

Analytics in Action: Do-It-Yourself Online Research for Entertainment Venues

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imagine
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If we only knew...



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If we only knew...
Which name should we choose?

TITAN

or

GOLIATH



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If we only knew...
Who is the decision maker in the household?



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If we only knew...
*Which benefits and perks are most
compelling to Season Pass Holders?*



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If we only knew...
What is the right discount to offer?



or



If we only knew...

Which new attraction should we introduce next?



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If we only knew...



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But who has the budget?

Who has the time?

- Is it possible to get information accurate, fast and cheap?
- No staff (certainly no research dept)
- Need this yesterday



Gut check...

You don't have
to trust your gut
any longer.



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Do-It-Yourself Online Research for Entertainment Venues



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Who This Session Is For

- Marketers
- Venues with Limited Budgets
- Willing/able to spend:
 - Some Time
 - Some Money
- Don't need to be a research analyst
- Don't need advanced statistical knowledge



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What We're Going To Cover

- Should you be doing your own research?
- Which projects can you (safely) do yourself?
- Practical Guide to Self-Service Research
 - Choosing the right survey software
 - Develop your questionnaire
 - Programming considerations
 - Finding/choosing respondents
 - Interpreting your results
 - Presenting your data
- Making the most of your results



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My Experience

- Started conducting online self-service research in 2000
- Put together in-house online programs for
 - Paramount Parks
 - Universal Orlando
 - Six Flags
- Hundreds of online surveys on any number of topics related to out-of-home entertainment



What We Do at Six Flags

- Six Flags has been doing self-service research since 2011
- We collect over a million responses each year on dozens of different studies
- Research staff consists of 2 people
 - Myself (about 1/3 of my time)
 - Full-time research manager
 - Part-time field coordinator



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Is it safe to do
your own
research?



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Benefits of Using a Research Agency

- Less work for you
- **Experience and knowledge**
- They have access to specialty tools
- Experience analyzing data
- They have access to respondents
- Professional looking reports
- Third-party perspective



Research Professionals



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Disadvantages of using a Pro

- Expensive
- Usually not very fast (weeks & weeks)
- Don't know the context
 - Need to be schooled in your business
- Still requires a surprising amount of work on your part.



More Research Professionals



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Disadvantages of Doing it Yourself

- Maybe you have limited experience...
 - Writing good questions
 - Selecting good respondents
 - Analyzing survey data
- It will be a struggle to be unbiased
- Takes time to get things set up



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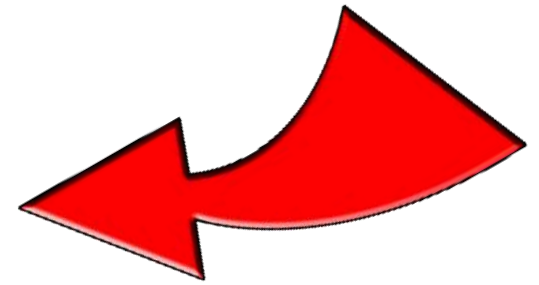


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Advantages of Doing It Yourself

- Significant cost savings
- Fast results
- Brings you closer to your guests
- ***Usually* much better than not doing anything at all***



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In My Opinion

Research you conduct yourself probably won't be as good as what you can get from an experienced specialist.

BUT

Chances are you weren't going to hire a specialist anyway.

Self-service research is almost always much better than no research at all.



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In My Opinion

If you have to choose: a “good enough” response from your guests is always going to be much better than a group of middle age executives in a board room.



Your Executive Team

or



Your Guests



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In My Opinion

Whether you ought to try to do a research project yourself **depends on the project.**



When is it safe
to do it
yourself?



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When NOT to Do It Yourself

There are times when it absolutely makes sense to hire a professional:

- Situations where you need to convince an outside set of stakeholders
- Really important projects*
- Really complicated projects
- Projects that require a lot of math
- Anything related to pricing



A Professional



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When NOT to Do It Yourself

The danger isn't that you won't get an answer. You will!

But your answer might be wrong.

- Some things are subject to interpretation more than others.
- It can be tricky to get respondents to answer against their own best interests.



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Research You Can Do Easily

You should easily be able to conduct surveys with straightforward questions requiring limited interpretation.

Examples

- Guest satisfaction research*
- Basic advertising creative research
- Website satisfaction research
- New attraction development research
- Lapsed visitor research
- Basic attraction naming research
- General opinion-based research



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Research That Is Harder

- Surveys where the responses require some interpretation to
- Year-over-year tracking research
- Sensitive subjects



Research You Probably Shouldn't Try

- Pricing research
- Market tracking research
- Venue positioning research
- Key driver research
- Economic impact research
- Segmentation research
- Attribution research
- Key driver research

DIFFICULT



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Factors To Consider

- Can you find enough of the **right people** to take your survey?
- Do you need to keep the content secret?
- Do you just need straight answers, or something that requires interpretation?
- Is it going to be OK that the results came from you?



With All That Said...

**Unless time is of the
essence, it probably won't
hurt to give it a try.**

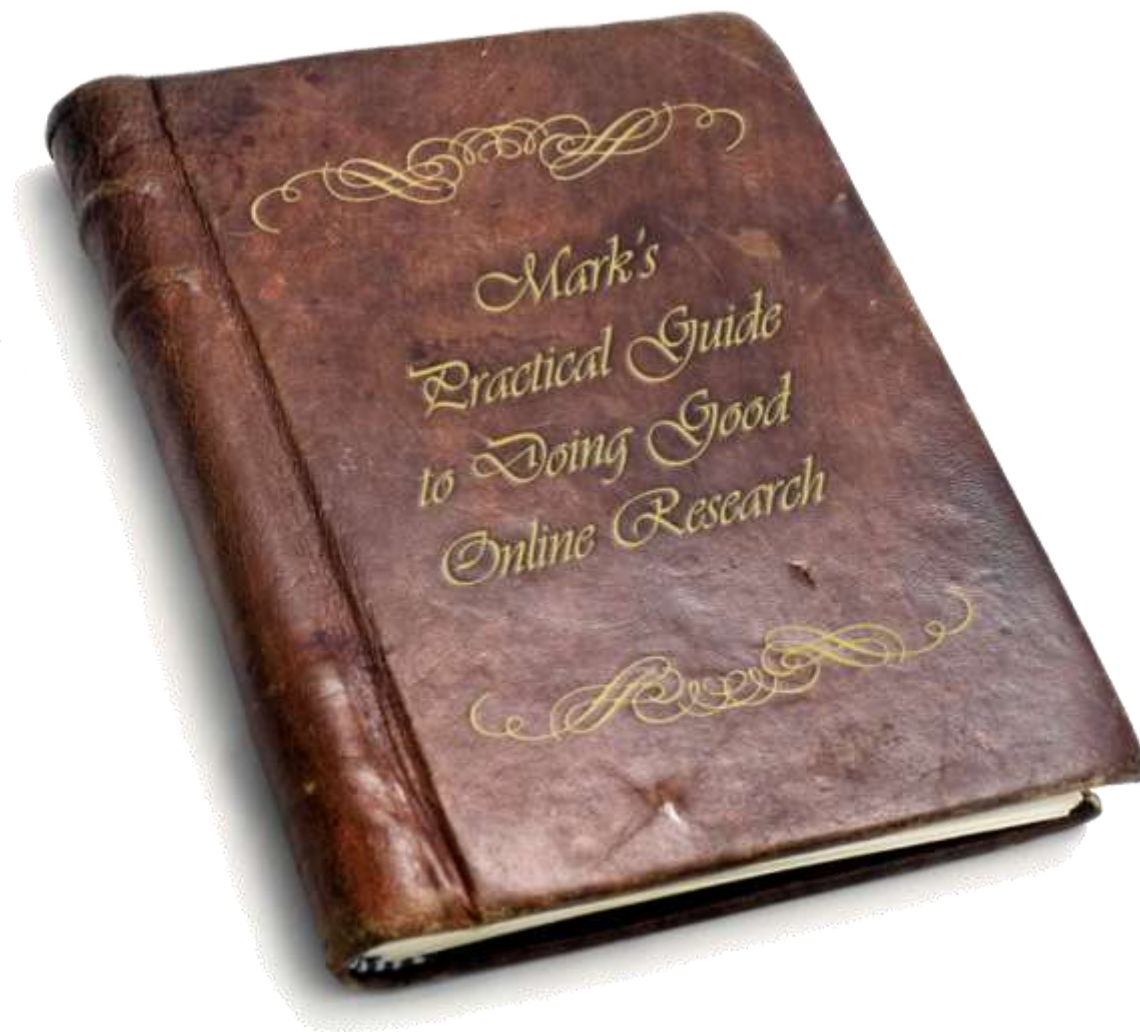


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Choosing the Right Survey Software



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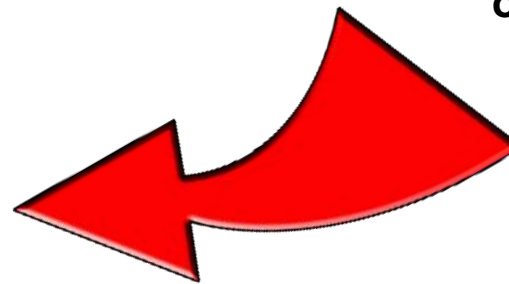


Survey Software Features You Want

Survey/Questionnaire Capabilities

- Unlimited responses
- Unlimited questions per survey
- Ability to send email invitations
- Ability to change the look of the surveys
- Custom redirect upon survey completion
- SSL security
- Basic question types
- Mobile survey capabilities
- Question randomization
- Response randomization
- Response piping
- Ability to import your data
- Skip logic
- Basic integrated reports

Do not choose a survey package that doesn't offer all of these features.

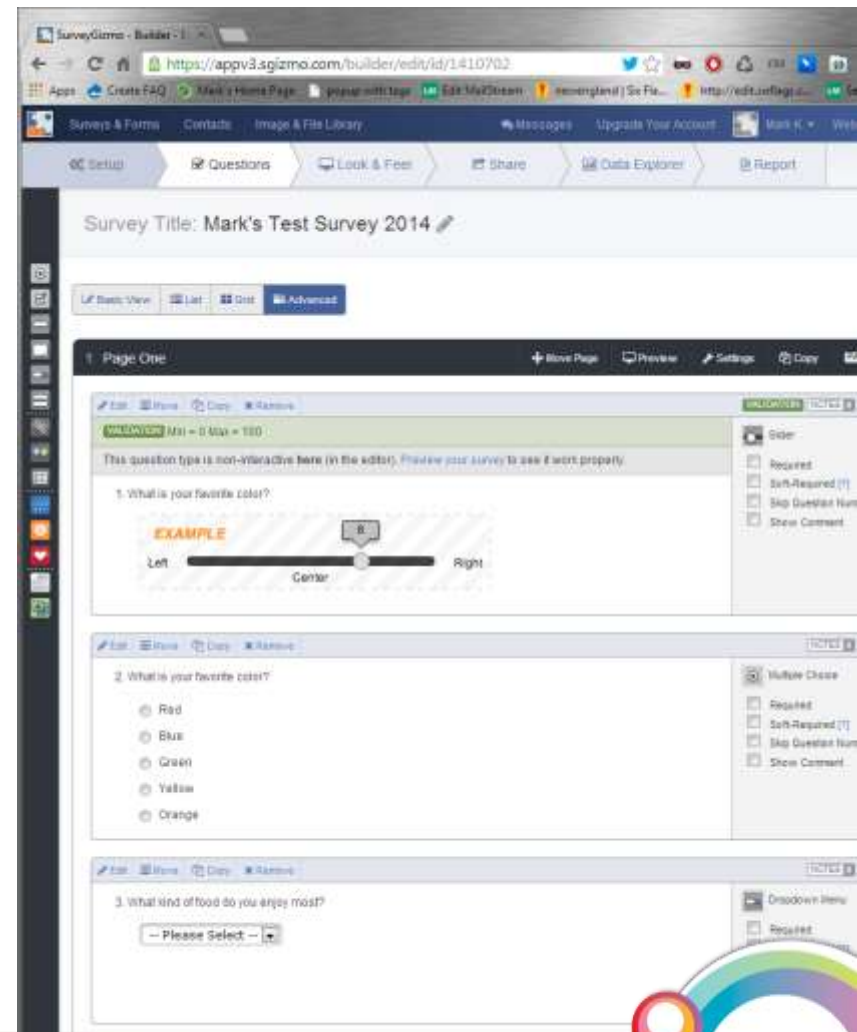


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Survey Gizmo

- Extremely friendly, easy to use interface at a fair price
- Unlimited survey with generally unlimited features for \$75 per month
- Great for beginners but also has a variety of advanced features when you need them.
- Very strong reporting capabilities
- 25% discount for non-profits



Qualtrics

- It's what we use at Six Flags. I've been using it since 2009.
- More expensive, higher learning curve
- Lots of advanced randomization features
- Definitely at the higher end of the spectrum when it comes to self-service research.

The screenshot displays the Qualtrics Survey Software interface. The main survey section is titled "About Your Visit" and contains a rating scale question: "Overall, how would you rate your experience of \$(c:FieldParkName)? Rate it on a scale from 1 (Poor) to 10 (Excellent)." The scale ranges from 1 (Poor) to 10 (Excellent). Below this, there are two more questions: "Arrival Time" and "Depart Time", both asking for the time of arrival and departure at the park. The interface also shows a "Page Break" and a "Display This Question" section with HTML code for the rating scale. The right sidebar contains various settings and options, including "Change Web Type", "Changes", "Answers", "Position", "Label Position", "Validation Options", "Validation Type", and "Add Page Break".

Fluid Surveys

- Lots of advanced features, unlimited responses for \$49/mo.
- Interface isn't as friendly as Survey Gizmo (in my opinion)
- Great looking tablet surveys

The screenshot shows the FluidSurveys online survey editor. The browser address bar displays 'fluidsurveys.com/account/surveys/324492/edit/'. The interface includes a top navigation bar with 'Food Survey', 'Polls', and 'Tools'. A left sidebar contains icons for editing, saving, and viewing. The main area is divided into 'Questions', 'Page', 'Survey', and 'Options' tabs. The 'Questions' tab is active, showing a 'Basic Questions' section with options like 'Text Response', 'Multiple Choice', and 'Dropdown'. A 'Question Bank' section is also visible. The right side of the editor shows a preview of the survey, titled 'Customer Satisfaction Survey', with a table for rating satisfaction levels (Very Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral, Satisfied, Very Satisfied) for various categories like Food Quality, Food Selection, Pricing, Healthy Options, and Overall. The survey is currently on page 3 of 8.

Developing Your Questionnaire



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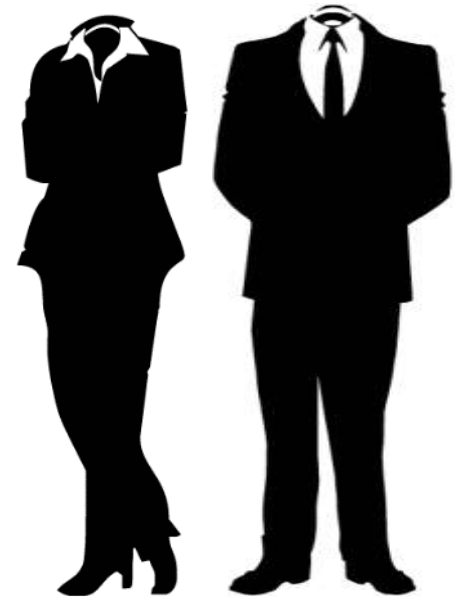
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Getting Honest Answers

Anonymous surveys get honest answers.

- If your survey is anonymous:
 - Make sure respondents know it:
 - In the invitation
 - At the beginning of the survey
 - Before sensitive questions
 - Make sure your survey really is anonymous!
 - Our surveys are anonymous, but we get asked about it a lot from people who don't believe us.
- If your survey isn't anonymous:
 - Don't say that it is (obviously)



Anonymous Respondents



How long should your survey be?

The maximum reasonable length you can make your survey varies.

- Longer surveys lead to:
 - Better, more actionable results
 - Bored respondents who quit or don't answer carefully
- Maximum length depends on several factors:
 - Interestingness of the subject matter
 - The incentive you are offering
 - The nature of your respondent
- At the end of each survey we conduct we ask guests to tell us what they thought of the length and their interest.
- On average, our surveys last about 15 minutes.



How would you rate the length of this survey?

- ☐ Far too long
- ☐ Too long
- ☐ A little long
- ☐ Just right
- ☐ Could have been longer!

How would you rate your interest in this survey?

- ☐ Very interesting
- ☐ Interesting
- ☐ Somewhat interesting
- ☐ Not very interesting
- ☐ Not at all interesting



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Ordering Your Questions

The order of your questions impact the quality of the results you get.

- Be careful not to taint the responses you receive later by sharing too much upfront.
- Don't confuse respondents by jumping around.
- Organize your questions into logical lines of questioning that start broad and get deeper.
- Ask open-ended questions before you ask closed-ended questions that might impact responses.

Which of the following characters have you seen on TV lately?

- ☐ Mickey Mouse
- ☐ Scooby-Doo
- ☐ Woody Woodpecker
- ☐ Bugs Bunny
- ☐ Iron Man
- ☐ Superman
- ☐ Batman
- ☐ Fred Flintstone

In the box below, name your favorite cartoon characters:



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Anticipate Answers

Anticipate answers you are likely to get and have pre-programmed follow-up questions.

- Rarely is it enough to know the answer to a question. You will always want to understand why your respondents answered the way they did.
- If you don't ask now, you won't get to ask later.
- There is value in exhausting a line of questions before you move on.

Which of the following reasons best describe why you visited?

- ☐ Family rides
- ☒ Thrill rides
- ☐ Concert
- ☐ Dining experiences
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Live shows

You said that the primary reason you visited was the thrill rides. Was it all of the thrill rides or one particular ride that made you visit?

- ☐ All of the rides
- ☐ Roller coasters
- ☒ Drop towers
- ☐ Swinging ship
- ☐ Underwater adventure

What is it about the drop towers that made you want to visit?



Closed vs. Open-Ended Questions

- Choose open-ended questions when:
 - You don't know what all of the possible responses are
 - You want to hear what people have to say in their own words
- Choose closed-ended questions when:
 - After you're you know what all of the possible responses are
 - You want to quantify the results
 - It's OK to have an "Other:" question with open-ended response
- Don't try to quantify open-ended responses



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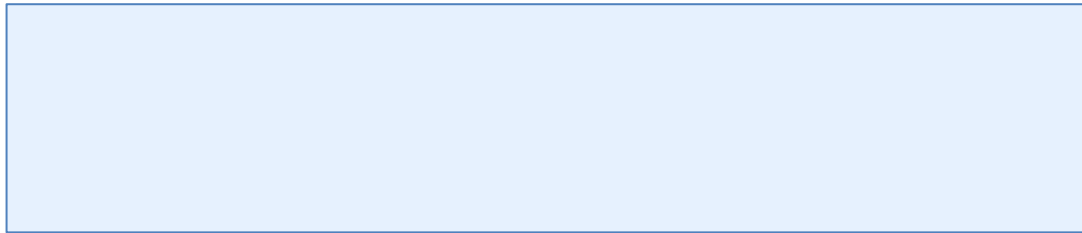


Closed vs. Open-Ended Questions

If you want the best of both worlds, ask guests an open-ended question and then a closed-ended question (*on the next page – not the same page*)

Why haven't you visited the park this year?

Write as much or as little as you like!



Page Break

Which of the following describe why you haven't visited the park this year?

Select all that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too Busy | <input type="checkbox"/> Kid's Didn't Want To Visit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too Much Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Like Roller Coasters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too Expensive | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |



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Single vs. Multiple Response Questions

- Multiple response questions lead to less definitive results, but they tend to get more accurate answers.
 - People rarely see your advertising in just one place
 - People rarely have just one reasons for doing (or not doing) something
- **Best Practice:** Ask for a multiple response first. If they select more than one item, ask them a follow-up question to tell you which was most important.

Which of the following describe why you haven't visited the park this year?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Too Busy
- ☒ Too Much Traffic
- ☐ Too Expensive
- ☒ Kid's Didn't Want To Visit
- ☒ Don't Like Roller Coasters
- ☐ None of the above

Which of the following best describes why you haven't visited the park this year?

Choose just one.

- ☐ Too Much Traffic
- ☒ Kid's Didn't Want To Visit
- ☐ Don't Like Roller Coasters



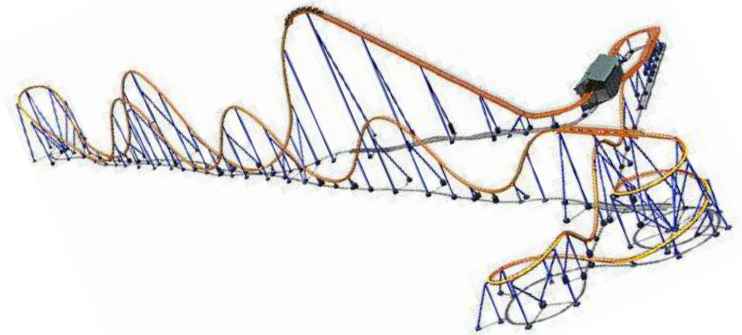
Importance of Balanced Stimuli

Make sure that the form/style of the stimuli you use doesn't overshadow the impact of the underlying concept.

- A **bad** concept with a **good** description will perform better than a **good** concept with a **bad** description.
- Make sure that all of your concepts are written in the same style with the same level of punch/enthusiasm.
- Select stimuli that is best matched to the item will be marketed in real life.

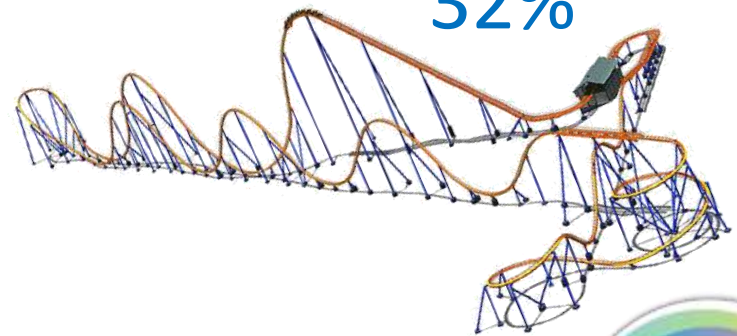
See-Saw Coaster

67%



Top Gun: Supersonic

32%



Securing Your Content

It is impossible to guarantee that your online survey stimuli will not fall “into the wrong hands.”

- There is no way to stop people from taking screen shots.
- You can offset the risk by mixing up your super secret concept with a bunch of other concepts.



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Programming Your Survey



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Randomize Responses

Always randomize the order of the responses within a question.

- Guests have a tendency to choose responses earlier in a list.
- Exception: don't randomize items that have an obvious, natural order (like ratings).
 - Exception: If you can randomly *reverse* the order, that's great!
- When it makes sense, randomize the order of the questions themselves.

Which of the following characters have you seen on TV lately?

- ☐ Mickey Mouse
- ☐ Scooby-Doo
- ☐ Woody Woodpecker
- ☐ Bugs Bunny
- ☐ Iron Man
- ☐ Superman

How would you rate your overall experience at the park?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Just OK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Just OK | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent |



Avoid Fancy Question Types

Avoid fancy “interactive” and “fun” question types that don’t work in every browser.

- Many survey packages offer special question types that are conceptually very interesting but in practice tend to break.
- An increasing number of respondents are taking surveys on their phone.
- To avoid numerous calls and emails from your respondents, keep your survey questions as simple as possible.

Items

- Apples
- Bananas
- Pears
- Cookies
- Pizza

I like these	

I don't like these	

Rank the following by height by dragging them into the right order:

Car	
Dog	
Bed	
Grasshopper	
Ant	



Avoid Really Long Lists

Keep your response lists as short as reasonably possible.

- Guests will not read a list of eighty options. They will either pick just a few from the beginning or pick options at random.
- Best option: do a quick “pre-survey” (of different respondents) to find out the best options to include.



English

0%

100%

[Report a Technical Problem](#) • [Stuck?](#)

Which of the following have you visited in the last 12 months?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adirondack Animal Land <i>Gloversville</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Wolf Lodge <i>Williamsburg</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Riverview Park <i>Wisconsin Dells</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adler Planetarium <i>Chicago</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> GW Exotic Animal Park <i>Wynnewood</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Roger Williams Park Zoo <i>Providence</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure City <i>Anaheim</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy Hollow Park <i>San Jose</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotary Storyland and Playland <i>Fresno</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure Park USA <i>New Market</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy Hollow Zoo <i>San Jose</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Route 66 Carousel Park <i>Joplin</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventureland <i>Altoona</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Falls <i>Garland</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Rye Playland <i>Rye</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventureland <i>Farmingdale</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Falls <i>Mansfield</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacramento Zoo <i>Sacramento</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventureland <i>Narragansett</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Falls <i>Roanoke</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Safari West <i>Santa Rosa</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alabama Adventure <i>Bessemer</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Falls <i>The Colony</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> San Antonio Children's Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Amusement Park <i>Helen</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Falls <i>Waco</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> San Antonio Missions Baseball Game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Obstacle <i>Kimmunity</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Henson Robinson Zoo <i>Springfield</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> San Antonio Zoo <i>San Antonio</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antioch Waterpark <i>Antioch</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hersheypark <i>Hershey</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> San Diego Safari Park <i>Escondido</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aqua Adventures Water Slides <i>Queensbury</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Mountain Fun Park <i>Monticello</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> San Diego Zoo <i>San Diego</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquarium of the Bay <i>San Francisco</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday World & Splashin' Safari <i>Santa Claus</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco Zoo <i>San Francisco</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astroland <i>Brooklyn</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Houston Downtown Aquarium <i>Houston</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandy Lake Amusement Park <i>Carrollton</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlanta Braves Game <i>Atlanta</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Houston Zoo <i>Houston</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlanta Falcons Game <i>Atlanta</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricane Harbor Los Angeles <i>Valencia</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Monica Pier <i>Santa Monica</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlanta Hawks Game <i>Atlanta</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Imagine It! Children's Museum <i>Atlanta</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa's Workshop <i>Wilmington</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlanta Thrashers Game <i>Atlanta</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence Petting Farm <i>Orwell</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Schaumburg Flyers Baseball <i>Schaumburg</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Austin Zoo <i>Austin</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Inner Space Caverns <i>Georgetown</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort <i>New Braunfels</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche Adventure <i>Lake Placid</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Jenkinson's Boardwalk <i>Point Pleasant Beach</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Seabreeze Park <i>Rochester</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bahama Beach Waterpark <i>Dallas</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Jenkinson's Breakwater Beach <i>Seaside Heights</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> SeaWorld <i>San Antonio</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Zoo <i>Baltimore</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Jolly Roger Amusement Park <i>Ocean City</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> SeaWorld <i>San Diego</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bally's <i>Las Vegas</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Jolly Rogers Splash Mountain <i>Ocean City</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> SeaWorld's Aquatica Waterpark <i>Orlando</i> |

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Avoid Long Matrixes

If you use matrixes, try to show only 6-8 rows to avoid bad data.

- Respondents hate matrixes. They give the appearance of being one question but in reality each row is a question.
- With matrixes, there is a high risk of “Christmas treeing” and “straight lining”
- If you have a long list of items, have your software only show a random selection of them to each respondent.



English 0% 100%
(Return to Question Pooling - Q100)

How interested are you in visiting each of the following in the next 12 months?

	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Somewhat interested	Interested	Very Interested
Texas State Aquarium Corpus Christi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salton Wind Santa Rosa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inner Space Caverns Georgetown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independence Puffing Farm Orwell	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Six Flags Great Adventure Jackson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monterey Bay Aquarium Monterey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legoland California Carlsbad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dallas Mavericks Game Dallas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lake Compounce Theme Park Southington	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
California Splash Water Park Pleasanton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exotic Resort Zoo Johnson City	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wild Water Adventures Covington	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Big E State Fair West Springfield	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legoland Discovery Center Atlanta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deft Diamond Baseball Field Round Rock	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Milwaukee Public Museum Milwaukee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avalanche Adventure Lake Placid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adventureland Albion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waterworld USA Concord	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paradise Landing Indoor Waterpark Milwaukee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raging Rivers WaterPark Grafton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kennsburg Amusement Park Kennesburg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Six Flags Discovery Kingdom Vallejo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adventureland Farmington	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admission Sacramento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wisconsin Dells	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
San Antonio Zoo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Make Sure They're Paying Attention

On long, important surveys use test questions to verify respondents are paying attention.

- Guests who don't read your questions can't give you meaningful responses.
- Whether you choose to reward these people for participating is up to you, but you definitely shouldn't include their responses in your final data set.
- There are several approaches to testing:
 - Look for weird responses to existing questions
 - Create test questions that people will not notice unless they are reading your questions.

In just a couple of pages you will see a question where we are going to ask you to pick a food. Make sure you pick bananas. If you don't, you will be ejected from the survey. Now, how often would you say you visit Six Flags Over Texas?

- ☒ At least once a year
- ☐ Every other year
- ☐ Every 3 years
- ☐ Every 4-7 years
- ☐ Less often than every 7 years

A few pages ago we told you to remember the name of a food. Which food was it?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Brownies | <input type="radio"/> Tomatoes |
| <input type="radio"/> Bananas | <input type="radio"/> Apples |
| <input type="radio"/> Pizza | <input type="radio"/> Hamburgers |
| <input type="radio"/> Ice cream | <input type="radio"/> <i>I don't know</i> |

Make Sure They're Paying Attention



Finding & Selecting Respondents



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Consider yourself lucky.

People like taking surveys about fun things. It makes it much easier to get respondents.



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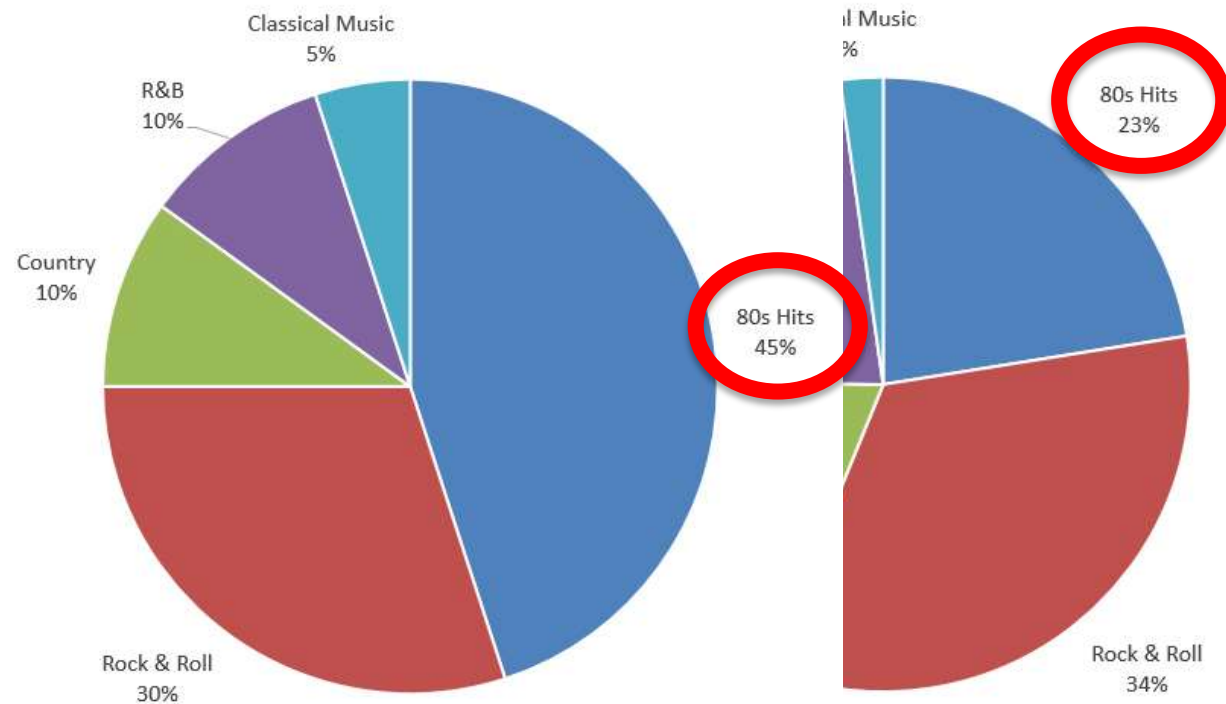
Right Time, Right Place

Surveying guests online isn't always the best way to go.

- Sometimes you get a much better response “in the moment”
- Other times it is better to survey them several days after the fact.
- Guests at home will have more patience and more time to give you thoughtful answers.
- While online research is pretty common and standard, there is nothing more representative than an exit survey or entrance survey.



Importance of a Representative Sample



Importance of a Representative Sample

It is extremely important that you survey respondents in proportion to your target group.

- The nature of your target will vary depending on the project.
 - Sometimes it will be consumers, other times it will be guests, other times it will be just moms.
- Certain groups are more likely/willing to take surveys than other groups.
 - Getting a good variety of teens can be tricky.
 - You'll get more women than men.
 - You'll probably get more seniors than you need.
- There are several ways to ensure that your sample is representative, either on the front end or the back end.



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Where to Find Respondents

There are several different sources for respondents.

- Collect email addresses from guests visiting your facility.
- Your email database
- Ecommerce purchase database
- Your Facebook page
- People visiting your website
- Paid survey panels
- Your own survey panel



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Building Your Own Survey Panel

There are pros and cons to building your own survey panel.

Pros

- It's easy to set up.
- It will get you the fastest answers.
- Gives guests a sense of ownership of your facility.
- It doesn't cost much.

Cons

- Same people taking all your surveys (depending on panel size)
- Over-represents your fans
- Takes a while to build up



Building Your Own Survey Panel

Here's how Six Flags does it:

- We *only* invite people who complete at least one of our surveys to join the survey panel.
- Anyone who signs up is asked to provide us with a variety of demographic data.
- We don't use the panel for *every* survey, but we do use them for:
 - Surveys where we really want to know what our guests think
 - Surveys where we want really quick answers (overnight)
- Results are carefully weighted to make them representative of guests overall.



Thank You For Your Participation!

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and opinions with us. Your responses will be kept anonymous and will only be used to improve the park.

Join the Six Flags Theme Parks Advisory Panel

Are you willing to share your opinions with us in the future? Join the Six Flags Theme Parks advisory panel and we will periodically ask you to help us make decisions about new attractions, food offerings, merchandise, and more!

- You'll help us make the park better!
- Regular chances to win tickets and other prizes.
- Absolutely no cost to participate.
- We will only contact you about park surveys.
- Unsubscribe at any time with just one click.
- It's free - there is no cost to participate.

[Join the Advisory Panel](#)

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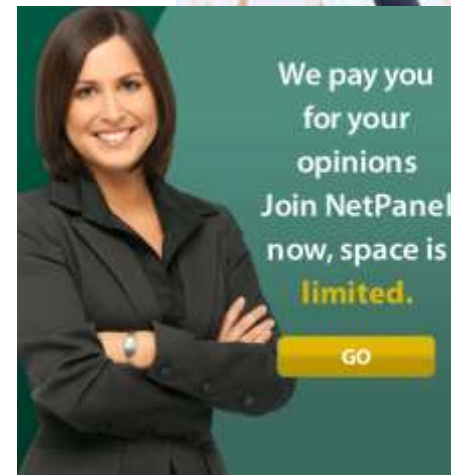


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Using an Outside Panel

Research Panels are a great way to reach consumers in your market.

- It's not cheap: you'll pay anywhere from \$4 to \$20 for each response.
- Still, much less than what you would pay an outside research firm to do your project.
- Great sources for panel info:
 - <http://www.quirks.com/>
 - <http://www.greenbook.org/>



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Where To Find Respondents

	Time To Develop	Cost Per Response	Response Rate	Study Completion Speed	Fan Representation	Recent Guests	Represents Guests	Represents Consumers
Your Own Survey Panel	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Facebook Page	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ecommerce Purchase Database	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Your Email Database	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Emails collected on-site	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
On-site In-Person Survey	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Website Visitors	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Paid Survey Panel	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Online Ads	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Phone Survey	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mall Survey	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Pros & Cons of Incentives

Offering incentives will likely increase the quality of your response base.

- People used to think that incentives biased the results you got.
- Incentives get you better, more actionable results.
 - People who take a survey without any sort of incentive likely have their own agenda as it relates to your venue.
 - People who take surveys for an incentive just want the incentive – so the feedback they give is likely to be less biased.
- To avoid biasing your results, offer incentives with universal appeal
 - Try not to offer incentives that would only appeal likely to have a particular viewpoint on the subject you are asking about.
 - Example: don't offer a free chocolate ice cream cone as an incentive if your survey is about what kind of ice cream you should stock.



Types of Incentives You Should Offer

The quality and type of incentive you offer should be based on the type of respondent you want and how unpleasant the subject is.

- Easiest, least expensive incentive: Chance to Win!
 - Be sure your prize doesn't bias the results.
 - When doing sweepstakes, make sure you follow relevant laws.
 - It's usually pretty easy to give away something small like a pair of tickets.
 - People usually *love* the chance to win tickets to your venue.
- If your respondents are hard to come buy, you may have to offer something to everyone who takes your survey.
 - Example: B2B customers like group leaders
 - Careful not to offer incentives that are hard to disburse
 - Great venue incentives: discount codes for your venue's tickets or merchandise
 - Great neutral incentives: Amazon gift cards (easy to email, so no postage!)



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Incentives We've Offered

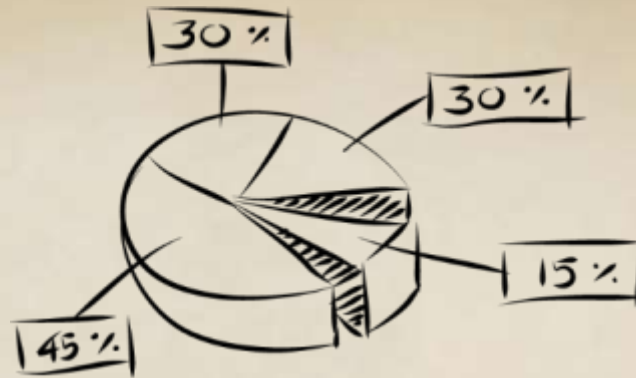


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Interpreting Your Results



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Cleaning Your Data

Before you do anything else, you need to delete responses that could lead to misleading results.

- Delete incomplete responses
- Delete data you know is fake
 - Very few respondents earn \$350K a year
 - Very few respondents have never been to a restaurant
- Delete data from respondents who aren't in your target group
 - If you want to know what moms think, having dads in the sample will mess you up
- Delete responses that were completed too quickly
 - If on average your survey takes 20 minutes to complete, be very suspicious of responses completed in 5 minutes.

It's better to have less data than wrong/bad data



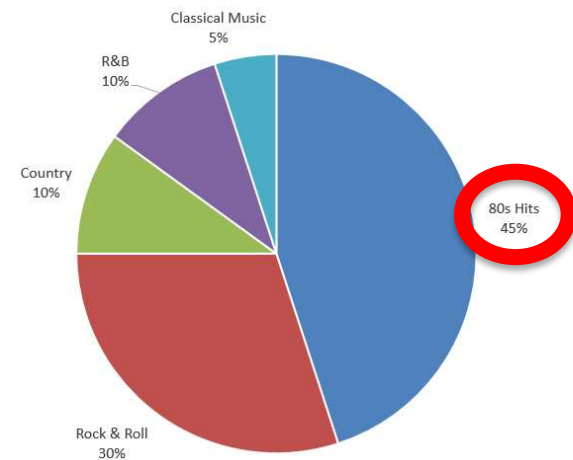
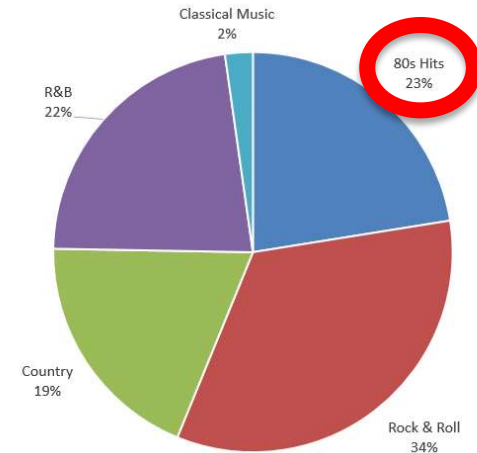
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Make Sure Your Sample is Balanced

After you've collected all your data, it is important that you validate that your final sample is representative of your audience.

- Usually it won't be. You need to fix this.
- There are a couple of different ways you can handle this situation.
- Option #1: Delete the extras
Never a first choice, but if you're not sure how to do option #2, then your best bet is to delete however many responses necessary to make your sample representative.
- Option #2: Weight your data



Weighting Your Data

While it's too complicated to explain the process of weighting research data, the concept is straightforward.

		Your Guest Demographics		Your Sample		Weight
Teens 12-17	Male	100	10%	103	10%	0.971
	Female	100	10%	132	13%	0.758
Adults 18-24	Male	80	8%	128	13%	0.625
	Female	80	8%	110	11%	0.727
Adults 25-34	Male	100	10%	94	9%	1.064
	Female	100	10%	50	5%	2.000
Adults 35-49	Male	170	17%	150	15%	1.133
	Female	170	17%	85	9%	2.000
Adults 50+	Male	50	5%	30	3%	1.667
	Female	50	5%	118	12%	0.424
		1000	100%	1000	100%	

In this situation, 13% of our survey sample was teen females, when we know our that in “real life” they represent only 10% of our guests.

Solution: for our analysis, we’re going to say each teen response is worth only 0.758 of a “regular” response.

Only 5% of our sample were women 25-34, but we know in real life they represent 10% of our attendance.

Solution: we say each women 25-34 response we receive is worth 2 times a regular response.

Weighting Your Data

While weighting the data makes your process more complicated, the pros far outweigh the cons.

Cons

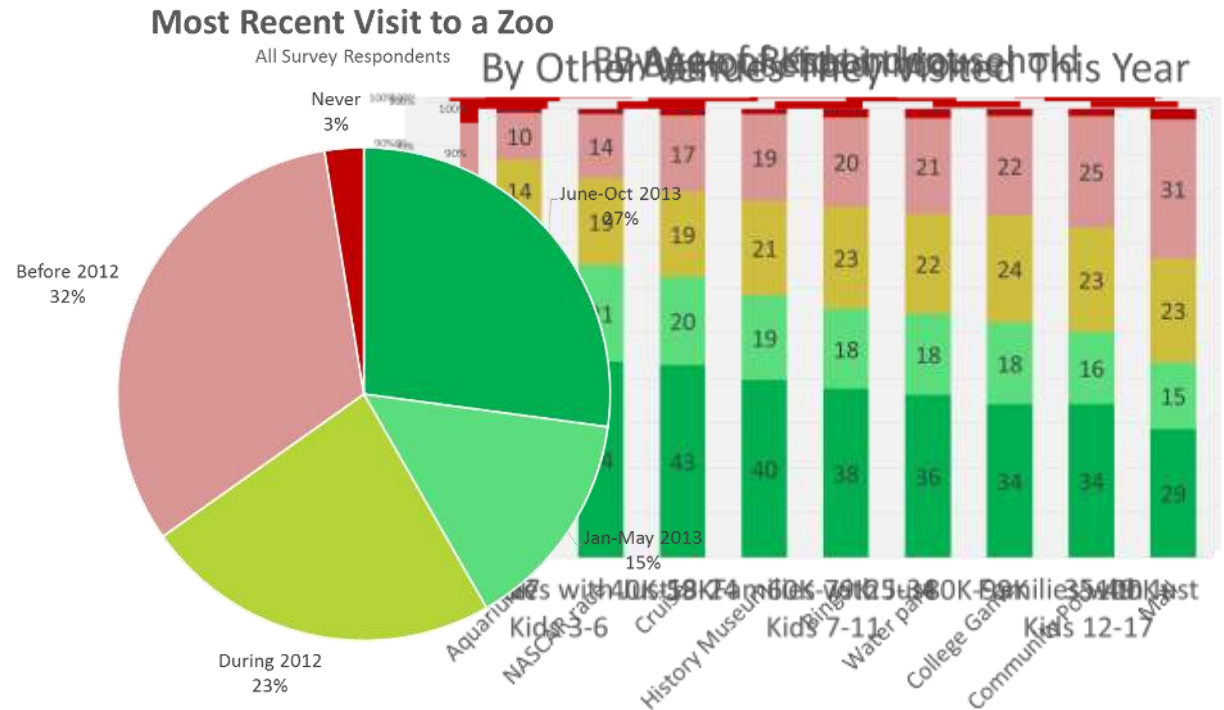
- Math is required
- It isn't "pure"
- Giving a segment too much weight can distort your results

Pros

- Makes your sample representative no matter who takes your survey.
- Means you don't have to throw away any of your data.
- Makes it easy to "over sample" important segments without distorting your overall result.
- Really not *that* hard once you get the hang of it.



Importance of Looking at Segments



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Importance of Market Segments

Overall results are interesting, but real insights come from looking at the differences between your key market segments.

- Segments help you make up for an unbalanced sample.
 - Even if your total sample isn't precisely representative, looking how the segments different from one another can explain any weird overall results.
- Segments let you explain *why* your overall answer is what it is.
 - When you drill down into your key market segments you can usually see which ones are driving your overall results.
- Segments ensure that you serve the needs of all of your guests.
 - Key example: **families with little kids**. The attractions they enjoy are often much different than what all of your other guests enjoy. If you don't break this group out you might not know that the big stuffed bear really is serving an important purpose.



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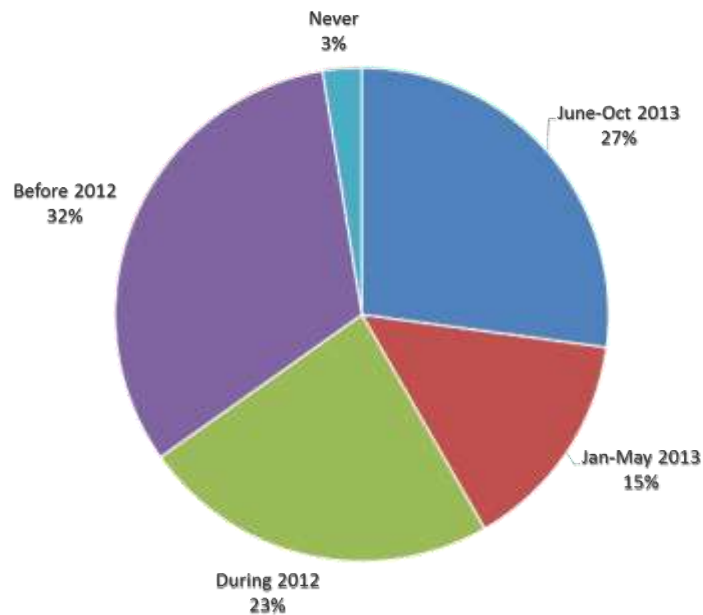
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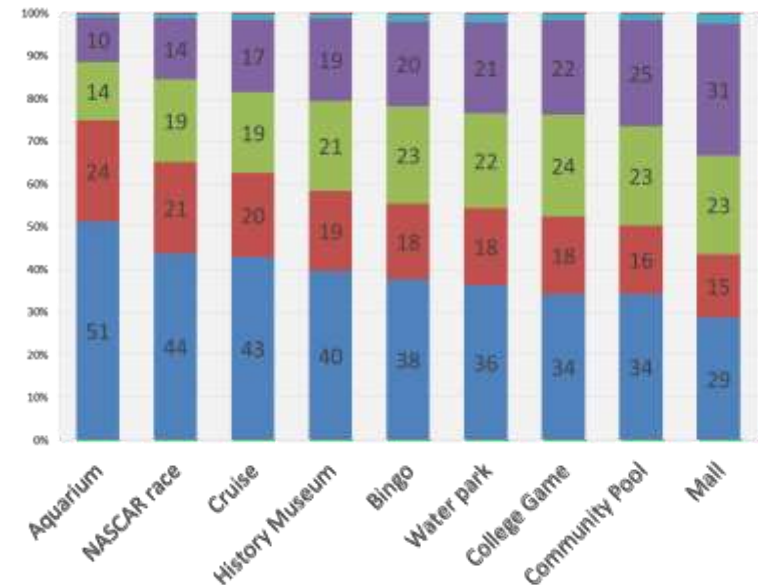
Use Colors in a Meaningful Way

Most Recent Visit to a Zoo

All Survey Respondents



By Other Venues They Visited This Year



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Key Takeaways



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or

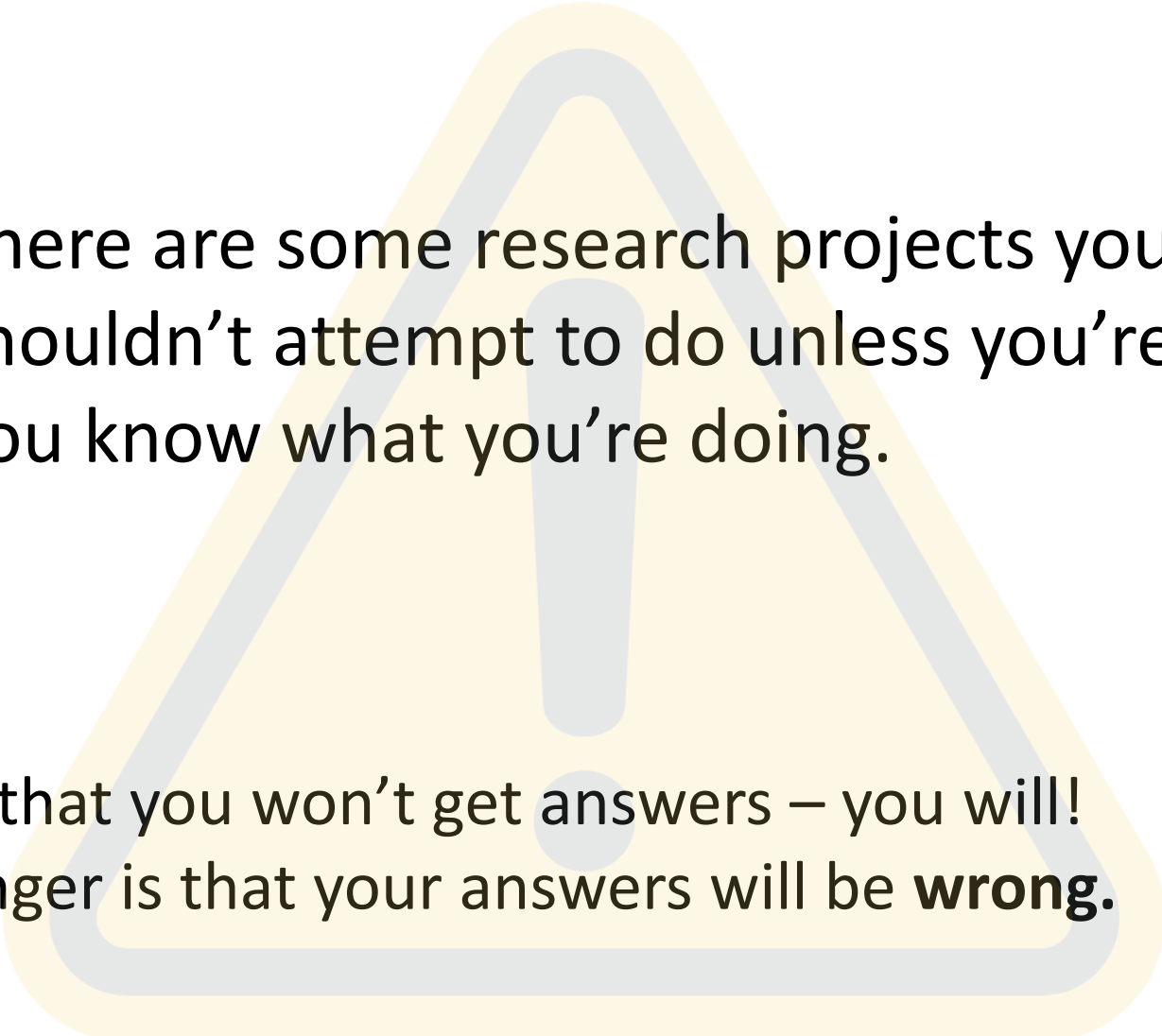


Asking customers what they think
is almost always better than
guessing what they think.



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There are some research projects you shouldn't attempt to do unless you're sure you know what you're doing.

It's not that you won't get answers – you will!
The danger is that your answers will be **wrong**.



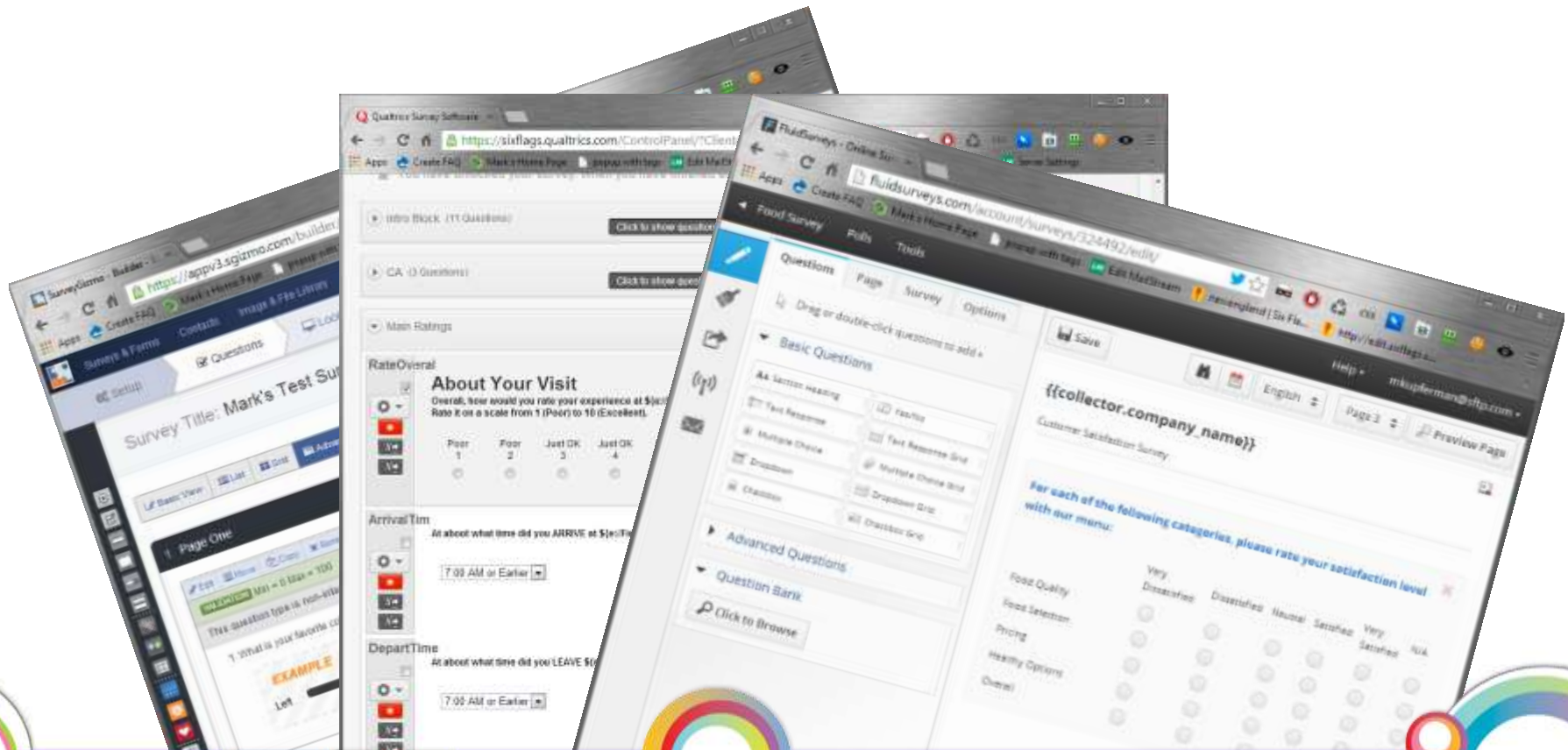
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Online survey software is cheap and easy to use.

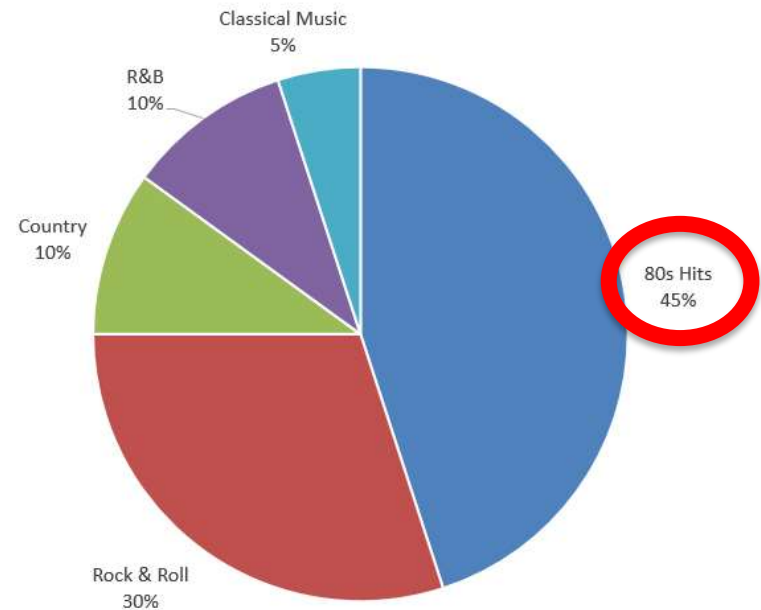
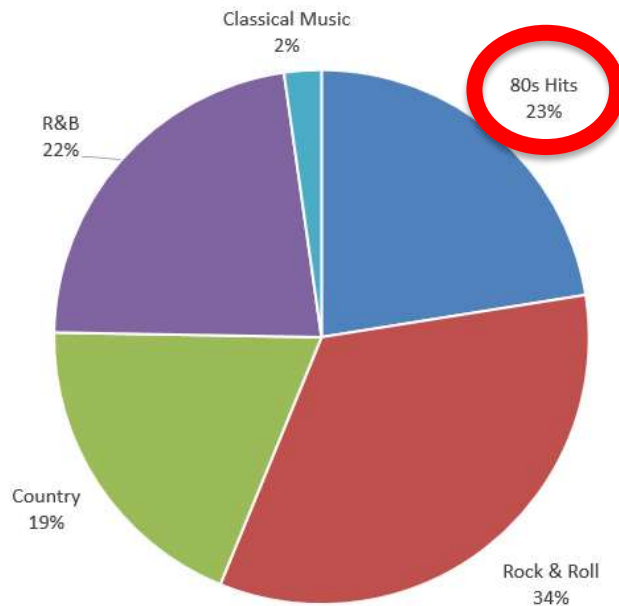


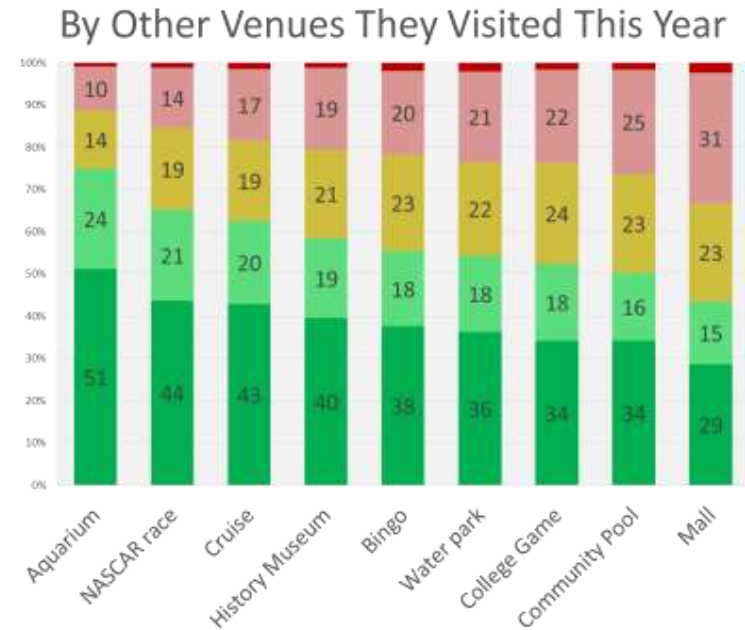
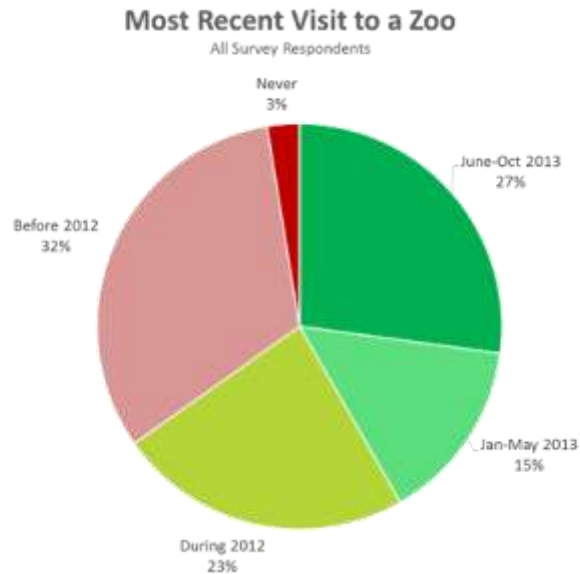


To get the best answers make your surveys **anonymous**, reasonably **short**, and offer **incentives**.



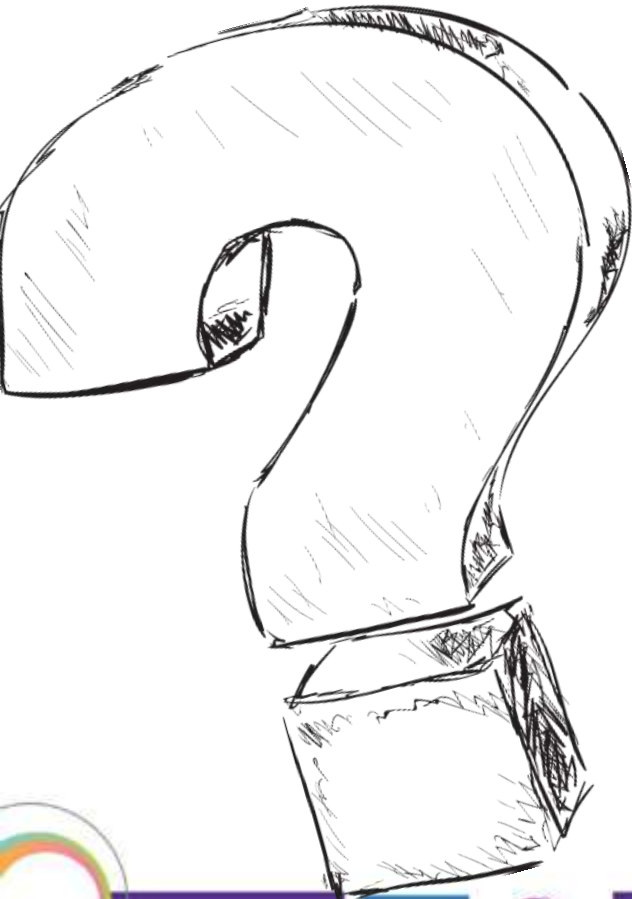
Make sure that you get a representative sample of your respondents, and if not weight your data appropriately.





Break down your results into market segments to understand how your customers are different from one another.





Questions?

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