RESEARCH

Creating Online Surveys

Tip Sheet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH& EVALUATION STRATEGY

For more, see http://blog.surveymonkey.com/blog/2012/04/13/10-online-survey-tips/

Defining Purpose in Online Surveys

- How will the data you collect be analyzed?
- What is the goal?
- What decision do you hope to impact?
- Who will be using the results?
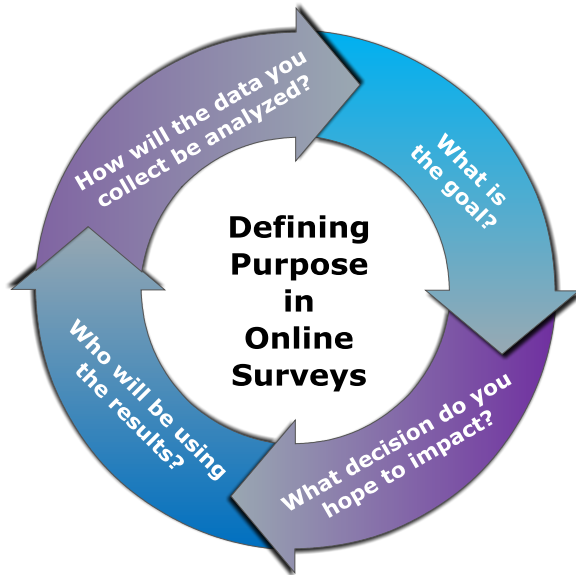
Clearly define the purpose of your online survey

- What do you hope to accomplish with this survey?
  - What is the goal of this survey?
  - Why are you creating this survey?
- How will you use the data you are collecting?
- What decisions do you hope to impact with the results of this survey? (This will later help you identify what data you need to collect in order to make these decisions.)

Fuzzy goals lead to fuzzy results, and the last thing you want to end up with is a set of results that provide no real decision–enhancing value.

Keep the survey short and focused

Shorter surveys generally have higher response rates and lower abandonment percentages.

- Once a respondent loses interest they simply abandon the task – leaving you to determine how to interpret that partial data set (or whether to use it all).

- Research has shown that a survey should take 5 minutes or less to complete.
 6 – 10 minutes is acceptable but significant abandonment rates occur after 11 minutes.

Short and focused helps with both quality and quantity of response.

Keep the questions simple

- Try to make questions specific and direct.
- Do not use acronyms or technical jargon.
- Create list responses rather than asking open ended questions.
- Focus on high level questions first.
- For more about questions, **click here**.

1. In 100 words or less, explain the full ministry plan to end achievement gaps.
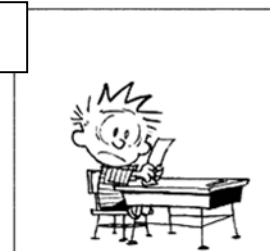
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Keep your rating scales consistent

If you choose to use rating scales (e.g. from 1 – 5) keep it consistent throughout the survey. Use the same number of points on the scale and make sure meanings of high and low stay consistent throughout the survey.
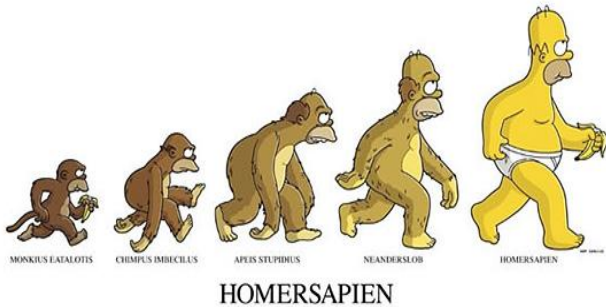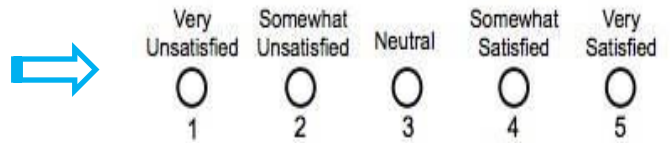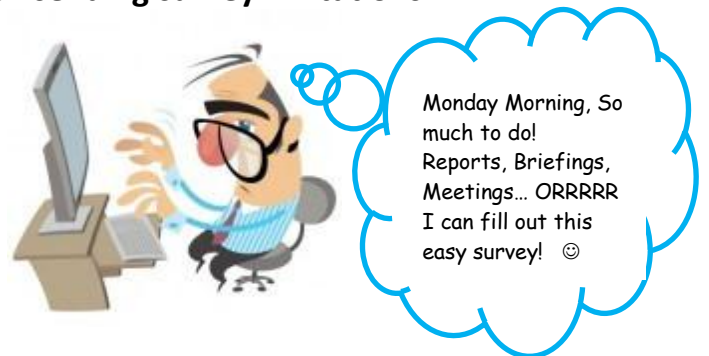

Logical ordering

Make sure your survey flows in a logical order. Begin with a brief introduction that motivates respondents to complete the survey (e.g. "Please answer the following short survey on achievement."). Next, it is a good idea to start from broader–based questions and then move to those narrower in scope. It is usually better to collect demographic data and ask any sensitive questions near the end. If you are asking for contact information, place that information last.

Pre-test your survey!!

Make sure you pre–test your survey with a few members of your target audience and/or co–workers to find glitches and unexpected question interpretations. This is especially important for ministry surveys going out into the field.

Consider your audience when sending survey invitations

An "open and click rate" is the percentage of respondents, out of the entire audience the survey is sent to, that actually opens and clicks to start your survey. Recent statistics show the highest open and click rates take place on Monday, Friday and Sunday. For surveys being sent internally in the ministry as well as externally to the field, the best day and time to send a survey is Monday at 9:00am.

Monday Morning, So much to do! Reports, Briefings, Meetings… ORRRRR I can fill out this easy survey! ☺

Reminders

While not appropriate for all surveys, sending out survey completion reminders to your sample can often provide a significant boost in response rates.
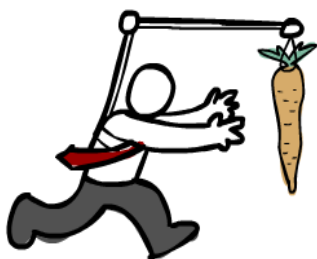
Incentives

Depending upon the type of survey and survey audience, offering an incentive is usually very effective at improving response rates. Generally, people like the idea of getting *something* for their time. **Research** has shown that incentives typically boost response rates by 50% on average.