

# Designing Surveys for Maximum Response

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*No matter what the topic of your survey, it is important to get the best response possible.*

## Common questions about creating effective surveys

### 1. How can survey design encourage people to respond?

Time is precious to everyone and a survey that is respectful, to the point, and uses as few words as possible will garner a better response. Yes/no answers, multiple choice and scaled responses are time savers and should be used when appropriate. The look of your survey should be simple and professional, with conservative use of design elements like colors or graphics.

### 2. What type of rating scale works best?

As a rule, scales such as a [Likert Scale](#) should be rated from lowest to highest or least to most starting from the left and going to the right - the way Standard English text is read. For example:

1. Not at all likely. 2. Somewhat likely. 3. Likely. 4. Very likely. 5. Not applicable.

### 3. What other items should I consider while creating my survey?

Understanding your audience is key to getting a good reception. Think about the language of the survey; is appropriate for the age or education or the proposed respondents? Avoid using business jargon. Be discerning when selecting your stakeholders. Consider if the topic of your survey is something the targeted respondents can reasonably contribute information to. Avoid personal questions whenever possible.

## How to use this topic in your organization

Step 1: Review your draft survey for ways it could be more user-friendly by applying the tips mentioned above. Consider: Is your introduction brief and welcoming? Are the questions grouped in a logical order? Do I really need to ask that?

Step 2: Go through a survey you have drafted to see if you can restate the questions concisely while making sure they are easily understood by everyone and not just the targeted group. Also, see if any open ended questions can be changed into a multiple choice or scaled answers.

Step 3: Test your survey before launching it. Silently observe those taking it and ask questions after they are finished such as: "Did you find anything confusing or repetitive?" "Are there any questions that were difficult to answer and why?" "What do you think of the length?"

*This white paper was developed after assisting on surveys for the Improve Group. The author incorporated information provided at multiple [MESI](#) Conference sessions.*