

Marketing Tips: Questionnaire Design



What are you trying to find out?

- A good questionnaire should give results that will tell you what you want to find out.
- Write down what you are trying to do in a few clear sentences, and work from here.

How are you going to use the information?

- There is no point conducting research if you don't use the results.
- Make sure you cover everything you will need when you come to analysing the answers. Perhaps you want to compare answers given by men and women, and then you need to record the gender of each respondent on each questionnaire.

Telephone, Postal, Web, Face-to-Face?

- There are many methods used to ask questions, and each has its good and bad points. Postal surveys are cheap but responses can be low and can take a long time to receive; face-to-face is expensive but generates the fullest responses; web surveys are cost-effective but vary on response rates; and telephone is costly, but will often generate high response rates, give fast turnaround and will allow for probing.

Qualitative or Quantitative?

- Do you want to focus on the number or are you more interested in interpreting feedback from respondents to bring out common themes?
- The method used will generally be determined by the subject matter you are researching and the types of respondents you will be contacting.

Keep it short.

- We are all busy; people are unlikely to answer a long questionnaire.
- If you are going to be asking your customers to answer your questionnaire in-store, make sure the interview is no longer than 10 minutes (about 10 to 15 questions).
- If your questionnaire is too long, try to remove some questions. Read each question and ask, "How am I going to use this information?" If you don't know, don't include it!

Use simple and direct language.

- The questions must be clearly understood by the respondent. The wording of a question should be simple. Don't use odd words, jargon or long sentences.



Start with something general.

- Respondents will be put-off and may even refuse to complete your questionnaire if you ask questions that are too personal at the start (financial matters, age, and religion).

Place the most important questions in the first half of the questionnaire.

- Respondents sometimes only complete part of a questionnaire, so partially completed questionnaires will still contain important information.

Leave enough space to record the answers.

- If you are going to include questions which may require a long answer e.g. ask someone why they do a particular thing, then make sure you leave enough room to write in the answers.

Test your questionnaire on your colleagues/friends.

- No matter how much time and effort you put into designing your questionnaire, there is no substitute for testing it. Complete some interviews with your colleagues or friends BEFORE you ask the real respondents. This will allow you to time your questionnaire, make any final changes, and get feedback.