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# MARKETING:sports

## How To Be A Bad Survey Respondent

by Jon Last, Tuesday, September 13, 2011 7:09 AM

Thankfully, we still hear incessant cries from sponsor and property clients that beyond measuring reach, determining ROI or ROO is tantamount to designing and executing an effective sports marketing program. As researchers and sports marketers, long trained in the nuances of designing and executing research to do just this, we recognize that just as every activation hopefully has some unique element or creative differentiator, so too must the research studies designed to measure their impact.

Yet, why then, do we also consistently see so many in the sports marketing field skimp on the effort or investment of time and professional resources necessary to build a useful measurement component? Why do we still see an abundance of poorly executed, "band-aid" approaches to measuring fan input at and around sporting events?

One would think that it would be easy to see how the research investment, which still dwarfs that of the major activation or media elements, would be well worth the money. When well done, the results will not only demonstrate return, but will also yield insights to help optimize future sports marketing activation.

Good research should not be an afterthought. Rather it should be contemplated and designed by experts, with the same rigor and care that you use to develop the rest of the program. If you question the value of this effort, I then invite you to review the following "How to guide" aimed at those fans who are walked right into the traps of poorly executed research. Don't say that I didn't warn you!

**1. Self select at a kiosk ... or participate later, via a web link or mobile call to action:** Step right up to this cool looking touch screen and fill out a survey. Maybe do it lots of times. Better still, go to a website, use the QR code or text to take the survey after the event, when you are even more distracted. When there are no controlling mechanisms in place to assure that the people taking your survey are a representative, random reflection of your target audience, how can you expect the results to be worth anything? When some are completing the survey possibly days after the event, how can they be expected to recall and reflect on what they saw just as those measured on site? When you are taking a survey just to get a reward are you necessarily going to take the time to thoughtfully complete it? Professional researchers have ways to manage such behavior, preserving the projectability and accuracy of your results.

**2. Know who is "sponsoring" the survey:** Your answers will be particularly insightful, reflective of true, unbiased perceptions if you know that brand X is looking for your opinions. Surely this piece of information will enable you to candidly assess and evaluate brand X. In graduate school, we had a sophisticated term for this phenomenon; it's called, no one likes to call the baby ugly.

**3. Think long and hard about how an ad or promotion altered your behavior:** Did this single, specific advertisement make you want to buy the new vehicle that was featured? OK maybe that was too hard. But didn't it and it alone, make you want to seek out more information about the product? Not only are such questions impossible to cognitively answer, they are incredibly leading, which can often bring about the same phenomenon mentioned above in "tip #2."

**4. Use your uncanny memory or phenomenal predictive capabilities to determine how much you spent or will spend on a sponsor product:** I assume, I've made my point above, that there is both art and science in designing appropriate survey questions. Yet, there are still lots of sports marketing surveys that legitimately expect a respondent to provide meaningful recollection or precise estimates of what they spent or will spend on a product or service category over a lengthy time horizon. There are plenty of great ways that professional researchers can measure this. But direct questioning is usually not one of them.