

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a white lab coat, holding a silver pen in their right hand and pointing with their left index finger at a clipboard. The clipboard has a survey form attached, which includes a header with a logo and several rows of text and checkboxes. The scene is set on a light-colored wooden table. In the background, another person is partially visible, also holding a pen and looking at a document. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused on data collection or analysis.

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THE POWER OF A SURVEY

How Surveys Can Take Marketing Campaigns to the Next Level

CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Online Survey Tools | 3 |
| Data-Driven Storylines | 4 |
| Multi-Purpose Tool | 5 |
| Case Study: BUMI | 6 |
| Case Study: EasyVista | 7 |
| Getting Started | 8 |
| Summary | 10 |

INTRODUCTION

Surveys are an ideal multi-purpose marketing tool, providing an affordable and easy way to gather important data, insight, and perspective that can be transformed into an array of content. Information captured from surveys –targeting internal or external audiences– can be used to identify feedback, trends, and business opportunities.

Unlike the typical “how’s my driving” survey aimed at understanding customer satisfaction, a marketing-centric survey, when carefully constructed, can support interesting storylines that drive all types of campaigns. In addition to marketing and PR campaigns, survey data can be used to create infographics, blog posts, visuals for social media, and more.

While there are a variety of options to gather market data, such as third-party research companies and professional focus groups, the following offers a cost-effective, do-it-yourself guide to creating impactful surveys. Utilizing online tools and existing databases, you can unlock the power of surveys and integrate them into your marketing campaigns.



ONLINE SURVEY TOOLS

Surveys have come a long way since paper-based forms. Creating, collecting, and consolidating responses used to be time-consuming, expensive, and often provided opportunities for data errors and miscalculations. However, email and the Internet have made the process of administering surveys extremely simple while ensuring accurate results.

Online survey tools such as SurveyMonkey, Constant Contact, and others (see sidebar) have eliminated many of these manual processes and provide a powerful dashboard to compile results and display metrics. As responses are received through the online tools, metrics are updated, providing accurate statistics that are ready to use – no calculations required.

From a logistics perspective, online survey tools make distribution fast and easy. You can send a survey to an existing database (customers, prospects, partners, etc.) via email, post a link on a website or via social media (or any combination thereof); this provides the capability to reach a broader audience. Regardless of the channels used, all of the responses can be centrally managed online.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Online survey software can help you create and manage professional surveys, collect responses, and analyze data in real-time. These tools are easy to use and most offer a free version, providing survey-building solutions for organizations of all sizes. Here are some options to get you started:

- ✓ SURVEYMONKEY
- ✓ CONSTANT CONTACT
- ✓ MAILCHIMP
- ✓ SURVEYGIZMO
- ✓ QUESTIONPRO

DATA-DRIVEN STORYLINES

Based on the goals and objectives, surveys can be used for general informational purposes or to identify specific information from targeted groups, such as customers, prospects, partners, etc. However, the quality of the data depends on those participating and the types of questions asked. Start with your goals in mind; identify the key themes you are aiming to capture and use them to guide you as you create your survey.



A SURVEY CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY:

- ✓ BEHAVIOR AND MARKET SENTIMENT
- ✓ PRODUCT AND SERVICE FEEDBACK
- ✓ COMPETITIVE FEEDBACK
- ✓ FUTURE PLANS
- ✓ OPINIONS ON FUTURE PLANS AND INITIATIVES
- ✓ CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, EXPECTATIONS, AND NEEDS
- ✓ CHALLENGES WITH EXISTING PROCESSES, PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES

MULTI-PURPOSE TOOL

Once data from a survey has been interpreted, storylines can be articulated in a variety of content formats. Extracting key facts can support a series of activities, providing the capability to create integrated, multi-channel campaigns including:



MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

PRESS RELEASES

BYLINED ARTICLES

INFOGRAPHICS

VISUAL REPORTS

BLOG POSTS

EBOOKS AND WHITEPAPERS

SOCIAL MEDIA

PRODUCT AND SERVICE LAUNCHES

CASE STUDY: BUMI

BUMI, a company specializing in cloud data backup and recovery for small and midsize corporations, used surveys in order to create data-driven PR campaigns.

BUMI implemented a series of surveys with the intention of gaining insight into disaster recovery across a variety of industries. Focusing on small and midsize corporations, the company surveyed IT professionals within the financial, healthcare, technology, legal, accounting real estate, and government sectors over three years.

In conducting the surveys, BUMI collected data about disaster recovery planning, thresholds on downtime, etc., and the results were used to create several narratives about the general unpreparedness of organizations. These storylines supported successful PR campaigns that were powered by press releases and infographics highlighting key metrics. Each campaign garnered articles in industry and trade publications which improved thought-leadership, awareness, and lead generation.

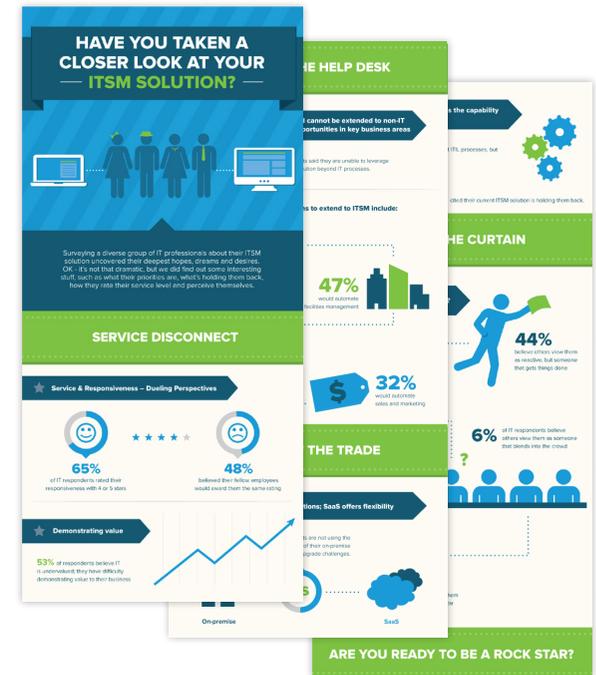


CASE STUDY: EASYVISTA

EasyVista, a company that provides IT service management solutions to mid and large-sized companies, incorporated surveys and used the resulting storylines to increase lead generation.

EasyVista launched a survey aimed at IT professionals to understand current IT service management trends. This survey helped the company identify key insights into strengths, weaknesses, and challenges in the IT service management industry. Using this data, the company created informative and fact-driven content.

Storylines from the survey were integrated into a PR campaign that offered targeted media with a press release highlighting key findings. This campaign resulted in several published articles. In addition, EasyVista created an infographic and visual report that was offered as part of a lead generation campaign delivered through a marketing automation tool, dedicated landing page, and trade show exhibit.



GETTING STARTED



1. ESTABLISH A CLEAR OBJECTIVE

What do you want to accomplish? Starting with the end in mind will help create the appropriate questions.



2. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

Are you using an existing database? Is it segmented? Surveys to external audiences typically average a 10-15 percent response rate. Think quality versus quantity.



3. USE ONLINE TOOLS

Online survey tools can integrate branding, fonts, and colors and are capable of supporting a variety of question formats. Keep the survey brief (less than 10 minutes) to improve your completion rate.

GETTING STARTED



4. OFFER AN INCENTIVE

Incentives, such as a chance to win a gift card, significantly improve response rates. Offering a copy of the survey results is also common practice.



5. ALLOW TIME FOR PEOPLE TO ANSWER

Build in at least a month to receive responses; inserting a deadline and incentive will keep the survey on schedule.



6. COLLECT DATA AND ANALYZE FINDINGS

Review the findings to identify compelling storylines.

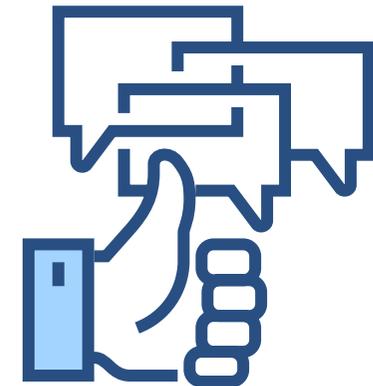
SUMMARY

Surveys are the answer to developing fact-driven marketing content and campaigns. Not only do they provide insight into key audiences, but the information offered can be used across different aspects of your marketing plan.

Formerly an arduous task, surveys can now be easily managed with automated tools, delivering real-time analytics and data that can be used to create compelling marketing content.

Most importantly, surveys are cost-effective tools that require minimal time and money. By using online tools and existing databases, surveys can be a powerful solution to engage with key audiences.

Using the aforementioned guidelines and tips will allow you realize the power of surveys. Let us know how we can help you [get started](#) creating your next survey.



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Springboard is a full-service marketing firm that supports an array of branding, content strategy and development, public relations, social media and digital design campaigns.

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