

# How To CODE SURVEY DATA

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Support material to the  
***INSIGHT DISCOVERY REPORT***<sup>©</sup>  
PROFESSIONAL SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS  
EVEN STUDENTS CAN AFFORD

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## How to organize Survey Data

There are three steps to put the data collected with (online) surveys in the right shape to be analysed like professionals do:

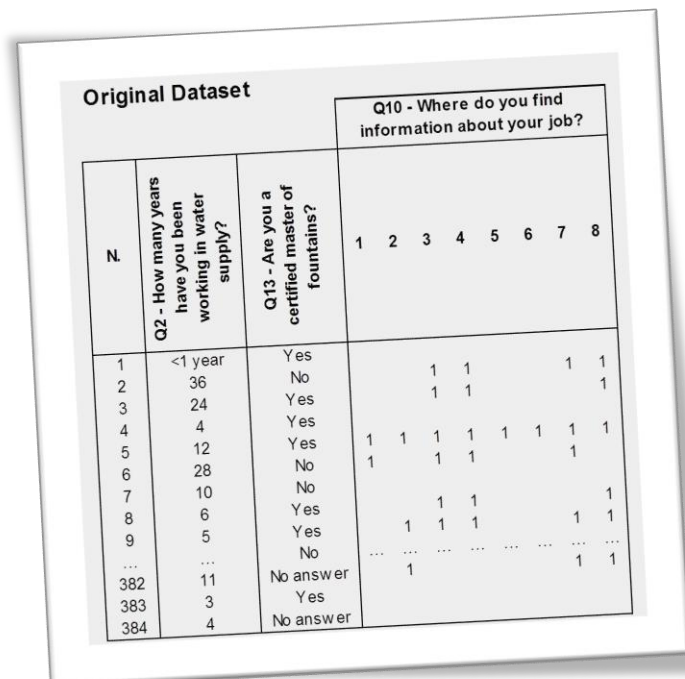
1. Organize closed-ended and open-ended questions
2. Create the Frame Code for each question (aka variable)
3. Convert respondent answers to codes

**Tip: Store a copy of the original data before you begin putting the survey data in shape for the analysis.**

### Organizing closed-ended questions

From a list of possible answers closed-ended questions allow the respondent to choose one single answer. These answers must be organized in a single column with the question label in the first cell of the column.

The dataset you export from your online survey provider may look like the following image:



Original Dataset			Q10 - Where do you find information about your job?																	
N.	Q2 - How many years have you been working in water supply?	Q13 - Are you a certified master of fountains?																		
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8										
1	<1 year	Yes																		
2	36	No																		
3	24	Yes																		
4	4	Yes																		
5	12	Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	28	No	1																	
7	10	No																		
8	6	Yes																		
9	5	Yes																		
		No																		
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
382	11	No answer																		
383	3	Yes																		
384	4	No answer																		

Image 1

Q2 and Q13 are closed-ended questions while Q10 is an open-ended one. Both question types must be coded in a form the elaboration software can transform into meaningful contingency tables (crosstabs). To do so we create a *Frame Code*.

## The Frame Code

The Frame Code instructs the software on how to handle each answer to each question. It looks like this:

Image 2

Code	Q2 - How many years have you been working in water supply?	Q13 - Are you a certified master of fountains?	Q10 - Where do you find information about your job?
1	Up to 10 years	Yes	Magazines
2	11 to 20 years	No	Online
3	21 to 30 years	No answer	Association
4	Over 30 years		Fairs / Continuing Education
5			Flyers
6			Mailings
7			Supplier / Dealer
8			Colleagues

It's all quite simple. Take Q2 for example. If the first interviewee's answer to Q2 is "Less than 1 year" (see Image 1), according to the frame code this answer is substituted with a code "1" which covers all answers up to 10 years. The second interviewee's answer for Q2 is coded with a "4" and so on. The coded dataset should look like the following image.

Image 3

N.	Q2 - How many years have you been working in water supply?	Q13 - Are you a certified master of fountains?	Q10 - Where do you find information about your job?								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	1	1				1	1			1	1
2	4	2				1	1				1
3	3	1									
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	2	1	1	1	1					1	
6	3	2	1	1	1						
7	1	2									1
8	1	1			1	1				1	1
9	1	1			1	1					1
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
382	2	3			1						1
383	1	1									
384	1	3									1

## *Organizing open-ended questions*

The treatment of open-ended questions does not differ much from how we treated the closed-ended ones. The only difference is that an open-ended question is coded over as many columns as codes. For instance, Q10 of Image 1 is an open ended question with 8 codes. Each code takes a column. The cells in each column above the first respondent answers show the code number, and above it is the question label. Leave blank cells where there is no answer (make sure it is really blank. Pay attention, certain characters are invisible, f.i. a blank space).

## *Coding answers*

Consider using the Excel function VLOOKUP to turn closed-ended respondent answers into frame codes. This is possible in most cases but not always. Sorting data and using filters helps make the coding process less tedious.

**You don't have time to make survey data analysis-ready?  
MarketingStat can do it for you.**



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