



Pros and Cons of Internet Surveys Compared to Traditional Survey Methods

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Survey Methods



- Traditional
 - Mail-in
 - Face-to-face
 - Phone
- Non-traditional
 - Email
 - Internet (or Web-based)
 - Fax (a hybrid)

Advantages/Disadvantages



- **Cost**
 - Electronic surveys are generally more cost effective (Cobanoglu, Warde, & Moreo, 2001).
- **Labor**
 - Paper surveys take more time to prepare and then code once they are returned.
- **Incentives**
 - More difficult to incentivize with electronic surveys, versus mail-in survey.

Advantages/Disadvantages, cont'd

- Turn-around time (e.g., number of days to complete survey)
 - Tends to be less in electronic surveys compared to mail (Cobanoglu, Warde, & Moreo, 2001).
- Response Rate (R.R.)
 - Largely depends on audience (Dillman, 2000).
 - Response rates tend to be higher in traditional survey methods versus e-mail and web-based surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000).

Response Rate (R.R.)



- Baruch (1999) found the average response rate for paper surveys to be 55.6%
- Meta-analysis done by Cook, et al, 2000 determined an average response rate for electronic surveys of 39.6%.
- According to Cook, et al, 2000, factors which increase response rate in electronic surveys:
 - Personalized correspondence
 - Salience of issue
 - Number of contacts to respondents
 - Pre-contact with respondents



A Case Study: 2007 Sussex Child Health Promotion Coalition (SCHPC) Member Survey

Sussex Child Health Promotion Coalition (SCHPC)

- A Coalition that was initially created by NHPS to serve children and families in Sussex County, DE.
- SCHPC's mission is to help families and children combat the epidemic of childhood overweight/obesity.

Who are the SCHPC members?

- A dynamic group of community-oriented individuals from diverse organizations, who are dedicated to the health and well-being of Sussex Co. children.
- The members are categorized into 4 sectors: community, primary care, childcare, and schools.



Sussex Coalition Evaluation



- Process evaluation (implementation)
 - Understand the successes and challenges of the Coalition in becoming a self-sustaining entity
- **Electronic Coalition Member Survey**
- Conducted member key informant interviews

2007 SCHPC Member Survey



- Purpose: To collect information about how the Coalition was forming and changing over time.
- Design: Anonymous, web-based survey was distributed over a course of 4 weeks (July 20th – Aug 16th 2007)



SCHPC Member Survey



- Completed response rate: 36% (49/138)
- Total Sample Size: n=49 SCHPC members



Response Time by Sector



Sector	Number of Respondents (n=49)	Mean Number of Days to Return Survey
Community (49%)	24	6.54 days
Schools (21%)	10	10.4 days
Primary Care (6%)	3	10.67 days
Child Care (24%)	12	13.83 days

Response Rate by Sector



Sector	Number of SCHPC Members (n=138)	Number of Respondents (n=49)	Response Rate (%)
Community (60%)	83	24	28.9%
Schools (22%)	30	10	33.3%
Primary Care (6%)	9	3	33.3%
Child Care (12%)	16	12	75%

Implications



- Community coalition members responded faster to the Member Survey.
- Those members who work directly with children (e.g., child care and primary care) took the longest to respond.
- R.R.s were fairly equal, except for child care (75%).

Factors for Increasing R.R.



- Personalized Correspondence
 - Coalition members did not receive personal correspondence.
- Pre-contact
 - Coalition members knew ahead of time of this survey
- Multiple contacts
 - Unless the survey was completed, the members received a reminder every week for a total of 4 weeks.
- Salience of Issue
 - Issue was important to members, as this survey was to better improve the Coalition

Ways We Could Have Improved R.R.



- Personalized correspondence (Dillman, 2000)
 - A generic email was sent out to members with an embedded survey link.
- Incentive
 - No incentive, except for personal Coalition improvement, was offered to the participants.

Ways We Could Have Improved R.R., cont'd

- Mixed mode survey (Dillman, 2000).
 - Possibly a combination of fax and email.
- Timing
 - The survey was administered in the summer time, a time where many people vacation and take holidays.

Summary



- Nearly reached the established electronic survey response rate of 39.6%
- There was a noticeable difference in response rate among child care providers vs. other sectors.
- Those in the community sector responded much faster than others.

References



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*All the flowers of all the
tomorrows are in the seeds of
today.*

- Anonymous

