



# SURVEY FOR SUCCESS



Surveys are an invaluable tool for event organizers to collect meaningful information before, during and after an event. But after the flurry and excitement of an event, the post-event survey can often be overlooked and becomes an afterthought. Survey questions are thrown together quickly and in many cases, the data collected isn't as good as expected and sometimes is never even used.

To avoid this, it is recommended that you plan your post-event survey in advance, and have it all set up and ready to send automatically once the event has concluded. Within RegOnline® by Lanyon, surveys are really easy to design, send and analyze, but before you dive into your survey creation it's important to spend identify what you want to know and how you'll best structure the questions to get the answers you need. Here are some tips for successful design and deployment of event surveys.

## 1. Work back from your main goals and objectives

Before creating your survey, make a list of the key things you want to learn from it. Decide what data will validate whether or not you have achieved your goals and consider who will be using this data and how they will be using it. This could be you and your event management team, it could be your client if you're an independent planner or agency, and it will almost certainly be the senior leaders of the organization behind the event who will want to put metrics and value to the dollars invested.

## 2. Design for maximum response

### Create surveys that are quick and easy to complete

Offer surveys in an easy-to-use electronic format that is also accessible through smartphones and tablets. Ensure the design and interface is appealing. The RegOnline survey tool allows you to match your survey design to your registration form, websites and other marketing materials so you have consistency across your event branding.

### When it comes to survey questions, focus on quality, not quantity

You can include unlimited questions in your survey but ensure you focus on the quality of the questions and the responses you're looking for rather than asking too many. When it comes to survey questions try to provide multiple-choice or yes/no answers as much as possible and keep open ended responses to a minimum. These types of questions require less of the respondent's time and the data collected is easier to analyze, compare and report on.

### Make responses anonymous

Another way to boost survey responses is by making your survey "anonymous" for respondents. In RegOnline, simply skip the participant information section when creating your survey. This is likely to result in more responses and ensure the attendee feedback you gather is honest and accurate.

### Offer an incentive

It is always a nice idea to offer survey respondents something in return for their time and feedback. Entry into a drawing or competition is one option, or you could offer a free download of a whitepaper or e-book that is of interest to your audience.



**CASE IN POINT:** One RegOnline client has developed a clever way of encouraging attendees to complete her post event surveys. At the conclusion of each seminar, she sends her registrants a follow up email thanking them for attending. Embedded in the confirmation email of the survey is a merge code that generates a personalized certificate for each attendee, but in order to receive the course completion certificate, the attendee is required to complete the survey. Since the introduction of the post-survey certification, this client now receives 100% feedback in her follow up surveys. Additionally, she has saved on the cost of printing and mailing certificates by simply using RegOnline's badge feature to merge the event and attendee details.

### 3. Ask the right questions

The questions you ask are very much dependent on the type of event you're running, but there are a few key areas worth reviewing for most typical events. In RegOnline you can also send different surveys for different participant types, giving you added flexibility.

#### Measure your marketing efforts

Ask how attendees heard about your event, whether it was through an email invitation, social media, a referral, word of mouth, etc. This information can be useful to determine where your event audience is engaging and communicating and what channels you need to focus on for future promotions.

#### Determine logistical successes or failures

Find out which aspects of the event venue, including location, parking, access, transportation, and facilities, the attendees liked or disliked. You can use this information as you plan for your next event to ensure an even better attendee experience.

#### Query on the content, speakers, and quality of presentations

Give your respondents an opportunity to rate the content of your event such as themes, topics, guest presenters and educational sessions. Quiz your audience on the event setup in terms of booths, technology and networking opportunities. Did your attendee get something out of the event? Was it worthwhile? This feedback is essential when determining the success or failure of the event and will guide future event content.

#### Offer an opportunity to give feedback

Provide one verbose text area in your survey where your attendees may voice their opinions and give suggestions to improve future events. Here you can find out more details about your attendees' experience, whether good or bad. You could consider asking your respondent to provide contact information here such as their name, email address, or telephone number so that you can follow-up with them directly if the response is negative. Or you could consider asking them for permission to use a positive response in this section as testimonial in your marketing materials.

### 4. Test your survey

Once you've created your survey it's important to test it for usability, flow, typos and punctuation. Ask colleagues to complete it and have them critique it for clarity, engagement, ease of use, as well as basics like spelling and grammar. Ensure that they are working through the survey as an attendee would to get an accurate sense of timing. If it takes longer to complete the survey than anticipated or if anyone is even slightly confused by a question or answer, review, update and test again before hitting the activate button to make your survey live.

### 5. Launch, measure, improve

As your attendees complete your survey, you can track who is responding and who is not and follow up with the laggards to encourage participation. When your survey closes, you can understand in detail all responses and even slice the data by any number of variables, including registration type, demographic data or any custom fields you included. Export all data to Excel if you want to create additional custom charts or custom pivots to share with your organization. Use the data to make your next event even more compelling for your attendees and even more profitable for your organization.