



How to design an effective survey

Creating an effective survey doesn't need to be a difficult or a time-consuming task, if you follow these tips, you will be able to develop a quick and simple survey.

1. Work out what the purpose of your survey is

What are you trying to achieve from your survey, what is the goal of the survey, what are you wanting to understand from the survey?

The first step in designing your survey is to know and understand its purpose, for example, I want to understand what matters most to local community members. Once you have your purpose it will be easier to develop your questions that relate to your purpose.

2. Only ask questions that matter

When developing your survey, it is important to keep in mind that you should only be asking questions that matter and are relevant to your purpose. An example is asking the respondent's, "What type of vehicle do you own?" Is this relevant to your purpose, if not, don't include it. Other tips are:

- Keep the survey relevant and simple so it is more likely to be completed by the respondents.
- Understand what specific data you want to collect and how you will use and analyse the data before you start to design the questions.
- Make sure questions are specific/direct, do not include double barrel questions i.e. Do you think there are enough parks in the local area and which ones needs more equipment?
- When using multiple choice answers, provide balanced options which don't bias the result i.e. unbalanced would be limited options in the positive: highly agree, agree, somewhat agree. A balanced option that allows positive or negative responses would be: highly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, highly disagree.
- Don't ask leading questions such as "What was the best part of the event?" Ask, "Was there an aspect of the event that left an impact on you?"
- Don't include too many open-ended questions as these take the respondent longer to answer. Remember: you want them to complete the survey and not stop halfway through because it is taking too long, or it is too hard.
- It is better to ask demographic questions near the end of the survey, demographic questions are questions that relate to age, address, employment etc.



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3. Tell them about yourself/your group, why you are doing the survey and how long it will take to complete

Before launching straight into survey questions, it is important to let the respondent know who you are, why you are doing the survey, why their responses matter and provide a rough guide of how long the survey should take them to complete. You may also want to advise them how their data will be used.

4. Test and proofread your survey before you send it out

It may sound obvious, but one of the most important steps when creating an online survey is to ensure that the survey works correctly, including the link and if you have set up any questions within your survey that are conditional, make sure they are flowing and connecting correctly. Remember to also ensure that it has been proof-read for any typos and to ensure the questions are in a logical order and are easy to understand.

Keep the questions as short as you can, use easy English and don't use acronyms.

Further information on survey types and questions can be found here:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/Basic+Survey+Design+-+Questionnaire+Design>

Survey applications

Here is a list of some survey applications that have free versions available.

Application	Link	Free/Paid
Google forms	https://www.google.com.au/forms/about/	Free – You will need a Free Google account to create a Google form
Microsoft forms	https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/online-surveys-polls-quizzes	Free – You will need a Microsoft account to create a Microsoft form
Survey Monkey	www.surveymonkey.com	Free - However, you can upgrade to a paid version to unlock more features
Jotform	https://www.jotform.com/	Free