


What are they thinking?

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Discovering what members think

- Why do we want to know?
- What's the best way to find out?
- How do we do it efficiently?
- Do we have the right answers?
- Resources

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This is a working session

- If you see members of your local association in the room, please sit with them...

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Why do we want to know?

- Make better decisions about
 - Strategic direction
 - What to spend your time and money on
- Avoid surprises
- Just test the waters

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What's the best way to find out?

- Surveys
- Focus groups or interviews
- Opinion polls

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When to use Surveys

- Got a clear idea of what you want to know?
- Need solid numbers you can refer to?

Use a survey

Surveys reveal measurable opinions on specific topics

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When to use Focus Groups

- Want ideas, but not numbers?
- Need a quick check to make sure you're on the right track before doing a survey?

Use a focus group
Focus groups reveal different sides to an issue you might not have considered

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Focus groups...

- Focus groups can be as easy as getting a few people together over coffee
- Dig deeply into "why?"
- Be careful about generalizing what you learn to the membership at large

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Quick Opinion Polls

- Google "web polls free" – easypolls, micropoll, pollcode
- Not scientific, handle results with care
- Look at them as straw polls

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Two Questions

1. What burning membership question do you have **right now**?
2. What would be the best way to handle it?

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Good planning = efficient surveys

- Before you start, think about...
 - Cost and effort
 - Lead time for needing results
 - Getting enough responses
 - Good survey design
 - What to do with the results

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Email survey are low cost

- Email has good reach
- You can get a decent response rate
- You will see some distortion of results
- SurveyMonkey is a good tool

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Allow plenty of time

- Design—2 weeks
 - Get survey together
 - Get mailing list together
- In the field—1 week
- Summarize results—2 weeks

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How many is enough?

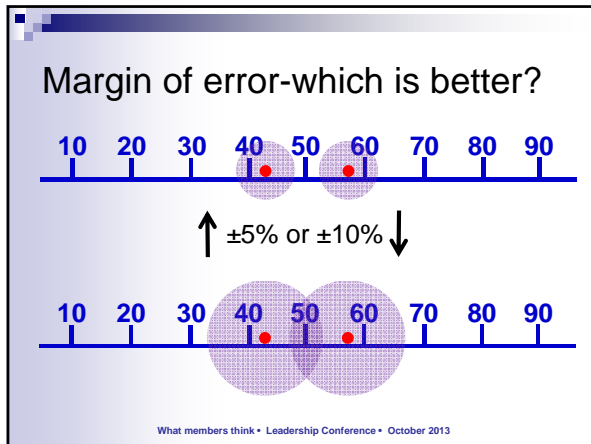
- The more responses you get, the more you can depend on the results
- It's all about Margin of Error

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Let's talk about margin of error

- It's how much you can rely on answers... like a "zone of uncertainty"

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Fixing margin of error issues

- It's easy... get enough responses

If you send out this many surveys	You need this many responses
10,000	360
2,000	320
1,000	260
500	220
200	130
100	80
50	45

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Fixing margin of error issues

- Well no, it isn't easy...
- What can you do to increase the number of responses you get?

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Good survey design

- Design your survey carefully
- Test it before you send it out
- Good surveys have
 - CONTENT questions and
 - DEMOGRAPHIC questions

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Content questions

- Was your problem handled to your satisfaction?
- Please rate the following services:
- How often do you come to the Association office?
- Please tell us how you prefer to make purchases:

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Demographic questions

- Please tell us your age:
- Please tell us your gender:
- Please indicate how many years you've been active in real estate:

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Ask demographic questions

- To be able to describe your respondents
- To compare to previous surveys
- To compare content answers among different groups of members
- To look for response bias

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Design tips

- Keep it short – 30 questions is pushing it
- Keep it focused – not too many topics
- Avoid open-ended questions:
“Tell us what we should do about...”

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Design tips

- Account for every conceivable answer
 - Ask yourself “does this cover any possible answer?”
 - Avoid overlapping ranges:

Poor range	Good range
• 1 year or less	• Less than 1 year
• 1 to 2 years	• 1 to 2 years
• 2 to 3 years	• 3 to 4 years
 - Allow for “don’t know” or “other _____”

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Design tips

- Use NAR survey response values.
 - Real estate experience (2007 Member Survey)
 - 1 year or less
 - 2, 3, 4 and 5 years
 - 6 to 10 years
 - 11 to 15 years
 - 16 to 25 years
 - 26 to 39 years
 - 40 or more years

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Design tips

- Avoid compound questions and ambiguous language.
 - “Do you attend MLS tours **or** membership meetings?”
 - “Are you seeing a trend toward **higher** rentals?”

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Design tips

- Beware of open-ended questions.
 - Respondents like to “check the box” and go.
 - They are difficult to summarize and report.
- A good open-ended question:

What is the most significant, day-to-day business problem you face?

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Let's start a survey

- If possible, find other members of your local association to work with
- Create a survey
- Report in 10 minutes

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Let's start a survey

- The reason for the survey
- Three questions (with answer choices)
- Two demographic questions with reasons why they

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Analyzing results

- Decision makers appreciate summaries
- Focus on "surprises" that emerge
- Compare your results to other surveys

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Analyzing results

- It's OK to combine response ratings
 - Combine 14% "excellent" and 17% "very good" responses to say

"nearly a third indicated a very positive impression..."

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Look for **response bias**

- Means that the people answering your survey do not represent the membership
- It happens under the best of circumstances
- A good example...

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Response bias in action

- In a recent survey we asked,
"How often do you use eSign (GoPaperless)?"
- Over 50% of said they do... **HOWEVER**
- We know that only 5% actually used eSign at that very moment
- What does that say to you?

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What's next?

- Make some plans for what kind of survey needs you have
- Set some time frames
- Make a commitment
- Get some help

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Contact info

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Improving poor response rates

- With luck, you may get 10%-15% response
- Send reminders
- Use incentives
 - Drawing for an iPod or another gadget
 - Gift cards are good
 - Avoid "free" membership prizes

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