

ABC (UK) Ltd

Open Employee Satisfaction Survey 2004

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How to use the reports

Looking at benchmark comparison reports (if you have them)

Your results are compared with our benchmarking data. The report tells you that your average result for a particular item is “better than N% of the normative data.” This means that among all the individuals whose responses to the item (or one expressed in comparable terms) N% of them gave less favourable responses than the average participant in your survey. You will want this figure to be 50% or higher, meaning your results are better than average. The higher the percentage given, the greater the proportion of the normative database that your organisation is outperforming.

If your result is better than 50%, then employees in your organisation are more satisfied with this aspect than the average in the chosen benchmark group participating in our surveys. It may be worth letting your people know about this – they may not realise that they enjoy a better level of satisfaction than is typical among people in other employments.

If your result is much lower 50%, consider doing something to address the problem – if it is a problem. Factors which will influence your decision whether to do anything and if so what to do will include

- **Corroborative evidence.** If you have information from other sources which tells you that there is a problem, you may be more convinced of the need to act. Other sources might include
 - Job offers turned down
 - Employee turnover
 - Leavers giving this issue as a reason for leaving
 - Employees complaining about it
 - Productivity low
- **The nature of the problem.** Is it something you can change? It may be out of your control, or just too expensive to change to make it commercially wise to attempt to. Or on the other hand, it may be just the way things have evolved and it could be just as easy and cheap to do things a different way to please your people.
- **The importance of the issue.** It may be something people are fed up with but which they wouldn't see as crucial to the quality of their experience at work. Or it might be exactly that – crucial.



Looking at prior occasion comparison reports (if you have them)

Look in the reports for asterisks. These show differences between the prior occasion and the recent results which are statistically **significant**. **Don't even consider taking action about any differences not marked with asterisks.**

If your result is better (a higher number than the prior occasion), then employees are more satisfied with this aspect than they were before. It may be worth letting your people know about this – they may not realise that things are on an improving trend.

If your result is less good (lower) than before, consider doing something to address the problem – if it is a problem. Factors which will influence your decision whether to do anything and if so what to do will include

- **The number of employees affected.** If one small subset seems to have a problem but the organisation as a whole doesn't there may be no need to act.
- **Corroborative evidence.** If you have information from other sources which tells you that there is a problem, you may be more convinced of the need to act. Other sources might include
 - Job offers turned down
 - Employee turnover
 - Leavers giving this issue as a reason for leaving
 - Employees complaining about it
 - Productivity declining
- **The nature of the problem.** Is it something you can change? It may be out of your control, or just too expensive to change to make it commercially wise to attempt to. Or on the other hand, it may be just the way things have evolved and it could be just as easy and cheap to do things a different way to please your people.
- **The importance of the issue.** It may be something people are fed up with but which they wouldn't see as crucial to the quality of their experience at work. Or it might be exactly that – crucial.



Looking at your results for this occasion

You can't tell from these reports whether your overall results are good, bad or indifferent. With no standard to compare with, you don't know what "score" would be a good one for any particular question.

The reports are still useful, though. You can tell whether there are some groups of employees who are more satisfied than others with aspects of their experience at work.

In the subset tabulations, look for asterisks in the significance matrix below the row of percentile results. These show where differences between subsets are statistically **significant**. **Don't even consider taking action about any differences not marked with asterisks.** These differences might arise just through sampling error.

If a subset result is better (has a higher percentile result), then these employees are more satisfied with this aspect than the other subset. It may be worth letting them know about this – they may not realise that they are better off.

For the subset group whose result is less good (lower), consider doing something to address the problem – if it is a problem. Factors which will influence your decision whether to do anything and if so what to do will include

- **The number of employees affected.** If one small subset seems to have a problem but the organisation as a whole doesn't there may be no need to act.
- **Corroborative evidence.** If you have information from other sources which tells you that there is a problem, you may be more convinced of the need to act. Other sources might include
 - Job offers turned down
 - Employee turnover in this area
 - Leavers giving this issue as a reason for leaving
 - Employees complaining about it
 - Productivity declining
- **The nature of the problem.** Is it something you can change? It may be out of your control, or just too expensive to change to make it commercially wise to attempt to. Or on the other hand, it may be just the way things have evolved and it could be just as easy and cheap to do things a different way to please your people.
- **The importance of the issue.** It may be something people are fed up with but which they wouldn't see as crucial to the quality of their experience at work. Or it might be exactly that – crucial.



QUANTIFY

We quantify the things ordinary management information systems can't

Questionnaire

We include a copy of the questionnaire for reference.



Response account

Progress report

This report shows the responses received and when they arrived. The summary shows the [response rate](#) for your survey.



Quantitative reports

Subset list

This shows each **subset** we have analysed and the number of **informants** who fell into each.

If you add together any group of subsets which should comprise the whole survey, there may be a shortfall, which is accounted for by any **informants** who chose to tick no box to describe themselves for the **classification system** concerned.

To preserve the anonymity of the informants, we set a lower limit on the size of subsets which may be reported. The smallest subset we will report is one comprising 3 informants but if you have asked us to apply a higher limit, this will be reflected in the subset reports you see.

We provide two versions of the report

- **Full list**
Shows all the subsets we have defined and analysed for you.
- **Short list**
Shows only those which survived the minimum subset size test described above.



Quantitative reports

Response Tally Report

This report shows the response options available for each [item](#) and the number and [percentage](#) of [informants](#) who ticked each one. The percentage is based on the total number of informants shown in the report, which excludes those who made no intelligible response.

We can produce such a report for any or all of the [subsets](#) we have created, or indeed for any others we create on your instructions, but we expect that you will find the [subset tabulation](#) makes comparisons between subsets easier.



Quantitative reports

Subset tabulation

The report shows the result for each [item](#) from each [subset](#). Results are expressed as [percentiles](#), and are inverted for negatively keyed items marked (r), so that in all cases a higher value represents a higher level of satisfaction. In case of doubt, please refer to the [Key to Percentiles](#).

In the headings, *Subset number* is the subset's reference number corresponding with the number shown in the subset listing; *Subset size* is the number of respondents in this subset.

Below the row of percentile results, there is a significance matrix. The numbers at the left-hand end of the rows are the subset numbers; note that they are the same as the subset number at the top of the column they appear in. When the difference between two subsets is [significant](#) at the level indicated at the foot of the report, an asterisk appears in the matrix where the two subsets intersect.

We include the whole survey "subset" on one tabulation to provide you with whole survey results expressed as percentiles. The comparison with other subsets isn't valid in this case because any other subset comprises people who are also included in the whole survey.



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Key to Percentiles

The meaning of the [percentiles](#) in the subset tabulations is explained on the following pages.



Qualitative reports

We review all responses, paraphrase each comment, develop a tree-structured classification system for comments and allocate each one to a classification to group like comments together.

With the paraphrased comments recorded in a data file under their classifications, we can produce reports presenting the results in a variety of sequences:

- Comments - Number of mentions
- Comments - All
- Comments 2 +
- Comments 10 +



Qualitative reports

Comments - Number of mentions

Every comment mentioned more than once is included. They are presented in descending order of the number of times they were mentioned regardless of the category we placed them in.

Each one is followed by a statement of the categories within which we have placed it in a three level, tree structured category system.



Qualitative reports

Comments – All

Every comment is included. Presented category by category in descending order, within category, of the number of times they were mentioned. Also shows for each category and comment what [percentage](#) the number of comments found represents of the total number of [responses](#) to the survey.



Qualitative reports

Comments 2 +

Sequence as “[All](#)” but showing only comments made by more than one [informant](#)



Qualitative reports

Comments 10+

Sequence as “[All](#)” but showing only comments made by more than nine [informants](#)



Glossary of terms

A

Achieved Response

The group of people who actually replied to a survey. The size and makeup of the group dictates the accuracy of any estimate we can make of the view of the [population](#). See [sampling](#).

Arithmetic mean

A simple average calculated by adding up a group of values, and dividing the sum by the number of values.

Artwork

Typesetting quality original from which printers make plates for printing.

B

Benchmark

A fixed point with which to compare.

Comparing your survey results with those from other organisations

In an effort to put their survey results in context, people sometimes try to compare them with those obtained by other organisations using similar questions.

Choosing a subset from your own survey to use as a benchmark

You might choose a benchmark [subset](#) and then compare all the other subsets with it. Often the benchmark will be the whole survey, or the average result, but you could pick on a particular department or area if you wish. If you choose the whole survey the comparisons are all flawed, if only very slightly, by the fact that each subset you compare with the benchmark is also included in the subset.

Taking the following little list of subsets as an example, the whole survey subset is made up of the members of the four departments together with six people who didn't tick any department on the questionnaire. Comparing department C, with its 75 members, with the whole survey is not right because 75 of the 158 people in the whole survey are department C, so we are comparing department C with itself, plus the other people. It would be better to use department C (the biggest) as the benchmark and compare the others with it.

Subset size (number of informants)	Subset name
158	Whole survey
14	Department A



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Subset size (number of informants)	Subset name
23	Department B
75	Department C
40	Department D

When making comparisons between a current survey and previous ones, you might take 2001 as the benchmark and show results for 2002 and 2003 with the improvement / decline since the benchmark year.

The term derives from the distinctive marks (known as benchmarks) made by the U.K. ordnance survey on public buildings, bridges etc, whose height above sea level is shown on Ordnance Survey maps. These provide a fixed point from which surveyors can derive levels for other places they are surveying.

C

Census

A survey in which every member of a [population](#) is invited to respond.

Class

A category within a classification system, see below.

Classification system

If we want to create [subsets](#) from our response based on people's characteristics such as gender, age range, location etc. we must ask [informants](#) to classify themselves, usually by ticking a box within a classification system.

Closing date

The official, or published, closing date is the date by which we tell [informants](#) we want responses back.

Usually, responses keep trickling in after that date, though. The actual closing date is the date on which we decide that no more responses will be accepted, and we go ahead to analyse the data already received. We plan this date in advance, but usually agree it finally at the time and in consultation with you, based on

- the number of responses so far, and
- where they have come from, as well as
- the rate at which they continue to arrive.
- how urgently you need the results and
- how important it is to you to include every last possible response.



Cluster

See [topic](#)

Confidence level

When we assess the [significance](#) of any differences the survey appears to find, we do so at a given confidence level, usually the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that a difference which exceeds the [sampling error](#) we calculate really is significant. The other 5% of the seemingly significant findings will be due to exceptionally large sampling errors.

The confidence levels usually offered are as follows

Confidence level	Sampling error based on
68%	1 standard error
95%	2 standard errors
99%	3 standard errors

Correlation

When two sets of data appear to vary in the same way, they are said to be correlated. If you visit a school and measure the height and weight of every pupil, those who are taller will tend to be heavier too. There will be exceptions to the rule, though, so although using the data collected you could make a good guess at the weight of an unknown child based only on knowing how tall they were, you would be caught out now and again by a very fat short one, or a very thin tall one. In this case height and weight would be positively correlated to a high degree.

We measure correlation using a correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient of 1 means that as one value increases so the other will increase in a completely predictable way. A correlation coefficient of -1 means that as one value increases so the other will decrease in a completely predictable way. A correlation coefficient of 0 means that there is no connection between the two sets of data. In the example above, height and weight might be correlated with a coefficient of 0.7

D

Demographics

A shorthand for the [classifications](#) referred to above.

Design factor

When we assess the [significance](#) of any differences a survey appears to find, we compare the apparent difference with the difference which might have arisen as a result of the [sampling](#) process (sampling error). Only when the difference is greater than might have arisen through sampling error do we say the difference is significant.



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The **instrument** itself introduces further error, however, because different people interpret language differently, so their understanding of an **item** we included in the instrument may not be the meaning we intended. To provide for this extra error, the sampling error may be increased by the design factor. For example, if we decide that we should allow for a further 20% margin of error then we multiply the sampling error by a design factor of 1.2 and only regard as significant any difference which exceeds the new, bigger range of error.

Our standard reports which compare one subset with another, or one occasion of running the survey with another (**Subset comparison report**, **Prior year comparison report** and **Subset tabulation**) show the **confidence level** at which the sampling error has been calculated and the design factor we have applied. If you wish a design factor to be applied, we will be pleased to do so. Unless you ask us to do something different, we use a design factor of 1, which means the sampling error is not increased to take account of error introduced by the instrument.

F

Focus Group

A group of people brought together to provide their input to a particular issue or problem. When developing an **instrument**, we often use focus groups drawn from the target **population** to get their perspective on the issues to be measured. This ensures we cover the relevant issues, and avoid producing an instrument which asks everything except the one thing the target groups wish to tell us.

G

gsm

Grams per square metre - measure of the weight of a paper. Standard copier paper is 75 - 80 gsm, meaning that one square metre of the paper would weigh between 75 and 80 grams. More prestigious papers are usually about 100gsm. At about 120 gsm, the material would begin to feel like a card.

I

Index

A single figure representing a range of measures and comparing one thing with another.

A stock market index is arrived at by calculating the value of a given "basket" of shares and comparing the current value with the value at an earlier benchmark date. The result is usually presented as a current value compared with a base (the benchmark) of 100. So if the market has been rising and the value of the basket of shares has increased from £43,023 at the benchmark date, say 1 April 1998 to £69,415 now the index would be 69,415 divided by 43,023 and multiplied by 100 = 161. The index should be quoted as 161 base 1 April 1998 and it tells us that the particular basket of shares has increased in value by 61 **percent** since the base date.



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We sometimes use indices to summarise survey results and compare performance in one area with another, or to compare with an earlier measure, rather as a stock market index does.

Informant

One of the people completing and returning a questionnaire, or otherwise providing information about their characteristics, attitudes and opinions in a survey.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire. The purpose of the survey is to measure attitudes and opinions. A measuring tool (like a rule or a micrometer) is known as an instrument, and so is the questionnaire which is the tool for this kind of measuring.

Item

Each separate question in an instrument is called an item. It is called an item because it might not actually be a question. Often it will be a statement such as "I like my job" and **informants** will be asked to tick one of a series of boxes to show how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement. There are lots of other kinds of item which might be used, many of which are not actually questions. In practice, the terms "item" and "question" tend to be used interchangeably.

K

Keying

Survey **items** may be positively or negatively keyed. The distinction is about the system adopted for converting responses on questionnaires into numerical scores for analysis. A five point scale from Unacceptable to Excellent might be represented by the numbers 1 to 5, so a respondent's tick next to Unacceptable would be recorded as a score of 1, and an Excellent response as a 5.

In this case, higher scores are a good thing, and we refer to the question as positively keyed. If instead we had chosen to use 5 to represent Unacceptable, and 1 to represent Excellent, lower scores would mean more favourable responses, and the question would be a negatively keyed one.

The distinction is equally relevant in a case where all responses are expressed as a level of agreement say from Totally Disagree, scored as 1, to Totally Agree, scored as 7.

If we then offer a positive statement such as "I like working here" for the respondent to agree or disagree with, this is a positively keyed item. But a statement such as "ABC Company staff are offhand on the phone" would be a negatively keyed item, because a higher level of agreement with it, represented by a higher score, would be a bad result.

Keystrokes

The number of keyboard key depressions needed to input the data represented on one completed questionnaire. Most **items** can be input with a single keystroke. Multiple



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choice items count as several keystrokes - as many as there are options to choose from.

Any **demographic** or **classification** items are coded and count as many keystrokes as there are characters in their codes. e.g. A classification system with codes a, b, c .. z., or 0, 1, 2 .. 9 would take 1 keystroke and one with codes aa, ab, ac ... zz or 00, 01, 02 .. 99 would need 2 keystrokes.

M

Management Services

Generic name for the application of a range of techniques for the study of work and organisations with a view to bringing about improvement. Defined in BS 3138: 1992 Glossary of terms used in management services as

The provision of advisory and information services to assist management in improving effective use of resources. This may embrace the use of work study, O & M, operational research, data processing, ergonomics, economic forecasting, and industrial engineering.

Usually practised by independent or internal consultants without executive authority. Their conclusions are usually presented as recommendations for line management to consider.

P

Panel

*A permanent representative **sample** maintained by a market research agency from which information is obtained on more than one occasion either for continuous research or for ad hoc projects. (MRS Research Buyer's Guide)*

Percentage

An easy way to compare proportions by saying how many each represents out of one hundred.

If we asked people in an office if they wanted a coffee machine which made real coffee instead of instant and we found that 38 of the 54 people in department A agreed, and 46 of the 63 in department B, it is hard to know which department is more enthusiastic. But if we say that those agreeing were 70.4% in department A and 73.0% in department B we can easily see that department B is more in favour than department A. If department A had had 100 people in it and the proportion of agreement had been the same as we found in our survey, then 70 people out of 100 would have agreed. In department B, if it had had 100 people, 73 would have been in favour.

Working them out:

38 divided by 54, multiplied by 100 = 70.37037, which we round off to 70.4 or 70



46 divided by 63, multiplied by 100 = 73.01587, which we round off to 73.0 or 73

Percentile

A percentile (abbreviated to %ile) provides a way of converting results measured using different scales to a common scale of 100 points. Even when different scales have not been used, it can often be easier to understand a result expressed as a percentile than a [raw score](#).

If we want to compare results from one survey, or two or more different surveys and some results are on a scale from 1-5 and others on a scale from 1-7 the same answer can mean different things according to which scale applies. Say two questions had the answer 3. On the first scale (1-5), this is exactly the midpoint, but on the second (1-7) it is closer to the lowest possible score (1) than to the highest (7).

To work out a percentile, the scale is divided into 100 so-called percentile points. By working out how far along its possible scale each average result lies, and expressing it as a percentage of the way along, we can say at which percentile point the average lies, and make the results comparable one with the other.

Some examples:

Scale	Average Raw Score	Percentile
1 - 5	3	50
1 - 7	3	33.33
1 - 5	2.3	32.5
1 - 7	2.3	21.67
1 - 7	4	50
0 - 1	0.45	45
1 - 5	1	0

To calculate a percentile from a [raw score](#), calculate $(RS - \text{Min}) / \text{Range} * 100$ where RS is the average raw score; Min is the minimum of the scale; Range is the maximum of the scale minus the minimum of the scale.

Taking as an example the fourth line in the table above, a Raw score of 2.3 on a scale from 1 to 7;

RS = 2.3; Min = 1; Range = 7-1 = 6.

So %ile = $2.3 - 1 / 6 * 100 = 1.3 / 6 * 100 = 21.67$

Population

Statistical term for the whole group about whose characteristics or views we are trying to learn, when we study only a [sample](#) chosen from within it.



R

Raw score

When we capture the data from an [instrument](#), we have to convert ticks in boxes to codes or numbers which the computer can handle. If an [item](#) is a statement with an agreement scale, there might be five boxes for the [informant](#) to tick, labelled as shown below. We key the score shown, according to the box ticked. This is known as a raw score, because it hasn't yet been subjected to any processing.

Box label	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Score	1	2	3	4	5

Having filtered out a [subset](#), then for each [item](#) in the survey we can add all the scores we have recorded and divide by the number of them to arrive at an average raw score for this item, within this subset.

RSL

Registered Social Landlord. An organisation registered with the Housing Corporation and therefore qualified to provide housing and receive subsidy from the Housing Corporation. Most RSLs are Housing Associations.

Respondent

See [informant](#)

Response rate

The number of responses received, usually expressed as a [percentage](#) of the total number of informants invited to respond.

Responses

The questionnaires actually returned. See [Achieved response](#).

S

Sampling

A technique by which we learn about the characteristics or views of a whole group ([population](#)) by gathering data about only some representative members of it. The result is an estimate of the characteristics or views of the whole group. The accuracy of the estimate depends on the size of the sample and the popularity of the characteristic or view we are trying to estimate.

Sampling error

If the sample has produced the result 42% and we estimate the error at plus or minus 3% we might express the result as 42% \pm 3%. This means that the population result would have been in the range 39% to 45%. Even this isn't quite specific enough, though, because in an extreme case the population result might be outside even this range. So we have to say how sure (how confident) we are that the population result



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would have been in the range stated. There are three commonly used confidence levels; roughly 68%, 95% and 99% confident, corresponding to sampling errors of plus or minus one, two and three **standard errors** respectively.

The most popular confidence level is 95% and this is the one our reports use unless you ask us to do something different. This means that when we say that a difference shown on a report is significant there is only a one in twenty chance that it actually isn't (95% = 19 out of 20).

Unfortunately, there are several ways these results can be expressed. Taking the example already used, and assuming that we are 95% confident of the result given, it might be expressed in any of the following ways. They all represent exactly the same result:

- 42% \pm 3% at the 95% confidence level
- 42% \pm 1.5% at the 68% confidence level
- 42% \pm 4.5% at the 99% confidence level
- Sample mean: 42% Confidence level 95% Confidence interval \pm 3%
- 42% Limits of accuracy \pm 3% at the 95% confidence level

Sampling Frame

A list of the **population** from which a sample can be chosen.

Self-administered

A survey **instrument** designed for the **informant** to complete unaided. The distinction is between this and an instrument which is intended for completion by a professional interviewer based on an interview with the informant.

Significance

If we compare the results for the same question from two different groups of informants, they might appear to show a difference between the views of the two groups. Before drawing attention to it, and proposing action based on it, we need to be sure that the difference could not reasonably be explained simply as the result of **sampling error**. If the difference is greater than the sampling error we could reasonably expect, then we say the difference is significant. Our standard reports highlight significant differences at a given **confidence level** between **subsets** or occasions of running the survey.

Generally, the smaller the **sample** size, the greater the sampling error.

Stakeholder

A convenient jargon term which embraces an organisation's customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, neighbours etc; in fact anyone who has any interest in what



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the organisation does. The term is popular lately in government circles and in local government, where "stakeholders" include Council tax payers; other residents; businesses and their employees; users of services like leisure facilities and libraries who may not be resident within the local authority area; shoppers and mere passers through.

Standard deviation

A statistical measure of the variation in a set of data. We often use an average to summarise a number of data items, but by itself an average tells you nothing about the extent of the spread or "scatter" of the individual values around it. That is the purpose of working out the standard deviation.

These two lists of values both average 100 but their standard deviations are very different.

	110	150
	98	90
	102	110
	90	50
	95	75
	105	125
	102	110
	99	95
	98	90
	100	100
	100	100
	101	105
Average	100	100
Standard deviation	4.7	23.6

Standard error

A statistical measure of the extent to which the average of a [sample](#) may be expected to vary from the [population](#) average.

Subset

Any group of [informants](#) defined in terms of their responses to questions in the [instrument](#). The responses to a survey may be summarised and reported as a whole, but it is usually helpful to see separately the results obtained from groups of informants who have some features in common.

A subset may include all female informants, say, or all clients in the south of England. We can set rules to control whether respondents are included in a subset via a [class](#) or



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a range of classes in any of the classification systems by which respondents have been classified, and / or by setting responses to any question(s) in the survey.

A subset definition may admit all members of a single class, (e.g. a group which includes all females); or a range of classes (e.g. those in departments c to e). Classification systems may be combined so if your survey includes codes for department, job type, and length of service we could create a subset which includes anyone who works in departments coded a to c, in jobs coded d, or f and who has length of service coded c or higher.

We can also define a subset in terms of responses to the questions in the body of the survey, so if there was a question about the frequency of meetings with a five point scale for responses from "never" through to "very frequent", we could create a subset comprising people who said they had meetings never or only occasionally. This would allow us to see how this group of people answer the other questions in the survey. We can do the same sort of thing by comparing one question with another, so for example if our survey asked people to rate various sources of information we could create a subset of those who say they get more information from the grapevine than from organised meetings.

We can also construct weighted subsets from a number of simple subsets, to produce results which estimate the results we might have obtained from an overall response in which the representation of classes was different from that which was actually received. This is valuable when the distribution of responses does not reflect the true mix of classes in the population whose views the survey is intended to estimate.

We can produce all our standard report formats based on any simple (unweighted) subset of survey response. We can't report weighted subsets using the [response tally report](#).

Survey fatigue

The phenomenon whereby people get fed up with filling in survey questionnaires. It becomes more acute when surveys are repeated too often, or when they appear to be irrelevant, or pointless. Surveys which ask informants what they want changed, but after which no change occurs, will often lead through survey fatigue to a lower [response rate](#) next time the survey is run.

T

Time used

A method of fixing consultancy fees. We perform whatever parts of the project you have instructed us to do, we keep records of the time we devote to your work, and bill you for the time spent. Our daily rate for consulting work is currently £800 per day plus expenses and VAT. For part days, we bill at £100 per hour plus expenses and VAT. Our minimum billing period is 5 minutes, so we don't charge for an hour if the job takes only ten minutes.



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Topic

Items (questions) may be grouped into topics, either for reporting purposes or to allow topic averages to be calculated. Topics are sometimes called clusters.

Topic average

Topic averages may be just the **arithmetic mean** of the results for the items which make up the topic. If we are calculating topic averages for you, the items in the topic must all use the same scale for responses but positively and negatively **keyed** questions can be combined to produce a measure of how favourably informants have responded to the topic.

They can be weighted if you wish, so that some **items** are given more weight than others. Each item can be included in as many topics as you wish, and may have a different weighting assigned for use in each topic in which it features.

Transfer of learning

Transfer of learning has occurred when knowledge and skills learned show themselves in the behaviour of the learner. It is the difference between knowing how a situation should be handled and actually doing it that way when it arises.

Many drivers would be able to tell you that the right way to handle a rear wheel slide is to steer into it. Not so many would actually do the right thing when the skid happened. They are the ones for whom transfer of learning has occurred, usually as a result of having had the motivation and the opportunity to practise.

V

Validity

A measure of the extent to which an instrument truly measures what it claims to measure. For example, if we are trying to construct a measure of customer loyalty, we might include an item which says *Next time you need a widget, will you choose an ABC widget?* The item is said to have face validity if, as in this case, it appears on the face of it that it would measure customer loyalty. (It is actually a measure of repurchase intention, which is one aspect of customer loyalty.)

If we offer a scale of responses from *certainly not* to *certainly* and administer the instrument to several different groups of people, we will get a good measure of the relative loyalty of the different groups. All we have measured so far, though, is what people say they will do. If, as part of the instrument development process, we can administer the instrument to a group of people whose widget purchasing we can then monitor, so we know who bought a widget, and whether the one they bought was indeed an ABC widget or some other manufacturer's, we call this data the criterion. It is the standard by which we are testing our instrument in the way that an instrument for measuring distance might be checked against a known official measure. We can then calculate the **correlation** between the responses to the question in the instrument and the criterion - people's real loyalty as demonstrated by their buying behaviour. We may be able to show a link between the results from the item in the instrument



QUANTIFY

We quantify the things ordinary management information systems can't

and people's future behaviour. The strength of this link is a measure of the predictive validity of the item in our instrument.

This is a costly and difficult process to go through and it is often impossible or impractical to obtain criterion data. For this reason, many employee and customer satisfaction measures depend on face validity alone.

VAT

Value Added Tax. The European Union sales tax. In the U.K. the VAT rate is currently 17.5% of the cost of most goods or services, including ours.

Verify

Key data a second time, comparing the first and second versions to see that they agree. Provides greater confidence in the accuracy of the data to be analysed.

W

Weightings

We can calculate weighted [topic average](#) results for a topic, and we can calculate [weighted subset results](#).

