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# 5 Reasons IT Pros Hate Your Surveys



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We do a lot of research here at Spiceworks (both for tech brands and for our own internal research initiatives). And over the last few years of running surveys, we've learned a few things about what works... and what doesn't. Check out the top five reasons why IT pros hate your surveys – and what you can do instead to get them engaging with your research.

## 1. Your Surveys Are Too Long

You know IT pros are busy people. They're on call for everything from busted hard-drives to full system outages. They don't have time for 20-minute surveys.

In a recent survey we ran, IT pros told us their ideal survey length is 5 minutes—any longer and they tune out (or drop out!). SurveyMonkey did a recent study of 100,000 surveys which showed that as surveys get longer, people spend less time thinking about their response to each question.

Still not convinced? Hear it straight from the horse's mouth (the horse being IT pros in the Spiceworks community).

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*“Brevity is important - I don't have a lot of time to devote to surveys.”*

## 2. Your Questions Are Confusing

Look at one of your current surveys. Read the questions out loud. Is that how you would ask the question if the respondent was sitting in front of you? If the answer to that last question is “no,” you might be suffering from garbled-message syndrome. Here's how to fix it:

- Drop the jargon because these are real people taking surveys, not robots
- Do your research to make sure your questions and answers make sense to IT pros
- Write the questions clearly and concisely - eliminate unnecessary words
- Clarify vague questions (make it clear as day!)



### 3. You're Using Your Survey to Sell

IT pros are smart cookies. If you're using your surveys to sell your brand to respondents, they'll see right through it.

Use your market research for research. Selling to an IT pro under the guise of research not only makes them lose trust in your company, but it makes them lose trust in market research as a whole. And whatever you do, don't call your survey participants afterwards and use their feedback to sell your product!

*"If I take a survey on [Brand] switches and the next day and following six months I get tons of emails and phone calls from someone trying to sell me [Brand] switches...we are done forever. I will hate you and never do a survey for you again."* – Voice of IT panelist

### 4. They Can't Fill Out Your Survey from Their Smartphones

IT pros have to run around constantly—from their desk, to a coworker's broken PC, to the server room. It's no surprise then that 30% of online surveys are completed from a mobile device—and industry experts expect this to increase to over 50% within two years. So whenever possible, make sure your surveys not only work on smartphones, but they're easy to fill out.

How do you make your surveys more mobile-friendly? Here are some tips:

- Keep it short (noticing a trend?)
- Limit the number of questions on each page to 1 or 2
- Optimize the survey for mobile so people can quickly swipe through without having to pinch the screen
- Try to limit your questions to multiple-choice, and display the answer choices vertically
- Keep bandwidth in mind since multimedia elements can quickly use up data

### 5. Your Surveys Are BORING

You want to get insightful responses from IT pros, not put them to sleep. So make the survey experience pleasant... or even fun!

A survey from Qualtrics Marketing went viral in 2014 because they gamified it to let respondents know how long they'd survive the zombie apocalypse. We all wish our surveys got that kind of response, but I realize it can be challenging to weave this approach into your research objectives.

The good news? There are little ways to make the survey experience more pleasant for your respondents:

- Use the first-person voice, it makes the survey more personable
- Talk like a human and be conversational
- Update your survey template: We all know that the most successful apps are beautifully designed, so why should surveys be any different?
- Use images (but keep them small so they don't suck up bandwidth on mobile)
- Vary the question types

#### Bonus Tip: Share Your Results

Many IT pros have told us it's demotivating to give their feedback and watch it disappear into a black hole. In fact, in one of our recent surveys, 57% of our respondents said that getting in on the results is a motivator for participating in surveys (even above cold, hard cash!). Sharing can be as simple as posting a few key stats in the Community, or as awesome as sending them an infographic with all the juicy details.

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*Want to see how you can put these tips into action?*

*Check it out. Learn how we can provide the audience AND design the survey to get your questions answered... in a way both you and the IT pros will love.*