



How to Create Donor Surveys That Improve Your Fundraising

Association of Fundraising Professionals

afpglobal.org twitter.com/afplhq facebook.com/AFPFan linkedin.com/companies/878282 instagram.com/afplhq

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Survey:

Have you previously conducted a donor survey?



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Chief Marketing Officer
Mighty Citizen
@youaremighty



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Surveys can tell us:

- What motivates our donors to give?
- How can we better engage with our donors?
- Who are our donors?
- Why aren't <insert audience> giving more?
- How good is our stewardship?



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**Research
Kills
Opinions.**



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By the End, You'll be Able to:

- Describe the shortcomings and benefits of donor surveys
- List six principles of an effective survey
- Write good survey questions
- Analyze and interpret survey results



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The Shortcomings & Benefits of Donor Surveys



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The Case Against Surveys

- People estimate
- Inaccurate answers
- Hard to predict the future
- Bad questions look like good questions
- Hard to reach statistical significance
 - Surveys are wide but shallow



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4 Key Benefits of Donor Surveys: F-A-C-E

- Flexible
- Anonymous
- Cost-effective (and quick)
- Extensive



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So, should you conduct a
donor survey?



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#1: Purposeful

- What is your goal?
- What will you do with the information?
- Who has buy-in?
- Different surveys for different goals:
 - Learn about an audience
 - Compare audiences



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#1: Purposeful

Donor Survey Strategy

Goal

1. Find out why our donors give to Girlstart
2. Find out how satisfied our donors are
3. Discover how we can better engage our donors
4. To receive 5% response rate.

Audience

Two audiences

- Donors who have given gifts between \$1 - \$499 in the last two years, not including P2P donors.
- Donors who have given gifts between \$1 - \$499 in the last two years, only including P2P donors.



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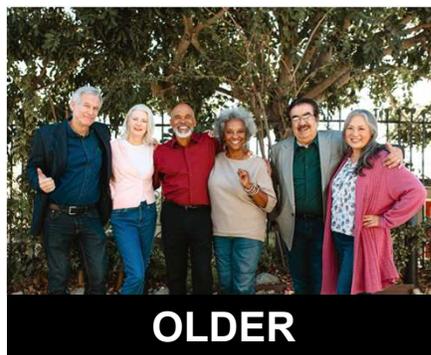
#2: Targeted

- How many people should I survey?
- Small and representative vs. big and broad
- Which donors are you going to target?



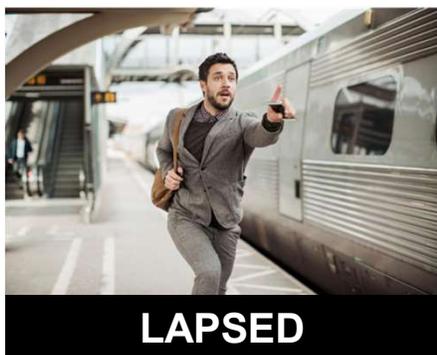
16

Target: By age



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Target: Engagement with your org



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Targeted: By sex



WOMEN



MEN



19

Target: By greatness



TEXANS



EVERYONE ELSE



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Survey:

Do you have confidence in the fidelity of your donor data?



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Remember:

To target an audience, you must have good data in your database.

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#3: Short

- Short surveys produce higher response rates
- Ideally takes fewer than 5 minutes to complete
- Fewer than 10 questions ideally
 - Fewer if you include lots of open-ended questions



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#4: Delivered Well

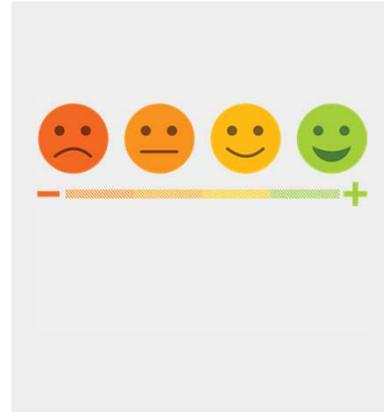
- Intuitive and works on multiple browsers
- Mobile-friendly!
- Remove those who have completed a survey



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#5: Tested

- Read the questions aloud
- Test over and over again
- Test with people who haven't seen it



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#6: Incentivized*

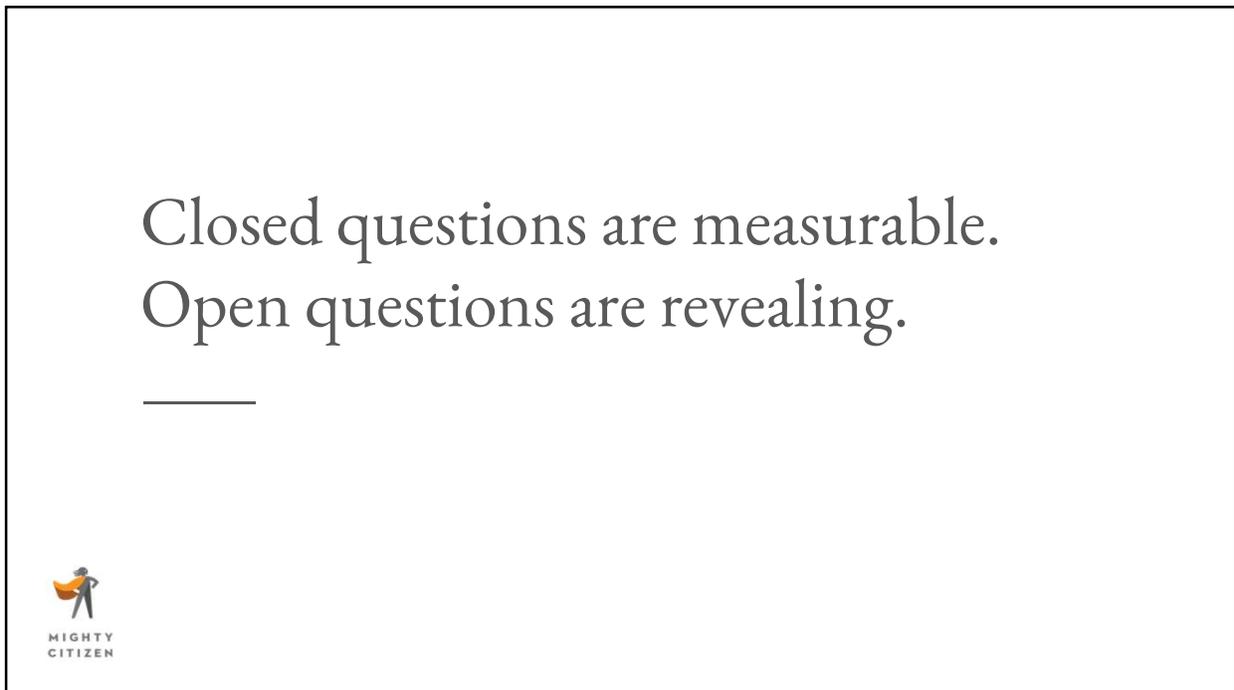
- Consider an incentive for taking the survey
- Increase response by 5-20%
- Can bias results if too large
- Make sure the incentives are easy to allocate
- If user doesn't share their contact info, they can't get incentive



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Closed Questions are Measurable

Have you already included UT Austin in your **estate plans**?

Yes

No

I plan to

I'm undecided at this time



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Closed Questions are Measurable

- Closed Questions
 - Provide list of acceptable responses
 - Multiple choice, Yes/No, Checklists, etc.
- Easier and less time-consuming on both ends
- Be careful not to bias



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Closed Questions are Measurable

15 What is your age?

16 What is your gender?

Male
 Female
 Prefer not to say
 Other

17 What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

Less than high school graduate
 Graduated high school or received equivalent degree (e.g., GED)
 Attended college but did not graduate
 Graduated from 2-year college



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Open Questions are Revealing

Examples:

“Why did you choose to become a donor?”

“What’s the one way we could best show our appreciation for you?”

“What one word would you use to describe our Scholarship program?”



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Open Questions are Revealing

- Allow respondents to answer in their own words
- Provide unanticipated insights
- Usually encourage more reflection (and accuracy!)
- Require more human time to analyze



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Open Questions are Revealing

13 What do you like MOST about this podcast?

14 What do you like LEAST about this podcast?

Continue



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Should I ask closed questions,
open questions, or both in my survey?



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Just Don't

	Disagree	-1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Agree	-10
I felt that my interactions about my gift were appropriately personalized.	<input type="radio"/>											
I am satisfied with the acknowledgment or recognition that I received for my giving.	<input type="radio"/>											
I believe my gift has been used for the purpose for which I intended.	<input type="radio"/>											
I promptly received an accurate receipt documenting my gift.	<input type="radio"/>											
The process of making a gift was easy.	<input type="radio"/>											
I am satisfied with communications I have received about my gift.	<input type="radio"/>											
I understand the impact of my giving.	<input type="radio"/>											
They did a good job of asking me for my gift.	<input type="radio"/>											



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Also Don't



DoNotReply 3:02 PM

Tell us what you think!

Dear Rachel, Thank you for joining us... 



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It's time to play:

What's Wrong
With This
Question?!



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Question #1
What is the most affordable and most fun
summer camp?

Asking two questions in one



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Question #1
What is the most affordable summer camp?

Make it two questions

Question #2
What is the most fun summer camp?



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Question #2
How much do you enjoy our <annual event>?

Framing as a positive...



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Question #2

What is your opinion of our <annual event>?

Unbiased words



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Question #3

When were you born?

- a. Before 1950
- b. 1950-1960
- c. 1960-1970
- d. 1970-1980
- e. After 1980

Not mutually exclusive options



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Question #3

When were you born?

- a. Before 1950
- b. 1950-1959
- c. 1960-1969
- d. 1970-1980
- e. After 1980

Only one answer applies



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Question #4

How often do you visit our website?

- a. Never
- b. Sometimes
- c. Regularly
- d. Often

Vague!



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Question #4
Which option best describes how often you visit our website?

- a. Never
- b. Few times per year
- c. Once per month
- d. Once per week
- e. Almost daily

Concrete and specific



The slide contains a survey question with five options. A green hand-drawn circle highlights options a through d. A green arrow points from the text 'Concrete and specific' to this circle. The 'Mighty Citizen' logo is in the bottom left corner.

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Five Survey Analysis Techniques



The slide features a green background with a landscape image of a field and mountains. The title 'Five Survey Analysis Techniques' is centered in white. The 'Mighty Citizen' logo is at the bottom center.

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#1: Read All Responses for Patterns

- Especially with open-ended questions
- Read it multiple times
- Patterns will emerge
- Begin to name and group responses to a particular question
- Word Cloud



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#1: Read All Responses for Patterns



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#2: Be Careful with Averages

Dogs are better than cats.



Five responses: 2, 3, 3, 4, 5
 Average: 3.4

Five responses: 1, 1, 5, 5, 5
 Average: 3.4



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Instead...

Show the number of responses for each option on a scale.

1 Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Agree
0%	40%	0%	40%	20%



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#3: Focus on the Big Picture

- It's easy to focus on the specifics and the outliers
- Instead, notice the big items
- If there are outliers or strange anomalies, test them again
- Be more skeptical of good news than bad news



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#4: Confirm, Then Change

- Surveys are just one of many research tools at your disposal
- You can conduct a survey more than once
- Make changes in your organization once a clear picture emerges
- Start small with the change to make sure you're headed in the right direction



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#5: Report Back

AND THE SURVEY SAYS...
755 ALUMNI RESPONDED TO OUR 2017 INTERESTS SURVEY

DEVELOP YOUR CAREER
79% PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
69% NETWORKING AS IMPORTANT

PACK YOUR BAGS
64% ALUMNI TRAVELERS PROGRAM
64% BARRY TRAVEL PROGRAMS

ANNUAL GIVING
Giving back is just as important for recent grads as it is for longtime alums!
REASONS FOR GIVING BACK
64% Had a great Barry experience
20% Received a scholarship and want to pay it forward
16% Other

TOP 3 REASONS FOR NOT GIVING BACK
241 1. Financial barriers
64 2. Not a priority
59 3. Lack of engagement

Most alums who have not donated to Barry cite financial issues.

Barry University

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Recap

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Remember:

- Surveys are an inexpensive way to gather lots of data
 - For most, surveys are indicators, not 100% truth
- Start your survey with a goal and a plan
- Good survey design is:
 - Purposeful, Targeted, Brief, Delivered well, Tested, and Incentivized*
- Write clear questions and provide context
- Read the results, avoid quick assumptions, and don't let the numbers fool you



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Opinions.**



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Questions?

Get the slides and additional resources:

mightycitizen.com/donorsurveys

Including:

- Donor Survey Guide
- How to Plan and Execute a Fundraising Campaign
- On-demand Donor Survey Webinar

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Thank You!



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