

It's a fact: reporters love data. As such, developing, distributing and analyzing a survey can yield new opportunities to provide reporters with important statistics and proof points. The key to getting coverage of a survey lies in effective execution – and promotion.

Affect outlines 10 steps for creating and promoting a survey for public relations use:



- 1 Define clear goals and objectives.** Start by developing a theme or story you'd like to tell. Make sure every survey question is designed to help you tell that overall story, regardless of whether the results come back in your favor or not.
- 2 Pick your audience.** Decide who will help you reach your survey goals: customers or unbiased individuals? Consumers or professionals? This will ensure that your survey reaches the right people, as well as help clarify your results.
- 3 Identify your platform of choice.** The best thing about running a survey? It doesn't have to be expensive. Many low-cost or free options exist. Depending on your target audience, consider national survey vendors or omnibus options that can help you reach niche or wide audiences.
- 4 Ask the key demographic questions.** Everything from a respondent's professional title to his location can help uncover additional demographic-based trends when you do your final analysis. Don't neglect these questions when developing the survey.
- 5 Creatively pose every question.** Craft the survey to ensure that questions are phrased to yield interesting data, without leaning towards bias (in terms of industry, profession, location or age). If you're using a survey vendor, a representative can also take a look at your survey and provide advice on phrasing.
- 6 Ask respondents to rank their answers.** Instead of allowing respondents to select "all that apply" or the "top" priorities, ask them to rank items in order of importance. Ranking items will help you gain valuable insight into what your respondents care about the most.
- 7 Test, test and test again.** Run a "beta test" with internal employees to weed out design flaws or tricky questions. You'll quickly notice if there is any confusion with terms, and be able to poke holes in questions that won't yield significant or compelling data (e.g., "all of the above" responses from every respondent won't provide compelling data).
- 8 Analyze & compare.** Many survey tools offer additional analysis tools, including the option to use "cross tabs" that let you compare a question against demographics. Leveraging these tools can yield a whole new perspective that may offer reporters unique perspectives and trends.
- 9 Identify the gamut of PR opportunities.** Depending on the data your survey yields, you may be able to choose from a wide variety of internal and external content opportunities. Options could include a company white paper, full report, webinar or infographic.
- 10 Strategize on distribution.** Consider the most impactful way to release the survey results. Should you provide them as an exclusive to a top-tier reporter, announce them via a press release or blog post, or time them with a particular event or news item? Work to evaluate the biggest PR opportunity.

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