

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

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