

*How To Conduct Original Research:*  
**An Easy-To-Follow Guide**  
**for Modern Marketers**



# Executive Summary

Original research is fast becoming a cornerstone of modern marketing strategy. The insights you generate can bolster brand authority, fuel content creation and uncover untapped opportunities while simultaneously future-proofing SEO performance.

## IN THIS WHITE PAPER, YOU'LL LEARN:

### *Why original research increasingly matters:*

Proprietary data positions your company as a thought leader, earns press coverage and builds trust with customers who, more than ever, demand evidence-based content.

### *The market intelligence advantage:*

Research helps you spot emerging trends, identify customer pain points and reveal whitespace your competitors may have not noticed yet.

### *Frequency factors:*

Successful teams consider capacity, audience demand, distribution plans and project scope to decide whether to launch quick polls or large-scale studies — and how often.

### *Step-by-step execution:*

From choosing a topic to writing clear questions, promoting surveys and collecting responses, this guide offers practical steps and advice you can easily follow.

### *Turning data into results:*

You'll learn how to evaluate findings, craft attention-grabbing stories, build a hub-and-spoke content engine and measure ROI.

# Unlocking Better Brand Authority Through Original Research

Orchestrating original research can be a complex and heavy lift, but the results are rewarding in ways few other marketing initiatives are. It's a growth engine that gives your brand something competitors can't copy: proprietary insight.

At its core, original research captures first-party data about your market, customers or industry, and transforms it into stories only you can tell. When you publish those stories, you immediately elevate your brand's authority. Reporters cite the numbers, influential websites link back to your findings and prospects see proof.

The result is a virtuous cycle in which authoritative content drives visibility, and visibility reinforces authority.

Beyond building reputation, original research reveals actionable opportunities. Many organizations rely on industry reports that paint broad strokes, yet miss the nuances unique to their audiences. Running your own study surfaces unmet needs, emerging preferences and behavioral shifts that never make it into those larger, more generic datasets.





Teams that harness these discoveries can use them to refine messaging so that it echoes real customer language and adjust go-to-market plans before competitors even notice a trend.

The competitive landscape is also noisier than ever. Since AI tools make it effortless to spin up generic blog posts, search engines increasingly reward original, verifiable information. By publishing unique statistics, charts and quotes from your research, you signal credibility to both algorithms and human

readers. Pages featuring proprietary content can earn longer dwell times, more backlinks and higher rankings to strengthen your overarching SEO strategy.

## How Often Should I Conduct Original Research?

How often you should repeat the original research process depends on four intertwined factors:

-  **Capacity**  
Do you have the people and tools to manage collection, analysis and promotion?
-  **Audience demand**  
Are new questions surfacing in sales calls, social threads or customer support tickets?
-  **Distribution strategy**  
Will fresh data fit seamlessly into your existing content calendar, campaign schedule or PR roadmap?
-  **Project scale**  
Quick polls may run monthly, while a 2,000-respondent survey might be annual.

Audit these variables from time to time or as a need arises, and create a plan that aligns with your resources and goals.

If you're strapped for time, even lightweight studies or polls can keep your insights pipeline flowing and your brand top-of-mind.

# Executing Effective Original Research: 7 Steps for Success

From planning to publishing original research — and creating content that branches off your main asset in a sputnik-style fashion — you have to build a strong process. These 7 steps for executing effective original research can help guide your strategy:



## Step 1

### Define a Clear Topic and Purpose

Great research projects begin with a clear purpose. Before you draft a single question, identify the business objective the study must serve:

- Are you validating a product or service idea?
- Uncovering audience pain points?
- Sourcing statistics for a thought-leadership campaign?

Defining the “why” keeps the entire process on track and ensures the insights you gather align with revenue goals.

Start by framing one or two core questions the study needs to answer. These can be broad — such as “How is our target audience adapting to AI tools?” — to provide direction while leaving space for exploratory findings.

Once you establish clear intent, outline success criteria by deciding:

- How many responses you need to achieve your goals.
- Which audience segments to include.
- What timeline fits your campaign calendar.

These will look different for every business, even if two similar entities employ the same approach. The key is to consider the project as a whole, determine what success looks like to *you* and define your criteria accordingly.

Finally, secure internal buy-in. Stakeholders who approve the scope at this stage — and ideally are even excited about it — are more likely to champion the finished study when it’s time to promote results and spin-off content.



## Step 2

# Choose Data Collection Methods

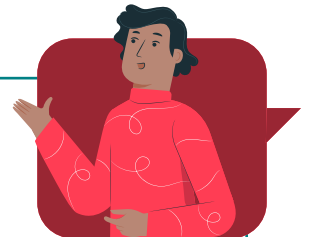
Selecting the right methodology is equal parts science and pragmatism. Surveys, polls, focus groups and partner panels all gather valuable feedback, but each excels in different scenarios:

- **Surveys via platforms like Google Forms and SurveyMonkey** are affordable, customizable and ideal for capturing quantitative trends at scale.
- **Polls on LinkedIn or X** gather quick, surface-level sentiment and are perfect for pulse checks or teaser stats that build anticipation for a larger study.
- **Focus groups** yield rich, qualitative insights and nuanced quotes but require more time, budget and moderation expertise.
- **Third-party networks** such as Pollfish can expedite data collection among hard-to-reach segments, though costs increase with targeting complexity.

Before you choose, consider reach, depth and budget. If you need statistically significant numbers fast, lean on a survey partner. When exploring early-stage buyer motivations, a virtual focus group may reveal subtleties a form can't.

## Step 3

# Develop Effective Research Questions



The quality of your survey data hinges on what you ask and how you ask it. Clarity, brevity and neutrality are your allies here, which can make creating hard-hitting questions more difficult. Keep these tips top-of-mind when brainstorming questions for maximum impact:

- Use plain language that all respondents understand, regardless of expertise.
- Keep each question focused on a single idea. Combining topics risks muddy answers.
- Avoid leading phrasing that could create biased results, i.e., “How much do you agree that our new service significantly improves productivity?” Instead, use neutral language: “What impact, if any, do you believe this service has on productivity?”

- Consider answer formats and choose options that fit the information you're after:
  - ◆ Binary yes/no for straightforward asks.
  - ◆ Multiple choice for categorical preferences.
  - ◆ Rating scales for satisfaction or likelihood measures.
  - ◆ Open text boxes for unsolicited insights and voice-of-customer language.
- Plan an appropriate question order. Begin with easy, non-sensitive questions to build momentum, group related topics together and reserve demographic queries for the end. While important, you want to ensure participants answer your most valuable questions first before fatigue sets in — especially if it's a longer survey.

This step is arguably the most important of the process, so make sure you leave yourself enough time to take it slow and really consider what questions you should be asking, and in what order.

## Step 4

# Create and Distribute Your Survey Assets



Once your questions are finalized, it's time to build the survey in the platform best suited to your method.

### HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO REMEMBER:

- Google Forms and SurveyMonkey support conditional logic, branding elements and auto-generated charts.
- Social polls streamline one-click participation.
- Partner networks handle sampling and device optimization behind the scenes.

Distribution strategy can make or break participation rates, so leverage channels you already control:

- Share the link on corporate social accounts, adding context that teases the value respondents will gain.
- Encourage employees to share the survey on their own professional accounts, too, like LinkedIn.

- Utilize your website, creating pop-ups and menu links that direct users to the survey.
- Email customer lists and newsletter subscribers, clearly stating how their input will influence future products or content.
- Activate internal teams, especially sales and customer success, to forward the survey to active contacts. Warm intros often outperform cold outreach.

*Tip:*

Consider limited-time incentives such as early access to the findings or entry into a draw to boost completion rates without skewing results.

Track response momentum periodically. Regular evaluations are important for assessing what's driving response and what isn't, but you shouldn't obsess over progress daily. If you see participation plateau, adjust subject lines, refresh social copy or widen targeting criteria until you hit your sample goal.

The most exciting phase comes next: turning raw responses into insights that fuel content and press mentions to drive up authority.

## Transforming Insights Into Content That Delivers Value Over Time

Collecting responses is only half the mission, marketer! The real value emerges when you translate raw numbers into strategic narratives that influence decisions, fuel campaigns and inspire press coverage. That process begins with a thorough evaluation of your dataset.





## Step 5

# Evaluate and Organize the Data

Start by importing responses into a spreadsheet or business-intelligence tool and scanning for obvious errors or incomplete records. From there, segment the data in ways that match your original objectives. For instance, break responses down by buyer persona, company size or geographic region to expose patterns that a single, blended view would obscure. If you're working with open-ended fields, use text-analysis features or large-language models such as ChatGPT to surface recurring themes and sentiment quickly.

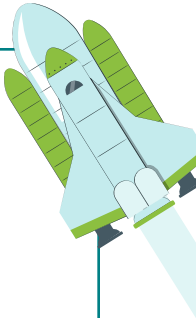
Throughout this process, keep a checklist of your initial research questions close at hand. Confirm that each one can be answered with the data you've collected and note any surprising findings that fall outside that original scope. Those unexpected gems often become the headline-grabbing stat or storyline your competitors never anticipate.

Once the data is clean and organized, shift from exploration to interpretation. Look for statistically significant differences, compelling averages or standout quotes that speak your audience's language. A useful litmus test is to ask whether each insight meets at least one of four criteria:

- It empowers your sales team to handle objections or position value more persuasively.
- It offers journalists a fresh angle or a number they can cite in coverage.
- It guides product, pricing or positioning decisions that improve customer experience or profitability.
- It reveals unique insight that your audience would be hard-pressed to find elsewhere.

Insights that check two or more of these boxes belong at the top of your storytelling hierarchy.

With this hierarchy in place, craft a concise summary that explains why the insight matters, who it affects and what action you recommend.



## Step 6

# Create and Distribute Impactful Content

Once you've got all the organized data in front of you, interpret insights to develop a structured content engine. A hub-and-spoke model is an ideal approach for this kind of project, as it provides both depth and reach: The hub houses the complete dataset and analysis, while the spokes repurpose those findings across multiple formats and channels.

### Creating the Hub

Begin by developing the hub asset, which is often a gated report, interactive webpage or long-form blog article — something that can package the core narrative, key charts and methodological notes in a visually engaging layout.

If you choose a downloadable asset, be sure to include a clear value proposition; for example, readers get exclusive benchmarks (and you capture leads for follow-up nurturing).

With the hub live, plan supporting pieces that direct traffic back to it. These may include:

- Blog posts that dive into individual charts, insights or personas.
- Infographics that distill complex numbers into shareable visuals.
- Short-form videos or webinar segments discussing headline findings.
- Social-media carousels that spotlight one statistic at a time.
- Email series that delivers bite-sized insights and links back to the full report.
- Sales enablement materials that arm your reps with compelling intel to help them overcome objections or highlight unique value propositions.

### Creating the Spokes

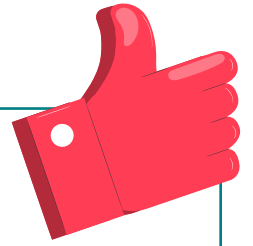
Each spoke should provide standalone value yet leave readers wanting the complete picture, which they can only see via the main hub asset.

Spoke promotion merits equal attention. Activate every owned channel first: newsletter lists, organic social feeds, employee advocacy and your corporate website.

Next, supplement reach with paid social ads and display campaigns targeted at audiences that match your survey demographics.

#### *Tip:*

Don't forget about earned opportunities, too! Pitch unique angles to trade journalists or contribute guest columns to online industry magazines. Wherever possible, provide pre-packaged graphics or quote snippets that make it effortless for editors to feature your work.



## Step 7

# Measure Success

Measuring success closes the loop on the whole initiative. You can start tracking metrics before all of your spoke content is live, but it should continue until a month or two after the last asset goes out.

Key metrics to track include:

- Downloads and form conversions to assess lead generation.
- Email open and click-through rates to gauge ongoing interest.
- Shares, comments and follower growth on social platforms as signals of resonance.
- Website analytics to reveal new versus returning user ratios.
- Booked meetings or closed deals won via research assets.

Review these metrics at an interval that suits your goals. Throughout your distribution window, that could mean weekly at first when it's fresh and there's a peak in interest; then monthly later on and eventually quarterly when things start to slow down. Compare metrics with your pre-set goals and adjust promotion levers accordingly.

Finally, zoom out and ask whether the research achieved its strategic purpose:

- Did you uncover new or unique insights that fuel content that resonates with your audience?
- Did it reveal an untapped segment ripe for a product or service launch?
- Did it supply sales with conversation-changing proof points?

Feeding these answers back into your planning cycle ensures your next study comes out even sharper.

# Key Takeaways

Original research pays dividends in multiple ways — when it fuels your content engine, engages your audience, elevates your digital PR or expands your reach, to name a few.

Here's a quick recap to take with you into your next original research initiative:

- 1 Calibrate research frequency to your capacity, audience curiosity and campaign rhythm — and remember: even small polls can keep insights flowing.
- 2 Anchor your study to a specific business objective so every insight ladders up to measurable growth goals.
- 3 Match your research method to your goals and resources — balancing speed, depth and budget for maximum impact.
- 4 Ask clear, unbiased, single-focus questions to gather clean and actionable data that's meaningful.
- 5 Promote smartly across owned and earned channels. Participation thrives on context, clarity and incentives.
- 6 Segment, clean and interpret results to surface insights that inform strategy and grab attention.
- 7 Use a hub-and-spoke content model to repurpose your findings across channels and maximize reach.
- 8 Track both engagement and business outcomes, feeding learnings back into your next research cycle.

Uncovering insights no one else has gives your brand an authoritative voice that commands attention. Whether you start small with a quick poll or launch a full-scale industry survey, original research is the roadway to lasting credibility, sharper strategy and measurable growth — all driven by your own intelligence.



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