



QUEST  
MINDSHARE

Creating a Better B2B Survey:

Business Professionals  
Speak Out (Part 2)



# What's the Problem Quest saw with B2B Surveys?

- Response rates for online research are **declining**.
- Finding willing audiences is **harder!**
- Bad enough in consumer research, but **worse in B2B!!**

In B2B research:

- **Smaller** populations available
- More **competition** for attention
- **Time-constrained** respondents





# “What will better motivate B2B survey-takers?”

Quest looked for answers from previous research.

- What will **increase participation and engagement?**
- **TONS** of articles, blogs talking about “better” B2B surveys
- **NONE** showed **direct research with B2B respondents**

*So we built our own research project to find out!*



# What did Quest do?

Built a questionnaire focusing on all aspects of a **typical B2B survey-taking process** :

- Why would they share their “**professional opinion**” in the first place?
- **Invitations** - what did they respond to vs. ignore
- **Screening and qualifying** – what they’re okay with vs. object to
- **Survey experience** – what happens during, good and bad, how they would change



# What did Quest do? (cont'd)

Fielded with n80 each/**400 total** of :

- **Small business owners** and GMs (<50 employees)
- **Mid-level managers** and directors
- **Higher-level management** – AVP, VP, SVP
- **Tech specialists** – ITDMs, IT influencers
- Non-tech, non-mgmt. “**regular workers**”

*\*Quotas for company size – small, mid-level, enterprise*

*\*No quotas for LOB, geo*

*\*Required: Taken 2+ B2B surveys past 12 months*



# What were we trying to find out?

Yeah, what's working well, but especially looking for:

- What **de-motivates** B2B survey-takers?
- What do they want **less** of?
- Where are **pain points** during B2B surveys?
- And what just **pisses them off**?

*The key question- how do they want us, the professional researchers, to **“fix” B2B surveys**?*



# Let's get to the results...

We had presented the basic results across all audiences previously. We'll cover **more granularity** today:

- for **"hot buttons"**, how do **different groups** see those?
- do we have significant differences by **title, responsibility level, company size**?
- are **more experienced respondents** more or less tolerant?
- do those **taking more surveys** have different views?



# “What are the top motivators to take a B2B survey?”

- Making my opinion known-heard
- A close #2- Compensation (cash or equivalent)
- Also, close – exposure to new ideas, tech; gaining info helpful to my role

The losers? Donation incentives, competitive info to help my company





## “What are the top motivators to take a B2B survey?” - details

Mid-management and employees at larger companies much stronger for wanting to express opinions through surveys.

Direct incentives didn't show differences by co. size, but top mgmt. not motivated by direct \$\$ nearly as much.

Exposure to new ideas/gaining information strongest by far with tech respondents. All others – not much of a motivator.



# “What “pain points” have you had in business surveys?”

- **Screening/qualifying questions** – a very strong **#1**, 3X others

A follow-on asked “What kind of screening questions are **most/least appropriate?**”

- **Most** – industry, decisions I make/influence, my responsibilities/title
- **Least** – my age/gender/ethnicity/race (not relevant)



# “What “pain points” have you had in business surveys?” - details

Time it took and more relevant questions was universal – all size companies, tenure, complained about screening/qualifying!

Much more pronounced in the “middle ground” – senior and middle managers, vs. top mgmt. or regular workers.

Infrequent survey-takers were especially sensitive to poor screening/qualification – 30% higher complaints.



# “How long before you’re disqualified is reasonable?”

- Three minutes, tops!
  - Fewer than 10% said four minutes or more
  - Strongest for SBOs and less frequent survey-takers
  - Interestingly, more senior execs/top management at larger companies said “depends on what’s needed for the topic”
  - *Sago* recently had a *great post* about this:

“Screeners have bloated in length, clocking in at an average of 27 questions. That’s nearly 15 minutes of a respondent’s valuable time! No wonder drop-off rates spike after question 12.”



# Other “major pain points during a business survey”?

A solid second place – “confusing/bad survey design”

Right there with this – long LOI (more on that in a sec)

Interestingly, “Survey invitations” not an issue

- 85% said “no problems”





# Other “major pain points during a business survey”? - details

Respondents ***hate*** surveys that have **technical glitches** or **show a lack of subject knowledge**. More than **70%** say they **would drop** out of a survey for these reasons.

**Much stronger for SBO/small companies** (<50 employees).

Encountering **tech problems** was **more important** than the **survey running long** as a de-motivator.



# “What kind of questions during a survey bother you?”

Two standouts:

1. **Big forced grids** – “why so much detail?”
2. Confidential personal or company info – “**work PII**”

Almost as strong:

- “**Ignorant questions**” (i.e. writer doesn’t know the industry)
- **Open ends** - consistently disliked





# “What kind of questions during a survey bother you?” - details

Big grids – OMG are those **hated** (60% of our sample **across the board**), but especially by those in smaller companies.

Confidential company info, but especially “**work PII**” – much stronger for the **larger companies and middle to top managers**. (More in a minute on that!!)

And those surveys showing **naivete about a topic** or industry? This was a **hot button for top mgmt.** as well as **ITDMs and tech respondents**.





# “How long is too long for a business survey?”

Cooperation peaks at **15 minutes**.

Respondents said they're **twice as likely to quit at close to 20 minutes**.

Beyond that is even more pronounced!

*Quest will be exploring this ago-old question further:*

- When do people *actually* drop out?
- How does B2B survey data degrade prior to that point?



# “How long is too long for a business survey?” - details

By 15 minutes, 20% of all respondents are considering dropping. After 20 minutes, that rises to 60%.

If you're getting to 25 minutes, you're losing 75% of your respondents' attention and interest. May not drop out, but they're “gone”.

Most pronounced with sr. and middle mgmt., and infrequent survey takers. But consistent for LOIs shown.



# “What specific info would you not share (regardless of incentive)?”

Types of info they're strongly **not** okay being asked: “**work PII**”:

- My personal work info – email, LinkedIn profile, phone number
- Company identifying information – name, address, employee size, revenue (other than general screening-type questions), specific spending

These were **deal-breakers**!!



## “What specific info would you not share?” - details

Information for budgets, category spending and category purchase – could be shared at times.

Specific “sensitive company information”, including name/address, is a cliff to fall off if you ask it.

Personally identifying work information was worse - fewer than 5% of respondents said they would consider.

- This transcended company size, role/responsibility, and tenure with the company.



## “What specific info would you not share?” – more details

This is differentiated from “personal professional” information, such as a person’s title, department, responsibilities.

Younger workers and non-middle managers would share more. But “work PII” was still a killer.

“Would depend on the survey” was offered for these “sensitive” options – less than 5% would agree to any of this.



“One change to most motivate me to take more B2B surveys”

“Shorten the screening process”

“ No long grid questions – hate those”

“Respect my time”

“Shorter surveys and higher incentives”

“Ask about my experience for the topic”

“Faster screening process”

“Stop asking my age and gender – why?”

“Remove the personal questions”



# Quest's Recommendations – Three Key Takeaways

## 1. Be very careful with your screening questions

- Sore spot for B2B respondents
- Make your screening questions:
  - **Fewer** – you have three minutes, maybe
  - **More relevant** – to the person's role
  - **Direct** – “ask me what I know about, influence, decide”





# Quest's Recommendations – Three Key Takeaways

## 2. Don't expect to keep their attention more than 15 minutes

- As mentioned, Quest will dive into this further in 2024

## 3. Asking “Work PII” will kill your responses

- B2B respondents will share certain types of “sensitive” info
- They **don't want** questions linked to their personal or specific company identity





# Where's Quest going next with this topic?

More on hot spots soon!– issues around LOI, work PII and screening/qualification

More on improvements – today focused on problems areas. We want to deliver more on solutions.

Extending to international audiences – yeah, not just the U.S.

A separate look at B2B incentives – a topic of its own.



# Shout-outs

David Bruce & Tyler Tetz at **TL;DR Insights**

For specific thoughts and suggestions

Terry Sweeney at **RONIN**

He should get co-credit for all his ideas contributed!

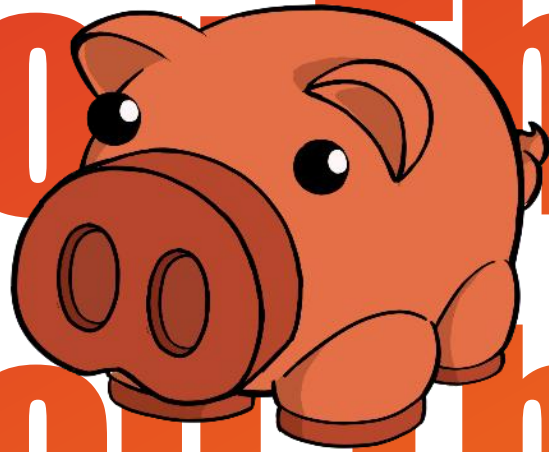
Cathy Harrison, Independent Researcher

My survey would have been lesser without her assistance. Hire her to help you too!

Sam Farag at **Tab House**

Tables and tabs extraordinaire – his work made my data review tons easier.

Thank You Thank You  
Thank You Thank You  
Thank You Thank You  
Thank You Thank You





**Scott Worthge**

Research Director

Quest Mindshare

[sworthge@questmindshare.com](mailto:sworthge@questmindshare.com)

+1 650 867 5976

