

# Telephone Survey Relevance in the Digital Age

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Telephone surveys are certainly more difficult to perform now than in years past. With fewer landlines, more cell phones, and the preponderance of digital communication, conducting a telephone survey is more complicated and challenging. However, even in today's world, telephone survey results remain a vital part of successful market analysis. The key is working with an expert who knows what to do and how best to do it, has telephone survey experience, and understands how to best reach your market.

Understanding your market and their communication habits is critical to the success of a phone survey. Though landlines are shrinking in number, and caller ID hinders response, there is still success in calling landline numbers for some markets, and cell phone numbers are now available for calling in most markets. According to the Pew Research Center, the cell-only rate is higher for young people, Hispanics, and African Americans. However, many consumers over age 55 still have a landline and are more likely to answer their phone. In addition, while cell phones are growing in dominance as a communication method for certain consumer sectors, in the B2B world, landlines remain a primary method of contact. Surveying businesses via telephone continues to be performed with great success and provide key insights.

Because each different market sector is reached most effectively through different modes of communication, we know that taking a blended approach to survey analysis can often prove highly successful and can help avoid the potential for bias that might occur when using a single survey methodology. The key is determining how to best reach a representative sample, including communication methods each market segment responds to, and then performing the survey with the appropriate mix of cell phone survey calls, landline survey calls, and online surveys.

Just because some people don't answer the phone, that doesn't mean no one does. Some consumers are more likely to respond to an interview with a live person than fill out an online form. Calling consumers via cell phones works and delivers results when performed by an experienced caller who is personable and engages consumers. New South Research uses live interviewers who hand dial each respondent's number, which, while it can be a bit more expensive, will typically deliver richer results and provide a valuable return on investment. There is no delay of call with a live caller like there is with an auto dialer. Consumers are more likely to talk to a live person than respond to a computer call, and a live interviewer keeps the respondent engaged, eliminating potential misunderstandings and revealing richer responses and opinions. Whether cell phones or landlines are called, telephone surveys are productive and provide important feedback that may not be uncovered via other survey modes.

Telephone surveys continue to not only be relevant, but remain viable and important when seeking to learn from your market. New South Research designs and conducts telephone surveys that hold interest and generate useful and substantial responses. Whether used alone or combined with other survey approaches, telephone surveys will certainly capture a more complete understanding of the market's current behavior and opinions.