

Best Practices for Creating Surveys

1. At the beginning of the survey, provide the [respondents](#) with:
 - Clear instructions
 - Purpose of the survey
 - Estimated completion time (to take the survey)
 - Assurance that their answers will remain anonymous
 - What will be done with the survey data that you collect.
2. Provide clear survey responses:
 - Yes or No
 - True or False
 - Consider using a 5-point [Likert scale](#) when you create survey questions.
 - Etc.
3. Be careful how you group your questions.
 - The first question should engage the respondent to *get them in the flow*.
 - Place [demographic](#) questions at the end of the survey to avoid [response bias](#).
 - Earlier questions in a survey can affect how respondents respond to later questions.
4. Group similar questions together in the same section. Use titles to introduce each section.
5. Avoid double-barreled questions (such as using the word “and”) because a survey question should only have one single concept in it.
6. Keep your questions (and answer choices) short, simple and clear. Why? Because respondents are less likely to answer:
 - Long, complicated, and confusing questions.
 - Respondents will not finish your survey if it is too hard
7. Avoid using [jargon](#) and technical terms, such as:
 - [BATF](#) ○ [CID](#)
 - [JTTF](#) ○ IRS
 - [CPS](#) ○ PD
 - CIA ○ Etc.
8. Create questions that will give you precise answers.
9. Avoid leading questions, such as:
 - “When did you stop beating your wife?”
 - ✓ That question is biased because it implies that the respondent is a wife beater.
 - ✓ Survey questions should not have biased answers built into them.

10. Do not provide more than 10 answers to select from when you create a question.
11. Select needed classifications of respondents that are appropriate for the topic that you are researching, such as:
 - Victims
 - Witnesses
 - Officers
 - City Council Members
 - Citizens
 - Neighbors
 - Friends
 - Customers
 - Immigrants
 - Students
 - [INSERT YOUR NEEDED CLASSIFICATION HERE]
 - Etc.
12. Select the smallest [sample size](#) possible to meet your needs.
13. Include a “Thank You” statement at the end of the survey.
14. Before you conduct issue your survey, contact your [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) for:
 - I.
 - Approval of your created survey and
 - Permission to issue it to respondents.
15. Once you’ve created your survey:
 - Send it to a few friends or colleagues to try it
 - Ask them how long it took to complete the survey
 - Did their survey answers provide you with useful data?
16. [Response rates](#) to online surveys usually range from 30 to 60%.
17. Be respectful of those who do not wish to take your survey.

References

Best Practices for Improving Survey Participation. (n.d.). Oracle Corp.

<https://www.oracle.com/applications/products.html>

Learn the Top 12 Best Ways to Use Surveys. (n.d.). Constant Contact Corp.

<https://img.constantcontact.com/docs/pdf/learn-the-top-12-best-ways-to-use-surveys-constant-contact.pdf>

Nardi, P. M. (2005). *Doing survey research: A guide to quantitative methods.* Boston: Pearson.

Survey Design and Administration Best Practices. (2022). Louisiana State University.

<https://grok.lsu.edu/article.aspx?articleid=17958>

Surveys (Qualtrics). (n.d.). University of Wisconsin - Madison Information Technology.

<https://it.wisc.edu/services/surveys-qualtrics/>