

# Survey Implementation



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# Factors that improve response rates

- Respondent's interest on the topic.
- Respondent-friendly questionnaire.
- Multiple contacts with the respondent.
- Incentives.
- Contact materials that communicate the importance of the survey.
- Personalization of contacts.

# Contacts with the respondent for a mail survey

1. Pre-notice letter
2. Questionnaire mailing
3. Thank-you postcard
4. Replacement question
5. Final contact of different mode

# Pre-notice letter



- It should be personalized.
- It should be no longer than one page.
- It should precede the questionnaire by just a few days.
- It should mention why the survey is important.
- It should avoid mentioning conditions to participating .

# Parts of the Pre-notice letter

**What will happen**

**A few days from now you will receive in the mail a request to fill out a survey for an important project being conducted by The University of Florida.**

**Objective**

**The purpose of our survey is to collect information about the professional and career development needs of UF graduate students. The results will be used in a re-organization of the Office of Graduate Students**

**Importance**

**Thank you**

**Thank you very much for your time and consideration. The information provided by graduate students like you will be essential to improve the Office of Graduate Studies.**

**Real Signature**

**Walter Leite  
Survey Director**

**Incentive**

**Ps. We will be enclosing a small token of appreciation with the questionnaire as a way of saying thanks.**

# Questionnaire Mailing



- Components:
  1. Cover letter
  2. Questionnaire
  3. Return envelope
  4. Incentive

Date

October 10, 2005

## Example of Cover Letter

Dear Donald Dillman

Complete name

Request

We are writing to ask for your participation in a survey about the teaching of statistics. The purpose of our survey is to collect information for the creation of a website of resources for teaching statistics ([www.learnstats.org](http://www.learnstats.org)).

Usefulness

Reason for selection

Your name was randomly selected from a database provided by the American Statistical Association. If you choose to participate in this survey, your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as part of group summaries.

Confidentiality

We have enclosed a small token of appreciation as a way of saying thanks for your help.

Incentive

Contact information

If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please feel free to contact us at 352-3920723 ext.240 or at the address on the reply envelope.

Thank-you paragraph

Thank you very much for helping us with this important study.

Sincerely,

Real signature

*Walter Leite*  
Survey Director

Name of sponsors

**This is a simplified example! In a real letter, add more to the usefulness section, to highlight the importance of your survey.**

# Types of Incentives



- Monetary incentives (cash, checks)
- Material incentives (pen, organizer, game tickets)
- Drawings of prizes (cash, airline tickets, etc.)
- Contribution to charity (Katrina relief)



# The Use of Incentives



- Send a small incentive with the questionnaire.
- Promised incentives do not work as well as immediate incentives.
- Although larger incentives lead to better response rates, the increase in response rates diminish steadily with amounts larger than \$1.
- Financial incentives work better than material incentives.
- Larger prizes have no proven effect on survey response rates.

# Packaging



- Use standard brown envelopes.
- Make your envelope look official by writing the name of the sponsor on it.
- Make your envelope easily distinguishable from spam mail.
- Labels with addresses are easier to print than printing directly on the envelope.

# Mailing



- Always use first class postage (either stamps or meters).
- Problems of bulk mailing:
  1. It requires the identification of the envelope as bulk mail.
  2. Bulk mail has low priority of delivery.
  3. Bulk mail is not forwarded to individuals that changed addresses.
- Always use a real stamp on the return envelope (never a business reply envelope).

# Schedule of contacts



- Pre-notice letter: 3 to 5 days before questionnaire.
- Questionnaire.
- Thank-you postcard: one week after the questionnaire.
- Replacement questionnaire: one week after the Thank-you postcard.
- Final contact: two to three weeks after the replacement questionnaire.

# Parts of the Thank-You Postcard

Identify the survey

October 11, 2005

One week ago, a questionnaire seeking your opinions about the Office of Graduate Studies at University of Florida was mailed to you.

Thank for responding

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, we urge you to please consider doing so today. Your opinions are very important in allowing us to identify the current needs for improvement of the Office of Graduate Studies of University of Florida. We are very grateful for your help.

Request immediate response

If you did not receive our questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please contact us at (352) 392-0723 ext.240 or [walter.leite@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:walter.leite@coe.ufl.edu), and we will send you another copy.

Offer to replace survey

Real signature

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Walter Leite - Survey Director

# The final contact



- It can be accomplished by certified mail, (which requests the person's signature), letters delivered by private companies (e.g. UPS, Airborne Express, Federal Express) or by phone.
- Letters for the final contact should be personalized.
- Letters for final contact should explain the importance of the survey and tie it to the need for the special contact.