Proven strategies for higher survey response and better data quality

Becky Lien & Julie Rainey | Professional Data Analysts, Inc.
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We will discuss strategies to improve...

- Study design
- Working with vendors
- Survey methods
Strategies to improve study design
It is best to continuously survey participants.
When a high-quality, continuous study is not feasible, prioritize quality over quantity.
Randomly sampling with rigorous methods produces a more representative group of responders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling method</th>
<th>Number eligible</th>
<th>Number sampled</th>
<th>Number responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustive with weak protocols</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random with rigorous protocols</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
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</table>
Use a **multi-mode survey** to increase response rate.

+ mail

*or*

web
Adding a **mail** component is a low to moderate cost.
Adding a web component could result in a cost savings.
Strategies to improve study design

💰 When a high-quality, continuous study is not feasible, conduct shorter or less frequent studies.

～ Select a random sample and work that list rigorously.

💰 Adding a web mode will produce a higher response rate and could save you money.
Strategies to improve working with vendors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
<th>Phone1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>Girardi</td>
<td>3286 Heavner Court</td>
<td>Polk City</td>
<td>IA</td>
<td>50226</td>
<td>515-984-4901</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>Hollingsworth</td>
<td>4217 Elliott Street</td>
<td>Center Ossipee</td>
<td>NH</td>
<td>38144</td>
<td>603-539-5780</td>
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<td>Donnell</td>
<td>Clausen</td>
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<td>Susan</td>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>1081 Rainy Day Drive</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>21180</td>
<td>617-925-3606</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>1384 Lords Way</td>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>TN</td>
<td>38110</td>
<td>731-608-5822</td>
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<td>Robert</td>
<td>Baran</td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Akin</td>
<td>2802 Briarwood Road</td>
<td>Bolivar</td>
<td>MO</td>
<td>64613</td>
<td>417-777-3936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roy</td>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>1542 Cook Hill Road</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>69041</td>
<td>203-462-6590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candice</td>
<td>Yeager</td>
<td>2255 Trinity Lane</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>78205</td>
<td>210-568-6811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnny</td>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>7814 Knoxville Avenue</td>
<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>13203</td>
<td>315-586-8870</td>
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<td>Charles</td>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>1902 Clarksburg Park Road</td>
<td>Marble Canyon</td>
<td>AZ</td>
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<td>928-355-0664</td>
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<td>Jimmie</td>
<td>Solares</td>
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<td>Hartford</td>
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<td>61003</td>
<td>808-672-6903</td>
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<td>Kim</td>
<td>Atwood</td>
<td>4310 Hardesty Street</td>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>12207</td>
<td>518-449-9136</td>
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<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Wallace</td>
<td>202 Norma Lane</td>
<td>Shreveport</td>
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<td>71101</td>
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<td>David</td>
<td>Thomason</td>
<td>2637 Cedar Street</td>
<td>Little Rock</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>72212</td>
<td>870-828-4746</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phyllis</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>3769 Pinnickinick Street</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Driggers</td>
<td>1118 Glenview Drive</td>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>78476</td>
<td>361-545-0429</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Reed</td>
<td>1211 Stanton Hollow Road</td>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>20216</td>
<td>781-467-0962</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>Weston</td>
<td>4983 Shingleton Road</td>
<td>Oshtemo</td>
<td>MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>Groth</td>
<td>3925 Sardis Station</td>
<td>Golden Valley</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>55422</td>
<td>612-589-8792</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>Perez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Martinez</td>
<td>1738 Baker Avenue</td>
<td>Farmers Branch</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>75244</td>
<td>817-822-6242</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

$Monitor quitline vendor data to ensure contact information is collected.$
Structure your contract so that you are paying per completed survey.
Negotiate for a small team of dedicated staff to conduct the surveys.
Make sure there is a feedback loop in place so that interviewers can help improve protocols.
Strategies to improve working with vendors

$ Monitor quitline vendor data to ensure contact information is collected.

💰 Structure your contract so that you are paying per completed survey.

💰 Use a small team of dedicated staff to conduct the surveys.

$ Use a feedback loop so that interviewers can help improve protocols.
Strategies to improve survey methods
Incentives & mailings
Advance incentive

$ \rightarrow \checkmark \rightarrow \$-

Promised incentive

$ \rightarrow \checkmark \rightarrow \$
Advance or pre-notification letters are a cost effective way to boost response rates.
YOUR OPINION MATTERS

Jane Doe
3219 E. Camelback Road, #416
Phoenix, AZ 85018

Dear Jane,

I’m writing to you today to ask you to fill out a survey about your experience with the State Tobacco Quitline. Your feedback will be used to improve the Quitline so that all North Americans have access to the best stop-smoking services possible. There are two ways to complete the survey, either over the internet or by calling us on the phone.

We are enclosing a 2 dollar bill as a thank you for taking this survey.

There are two ways to take the survey:
Type this link into your browser: QueryString
OR call us at 555-555-5555 or toll-free at 800-555-5555

The State Tobacco Program asked us to conduct a survey to learn what people think about the Quitline. About seven months ago when you registered for the Quitline, you agreed that we could contact you to ask about your satisfaction with the program. If we don’t hear from you, we will try calling you in the next few days to speak to you.

This survey is completely confidential and no one at the State Tobacco Quitline will know that you completed it. For more information, see the back of this document.

It is only with the help of people like you that we can learn the best ways to assist people as they try to quit smoking. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 555-555-5555 or toll-free at 800-555-5555. I can also be reached by email at address@domain.com.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Name, Evaluation Director
Estimada Jane,

Me dirijo a usted hoy para pedirle que llene una breve encuesta sobre su experiencia con el Estado Tobacco Quitline. Sus comentarios se utilizarán para mejorar Quitline para que todos los residentes del estado tengan acceso a los mejores servicios posibles para dejar de fumar. Hay dos maneras de completar esta encuesta, en línea o llamando por teléfono.

Se envíaremos 10 dólares para agradecerle su participación en esta encuesta.

Hay dos maneras de completar esta encuesta de 5 minutos:
Escriba este enlace en su navegador de internet: «QueryString»
O llámenos al 555-555-5555 o al número gratuito 1-800-555-5555

El Departamento de Salud nos ha pedido llevar a cabo una encuesta para saber qué piensa la gente acerca de Quitline. Hace aproximadamente unos siete meses, cuando usted se registró para Quitline, usted aceptó que nosotros pudiéramos comunicarnos con usted para preguntarle acerca de su experiencia con el programa. Esta encuesta es completamente confidencial y nadie en Estado Tobacco Quitline sabrá que usted lo ha completado. Si no escuchamos de usted, intentaremos llamar en los próximos días para hablar con usted.

¡Gracias de antemano!

Sinceramente,
[Signature]
Name, Evaluation Director
Agency Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Jane Doe
3219 E. Camelback Road, #416
Phoenix, AZ 85018

$10 for your feedback
Hi,

We are trying to improve the State Quitline services, and we would love your feedback! Please call us toll free at 1-800-555-5555. Also watch for an email from us at Quitline@domain.com for directions on taking the survey online.

Sincerely,

Evaluator Name
Agency Name
Survey delivery
Allow some freedom in introductions and transitions.
Insist on word-for-word delivery of survey questions & response options.
Hi Jane. My name is Julie, and I am calling on behalf of the State Quitline. When you first called the Quitline about 7 months ago, you said you’d be willing to take a short survey about your experience. You may recall receiving a letter from us recently which introduced the survey and contained a two dollar bill as a thank you gift. The survey should only take about 5 minutes. Did I catch you at a good time for this?
Convert soft refusals but respect hard refusals.

I’m busy right now.

I started smoking again.

I didn’t use the program much.

Please do not contact me again!
Contact schedule
Contact participants multiple times using multiple modes.
Leave 2-3 tailored voicemail messages to identify who’s calling.

Who keeps calling me?
Vary the appeal of each message.

1st = Invitation
2nd = Reminder
3rd = We’ve been trying to reach you
4th = Survey is closing soon
5th = Last chance!
Strategies to improve survey methods

$-$$$$ Use advanced incentives except when not feasible or effective.

$-$$$$ Use personalized pre-notification letters & reminders.

🚫 Give skilled interviewers the option to personalize survey delivery.

∼ Make multiple contacts, via multiple modes, containing varied messages.
How to select the right mix of strategies...

- Review your data and talk with your team and vendors to identify areas for change.
- Implement no/low cost strategies first.
- Consider which survey methods will work best with your population.
- Test and evaluate before making a long-term resource commitment.
Do what your resources allow in order to hit that 50% target.
Pick the low hanging fruit. Implement ONE low or no cost strategy.