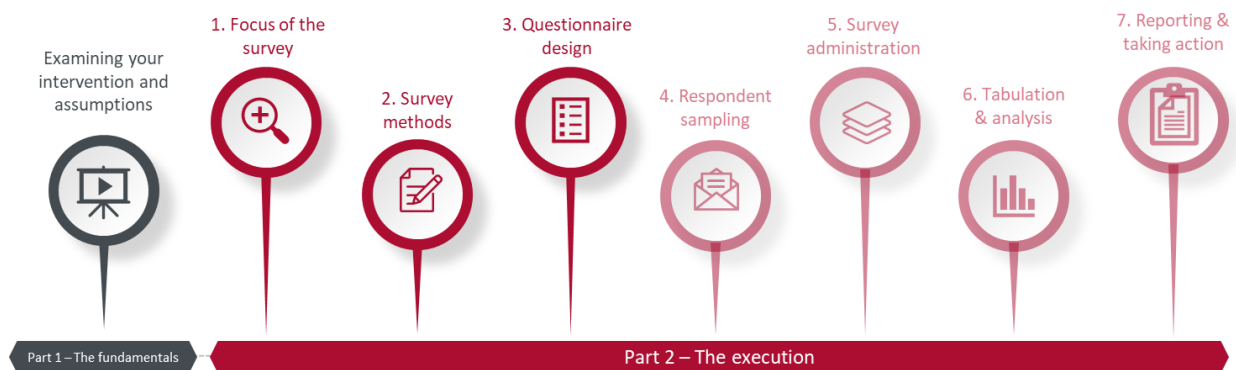


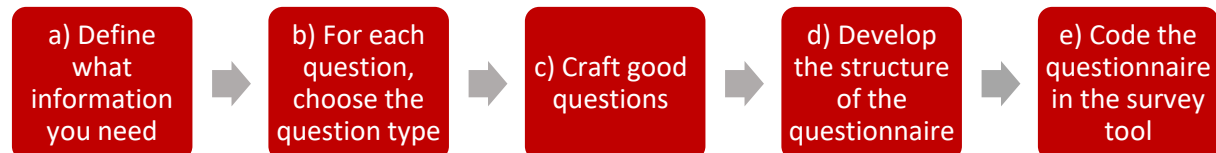
MODULE 3. DESIGN THE QUESTIONNAIRE



After defining the scope of your survey in *Module 1* and selecting a survey method in *Module 2*, it is time to design your questionnaire. This module is challenging for a number of reasons:

- Questions need to be selected very carefully: you only have a few attempts to verify your assumptions and inform the future course of your organization. The questionnaire should not take longer than 10-15 minutes to complete, which translates into a maximum of about 20 questions.
- The phrasing of the questions is very important. Complicated formulation or unclear vocabulary may confuse your respondents and jeopardize the quality of your results.
- The order of the questions also matters to ensure that respondents finish the questionnaire and give enough attention to each question.

More specifically, designing a good questionnaire requires the following 5 steps:



a) Define what information you need

The same rule applies as in every step of this training: Start with remembering *Module 1*. Before formulating each question, think of what information it must help you collect and what type of answers would yield the insights you need to address the challenge at hand. A good trick is to anticipate the moment when you will need to analyze the results of your survey and ask yourself: what type of answers will I likely get from the questions I am drafting? Will these answers allow me to test my assumptions? Will they help me identify how to improve? If not, then redraft the questions.

Do not forget to include some socio-economic profile questions at the start, to help you classify and segment your respondents and analyze if results differ across different types of respondents. You should also decide if the survey will be anonymous. The advantage of an anonymous survey is that more people typically agree to participate, and they tend to answer more honestly; the drawback is you cannot link the survey answers to data you may already have about the respondents (e.g., purchase history), so you need to ask all relevant information as part of the survey itself.

b) For each question, choose the “question type”

There are essentially two ways to phrase your questions: close-ended and open-ended questions. In the case of close-ended questions, respondents select the answer from pre-coded answer options. Close-ended questions can be further split into two main types: single-choice, and multiple-choice. In

single-choice questions respondents can only pick one option from the list. For example:

How frequently do you typically use product X? (Please select one answer)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ A few times per week
- ☐ Once per week
- ☐ A few times per month
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ Less than once per month

In the case of multiple-choice questions, respondents can pick more than one option. For example:

What factors matters most to you when purchasing food items? (Please select top 2)

- ☐ Price
- ☐ Nutritional value
- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Quantity
- ☐ Packaging
- ☐ Recommendations/reviews
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Open-ended questions, on the other hand, allow respondents to answer in their own words. For example:

What aspects of this training did you like the most?

To help you chose the best type for each question, see the pros and cons below:

Close-ended questions		Open-ended questions	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Easier to ask	Harder to design	Easier to design	More challenging to analyse the results
Quick to process	Limits nuance and detail of response	More detailed responses	Time consuming, thus more expensive
Simple to record	Limits range of responses	Full range of responses	Less suitable for comparisons
More stable for comparisons	You can miss the answers not in the pre-coded list	More individualized	Longer and harder to answer for respondents

Keep in mind that, while phone and online surveys allow you to ask any type of questions, you will need to select primarily (if not only) closed-ended questions. SMS surveys also should be close-ended with few answer choices. If you realize that the survey method you chose doesn't fit the questions you want to ask, reconsider your choice. Even with phone and online surveys, try to keep the number of open-ended questions to a minimum, to reduce completion time and facilitate the analysis.

c) Craft good questions

It is important to meticulously think through how you phrase each question. Straightforward, unambiguous, everyday language yields clearer answers. For instance, instead of writing *Please describe the level of cleanliness of the shop*, you should write *How clean was the shop?*. To ask the right questions, try to put yourself in the respondent's shoes. How would they answer the question? Could there be situations in which a respondent wouldn't know how to answer or could be confused about the meaning of the question? Could different people interpret the question differently? For example,

take the question *What was your biggest investment in your farm this year?*. Some people would understand the word “investment” as what did you buy (e.g., a machine), while others would interpret it as the amount (e.g., 1000 USD), so a more precise formulation is required.

Beware of not asking multiple questions in one. The result is often ambiguous answers. For instance, if you ask *How satisfied are you with our products and services?*, you will not know if satisfaction is driven by the products, the services, or both. You should rather ask separate questions, or even for each individual product and service offered.

Also, try to avoid formulating questions in a way that reflects your assumptions, as this may (mis)lead the respondents and yield biased answers. Rather, the phrasing should be neutral. An example of leading question is: *Did this cookstove increase your cooking speed? – Yes/ No*. It suggests that speed should have indeed increased. A more neutral question is: *How did your cooking speed change since you started using this cookstove? – It decreased a lot/ It decreased a bit/ It did not change/ It increased a bit/ It increased a lot*.

The gender aspect is also important to consider. Avoid traditional, stereotypical views on gender roles, and think about how answers might differ between male and female respondents. For example, if you ask a question about time spent working, you might get results misrepresenting the reality: women might answer “none” as they don’t have a formal job, although they might have very little (if any) actual “free time”. Similarly, in a question about income, women might not report any, even if they might earn a little cash from informal occupations (e.g. firewood collection, weaving, etc.). It is therefore important to understand the local context and adapt the questions and language.

If you have close-ended questions, the proposed answer options are as important as the question itself. Make sure to propose all relevant answers, without bias (that is, offering answer possibilities covering the full spectrum of possible answers), and to include an *Other* option (asking to specify, if respondents choose *Other*). Also make it clear for respondents how many answers they can select.

For multi-choice questions, it is better to allow only a limited number of answers (2, maximum 3), especially for questions which assess subjective preferences. Otherwise, respondents will select many answers and you will not be able to identify which option matters the most.

Special focus: Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is an important and widely used metric based on a simple question: *On a scale of 0 (least likely) to 10 (most likely), how likely are you to recommend our company to a friend, family or colleague?*. Respondents rating 0-6 are considered “detractors” (unhappy users at risk of churning), those rating 7-8 are “passives” (users who like your organization but without particular enthusiasm), and those rating 9-10 are “promoters” (users who love the company and actively promote it). To calculate your NPS score, you have to subtract the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. The score can range between -100 (100% detractors) and 100 (100% promoters): a score below 0 is a red flag; between 0-30 is good; between 30-70 is great; and above 70 means you have a very high satisfaction score.

NPS is generally considered the gold standard for measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty: for example, it is typically a much better predictor of customer retention than directly asking clients *How satisfied are you with our service?*. NPS is a key metric that all businesses and organizations should track, and it can (and should) be incorporated into almost any survey.

d) Develop the structure of the whole questionnaire

Once you have all questions, take some time to think about the best flow. A good questionnaire starts with an introduction, explains your organization, the questionnaire purpose, how long it takes to complete and how grateful you will be if the respondent participates. By doing so, you are enticing the respondents to answer and boost the quality of the answers. For online surveys, also mention a

deadline for completion.

For the core of the questionnaire, group your questions by topic and think about the most logical sequencing. This helps respondents understand the questions and navigate the questionnaire. Generally, you should go from broad to more specific, to make sure your respondents understand the specific questions.

Another suggestion is to put the most important questions early in the survey: if the respondent chooses not to finish the survey, or if the survey is interrupted for any reason, you will still have your most desired information. Moreover, it is common for respondents to lose interest in the questionnaire if questions are too complicated or unpleasant to answer. Therefore, more difficult or personal questions should be placed at the end of the questionnaire.

To make your questionnaire more engaging, keep it short (only include strictly necessary questions), bring variation in the questions you ask (alternate between close-ended and open-ended) and avoid using too many repetitive and personal questions.

Lastly, be aware of questions that could influence the answers to subsequent questions. For instance, if you want to measure spontaneous brand awareness or usage, do not, in any previous question, list any brand. This would influence the answers.

At the end of your questionnaire, remember to thank the respondents for their participation. Always express gratitude for the time people have given you!

e) Code the questionnaire in the survey tool

After the questionnaire design is finalized, you need to program the questions and answers in a survey tool of your choice. There are many good survey tools available, including some that are free of charge. Some popular providers that offer at least a basic version for free include Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, QuestionPro and Kobo Toolbox. Choose the tool that works best for you, keeping in mind your needs in terms of: number of questions and answers; skip logic (i.e., ability to display/hide questions based on the answer given to previous questions); offline data collection; data output (e.g., CSV/excel export, analytics capabilities). Make sure to check what set of features are available in the free versus paid versions; in some cases, it might be worth paying a subscription for 1-2 months during survey rollout. If you use a customer relationship management (CRM) or project management tool, it is possible that it already includes a survey feature, which could allow you to integrate survey results with your existing database.

When coding the questionnaire in the tool, make sure to pick the right format for both questions (single-choice, multiple-choice, open-ended) and answers (e.g., text, numbers). For multiple-choice questions, also pre-set the maximum number of answers allowed.

You should generally make all questions mandatory, to avoid any data gaps. If anything, you can provide an “escape door” where appropriate, e.g., *I don't know*, *N/A* or *Prefer not to answer*, to avoid respondents choosing a random answer.

Finally, use the skip logic functionality to only show questions relevant to what respondents answered previously. For example, you should not have a question saying: *If you answered yes to the previous question, please explain why*. Rather, only respondents who selected Yes in the previous question should see the follow-up question, *Why?*. Most survey tools allow you to use skip logic (refer to training materials from the provider for guidance). Depending on the complexity of your questionnaire, skip logic can be tricky to set-up correctly, so make sure to run several tests.