

Deliberative Polling®

A Public Policy Tool
for
Public Utility Commissions



Information excerpted from <http://cd.stanford.edu/polls/docs/summary/>

William J. Hughes Center for
Public Policy

Deliberative Polling

Especially suitable for issues where the public may have little knowledge or information, or where the public may have failed to confront the trade-offs applying to public policy.

It is a social science experiment and a form of public education in the broadest sense.

*And just what is this “thing”
called Deliberative Polling?*

**A process that uses television/Internet,
education and public opinion research
in a new and constructive way.**

Basic Steps

- Decide the issue and poll a random sample.
- A subset of those sampled becomes the group of people who get to “deliberate.”
- Deliberators get to question experts + policy makers.
- The subset is re-pollled.
- Change in opinion reflects the general public.

Decide the issue and poll a random sample.

- Use this for issues that have a public policy impact.
- A random, representative sample is first polled. At a minimum, 800 people.

A subset becomes the group of people who get to “deliberate.”

- After this baseline poll, members of the sample are invited to gather at a single place to discuss the issues.
- Deliberators are given carefully balanced subject materials to read before D-Day.
- Deliberators meet with subject matter experts on D-Day.

Deliberators get to question policy makers

- Utility Commissioners
- High level DEP people
- Legislators
 - State
 - Federal
- Local officials

The subset is re-polled.

- Again asked the original questions.
- Parts of the deliberative events are broadcast on television/Internet.
- Peers hear their peers.

Change in opinion reflects the general public

- a poll with a human face
- scientific sample but it also has the concreteness and immediacy of a focus group
- taped and edited accounts of the small group discussions are aired

**...Electric Utility Deliberative Polling® Conducted for
CPL (Central Power and Light), WTU (West Texas Utilities) and SWEPCO (South West Electric Power)**

	Before Deliberation %	After Deliberation %	Difference %
<i>Option to pursue first (to provide additional electric power to service territory):</i>			
Renewable energy (CPL)	67	16	-51
Renewable energy (WTU)	71	35	-36
Renewable energy (SWEPCO)	67	28	-39
Invest in conservation(CPL)	11	46	+35
Invest in conservation (WTU)	7	31	+24
Invest in conservation(SWEPCO)	16	50	+34
Build fossil fuel plant (CPL)	11	29	+18
Buy and transport power (WTU)	10	18	+ 8
<i>% of customers who were willing to pay at least \$1 more on their monthly bill for renewable energy</i>			
CPL	58	81	+23
WTU	56	90	+34
SWEPCO	52	84	+32