



## George Horace Gallup

(born 1901 in Jefferson, Iowa, died 1984 in his holiday home in Switzerland)

This veritable pioneer in market and opinion research originally started out in the journalism and advertising sector, before later turning his attention to market research, and especially political opinion research.

He was the first person to use the probability theory in order to carry out representative surveys with a scientific basis.

The most famous anecdote which served to propel Gallup to international renown involves the 1936 presidential elections in the USA. At that time, the journal Literary Digest surveyed thousands, perhaps even millions, of Americans through a written questionnaire. As a result of the answers received, it was predicted that Landon would beat Roosevelt and assume presidency of the United States.

George Gallup carried out a representative sample (2000 weekly face-to-face interviews), and forecast that victory would go to Roosevelt.

In a letter to the editor before the results of the survey had been released, Gallup already predicted that Literary Digest would wrongly predict a win for Landon. And he was right. Why?

Well, the results of written surveys are intricately linked to the type of person who agrees to participate. Moreover, Literary Digest sent the survey to people who were registered as telephone or car owners. At that time, however, shortly after the economic crisis, only select voting groups had such luxuries.



This first 'coup' gave way to the term 'Gallup Poll' as a synonym for exact opinion surveys using a scientific, statistical basis.

Under his auspices, based on this commitment to quality and his motivation, independent institutes from almost 100 countries have come together to form part of the GALLUP INTERNATIONAL network, a partnership which helps to ensure the smooth coordination of international projects (well-established project associations, identical methodical understanding), guaranteeing impeccable levels of quality.



*Robert Kappeler, George H. „Ted“ Gallup, Hélène Riffault*