



Door Step and Street Surveys

What are Door Step and Street Surveys?

These surveys are just as they sound. Door step surveys are done by going to people's homes (usually chosen at random) and Street surveys are carried out by stopping people in the street.

If you are unsure about what a survey is, it is a method of consultations that asks a set of questions employed to ascertain people's opinions on particular topics. Responses are normally chosen from a suggested range displayed using a Questionnaire or show cards.

Questionnaires are either self-completed or administered interactively with someone asking the questions and recording the answers.

The usefulness depends on asking the right questions and response choices

Why use these techniques?

They provide a means of gathering a snapshot on the views of a large number of people. The results can be coded easily and quickly, analysed and summarised in the form of numbers, percentages and sample statistics.

When should you use them?

This technique should be used when:

- looking for broad measures of current performance i.e. current satisfaction
- eliciting people's perceptions of issues
- identifying priorities for future service delivery
- developing issues raised through focus groups or other workshops
- seeking quantifiable views on current issues
- Statistical reliability is required.

What type of information do they produce?

Predominantly quantitative but can include some open-ended questions will also generate qualitative data.

What are the advantages?

- A good response rate and questions often fully answered
- Respondent suitability can be checked ensuring a representative sample
- Detailed questions can be asked and explained to respondent
- Results are easy to assimilate and communicate
- Results can be presented in different formats
- It allows comparisons with previous exercises and exercises undertaken by others if questions & samples are consistent.
- It can incorporate other related issues in one survey (e.g. town centre shopping and car parking)
- It can provide baseline data for something you may wish to pursue
- The questionnaire can often be longer (and more detailed) than a postal survey
- The questionnaire can be designed so that different groups of people can be interviewed
- It is easier to identify the appropriate person to complete the questionnaire
- Interviewers can use showcards or carry examples to test response

What are the disadvantages?

- Poor response rates
- Sample bias if too small and/or unrepresentative.
- Poor design can produce misleading results
- If it produces qualitative data it is often shallow and lacking in detail
- It does not engage respondents in any detailed discussion or dialogue
- You are not able to validate responses without further follow up
- It is labour intensive and costly
- It can be difficult to interview some minority groups
- Lack of attitude/opinion detail
- It requires trained interviewers (including – on some occasions - those trained in sign language or trained as interpreters).
- It may be more time consuming for the respondent

What are the costs?

- It requires expertise in survey design, construction and planning to ensure validity
- It can be expensive in time to administer, in postage and data capture (labour intensive)

What are the practicalities?

- You should pilot the questionnaire before distribution i.e. around the office, with a small user group
- You must clearly identify your target population
- You must ensure good response by keeping questionnaires relatively short and simple.
- You must assure people of confidentiality and data protection
- You will need a mix of closed questions where people choose an answer and open questions where people can provide reasons
- Ensure you are asking the right questions by conducting some investigative work through focus groups or interviews
- Think about your target respondents – Is English appropriate? Are literacy levels high? Are they available in Braille?
- You must determine how the responses will be analysed. This will influence your response rate and the quality of information you receive
- Determine the length of your questionnaire and don't make it unnecessarily long. Remember that a 30 question questionnaire with 500 responses requires the analysis of 1,500 pieces of data! This is often overlooked at the planning stage.

Response Rates

- These can vary between 20-50%. It would be sensible to expect an average of 1 in 3 using a standard 30-40 point questionnaire without a completion incentive.
- If wording is cumbersome or the questionnaire lengthy, response rates can be well below 20%.



How to increase response levels/returns:

- A. Make questionnaire more user-friendly
- B. Increase sample size
- C. Issue questionnaire with covering letter
- D. Translate into local languages
- E. Offer incentives or a competition

It is also possible to increase response rate by up to 15% via the use of Enumerators. These drop off/collect forms on a door to door basis giving advice/assistance.

