

Member Survey Research

A Member Survey is an important and relatively easy way to evaluate your membership program. It will allow you to better understand your members, why they joined, why they visit, what benefits they value, what will make them most likely to renew. Additionally, the survey can be used to understand what membership pricing structure will maximize revenue. We recommend surveying your members every one to three years, ideally in the spring or fall -- it's always nice to ask for feedback before asking for a gift.

What You'll Learn

- *Member Data:* member household characteristics and demographics, reasons for joining and renewing (including motivators and detractors), reasons for visiting
- *Membership Program Evaluation:* satisfaction with the program, usage, benefit awareness and evaluation, and likelihood of renewal
- *Renewal & Communications Strategies:* optimal renewal messages (usage vs. mission) and preferred delivery system, timing and frequency for member communications
- *Pricing and Packaging:* membership pricing, categories, and benefit packaging to maximize acquisition (while not cannibalizing gate admission) and upper-level membership conversion
- *Member Giving:* past additional giving, likelihood of making an additional gift in the next 12 months, areas of support to maximize potential to give

What You Can Do With What You Learn

Increase Renewal. Knowing your renewal rate and potential motivators and detractors can help you to maximize renewal. How likely are your members to renew? Even if they do plan to renew, how likely are they to let their membership lapse and join on the next visit? If they don't plan to renew, why not? And what offers might change that?

Increase Visitation. The more often a member visits, the more likely they are to renew. And, the better you understand what drives visitation, the better you can promote the visit and the associated value. Why do your members visit? How often do they visit? How satisfied are they with their visit? What would make them more likely to visit? What current exhibits are they most likely to see? What future exhibits are they most likely to come in for?

Increase Upper-Level Conversion. The primary reason for joining is typically for unlimited admission, however, base-level memberships typically give away 4 to 10 other benefits that are not valued by most members. Are there any benefits that can be moved to higher membership levels to increase perceptions of access and exclusivity and to incentivize upper-level conversion?

Customize Your Renewal Messages. Rather than one-size-fits-all, renewal communications are most effective when what they say *first* is tailored to either visit-based members or mission-supporting members. For example, visit-based renewals should highlight upcoming

visits, while mission-supporting renewals should highlight mission accomplishment. What percentage of your members are transactional? What percentage are mission supporting?

Evaluate Your Member Communications. Are members hearing from you too often or not often enough? Is the hard-copy newsletter that they receive something that they value and actually read? Or would they prefer to receive the same information digitally? How do they renew and how do they prefer to renew?

Price Membership to Maximize Revenue. Underpriced memberships result in higher support costs per member household and an overall loss of revenue, while overpriced memberships result in missed opportunities for both a stable revenue source and a qualified development pool. Memberships are typically priced too low when Family memberships cost less than two times the cost of admission (based on a family of 4). Memberships are typically priced too high when Family memberships cost more than three times the cost of admission (based on a family of 4). How likely are your members to renew at alternate price points?

Increase Giving. Many members consider their membership dues to be a philanthropic contribution. How likely are your members to make an additional gift beyond their membership dues? Which areas or projects would they be most likely to support?

Methodology

We recommend conducting an online survey via an email invitation distributed to current members. Typically, this approach will result in a 10% participation rate and is significantly more cost effective than a telephone survey. The survey can run approximately one week. If necessary, the survey can be extended one week and a reminder can be sent to increase participation.

Next Steps

A Member Survey is something you can do in house or you can hire a research firm to do for you. The in-house approach has the advantage of being inexpensive with the disadvantage of being time consuming for staff. Hiring a research firm will have a cost associated with it (\$10,000 for Morey Group to do your Member Survey) but has the advantage of being fast, drawing upon a breadth and depth of experience and expertise in the field, and being able to benchmark your results to other museums across the U.S. to provide context.

If you would like to discuss your membership program, pricing, or benefit structure (at no cost to you), please call Lauren Hunt, Vice President of Morey Group, at (843) 723-7290 or email lauren@moreygroup.com.