

## **Video Three: Questionnaire and Survey Design**

### **Page 1: Welcome**

Hi everyone, welcome to Video 3 of our Six video series in the CSS Toolkit.

Funded by Community Sector Banking - 2019 Social Investment Grants Program and in partnership with the NSW Council of Social Service, Survey Matters produced this series of short educational videos to help NGOs understand best practice when conducting Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

### **Page 2 -Customer Satisfaction Survey Video Series**

You will have seen this picture in the first video and it provides an overview of the series.

In this third video we will provide a practical explanation of how to design a survey questionnaire and program the survey in a software tool.

Now, just as a warning, this is probably the longest video in the series at nearly 20 minutes. However, questionnaire design is the most important aspect of conducting a survey – so it is worth persevering if you can!

### **Page 3: Questionnaire and Survey Design**

There are several steps you need to go through to design your survey questionnaire:

- Firstly, you need to decide on your survey type. Is it a customer satisfaction survey, a volunteer feedback survey or a program evaluation?
- Once you have done this, you can start writing your questionnaire. There are some important things to remember, such as question order, type, rating scales and survey length.
- Next, if you are conducting the survey online, you need to choose the most appropriate software.
- The final step is to load your questions into your software and then test it to make sure it works.

## **Page 4 & 5: Decide on Type of Survey**

The first thing to do before building a questionnaire is think about your survey design and there are two main types of surveys that you can choose from:

### **The first is a once-off survey**

- This is information collected at a single point in time.
- And it typically surveys a small group of people from a larger population to gather opinions about one particular situation or issue.
- This might include, for example, a survey about participation in a one off event or service.

### **The second type of survey is a tracking survey.**

This is a survey that collects information over a longer period of time or at different time points.

- Tracking surveys help us look at trends over time.
- They are typically used to look at changes year on year to improve service levels, such as annual client satisfaction surveys,
- When conducting a tracking survey it is essential to have continuity – and by that I mean keep your key questions and measures the same from one time point to another. This way you can make consistent comparisons over time.

## **Page 6: Different Types of Survey**

There are many different type of surveys you can conduct. We have put together survey templates for surveys commonly used by community organisations so you can see how the questions vary and the specific structure you should use for each.

We recommend that you use these templates for your own survey or as a good starting point to build a custom survey based on your specific objectives.

The surveys we have designed and are included in the CSS are:

- Group or community event satisfaction surveys conducted with attendees
- Participation in a one-off training and capacity building sessions
- Participation in a one-off activities/services
- Satisfaction surveys before and after receiving a series of activities or services
- Annual client satisfaction surveys conducted at a whole of organisation or service level
- And finally volunteer satisfaction surveys

### **Page 7: Write your Questionnaire**

After you have decided on the type and frequency of the survey you are conducting, you are able to start writing your questionnaire.

The most important thing here is to make sure your questionnaire answers your key research questions.

### **Page 8: Write your Survey Questionnaire**

In summary, there are five steps involved when you design a questionnaire:

- Think about your question order
- Craft your question wording
- Consider the type of questions you ask
- Think about the rating scales
- Assess your survey length

### **Page 9: Think about your Question Order**

Writing survey questions seems pretty straight forward, however there are a number of things to think about before you begin.

**The first important thing to consider is your question order.**

- The order questions appear in your survey can have a big impact on the responses you collect.
- Questionnaires should follow a logical order because grouping similar questions together makes the questionnaire easier to complete for respondents.
- A way to ensure you are following a logical survey order is to use the funnel technique. This technique starts with asking broad questions, places the most difficult questions in the middle and ends with easy to answer personal questions.
- Let's walk through an example that puts the funnel technique to use in a questionnaire. Please note that we are using the 'volunteer satisfaction' survey for this example. This is one of the template questionnaires provided to you if you would like to view the full version.

**Slide 10: Example of the introduction section**

In all surveys, it is good practice to start with an introduction.

- This informs your participants about the purpose of your survey and how results will be used. It is important to outline here that responses are confidential, and their privacy will be protected. Lastly make sure you provide contact details should anyone have concerns about the nature of the project.

**Page 11: Example of the satisfaction with volunteering section**

Once you have put together an introduction you can then look at applying the funnel technique.

Start with broad overarching questions.

As you can see by the example, we start at a very high level to test overall satisfaction with volunteering without going into any specific aspects of the experiences yet.

We might also ask for some general feedback about the most rewarding aspects of the volunteering experience.

Again, this is quite high level and allows the participant to provide feedback about their experience. We usually do this before we remind participants about some of the specific elements of volunteering, to give participants the opportunity to provide what we refer to as their ‘top of mind’ feedback.

## Example of the satisfaction with volunteering section

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**Overall, how satisfied were your experience volunteering for (organisation)?**

	Extremely dissatisfied
	Dissatisfied
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
	Satisfied
	Extremely satisfied

**In your own words, what was the most rewarding aspect of your experience volunteering for (organisation)?**



**Tips**

Start with general questions and drill down to more specifics that you would like to explore



**Page 12 – Example of the satisfaction with specific aspects of the volunteering experience section**

We then move onto the middle section of the funnel, which addresses the more difficult questions we would like answered.

In our example, we move on the ask participants how they feel about specific elements of the volunteering experience.

- As you can see, we could ask about specific elements of the volunteering experience, such as their specific experience at work, relationships with management, or the recognition they receive for their contribution. We might also explore whether training was provided, as this may have an impact on volunteering experience.


**Example of attitudes to specific aspects of the volunteering experience.**

**How much do you agree with the following statements?**


	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel valued by (organisation)					
Volunteering with (organisation) improves my wellbeing					
My volunteer work makes a difference					
Volunteering provides me with a sense of accomplishment					

**Were you provided with training for your volunteering role?**

	Yes
	No
	Don't know / can't remember

 **Tips**

Best to leave a 'don't know' option for some questions so you are not forcing respondents to make choices they are not sure about



**Page 13: Example of improving the volunteering experience section**

The middle section might also explore ways of improving the volunteer experience.

- We can use this to identify strengths and weaknesses as an organisation and seek ideas for improvements to the volunteering experience. This section could also include an open-end question type that asks for participants to provide ideas in their own words.
- While this section is extremely useful, try not to overload your question with too many options. We recommended no more than 12 options. Try and keep you statements clear and avoid overlapping statements.

## Example of improving the volunteering experience section

How could (organisation) improve your experience as a volunteer? Select up to 3

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	More training / opportunities for professional development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater flexibility around how and when I can volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities to volunteer more often
<input type="checkbox"/>	More support from the supervisor / team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater focus on health and safety for volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/>	More feedback about my performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	More information about the role and the contribution my work makes
<input type="checkbox"/>	More information about the volunteering opportunities that are available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater public recognition of the contribution volunteers provide
<input type="checkbox"/>	More opportunities for volunteers / team members to network and socialise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)



### Tips

Don't overload your questions with options. Select up to 12 statements maximum or you risk respondents not reading the question

### Page 14: Example of the demographics section

The final part of the funnel technique is asking broad, easy to answer questions. These take less mental load than other questions, as the answers should be well known to participants.

This section is quite straight forward and includes basic demographic details about an individual, such as age and gender.

- You can also ask other questions in this section that might be relevant, such as length of volunteering and location.
- Only include demographics that you plan on using in your data analysis, it is good practice not to collect more personal information than you need. We'll go into this in more detail in Video 6 when we talk about Privacy.

## Example of the demographics section

**How old are you?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 18
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 – 24
<input type="checkbox"/>	25 – 34
<input type="checkbox"/>	35 – 44
<input type="checkbox"/>	45 – 54
<input type="checkbox"/>	55 – 64
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 64

**Gender**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say



### **Page 15: Craft your Question Wording**

Once you have thought about your survey order, and have a broad questionnaire plan, you can start writing, or crafting, your survey questions.

When you do this, there are a few rules you should follow:

- Firstly, and probably the most important - make sure you are asking only one question at a time. For example, ‘Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience volunteering for (organisation)?’ This question works as it asks about one topic only. In contrast, if you were to ask ‘Overall, how satisfied were you with your experiences volunteering and training with (organisation)?’ it would be impossible to tell from the respondents answer whether they were answering about volunteering or training.
- Secondly, ensure the person you are asking the question is able to answer it. There is no point in asking your donors a question about volunteering as it is not relevant to them. Make sure your audience is able to provide the information you are asking for.
- Thirdly, use clear and simple language. While this may seem like common sense, make sure you get your question across quickly. You risk overburdening and irritating respondents if questions are too complicated, potentially leading to incorrect answers or high drop-out rates.
- Finally, do not lead a person to answer a certain way. For example, ‘Were you provided with excellent training for your volunteering role’. The use of the word ‘excellent’ here leads the respondent to think that the training may be well regarded in the industry and is of high standard, making them more likely to agree with this statement.

**Page 16: Consider the Types of Questions you Ask**

Another thing to consider is the type of question you are asking. Questions generally fall into three main categories of questions.

- **The first is a multi-response question.** Just as the name suggests, this allows the respondent to select multiple answers from your option list. We would not recommend allowing more than 3 responses to a multi-response question.
- **The second type of question is a single response question.** This allows respondents to select one answer only. It is generally associated with yes/no questions, rating scales like agree to disagree, or questions that have distinct categories, for example gender or age.
- **The last type is open-ended questions.** This allows respondents to type in an answer in their own words. This question type is useful when you would like to know more about a question, or when you would like to know a respondents’ top of mind response.

**3. Consider the type of questions you ask**

The format you choose will depend on the nature of the question



**Multi response**

Allows you to select multiple responses

**Example: How could (organisation) improve your experience as a volunteer? Select up to 3**

<input type="checkbox"/>	More training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater flexibility around when I volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities to volunteer more often
<input type="checkbox"/>	More support from the supervisor / team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater focus on health and safety
<input type="checkbox"/>	More feedback about my performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

**Single response**

Allows you to select one response only

**Example: Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience volunteering for (organisation)?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	Satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely satisfied

**Open end**

Allows you to type in a response with a character limit.

**Do you have any suggestions to improve the volunteering experience with (organisation)?**

**Page 17: Think about your Rating Scales**

Rating scales are one of the most common techniques in surveys and are usually used to measure things like the level of agreement or satisfaction.

- Rating scales can be 10 point, 7-point or 5-point scales, depending on the level of detail you need within your responses.



- While we often use a 7 point scale for more complex surveys, if you are conducting your own survey, we would recommend using a 5-point scale because they are easy for respondents to interpret and easy to analyse from a data perspective.
- On this slide we have examples of both 7-point and 5-point rating scales. As you can see the 7-point scale offers more granularity in terms of responses, while the 5-point scale is more user-friendly and easier to understand.

### **Slide 18: Common examples of 5-point rating scales**

Here are some different examples of how 5-point rating scales can be used.

- As you can see, they can be broadly applied to measures including satisfaction, likelihood and agreement.
- If you are faced with a scenario where you are uncertain about whether or not a respondent can answer the question you put forward it is best to include a ‘don’t know’ option.

## Common examples of 5-point rating scales

**Satisfaction measures**

*Overall, how satisfied were your experience volunteering for (organisation)?*

	Extremely dissatisfied
	Dissatisfied
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
	Satisfied
	Extremely satisfied

**Agreement measures**

*Overall, how much do you agree that (organisation) staff understand your needs?*

	Strongly disagree
	Disagree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Agree
	Strongly agree

**Likelihood measure**

*How likely are you to volunteer with (organisation) in future?*

	Extremely unlikely
	Unlikely
	Neither likely or unlikely
	Likely
	Extremely likely
	Don't know

**Tips**

It is important to use a ‘don’t know’ option when there is uncertainty about whether a respondent can answer a question. This is to avoid forced choices in your survey

### **Slide 19: Common examples of 5-point rating scales**

5-point rating scales can also be used for attitudinal and outcome measures

- Here is an example of attitudinal and outcome statements placed on a 5-point agreement scale.
- When adding these scales to your questionnaire be sure to always order your scale from negative to positive when working from left to right

- Also ensure that you include a balanced and equal number of both positive and negative statements. This prevents bias in your results for example if you offer four positive options and only one negative.

## Common examples of 5-point rating scales

### Outcome and attitudinal measures

Thinking about your experience volunteering with (organisation) how much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Outcome measures</b>					
My supervisor provided adequate support					
I was made to feel like a valuable member of the team					
I was provided with feedback about the contribution my work makes to (organisation)					
<b>Attitudinal measures</b>					
I feel valued by (organisation)					
Volunteering with (organisation) improves my wellbeing					
My volunteer work makes a difference					



### Tips

- Always order your scale from left to right – negative to positive
- Make sure your scale is balanced – including as many positive statements as negative ones

### Slide 20: Assess your Survey Length

It is common for us to be asked ‘How long should my questionnaire be? Given every questionnaire is different, there is not one single answer.

However, as a guide

- The longer the survey is, the less time respondents spend on answering each question
- For surveys longer than 30 questions, the average amount of time respondents spend on each question is nearly half of that compared to surveys with less than 30 questions. This does not necessarily mean that data quality is low, it just means that we should be mindful of how many questions we ask and the burden on participants. And it also means they are less reflective of the responses they give.
- Dropout rates increase for surveys that take longer than 7-8 minutes to complete. Based on this we recommend that the ideal survey length should be between 7-10 minutes.

- However, please keep in mind that this advice depends on the topic and your audience. If your audience is engaged in the content and you have a close relationship with your respondents, and they are invested in the outcome of the survey then their tolerance for lengthier surveys is higher. It is also sometimes important to recognise that depth of information is important to some studies, and if your respondents are prepared to answer more questions it can improve the value of the data you collect.

### The impact of survey length on completion time

Question count	Question average (secs)	Total survey completion times
1	75	1 min 15 sec
2	40	2 min
3-10	30	2-5 min
11-15	25	5-7 min
16-25	21	7-9 min
26-30	19	9-10 min

#### **Slide 21: Choose an appropriate survey tool**

Once you have written your questionnaire, you are ready to program it in software ready for distribution.

#### **Slide 22: There are Several Online Survey Tools**

There are several online survey tools that can help organisations create surveys, maintain data and analyse results

- Here are some of the most popular survey tools used by organisations.
- While each have their unique pros and cons, all have the capability to script, launch and collect data from your survey respondents with ease.

#### **Slide 23: Pros and cons of the Most Popular Survey Tools**

Survey Monkey and Survey Gizmo are two of the most popular tools used by organisations to run their surveys. However, they do have advantages and disadvantages that you should consider before conducting your survey.

### **Starting with the advantages**

- The software is cost efficient. There is a free trial with limited features available. Paid versions of the software are also quite reasonable.
- They are also easy to use. The user-interface is clear, and it is reasonably straight forward to program and distribute your surveys.
- Considering the cost, the software has great survey features including recording real time results, custom branding, customisable survey links, easy and simple reporting and the ability to export to SPSS, Excel and PDF.
- Finally, customer service and support is available and both have a great help section on their website and 'frequently asked questions' section to assist with building your survey.

### **However, there are also disadvantages that need to be considered.**

- Firstly, the reporting and analysis tools are generally quite limited. While overview reports can be produced, they are fairly basic and focus on one question at a time. To complete a more detailed analysis you will need to download the data and perform a separate analysis.
- Secondly, while you can get help with the technical aspects of the software you still need to know the basics on how to construct your survey and the best way to administer it to your participants.
- Thirdly, the free version offers limited features. To enjoy the full benefits of this software a paid version is recommended.
- And finally, real time customer service may be difficult depending on where their head offices are located. You may not get assistance when you need it simply because of time differences between your location and an overseas support office.

### **Slide 24: Program, Test and Pilot your Survey**

Once you have chosen your software, you need to program the questionnaire.

### **Slide 25: Program your Survey**

There are three steps.

- Firstly, you need to load your questionnaire into the survey software.
- Once all the questions are in the software, you can move on to program any survey logic that needs to be added.
- Finally, you can move onto testing.

### **Slide 26: Load your Questions**

So, as I said, the first step is to load your questionnaire into the software. Usually, you will have written your questionnaire in Word or similar, and you need to copy it into the survey tool.

This is usually quite easy in most software and involves typing or copying the questions into the software.

However, always make sure you pay attention to the question type for each question and don't accidentally program a single option question to allow multiple response options!

### **Slide 27: Add Survey Logic**

Sometimes you will need to apply programming rules to your survey. These are rules that determine which questions particular respondents should answer. While it can be difficult to apply rules to paper surveys, all survey software comes with a range of tools that will help you apply rules to your survey.

The most common ones we think you will use are question skip logic and option randomisation. You will also need to decide whether to make your questions compulsory.

Let's go through an example of each.

### **Slide 28: Example of question skip logic**

**Question skip logic**, which is when you direct respondents to a specific question or page in the survey based on their answer to a previous question. Let's go through an example

Let's say the first question your respondent is faced with is about recommendation, where the respondent needs to answer between 0 to 10 depending on how likely they are to recommend volunteering at your organisation to family and friends.

- If the respondent answers between 0-6 they are presented with a subsequent question 'how could we improve?'
- However, if they answer between 9-10 they are presented with a different question 'What did you enjoy most about volunteering experience'

That allows you to customise what is the next question people see, based on a previous response.

### Example of question skip logic

On a scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 equals extremely unlikely and 10 equals extremely likely) how likely are you to recommend the volunteering with (organisation) to family and friends?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ask if answered 0-6 on scale

**How could we improve?**

Ask if answered 9-10 on scale

**What did you enjoy most about volunteering?**

### Page 29 – Example of option randomisation

Another tool you can use is option randomisation.

The reason to do this is to reduce order bias – by that I mean respondents only pay attention to the first few statements and then tune out and do not read other statements properly.

- When you set up option randomisation, the order of your options changes every time a new participant enters your survey. So participant 1 will see a different order list compared to participant 2.
- It is best to keep ‘other’ and ‘don’t know’ options fixed at the bottom of the list and not randomise these. You can easily do this in survey software.

### Example of question randomisation

**What participant 1 sees...**

**How could (organisation) improve your experience as a volunteer? Select up to 3**

<input type="checkbox"/>	More training / opportunities for professional development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater flexibility around how and when I can volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities to volunteer more often
<input type="checkbox"/>	More support from the supervisor / team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater focus on health and safety for volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/>	More feedback about my performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	More information about the role and the contribution my work makes
<input type="checkbox"/>	More information about the volunteering opportunities that are available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater public recognition of the contribution volunteers provide
<input type="checkbox"/>	More opportunities for volunteers / team members to network and socialise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

**What participant 2 sees...**

**How could (organisation) improve your experience as a volunteer? Select up to 3**

<input type="checkbox"/>	More support from the supervisor / team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater public recognition of the contribution volunteers provide
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater flexibility around how and when I can volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/>	More feedback about my performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	More information about the volunteering opportunities that are available
<input type="checkbox"/>	More training / opportunities for professional development
<input type="checkbox"/>	More opportunities for volunteers / team members to network and socialise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater focus on health and safety for volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/>	More information about the role and the contribution my work makes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities to volunteer more often
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)



**Tip**

Randomising response options removes question order bias – e.g. only selecting the first 3 options. Note while this is possible for some questions like the above it is not appropriate for ordered options (e.g. age)

### Slide 30: Assess the need for compulsory vs. non-compulsory questions

Another question we are often asked is whether questions should be made compulsory. While it might seem sensible to make it compulsory for every respondent to answer every question – think again! If you force participants to answer every single question, you may end up with fewer responses and you may end up with inaccurate data.

- Think about which questions are appropriate to make compulsory. For example, there is no point making it compulsory to answer the question ‘How many children do you have?’ If you don’t have children, you can’t answer that question.
- It is also best not to make personal questions compulsory to allow respondents to skip questions they would prefer to keep private. For example, it is common practice not to make it compulsory to provide your personal income.
- If you do make the question compulsory, it is best to include a ‘don’t know’ or ‘prefer not to answer’ option to prevent respondents dropping out.

### Slide 31: Test, test and test again

Your final step in questionnaire and survey design is testing

- This is an important step in detecting any errors you may have missed when constructing your survey.
- We recommend that you test your survey both internally and externally for grammar, question clarity and working logic.

- It is good practice to test your survey on different devices such as laptop and smart phones and different browsers such as Google Chrome and Safari.
- If you are conducting a paper survey, I would recommend you hand out a few copies to stakeholders and a small group of potential respondents for their feedback. Make sure they understand the questions and how they should answer the survey.
- When your survey looks good, it is important to conduct a ‘pilot launch’ of your survey. This means you send the survey out to 5-10 people so you can check their data collected. This is safety measure to ensure that the survey platform you are using is capturing correct information.
- Once you have conducted all your checks, there is nothing left to do but launch your survey to your entire database or target audience!

### **Page 32 – Conclusion, and Next Videos**

So that concludes our video on good questionnaire and survey design practices, which hopefully gave you a guide to key considerations you should be thinking about when putting your survey together and programming it in your chosen software.

As I said, there are six videos that provide more information about fieldwork and response management, data analysis and reporting and lastly ethical compliance considerations. The next video in the series goes into detail about fieldwork and response management.

### **Page 33 – Questions. Get In Touch**

If you have any questions, we are also available by phone or email. So feel free to reach out to us at any time.

Thanks for watching!