

Creating Effective Online Surveys: The Ultimate Guide

Making an important decision is much simpler when you have data to back it up. But how exactly do you get the data you need to make crucial, impactful decisions for your business?



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Introduction

You could spend days, weeks, or months scrolling through Google to find studies, articles, and journals to gather information to help you make important decisions. But that data is only so helpful—it probably doesn't accurately reflect your audience, industry, geographic area, or target market.

What's a business professional to do? Create surveys to collect your own data, of course! But how?

Creating online surveys can be daunting. What questions do you include? How do you create and format your survey? What's the best way to deploy it? How do you process and use survey data?

We've built this surveys guide to creating effective online surveys to help you become a survey master. Once you're done reading, you'll be able to answer all those questions above. This guide will teach you how to launch pristine online surveys that unlock incredible data for you and your team.

No matter your industry or department, your team can benefit from using surveys. Here's your crash course on how to create, launch, and manage surveys to gather the data you need to get work done.



How Surveys Can Benefit Your Team

Don't make big decisions blindly! No matter what problem you're trying to solve or decision you're trying to make, gathering input and feedback from customers, employees, event attendees, students, or patients will always help you make smart decisions.

Here are just a few questions surveys can help you answer:

- What price point should our new product be offered at?
- How engaged are my employees?
- Was our most recent event a success?
- Are patients satisfied with visit wait times?
- Will customers recommend my product to their friends and family?
- Are students happy with courses and professors?
- How can we improve the customer experience?

Stop working off assumptions and start making decisions with data! It's simple to pitch why you need surveys to your leadership team if survey software isn't a part of your tech stack yet. Here are just a few ways online surveys can help improve your business and support the goals of your team:

Collect substantial data to guide your strategies.

Whether you're launching a new product, putting together an event, or getting more patients through the door, surveys can help you gather substantial data that can guide your strategies.

When you're able to easily survey large groups of people, you'll discover trends, opinions, wants, needs, likes, and dislikes that will help you develop strategies that make sense for your audience. You won't have to guess if your audience wants your next ice cream flavor to be mint chocolate chip or birthday cake—you'll know!

Get a pulse on the happiness of your customers.

Without customers, there is no business. Continually surveying customers about their experiences and satisfaction can help your team identify what's working and what's not. With specialized surveys personalized to your audience, you'll gather insightful data on exactly what makes your customers come back time after time, as well as what's causing them to consider alternatives.

Develop a better understanding of the wants and needs of your audience.

Should you focus on the price, usability, or quality of your product? When making big decisions like these, surveys can be a game changer. You'll collect authentic data that can help your team set priorities and better understand the wants and needs of your audience.

Maybe you thought the product was too expensive, but your survey results show customers are more concerned about the usability. Gathering data like this can make the difference between investing tons of money into a project that works versus a project that tanks. With customer insights in tow, you can make a better pitch to your leadership team that's based on what your customers really want.

Plan for the future.

Planning is essential to the success of your business, and good planning requires data that helps you understand your wins and failures. By implementing surveys into your normal business functions, you'll be able to better plan for the future by making informed decisions with data.

Make your dollars count.

It takes a lot of money to run a business. Each department must make the most of their budget, regardless if you're in marketing, HR, or IT. By investing a small amount into online survey software, you'll be able to collect endless amounts of data that will help you make decisions about everyday expenses and larger investments.

Whether you're surveying employees about benefits, asking patients about a recent appointment, following up with customers after a purchase, or asking students to evaluate courses, surveys can help you identify and solve problems so you can make the best return on your investments.

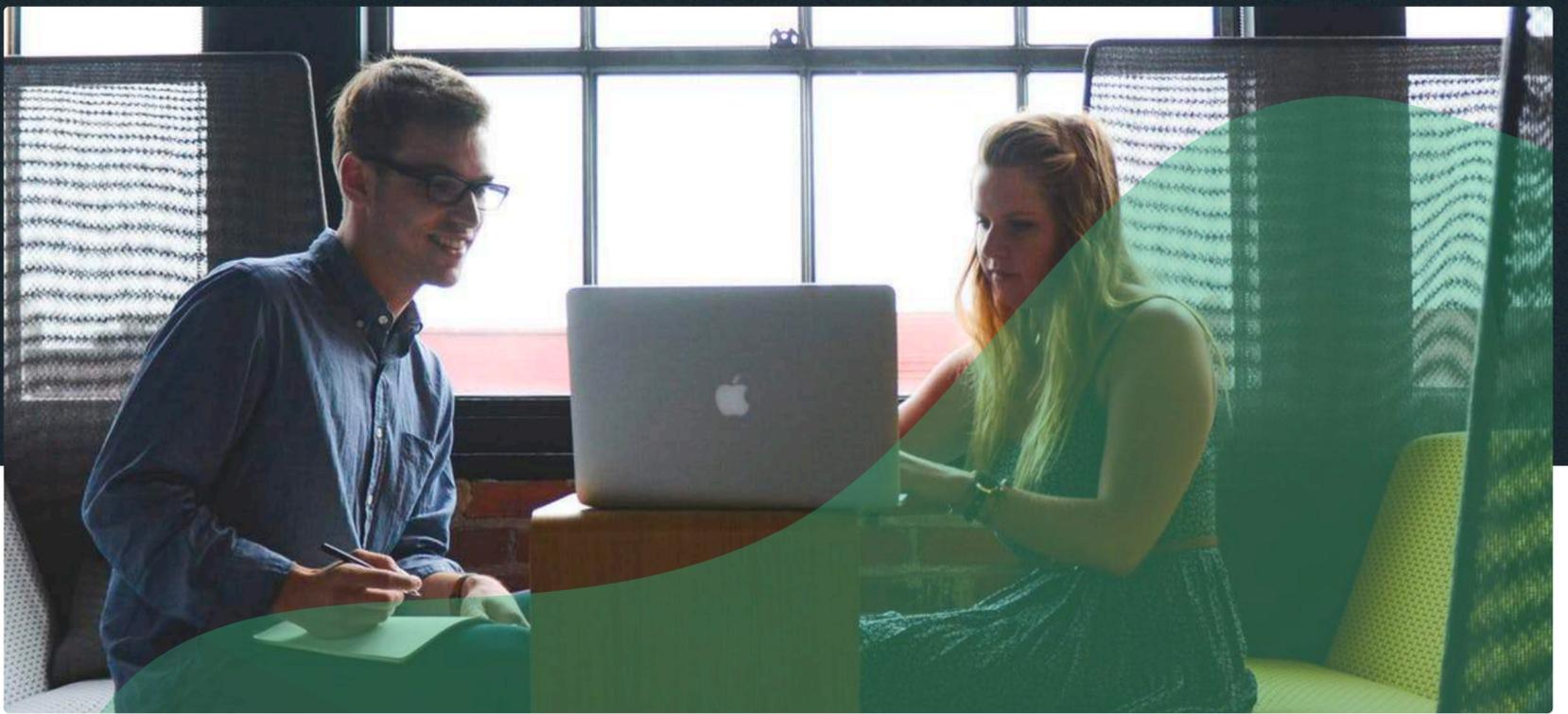
It's time to put data to work.

Using surveys to collect data is an easy way to gather automated, honest feedback that can guide your team to success. You'll develop better strategies based on the real needs and wants of your audience. If you're ready to create killer surveys that help your team gather data and put it to work, you're in the right place! Read on to unlock the best tips on how to create effective online surveys in a snap.

Fun Fact



Formstack customers deployed more than 10,000 surveys in 2018!



Types of Surveys

There is an endless variety of survey types you can deploy to gather insightful data that helps you answer a question or solve a problem. Surveys can work for any audience in any business sector, as long as you spend the time tailoring your survey to your unique situation.

Here's just a glance at some of the most popular and useful types of surveys:



Satisfaction Surveys

Whether you're surveying employees or customers, satisfaction surveys are incredibly helpful for getting insight into how happy and satisfied your target audience is. This type of survey helps you gather information on what you're doing right, what could be done better, and what your employees or customers want most from your company.



Feedback Surveys

Have you launched a new product, course, event, or presentation recently? Feedback surveys give you the opportunity to gather thoughts from your audience that can help you pinpoint issues and make smart improvements.



Opinion Surveys

Opinion surveys use agree/disagree sliding scales and a variety of other question types to gauge the opinions of others. The goal is to gather data from a subsection of your target audience to get a better understanding of their opinions and attitudes. Many politicians, governments, and political groups use opinion surveys to better understand what audiences think of their platform, especially when campaigns are underway.



Market Research Surveys

Whether you're about to launch a new product or it's been on the market for ages, a market research survey can help you gather insights from customers on pricing, functionality, usage, buying habits, and overall brand awareness.



Event Surveys

Event surveys are helpful both before and after events. Use a pre-event survey to gather feedback on what your audience wants and expects from the next event you host. Once your event is finished, send out a survey to attendees to gather their thoughts on what went well and what has room for improvement.



How to Create a Survey: 5 Simple Steps

Creating a survey can seem daunting, but it's actually fairly simple if you just follow these five steps. No matter what type of survey you're sending out, use these tips to guide your process and ensure you launch a successful survey.

1 Outline what you want to learn.

Before you begin writing questions, take some time to reflect on what you want to learn from your survey. What questions are you trying to answer? What problems are you trying to solve? Starting with a clear, concise outline of why you're sending out a survey will ensure you don't get off track.



Focus on two to three goals for your survey. If you're working with a team, make sure everyone is in alignment on your goals. When adding each question to your survey, always ask yourself if the question will help you reach your goals. If the answer is no, skip it. The last thing you want to do is dilute your survey with unnecessary questions and hurt your response rate.

2 Choose your audience.

Once you've defined the goals of your survey, it's time to choose your audience. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Choose a large sample size of your audience to gather accurate data.
- Ensure your audience fits with your survey goals.
- Avoid bias by including a diverse audience in your sample.
- Distribute your survey widely to minimize misrepresentation of your audience.
- Consider who will provide the most accurate, unbiased results.
- Don't exhaust your audience by asking them to take multiple surveys in a short period of time.

3 Ensure clarity.

You've set your goals and have identified your audience. Now it's time to create your survey questions! Remember, it's important to only ask necessary questions to minimize survey time and increase conversions.

When creating your questions, make sure they're concise and clear. The last thing you want to do is gather incorrect data due to a confusing question or unfamiliar jargon. It's best to keep your questions simple, direct, and unbiased. This helps retain attention, minimizes survey abandonment, and improves overall data quality. If a question takes more than a few seconds to read and understand, it needs to be rewritten or removed completely.



It's smart to use the funnel technique when crafting your survey. Start with broader, simpler questions and progress toward more complex ones. This will help you get survey takers invested early and avoid overwhelming them with difficult or thought-provoking questions.

Finally, make sure to include the answer options "does not apply," "I don't know," and "other." Use conditional logic to bring up an answer box if "other" is selected. Adding these options will ensure you gather valid data.

4 Test, test, test!

Never launch a survey without testing it first. It's the best way to deter survey errors and improve submissions. Pick a few colleagues who were not involved in the creation of the survey to review your questions and provide feedback.

Ask survey testers the following questions:

1. Did any of the questions confuse you?
2. What's your opinion on the length of the survey?
3. Is there anything about the survey design and layout you would change?
4. Were there any copy errors?
5. Are there questions that seemed out of place?
6. Do any questions seem unnecessary or redundant?

It's especially important to test your survey on a phone and tablet. Make this step simple by investing in a survey tool that is mobile-optimized out of the box. This will ensure everything looks correct on all device types.

Pro Tip



77% of Americans now own a smartphone! Your surveys must be accessible on mobile if you want to reach your audience.

5 Decide how to deploy.

There are many ways you can send your survey to your audience. A good survey tool will make it easy to share your survey through a variety of channels. To figure out which channels are best for your audience, consider the following questions:

- What technology does your audience use on a daily basis?
- What personal information do you have on your audience?
- How do you currently communicate with your audience?
- What communication channels have the highest conversions?
- How long is your survey?
- Are there any in-person opportunities for survey completion?

We'll cover survey distribution channels in more detail in the *Launching Your Survey* section.



Types of Survey Questions

To get the most accurate and reliable data, it's important to create clear survey questions. The question styles you use depend on the type of information you need to gather. Using a variety of question styles creates a more interesting survey and can help deter boredom and survey abandonment.

Here's a snapshot of some of the most popular types of survey questions, what they're best used for, and pro tips for using them in your surveys.

Likert Scale Questions

The Likert scale asks a question and has respondents reply by selecting an answer from a scale. The most common response options include "Agree," "Somewhat Agree," "Neutral," "Somewhat Disagree," and "Disagree." You can also use an answer scale with likely to unlikely, satisfied to unsatisfied, helpful to not helpful, or any other descriptor that makes sense for your question or statement.

This survey question type is best for: Measuring attitudes and opinions on a deeper level. Likert scales give you more insight than yes or no answers.

Pro Tip



Always balance your responses. Don't offer more positive selections than negative ones and vice versa. This will help you avoid bias and improve the quality of your data. You should also avoid using number scales—sticking with clear, descriptive words makes it easier to provide a true answer.

Matrix Field Questions

A matrix field is best used for gathering similar feedback across various topics or questions. The answer selections do not change, making these questions easy to understand and great for comparisons or rankings. Use a matrix field to minimize the number of questions in your survey and make it appear shorter.

This survey question type is best for: Asking multiple questions that all have the same set of possible responses.

Pro Tip



Using too many rows or columns in your matrix field can lead to straight-lining, which is when a survey taker simply chooses the same answer down the row. It's smart to limit your matrix field to five questions or less, with no more than five answer options to choose from.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Multiple choice is by far the most popular type of survey question. This question type provides the survey taker with a set of possible answers, minimizing the time it takes to think of an answer and making data analysis easier on the back end. Multiple-choice questions can include a single answer (pick your favorite ice cream flavor) or multiple answers (what ice cream flavors do you enjoy).

This survey question type is best for: Questions that have a distinct set of answers.

Pro Tip



Don't offer overlapping answers. For example, don't ask for the age of the participant, then proceed to list the answers as 15-18, 18-21, 21-25, etc. All answers should be different to ensure accurate data.

Net Promoter Score Questions

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a question used across industries to measure customer loyalty by asking, "How likely are you to recommend our business to someone else?" It uses a 1-10 rating scale to divide customers into the categories of promoters, passives, and detractors.

This survey question type is best for: Using as a stand-alone survey question after a customer has an interaction with your business.

Pro Tip



This type of survey question serves as an alternative to traditional customer satisfaction surveys. It gives you the power to measure overall customer satisfaction and brand loyalty with just a single question! Use it as a pop-up survey on your website after a customer makes a purchase.

Open-Ended Questions

Give your survey takers the power to provide authentic feedback in their own words. Use a short question that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

This survey question type is best for: Asking for general feedback or asking questions that are not easily answered with one response.

Pro Tip



Avoid using too many open-ended questions. The more your survey takers have to type, the less likely it is that they will get to the end. Substitute with multiple-choice questions when possible.

Ranking Questions

Understand what your audience deems most important and least important with a ranking question. This will help you pinpoint where to invest the most time, money, and resources.

This survey question type is best for: Ranking similar groups or topics, such as product features, parts of an event, or topic interests.

Pro Tip



Need to cut something to stay under budget? Include a ranking question in your survey to help guide the conversation on what should get the boot. You'll get insight into what your customers love and what they won't miss.

Rating Scale Questions

Rating scales usually use numbers or images to gather feedback on the satisfaction or happiness of customers. It can also be used to determine thoughts on the quality of a product or service.

This survey question type is best for: Gathering general feedback on a particular topic, event, product, or experience.

Pro Tip



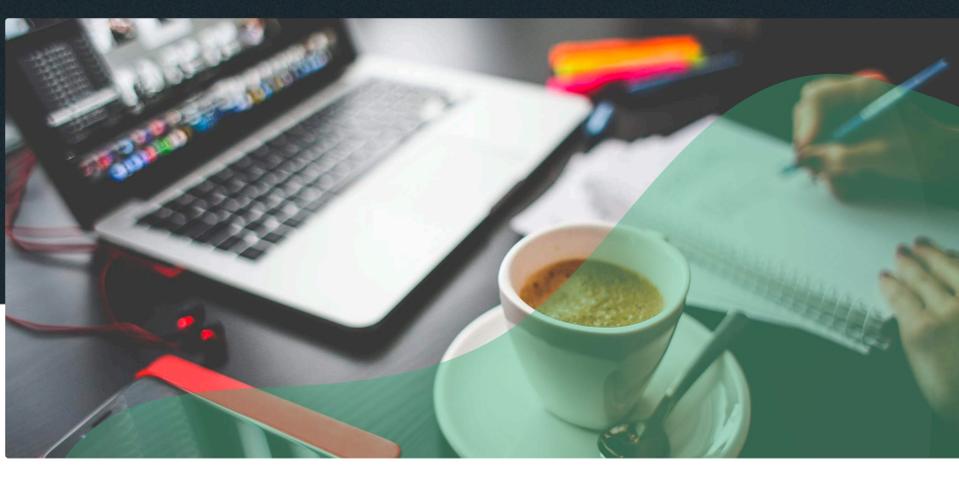
Use graphics to make ratings more fun! Be sure to clearly state what each star rating means to ensure your audience knows exactly how their star rating translates.



Did you know?



Formstack provides over 15 question types for surveys!



The Dos and Don'ts of Survey Design

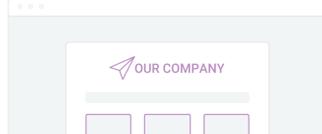
Creating your survey questions is just one part of the survey design process. Once you've crafted exceptional questions, it's time to get to work on how you should lay out those questions in a form. Here are some survey design tips you should follow to create a beautiful, well-designed survey that converts.

1 Colors

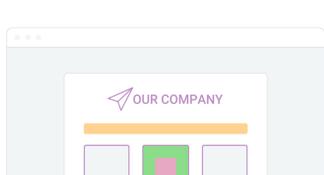


Do: Use Your Branding

Branding your surveys not only makes them look polished and professional, but it also gives you more credibility. Consider adding your logo, colors, and font styles to create a seamless survey experience.



Don't: Use Conflicting Colors



Avoid using clashing colors or colors that are hard to distinguish from each other. It's best to use no more than four colors, generally within the same color palette or complementary to each other. Try out a tool like Colormind to find color palette inspiration for your next survey design.



Don't: Use Too Many Colors

You want to make your survey design as easy on the eyes as possible. Using too many colors or colors that are too bright or too dark can make it incredibly hard to read your survey. Make your questions darker than the survey background to keep the eyes of your survey takers focused on what is most important.

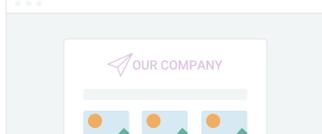


2 Images

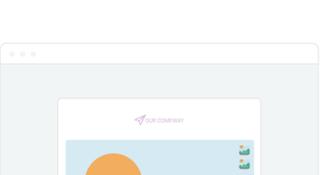


Do: Use Images

If your survey questions include answers that could be paired with images, add them in! Using images throughout your survey will keep readers engaged. If it fits with your brand's personality, consider adding a few GIFs or memes when appropriate.



Don't: Make Images Too Small or Too Large



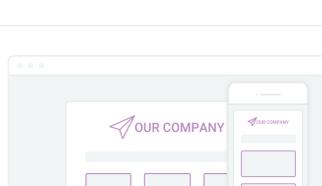
A majority of your survey takers are probably completing your survey from a mobile phone or tablet. This is important to keep in mind when designing any part of your survey, but it's especially important when using images. Images that are too big will take over the entire screen, and images that are too small will create incredible eye strain. Go for medium-sized images, and don't forget to always test before deploying!

3 Mobile Usability

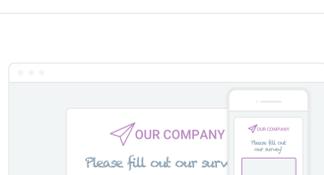


Do: Test on Multiple Devices

Your survey may look different on various device types and screen sizes. Before launching, review your survey on multiple Android and Apple devices with different screen sizes to ensure the design translates well across different types of phones and tablets.



Don't: Use a Hard-to-Read Font



You might have found a font that looks amazing on a computer, but have you viewed it on a phone yet? What looked fantastic on a computer might look drastically different on the tiny screen of a cell phone. Avoid using fonts that are heavily designed. Opt for basic fonts that look legible on all devices.

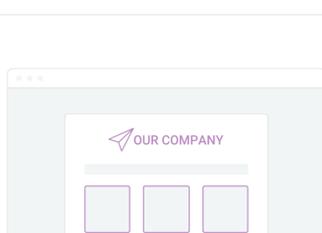
4 Buttons



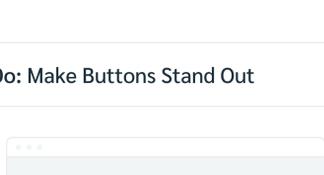
Do: Use Varying Button Language

Still using "submit" as the language on all of your buttons? It's time to switch it up! Test out different terms to see which one appeals to your audience. The language you use will depend on the type of survey, but here are some suggestions:

- Tell Us Now
- Share Your Thoughts
- Send Answers
- Finish Survey
- Tell Us Your Thoughts
- Send Survey Answers



Do: Make Buttons Stand Out

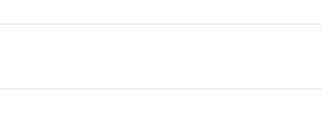


It's important to make your call-to-action buttons stand out. Using white or light-colored font on a dark background can make your buttons jump off the page. Putting text in all caps can create a sense of urgency while still looking balanced.

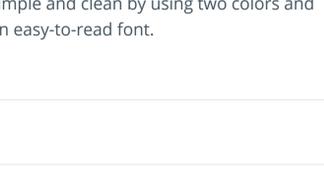


Don't: Use Images for Buttons

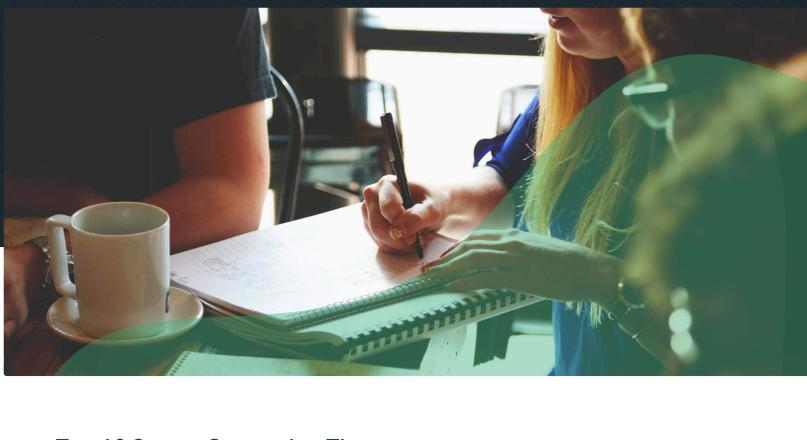
Images are great, but not within buttons. They just don't pair well. Keep your buttons simple and clean by using two colors and an easy-to-read font.



Don't: Make Buttons Too Wide



You want your button to stand out, but if it's too wide, it might not even translate as a button. The optimal size is about one-third of the page width. The exception is mobile—it's best to make buttons wide to increase the clickable space and make it simple to hit submit.



Top 10 Survey Conversion Tips

The goal of surveys is to collect valuable, insightful data. But if people abandon your survey, you won't be able to collect enough data to really understand your audience. A substantial number of survey responses is needed to ensure your data is valid and reliable.

The key to getting people to hit submit is to ensure they don't become frustrated or confused while taking your survey. It's also important to deter boredom and keep their attention.

Here are 10 survey conversion tips to help minimize survey abandonment so you can gather the data you need!

Pro Tip



We know how tricky it can be to ramp up your survey conversion rate. That's why we created the Conversion Kit, a set of powerful tools to help boost your survey responses.

1

Keep it short.

In today's world, attention spans are shorter and time is more valuable than ever. To get the survey submissions you need, you must keep your surveys as short and concise as possible. Don't ask questions that aren't absolutely necessary to your research or the problems you're trying to solve.

If your survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete, mention this in your outreach to entice people to click on your survey link. When your audience understands the time investment up front, they'll be more likely to click on—and stick with—your survey.

Did you know?



Nearly 15% of mobile users will abandon your survey if it takes them 10 minutes or more to complete.

2

Use language your audience will understand.

This survey tip is important for two reasons. The first deals with the frustration factor. If your audience doesn't understand a word or phrase used in a question, they'll become frustrated and disengage from your survey. If there's even a slight inkling that a term might be confusing, misunderstood, or even unknown, don't use it. Avoid using jargon, acronyms, buzzwords, and slang. If you want to use acronyms to save space, always spell out the acronym on first reference.

The second reason language is so important is for credibility and authenticity of data. If you include language your audience doesn't understand, one of two things is likely to happen: They'll abandon the survey, or they'll randomly select an answer just to get through the question. This results in bad data, which is not what you want!



3

Use imagery and colors.

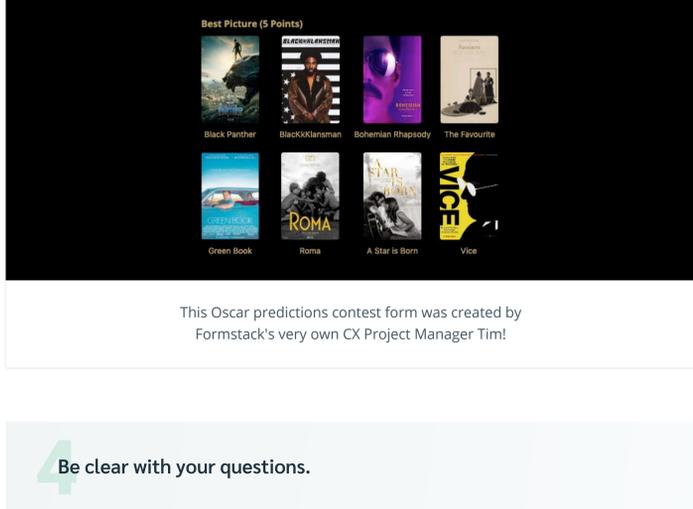
Make your surveys eye-catching by infusing them with colors and imagery! Few people enjoy staring at a standard black-and-white screen for very long. Keep your survey takers' attention and minimize boredom by creating fun surveys that appeal to people's eyes.

With the right survey tool, you can make your survey questions go from this:

Best Picture

- Black Panther
 BlacKkKlansman
 Bohemian Rhapsody
 The Favourite
 Green Book
 Roma
 A Star is Born
 Vice

To this:



4

Be clear with your questions.

Don't let confusion mess with your survey submissions! Here's an example of one way many survey questions go wrong:

Did you find our product to be easy-to-use, reliable, and worth the cost?

- Yes
 No

Your survey taker will probably have different opinions on each part of this question. It's very unlikely that they would have the same feedback and thoughts on whether the product is easy-to-use, reliable, and worth the cost. What if they believe it's easy-to-use and reliable, but too expensive?

Break up the question to ensure you're gathering feedback that is correct for each topic. It's also wise to include better answer descriptors than simply yes or no. Using a matrix layout is very handy for this situation.

Did you find the product to be:

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree
Easy-to-Use	<input type="radio"/>				
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>				
Worth the Cost	<input type="radio"/>				

5

Adapt the survey to the survey taker.

To keep your survey as short as possible, only ask questions that are relevant to the survey taker. This is simple to do by using a survey tool that offers conditional logic. For example, let's say you want feedback if a survey taker selects yes or no for the question below.

Have you purchased this product more than once?

- Yes
 No
 This was my very first purchase

With conditional logic, you can show a customized feedback box depending on the answer they selected. This will keep your survey short and help you avoid asking irrelevant questions.

Why did you choose to purchase this product again?

Type your message here

6

Brand your survey.

In today's age of technology, it's not uncommon for people to find themselves faced with illegitimate emails and scams. To increase your survey conversions, give your survey more authenticity, credibility, and legitimacy by adding your branding to your survey template. When people open your survey and see a familiar logo, they'll know it's legitimate and be more likely to submit their information.



7

Use section breaks.

You should use every tool available to make your survey look shorter. Many survey tools let you create survey sections, which breaks up your survey into multiple pages. This prevents continuous scrolling and that "this is never going to end!" feeling brought about by long survey pages.

Customer Survey

What did you find most helpful?

Type your message here

STEP 2 OF 3

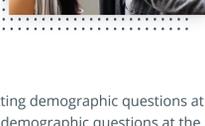
NEXT

The key is to hit the right balance and not go overboard. Your survey taker will eventually get sick of hitting the next button. It's smart to do some A/B testing to learn more about your audience's preference for page breaks and sections. You might be surprised by what you find out!

8

Be smart with demographic questions.

Demographic survey questions are important, but they can also cause people to abandon your survey if you ask too many. Avoid adding extra length to your survey by only including questions that are absolutely necessary. Unless gathering demographics is the reason for your survey, don't make demographic survey questions mandatory.



Some people don't want to share demographic information, so putting demographic questions at the beginning of your survey can be off-putting. Consider putting your demographic questions at the end, and always offer the response option "I prefer not to answer" for those who don't want to disclose that information.

If you're surveying an audience you have a lot of demographic data on already, you might even consider skipping demographic questions altogether.

9

Be short and clear in your survey invite.

If the link to your survey is buried in a long email or hidden between paragraphs of text on a landing page, you're bound to see low submission numbers. Be very clear and concise when asking people to take your survey. All they really need to know is why you need them to take the survey and where they need to go to complete it.

Make the link to your survey bold and in a different color than the rest of the text to catch people's attention. You might add a button to your email or landing page that links to the survey and says "Take Survey Now." If your survey is for a wide audience, you might consider sharing it on social media or embedding it on a page on your website.



10

Offer an incentive.

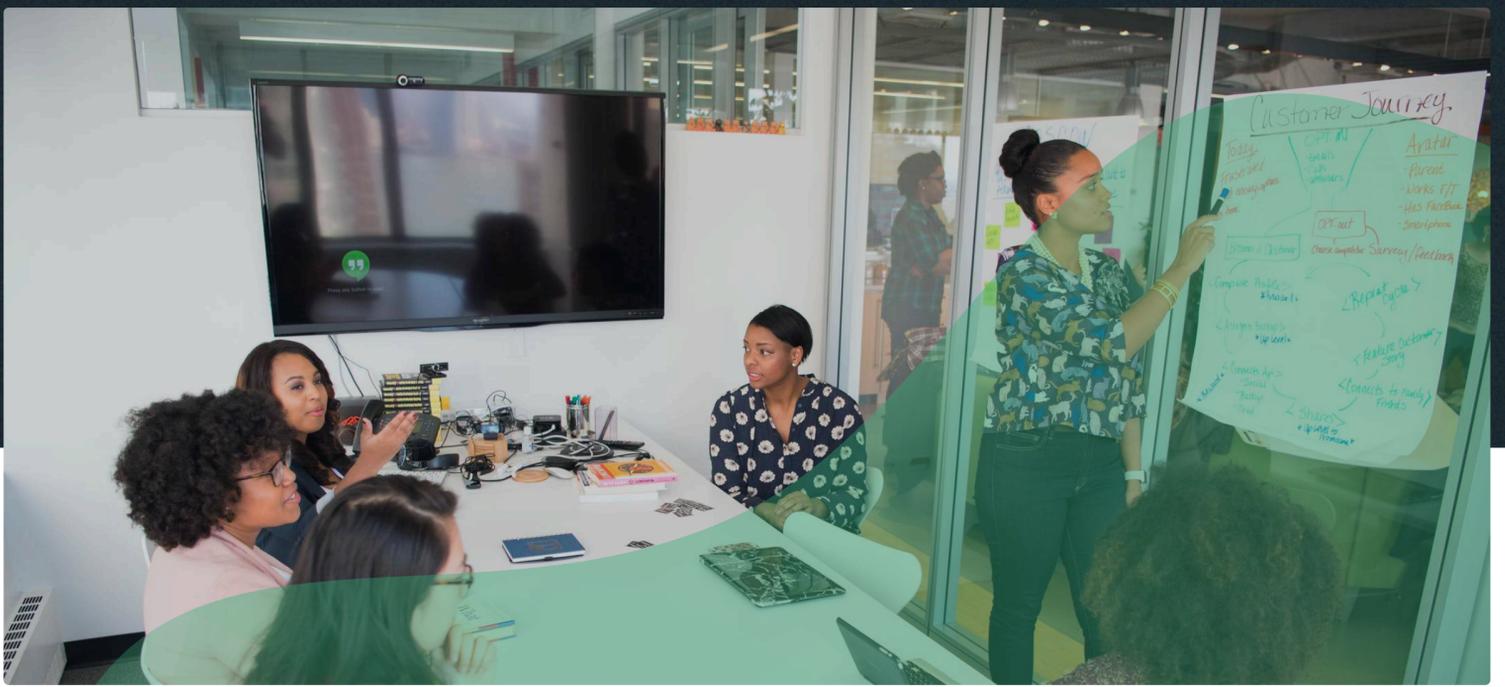
The amount of surveys people are asked to take has increased tenfold over the last decade, causing extreme survey fatigue. Many companies have fought against this statistic by offering incentives to take their surveys.

Offering an incentive—whether it be in the form of money, swag, gift cards, or product samples—is recognized as a valuable tool for encouraging people to respond to surveys by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Consider setting aside some of your budget to cover a survey incentive for participants. You may want to do some testing on different incentives to see which works best for your audience.

Did you know?



In many studies, prepaid incentives yielded significantly higher response rates than promised or no incentives. Try offering a gift card up front in your survey invite email to see if the same is true for your audience!



Picking a Survey Tool

When it's time to make an investment in a survey tool, it's important to make the right decision from the get-go, because switching from one tool to another can be a costly and complicated nightmare.

The last thing you want to do is spend hundreds (or thousands!) of dollars on a tool that doesn't have the functionality you need or give you the ROI you want. Here are some important features to look for in a survey tool:



Pre-Built Templates

Invest in a survey tool that provides a variety of pre-built templates to help you get a jump start on deploying your surveys. You won't have to spend hours researching the perfect survey questions and formats if you choose a tool that provides them premade and ready to go!

However, those templates won't be very useful if they are not mobile-optimized out of the box. Choose a tool that offers templates that look great on computers, tablets, and phones so you can avoid spending hours adjusting your survey templates for mobile audiences.



Flexible Delivery Options

You need to adapt your surveys to your audience. This might mean having a short point-of-sale survey set up at your register or gathering survey responses from a freestanding kiosk. Maybe you need to email out a link so your audience can fill out the survey on their own time from their own device.

No matter how you need to reach your audience, choose a survey tool that offers delivery flexibility. This is especially important if you plan to create a variety of surveys or reach out to different audiences. No matter how you send it, your survey should be mobile-friendly and accessible anywhere.



Offline Data Capture

As connected as our world is, there are still times you might find yourself without an internet connection. If your mobile survey app doesn't work when faced with this situation, it's not the right one for you.

Whether you're out in the field administering surveys, traveling to hundreds of trade shows that have spotty internet, or polling people on-site during events, it's important to have a mobile survey app that always works. With offline data capture, you can feel confident gathering data, regardless of internet availability or the strength of your Wi-Fi connection.



Robust Reporting & Analytics

The most essential element of a survey is the data you collect. Don't invest in software that can't deliver the reports you need to make sense of your survey data! Look for a survey tool that provides visual reports, as well as a variety of ways to export your data to dig in deeper

Pro Tip



Look for survey software that easily integrates with the tools you use every day to improve data collection and management.



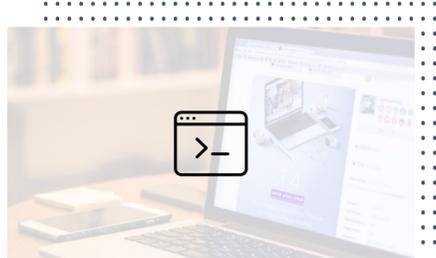
Launching Your Survey

Once your survey is ready to go, you need to figure out the best way to deploy it. There are many options, and it's usually best to use a mix of survey launch options to receive the best data.

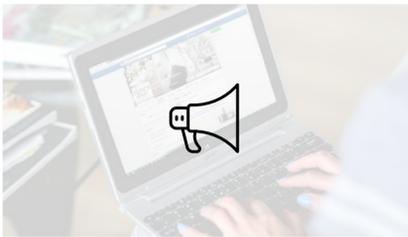


Embed on Your Website

Most survey tools make it incredibly easy to embed surveys on your website. This can improve your reach, but it may dilute your audience targeting. You can curb this issue by creating a new landing page for your survey and only sending out the link to chosen survey participants.



Share on Social Media

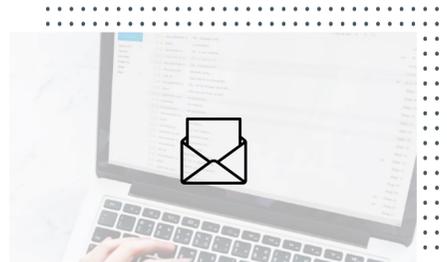


If your survey encompasses a broad audience or focuses specifically on those who follow or interact with your brand on social media, sending it out on popular social networks like Twitter and Facebook is a smart move. This is recommended when looking for general feedback or opinions versus targeting a very defined audience.



Send Through Email

If you use an email marketing tool, sending out your survey through email can be one of the easiest ways to deploy your survey. Keep your survey invite short and to the point, and only send a few reminder emails. If you're planning to close your survey after a certain time period, be sure to include this information in the email.



Survey People in Person



Sometimes it makes sense to gather survey responses on-site and in person. For instance, you might want to gather feedback during an event or meeting. If you're a brick-and-mortar store, you may want customers to take a quick survey right after their purchase.

For both of these cases, a survey tool that offers offline capabilities is important, because you may not always have a solid internet connection to work with. Oftentimes, a mix of online and in-person surveys will work best for gathering responses.



Text a Link

There are many different services that allow you to send text messages to your customers. If you already partake in this communication channel, consider sending a short text message with the survey link to those in your sample group. But always ask customers to opt in before sending any type of SMS message. You don't want to lose consumer trust by sending out something they consider spam.





Analyzing Survey Data

You've created a strong set of survey questions, designed an amazing layout, tested your survey, and deployed it to the masses. Now it's time to analyze the data you've collected! If your survey has a designated close date, be sure to wait until the close date has passed to begin digging into your data.

1 Review your data.

As much as you may hope for completely valid survey responses, there will always be a few duds. Take some time to review your data and remove submissions that are completely bogus. Be on the lookout for answers that don't make sense, incomplete responses, void personal information, and surveys with only a few responses included.

2 Make it visual.

Numbers can be hard to grasp and can make it difficult to see the big picture. Using graphs and charts to display your survey data can help people better understand your results. With the right survey tool, you can create strong visuals in minutes that tell the story of your data.



3 Dig into different demographics.

If you gathered demographic data, use it to your advantage! Dissect your data according to various demographic groups to get a better understanding of different audiences. This will help you tailor business strategies to different audiences by honing in on the preferences, tastes, wants, and needs of different personas.

4 Revisit your goals.

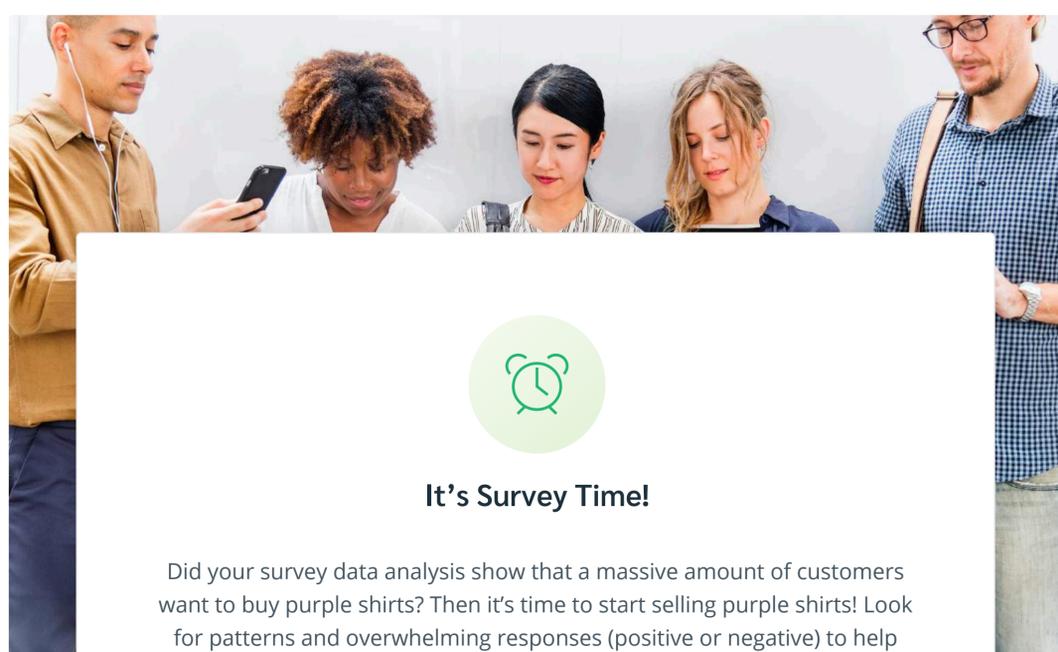


Remember those goals we talked about setting at the beginning of this guide? Go back to them to see if you answered your questions or solved your problems with the survey data you've collected. If the answer is no, you may want to tweak your survey and send it to another group to get better data.

5 Make changes.

Did your survey results show that a massive amount of customers want to buy purple shirts? Then it's time to start selling purple shirts! Look for patterns and overwhelming responses (positive or negative) to help you make important business decisions. Let your customers guide you to what they want.

But remember, you need to have a large enough sample size in order to represent your audience well. If you send out a survey to 1,000 people and less than 100 participate, you may not want to make any drastic decisions until you gather more data.



It's Survey Time!

Did your survey data analysis show that a massive amount of customers want to buy purple shirts? Then it's time to start selling purple shirts! Look for patterns and overwhelming responses (positive or negative) to help you make important business decisions. Let your customers guide you to what they want.

But remember, you need to have a large enough sample size in order to represent your audience well. If you send out a survey to 1,000 people and less than 100 participate, you may not want to make any drastic decisions until you gather more data.

Ready to put all you've learned to work?
Get a free 14-day trial today!



Bonus: Using Survey Data for Marketing

We're at the end of this guide, but we have one extra section for you to dive into. Once you have your survey data, put it to work in your marketing materials to gather more leads, increase traffic, and get more eyeballs on the data you worked so hard to collect.

★ Create great content.

You can use the data you collect from surveys to create ebooks, guides, blog posts, and white papers. If your survey is hyper-focused on a certain industry, job, or demographic, then you're bound to drive substantial traffic with a focused content piece that includes survey data.

Here are a few examples of content we've developed with our own survey data:

- Top 5 Healthcare Marketing Trends for 2019
- 2018 State of Workflow Automation
- 4 Problems Digital Marketers are Facing

Pro Tip

 Repurpose your content from an in-depth guide or ebook into multiple blog posts to utilize your survey data in as many ways as possible.

★ Gather links.

Creating content with your survey data is a great way to gain more links to your website. This is very important for improving the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of your web pages. The more links you receive from reputable websites, the more valid Google deems your website.



But you can't just put your content out there and hope it receives links. Make sure relevant industry professionals know about your fresh content by creating an entire marketing campaign around it. Consider sending an email to those in your database who might find your content interesting and aligned with their own marketing. Pitch your email as a collection of exclusive data insights you want to share with them first, and see what happens!

★ Get social.

Pull out some of your most surprising, intriguing, or interesting stats; turn them into graphics; and post them on social media. You'll be amazed by the conversations these statistics can produce. Consider posing survey questions in your social posts to start a dialogue with followers regarding your findings.

Add this text to the end of your posts to get people engaged:

- Do you agree or disagree?
- What are your thoughts?
- What would your answer be?
- Does this surprise you?

★ Produce email campaigns.

This is a two-fold strategy. First, send a follow-up email to all those who participated in your survey with a link to the new content you've published. If you're releasing the survey results, include that in the email as well.



Second, create a general awareness email campaign about your new content, and send it to a targeted audience. Try focusing a few emails on insightful statistics, a few solely on the new content, and one or two on a lead form for people to get involved in your next survey.



That's it! You made it all the way through our guide to creating effective online surveys.

We hope you feel confident in your survey skills and are ready to conquer your data collection needs. Once you start creating and sending surveys, you'll wonder why you never used them before!

If you're looking for even more information on how to craft surveys that convert, check out the Formstack blog. It's chock full of helpful articles about how to transform the way you collect data and put it to work.