

CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

The following table summarizes the key “dos and don’ts” for writing and formatting your survey questionnaire.

Do:	Do Not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Give clear instructions<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep question structure simple<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ask one question at a time<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain a parallel structure for all questions<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Define terms before asking the question<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be explicit about the period of time being referenced by the question<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide a list of acceptable responses to closed questions<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that response categories are both exhaustive and mutually exclusive<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Label response categories with words rather than numbers<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ask for number of occurrences, rather than providing response categories such as often, seldom, never<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Save personal and demographic questions for the end of the survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Use jargon or complex phrases<input type="checkbox"/> Frame questions in the negative<input type="checkbox"/> Use abbreviations, contractions or symbols<input type="checkbox"/> Mix different words for the same concept<input type="checkbox"/> Use “loaded” words or phrases<input type="checkbox"/> Combine multiple response dimensions in the same question<input type="checkbox"/> Give the impression that you are expecting a certain response<input type="checkbox"/> Bounce around between topics or time periods<input type="checkbox"/> Insert unnecessary graphics or mix many font styles and sizes<input type="checkbox"/> Forget to provide instructions for returning the completed survey!