

Audience Survey Best Practices

Collecting audience data is arguably the most important aspect of sponsorship sales, valuation and activation development. There are some issues to be mindful of as well as best practices that can help get the most out of the data collection process.

Timing

In our experience, the best time to send a survey is from Tuesday to Thursday, between 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM (local time for recipients). National and international organizations must be especially mindful when scheduling surveys so as to send messages during this period, taking into account time zone differences.

No less than two, standalone emails are recommended. An initial email announcing the survey and the incentive along with a reminder three days later are the minimum suggested emails. Adding reminders to newsletters and social media posts will help to increase response rate but should not be relied on as the sole source of responses.

Incentive

Offering an incentive to recipients is an excellent way to increase response rate. Hoping that individuals will complete the survey because of a connection to your brand or belief in the cause has not produced positive results in the past and is not recommended.

Incentives can be simple and affordable, a random draw for a \$50-\$100 gift card is often enough to drive survey results into the 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The incentive is also an opportunity to offer sponsors the chance to provide a gift for the incentive and can be a powerful asset and stewardship technique.

Reviewing the Survey

Please note that internal review of the survey is essential before it is sent to your database. In particular, please review your branding and any names/titles within the survey. You should also review any brands listed within the survey to ensure that your sponsors are listed and spelled correctly. Not every automobile brand is listed, for example, which means that an automotive sponsor may not be included in the initial draft

of the survey. Upon review of all brand names, please notify The Sponsorship Collective of any missing sponsors.

Prior to the survey being sent out, please notify your sponsors that you are doing so, not necessarily to ask for their approval or input, but so that they know to expect it and aren't surprised once it has been sent to your database. This is another opportunity to add value to your sponsors by telling them that you are performing this survey with the goal of improving your sponsorship program.

Handling Complaints

Despite the disclaimer within the survey and properly crafted emails to announce the survey, complaints still happen and should be expected. Complaints are usually submitted by email or by phone and are often the result of misunderstanding the purpose of the survey.

When a complaint is received, the following formula works well to correct the situation:

- Apologise for any discomfort created by the survey
- Reinforce key messaging, that the survey is designed to help the organization find appropriate sponsors that match the key interests of your supporters
- Remind the individual that all responses are anonymous and that none of the questions are required (that is, any questions that make them uncomfortable can be skipped)
- Let them know that you will note their file and make sure not to send surveys to them in the future
- Thank them for taking the time to help you improve your communications strategy

Prior to sending the survey to your database, please meet internally to discuss appropriate response time and language. Do not hesitate to reach out to The Sponsorship Collective to discuss an appropriate complaint strategy.

Suggested Emails

The content of the emails announcing the surveys is left to the discretion of each organization, however, the following emails represent messages that perform well. You are welcome to use them as a template or to write your own. The key to success is to have a clear call to action (and only a single



call to action) outlining the reason for the survey as well as the inactive offer.

Initial Email:

Subject Line

Help us choose the right partners

Email Copy for Participants

Hello <name>,

The <ORGANISATION NAME> is in the process of identifying new corporate partners for <EVENT NAME> and we are reaching out to you for your input to help us find the right fit. This survey is focused on understanding your hobbies and interests but is also an opportunity for you to provide feedback about the <EVENT NAME>.

We would really appreciate 90 seconds of your time to complete this survey and help us identify new partners who are in line with your interests and goals.

All survey responses will be anonymous.

By completing the survey, you will have the chance to win <DESCRIBE INCENTIVE>

Please click here to complete the brief survey

Thank you,

<SIGNATURE>

Reminder Email:

Hello <name>,

There are only 3 days left for you to have your say and help us identify new corporate partners who fit your interests and who you think are a good fit for <ORGANISATION NAME>.

We would really value your input and invite you to complete this anonymous survey. You will have the chance to win <DESCRIBE INCENTIVE>.

Please click here to complete the brief survey

Thank you,

<SIGNATURE>