

Florida Cooperative Extension Service's Customer Satisfaction Survey Protocol

Glenn D. Israel¹

In 1997, thirteen or fourteen counties were randomly selected for the annual customer satisfaction survey (CSS) for each year (see Table 1) until all 67 counties were assigned to the 5-year rotation. Currently, staff in each selected county are responsible for assembling the sampling frame, which is comprised of customers who 1) attend a planned activity including, workshops, seminars and field days, 2) visit the extension office to obtain information, 3) telephone for information, or 4) use e-mail to obtain and receive information during a 30-day period. A systematic sample of 120 names will be selected for each county (but a larger sample size may be used as resources allow) with about half from the list of workshop attendees and half from the list of "walk-in" and telephone customers. Faculty in the Program Development and Evaluation Center (PDEC) will conduct the sampling process, which includes editing the sampling frame to enter missing information, correct typing errors and remove duplicates, as well as selecting the final sample using systematic sampling.

Table 1. County rotation for the annual customer satisfaction survey.

1997, 2002, 2007, 2012	1998, 2003, 2008, 2013	1999, 2004, 2009, 2014	2000, 2005, 2010, 2015	2001, 2006, 2011, 2016
Baker	Bradford	Alachua	Broward	Bay
Calhoun	Brevard	Miami-Dade	Collier	Charlotte
Duval	Clay	DeSoto	Columbia	Citrus
Glades	Dixie	Escambia	Franklin	Hardee
Highlands	Hendry	Flagler	Gadsden	Hillsborough
Holmes	Lake	Gilchrist	Indian River	Jackson
Jefferson	Liberty	Gulf	Leon	Lafayette
Okaloosa	Madison	Hamilton	Orange	Levy
Osceola	Monroe	Hernando	Pinellas	Manatee
Pasco	Palm Beach	Lee	Putnam	Marion
Polk	St. Johns	Martin	St. Lucie	Nassau
Seminole	Sumter	Suwannee	Santa Rosa	Okeechobee
Volusia	Wakulla	Taylor	Walton	Sarasota
			Washington	Union

Survey Procedures

The survey is sent to the sample of clients via postal mail or e-mail. The survey included questions on: overall customer satisfaction with the services provided by Extension, clientele's satisfaction on four dimensions of quality, outcomes of the use of Extension service, and demographic attributes of the respondents. The customer satisfaction survey has been conducted annually since 1997 using telephone (1997-2004), mail (2003-2011), web-hosted and mixed-modes (2008-2012) (see Israel, 2010; 2011; 2012; in press; Israel & Lamm, 2012).

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For the 2011 survey, a sample of 1,939 was selected from lists of extension clients in 11 of Florida's 67 counties.

The mail and Internet versions of the survey were constructed to follow Dillman et al.'s (2009) unimode design principles. This included using the same questions and question order and, more importantly, working to minimize differences in visual design (see Figure 1 in Israel, 2010). The 2-page mail questionnaire had 21 items and utilized gray shading to distinguish blocks of related questions. Similarly, the Internet survey presented questions in groups or singly on a separate screen (see Israel, 2010).

The Web survey switched to Qualtrics survey software in 2011. Clients who had received the invitation via e-mail could click on the link to access the URL and then enter the personal identification number (PIN). Upon entry, the informed consent information was presented. When the "Agree to participate" button was selected, the screen containing the initial questions was presented.

The correspondence was constructed to provide the same verbal and visual presentation to clients. A series of four or five contacts were used to implement the survey. Clients are usually sent a pre-letter announcing that they will receive the survey shortly. This is followed 3-5 days later by the survey packet containing a cover letter, questionnaire, and business reply envelope. A week after the survey is sent, a reminder post card is mailed. Finally, two weeks after the post card, a replacement questionnaire, cover letter and reply envelope is sent to nonrespondents. Similar procedures are used for clients who provide only an email address with the exception that a link to the Web version of the survey is provided with each of the contacts.

Completed surveys are entered into a database and analyzed using SAS for Windows, version 9.3 (SAS Institute Inc.). Aggregated results for each county and the state-wide total are presented in tables and charts. These are provided to each county participating in the survey.

References

- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., and Christian, L. M. 2009. *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method*. (3rd ed.) Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Israel, G. D. 2010. Using Web-hosted surveys to obtain responses from Extension clients: A cautionary tale. *Journal of Extension* [on-line], 48(4), Article 4FEA8. Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2010august/a8.php>.
- Israel, G. D. (2011). Strategies for Obtaining Survey Responses from Extension Clients: Exploring the Role of E-mail Requests. *Journal of Extension* [on-line], 49(2), Article 3FEA7. Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2011june/a7.php>.
- Israel, G. D. 2012. Combining Mail and E-mail Contacts to Facilitate Participation in Mixed-Mode Surveys. *Social science computer review*. Published online November 28, 2012. doi: 10.1177/0894439312464942. Available at: <http://ssc.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/11/26/0894439312464942>.
- Israel, G. D., & Lamm, A. J. 2012. Item Non-response in a Client Survey of the General Public. *Survey Practice*, April. Available at: <http://surveypractice.wordpress.com/2012/04/17/item-nonresponse-in-a-client-survey-of-the-general-public/#more-6070>
- Israel, G. D. (in press). Using Mixed-mode Contacts in Client Surveys: Getting More Bang for Your Buck. *Journal of extension*.

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First, we would like to find out how you feel about the information you received from the Extension office.
Please mark your answers with an "X".

	Very Satisfied ▼	Satisfied ▼	Neither ▼	Dissatisfied ▼	Very Dissatisfied ▼
1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the information was up to date and accurate? . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the information was delivered in time to be useful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the information was relevant to your situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the information was easy to understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Next, we'd like to ask about using the information that you received.

5. Have you had an opportunity to use the information? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
└──────────┐ → **Go to Question 6**
- 5a. If YES, did it solve the problem or answer your question? . . . ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
- 5b. Please explain what your information need or problem was, what you did with the information, and what the results were.

6. Have you shared the information with anyone? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

7. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the Extension office?

- ☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied

8. This question is very important, so please tell us all that you can. What could we do to improve our services to you and others in the county?

9. Please think about how receiving Extension services has affected you. How have you benefitted from Extension's services during the last year? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Saved me money
- ☐ Increased my income
- ☐ Improved my health or well-being
- ☐ Helped me conserve water or energy better
- ☐ Developed my skills as a leader or volunteer
- ☐ Other benefit _____
- ☐ I have not benefitted in any way during the last year

Finally, we would like to ask a few questions about yourself to help us better understand who is receiving Extension services throughout the state. Please answer all of the following questions.

10. How many times during the past 12 months have you attended an Extension program or contacted the Extension office? (Include 1 for the time that this survey asks about) Times

11. How many years have you been using Extension services? (Write '1' if only this year) Years

12. Where do you live? ☐ A Farm
☐ Rural area, not a farm
☐ A city, town, or suburb

13. What is the highest level of education you have attained?
☐ Some high school or less
☐ High school graduate or GED
☐ Some college, such as attending a technical college, community college or 4-year program
☐ College bachelors degree
☐ Post graduate degree

14. Do you work for pay?
☐ Yes ———→ **What kind of work do you do?** _____
☐ No ———→ **Are you looking for a job or retired?**
☐ Looking for a job ☐ Retired ☐ Other _____

15. What is your racial-ethnic background? (Please mark the best answer)
☐ White, non-Hispanic
☐ Black, non-Hispanic
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian American
☐ American Indian or native Alaskan
☐ Multi-racial (please specify) _____

16. What year were you born?

17. What is your sex? ☐ Male ☐ Female

Thank you for answering the survey.



Department of Agricultural Education and Communication

PO Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611-0540
Telephone: (352) 392-0502
Fax: (352) 392-9585

June 1, 2012

Dear Extension Client,

A few days from now you will receive in the mail a request to fill out a brief questionnaire for people who have contacted the local Extension office for information or attended one of its programs.

The survey is being conducted by the University of Florida to find out how people feel about the information that they received. Your responses will help us find out what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

We are writing because we have found many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one that will help the Cooperative Extension Service understand our clients' needs and whether they are being met.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It's only with the generous help of people like you that our survey can be successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glenn D. Israel". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Survey Director



Department of Agricultural Education and Communication

PO Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611-0540
Telephone: (352) 392-0502
Fax: (352) 392-9585

June 5, 2011

«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Street»
«City», FL «Zip»

Dear «First_Name» «Last_Name»,

The University of Florida's Cooperative Extension Service is conducting a survey of people who have contacted the local Extension office for information or attended one of its programs. We want to find out how people feel about the information that they got. Your responses will help us find out what we are doing well and where we need to improve. The survey will take about 5 minutes to complete.

You are one of a small number of Extension clients randomly chosen to participate in this study. Since your responses will also represent others who were not selected, we hope that you will complete the survey as soon as possible. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. We believe that there are no risks to you from participating in this study. There are also no direct benefits or compensation to you for participating in the study. If you have questions about your rights, please contact the UFIRB office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250.

We will keep your answers confidential to the extent provided by law. Your name will not be used in any report. We will only use your answers after they have been combined with the other respondents' answers. Please note that the number on the questionnaire will be used only to check your name off the mailing list when your survey is returned.

If you have any questions, please call 352-273-2586, or send an email to gdisrael@ufl.edu. We have enclosed a postage paid envelop for you to mail the completed survey. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Glenn Israel'.

Glenn Israel
Survey Director

Dear Extension Client,

A few days ago, I sent you a questionnaire asking about your experience with contacting the Extension office for information or attending one of our programs. If you have completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks.

If you have not returned your questionnaire yet, please do so as soon as possible. Because of the small number of people being asked to participate in this survey, it is important that each person complete the questionnaire. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Glenn D. Israel
Professor and Survey Director

Department of Agricultural Education and Communication

PO Box 110540
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Telephone: (352) 392-0502

June 27, 2012

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Street»
«City», FL «Zip»

Dear «FirstName» «LastName»,

A couple of weeks ago, we sent you a survey asking about your experience in getting information from the county Extension office or attending one of its programs. As of today, however, we have not received your completed survey.

Many people have already responded. They described their experience, both good and bad, from their contact with Extension. The results will be very useful to us at the University of Florida.

We are writing again because of the importance that your questionnaire has for helping to get accurate results. Although we sent questionnaires to people across Florida, we need to hear from nearly everyone in the sample to be sure that the results are truly representative.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. We believe that there are no risks to you from participating in this study. There are also no direct benefits or compensation to you for participating in the study. If you have questions about your rights, please contact the UFIRB office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

We will keep your answers confidential to the extent provided by law. Your name will not be used in any report. We will only use your answers after they have been combined with the other respondents' answers. Please note that the number on the questionnaire will be used only to check your name off the mailing list when your survey is returned.

If you have any questions, please call 352-273-2586, or send an email to gdisrael@ufl.edu. We have enclosed a postage paid envelop for you to mail the completed survey. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,



Glenn Israel
Survey Director



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July 20, 2012

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Street»
«City», FL «Zip»

Dear «FirstName» «LastName»,

This is our last call for your opinion on how we are doing! Please take just five minutes to answer the survey about your experience in getting information from the «County» County Extension office or attending one of its programs.

Many people have already responded, but we need to hear from you too. This is because we need to hear from nearly everyone to get an accurate picture of our clients' experience, both good and bad. The results will help us serve you and your neighbors better.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. We believe that there are no risks to you from participating in this study. There are also no direct benefits or compensation to you for participating in the study. If you have questions about your rights, please contact the UFIRB office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

We will keep your answers confidential to the extent provided by law. Your name will not be used in any report. We will only use your answers after they have been combined with the other respondents' answers.

If you have any questions, please call 352-273-2586, or send an email to gdisrael@ufl.edu. We have enclosed a postage paid envelop for you to mail the completed survey. Thank you for your help.

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Survey Director