

HOW TO BUILD A SURVEY

Anyone who has built a survey knows that it can be a hard, and arduous process. It takes an understanding of how research is done, to create a truly effective survey. The most important step in creating a good survey is knowing what it is that you want to understand, and building your questions around that.

Now lets look at what a good survey should contain.

1. First you need to look at what it is you are trying to discover or achieve with this survey. Or in other words, what's the point of the survey. Also, you should figure what action will be taken as a result of this survey.
2. Now you need to picture in your head what kind of visuals will this survey produce. Graphs, tables, charts should all be formulated to help you achieve your end result, or action. So think about what your final data will look like and how it can be used to achieve your desired outcome.
3. With an idea of where your going, it's now important to figure out how your going to get there. So ask yourself "how easy is it going to be to get the appropriate information from my respondents?" If it's too hard, then you need to revise your questions or technique. You can do this by changing the question or the method.
4. It's time now to look at the questions your going to ask. Are the questions in the proper order? Does one question have an effect on the following question? Do the questions provide answers that are relevant to the survey as a whole.
5. Write down multiple versions on the same question. These questions make up the heart of the survey, make sure that you are using the right ones.
6. It's important to test your questions before coming up with your final survey. Pretest the survey on 20 or more people. This should give you an understanding of the abilities of the survey. Also, you should time your survey. A good survey takes only 10-15 minutes to administer.
7. After pretesting the survey, look at the respondents answers. When reviewing the responses ask yourself: Did the answers make sense? Were the respondents unsure about anything? Did the respondents have any questions about the survey? Were the questions understood? Was there anything surprising in the responses?
8. With this information in hand you're now ready to make the official survey. Once the survey has been re-tooled, pretest it again to make sure that the efficiency of the questionnaire is maximized.

However, creating a survey is only half of the story. Once you've put the right questions together and in the right order, you need to decide on how you're going to administer the survey.

Each method of distribution comes with it's own type of response. You need to look at all the different ways of reaching your respondents. Surveys by phone, email, mail, online, or in person can yield different types of responses. It's worth your time to sit down and consider which of these methods would most likely suite the needs of your research.

Once you've settled on the method of delivery, and you've administered all of your surveys, it's time to collect and sort through the mass of data you've received. How this is done, and with what technique you will accomplish this, is up to you. There are lots of options out there, but it's important to look into the ones that will help you accomplish your overall goal.

It's crucial with any survey to always keep in mind the big picture. Remember during every stage of development, distribution, and collection to make sure that your research needs are being met.