

## Surveying Your Surveys - Seriously

When determining your target audience or gauging their perception of your product or service, a well designed, carefully thought out survey can be the key to success. But (there is always a but), the survey has to be executed and analyzed correctly in order to be of measurable value to you or to your clients. Without measurement – you’ve no doubt wasted your carefully measured time.

If you’re new to this, you may want to consider using a short online survey, as they are typically less expensive to administer. Plus, they yield quick responses and analyzing the results is usually quite simple.

Whether you’ve chosen to reach your audience online, snail-mail, or by telephone you should consider which methodology will get your desired tidbits of information. Lynnette Leathers, President of **Mindspot** Research, and one of **evok’s** strategic partners, recommends using online surveys. “The online population is now reflecting the general market population for most segments. Mindspot specializes in online research because today’s marketplace and the future are online and surveys can be completed via computer, mobile phone, or text. Today, we almost never mail a survey or dial a home phone number.

“In fact, with online surveys, consumers can choose the time most convenient for them and with a click of a button submit their completed survey. Even Focus Groups are now conducted online. Our clients want results quickly so they can make immediate improvements or go forward with confidence by utilizing their customer’s feedback right away. Consumers have more power in the market now than they have ever before.”

### **Customer Satisfaction and Attitude and Usage (A & U) Surveys**

Typical Customer Satisfaction surveys are designed to measure just that – customer satisfaction. And, a well-designed survey will also measure how loyal your customers are to your company, product or service. You can even add specific questions that will give you a Net Promoter Score (NPS) that reveals the percentage of your customers which are promoters or detractors. This type of survey can identify what you do well and uncover opportunities to improve your business.

An A & U survey will measure aided and unaided awareness, the perceived benefits of your product or service, and the buying and usage habits for your product.

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Now, to get to the guts, the meat on the bone and the core of a survey, here are evok's 15 best practices for designing and administering an effective survey:

1. Know what questions you need answered. In order to get the information you are looking for, you must figure out exactly what questions you need answered.
2. Keep the survey relevant to your customers.
3. For the best results the survey should be simple, easy to understand, and brief (10 minutes or less).
4. Be considerate of the respondent's time. Let your audience know up front how long the survey should take to complete.
5. Tell your respondent WIIFM: Offer incentives to get your desired sample size. This could be as simple as a discount, drawing or gift card.
6. Don't keep secrets. Start with a quick introduction of what the survey is about-this will give your respondents an idea of what to expect and a little bit of context often helps when answering your questions.
7. Be Polite. Thank your audience up front and at the conclusion of the survey.
8. Make sure you are talking to the right people. Use screening questions to qualify the person.  
For example: *Do you currently use XYZ brand?*
9. Use a logical flow. Start with broad questions and then get more specific.
10. Incorporate questions with a rating scale, to provide you with easy to interpret and actionable data.
11. Leave enough space for people to tell you all about it. They will - your customers want to help you. If you ask open-ended questions, leave enough space for people to answer.
12. If you use a rating scale keep the order consistent throughout the survey so that there are no mix-ups.
13. Ask demographic questions at the end of a survey unless you are using them as screening criteria (am I talking to the right person?) If you ask too many personal questions upfront, people may not complete your survey.

Examples of demographic questions include:

*What is your gender?*

1-Male

2-Female

*What is your race/ethnicity?*

1-Caucasian

2-African-American

3-Hispanic

4-Asian

5-Other

*What is the last year of schooling you have completed?*

1-Some high school

2-High school degree

3-Some college

4-College degree

5-Postgraduate degree

# white paper

14. Always pre-test the survey with co-workers before deploying to make sure the flow is logical, key questions weren't missed, and there are no programming errors.

15. "Soft-launch" your survey. Only send the survey to a small percentage 5%-20% of your potential respondents in case there is an error that you need to correct.

After you've designed the perfect survey, administered it, received responses, don't overlook the most important thing - tabulating and analyzing the results. Use these results to make recommendations on what your company could be doing better and create a plan with your what you have learned.

If you are looking for an inexpensive way to conduct surveys, check out some of the subscription-based survey tools like [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com), [constantcontact.com](http://constantcontact.com), or [zoomerang.com](http://zoomerang.com). You can find templates, instructions and, sample questions to help you get you started. We're here if you want more in-depth help, advice, or full-service options - contact evok directly at 407-302-4416.



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