



Survey Reports Guide

An excerpt from the SurveyGizmo Guide to Great Survey Design

Quality Data

When you have reliable data, you can be confident that you're building decisions on a solid foundation.

For optimum reliability, you need to clean your data to identify outliers before you start analyzing it.

This process helps ensure all of your data is relevant (and comes from a real person who cared about taking the survey).

Cleaning Data: Warning Signs

Here are the top five warning signs to be on the lookout for when reviewing responses:

#1: Suspicious Answer Patterns

2. Thinking about future visits to our site, how likely are you to do the following?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Neutral	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely
Get product information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Get how-to information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Find contact information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Look for store locations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Use message boards/forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Read a blog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Comment on a blog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Watch a video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Register for an email newsletter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Post a photo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

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#2: Very Fast Completion Times

If you're using a survey timer, be leery of responses that come in well under the average time.

#3: Choosing All Checkbox Options

1. Where did you purchase our product(s)?

- Web site
- Company store
- Retailer
- Discount store
- Catalog
- Warehouse (Costco, Sam's, etc.)
- Other

#4: Red Herring Fails/Logically Inconsistent Answers

Remember when we suggested you throw in some questions to make sure people were paying attention? This is why.

1. In order to ensure that the data collected in this survey is consistent, it's very important to put security checks in place to show that respondents are engaged in the survey. Please choose the last answer in this question.

- Yes, I do
- No, I do not
- Sometimes
- Occasionally
- I would never do this

#5: Nonsense or Missing Open-ended Answers

4. Do you have any other questions or comments?

Fruit banana apple service great
marshmallow okay fine yes fruit salad
cucumbers good wonderful!

Preparing Data For Analysis

Now that your data is clean, it's time to prep for analysis. Hopefully you identified any inconsistencies in responses options during the validation phase, but if not, keep an eye out for inconsistent numerical values and any breaks in validation that arise.

Whatever problems you find, be sure that you don't introduce a new source of bias by changing the question text AFTER you've collected responses.

Dealing With Qualitative Data

Prepare options for how you'll deal with your qualitative data from open text or essay questions.

Some good options are:

- Tracking keyword frequency, or how often particular terms are used by all your respondents
- Word clouds, a handy visualization of the words based on how commonly they appear in answers.

They look like this:



- Rate each response as positive or negative based on the emotional words being used.
- Bucket responses with an open text analysis tool. This software feature will let you categorize responses when they use a certain term or phrase.

Run Preliminary Reports

Remember those learning objectives from Part 1? Now's the time to pull them back out again.

You'll want to run an individual report for each learning objective in order to determine the "highlights" of the data you collected as it relates to future actions.

This way you can truly understand the most significant findings of your research.

Based on each report, determine what actions you'll be recommending for each learning objective.

Preliminary Reports Should Determine:

- If you got your original questions answered.
- If the data is in the format you expected.
- Whether you're seeing the expected trends.

Data Types To Consider

Depending on the purpose of your survey, you may collect demographic details about your respondents, firmographic data, or both.

Demographic data: the statistical characteristics of human populations (such as age or income) used especially to identify markets.

Firmographic data: Characteristics of an organization (such as size or location of a company)

Often your survey will contain demographic and firmographic questions so you can create segments in your survey and reports.

These segments should remain the same from start to finish of the survey process.

Are You Seeing A Trend

When you have data that isn't statistically sound but is still interesting, you can call it "**directional data.**"

This data gives you an idea of what your population is saying, thinking, or feeling, but you cannot use statistics to back it up.

Analyzing Your Data: Ratios

If you collected too many responses from a certain segment of the population, sometimes you will need to adjust the weight of your responses in order to keep it true to outside ratios.

For example, if the population of the US is 52% women but your respondents were 54% male, you'll need to make some adjustments if you want your results to accurately reflect the real ratios of the US population.

Report On Your Findings

There are four stages of the reporting process, during which you reveal the brilliant findings of your well-designed survey to the world.

Stage 1: Write a summary

Stage 2: Write a mini-report for each individual learning objective

Stage 3: Reveal interesting and unexpected trends

Stage 4: Conclusion

Stage 1: Write A Summary

- What was the ultimate goal of this survey?
- Who was surveyed?
- Who was the population?
- Who responded?
- Include basic highlights of the survey audience and your data to introduce the findings.

Stage 2: Write Mini Reports

Each learning objective gets its own mini report so you can specifically address the goals and outcomes for each one.

The last section for every learning objective report should include the recommended actions to take based on the results of the survey (these should not be a surprise!)

Stage 3: Interesting & Unexpected

While optional, this stage can lay the groundwork for future projects and reveal things about your audience that you weren't specifically investigating.

- Good- to-know, not need-to-know
- Maybe you found a new segment of your population that could help you to make good business decisions going forward
- This is going the extra mile!

Stage 4: Conclusion

- Recap what actions are going to be taken (if any) based on your findings.
- Get all stakeholders to agree to those actions
- Create a survey to be sent to stakeholders in order to gain feedback for the project and put actions in motion
- Important for the next stage, Act: ask stakeholders to provide metrics that can be used to measure the success of the actions that will be taken

Tips For Communicating Data

Having the best data in the world isn't very useful if you can't convey its value.

- Understand your audience and their interests
- Try to be brief
- Keep your report and findings clear
- Have more than one clear course or possible way forward with the data
- Include data visualization to convey key points
- Try to anticipate questions about the reports
- Know the details
- Be honest

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