

Sample Frame, Sample and Types of Samples.

Statistics for non-statisticians and the casual user of survey data can be confusing and not all that easy to understand. This includes the process with which surveys begin, the Sample process. Let's look at how things work.

It all starts with the individuals about which you want to learn something. These people comprise what is called your Population. An example would be "my association's members" or "my subscribers." From there, we work our way to the Sample Frame. This is simply an enumeration or complete listing of all the people in your Population that you wish to study. In the case of the association, the Sample Frame is a listing of all your members.

Once we have identified our Frame, the next job is to create the Sample. There are several different methods that can be employed to get this job done. While we typically use the Simple Random Sample, there are occasions when another approach may be used. Here are descriptions of three commonly used sampling techniques.

Simple Random Sample: This can best be thought of as the "name in the hat" process. Every name in the Frame has an equal or known chance of being selected.

Systematic Sample: In systematic sampling, every member of the Frame is assigned a number. A sample is then selected based on the numbers being chosen at proscribed intervals, for example, every 7th number.

Cluster Sample: The Population is divided into groups, perhaps based on location or another definition. The groups are called clusters. The clusters are randomly selected with each element in the selected clusters used in the survey.

We would be happy to talk about how a Sample would be best set up for your survey. Please contact the Readex Sales team at readexsales@readexresearch.com.