IncQuery

How to Write
Effective Survey Questions

Do's and Don'ts

Here are some tips for writing questions that help you gather accurate and actionable results, which will lead to stronger insights and better business decisions.

	Do ...	Don't ...
Neutrality	**Use impartial language.** *Good: How would you rate the ease of use of this product?*	**Use words and phrases that might influence respondents.** *Poor: How easy is it to use this product?*
Scope	**Ask about one topic or issue at a time.** *Good: How satisfied were you with the in-store experience?*	**Ask about multiple aspects in the same question.** *Poor: How satisfied were you with the in-store experience and product selection?*
Simplicity	**Phrase your questions in a simple, easy-to-understand way.** *Good: Which customer relationship management (CRM) platform does your company currently use?*	**Assume respondents know technical terms or abbreviations.** *Poor: Which CRM does your company currently use?*
Specificity	**Be specific about timeframes, conditions, and other parameters.** *Good: How has your usage of Product X changed since last year?*	**Leave questions open to interpretation.** *Poor: How has your usage of Product X changed?*

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Do's and Don'ts (Continued)

	Do ...	**Don't ...**
Expansive Options	**Present multiple options to avoid bias and collect more accurate data.** *Good: Which of the following cloud computing platforms do you use?*	**Use yes/no questions that focus on a single aspect.** *Poor: Do you use Platform X?*
Exhaustive Options	**Offer mutually exclusive response options that cover all possible choices and preferences.** *Good: What types of pets do you have in your household? Select all that apply:* ☐ *Cat* ☐ *Dog* ☐ *Bird* ☐ *Other (please specify)* ⬚ ☐ *None of the above* **Tip:** Offer "other" and "none of the above" options when appropriate to ensure all possible options are covered.	**Omit possible choices from the range of responses.** *Poor: What types of pets do you have in your household? Select all that apply:* ☐ *Cat* ☐ *Dog*
Complete Numerical Ranges	**When asking about a numerical range, offer discrete values that cover all possible responses.** *Good: How many employees are in your company across all locations? Your best estimate is fine.* ☐ *Less than 10* ☐ *10-49* ☐ *50-99* ☐ *100-499* ☐ *500-999* ☐ *1,000-4,999* ☐ *5,000 or more*	**Provide overlapping values or omit possible responses in a numerical range.** *Poor: How many employees are in your company?* ☐ *1-10* ☐ *10-50* ☐ *50-100* ☐ *100-500* ☐ *500-1,000* ☐ *1,000-5,000*

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Choosing the Most Appropriate Question Type

Writing effective survey questions starts with knowing what type of question to ask. Here are five commonly used types.

Question Type	Use It When You Need To …
Multiple choice (single select)	**Get one response from a list of options.** *Example: What is your age range?*
Multiple choice (multiple select)	**Get one or more responses from a list of options.** *Example: Which of the following products have you purchased in the past month?*
Scale rating ① — ② — ③ — ④ — ⑤	**Measure responses on a predefined numerical scale.** *Example: How would you rate this product on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is extremely unsatisfied, and 5 is completely satisfied?*
Matrix	**Ask a series of related questions with the same response options.** *Example: How would you describe your familiarity with the following brands?*
Open-ended	**Ask for additional feedback or information in a text field.** *Example: What other features would make our product more useful?*