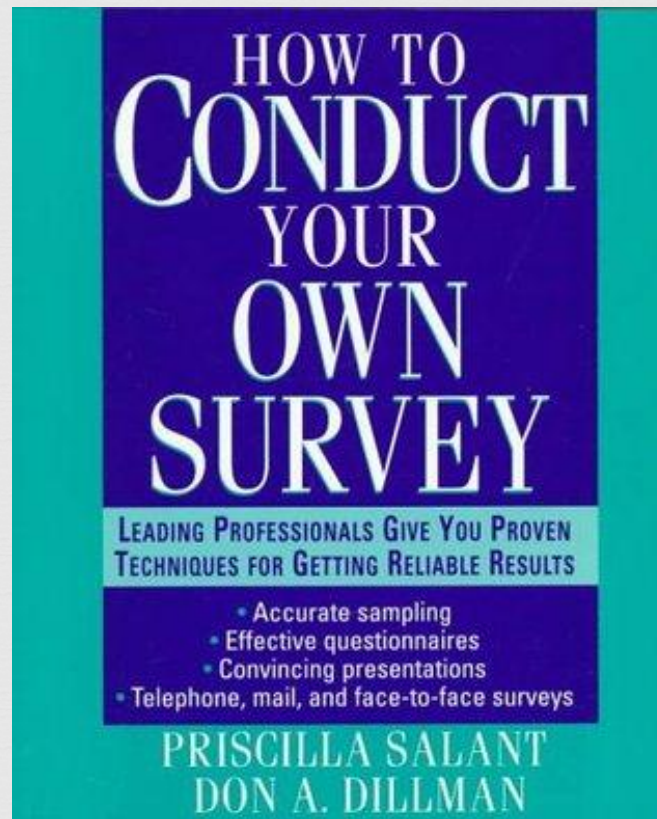


Choosing a Survey Method

Chapter #4



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What to Consider



- ☞ Before You Commit, Consider Your Resources
 - ☞ How many people helping?
 - ☞ How much time to produce results?
 - ☞ Can someone with survey experience help you?
 - ☞ What facilities are available to you?
 - ☞ How much money can you spend on the survey?

Mail Surveys



Strengths

- Require the least amount of resources
- Minimize sampling error at a low cost
- Less sensitive to biases

Weaknesses

- Sensitivity to noncoverage error
- Some people are less likely to respond
- Researchers have little control after the questionnaire is mailed

Best Suited for

- Reliable address and likely to respond fully
- Response not immediately needed
- Resources are scarce-money, staff & professional help

Telephone Surveys



Strengths

- Quick results
- Immediate intervention for any problems
- Interviewer control

Weaknesses

- Not all have telephones
- Telephone directories are incomplete

Most Appropriate when

- Members of the population are most likely to have telephones
- Straight forward questions
- Experienced help is available
- Turnaround time in crucial

Face-to-Face Surveys



Strengths

- No list is needed
- You could get to know your interviewee

Weaknesses

- Cost
- Time Consuming
- Call backs

Best Suited for

- Surveying populations when there is no list
- Collecting information from people that are less likely to respond
- Complex questionnaires
- Well funded projects
- Experienced interviewers

Drop-off Surveys

A Convenient Hybrid



Questionnaires that are delivered by hand to the intended respondents at their home or business

Well-suited for

- Small community or area

- Short and simple questionnaires

- Projects with small staff but large sample area

What About Response Rates?



- ⌘ A proportion of people in a particular sample who participate in the survey.
- ⌘ Generally expect a 60% response rate if well organized
- ⌘ Higher the budget the higher the response rate with telephone and mail surveys

Remember the Budget



- ❧ No matter how much we hammer on the idea of response rates and other error sources, the bottom line for most people is money. Therefore, you'll probably want to draw up several alternative budgets (mail survey, telephone survey, face-to-face survey) before deciding which survey method is best for you.
- ❧ To help estimate how much your survey will cost, the book developed a hypothetical budget for each method.

Choosing a Survey Method

Remember the Budget

Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.1 continued

Figure 4.1
Estimated budget for a basic mail survey with an ending sample size of about 520 (see text for assumptions)

	Clerical hours @ \$8.40/hr ^a	Other costs (dollars)	Total cost (dollars)	Your costs (dollars)
Prepare for survey				
Purchase sample list in machine readable form		375	375	—
Load data base of names and addresses	2		17	—
Graphic design for questionnaire cover (hire out)		100	100	—
Print questionnaires: 4 sheets, legal-size, folded, 1,350 @ \$.15 each, (includes paper) (hire out)		203	203	—
Telephone		100	100	—
Supplies				
Mail-out envelopes, 2,310 @ \$.05 each, with return address		116	116	—
Return envelopes, 1,350 @ \$.05 each, pre-addressed but no return address		68	68	—
Letterhead for cover letters, 2,310 @ \$.05 each		116	116	—
Miscellaneous		200	200	—
First mail-out (960)				
Print advance-notice letter	3		25	—
Address envelopes	3		25	—
Sign letters, stamp envelopes	6		50	—
Postage for mail-out, 960 @ \$.29 each		278	278	—
Prepare mail-out packets	16		134	—
Second mail-out (960)				
Print cover letter	3		25	—
Address envelopes	3		25	—
Postage for mail-out, 960 @ \$.52 each		500	500	—

^a \$7.00 per hour plus 20% fringe benefits

Continued on next page

Figure 4.1
Continued

	Clerical hours @ \$8.40/hr ^a	Other costs (dollars)	Total cost (dollars)	Your costs (dollars)
Postage for return envelopes, 960 @ \$.52 each		500	500	—
Sign letters, stamp envelopes	12		100	—
Prepare mail-out packets	14		118	—
Third mail-out (960)				
Prestamped postcards, 4 bunches of 250 @ \$.19 each		190	190	—
Address postcards	3		25	—
Print message and sign postcards	6		50	—
Process, precode, edit 390 returned questionnaires, 10 min each	65		546	—
Fourth mail-out (475)				
Print cover letter	3		25	—
Address envelopes	3		25	—
Sign letters, stamp envelopes	3		25	—
Prepare mail-out packets	20		168	—
Postage for mail-out, 475 @ \$.52 each		247	247	—
Postage for return envelopes, 475 @ \$.52 each		247	247	—
Process, precode, edit 185 returned questionnaires, 10 min each	31		260	—
Total, excluding professional time	196	3240	4883	—
Professional time (120 hrs @ \$35,000 annual salary plus 20% fringe benefits)		2423	2423	—
Total, including professional time		5663	7306	—

^a \$7.00 per hour plus 20% fringe benefits

Choosing a Survey Method

Remember the Budget

Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3

Figure 4.2
Estimated budget for a basic telephone survey with an ending sample size of about 520 (see text for assumptions)

	Clerical hours @ \$8.40/hr ^a	Interviewer hours @ \$6.48/hr ^b	Other costs (dollars)	Total costs (dollars)	Your costs (dollars)
Prepare for survey					
Use add-a-digit calling based on systematic, random sampling from directory	10			84	_____
Print interviewer manuals	2		20	37	_____
Print questionnaires (940)	4		50	84	_____
Train interviewers (12-hour training session)		108		700	_____
Miscellaneous supplies			25	25	_____
Conduct the survey					
Contact and interview respondents; edit questionnaires; 50 minutes per completed questionnaire		430		2786	_____
Telephone charges			3203	3203	_____
Total, excluding professional time	16	538	3298	6919	_____
Professional time (120 hrs @ \$35,000 annual salary plus 20% fringe benefits)			2423	2423	_____
Total, including professional time			5721	9342	_____

^a \$7.00 per hour plus 20% fringe benefits.

^b \$6.00 per hour plus 8% F.I.C.A.

Figure 4.3
Estimated budget for a basic face-to-face survey with an ending sample size of about 520 (see text for assumptions)

	Clerical hours @ \$8.40/hr ^a	Interviewer hours @ \$8.10/hr ^b	Other costs (dollars)	Total costs (dollars)	Your costs (dollars)
Prepare for survey					
Purchase map for area frame			200	200	_____
Print interviewer manuals	2		12	29	_____
Print questionnaires (690)	4		345	379	_____
Train interviewers (20-hour training session)		140		1,134	_____
Miscellaneous supplies			25	25	_____
Conduct the survey					
Locate residences; contact respondents; conduct interviews; field edit questionnaires; 3.5 completed interviews per 8-hour day		1192		9,655	_____
Travel cost (\$8.50 per completed interview; interviewers use own car)			4420	4,420	_____
Office edit and general clerical					
(6 completed questionnaires per hour)	87			728	_____
Total, excluding professional time		931332	5002	16,570	_____
Professional time (160 hrs @ \$35,000 annual salary plus 20% fringe benefits)			3231	3,231	_____
Total, including professional time			8233	19,801	_____

^a \$7.00 per hour plus 20% fringe benefits.

^b \$7.50 per hour plus 8% F.I.C.A.

What Does the Future Hold

- ⌘ There are times when no single method seems just right for a particular survey
- ⌘ Professional survey researchers have turned to mixed surveys to solve problems
- ⌘ Mixed mode means using two or more methods of data collection for a single survey
- ⌘ The usual strategy in a mixed mode survey is to get the highest response rate possible with the least expensive method first then switch to more costly methods