

**10 INVISIBLE  
BIASES  
IN ALL YOUR  
SURVEYS  
AND HOW TO  
FIX THEM**



# 10 invisible biases in your surveys



Your survey design already accounts for ambiguity, social bias, leading questions, complex questions, the “yes” bias, question order bias, and so on...

The problem is, it's not your survey design that's biasing your results.

Here are 10 things that are still going to bias your survey results even with perfect design, and how you can fix them by paying more attention to the panel you use.

## 1) **Your surveys rely on third-party data**

These days, data is the most valuable asset for any business. But not all data is the same. The most important thing to know about your data is its source.

When it comes to market research survey providers, most panelists are not technically panelists of that survey provider, rather, the panelists are sourced from third-parties.

There are three major downsides to third-party survey providers:

1. Lack of consistency
2. Lower general quality of data
3. Less reliable data (due to unknown sources and survey fraud)

Third-party data is **bad data**... Here's an example to prove the point.

Let's say your brother's birthday is coming up, and you want to buy him some golf clubs as a gift. You know he loves golf (but you personally hate golf). While browsing online, a search engine then cookies you while shopping for golf clubs, then tags you as someone with "purchase-intent" for golf. You buy your brother a new putter.

A few days later, you start getting ads for golfing trips. **Why?**

Because of bad third-party data! Advertisers in the sports industry are trying to target people interested in golf. That third-party data tells those advertisers that you are extremely interested in golf and you're ready to make a purchase.

The same can be said about the research industry. If you're panelists are not directly owned by the firm you're working with, you're *at least* one step removed from the truth. The demographic information about them may be inferred, the psychographic information about them may be seriously flawed, and their locations may be inaccurate.

With third-party data, your data is coming from **anywhere**.

## 2) Your surveys don't have truly representative panelists

Surveys are only worthwhile if you've got a representative sample.

There are two major risks to poor representation:

- 1) Inaccurate results
- 2) Fraudulent results

Obviously, neither of these outcomes is acceptable.

At MFour, we maintain a 100% [first-party consumer panel](#) of 2.5 million users.

The best part is they reflect a near-identical demographic population of the United States. That's by region, education, marital status, household, ethnicity, and smartphone population for age. So, you can select your perfect sample from our audience to represent your full consumer base.

## 3) Your surveys can't be fielded in time

If the research doesn't get done on time, it doesn't matter what the results show. It will be too late to make the correct decision based on the insights uncovered.

We're in an agile era.

Quick, informed decisions separate the high-growth companies from the stagnant ones. We pride ourselves on same-day research projects that don't compromise an inch of quality. Typically, we see 50% response rates in just 24 hours. That's **more than 6x** the traditional survey result.

#### **4) Your surveys are subject to recall bias**

Timing is everything.

How a person describes a recent shopping trip will be quite different as they leave the store vs. days later. If you can't reach your panelists in-the-moment, when they're experiencing your products, you miss a massive part of the picture.

*Here's how we fix it.*

Consumers carry their smartphones everywhere, which means MFour knows the exact moment they're at a location you want to field a survey. Not only that, but our first-party consumer panel keeps track of historical locations as well, so you can isolate very specific consumer journeys before fielding.

#### **5) Your surveys don't account for digital behavior**

Most companies are still just scratching the surface when it comes to using digital behavior to make better business decisions.

You can go so much deeper.

Our clients combine digital behavior tracking with their surveys to see a more in-depth view of consumers. Wouldn't it be nice to know what your consumers are doing on the Amazon app and what they're searching in their browser before, during, and after their in-person shopping trip? You can.

## 6) Your surveys are too short

You want completes and you want quality answers.

Here's a sad truth. Generally speaking, the sampling industry doesn't care about consumers so they try cramming more questions into a survey that isn't formatted for mobile (which is where most people take surveys nowadays) and they offer little-to-no incentive for participation.

So instead of looking at what it will take to get consumers engaged with longer surveys clients need completed to get their data, the industry has told end clients surveys need to be shorter.

We buck that trend by evaluating what it takes to get people to complete longer surveys then giving it to them.

At MFour, we're not just "mobile-optimized", we have a native-mobile app. Our surveys can be taken offline and the surveys are built for smartphones, not for web browsers. We're also one of the only consumer panels to incentivize with cash, not "points." We typically see 95% completion rates for 20-minute surveys.

## 7) **Your survey data doesn't easily integrate elsewhere**

Data becomes more valuable when it is enriched with other data.

For instance, when a smartphone receives an ad, the device's Ad ID automatically is collected by the publisher, advertising agency or advertiser.

Once you've obtained the Ad IDs for your campaign, you can match them against known recipients to see if those recipients fit the consumer profiles you're trying to reach. By partnering with MFour, you'll match your Ad IDs against more than 2.5 million panelists who use the Surveys on the Go<sup>®</sup> research app.

Now, thanks to integrating your ad recipients with our panelists, you're ready to get insights about who those validated recipients are, and how they experienced your ads.

## 8) **Your surveys are light on demographic granularity**

When your survey respondents aren't heavily pre-profiled, it means 1 of 2 things.

1. Either you have to ask all of those questions for the first time in your survey (which means the costs goes up, and it's not validated)
2. You'll have to forgo certain demographic details (weakening the insights available to you).

We collect observed, validated location and digital data, along with more than 100 first-party demographic profile data points.

All profile data is collected over a 10-week period of time, each time a new participant signs up to the panel. This makes it simple for the consumer, while giving you valuable insight you wouldn't otherwise receive.

## 9) **Your surveys are built in a cookie-cutter fashion**

Sometimes, a custom research project conducted to get the answers you need. The reason survey providers shy away from specialized projects and push heavier on their DIY products is partly that it makes their job easier. Vendors know “custom” means difficult to scale.

At MFour, we prioritize your research projects which means that we don't shy away from custom projects. Custom surveys are for brands who demand tailored inputs and consultation at every phase of a market research project. We're happy to be your one-stop solution with smooth, on-time execution.

## 10) **Your survey source is not repeatable**

You don't need 5 consumer panel vendors.

That's stressful, and hard to manage. Yet, the average consumer insights department works with 7 market research vendors. You don't have to. We're proud to be a single platform. MFour is the only market research company to combine a massive, first-party mobile consumer panel with location data, digital data, customer experience, full market research services, and do-it-yourself services.

Put our consumer panel to work, they're excited to share their feedback.



# The MFour consumer panel fixes all 10 survey biases

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The [MFour Consumer Panel](#) resolves all 10 survey errors listed above...

Surveys with our consumer panel have:

- 1) First-party data
- 2) Truly representative panelists
- 3) Up to a 24-hour turnaround time
- 4) Location behavior
- 5) Digital behavior
- 6) Long-form completes
- 7) The ability to integrate
- 8) Demographic granularity
- 9) Customization readily available
- 10) A single, repeatable source

# Start your market research project with MFour today!

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Our market research team is here to brainstorm with you.

If you're facing a challenge, chances are, we've seen it before - and our qualified team of Senior Research Consultants can help. It is possible to get the answers to the questions you have, no matter how hard they may seem.

We're in your court and we have your back. We've worked with the largest brand-name companies and biggest market research organizations in the world. Our teams have years of experience.

Click the link below. We look forward to hearing from you.

[Start a new market research project](#)