



Six Mistakes to Avoid When Creating Surveys

The goal of a survey is to receive meaningful and useful information to help you develop future marketing strategies. Therefore, when writing a survey and formulating questions be sure to avoid these common mistakes:

1. **Leading Questions** - Avoid leading the consumer to make statements about a particular product, service, or experience. For example, the question "Why do you like red wine over white wine?" leads the participant to make statements that favor red wine.
2. **Ambiguous Questions** – Avoid using words that do not have a set definition and leave room for different interpretations by the respondents. For example, the word "regularly" may mean once a week to one person and once a month to another.
3. **Unanswerable Questions** - Avoid questions that ask the respondent to recall some experience that they either will not remember at all or will not remember accurately.
4. **Two Questions in One** – Avoid combination questions. For instance, asking "Do you drink red wine and white wine?" poses a problem when someone enjoys one type of wine but not the other. Dividing the original question into two smaller questions would provide you with more accurate information.
5. **Irrelevant Questions** – Avoid extraneous questions that don't further the objective of the survey. Before distributing your survey to the respondents, each question should be analyzed to determine exactly what information you hope to gain from a response. Let's say you're trying to learn if customers are visiting your winery to celebrate special occasions such as anniversaries. It makes sense to ask them to provide their wedding date so you can add that information to your customer database and send them a special anniversary card or email, but a question about whether or not they have dogs wouldn't serve the objective.
6. **Forgetting Demographics** - Demographics are extremely important to marketing research because they allow you to develop new insights into market segments and marketing campaigns. Additionally, demographic information can provide you with the blueprint for your target market as well as clues about how to reach them. Note that questions regarding age, income, gender, or ethnicity can be perceived as mildly offensive or intrusive; therefore they should be located at the end of the survey.