

# TIPS FOR USING SURVEYS

Effective surveys focus on clarity, brevity, and reducing respondent burden to ensure high-quality data. The following tips apply with surveys of all kinds, whether you want to measure employee engagement, understand market trends, or enhance customer satisfaction.



## Designing the Survey

- **Identify the survey objectives:** Determine exactly what information you need before writing questions. Every question should contribute to one or more objectives.
- **Keep the survey short and focused:** Respect the respondent's time. This can improve drop-out rates (people who start but do not complete a survey).
- **Write the survey questions:**
  - Avoid relying upon yes-or-no questions: They are useful for gathering simple data but do not yield detailed insights.
  - Avoid leading questions: Make sure questions are neutral and do not imply a "correct" or desired answer.
  - Avoid combined questions: Ask only one question at a time. Do not combine topics with one question (such as, "rate the volume and quality").
  - Place sensitive questions last: Ask for personal information toward the end, after building trust.
  - Order questions logically: Begin with general, straightforward questions and move toward more specific or complex topics.
- **Use familiar language:**
  - Avoid jargon (unless the audience for the survey is within the organization and would understand the terminology).
  - Make questions easy to understand. Avoid language that allows respondents to interpret the questions in multiple ways.
- **Use consistent and balanced scales:** Use clear, labeled rating scales (such as Likert scales) and offer a neutral option if necessary.
- **Pilot the survey:** Do a trial run using a small group.
  - Note how the pilot respondents interpret the questions.
  - Spot errors or opportunities for clarification before launching the survey.
  - Refine the survey to reflect the pilot feedback.

## Launching the Survey

- Consider using multiple channels for the survey link, as appropriate for the audience and objectives. Use email, text messaging, website, and social media.
- Optimize the survey for use on mobile devices.
- Identify a deadline for completing the survey.
- Send a polite reminder 2-3 days after the initial invitation.
- Limit the number of reminders to avoid annoying recipients.
- Stop reminders when the deadline arrives for survey completion.
- Thank all survey respondents in a timely manner.