

# SURVEY BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST



## PLANNING

- Select a well-established tool.
  - Survey Monkey data is housed in the U.S. and may be used if no personal information will be collected.
  - A BCMA-developed tool should be used If personal information will be collected as it will mean the information is secure.
  - Outsourcing arrangements can be made through Ipsos Reid for large volume membership surveys
- Clearly define the issues you wish to address through survey research.
  - This will help limit collection of information to that which is necessary to address the issues
- Perform a Privacy Impact Assessment if the survey is going to:
  - gather large amounts of personal information
  - gather very sensitive personal information and/or
  - retain personal information for a length of time
- Ensure staff or contractors have a clear understanding of the privacy issues before beginning survey research
- If using an external contractor for any stage of the project, have a written agreement or contract in place

## DESIGN

- Whenever possible, design the survey so that
  - no personal information is collected about the respondent or any other person
  - collectively, the answers to multiple questions do not provide enough information to identify an individual
- The survey should begin with a disclaimer such as "*In this survey we do not ask for any personally identifiable information and we encourage you to refrain from providing any information about yourself or any other person when answering open ended questions*"
- If the survey cannot be carried out anonymously, design it so that personal information is transformed before use or disclosure. For example, if a prize is involved:
  - Some form of personal contact information such as an email address may be collected.
  - The survey question should state that "*the information provided will be used only for the purpose of contacting the respondent in the event they win the prize*"
- If using coded surveys, ensure that procedures are in place to minimize the extent of access to both sets of data
- Make sure the survey participants are informed of the purpose of the survey and how you will be using any personal information that may be transformed.
  - This will help them make an informed decision as to whether or not to participate
- Even if the survey is being conducted anonymously, it is good business practice to provide some basic information about the survey. Information provided to potential participants could include:
  - Name of the organization conducting the survey and the public body it is being conducted for (if different);
  - Purpose of the research
  - How much time will be involved
  - That participation is voluntary and non-response to specific items is acceptable
  - That a participant may withdraw consent to participate at any time by providing written notice where feasible or through verbal contact
  - How the survey results will be reported/published and used
  - How long the survey results will be retained
  - If and how respondents will be informed about the survey results

## SAMPLE SELECTION

- When you know in advance that client information will be used to select a survey sample, provide notice of this use at the time of collection
- Participant contact information should be used only if the member has not asked to be excluded from participating in surveys
- When you have not anticipated use of personal information to select a survey sample at the time of collection, use that information only if the use is consistent with the original purpose of collection or you have obtained individual consent in the prescribed manner
- If you are asking the Information and Privacy Commissioner for permission to collect personal information, complete a privacy impact assessment to demonstrate the need

# SURVEY BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST



	<p>Before sharing data to any other party to select a survey sample make sure there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• authority to collect and disclose and</li> <li>• a personal information sharing agreement in place</li> </ul>
	If possible, avoid indirect collection of personal information to obtain a survey research sample. Instead, have the organization that maintains the personal information, contact potential participants directly on your behalf.
	Before sharing data or contacting potential research participants on behalf of another organization, you should ensure that you have the authority to use or disclose the personal information for these purposes Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).
	When contacting potential research participants on behalf of another organization, ensure that replies go directly to the organization conducting the survey
	Any collection of personal information done on behalf of another organization requires a notice of collection
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	
	<p>If personal information is collected for a purpose not directly related to the survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep the two types of information separate and</li> <li>• make the use and disclosure of this information clear</li> </ul>
	Before collecting personal information directly, ensure you have the authority to collect the personal information required for the survey under the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)
	Before collecting personal information indirectly, ensure you have the authority to do so under the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)
	Limit the amount of personal information collected to what is strictly necessary
	When contacting potential survey participants, take steps to protect their privacy by not disclosing to third parties the name of your institution or the reason for contacting the potential survey participants
	Unless the survey is done anonymously, provide assurances of confidentiality only with the proviso that disclosure of personal information may occur if required by statute or the courts
	When collecting personal information to conduct a survey, provide notice of collection in compliance with the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)
	Provide survey participants with sufficient information about the survey so that they understand the use being made of their personal information
	Whenever possible, collect personal information directly from the subject individual
	Obtain prior written consent from each individual if the intent is to disclose personal information that could identify him or her to those the survey is about
	If follow up is necessary it could be done by contacting all survey participants or by having participants return separately a confirmation that they had responded
<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
	Use and disclose personal information only for the purposes specified to the survey participants at the time of collection
	Before using personal information for a purpose not specified at the time of collection, obtain the individual's consent in the prescribed manner
<b>REPORTING RESULTS</b>	
	Report survey results as aggregate information
	<p>Do not report results of small cells (i.e., 5 or fewer participants).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These could be used to identify an individual</li> <li>• If data could identify an individual, it should not be reported</li> </ul>
	Consider other ways of transforming personal information into non-identifiable information
<b>RECORDS MANAGEMENT</b>	
	Whenever possible store personal information separately from the survey responses
	Keep a record of the fact that a personal information bank is used to select survey samples
	Ensure that you have a records retention and disposition schedule in place for all records related to the survey and follow it