SURVEY CREATION BEST PRACTICES

Are you thinking about launching a survey to gather useful data about people's opinions or experiences? AE2S Communications often uses surveys to gather data for our clients' branding, marketing, and communications projects. Here are some best practices for writing questions and answers that will help you get accurate responses.

QUESTIONS

Be specific. The way a question is written can affect the quality of data you receive in the responses. If the question isn't clear, it may be interpreted in different ways by different respondents.

✔ **What do you think about the City's brand?**

✖ **What do you think about the imagery used in the City's logo?**

Questions that include multiple ideas may be confusing to people and you may get incomplete or inaccurate responses. Keep it to one topic.

The use of open-ended questions should be limited as much as possible because the survey responses will take longer to process due to the variety of answers, coming up with a response may feel like more work to respondents, and fill in the blank questions may increase the likelihood a respondent will leave the survey before answering all of the questions.

✔ **What do you think about the colors used in the City's logo?**

What do you think about the imagery used in the City's logo?

What do you think about the tagline used in the City's brand?

✖ **What do you think about the colors, imagery, and tagline used in the City's logo?**

👍 The key is to ask multiple questions!

It's also important to write questions without using words that may bias the respondent towards a particular answer, as respondents may unconsciously adjust their responses to match the question.

✔ **How do you feel overall about the City's logo?**

✖ **How much do you like the City's logo?**

ANSWERS

There are many answer formats you can use, including simple yes/no, rating scales, demographics, and multiple choice. One of the most popular multiple-choice options utilizes the Likert scale, which commonly utilizes a five- or seven-point scale of responses that allows a survey respondent to identify an option that most closely identifies their feelings about a topic. Some examples include responses that range from strongly agree to strongly disagree or extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied.

How do you feel overall about the City's logo?

Mostly Like It	Like it A Lot	Neither Like nor Dislike it	Mostly Dislike It	Dislike it A Lot

Additional Likert Scale Examples

You will notice none of the examples of Likert scales include a "Not Applicable (N/A)" or "Don't Know" option. That is because those answers do not provide meaningful data and they can sometimes become a default response for people who aren't engaged in answering the survey as accurately as possible. If you want to include an additional option for respondents who don't fit any of the options listed, I recommend including "Other" as an option with a text box so the respondent can explain the response. However, the drawback to including text boxes is that it takes longer to review the responses received.

Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Disagree
Extremely Easy	Moderately Easy	Slightly Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Slightly Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Extremely Difficult
	Always	Most of the Time	About Half the Time	Sometimes	Never	
	Extremely Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied	

BENEFITS OF LIKERT SCALES

- Most survey respondents have previously encountered a Likert scale.
- Data can be organized visually in graphs or charts.
- Respondent has multiple options to choose from.
- Data can be used to identify various issues by delivering easy to understand feedback.
- Likert scales include a neutral option, so respondents are not forced to give artificially positive or negative answers.