

Assessing Your Potential For Success

Tourism Assessments and Surveys

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/crawford/cnred/index.html>

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Conducting Surveys

Adapted from the Community Tool Box: <http://ctb.ku.edu>

A survey is a way of collecting information that you hope represents the views of the whole community or group in which you are interested. Surveys can be used to collect information about the behaviors, needs, and opinions, attitudes and reactions, to measure satisfaction, to gauge opinions about various issues, and to add credibility to your program. Surveys are a primary source of information; that is, you directly ask someone for a response to a question, rather than using any secondary sources like written records.

Surveys collect information in as uniform a manner as possible -- asking each respondent the same questions in the same way so as to insure that the answers are most influenced by the respondents' experiences, not due to how the interviewer words the questions.

Before conducting a survey:

- Is this information already available or better obtained elsewhere i.e. through the census, meeting with people in the community; interviews; or observation?
- What is the purpose? Why do we need this information? How will it be used?
- What questions do you want to answer?
- Think through the process. Is now the right time? Do we have the resources necessary to see this survey through?

Preparing for a survey

You will need to keep the purpose of the survey in mind throughout the process, as it will influence the choice of questions, the survey population, and even the way the survey is delivered (e.g. a computer-savvy population can be surveyed over the Internet; a population that is largely illiterate shouldn't be asked to take a written survey, and so forth). Local Universities or your UW Extension office can help you think through a survey process. The Survey Research Center at UW River Falls also offers assistance with surveys for a discounted price to community groups and organizations <http://www.uwrf.edu/src/>

Sampling: deciding who to survey

Who has the answers to your questions? Who will you survey? Is it the general public? The current program beneficiaries? People in a specific neighborhood or segment of the community? Potential tourists? To have a truly representative sample, you must be sure that every member of the group you want to survey has an equal chance of being in the sample, and/or you must have a fairly large sample. If your sample size is too large, it may be impossible to survey everybody effectively and within your budget; if too small, your credibility may suffer. The larger the sample size, the more accurate a reflection of the whole it will be.

Crafting a survey

Remember that less is more. The longer it is, the less likely it is that people will take the time to do it. Through editing and condensing, you should try to keep your survey down to one page.

Some guidelines and tips for writing your survey questions based on the Total Design Method, developed by Don Dillman of Washington State University <http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/sesrcsite/methodologies/tdm.html>

- Place easier questions first and demographic questions at the end. Start with an easy question to answer.
- Address sensitive issues as discreetly and sensitively as possible and avoid words that provoke bias or emotional responses.

- Use a logical order and place similar questions together.
- Reduce the amount of writing required (ie use checkboxes for demographic information)
- Avoid cramming too much text onto one page.
- Mailed questionnaires should be printed on standard letter paper (8 ½? x 11"), then folded in half into a booklet. This size of envelope is less likely to be viewed as advertisement or "junk" mail by the recipient, so more people will open your survey.
- For mailed surveys, include a well written cover letter with a real signature. Type the name on the front of the envelope (instead of mailing labels) Using first class postage will increase your response rate even more.
- Follow up with those who haven't responded.
- To make sure your survey works the way you want it to, try it out on a few members of the population you're aiming at before you actually distribute it.

Distribution

- Choose a method that works best for your audience (written, oral, direct mail, interview, phone surveys, media distribution, presentations to organizations, online are all options). Be creative! www.zoomerang.com and www.surveymonkey.com allow you to easily assess simple surveys during a short timeframe for no charge.
- Think through how results will be delivered/returned. Set a deadline for returns.
- Think through how data will be compiled.
- Remember that the more personal you make it, the higher the return rate will be. Surveys that are delivered cold have a return rate of only two to three percent, unless they're on a very hot topic for the community you're surveying.
- Try out the survey! Create a script if necessary.
- If possible, make it anonymous.

Be honest

When people volunteer to respond to a survey, we say they are self-selected. These people may have a special interest in answering your survey, so their answers may not be truly representative of the group you're interested in. Before reporting your results you should think through possible limitations on your survey and be honest about factors, like sampling or self selection, that might have an effect on your results.

Analyzing and compiling the results

Now that you've gathered the completed surveys, you'll need to figure out the results. Sometimes all you have to do is tabulate the results. Other times you'll need to look over written responses carefully and find themes. Be sure to make the most of your efforts by

- writing up a one page summary of the results
- thinking through ways to communicate results to stakeholders or decision makers. This may be done through a press release, public meeting, or presentations to interested groups and organizations.

For more information

- The Community Toolbox- Conducting Surveys http://ctb.ku.edu/tools//section_1048.htm
- University of Wisconsin Tourism Resources <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/tourism/>
- UW River Falls Survey Research Center <http://www.uwrf.edu/src/>
- Washington State University Total Design Method <http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/sesrcsite/methodologies/tdm.html>

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EVENT 2008 Attendee Survey

1. Where are you from? City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
2. Number in your party of Seniors (55+) _____ Other adults _____ Youth (1-18) _____
3. Was attending the EVENT the primary purpose of your trip? ___ yes ___ no ___ Other primary purpose (please specify) _____
4. How did you hear about the EVENT?(Circle One)

Print Ad	Word of Mouth	Drive By	Promo Literature
Radio	TV	Internet	Postcard
Other _____			Attended last year
5. Do you plan to stay overnight? Yes No N/A (I live here)
6. If yes, # nights _____ Location _____ (Circle one) Hotel/Motel/B&B Camping Family/friends
7. Please rate the importance of each of the following during your visit to the EVENT:

1 Not Important	2. Somewhat important	3. Moderately important	4. Quite important	5. Most important
Buying items from local businesses or vendors				
Buying foods grown or processed in the area				
Unique outdoor recreational opportunities				
Experiencing authentic cultural events, sites, or traditions				
Experiencing the farming landscape				
Meeting local people				
8. How would you rate the quality of the following:

Overall EVENT	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Food	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Music	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Logistics	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Location	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	(Parking, accessibility, schedule)				
9. Please list the approximate dollar amount you plan to spend in each the following venues during your stay:

Restaurants	\$ _____	Specialty/gift shops	\$ _____	Fuel	\$ _____
Grocery stores	\$ _____	Food at Festivals	\$ _____	Accommodations	\$ _____
Other (specify) _____				Tickets/entry fees	\$ _____
10. Do you plan to participate in other events or activities while you are in _____? Yes No

If YES, please list ? _____
11. Will you be back next year? Yes No Please list suggestions for improvement below.
12. To receive information about next year's event by email, print email clearly _____

Thank you for taking time to fill out this survey! Please return your survey to _____