

Survey Questionnaire Development and Assessment*: Step-by-Step

1. Identify the key issues you wish to explore or 'test' via the survey. Review available literature, including proprietary sources, to determine if there are good surveys or items that already exist to measure the key issues.
- *2. Convert these key issues into questions and remember to:
 - **State the question in very specific terms, using language that is appropriate for the target population.**
 - **Use multiple questions to sufficiently cover the topic.**
 - **Avoid 'double-negatives'**
 - **Avoid asking multiple questions in one**
 - **Be sure response categories match the question, are exhaustive and don't overlap.**
- *3. Determine what other data are needed for analytical purposes.
[Demographics, other background, contact information.]
4. Determine how the questions will be ordered and formatted and be sure to include directions for responses.
5. Have survey instrument reviewed by others including representatives from the target group

A Note about Response Choices

- 1) **There is no "right" number of choices, but keep it manageable. Even-numbers of responses prevent "waffling"**
- 2) **Answers typically are either forced choice (yes/no, descriptive) or likert-like "scales,"**
 - *Temporal (*e.g., never, sometimes, most of the time*)
 - *Qualitative (*e.g., poor, fair, good, excellent*)
- 3) **Answer order matters and should be consistent (pos to neg., or neg to pos.)**
- 4) **Response directions are critical.**
 - * MO (mark one)
 - * MATA (mark all that apply)

Designing surveys is complicated and time consuming! Use Caution.

TYPES OF SURVEYS

Mail Surveys (must have correct addresses and return instructions, must conduct tracking and follow-up). Response is typically low.

Electronic Surveys (must be sure respondents have access to internet, must have a host site that is recognizable or used by respondents; must have current email addresses). Response is often better.

Web + (combining mail and e-surveys). Data input required, analysis is harder.

Phone Surveys (labor intensive and require trained survey administrators, access to phone numbers, usually CATI software). Response is generally better than mail, but must establish refusal rules.

Staged Surveys (trained survey administrators required, caution must be used when collecting sensitive info). Can be administered orally, multiple response options possible, response rates very high.

Intercept Surveys (require trained administrators). Refusal is high.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE SURVEY RESPONSE

Write a good survey and tailor administration to respondents.

Advertise survey purpose and administration details in advance.

Carefully document who receives and completes surveys.

Aggressively follow-up. Send reminders.

Consider using incentives.

Make response easy.

Remember: Non-response bias can severely limit your ability to interpret and use survey data