

# **Business Retention & Expansion**

**Process for Developing the Research  
Report and Related Presentations**

# Overview

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- It's all about communication!
- The responses that you receive from the businesses are data – you are responsible for turning this data into information
- While much of the focus of this presentation is on developing a full-fledged written report, the same principles apply to short, fact-sheet type products that are targeted for specific audiences

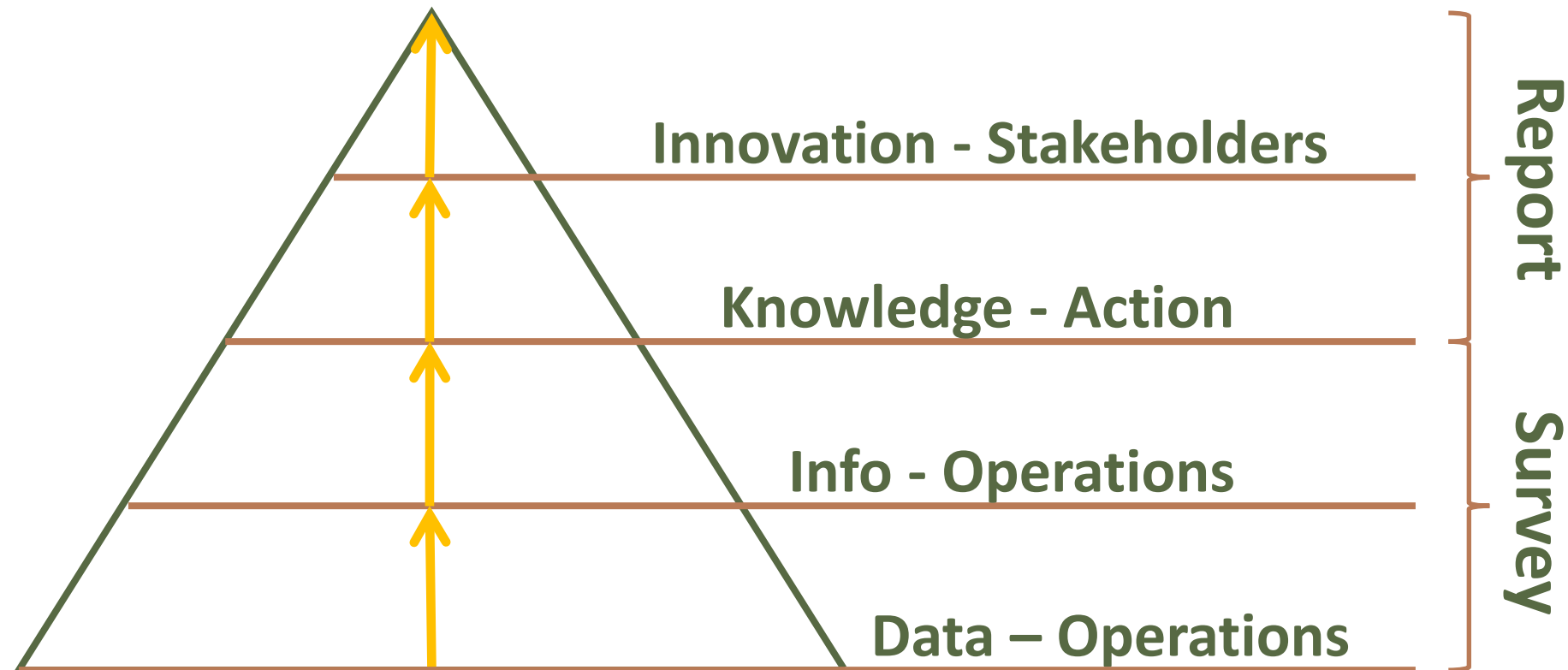
# Rationale

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- Remember that the BR&E process is also concerned with building community and community appreciation for businesses
- Written reports can benefit the Action Team's economic development planning efforts
- Written report(s) to stakeholders and the public can do much to build community support for the program
- Presentations will mean the most to the community, but the written report is the basis for these presentations

# What should the research report do?

The analysis and report should provide the basis to move from data (survey results) to innovative action within the community



# Components of a written report

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- Abstract or executive summary
- Problem statement including background information (community profile is the source for this)
- Survey methods and procedures (including difficulties or errors)
- Survey findings
- Implications – what does it all mean
- Appendices

# Components of a verbal report

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- Title slide showing Action Team and stakeholders
- Presentation objectives
- Relevant key survey findings
- Survey difficulties (including errors)
- Exact wording and format of questions to be analyzed
  - Don't attempt to analyze all questions – fit the presentation to the audience
- **Simple** graphics
- Summary of main findings, implications – encourage discussion

# Survey analysis options

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- Option 1 – Hire/recruit someone else to do it
  - *Before you begin this process, you have to have a solid idea of what the organization needs*
  - Above all, get references
  - Ask for sample reports
  - Ascertain whether the researcher/consultant did the “proper” job
  - Did the researcher/consultant perform the analysis in a timely manner?

# Survey analysis options

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- Option 2 – Do it yourself
  - Do you know what you're doing?
    - Can you handle large amounts of data?
    - Are you familiar with the basic statistical tools?
  - Do you have the time and resources to perform an effective, timely analysis?
  - Get examples of “good” reports; you have to have an idea of the direction that you need to take
- You will likely need multiple written and verbal reports targeted to different audiences



# Questions for BR&E report writers

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- What do you envision as being included in the report?
- Do you provide assistance to our group in reaching a consensus for an action plan?
- What outputs are generated as a result of your efforts?
- Can you provide references from previous writing efforts?

# Basic analysis questions

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- What should be contained in the report?
  - Outline of information
  - Report should be conducive to community/organization strategic planning
  - Are suggested action plans inherent in the report?
- What are the **needed/desired** outputs?
  - Strategic plan summary
  - Presentation materials
  - Survey response summary

# Basic analysis questions

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- What roles will be played and by whom?
  - Who will present the report to the community?
  - Can this person present information to increase knowledge and stimulate innovation instead of just presenting data?
  - How can the researcher assist the task force?
  - ***Will*** the researcher assist the task force?

# Analysis guide – SWOT worksheet

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- What appear to be the primary opportunities for and/or threats to these businesses?
- What appear to be the firms' or the community's primary strengths and/or weaknesses in dealing with these opportunities or threats?
- How can potential projects be identified from using the SWOT approach?
- Should another approach such as PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental) be used?

# SWOT analysis

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- First analysis of the questionnaire
  - What issues really “jumped out” for this community?
- Second analysis of the questionnaire
  - What can the community do to respond to the concerns and opportunities for local firms
- What are the pros and cons of using this approach to develop the research report?

# Understand the issue with the question

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- Identify the “best” method of presenting the question responses
  - Would frequencies describe the responses better than averages?
  - Utilize tables and (simple) graphs whenever possible
- Look at the cause of the responses
  - If newer businesses are facing problems, what is the cause of those problems?
  - Provide **possible** solutions in the write-up or presentations
- You are trying to identify the fewest number of factors that have an impact on the most issues faced by businesses

# Starting at the end – before you design the survey instrument/discussion guide

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- Think about the evaluation – what are the short-, medium-, and long-term goals that you want to achieve?
- Design your survey questions so that they lend themselves to the type of analysis that will be entered into the report and presentations
- Given your questions, identify the clearest statistical measures that will enable you to communicate your findings in the most transparent method possible
- Remember that the report's mission is to impart information to your audience – **just because you can perform an advanced statistical analysis doesn't mean that you should!**

# Analysis tips

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- Data collection
  - Use technology – iPad, Surface, smart phone, etc. – to capture responses
- Several platforms can be used for this
  - Online survey platforms (SurveyMonkey or Qualtrics)
  - Spreadsheet (Excel)
  - Database (Access)
  - “Canned” survey client (e-Synchronist, Executive Pulse)



# Analysis tips

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- Online survey platforms
  - Provide raw data downloads for further analysis
  - Perform basic analysis (mainly counts and averages)
- Canned survey clients
  - More detailed analysis for specific questions based on the author's ideas of what is important
  - Advanced topics such as cross-tabulation can be made much easier

# Crosstabulation

- Crosstabulation analyzes data in different ways to obtain more information
- Compare the basic business ownership counts from a fictional community with 100 businesses

Business Size	Number	Owner Gender	Number
0-5 employees	70	Male	53
5-10 employees	15	Female	47
10-20 employees	10		
Over 20 employees	5		

Owner Race	Number	Owner Age	Number
White	46	18-35 years of age	25
Black	37	35-65 years of age	47
Other	17	Over 65 years of age	28

# Crosstabulation

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- But what if we want to ask some different questions?
  - How many females of each race own businesses?
    - White females – 19
    - Black females – 18
    - Other race females – 10
  - How many whites versus blacks in each age group own businesses?

• White 18-35 years – 13	Black 18-35 years – 9
• White 35-65 years – 21	Black 35-65 years – 20
• White Over 65 years – 12	Black Over 65 years – 8

# Crosstabulation

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- Crosstabulation offers a much finer look at the data, but it can be taken too far to be used as information
- Statistical analysis packages can perform crosstabulation to 15 levels – it is unlikely that you would get much information with this fine an analysis; you would likely just be generating more data
  - Online survey platforms likely can't do this; canned survey clients only do this to the degree to which they've been programmed; can be done with Excel and Access, but this is tedious
  - The best tools to use for this are statistical packages such as Stata, SPSS, SAS, etc.
- Again – just because you can do a particular analysis doesn't mean that you should do that analysis

# Statistical measures tips

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- It's tempting to quantify the data and run averages of all responses
- Example, a community has 100 firms. There are 50 sole proprietorships, 25 partnerships, 10 LLCs, and 15 corporations.
- Your information collection database codes a sole proprietorships as a 1, a partnerships as a 2, an LLCs as a 3, and a corporation as a 4
- A simple average of these numbers would yield a value of 1.9. This number has no meaning.
- Better to report the frequencies of the different types of businesses as contained in the second bullet above

# Statistical measures tips

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- For responses that are quantifiable and can be averaged, it is sometimes useful to report the standard deviation of the responses
- The standard deviation is an easily calculated measure of the variability in the responses
- A low standard deviation indicates that there is little variation in the responses or that the respondents think very much alike
- A high standard deviation indicates that there is a great deal of variation in the responses; the opinions of the respondents are very different

# Analyzing open-ended questions

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- It is easy to measure something that is quantified (has numbers attached to the response). It is not easy to measure something that is not quantified.
- The key to measuring open-ended questions is to quantify them.
- Read through the questions to become familiar with the range of responses
- Develop a spreadsheet or table with the various response categories as column headings and the survey number as the row heading
- Re-read the responses. Indicate the category contained in the response by entering a “1” in the appropriate table cell.
- This may involve you reviewing the responses several times, but you will be able to report frequencies and (perhaps) other quantifiable statistical measures at the end of the process.

# Questions?

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