WELCOME TO:

Communicating Survey Methods & Results to the
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TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Emily Swanson

Trevor Tompson
Emily Swanson
Director of Public Opinion Research at The Associated Press

Trevor Tompson
SVP of Public Affairs & Media Research at NORC
In this presentation you will learn how to ...

1. Design your research to maximize its potential for media coverage.

2. Communicate your research in ways that are friendly to journalists.

3. Get the attention of the journalists most likely to use your work.
Think about your goals before launching a survey.
Including...

- What content decisions to make

- What methodologies work best for news
Is it important enough to keep interest?
How will you communicate your results?

- Research design
- Hypotheses
- Is it complicated?
You can make news with a single question.

There needs to be enough data to support the conclusions that you’re trying to draw.
Timing

If your topic is not sensitive to current events, *you can take your time.*

If it is a fast-moving topic, *your data can become stale if it is more than a few weeks old OR a major event happens.*
Make sure your work stands up to methodological scrutiny.
Good reporters will investigate – especially on controversial topics!

- Be up front about what you did and prepared to answer questions
- Other experts will look at lack of disclosure or shaky methodology as a reason to attack your work.
Why should a journalist trust what you have to say?
Make it easy for them

• Show your work.

• Expect questions.

• Make sure someone is available to answer technical questions.
Some news organizations have methodology standards that they have made public.

- Some organizations will not accept non-probability samples.
- Some have N size and subgroup size requirements.
1. What survey firm conducted the poll?
2. How were respondents interviewed – by live interviewers on the phone, IVR, online, self-administered questionnaire or another method?
3. Who paid for the survey and why was it done?
4. How many people were interviewed for this survey?
5. In what language(s) were respondents interviewed?
6. Please provide a copy of the full text and interviewer instructions/programming for all questions included in this survey release.
7. When was your survey conducted?
8. What is the source of your sample for this survey, and by what method were respondents selected? Please be as specific as possible, and if via web panel(s), please include a description of how the panelists were recruited. If your study was conducted online and included respondents chosen via routers, approximately what percentage of respondents were directed to the survey via routers?
9. If any quotas were applied to sampling or interviewing, at what stage were they applied, what variables and targets were used, and what is the source of your estimate of the target quota?
10. What is the universe of people you are trying to survey, and what makes you confident that the sample source represents that universe?
11. If surveys were conducted by telephone, what percentage of interviews were conducted via calls to cellphones? If surveys were conducted online, were respondents allowed to complete the survey via mobile browsers, and approximately what share of your respondents did so?
12. If surveys were conducted by telephone, how many callback attempts did a sampled number receive before being retired?
13. If surveys were not conducted by a live interviewer, what do you do to ensure your respondents are real people and are paying attention to the survey?
14. What is your estimate of this survey’s error, how is it calculated, and why is this an appropriate error estimation for your survey? If you are reporting a margin of sampling error, has it been adjusted for design effects?
15. If your survey has been weighted, please list the weighting variables and the source of the weighting parameters. If your survey has not been adjusted for education, please explain why and provide an unweighted frequency for education distribution among your respondents.
16. Is there a minimum unweighted sample size you require before releasing any subset estimates, and if so, what is it?
Generally, for the answer to be yes, a poll must:

— Disclose the questions asked, the results of the survey and the method in which it was conducted.

— Come from a source without a stake in the outcome of its results.

— Be representative of the population surveyed, usually by randomly sampling from that population and appropriately correcting for the fact that some types of people are more likely to respond to polls than others.

— Report the results in a timely manner.

Polls that pass these tests are suitable for publication.

Do not report on surveys in which the pollster or sponsor of research refuses to provide the information needed to make these assessments. In stories relying heavily on the
When writing a pitch, be brief.
Pitch email:

01 Bullet points
02 Data visualization
03 Numeric precision
04 Don't overstate
05 Include the why?
06 Trends
07 ‘Real people’ to talk to
Bullet points
Think about how your findings can be presented visually.
Present numbers to the nearest round number – 43%.
Don't overstate your results.
Why is your finding remarkable?
Include trends if you have them.
Other things to include:

- **Poll toplines with question wording**
- **Detailed methodology statements**
  - Sample details
  - Weighting targets
- **Crosstabs**
Timing
If your topic is not sensitive to current events, you can take your time. If it is a fast-moving topic, your data can become stale if it is more than a few weeks old or a major event happens.
Most Americans don't closely follow professional or college sports

Hi Emily,

I wanted to let you know that Pew Research Center just released new data examining how closely Americans say they follow sports. The survey finds that most Americans do not closely follow or talk about sports, based on a survey of 11,945 U.S. adults.

About six-in-ten Americans (62%) say they follow professional or college sports not too or not at all closely. Similarly, 63% of U.S. adults say they talk about sports with other people — whether in person, by text, online or some other way — only a few times a month, once a month or less often.

When given a list of possible reasons why they don’t follow sports, the most common one chosen is lack of interest. In fact, around seven-in-ten adults who say they don’t closely follow sports say this is a major reason (69%).

On the other hand, the smaller group of Americans who follow sports extremely, very or somewhat closely (38%) say a major reason why is to cheer for a specific team or teams (71%). Smaller shares say a major reason why they follow sports is to cheer for specific players (32%), because someone in their family follows sports (23%), or to be part of a community (13%).

A small subset of Americans are what might be called “superfans.” These fans say they follow sports extremely or very closely and talk about sports at least daily. Only 7% of U.S. adults fall into this category.

Other key findings include:

- When asked how many sports they follow, the largest share of Americans (39%) say they don’t follow any sports. Smaller shares say they follow one (18%), two (22%), three (11%), or four or more sports (9%).
- Just 13% of Americans who don’t follow sports closely say a major reason why is that sports are too political. Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party are more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to say this is a major reason why (22% vs. 5%).
- By a large margin (61% vs. 5%), Americans believe sports get too much attention in society today, rather than too little, while 43% say they get about the right amount of attention.
- There are some age differences in the reasons Americans cite for not following sports. Among those who don’t closely follow sports, adults ages 18 to 29 are more likely than those ages 65 and older to say they’re just not interested (78% vs. 65%) or that they find sports boring (35% vs. 21%).

Read the full post here: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/17/most-americans-dont-closely-follow-professional-or-college-sports/
If your topic is not sensitive to current events, you can take your time. If it is a fast-moving topic, your data can become stale if it is more than a few weeks old or a major event happens.

**Topline findings with precise numbers.**

When asked how many sports they follow, the largest share of Americans (70%) say they don’t follow any sports. Smaller shares say they follow (9%). Just 13% of Americans who don’t follow sports closely say a major reason why is that sports are too political. Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican party are more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to say this is a major reason (22% vs. 5%).

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**Links to detailed topline and methodology.**
Include everything important in the body of the email.
To control the narrative, the key is to be prepared.
Make all the key info about your survey available and easy to find on your website.

- AAPOR transparency guidelines.
Assume, especially if working in politics, whatever group holds the opposite view will feel compelled to respond.

- Protect against this by having information already out.
- Be prepared to answer questions, and knock down any misinformation by pointing to accurate information on your website.
Grow relationships, journalists are people.
Journalists are far more likely to be interested in your work if they know you and your reputation.
How to grow your relationship:

• Send them useful information from your research all the time.

• Make it a priority to be available to them.

• Answer their questions.
Other tips:

- Pick a spokesperson.
- Make lists of reporters/news orgs you want to work with.
Do you have specific organizations you want to pitch?
Working with organizations:

- Advance notice
- Embargo
- Formal relationship
Consider including crosstabs.
Consider sharing your datasets.
Share ‘real people’.
Consider the role of editors or directors in major news organizations.
Thank you.

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