



What exactly do I need to know and why?

Rethinking the use of statistical surveys for analytical decision making.

We are all familiar with surveys. We have taken countless numbers of them in our lifetime, from the types of toothpaste we like to whether or not we will buy a product again. These surveys report the percentage of responses. The percentages are just that – the percent of people who gave an answer. But what does that mean? This lack of clarity underlies why many organizations are hiring data analysts and deploying advanced analytic software. If your survey was about your conference, questions likely inquired as to the number of people planning on future attendance, who found the conference engaging, or how many liked the food, and so on. Sound familiar?

We look at these responses statistically in relationship to the total number of people who responded to your survey. Results are reported as 63% of the survey respondents will likely attend next year, 11% said they are not sure, and 26% said they are likely not to attend.

The survey is now closed, the results are in, what do you do next? Some companies accept the results and make simple assumptions from the results. Those that don't want to "go with their gut" employ advanced analytics to convert their statistical survey to an analytical assessment. This requires the complex process of extraction-transformation-loading (ETL).

ETL requires the organization, whether using internal or outsource resources, to

download the raw survey data from the survey tool and convert it for analysis using a more advanced (and expensive) data analytic solution. Basic data transformation includes:

- Cleaning;
- Format revision;
- Restructuring;
- Deduplication; and,
- Filtering.

After the data is cleaned and prepared, it is loaded into a new database that is addressable by the analytic solution. This data location can be in the cloud or on site. The ETL process can take a few days or a few weeks.

Assuming you have predetermined how the survey questions will be measured and what statistical analysis will be performed, it is then time to begin the analysis. This generally requires the labor-intensive process of building data tables and cross tabulation of fields. This can be done in Excel® or in a stand-alone application like Tableau™ or SPSS™.





You also need to consider if your survey data should be reviewed in a weighted format, or if there is a need to determine the significance of the data with a P- or Z-Test.

After crunching the numbers and drawing conclusions, you will need to transfer the data into an application like Excel to create graphical elements. Getting it ready for your audience then requires placing those elements and your commentary into presentation software like PowerPoint®.

Right about now, I am likely asking myself “Who needed this survey?”

Many issues can be resolved using percentages and frequency. But if your overarching purpose is understanding operational preparedness, compliance effectiveness, human capital performance or project gap analysis, then you need an assessment, not a survey.

What does an assessment look like? First, it requires knowing your survey’s purpose or objective. Let’s say the objective is understanding the risk of key employee turnover. If you are an HR consultant, you may have a proprietary

method of measurement for this objective. If not, there are dozens of scholarly studies with turnover risk “yardsticks” to consider.

Each “yardstick” generally identifies essential elements and best practices that define the presence or absence of key employee turnover risk. These elements and practices form the basis of your questions.

The response scale (Likert) you choose should be appropriate for the question, and the value of the responses should be weighted based on the importance of the practice. All the questions combine to calculate the risk level based on participant feedback.

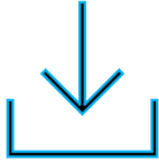
Imagine, what if there was a platform that streamlined the analytical assessment process? What if the platform was easy to use like the existing online survey tools, but with the power of an assessment engine?

Introducing Metolius™... The revolutionary platform for assessment design, delivery and analysis.

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