

CAPTURING ANSWERS AND EFFICIENCY ON SURVEYS

*Community colleges monitor
the pulse on campus with
survey management software*



Joy Dardin used to dread surveys because each one required her to invent a survey form and hand-enter the data in a spreadsheet format.

That all changed when the Contra Costa Community College District, in Martinez, an area near San Francisco, purchased a Pearson NCS OpScan® optical mark read (OMR) scanner and SurveyTracker® Plus E-Mail/Web software. Dardin, a research assistant in the district's Research Department, suddenly had an automated survey management system at her fingertips.

SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software gave her integrated tools for a more professional and manageable process. She started surveying faculty and staff via e-mail and the Web. When surveying students, she used the software, which includes a special version of NCS DesignExpert™ software, to design custom scannable forms. Then she used Pearson NCS ScanTools® software, also included in the package, to convert marks read by the OpScan scanner into data for tabulating by SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software. For either audience, automated data entry produces fast and reliable survey results.

"Now we can process our surveys and generate the reports we need in as little as an hour – a job that sometimes took weeks the old way," Dardin says. "As more and more people in the district become aware of the capabilities we have now, they have begun asking for more surveys."

Automation Saves Time

The program's ability to save time is most valuable to Dardin. Contra Costa Community College District has more than 40,000 students and hundreds more faculty and staff members spread over three campuses. The Research Department conducts as many as 25 surveys a month, gathering information and opinions from audiences as small as 30 and as large as 15,000.

Dardin typically surveys faculty and staff electronically because most employees have access to a personal computer. She uses paper surveys with students because many don't have access to a personal computer. The surveys are conducted for a variety of internal clients, including Human Resources, Payroll, and Information Technology, as they try to keep a finger on the pulse of their various constituencies. All seek more information to help make better decisions.

E-mail Surveys Mimic Web Surveys

Contra Costa recently upgraded to the latest version of SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software.

“The changes to the e-mail surveys are excellent,” Dardin says. “Our surveys can be sent out as part of the body of the e-mail, so people don’t have to deal with attachments. And, with the option of making our e-mail surveys form-based, we can make an e-mail survey appear exactly the same as it is on the Web. That takes the guesswork out of how to respond.”

With SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web, even a paper version can be designed to appear the same as the electronic version, a feature that makes them more appealing while showing a consistent identity to the entire survey audience.

The Power to Get the Job Done

SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software has no trouble measuring up to the increased demand Dardin sees these days. It offers the flexibility to distribute via form-based emails, text-based emails, Web/HTML, intranet/extranet, survey-by-disk, kiosk, network and scannable paper surveys. Other features include:

- A library of pre-written survey questions
- Survey design tools that permit up to six scales per question and 300 scale choices per scale
- More design options, including more choices for font types, colors and other graphic elements
- Improved database support for larger, faster projects
- More robust filtering and analysis tools
- More powerful and more visually appealing graphs and tables

No Need for a Statistician

In addition to asking for more surveys, Dardin’s internal clients want more sophisticated surveys and analysis.

“Our IT people are pretty savvy when it comes to surveys,” says Dardin “and they can come up with some pretty complex demands.”

SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software responds to the challenge with 18 methods of statistical analysis. And, with all the data in an electronic format, it requires little more than the click of a mouse to generate a variety of comprehensive but easy-to-understand reports.

“I often need to filter data by campus,” Dardin says. “During data analysis, I can include or exclude groups based on almost any criteria I want.”

Designed for Ease of Use

In addition to a highly intuitive basic format, SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software incorporates a number of wizards that walk users through various steps. Other features that make the process easier include:

- A simplified drag-and-drop design interface
- Easier project navigation
- A built-in “Survey Advisor” that guides users through the survey management process with hints and suggestions

Data also can be exported to other popular software programs. In addition, anyone can open and view reports, whether or not the software has been loaded on the person’s computer.

With SurveyTracker Plus E-Mail/Web software, Dardin has the tools she needs to conduct an efficient survey and provide the answers that her colleagues on campus need.

“I feel really comfortable with this product,” she says, “and that means a lot in my job.”

Pearson NCS’ engineering and production processes for data collection systems and forms are ISO 9001 certified.



Pearson NCS
5601 Green Valley Drive
Bloomington, MN 55437

Phone: 952-681-3000
Toll-free: 800-447-3269
Fax: 952-681-3674

All non-U.S. inquiries
Phone: 651-683-6294
Fax: 651-683-6301

www.PearsonNCS.com
info-ncs@pearson.com