

- Make it very easy for the respondent to complete. Have someone who is not familiar with the survey give you a critique.
- Use questions that involve a ranging scale of 1-4 (1= strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). Choose an even number so respondents will give you an indication of preference.
- Surveys should take no longer than 5-10 minutes to complete.
- Be careful not to bias the answers with your question construction.
- Offer respondents some reward for completing the survey (money, discounts, prizes, etc.).
- Say, "Thank you."

Conducting a producer survey

If you are involving others to be your supplier, you may need to focus on the supply side. If your business is based on taking a new product to the market place or taking your products to the market place in a different manner, are you acting alone or are you pulling together a group of producers to manage this business activity?

Will you be able to meet demand? Or are you going to need to increase the amount of product in your venture? What is the interest level among other producers in working with you – now or down the road (a need that should be indicated in your research)?

You might be wise to survey other producers about these things. Considering such factors as how wide a geographic area you reasonably can work within and what types/sizes of producers work into your plan. Secure a mailing list of all who fit the description. The questions that follow would typically be included in your survey. As you do this, keep in mind that you are announcing – or promoting – your plans to others. Your survey questionnaire should be accompanied by a letter from you indicating your need for the information and what you plan to do with it (in limited fashion).

Sample survey questions

Are you interested in producing for a private, local venture?

Yes No

If yes, what quantity are you willing to supply?

Are you interested in alternate methods of production; for example, organic, natural, attribute based?

Yes No

Do you already serve any specialty markets?

Yes No

If so, what are they?

Are you willing to maintain specific product identification?

Yes No

Please add additional comments.

Thank you!

Old, new tricks

- Enclose pre-stamped envelopes with mail surveys.
- Tap into the knowledge of the reference librarian at the library.
- Talk with other business people in the area. Benefit from their experiences.
- Get on-line and use browsers.
- Read advertising and marketing industry periodicals.
- If you have created your own email database or have a reliable resource for one, consider using an online survey. An Internet search under keywords "online survey software" will start you on the path of locating just the right program for your needs. The most popular ones are available at office supply or computer stores. Be aware that there are regulations about use of mass emails.

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