



Survey Questions Done Right!

By Linda Rink, President, *RINK Consulting*. December 2024

You need to do a survey – but how to ensure you get the answers you need from the maximum number of respondents? A critical factor is the **survey questionnaire**.

It may be tempting to try writing it yourself, or go with ready-made survey questions from Survey Monkey, but developing an optimal questionnaire for your specific needs is not as easy or straightforward as you might think.

Here are some guidelines:

Before you begin, be clear about why you are doing the research. Ask yourself:

- What specific information do I need? And what am I going to do with the information, once I get it?

Your questionnaire should be written with this in mind. Too often I see surveys that ask for unnecessary information. It's easy to throw in everything but the kitchen sink, but the longer the questionnaire, the larger your percentage of incompletes. *People just get tired!*

Here are 6 questions to ask when reviewing a survey questionnaire:

- 1) ***Does the order of the questions make sense?***
- 2) ***Is the language understandable?*** (Plain English, no jargon, grammatically correct)
- 3) ***Length: too short or too long?*** (A good rule of thumb is 20 questions for an online survey)
- 4) ***Easy to take, or cumbersome?*** (Clear instructions are essential)
- 5) ***Do the questions include all possible answers?*** (A common mistake is an incomplete set of options for a multiple choice question)
- 6) ***Is it biased?*** (Is the tone neutral? Or does it assume or lead to certain answers?)

Finally, always pretest! Have someone other than yourself check it for logic, language and length.

Remember: you can't go back and make people retake your survey! My advice is to work with a professional market researcher to ensure your survey gives you the best results possible.

Considering a survey? Contact me at lrink@LindaRink.com.

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