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Gloomy news

I have spoken to several people at different times over the last few years, who have told me that having previously been habitual Radio 4 listeners; they had recently switched to Radio 2 after finding the Radio 4 programmes just too gloomy. Perhaps this switch away from serious news and analysis to a more light-hearted entertainment with an occasional news bulletin reflects an understandable human trait. There is a limit to our tolerance of reports about doom and disaster, and speculation about doom and disaster that hasn't happened yet; but still might. One person's gloom threshold might be higher than somebody else's, but probably we all have one.

To acknowledge the need for a little light relief, then, I am pleased to announce a new regular feature in the newsletter. The *On this Day* feature will remind us of some of the historical events that happened on or around the date of each newsletter. It won't be completely frivolous but I hope it will provide an interesting distraction from the harsh realities of current affairs in 2011.



David Lusty
Principal Consultant
Quantify London



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More information

For a complimentary initial consultation, please call David Lusty, Quantify London on 020 8704 1296 or [email him](#). Or call Sue Alderson, Quantify Yorkshire, on 0845 241 3450 or [email her](#).



Sue Alderson, Quantify
Yorkshire

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On this day

Historical events on or around the date of this newsletter.

Usually, they are just events that caught our eye. Occasionally, there might be one which is relevant to research, surveys or statistics, but we make no promises.

12 October 1492: Columbus reaches the New World

10 October 1971: [Sir Cyril Burt](#), eminent British psychologist dies. Having become convinced that intelligence was an inherited trait, he so wanted to prove it that it is thought he faked the research which he then used to support his argument for selective education. That led to the introduction of the 11+ exam and the grammar schools for the bright kids and secondary modern schools for the rest.

11 October 1974: Harold Wilson's Labour government wins a second term in office - but only just.

10 October 1975: Liz Taylor and Richard Burton remarry only 16 months after getting divorced.

12 October 1984: A bomb explodes at the Conservative Party conference in Brighton in a direct attack on the British Government.

The QUANTIFY sample Web Survey

Visit our [sample web survey](#). This imaginary employee survey demonstrates the speed and flexibility of our web system and describes the many aspects which can be arranged to suit you. It provides a quick tour of Quantify services you may choose to use, and links to selected outputs illustrations.

If you know anyone who is considering a survey, please forward this email to them and suggest they have a poke around in our sample survey.

Refer a Friend? Please forward this email to anyone you know who might be interested in any of our services. Or if they prefer, pass us their details, and we'll get in touch directly.

Guest Spot



David Lusty is the Principal Consultant at Quantify.

This month's "guest" spot continues our recent series featuring his articles.

David writes:

Employee Satisfaction Survey: Do it Right

Get the CEO's commitment Without commitment from the CEO (and any management body) to make changes indicated by the survey results, the process is at best handicapped, and at worst doomed.

Communicate Publicise the survey energetically in advance to create expectation of the questionnaire's arrival. Emphasise the changes for the better that have happened following any previous survey.

Give the questionnaire the investment it justifies Invest enough time to produce an effective questionnaire which will produce actionable data.

Gather the data required to classify responses The chief value you can get from the survey will come from comparisons of results between groups of people, (department A is happier than department B) or between different times (people are happier now than they were a year ago). To make comparisons between groups, you must include questions which place people into different groups.

Convince people that they can reply and still remain anonymous People need to be confident that their views will only reach their manager in aggregated form. The best way to achieve this is to have an independent, external destination for people to send their response to and a credible promise that individual replies will not be reported to you.

Express scale results as averages, not as percentages Don't summarise results from a five point scale, for example, by giving the percentage who ticked, say, the Agree and Strongly agree options. This makes the statistics simple out but it treats Agree and Strongly agree as if they were equivalent, and Strongly disagree; Disagree and In between as if they, too, were all the same. Why offer the five (or more) different response levels, then treat them as if there had been only two? Calculate the average response, instead.

Make the results available a week or two after the survey closes The sooner the results are available, the more convincing will be any argument for change which they lead to.

Understand the significance of any differences you detect When there is a difference between results for one group and another, it may indicate a real difference of opinion, or it may be just the variation inherent in the sampling process. Make sure you know which are significant, or you could be investing time and money in addressing differences which are just sampling error.

Get the results presented authoritatively Managers will accept the need for change more readily if the news comes from an authoritative, disinterested specialist than if they are told by a colleague they interact with regularly, on all sorts of other matters.

Don't be seduced by benchmarking It is tempting to seek to compare results with other employers but meaningful comparisons are virtually impossible, so comparisons are likely to be dangerously misleading. For more about benchmarking, read our article [Debunking the Benchmarking Myth](#).

Do something with the results Publish at least a summary of the results to the employees and announce the initiatives you are introducing in response to what you learned, and monitor the change to ensure it actually happens.

Don't try to handle it internally Use an expert external supplier. You will get a better questionnaire. Employees will be more confident about their anonymity, so you will get more honest feedback and a better response rate which means more convincing results. Results will be delivered more quickly, better-presented and easier to interpret forming a more convincing basis for the change for the better which is the object of the exercise. You wouldn't look around for somebody in the office and ask them to have a go at installing a new basin in the staff toilet or a new telephone system because that would run the risk of leaks or crossed wires. Why risk it with a survey among your most valuable asset; your people?

This is a very condensed version of the article. You can download the full version as a .pdf [here](#).

Blood Donation



I am currently suspended from donations but **I shall soon be back on the blood donations trail again.**

David

P.S. If you aren't already a blood donor, click the logo below to visit the National Blood Service site to find out more about why it is so important and how easy it is.



David is the proud possessor of a Gold Award for 50 donations (illustrated on the left), and these days, he is a [blood platelet donor](#). The process involves being connected for an hour or more to a machine which draws out blood, separates the platelets, and returns the rest of the blood.

Because most of the blood is returned to the donor, platelet donors can donate every four weeks. "Normal" whole blood donors give only three donations a year. The procedure is much simpler and their donation is limited to ten minutes.

Survey of the month

The survey of the month is not one of ours.

It might not always be particularly topical, or very important or even serious, but we hope you will find it interesting.

Our surveys are more than just interesting. They provide **management information** about how people **feel** doing business with you or working in your organisation. This allows you to manage your relationship with clients and employees, to retain clients and employees better, to reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction and to compete more successfully.

Two thirds of consumers don't know what QR codes are



If you are among them, there is one here (left). If you point a mobile phone at it (with an appropriate app installed), it will open the web site of the marketing consultants where we found the story. Oddly, it doesn't go to the story itself, though. For that you need to click [here](#). Another odd thing: lots of ads on the London Underground have QR codes in them but there are few places on the tube where you can get service for your phone to open them on the web. Weird.

QR codes are gaining popularity in ads but 64% of consumers don't know what they are for. According to a recent survey, only 36% of consumers know what QR codes are for, and only 11% have ever used them.

Among the 11% of respondents that had actually used a QR code, 47% said they found them very useful and would like to see them more widely available, 33% found them useful on certain occasions and don't mind using them. But 20% think they don't really offer any advantages and don't expect to use them in future.

Complimentary "How to" guides

- Your Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Your Employee Satisfaction Survey
- Your Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Your Management Feedback System (360° Feedback)

These e-books are full of practical advice and checklists for planning every stage of the project. Most people will find something useful in them. To request your copy, at no cost to you, please [click here](#).

Questionnaire authors' Top Tips

These tips are drawn from our popular and successful one-day seminar, *Developing, Authoring and Designing Survey Questionnaires*.

Forthcoming open course dates are on the web page.

We also offer a seminar about analysing and interpreting the results of surveys.

Don't just ask what you want to know

Having decided what you need to know, it is very tempting, when composing a questionnaire, just to convert the list of required facts into questions. That doesn't necessarily get the best result.

As we pointed out last month, many people are vague about percentages. So if we need to know what percentage of the household income goes on heating, then because we know many people have a problem with percentages, rather than just ask for a response as a percentage figure, it is better to ask what is the household income, and what is the annual heating bill, and then do the arithmetic ourselves.

Another example is the list of items where we want to know which are the three most valued, or most important to informants. The simple approach is to ask people to tick the three most important, or to rank the whole list. This is hard for people to do, so the preferable approach is to ask people to give every item on the list a rating on a scale of value, or importance. That is much easier for informants to do. When you summarise the results, you can rank the items according to the average score each one got.



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More information

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