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6 TIPS FOR DATA PROCESSING TO MAKE YOUR PROJECT BETTER

At Research Results, data processing is in our DNA. We have the latest technology and expertise to conduct data processing that supports the success of your project. For example, our leader, John Zarrella, has been working in data processing since founding the company in 1987. Cheryl Montowski, our Chief Data Officer, leads the department and has been with Research Results for 35 years. And Sandra Bisson, our Director of Data Processing department, has been with us for 33 years.

There is no doubt that your project will be in good hands with Research Results' data processing team.

There are a few areas of the research process that just seem to stay in the background. And that's fine...most of the time. But when there's a problem, they suddenly jump to the forefront of project management and can take time and money to resolve. Data processing is one of those functions.

As researchers, we tend to spend a lot of time focusing on the questionnaire and the sample as we start the survey. However, back-end processes like data processing also need upfront attention.

THESE 6 TIPS WILL HELP US ALL KEEP DATA PROCESSING IN MIND AS WE PROGRESS THROUGH THE ONLINE SURVEY:

TIP #1:

Let's start at the end and work forward. Before you start writing the questionnaire, think about the report you'll be producing at the end. What do you want to tell your clients? What questions do your clients need to be answered? What types of analysis will you need? This will help us all with question design and setting up the data structure and layout to minimize post-hoc data manipulation and keep the project on schedule.

TIP #2:

Is it an ad hoc project or a tracker? If there is even a small chance that the project could become a tracker where you want to compare the results over waves, there are some precautions you can take. Write the questions to be repeated in subsequent waves. Keep the naming conventions consistent from wave to wave. This will help in multiple waves, but it will also help if you want to expand the survey to samples in different markets. The key is to have trendable data files, which will make it easier to determine which variables to repeat in each wave.



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TIP #3:

Strong and thorough documentation. Make sure to maintain one clean master document that includes the final questionnaire and records all the changes – including those in past and future waves. This will help everyone understand where we have been and where we are going.

TIP #4:

Plan data weighting in advance. What is the sample feasibility? If you have a difficult sample, think about what to make up the differences. Can you balance the sample during screening? Generally, it is better to avoid weighting samples as that can introduce serious data anomalies.

TIP #5:

How do you need the results presented for analysis and reporting? In general, we want to avoid the "data dump," which will give you too much information, as well as possible bad information, and may cause unnecessary confusion. Go back to the beginning and think about what you need to tell your clients in the report. Then, create the banner specs to meet those requirements. Giving this some thought early on saves much time on the back end.

TIP #6:

Bring programming and data processing into the project kick-off call. The key to a smooth market research process is to bring everyone into the process at the beginning. The goal is to avoid situations that cause unnecessary work to correct work or cause extra data manipulation. While it may seem cumbersome, having back-end team members' perspectives can make the process more efficient and faster.

By integrating these six tips into your data processing workflow, you can ensure a smoother, more efficient, and cost-effective project management experience. Remember, data processing should not be an afterthought but a crucial part of your planning process from the very beginning. By considering the end goal, maintaining consistency, documenting thoroughly, planning for potential issues, tailoring results to your report and presentation, and involving all team members early, you can mitigate risks and enhance the overall quality of your survey project. Implement these strategies, and you'll be well on your way to producing insightful, reliable, and actionable research outcomes.

Data Processing is in our DNA!

In fact, all of our longest-tenured employees are in this department.

For more information about how our data processors can help you, contact
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