

Best Practices in Survey Design

A brief guide for staff members at Western Wyoming Community College

A well-designed survey will ensure that you receive USEFUL and MEANINGFUL information that is easy to interpret and understand.

HELPFUL TIPS:

1. Keep your survey **brief**. Think about the information you really need, and focus your questions on getting that feedback.
2. Keep questions **focused** on a single concept, and limit the number of answer choices. Too many answer choices can overwhelm the reader.
3. Organize your survey with a **logical** pattern. Group questions together when they discuss the same concept.
4. Closed-ended questions (with multiple-choice answers you design) are much easier to analyze. Open-ended (fill-in-the-blank) responses give more detail, and are helpful in certain circumstances, but as these could have unlimited varieties of answers, the information you gather may be overwhelming to analyze.
5. Phrase your question (and answer choices) in a way that doesn't bias the responses. When using a rating scale, avoid options like "always" and "never," which can cause the audience to lean in the opposite direction.
6. A greeting page is always nice. This page should include information on the purpose of the survey, tell how long it will take to participate in the survey, and give assurance of either confidentiality or anonymity.
7. **Pre-test** the survey with a small group of respondents who are willing to give honest feedback. Poor phrasing, illogical order and unclear instructions can be avoided.
8. **Share** the results of the survey. Tell what you've learned and how you will use the information in your program.

DID YOU KNOW?

WWCC Learning Assessment Associate Dianna Renz can assist you in survey design, dissemination, and results analysis. Call 307-382-1871 or e-mail drenz@wwcc.wy.edu.

Working with Survey Monkey

Western Wyoming Community College has an institutional account with [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com).

Using a new piece of technology always includes a “learning curve.” Once you know how to use the many tools within the system, however, you can be more confident and efficient.

HELPFUL TIPS:

1. You will need a username and password to sign in. Contact Dianna Renz at 307-382-1871 or drenz@wwcc.wy.edu for login information. In order to maintain appropriate account access for the institution, the password will be changed each summer.
2. Your survey, with responses, will be automatically saved in the “My Surveys” section of our shared account. Feel free to look at other surveys for design ideas or phrasing suggestions, but others’ results are confidential, and should not be accessed.
3. You can always create a survey from scratch, but you may also copy and modify an existing survey. This feature is useful when you want to use the same questions to compare results from one year or semester to another.
4. You may create your own address list in the shared “Address Book.” This feature is particularly useful when you’ll be surveying the same group of people more than once. Including a first name with the e-mail address means that the Survey Monkey system can automatically personalize the e-mail invitation.
5. Carefully consider the best method of dissemination for your survey. Personalized e-mail invitations provide a better response rate, and this method also allows you to send reminder e-mails just to those who have not yet responded to the invitation. A link, which can be posted on a website or e-mailed, provides complete anonymity, but be sure to modify the settings and restrictions as appropriate.
6. The “Help” button is located in the upper right corner of the screen. The Survey Monkey Help center contains many useful tools.

PDF Documents: Survey Monkey User Manual, Best Practices for Survey Design, Tips for Improving Response Rates

Frequently Asked Questions: Getting Started, Survey Design, Collecting Responses, Analyzing Results, Tips

Tutorials: Creating Surveys, Collecting Responses, Analyzing Results

DID YOU KNOW?

With the Survey Monkey program, you can...

- Include some questions with “skip logic,” which is useful if you need additional information from only one portion of the audience
- Redirect your audience to a webpage of your choice after they finish the survey
- Filter out and analyze responses from one identified group in the audience
- Share responses with another party via e-mail, while maintaining confidentiality