

Reap the
Reward
OF
Research

How to use a
simple & short survey
to refine the
mission & messaging
of your business.

Your Guide to Creating a Simple Survey

WHY IS THIS NECESSARY?

In order to have effective messaging to promote and market your business to your ideal clients, you need to understand:

- 1) **who they are**
- 2) **the pain points (problems) they are facing**
- 3) **how your unique combination of background and expertise solves them**

Sometimes when we start a business we skip over this part. We know our expertise and the passion we have for using it to improve the life of others. However, we can be hard pressed when called on to answer these three questions in a way that allows us to incorporate the answers into our business strategy and messaging.

THIS IS WHERE RESEARCH COMES IN.

Research does not have to be difficult but it may push you outside your comfort zone. This was true for me! Following the simple process outlined below will help you push through your reluctance so your business can **Reap the Reward of Research**.

1. START WITH PEOPLE YOU KNOW.

You likely know people who are your ideal client in your circle of family and friends. In fact, some may be using the product or service your business will provide, but through a different provider. This is okay. In fact, it may be that they will be more forthcoming. They are helping you—their close associate—with your business and are happy to share pointers gleaned from their current product/service experience. Commit to gathering input from at least 10 to 12 people.

2. SEND AN EMAIL REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW.

This is where reaching out to people you know already makes it easier. Since they know you, they are excited about your endeavor and would like to see you succeed. They may be honored that you see them as someone with an expertise and viewpoint that will be of benefit to you. In the email, let them know the number of questions you will be asking them (a sample survey appears below) and commit to a time frame. For example, say “I value your opinion and it will help me with my business if you’d participate in a short research survey. I will keep the interview to 30 minutes or less.”

3. CALL THEM AT THE APPOINTED TIME AND PUT ON YOUR LISTENING EARS.

I guarantee that you will hear some surprising answers. Do not rely on your memory! Take careful notes as you move through the survey. If you decide to record interviews, be sure to let the respondent know they are being recorded. As soon as possible after the interview, create an electronic version of the responses and add your comments. What stood out? What surprised you? Did you hear something that can become an opportunity for you to differentiate your business from the competition? And so on.

4. CREATE AND USE AN ONLINE SURVEY.

If you are connected to on-line groups that allow you to query members, create a post and link it to a survey. Explain the purpose of the survey and the length. Google Forms allows you to create free surveys for personal use. I suggest that you accept responses that are anonymous, but provide an incentive for participants to provide contact information. See “Enhancements” below.

5. ENHANCEMENTS.

Is there a gift you can provide to people who agree to be interviewed, or who provide contact information when they respond to your on-line survey? If there is, include this information in the email asking someone to participate, or in the on-line post. For example, I provided a set of three blank note cards to each participant who responded to my request or supplied contact information. These were well received and enjoyed by my ideal clients.

SAMPLE SURVEY

A survey I conducted for my business had 4 questions centered around how the participants handled their business presentation (logo, business card and website) when they first started.

Question #1: Did you hire someone or do it yourself?

Question #2: What was the biggest challenge or stressor (logo, business card or website)?

Question #3: What was your biggest fear about using the approach you used?

Question #4: If you could solve that problem and get what you want most, would you be willing to invest for the solution? How much?

Question #1 helped me learn about my ideal clients and provided insight into how the two approaches impacted responses to the other questions. For example, when they hired someone, responses pointed to pain points related to the cost and the value they received for the money they spent. Those who chose to do it themselves were concerned that the presentation of their business looked amateurish.

Question #2 brought forward that the website was the biggest challenge or stressor. Responses related to their own skill level regarding creativity and the complexity of using on-line website programs. They also worried that if they hired someone, the website had to be perfect at launch because there would be no support provided after launch.

Questions #3 and #4 provided insight into the packages I should offer to address the pain points and the price point for each.

A Guide to Applying the Results of Your Research to Your Messaging and Offers

1. HOW TO INCORPORATE THE PAIN POINTS OF YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS.

Use your messaging to tell clients what you do FOR them, to alleviate their pain points. For example, before conducting research, I would tell clients that I design logos, business cards, websites, etc. After the research, I tell clients that I build a professional brand for their new

business, without breaking the bank! I let them know that I put no limit on the number of design rounds, that we continue fine tuning until they are happy with the result. And I share that I offer on-going training and support, including review and update windows to encourage them to ask for feedback from prospects and clients. I make sure they know that I provide a private folder on Box, that gives them 24/7 access to all the files I create for them, including a style guide so they can create on-brand marketing and promotional materials on their own, if they want to. As you can see, this is quite a shift in messaging.

2. HOW TO USE YOUR RESEARCH TO SHAPE YOUR OFFERINGS.

The other key learning from my research is what clients would be willing to pay for the solution to their problem. Using that information, I determined the packages I offer to solve their problem that are in alignment with my value proposition. This will be different for every business and is dependent on the clients you seek to serve, especially the stage of business they are in: start-up, sustaining or mature. Client interaction will let you know when to raise your prices, add new services, or change your packages including when it is time to drop one.



THERE'S MORE! Email me at Robin@DoubleVisionArt-Design.com to receive a copy of *"How to Get the Biggest Bang for Your Buck Working with a Design Professional."* It has all the information you need for a successful collaborative partnership—guidelines, tips, and a glossary of terms.