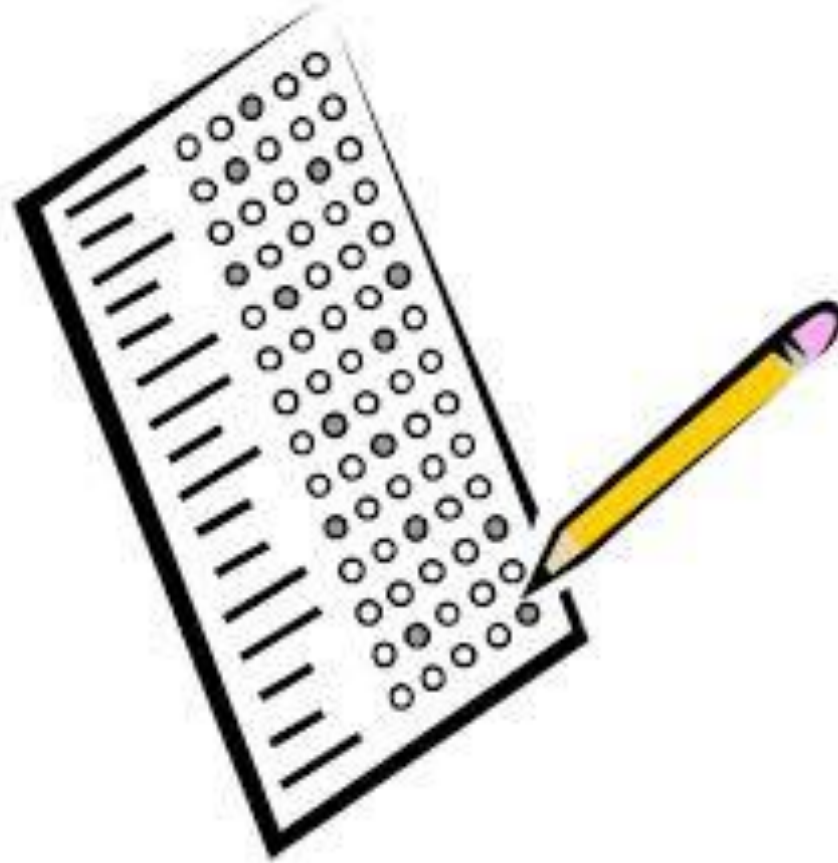


# Using Surveys: An Overview



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# Using Surveys



- ❑ Allow you to easily collect information from a group of people in a standardized manner.
  
- ❑ Surveys are useful for:
  - ❑ Larger samples
  - ❑ Original data
  - ❑ Measuring attitudes, perceptions, orientations, etc.

# Administration



- Four common methods
  - Self-administered
    - Respondents complete a hard copy
  - Face-to-face
    - Respondents are interviewed by someone
  - Telephone
  - Online

# Survey Recommendations



- ❑ Provide clear instructions:
  - ❑ At start of survey
  - ❑ During use of scales and matrix questions
  - ❑ During use of contingency questions / conditional branching / skip-logic
- ❑ Use clear and consistent formatting
  - ❑ For answering questions
  - ❑ For scales
- ❑ Check words, phrases, etc.
  - ❑ Spelling
  - ❑ Acronyms and abbreviations

# Common Errors



## □ Using Leading Words and Biased Terms

- Refers to any part of the question that encourages a respondent to answer in a certain way
- Subtle wording differences can produce large differences in results
  - “Could,” “should,” and “might,” seem similar, but have been shown to produce a 20% difference in agreement to a question
- Strong words such as “force” and “prohibit” introduce a bias to the question
  - Do you think the government should force you to recycle?
- Use of hypothetical situations can sometimes help to avoid issues

# Common Errors



## ❑ Failing to Give Mutually Exclusive Choices

- ❑ Multiple choice response options should allow respondents to make clear choices
  - ❑ Don't create uncertainty for respondents
- ❑ Review your survey and identify ways respondents could get stuck with either too many or no correct answers.
  1. What is your age?
    - a) 20-30
    - b) 30-40
    - c) 40-50
    - d) 50+

# Common Errors



## ❑ Not Asking Direct Questions

- ❑ Questions that are vague can limit the usefulness of your results
- ❑ Make sure respondents know what you're asking
  - ❑ Don't ask:
    1. What suggestions do you have for improving gardening in Spokane County?
  - ❑ When you want to know:
    1. Using the following list, please identify the gardening classes you are most likely to take if offered by Master Gardeners in the next six months?

# Common Errors



## ❑ Not Including a “Prefer Not to Answer” Option

- ❑ Sometimes respondents may not want or be able to provide the information requested.

Questions about:	
Income	Personal beliefs
Occupation	Political beliefs
Finances	Religious beliefs
Family life	

- ❑ These questions should be asked only when absolutely necessary.
- ❑ Should always include an option to not answer (not applicable, prefer not to answer, etc.)





# Common Errors



## ❑ Failing to Cover All Possible Answer Choices

### ❑ Are all of the options covered?

- ❑ If unsure, conduct a pretest using “Other (please specify)” as an option.
- ❑ If more than 10% of respondents (in a pretest or otherwise) select “other,” likely missing an answer.
- ❑ Review the “Other” answers provided and add the most frequently mentioned new options to the list



# Common Errors



## ❑ Not Using Unbalanced Scales Carefully

- ❑ Unbalanced scales may be appropriate for some situations and promote bias in others.
  1. What is your opinion of the recycling options in King County?
    - a) Pretty good
    - b) Great
    - c) Fantastic
    - d) The Best Ever
- ❑ Additionally, scale points should represent equi-distant points on a scale.
  - ❑ Research has shown the points on the strongly disagree–disagree–neutral–agree–strongly agree scale have the same equal conceptual distance from one point to the next



# Common Errors



## ❑ Not Asking Only One Question at a Time

- ❑ Known as a double-barreled question
- ❑ When multiple questions are asked at one time
- ❑ Can cause issues for respondents
  1. What is the fastest and most economical Internet service for you?

