

Attaining an 80+% Response Rate to Surveys of Recent Graduates

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Making a Commitment to Hear From Your Graduates

- “Where there’s a will, there is a way!”
- An 80% return rate provides more reliable information than a 20-30% return.
- Enlist the support and commitment from the entire faculty and support staff.
- Plan to expend the time, energy, and funds to get it done.

Valuable Information to Improve Your Programs

- Current contact information: email, phone, mailing address.
- Current employer and present position.
- How prepared were they for their job?
- Were they competitive in the job search?
- Reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of their academic program.
- Graduate school or professional development.

Pre-Graduation Preparation

- Capstone Course
- Faculty Involvement
- Create a Data Base for the Graduating Class

Capstone Course

- Explain how the business program practices continuous improvement processes.
- Tell students about how the business program has changed due to outcomes assessment data.
- Share specific examples of responses from recent graduates.
- Tell students when they may expect to receive the survey.

Faculty Involvement

- Students in all levels of classes need to hear about the various assessment measures that will be used to improve **our** business program.
- Faculty need to communicate to students that their interest and care for them extends beyond their days on campus (and paying tuition).

Create a Data Base Before Graduation

- Name
- Major
- Reliable email address
- Cell phone number
- Permanent address
- Name and phone number of the most stable relative or friend

Create the Survey Instrument

- Keep it simple.
- Keep it brief.
- Start with easy contact information.
- Incorporate “Yes/No” questions or other measurable responses so that data can be quantified.
- Include some open-ended questions so students can disclose information as desired.

Email Initial Survey 6-8 Months After Graduation

- Use the data base to send out a group email.
- Make it convenient for students to reply by email.
- Explain that the information will be used to improve the business program and not to evaluate their success.
- Encourage candid remarks.
- Inform students that a personal phone call will follow for those not replying by email.

Reorganize Data Base to Include Only Nonrespondents

- Allow about 2 weeks for responses to the initial email survey.
- Reorganize the data base to only include the nonrespondents.

Organize the Phone Survey

- Employ a student worker or contract with a student to perform the phone survey.
 - A student who can return for another year or two.
 - Has an unlimited nights and weekend cell phone plan.
 - Excellent oral communication skills.
 - Initiative and time-management skills.

Organize the Phone Survey (cont.)

- Provide training.
- Give a sample of a completed report.
- Expect to call during the evenings and weekends.
- Expect to call family or friends to get current contact information.
- Expect to play phone tag.

Complete the Final Report

- Allow 4-6 weeks to complete the phone survey.
- Monitor the percentage of respondents.
- The list of nonrespondents may be reviewed by faculty for follow-up.
- Consolidate the email survey data and the phone survey.



Congratulations!

You have contacted at least 80% of your recent graduates and have gained valuable outcomes assessment data.