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HOW TO DELIVER ACCESSIBLE SURVEY RESULTS AGE DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE - FAMILY FEUD STYLE

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ABSTRACT

In March, 1994, a survey designed to indulge the mutual "generational bias" of individuals in their 20s (Generation X) versus individuals in their 30s or 40s (Baby-boomers) was distributed to student and professional members of a human resources association on the eastern seaboard as part of a focus on diversity. Age diversity issues are increasingly of concern in the workplace. Do baby-boomers have different work/life values than younger workers? How do the differences, perceived and/or actual, affect working together?

Survey research results may be difficult to share with the statistically unsophisticated audience. Numbers, sterile or intimidating, can inhibit feedback rather than enhance it. The focus of the presentation will be on the method of reporting the results - a modification of the Family Feud game show. Session participants will experience the game show format.

INTRODUCTION

Survey research results are often an important part of working with students or other clients. Faculty provide a variety of data, or feedback: test score ranges; surveys related to course theories; results of student project involvement; student evaluations of courses. However, providing survey results to a statistically unsophisticated audience may prove to be a daunting task. This paper presents a technique to deliver survey results in a barrier-free, yet still informative, manner.

In March, 1994, a survey designed to indulge the mutual "generational bias" of individuals in their 20s (Generation X) versus individuals in their 30s or 40s (Baby-boomers) was distributed to student and professional members of a human resources organization on the eastern seaboard. Age diversity issues are increasingly of concern in the workplace. Do baby-boomers have different work/life values than younger workers? Do generational stereotypes help or hinder understanding each other and working together? A modified game show format (Family Feud) was used to present survey results to study participants and other members of the association. The remainder of this paper describes the game show format, provides an example of its use, and suggests

potential variations.

DESCRIPTION OF EXERCISE

Basic modified rules of Family Feud

Two groups (families) compete to identify correct responses to a survey research item. The competition is launched in the following format: "We asked (some number) (some group) to identify (some subject). The top (some number) answers are on the board" For instance, the first example used in Table 1 was presented: We asked forty members of Generation X to name their favorite participant sport. The top four answers are on the board." The first family to signal (raise a hand, ring in) volunteers an answer. (For the Table 1 example, "basketball.") Then, the other family offers a response. (In the Table 1 example, "baseball.") The family with the highest score then plays the entire question. (In the Table 1 example, the first family would play.) Each family member is polled sequentially for the remaining responses. If a guess is not listed in the response set, a strike is recorded.

**TABLE 1
SAMPLE SURVEY RESULTS**

FAVORITE PARTICIPANT SPORT GENERATION X			
SELF		OTHER	
Basketball	6	Racquetball	6
Baseball	5	Volleyball	5
Tennis	4	Tennis	3
Volleyball	4	Football	3

FAVORITE PARTICIPANT SPORT BOOMER			
SELF		OTHER	
Softball	7	Softball	8
Tennis	6	Golf	7
Basketball	3	Tennis	6
Racquetball	3		
Volleyball	3		

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If all listed answers are guessed before three strikes are given, the playing family gets the points. If three strikes are called, the other family can steal the points by identifying any of the unidentified responses. One family wins when a predetermined number of points are reached, or when a set number of questions have been played.

Procedures

A lecture or some other introductory comments may be given before the game begins. In this illustration, stereotypes about the other age group were identified and listed.

Any number of participants may be accommodated, but groups of 10-60 are best. Participants are divided into "families" of three to five members. Each group agrees on a family name. Standard tournament elimination rounds are conducted to get finalists. Figure 1 shows an arrangement for 64 participants. Each "X" represents a participant. The participants are grouped into 16 families. The first elimination round would pair family 1 -family 2, family3-family4, family5-family6, etc. The next round would pit the winner of the family1 - family2 competition against the winner of the family3-family4 competition, etc. The game may be played as long as participants are interested or until data are exhausted, but 60-90 minutes is a reasonable amount of time.

**FIGURE 1
ROOM LAYOUT**

1	2 3	4 5	6 7	8
X	X X	X X	X X	X
X	X X	X X	X X	X
X	X X	X X	X X	X
X	X X	X X	X X	X
9	10 11	12 13	14 15	16
X	X X	X X	X X	X
X	X X	X X	X X	X
X	X X	X X	X X	X
X	X X	X X	X X	X

Debriefing can take 15-30 minutes, depending on the data presented and the purpose of the session. In this illustration, the game process itself was discussed. Emotions ran high. Most participants were offended by some of the stereotypes held by the other generation. Some invalid assumptions - "we are all the same" - hindered communication. Some

assumptions of differences created barriers. When the topic was sports or clothing, the disagreements were humorous. It was easy then to switch to a candid examination of the realities of generational differences in the workplace, such as job values and promotion expectations. A handout was provided at the end of the session to each participant with full results. The "Family Feud" presentation helped make data more accessible. Follow-up with actual statistical presentation was easy - and sought.

Gathering the data

A variety of survey research forms could be used. Sample forms for this project are available from the author.

VARIATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

The modified Family Feud game show format illustrated in this paper could be used in a number of feedback or data-rich situations where there are barriers to participant understanding due to ignorance of statistics. The game could be used alone to present descriptive statistics. It could also be used as an icebreaker or initial discussion technique. Here are some possible applications.

1. For diversity training with this study, build "families" to represent minority/majority groups. This variant could be adapted to a number of subject areas.
2. Use with a class to review for a test using multiple choice questions.
3. Present part of a study in this format to engage students before delving into a particular theory.
4. Use the game show format to introduce descriptive statistical techniques.

CONCLUSION

This paper illustrates the application of existing experiential techniques to the classroom or to other presentation opportunities. Although television is often maligned as an educational vehicle, using the Family Feud format made a presentation more interesting and helped to enrich the discussion. The answer-question format in Jeopardy can also be easily used to stimulate student participation. Perhaps other game show techniques could be adapted.