

WHEN IS IT BEST TO USE A MAIL SURVEY?

Each survey research methodology has optimal uses and it's up to you to make the best match with your particular situation. When it comes to using a mail survey, what might this be a good choice?

Having been using the mail method since 1949, we have a pretty good idea what the answers are for this question. Further, we are assuming that by "best choice," maximizing response would be one of your goals. So, following are some of the top applications for mail surveys.

Surveys involving a more senior population. Sometimes it's just easier to do things in print. No fumbling with electronics, no signing on, just open an envelope and pull out the paper survey.

Sensitive issues. Headlines abound these days about someone speaking out on a sensitive or controversial issue, only to be castigated for their thoughts. A mail survey, being anonymous, provides an excellent channel to get feedback and removing any possibility of being exposed or tracked.

Hard to reach audiences. Even though we are well into the internet age, it's just not possible to reach everyone online. On the other hand, most of us live somewhere or work somewhere providing an opportunity to send a survey to a mailable address.

Busy people. Those of us who are on the go will respond to surveys when there is time, provided of course, the survey is relevant and not too long. Mail surveys give the potential participant the chance to complete the survey when it fits into their schedule.

Questions requiring background data that needs to be retrieved. Doing a survey that requires participants to track down information? It's easy to put the paper down, get the appropriate information and then come back.

Just looking for something new and different? What, something in the mail just for me? Think of it. When was the last time you received a nice, personalized letter in the mail asking for your opinion? With that letter is a classy, well-designed survey that isn't onerous, easy to get through along with a postage-paid reply envelope. All you do is complete the survey and drop it in the mail!

The above list is not meant to be exhaustive. There are other terrific and logical applications for mail surveys. Mail can be a very good option, not all the time, but for the right circumstance. If you have a mail (or paper) survey need, contact Mike Zeman at Readex. He will be happy to help.