

## What to Do When Participants Rain on Your Parade: Understanding and Using the Distribution Report



### | SETTING THE SCENE...

You are responsible for designing, distributing, and reporting on a major employee engagement initiative at your organization. The results of the survey will determine the organization's hiring, management, and overall practices for the next several years. It is imperative that things go well.

You create the survey, putting enormous time and energy into its construction. You then launch the initiative and hope all goes well. As you cross your fingers, you begin to receive emails from employees with the following complaints:

- "I'm trying to do this survey, but every time I click on the link it says that I've already participated."
- "I already finished the survey yesterday, but I received a reminder today."
- "I clicked on the survey link, but the information in the survey questions isn't mine."

### | WHAT HAPPENED?

Don't panic. These types of issues occur often in "Private with Unique Key" surveys (a survey that can only be taken by an individual one time, in order to prevent "ballot-box stuffing"). When issues such as these arise, turn to the Distribution Report for guidance.

DEFINITION: The Distribution Report is designed to help participants understand the status of their survey initiatives as it relates to participation. The Distribution Report will reveal if a participant has "Participated" (including the date & time) or "Not Participated," or whether the "Email [was] Read" (i.e. the participant opened the link, but did not complete the survey), or "Bounced."

### | WHERE IS IT LOCATED?



### | HOW IS IT USED?

If a survey recipient mentions any of the complaints above, do the following:

1. Go to the Distribution Report.
2. Search for the proper email address.
3. Look in the status column to determine their status of participation.

Does it say "Not Participated"? Or, can you not find the email address at all? Don't be confused. Just ask your participant if one (or all) of the following things could have happened:

- Did someone forward you the survey invitation? **If a user forwards a "Private with Unique Key" survey that's already been taken, then the recipient of the forwarded email will see this message:**

We thank you for your feedback, but we show that you have already participated in this survey on 4/9/08 10:02 AM. If you feel that you have received this message in error, please feel free to email us with details at [dtunstall@zarca.com](mailto:dtunstall@zarca.com).

Thank You,

The Support Team at Zarca Interactive

- Did the participant forward their invite *before* taking the survey him/herself? **If the recipient of the forwarded message participates first, then the original invitee will be unable to do so.**

Does a participant say that they received a reminder today, even though they took the survey days ago

- Visit the Status column of the Distribution Report. Look for the participant's email address and note if the system indicates that they have not participated. **If a participant took a forwarded survey and not the survey originally intended for him/her, then the participant will continue to receive reminders.** Does the participant say the information in the survey is not their own?
- If a survey contains Pre-Population (a feature that allows survey creators to pre-fill a survey with information about the participant), and someone forwards their survey, the recipient of the forwarded survey will see the *original* recipient's information.

*Example: You send Amy in Marketing a survey and it contains her first and last names, direct telephone extension, and her position title as the Director of Marketing. Amy forwards the survey to the Marketing Assistant, John. John then opens the survey and finds Amy's information. When John contacts you about the "mistake," ask him if he received the survey via a forwarded email.*

## **REMEMBER...**

The Distribution Report is a helpful tool to learn "what happened" to your survey invites. Learn it. Embrace it. Use it.