







CCCC Survey Question Design Tips







Thinking of creating a survey? Here are some helpful pointers you can keep in mind when composing your survey questions.

Structure

-  Are answer choices appropriate? (overlapping choices, etc.)
-  Have we already asked this question in a different survey?
-  Can a question be added to an existing survey, rather than creating a new one?
-  There are  good and  bad ways to write survey questions. See examples below.


Purpose

-  Why are we asking these questions?
-  How are survey answers being used?
-  Who will have access and ownership over this survey data?
-  Are all questions necessary? If not, can the survey be made more concise?

 **You recently attended a webinar. Did you find the content interesting and useful?**

A. Yes B. No


Problems: This is a "double barrel" question. Its asking for a yes/no response to two different questions: whether the content was interesting and whether it was useful, each of which may require different answers.

 **Solution:** This could be posed as two separate questions, as one more broadly defined question, i.e. "rate your overall experience with the webinar", or as an open-ended question asking users to describe their feelings about the webinar.

 **How would you rate the excellence of the webinar you attended?**

A. Excellent B. Great C. Poor

Problems: This question has multiple problems. It presumes that the webinar is "excellent" in the question, and the answer choices do not display a full range of choices, forcing the respondent to choose something that likely does not align with their true opinion.

 **Solution:** A Likert scale could be used for question answers, with the question reworded appropriately. Example:

Indicate whether you agree with the following:

"I thought the webinar I attended was excellent."

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree



I receive not too many communications.

A. Agree B. Disagree

Problems: This question presents a double negative and the wording would likely be confusing for respondents.



Solution:

How do you feel about the amount of communications that you receive from us?

- A. Far too many communications
- B. Too many communications
- C. Appropriate number of communications
- D. Not enough communications
- E. I have received no communication at all



How old are you?

- A. 0-20
- B. 20-30
- C. 30-40

Problems: This question has multiple problems. Answer choices overlap, so it is not clear which choice a 20-year-old or 30-year old should select. Additionally, there are no choices for anyone over the age of 40. That person would not be able to complete the survey.



Solution: More appropriate answer choices:

- A. 0-20
- B. 21-30
- C. 31-40
- D. 40+

Tips & Tricks



You can increase the response rate for your survey and improve the overall user experience by following a few basic guidelines:



Test your survey! Viewing your survey from the front-end can help you catch errors you might not have otherwise noticed. Ask others to help you test it as well.



Avoid using acronyms. These are confusing when respondents don't know their meaning.



Consider different question and answer formats. Would it be better as a list? A fill in the blank? A scale with slider bars? A matrix? Focus on ease of completion for the user.



Tell respondents *why* they're being surveyed. When people understand that their data will be used for beneficial purposes, they are much more likely to volunteer information.