Multi-Mode Surveys

Respondent Convenience. Multi-mode data collection can benefit organizations conducting surveys among their employees or customers. Business-to-business companies are becoming especially concerned about “harassing” their valuable clients in order to get important feedback from them. A multi-mode data collection design makes it possible for more people to respond to a survey in the way that is most convenient for them. Web surveys typically take less time for respondents to complete than do telephone interviews – and respondents can also choose when to respond to an online survey invitation.

Avoiding Coverage Error. In many cases, however, an all-Internet study design would introduce coverage error by excluding important parts of the population to be studied from participation. Although online penetration is increasing, many parts of the population – including many companies’ customers and employees – remain offline. For global studies this is especially important, as Internet penetration in many parts of the world lags well behind that found in the United States.

Combination Options. Many ways of combining online surveys with more traditional data collection methods are possible: Different methods can be employed as the primary means of data collection in different countries. People who don’t respond to an initial Internet survey can be re-contacted by phone. Or mail or phone surveys can be used to first contact those for whom e-mail addresses are unavailable. Burke can provide advice on the best strategy to use to meet a particular project’s objectives.

Overcoming Drawbacks. If surveys are not designed carefully, differences in response patterns attributable to the media through which data are collected can actually lead to measurement error. Burke research about the differences between phone and Internet responses has enabled us to offer clients good advice about how to construct surveys with an eye toward “unimode” design. Multi-mode surveys can also lead to greater survey programming costs and a need for more intensive sample management. This is why it is important to turn to an organization experienced in both online and more traditional research collection methods, such as Burke. With Burke, multi-mode data collection can lead to better data quality, lower costs, faster cycle times and enhanced relationships with survey respondents.