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**CONDUCTING MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS**

Who are your members? What do they want out of their membership? Do they feel like they are getting good value out of their dues investment? These are important questions for the long-term health of your association, and the only way to truly know the answer is to ask your members directly.

Membership surveys are a great tool for taking the pulse of your membership, as long as they are designed and implemented correctly. There are three basic steps to an effective membership survey.

1. **ESTABLISH A GOAL -** Before you design your survey, you need to have a good idea of what data you are trying to gather. Is it a big picture survey about overall member satisfaction, or do you want to narrow in on a specific slice of the membership experience--event participation, legislative advocacy etc. Are the questions you want to ask relevant to the entire membership, or just one particular demographic?
2. **BUILD YOUR SURVEY -** The rise of the internet has made this much easier, as there are now numerous electronic survey tools that can help you easily build and deploy your survey. The free version of SurveyMonkey will work for most basic membership surveys, but if you want more advanced metrics (and are willing to pay a little to get them), then there are other options out there.
3. **ANALYZE THE DATA -** It will generally take a couple weeks to get enough answers to from any meaningful conclusions, but the sample size you need may not be as big as you think--generally, a response rate of about 10% is enough to give you statistically viable results. Once you’ve gotten a usable number of responses, it is a good idea to create an infographic that you can use to present the data to your board.

Keep in mind that your membership is constantly changing, and so the results of your survey won’t remain accurate forever--you should conduct a membership survey every two years at most to ensure that your information is up to date.