

Measuring Results:

How to tell whether experience innovations are working

For more information:

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The Readership Institute recommends measuring readership generally and among the targeted group(s) before launching significant changes to the newspaper. (If you choose to measure Reader Behavior Scores, the methodology can be found at www.readership.org/consumers/rbs/data/rbs.pdf.)

We also recommend incorporating experience-related research questions into your readership questionnaire, and repeating the survey some months after the changes have been made to gauge their effect.

1. Select one or more experiences from the eight key experiences listed at the end of this report that your newspaper plans to focus on. If you choose five experiences to track, you will incorporate about 35 questions into your survey. Make sure your overall sample size is at least 300 and that subgroups you wish to analyze include at least 200 respondents.
2. As indicated in the Readership Institute's New Readers survey (www.readership.org/new_readers/data/survey.pdf), the questions are asked on a 5-point agree/disagree scale. Introduce the questions in this manner: "I am going to read you a list of statements about how some people describe reading the newspaper. For each statement please indicate how much you agree or disagree that it describes your feelings about (name of newspaper)." Use the following scale:
 1. Strongly Disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly Agree
3. List the statements for the various experiences you wish to track in your market. (Randomization is not necessary, and, in fact, not recommended.)
4. For each respondent, simply average the responses to statements for each experience.
5. Include the mean "experience score" as an additional column in your dataset. Calculate overall mean scores for all respondents by averaging the mean experience scores for each respondent.

6. Conduct subgroup analysis by calculating mean “experience scores” for selected demographic groups.

Example

A newspaper chooses to measure the “Looks out for my civic and personal interests,” “Makes me smarter” and “Something to talk about” experiences.

1. Identify the statements that apply to each experience you wish to track.
2. Ask respondents to rate each statement on the 5-point agree/disagree scale.
3. Average the scores for each experience for each respondent.
4. Calculate an overall experience score for your newspaper by averaging all respondents’ scores for that experience.

This is your benchmark score. For example, if your market’s overall “Something to talk about” experience is a 3.20, replicate the study nine months to a year after implementing your strategy to determine how the experience has changed over time.

Statements for the Eight Key Experiences

Looks out for my civic and personal interests (motivator)

Reading this newspaper makes me feel like a better citizen.

I think people who do not read this newspaper or one like it are really at a disadvantage in life.

Reading this newspaper adds to my enjoyment of other things I do.

I feel like the day is incomplete if I miss reading this paper.

Our society would be much weaker without newspapers.

People would be better parents if they read this newspaper.

I count on this newspaper to investigate wrongdoing.

I feel like the money I spend on this newspaper is a good thing for my community.

It gives me ideas about how to help in the community.

Makes me smarter (motivator)

I look at the newspaper as educational. I gain something.

Even if I disagree with things in this newspaper, I feel like I have learned something valuable.

This newspaper has columns that give good advice.

This newspaper is good at telling stories about things that happen and how they turn out.
It is a way to learn about new products.
It shows me how other people live their lives.
I learn about things to do or places to go.

Something to talk about (motivator)

I bring up things I've read in this newspaper in conversations with many other people.
I like to talk about the national news and current events I read about in it.
I like to give advice and tips to people I know based on things I've read in this newspaper.
I show things in the newspaper to people in my family.
Part of my role among friends or family is to keep them informed because I read the newspaper.

Good service (motivator)

I always get it when I want it.
I always get the newspaper in good condition.
This newspaper offers very good service.
I don't have problems getting the paper delivered to my home because of where I live.
I do not have to deal with my paper being missing or stolen.
I would probably not read the paper more even if it were easier for me to get it.

Value for my money (motivator)

Overall, this newspaper provides pretty good value for the money.
I save more money from its ads and coupons than I spend on the paper.
The newsstand price could probably be higher and sales would be the same.
Even if this newspaper cost twice as much as it does now, I would still read it.

Ad usefulness (motivator)

I look at most of the ads.
I use the ads to know what is on sale.
I like the ads just as much or more than the stories.
I like the ads for unusual things.
It makes me want to go shopping.
I value the coupons in this newspaper.

Too much (inhibitor)

I wish this newspaper had fewer pages.
It has too many special sections.

It tries to cover too much.

Too many of the articles are too long.

Discriminates and stereotypes (inhibitor)

I worry that other people reading this paper will get the wrong impression of minority groups.

This newspaper perpetuates racial or ethnic stereotypes.

This newspaper is basically about white America.

This paper is sometimes unfair in its stories about minorities.

They only target minorities for their money. They don't really care about them.

This paper has a history of discrimination against minorities.