

Market research questionnaire cheat sheet

Use this cheat sheet for developing questionnaires that will assist you in your market research.

There are two types of market research: quantitative and qualitative. The first looks for pre-defined parameters that allow for input into spreadsheets and hard analysis. The second asks specific questions that require longer, more detailed answers. Here's what you need to know about developing questionnaires for both types of research. Before you begin though, decide which type of research will offer the most benefit to you, while asking the least amount of time from your customers.

Quantitative research

STEP 1

Before you undertake market research, there are six crucial questions that you need to answer before you can begin:

The Sample	Who are you going to ask?
The Method	How are you going to ask them?
The Questions	What are you going to ask them?
The Results	What will you do with the information?
The Cost	How much do you want to pay for the answer?
The Time Scale	By when do you need the information?

STEP 2

Once you understand what your research needs to achieve, you can then choose which type of questionnaire you will use.

There are a number of different types of market research questionnaires that you can use to compile market research. Deciding which form of questionnaire to use should be based on the type of information you are looking for.

The options are:

- Dichotomous (multiple choice)
- Importance
- Bipolar
- Likert
- Rating scale 1 - 5
- Buying propensity

Note: These can be used in combination with each other, and that they are all quantitative type questions. What they ask is for a response within pre-defined parameters that allow for input into spreadsheets and hard analysis. They are not qualitative. This means that particular care needs to be taken with the questions you are asking.

Dichotomous

This is fairly basic question that asks for a yes or no answer. It does not assess the degree of feelings between the two poles.

Question:	Yes	No
Do you like ice-cream?		

Multiple choice

Multiple choice questions offer three or more answers. This allows for a greater breadth of response than the yes/no question above, but it still does not allow for elaboration of answers.

Question:	Never	Only when I am in a hurry	Only the rules I do not agree with	Always
Do you ever break the rules of the road?				

Importance

Importance-type questions ask respondents to rate the importance of a particular issue, usually on a scale of 1 to 5.

Question:	1: Extremely important	2: Very important	3: Somewhat important	4: Not very important	5: Not important at all
Being able to do my grocery shopping at night is:					

Bipolar

Questions of this nature ask respondents to choose an answer between opposite ends of a scale.

Question: How would you rate the employees at your local Woolworths? Note that 1 is extremely, and 5 is not at all.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Convenient						Inconvenient
Friendly						Unfriendly
Service Orientated						Unhelpful
Efficient						Inefficient

Likert

These questions focus on how strongly the respondent agrees with the statement. It is useful in assessing the feelings of customers towards specific issues.

Question: Convenience stations at garages are more expensive than normal retail outlets			
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly disagree

Or the question could read:

Question: Convenience garages are more expensive, but the level of convenience trumps price.			
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly disagree

Rating scale

In this example, replies are rated in terms of a scale, for example from poor to first class. TIP: Have an even number of boxes to avoid the ‘middle of the road’ response commonly taken by respondents trying to avoid making a stand.

Question: Would you rate the service delivery of your local municipality:					
First class	Good	Fair	Average	Poor	Very Poor
1	2	3	4	5	6

Buying propensity

In this case, you are trying to elicit a customer’s future intentions by asking whether they might buy a product/service. This can help you assess the needs and likely take up of a new product/service if developed. These questions require particular care, as they may reflect wants rather than needs.

Question: If a TV was able to record programmes, would you buy it?				
Definitely	Probably	Unsure	Probably not	Definitely not
1	2	3	4	5

STEP 3

Once you have decided on the type of questionnaire you will use, you need to develop the questions.

Your questions must be designed with the express intention of:

1. Inconveniencing the customer as little as possible
2. Being aimed at an unified, specific customer segment
3. Eliciting specific information that supports your marketing initiative

The qualitative approach

If you choose to use a qualitative approach, here are the five questions you should be asking your clients:

1. Why did you choose our product/service? What attracted you in our message, advert, brochure or website?
2. What do we do well? Why do you continue to use our products/services?
3. What could we be doing better?
4. Have you ever been let down by a vendor or company? How did they let you down? What could they have done to keep your business?
5. Is there anything that frustrates you about our industry? What would you change? What would be your ideal scenario when dealing with us?