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**THE POWER
OF A SURVEY:
MARKETING'S
UTILITY PLAYER**

Many would argue there has never been a better time to be a marketer than today. The sheer number of tactics in the marketing arsenal is staggering. Many traditional methods still flourish while new innovations in targeting, reach and segmentation empower marketing teams like never before. However, the true potential of these powerful tools cannot be realized without the proper research and due diligence. Luckily, among the arsenal of marketing tactics is the survey, an approach with a level of versatility and precision that many may not fully grasp at first glance.

Marketing surveys have long been a stalwart in the industry, but recent innovations have enabled them to cover more ground than ever, from the aforementioned research and strategy to the ability to optimize and reassess active approaches in real time. They can identify target markets, shape brand identities, build content strategies, identify consumer habits and much more. A well-executed survey can provide immense ROI, but it must first be understood. Read on to learn more about the variety of surveys at your disposal and how to approach them for optimal results.



BRAND IDENTITY

Determining your brand identity is a crucial first step in designing the right marketing materials, from website copy to social media content and beyond. Unfortunately, many organizations put the cart before the horse in this respect, choosing to begin the execution before the design is complete. The reasoning is understandable, as marketing must be implemented sooner than later to achieve desired results, but without an overarching identity, messages can get muddled and materials may lack the consistency required to drive prospects down the sales funnel.

Internal surveys can provide all the information necessary to construct this identity with minimal legwork on the part of the organization. The key is to survey current stakeholders, from owners and employees to happy clients and customers. These are the individuals who know the organization best and are the most equipped to describe what sets it apart from competitors and makes its products or services superior. Essentially, the goal is to use their words to construct the language that makes up your identity, your essence (the words that encapsulate you) and your differentiators (the pillars that make you superior in your industry). As such, it's important to ask questions that will provide the best language.

Some example questions include:

- What do you like best about this organization?
- What words come to mind when you think of this organization?
- What makes this organization different from others?
- How has this organization positively affected your life?

In addition to shaping your brand identity, these survey results can provide valuable fodder for web copy and testimonials. A response such as "I never even knew what I was missing until I found this brand and I couldn't be happier" could be integrated into a variety of marketing materials. Just be sure to include a question on the survey asking if respondents would be comfortable having their answers used in testimonials or marketing materials.

TARGETING

Surveys are useful for helping organizations decide how best to spend their marketing dollars in terms of which channels and platforms will be most effective. Using guesswork or instinct to decide how best to reach your audience is ill-advised. You may get lucky, but chances are if you're choosing methods that aren't backed up by data, you're wasting valuable resources on low-visibility channels while neglecting the most effective ones. For instance, a medical practice may be spending the bulk of its budget on printed, mailed materials. Not to say this isn't an effective approach, especially for new practices, but the results can often be misleading. A mail campaign might lead to some new patients, leading the practice to believe it is an effective method, but they may only be reaching 20% of the audience they are trying to attract. Without the complete picture a survey can provide, marketing spend is effectively blind.



Fortunately, programmatic surveys can remedy this issue using specific, data-driven targeting to reach the exact audience an organization wishes to serve and determining the best methods of outreach. The specificity of this approach is unrivaled, allowing you to target surveys based on all the right barometers, from age to occupation to geographical location, even income and marital status (among many others). Once the ideal demographics are

determined, programmatic surveys can identify what marketing methods these individuals respond to most by asking thorough questions in terms of where they spend their time online, how often they respond to traditional forms of advertising or what kind of imagery and language attracts them. The effectiveness of these surveys is bolstered by their ability to incentivize potential respondents to take them; for instance, they can identify users' recent online shopping habits and offer discounts on the items they sought in exchange for their participation.

Once the results are available, the organization will have a complete picture of how best to reach its audience. The aforementioned medical practice might find that those they are targeting respond positively to email promotions and Facebook ads but tend to ignore mailed offers – thus, they can pull back in print spending and reallocate that budget to more effective methods.



CONTENT MARKETING

The value of content marketing has become increasingly substantial in recent years and that value continues to climb. Strong content not only helps position your organization as a knowledgeable thought leader and resource in its industry, but also helps strengthen search engine optimization (SEO), provides content for social media and email marketing and more. However, the key word here is “strong.” Writing content for content’s sake is generally ineffective and often leads to topics that are irrelevant or so commonly written about they provide no value.

The strongest content answers your audience’s burning questions or addresses their biggest fears, obstacles and concerns. Surveys remove the guesswork from the content creation process by providing topics straight from the mouths of those you’re trying to reach, and the results are often unexpected. This allows your organization to create unique and valuable content that stands out from the recycled baseline material churned out by competitors.

GAUGING PERFORMANCE AND USER EXPERIENCE

This is one of the more traditional applications of the marketing survey, but it should not be overlooked. Measuring your performance regularly allows you to readdress and recalculate not only your performance as a business but also the consumer experience as a whole. While user experience should always be a priority, its importance in healthcare cannot be understated in the age of consumerism. The abundance of choice enjoyed by consumers in today's landscape leaves little room for error on the part of the practice or organization.

If you are not already sending surveys about patient or customer experience, it would be wise to start. These can be easily constructed with services like SurveyMonkey or Pollfish and can be included in automated follow-up emails after patients or customers purchase your products or services. When designing your questions, be sure to keep the entire customer journey in mind. Medical practices might ask how prepared a patient felt before the appointment. Did they receive enough information prior to the appointment, from confirmations to directions and instructions? Was the front office staff friendly? Did they wait long? These questions can help identify pain points and let you know where you may need to make changes.




Similarly, you can use surveys to determine the effectiveness of your website. First, ask respondents if they accessed your site on a desktop or mobile device. A website that looks beautiful on a computer may be jumbled and hard to use on a smartphone if it is not also optimized for mobile. Ask if they liked the look and feel of the site and how easy it was to navigate. Was your online booking process intuitive or confusing? Is there a feature they wished you had?



NET PROMOTER SCORE

According to SurveyMonkey, "The [Net Promoter Score](#) is the world's leading metric for measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty. It goes beyond [measuring how satisfied a customer is](#) with a company; the Net Promoter Score system is designed to gauge their willingness to recommend it to others."

Participants respond on a scale of 0-10, and are sorted into [three categories](#):

-  **Detractors (0-6):** These respondents weren't very happy with your services, and in addition to not purchasing them again, they may impact your reputation negatively through negative reviews or word of mouth.
-  **Passives (7-8):** While generally satisfied with your services, it's not likely they'll be brand-loyal and could be swayed easily towards a competitor. While they're not likely to impact your reputation negatively, they are not likely to promote your services, either.
-  **Promoters (9-10):** These respondents were very pleased with your services and are likely to not only provide repeat business but also promote your services to others.

The NPS score is then calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters, generating a score on the scale of -100 to 100. A score on the negative end of the spectrum suggests that your organization may need retooling and you'd be advised to administer more customer satisfaction and user experience surveys from the previous section to determine your shortcomings and correct the issues causing negative feedback.



$$\text{NPS} = \% \text{  } - \% \text{  }$$

CONCLUSION

Surveys are a tried and true approach to gauging quality, but their applications are only growing as targeting and technology improve. They can provide answers to some of marketing's toughest questions and offer valuable insights you didn't even know you were missing. However, they can vary in complexity from construction and distribution to analysis. If you think your organization could benefit from one or more of these surveys and wish to learn more, contact [Big Buzz](#) today at [720.350.4484](tel:720.350.4484).

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Born in Chile and raised in Western New York, Evan moved to Colorado to finish his education and graduated from Metropolitan State University with a degree in Marketing. Evan uses his passion for writing to create exciting and engaging content for every variety of client while staying true to the voice of their brand.

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- ✔ Clarity on the root causes of current lead issues we face
- ✔ Research and industry intel that will help eradicate lead issues for good
- ✔ A clearer vision for reaching the organization's desired future state this year, 3 years from now and 5 years from now
- ✔ A free initial nurture marketing plan to invite warm leads to move in now

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Big Buzz is a marketing agency delivering a steady stream of move-in-ready leads to teams serving the senior living industry. For more than 15 years, Big Buzz has helped senior living marketing and sales teams nurture leads to increase occupancy, grow and scale. CEO Wendy O'Donovan Phillips is the author of the book [Flourish!: The Method Used by Aging Services Organizations for the Ultimate Marketing Results](#), has been published in McKnight's, has been a regular contributor to Forbes, and has been quoted in The Washington Post, ABC News and Chicago Tribune. The Big Buzz leadership team regularly lectures in front of audiences ranging from 25 to 3,000 attendees, including at Argentum and various LeadingAge chapters. Agency awards and accolades include recognition for excellence by the American Marketing Association, Gold Key Award Winner by the Business Marketing Association, HubSpot Academy Inbound Marketing Certification, and Top Advertising and Marketing Agency by Clutch. www.bigbuzzinc.com