



## More Dos and Don'ts for the Development of Questions

Developing questions is a bit more complicated and challenging than remembering four dos and four don'ts. Additional guidance is useful in wording questions and creating a questionnaire. Marketing research practitioner Brett Plummer recently issued his own list of dos and don'ts.<sup>42</sup> Of course, some of Plummer's recommendations overlap with those presented previously in this chapter, but he suggests additional considerations that are essential to the design of good questions.

Dos include:

1. Keep your research objectives in mind. After drafting all the questions, go back and make sure that every objective has all of the necessary questions.
2. Consider which question type is best for each question. The options are open ended, which are difficult to analyze; single or multiple choice, which are quick and easy for respondents; ranking, which are somewhat confusing to respondents; and rating, which requires selection of the appropriate rating scale.
3. Take into account how the data will be analyzed. Nominal and ranking measures must be analyzed with percentages. Rating scales can be analyzed with averages and advanced statistical techniques.

4. Include all valid response options. With a multiple choice question, be sure to list all reasonable answers along with "other" and "none of the above."
5. Consider where your question falls in the flow of the survey. Group similar items together, ask important questions fairly early on, and consider if earlier questions might bias answers to later ones.

Don'ts include:

6. Don't create confusing or ambiguous questions. Avoid jargon, technical wording, and pretest the questions to make sure they are understandable to prospective respondents.
7. Don't forget to carefully review response options for appropriateness and overlap. Whether the question is a "choose one" or "choose all that apply" type, the choices should be mutually exclusive.
8. Don't lead respondents toward answers. A good marketing researcher will study the more subtle types of leading questions and avoid them.
9. Don't ask redundant questions. Respondents are especially likely to stop responding if they believe the survey is wasting their time with repetitive questions.