

How to write an *effective* questionnaire

To get information and opinions that will be useful for your project, you will need to write your questions carefully. You need to be aware that the same question written in different ways might get different answers.

The best questionnaires are easy for the users to understand and also provide the researcher with answers that are easy to analyse. It is important that you consider what information you need to collect right from the start, such as:

- ✓ What price people would pay for your product or service
- ✓ Which design consumers like the best
- ✓ Which features are most important to consumers
- ✓ Are there any additional features that you need to add

You then have a good starting point from which to write your questions

Who should I ask to do my Questionnaire?



- It's important to try and get a range of different people's opinions.
- It's also important that you target your questionnaire to the right people, for example, people who are likely to be interested in or might use your product or service, or already know something about the kind of project you're doing.

REMEMBER

There wouldn't be much point in asking a person who never rides bikes if they think your idea for a new bike light is good.

What kinds of questions can I ask?

You can write your questions in a number of different ways and each has different advantages and disadvantages.

Free Text Questions

These simply ask a question and let people write whatever thoughts or opinions they have in the space provided.



Advantages - They let people write anything they like to answer your question. This means you can get more detailed and honest answers



Disadvantages - It can be very time-consuming if you have a lot of questionnaires to go through, as you will need to read and understand each one. It can also be difficult to compare answers if they've all written very different replies.

Multiple Choice

These questions let the respondent pick an answer from a list of choices that you've written for them.



Advantages - These questions are easy to understand afterwards as they have a fixed set of answers



Disadvantages - You might not include exactly the option that the person completing the questionnaire wants so they may give a false answer or no answer.

Scale Questions

These questions usually let people pick a choice that is on a scale to show how much they agree or disagree with that sentence.



Advantages - These questions help you understand the strength of peoples feelings.



Disadvantages - If the number of choices on the scale are fixed then you may get a false answer or no answer.

Ranking Questions

Respondents have to say how important they think different things are by placing them in order from most to least important to them.



Advantages - These questions help to understand what is most important to customers.



Disadvantages - It can be difficult to build a picture from the respondents you unless they've put quite similar answers.

The best questionnaire designers will *think carefully* about what information they need and pick a *question type* that will give this information to them in a way that *can be easily understood*. In your opinion gathering you will probably find that you use a range of different question types.