



IABC INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS



Metrics and the Professional
Communicator:
How to Make this
Relationship Count
September 2014

Simplified *Understanding*



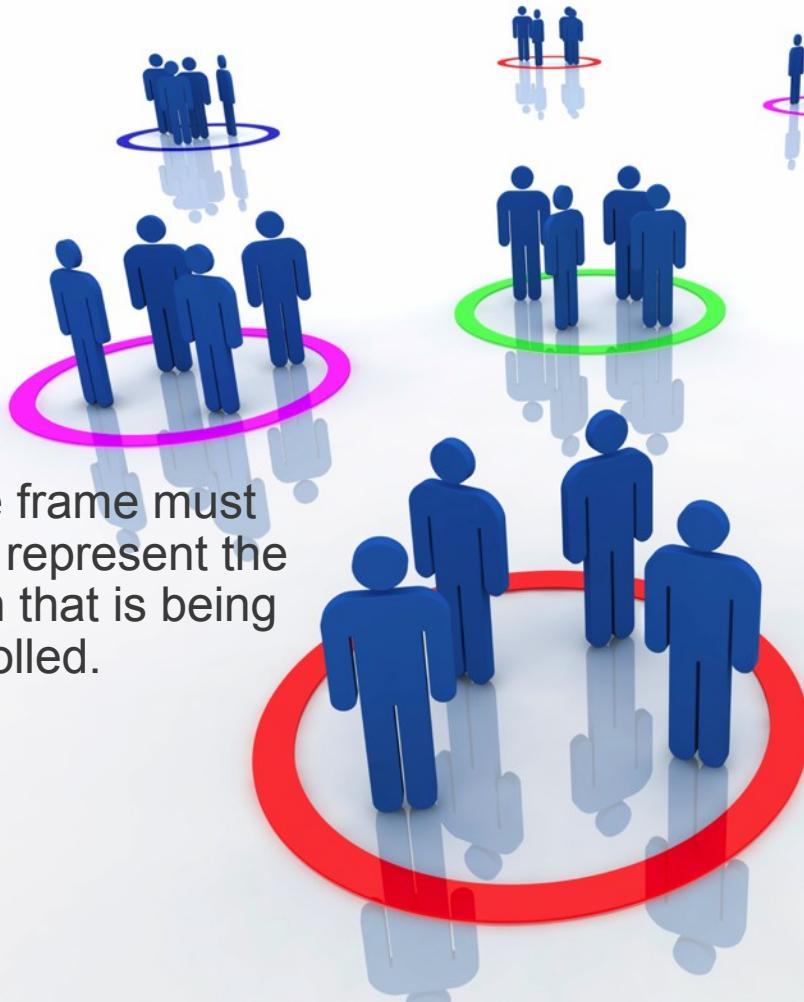
Polling and Research

Polling and research, regardless of method, are useless without these two basic elements:

- a) **A representative sample:** *Properly defining the group that is going to be contacted.*
- b) **Well-defined questions:** *The ability to give respondents an opportunity to express how they feel about a particular issue, candidate, product or idea.*



Six Problems



A sample frame must accurately represent the population that is being polled.

This is particularly difficult for telephone surveys.

Someone may answer the phone, but you need a middle-aged woman, and not a young man.



Six Problems

The “Cosmopolitan” Effect:
The respondent may be forced
to answer something he/she is
not comfortable with, due to the
lack of correct options.

How often do you eat pizza?

Every day
Every week
Every month
Whenever I can
I love pizza

Cosmo Quiz BY HOLLY EAGLESON

Are You Way Too Obsessed With Your Ex?

1. After a breakup, your rebound-guy is typically:

- ☐ That other-soppy-as-shit guy you dated before him
- ☐ Any random celeb who's been in prison recently
- ☐ It's probably one of the two people you dated after him

2. How do you feel about "your place"—the cafe, bar, or restaurant where you and your ex used to hang out?

- ☐ It makes me sick
- ☐ It's fine. Sure, it's kind of weird, but I'm over it now, right even if he isn't.
- ☐ It's like a new place. This is sort of like a vacation for the last few days of summer.

3. When you feel a sudden urge to see him, what are you most likely to do about it?

- ☐ Just wait it out
- ☐ Make it a point to go see him, then call him to talk you down
- ☐ Call him. You do numbers and percentages, and then you break up.

4. When you talk about your ex, your friends and family react by:

- ☐ Making a snide comment and cringing at how much they care about you
- ☐ Looking concerned and asking if you're still anyone new lately
- ☐ Rolling their eyes and telling you that's just how things are.

5. How many letters, gifts, and other bits of nostalgia did you keep after calling it quits?

- ☐ None. I'm not sentimental like that
- ☐ A few cards from him that gave you a sense of closure
- ☐ Hundreds. I've got a whole box full of stuff from our relationship.

6. When you feel on plans to hang out with your bestie instead of your ex, what would she do after you declare that you like him?

- ☐ Laugh and say, "I'm so happy for you!"
- ☐ Tell her to get her butt out of town
- ☐ Cry, "Really? Me? I'm so sorry."

7. When she bolts on plans to hang out with you, what does she do?

- ☐ She just needs to be alone with her bestie
- ☐ She's all over you, happy to have you around
- ☐ She's all over you, but she's been feeling really bad lately.

8. You just came up with the coolest idea for a blog. How would she react to it when you tell her?

- ☐ She doesn't really care about the fact that it's your idea, but she'll be critical of your execution.
- ☐ She's all over it, and she'll want to be involved in every part of it.
- ☐ She's all over it, but she'll be critical of your execution.

9. When you two have a disagreement, how does it usually get resolved?

- ☐ You both decide that you're right and then keep all arguments about it
- ☐ You end up going to therapy each year to work it out with her
- ☐ Disagreements rarely ever happen between you two.

10. What role does your BFF usually take on when you two are in public together?

- ☐ Neither one, but we're too straight for that
- ☐ One tends to be the life of the party, while the other tends to be the topic of conversation.
- ☐ Partner-in-crime. We are not afraid to show off our besties to the world, and we check in with each other often.

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How Passionate Are You?

1. When it comes to achieving your goals, you:

- ☐ Set the bar
- ☐ Put the effort in
- ☐ Pay the footnotes
- ☐ Set high expectations
- ☐ Set them low

2. You're a:

- ☐ Go-to-Extremes Girl
- ☐ Balanced Passionista
- ☐ Social Shyster
- ☐ Too-Tempered Chick

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Six Problems

People may not reveal their true feelings when they talk to a person on the phone, for fear of seeming out of touch, politically incorrect, or racist.

***Over the course of your life,
have you ever been unfaithful
to a partner?***

Online survey in BC – 28%

Telephone survey in U.S. – 11%

Face-to-face interview in U.S.

If you ask Bill Clinton, it depends on what your definition of “is” is.





Six Problems

Stacking the deck...

"In 2006 , the government introduced, without public consultation, the double taxation of public income trusts held in RRSPs, but not private income trusts held by pension funds, a measure that was intended to address the alleged tax leakage, a concept that was never proven by the government. In view of this objective and the fact that 51 such public income trusts were subsequently devalued by the government's double tax have no (sic) been acquired in the last 3 years by foreigners and through tax sheltered means has caused the permanent loss of \$1.5 billion in taxes to all levels of government, would you consider the policy to be a success or a failure?"



Six Problems



In order to access a representative sample, pollsters decide who they will talk to based on demographic factors (age, gender, education, household income).

Every group must be represented, in order to have a balanced sample.

Toughest Group to find Online: Men, aged 18-to-34.

Toughest Group to find on the Telephone: Women, aged 18-to-34.



Six Problems

Examples:

Answering questions about how a government has handled an issue, and asking who would be the best to handle that issue.

Q1. “Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the government’s decision to impose the HST?”

Q2. “Which party do you trust more to keep your taxes low?”





Margin of Error

The margin of error refers **ONLY** to sampling (i.e., how the group of people who answered a particular poll was assembled).

There are other "**non-measurable**" errors that can be present in a poll.

*Mistake by **interviewer**:* Pushing the wrong buttons.

*Mistake by **company**:* Writing the release with the wrong numbers.

*People **lying** to pollster: "I really am voting for the Natural Law Party, but I'll say I'm voting Libertarian just for fun."*



The "**margin of error**" is a mathematical calculation that takes into account:

- a) The size of the **target population**.
- b) The **number of people** the polling company contacted.

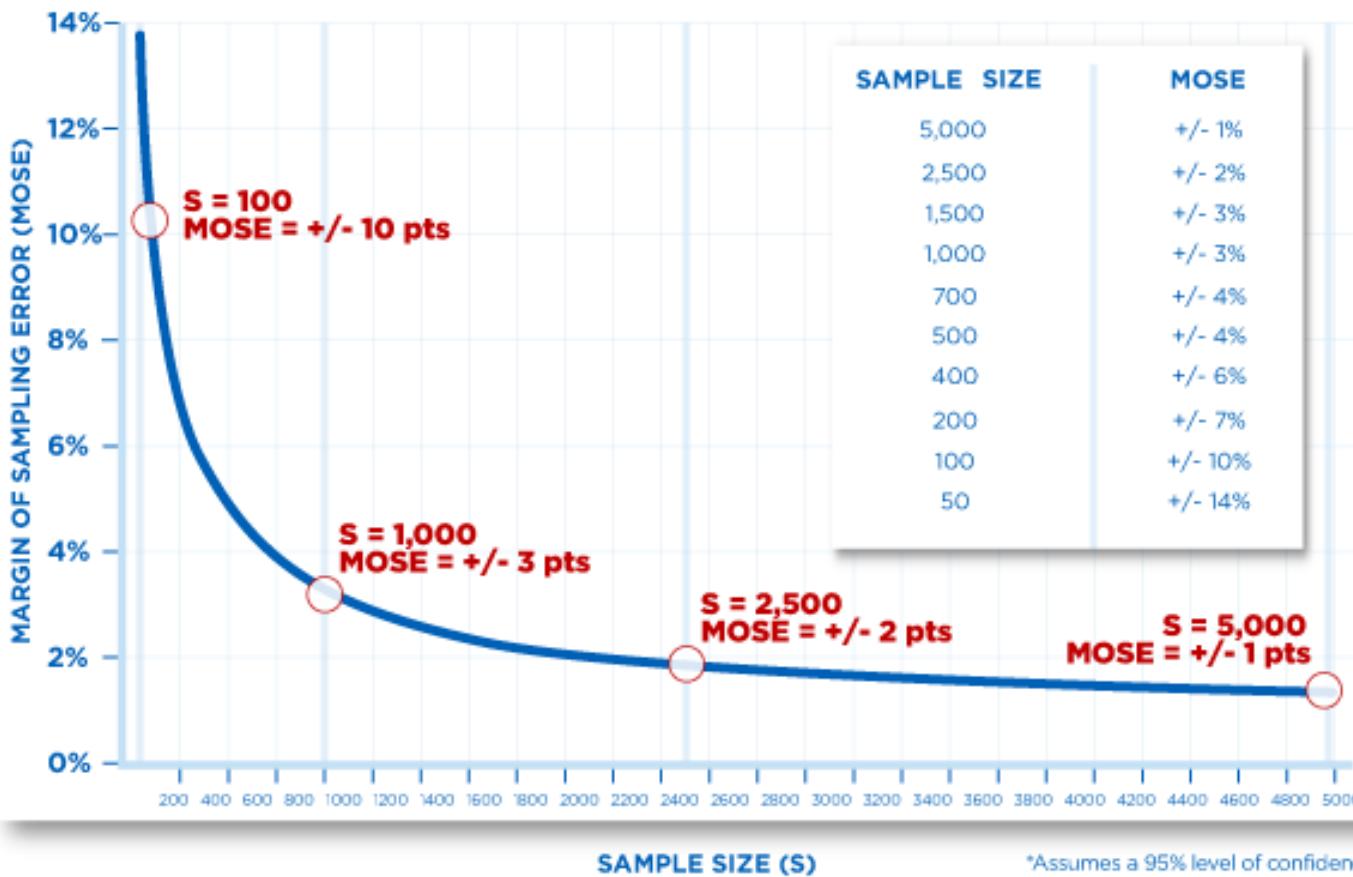
So, if in a kingdom comprised of **210 million adults**, a pollster speaks to **1,000 people**, 50% approve of the king, and the poll has a 3 per cent margin of error, the actual proportion could be as low as 47% or as high as 53%.

Margin of Error

UNDERSTANDING & INTERPRETING POLLS

PRICE YOU PAY

Margin of Sampling Error vs. Sample Size





Demographic Weights

Weights adjust the poll data to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the population from which it was drawn.

This is what the kingdom looks like:

Men 46%, Women 54%

But, when we did the poll, we spoke to:

Men 52%, Women 48%

So, weights need to be applied to ensure that the 52% of men we talked to become 46%.





Enemies of Polling

Myth: A true attempt to get an immediate reaction from impartial members of the public.

Fact: Hardly representative. Callers are often people with grudges. And, many times, political operatives masquerade as listeners who call in.



Enemies of Polling

Myth: An inclusive and democratic option to generate intelligent debate.

Fact: Not inclusive. Not democratic. Prone to *trolling*, promotion and anonymity. Evangelists and first adopters become "experts."

Steve Gibbons
@SteveGibbonsMP

Follow

Libs are led by a gutless douchebag and a narcissistic bimbo who aren't fit to be MP's let alone PM and Deputy. Both should be sacked.

Reply Retweet Favorite

10 RETWEETS	1 FAVORITE
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7:10 AM - 28 Nov 12 · Embed this Tweet



Enemies of Polling

Myth: Media outlets can get a true sense of what the public feels about an issue by asking them to click away.

Fact: Again, not inclusive. No effort made to ensure a representative sample.





Enemies of Polling

Myth: The "man on the street" will be in touch with what's going on in the world. Looks better on camera than a table or graph.

Fact: By offering equal air time to a well-crafted quantitative exercise and a qualitative reaction from a random person, the public is misled.



Enemies of Polling

Myth: All information needs to be disseminated, especially if it is something that ends up being troubling to the powerful.

Fact: A poll is not always the adequate venue, and it ultimately leads to lies and abuse.

“Are you aware that John McCain fathered an illegitimate child from a black woman?”



Enemies of Polling

Myth: People who handle Public Relations are well suited for advising a person, company or part about a course of action, based on research a survey.

Fact: People with little knowledge of research actually promise an outcome to clients before even conducting a survey.



Enemies of Polling

Myth: The client needs the public to perceive their issue, agenda, plan, product or idea as “the best.”

Fact: The client needs to be told the truth, in strong terms, about the real implications of a decision.



What I learned in Journalism:



- a) Seek truth and report it
- b) Minimize harm
- c) Act independently
- d) Be accountable



What I encountered in the research industry:



- a) Twist the truth for the client's benefit.
- b) Maximize the effect of a desired outcome.
- c) Act to benefit the client (or yourself).
- d) Wash your hands.



How to Counter these Challenges? Like a Journalist!

- a) **Seek truth and report it:** Misleading questions hurt everybody (researchers, clients, the media, society). A researcher must reject bad questions, and help clients realize that the survey needs to be unbiased. Detachment is the best course of action.
- b) **Minimize harm:** Citing a survey is not a license for arrogance. Every respondent deserves respect, whether we personally agree with the way they feel about things or not. A researcher must sacrifice his own feelings to look at the views of the respondents as a whole.



How to Counter these Challenges? Like a Journalist!

- c) **Act independently:** A researcher must reject any negative influence from clients, co-workers and media outlets with vested interests. The only way to figure out how people feel about an issue is to be vigilant and courageous about the issues that are reviewed.
- d) **Be accountable:** The researcher must clarify and explain properly what was done and how (to clients, to the media), admit mistakes and correct them promptly. Be very careful when making assertions that are not supported by data.



Finally...

Deficient research negatively affects us all:

The researcher gets a bad reputation.

The client gets data that does not represent the actual views of the population, and makes bad decisions.

The media are fooled by reporting on something that appears to have legitimacy, but is actually an exercise in self-promotion.



With deficient research, we all lose... 100% of the time.