

## Questionnaire Layout

Having a good set of questions to ask the respondent doesn't totally guarantee success in conducting a survey. The overall look of the questionnaire is also necessary to achieve the goals of the survey.

Most often than not, respondents consider the questionnaire layout first before having the motivation to complete the survey. Studies show that respondents may not be able answer the questions truthfully because of being pre-occupied or bothered by the number of pages to answer, or the overall look of the questionnaire. Therefore, a good-looking questionnaire layout [1] is an important factor in increasing response rates [2].



## The Cover Page

Placing a cover page on your survey questionnaire increases the level of motivation and willingness to participate. The survey cover can instantly connect the respondents [3] to the survey and make them feel that they are important to make the survey a success.

The cover should contain the following:

1. The title of the survey or study
2. A one or two-sentence description of the survey, stating its purpose
3. Initial instructions
4. The name of the company conducting the survey
5. Any sponsors

The cover, as well as the back cover, should look simple to give an impression that the survey

is conducted in a professional manner. However, studies show that using colored covers increase response rates by 2% to 4%, so feel free to add some spark on your cover.

## The Instructions Page

In this page, explain further the purpose of the survey [4]. Provide brief and specific instructions on how the respondent should answer the questions. Also, instruct the respondent about the deadline for completing the survey.

In addition, inform the respondent about confidentiality matters, and offer contact numbers that the respondent may call if there are any problems or comments regarding the survey questionnaire.

## The Questionnaire Proper

In forming the survey layout, the order of questions should be taken into consideration. The questions should be arranged from general to specific. The very first question should be a general one but is pertaining to goals or purpose of the survey, so that the respondent won't get intimidated but rather, become slowly engaged to the questionnaire. Being "general" means that the first question should be applicable to all respondents and is easy to answer in just a few seconds.

The questions should be grouped according to their content. This helps the respondent to organize his thoughts and reactions, leading to a more accurate response to the questions. With regards to the appearance, the questions should be consistent in font style, font size, and even the indentation.

## The Navigational Path

In a survey, the navigational path simply means the path that should be followed by the respondents when answering the questionnaire. There are four types of navigational paths: verbal, numerical, and symbolic or graphical. Here are examples for each type:

1. Verbal (e.g. Skip to No. 12 ; Proceed to the Next Page)
2. Numerical (e.g. Page 1, 2, 3...)
3. Symbolic (e.g. ?, and other arrows )

Remember that the navigational path you utilize should be consistent in all the pages of the questionnaire.

## Survey Length

According to Dillman (2000), the length of the survey varies depending on three factors relating to the respondent: his sense of commitment, interest and sense of responsibility in completing the survey. As a rule of thumb, keep the questions as short as possible to keep these three levels at their peaks.

**Related pages:**

Questionnaire Example [5]

Questionnaire Checklist [6]

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**Source URL:** <https://explorable.com/questionnaire-layout>

**Links:**

[1] <http://pareonline.net/pdf/v10n12.pdf>, [2] <https://explorable.com/increasing-survey-response-rates>, [3] <https://explorable.com/social-science-subjects>, [4] <https://explorable.com/defining-survey-goals>, [5] <https://explorable.com/questionnaire-example>, [6] <https://explorable.com/questionnaire-checklist>, [7] <https://explorable.com/users/sarah>, [8] <https://explorable.com/questionnaire-layout>