

Writing Surveys

Teams can use this tool to write surveys to collect data from various audiences.

PURPOSE	To write a survey that accurately collects opinions, experiences, and insights of people in a variety of roles
PRODUCT	A survey
PARTICIPANTS	The data team, with guidance from a university partner or other local survey expert
MATERIALS	Sample surveys and opportunities to revise questions and write new questions to gather important data
TIME	Time varies based on the scope of measured constructs and survey length, plus time for development, field-testing, administration, and analysis
PREPARATION	<p>Draft the survey. Some teams use an online tool such as SurveyMonkey (https://surveymonkey.com), Qualtrics (https://qualtrics.com/free-account), Blue from Explorance (https://explorance.com/products/blue), or GetFeedback (https://getfeedback.com) to help gather data with greater accuracy.</p> <p>Ask a local data expert to review the draft survey to ensure the data from it will accurately gather the needed information.</p>
PROCESS	<p>Step 1 <i>Write a strong opening</i> to help people understand what the survey is asking and why.</p> <p>Step 2 <i>Sequence the survey questions</i> in a logical way. Page breaks, section themes, and instructions help respondents keep focused on the task.</p> <p>Step 3 <i>Use the same question</i> in a series of surveys or use the same survey over time to build a baseline and measure changes in respondents' attitudes.</p> <p>Step 4 <i>Be brief.</i> Respondents really don't like long surveys.</p> <p>Step 5 <i>Save personal or sensitive questions</i> for the end of the survey—if they're absolutely necessary. Asking these questions at the beginning can create anxiety for respondents.</p> <p>Step 6 <i>Create survey questions that explore one idea</i> at a time to ensure respondents understand what you are asking. Vague, general, multipart questions can be confusing and tough to answer.</p> <p>Step 7 <i>Be specific.</i> Provide details about any question people could interpret in more than one way.</p>

PROCESS Step 8

(cont.) *Keep it relevant.* Create a survey that asks respondents questions that directly apply to them to keep the respondents focused.

Step 9

Avoid yes or no questions. These questions don't capture the answers of indecisive people or consider nuances of opinions.

Step 10

Use words when possible. When designing answer choices, use phrases such as *slightly likely* or *extremely likely*, not numbers to indicate degree of preference. However, if you are using a Likert scale, it's helpful to use an even number of options. Often people will choose a 3 (neutral) on a scale of 1–5. On a scale of 1–4, people choose agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Reference

SurveyMonkey. (n.d.a). How to create surveys. Accessed at surveyMonkey.com/mp/how-to-create-surveys on June 23, 2022.