10 Tips for designing a market research questionnaire



The purpose of a questionnaire is to help you gather information that will allow you to make an infomed decision to help solve a marketing problem or gather useful marketing information. It can be challenging to identify precisely what your information needs are, what types of questions to ask and how to best measure different concepts you want to learn about. Designing and writing a useful questionnaire is partially an art and partially a science. Below are some tips to help you navigate through this challenge.

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 1. Include a brief (two or three sentences) introduction to the questionnaire telling the respondent about the questionnaire, thanking the respondent, detailing the estimated time to completion and assuring respondents of the confidentiality of their answers. This will help increase the response rate.

 2. Begin the survey with a screening question(s), to make sure the person you are going to interview is qualified to answer your questions. You want people that are familiar with your product/brand/service/topic to be participating in the survey. The key to the qualifying question(s) is that if the respondent's answer is 'no' to being familiar with or using the product or service, then the survey is terminated and the person does not participate. (Example: I am interested in the perception of customer service at Publix. My target market is current Publix shoppers. Therefore, my screening question could be: "Have you shopped in Publix in the last month?" If yes, continue, if no, terminate.)

 3. As you develop questions, ask yourself the following to determine if you should use the questions: "Does each question produce information that is necessary to address the research topic and meet the goals of the study?" If the answer is no, do not include them.

 4. Use a variety of survey question types including ratings, rankings, forced choices, and semantic differential scales, to answer your research questions. Keep in mind the types of questions you ask may limit the method of analysis and quality of the information you can get from analyzing the data.

 5. Related to point four, consider using Likert-type questions when measuring attitude and satisfaction. They are easy to construct and easy for respondents to fill out. (Example: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the 1 to 5 scale below).

 6. When using semantic differential questions, make sure tha

- questionnaire among college students can give you misleading results.

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