer, e.g., true/false, multiple choice
  - multiple choice w/ multiple selections
  - ranking
- Some questions take better to some forms
  - sometimes you need a simple answer
  - sometimes you need a “feeling”

# How to Ask the Questions (cont.)

- Consider who is going to complete the survey:
  - Are they willing to provide the information
  - Do they have access to the information
  - Do they have time to provide the information