

tips for building an effective survey

Surveys can be used for a variety of purposes, from customer satisfaction and participation, to brand positioning, to product exploration and testing.

So how do you put together an effective survey which both engages to participant, gathers a sufficient amount of data but does not consume too much time. Surveys also need to follow a logical order while maintaining clarity in purpose and questioning.

These tips focus on compiling questions that will appeal to participants while collecting vital data.

Think of all the bad surveys out there, one of the most common mistakes for a survey is its biased approach. The whole point of conducting surveys is to collect clear data from individuals, therefore structuring questions is vital.

If you have never considered using surveys because of logistical difficulties, the advent of third party hosted web surveys allows businesses to build online surveys for their website with easy to use tools as well as efficiently reviewing and exporting the data for analysis.

However the first step is knowing what to ask. We have all seen the comedic

questions asked on the street to the unsuspecting pedestrian and the results they can yield, therefore proper preparation is key to success.

- Accurately title the survey and have a brief introduction.
- Organize your questions according to the title and introduction.
- Once your questions have been assembled assess each questions merit, the fewer the better.
- The sequence of questions is important, previous questions influence present ones.
- To focus a survey, start with general questions, then progress to more specific ones.
- Try to use laymen terminology, while ensuring you do not belittle your participants intelligence.
- Web surveys need to be as clear as possible in their question structure.
- Ask only one question at a time.
- Do not insert your opinion into the question.
- Do not create multiple choice questions with a "right answer"..
- When using multiple choice questions, be sure that you are not creating a bias in the answers.
- When using a YES/NO answer be sure your question fits the format.
- When choosing a range 1-10 or strongly agree to strongly disagree, 5 choices is a standard.
- Double check name spelling, phone numbers, addresses.
- When using text fields consider how you will compile the information gathered.
- To increase completed surveys, keep the form short and to the point.
- Getting a 20% return rate on web surveys is a reasonable return.
- Offer an incentive to increase completed surveys.
- Test the survey to ensure effectiveness.