Developing a Survey

Develop Survey Timeline

Determine goals of survey.
- What information do I need to address my assessment needs?
- Is a survey the best method to gather this information?

Create a draft of the survey.
- Start with what you need to report and work backwards to form questions that will “complete” the report.
- Keep the survey concise; use the following to determine if questions should be on survey:
  - essential to know – keep;
  - useful to know – keep to a minimum;
  - not directly necessary to goal – discard.

Pilot test the survey.
- Use a small group to identify and correct problems in wording and instructions.
- Make revisions as necessary to improve clarity.
- For online surveys, this is also a good time to test skip logic patterns, etc.

Determine who should take the survey.
- Using a sample is often equally effective to surveying the entire population.

Map out implementation timeline needed to get a satisfactory response rate.
- A 7-10 day administration period is usually sufficient for online surveys.
- Consider if advance messages and/or reminders will be needed.

Effective Survey and Question Design

- Keep surveys short!
- Begin your survey with core material; save demographic and background questions for the end.
- Keep questions clear and concise and use neutral language.
- Avoid the use of technical wording, jargon, or acronyms.

Sample Question Types

Closed-Ended Questions: questions with a set of provided response choices. For example:
- Dichotomous questions: allows respondents to choose from one of two answers.
  - Yes  No
  - True  False
- Likert Scales: response choices that fall along a scale that forms a series of attitude dimensions.
  - Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Open-ended Questions: questions that allow respondents to answer in their own words.
- Open-ended questions can be useful when asking for attitudes or feelings, opinions, or additional comments.
- These questions take more time to fill out and have higher skip rates.
- Analyzing open-ended questions thoroughly can be time consuming and difficult.

Common Survey Design Pitfalls

- Ask for opinions on two issues within the same question.
- Leading the respondent to a particular conclusion.
- Questions that present only one side of the issue.
- Overuse of open-ended questions.

Ways To Avoid Pitfalls

- Use caution with the words “and”/“or” in questions.
- Use neutral language in survey question construction.
- Present both sides of an issue.
- Minimize the use of open-ended questions.

Calculating Survey Response Rate

Response rate: percentage of people who respond to your survey

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\text{Number of Complete Surveys} \div \text{Number of People Contacted} = \text{Response Rate}
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