Custom Item Creation Guidelines for On-Demand Pulse

The following is an overview of how to write custom survey items.

Three Main Attributes of Effective Survey Questions:

1. **Focus:** Each question should focus on a single, specific issue or topic.

   <u>Wrong</u>: There are enough employees in my team for the most part. [The words "for the most part" is unclear.]

   <u>Right</u>: My work unit is adequately staffed.

   <u>Wrong</u>: My work policies and procedures are available and clear. [There are too many moving parts to this question. The policies might be available but not clear and the procedures may be clear. It is therefore difficult to answer this question accurately.]

   <u>Right</u>: My department work policies are clear.

2. **Brevity:** Each question should be as brief as possible.

   <u>Wrong</u>: There are many safety procedures, each corresponding to specific departments, which are seriously enforced and regulated in this organization. [This question is too long.]

   <u>Right</u>: Safety procedures are enforced in this organization. •

3. **Clarity:** Each question should be interpreted the same way by all respondents.

   <u>Wrong</u>: I seem to get along well with my co-workers and with the person I report to [It could be that the person gets along well with co-workers but not with the person he/she reports to, or vice versa.]

   <u>Right</u>: I have a good relationship with the person I report to.

Instrumentation Bias/Error

Instrumentation bias/error is systematic bias or error that is introduced by instructions, questions, or response scales/options. The following are some major categories of instrumentation bias/error.

- Ambiguity of Wording

  <u>Wrong</u>: In my work unit, we emphasize accomplishments. [This question is unclear as to whose accomplishments? The individual employee or the team?]

  <u>Right</u>: In my work unit, we emphasize team accomplishments more than individual accomplishments.

- Double-Barreled Questions

  <u>Wrong</u>: Members of my work unit treat one another with dignity and respect. [The team member may treat the other with respect but maybe not with dignity. Both dignity and respect are two different things so it's unclear as to which one the response would be addressing.]

  <u>Right</u>: Members of my work unit treat one another with dignity.

  <u>Right</u>: Members of my work unit treat one another with respect.

- Inapplicable Questions

  <u>Wrong</u>: Performance evaluations are done quarterly. [For this question, 'quarterly' would not apply since only yearly reviews are done.]

  <u>Right</u>: I receive performance evaluations on a yearly basis.

- Leading Questions

  <u>Wrong</u>: Don't you think the vending machine carries good snacks? [The person writing this question is looking for a "yes" response.]

  <u>Right</u>: I like the food available in the vending machines

- Loaded Questions

  <u>Wrong</u>: Don't you feel that due to added security in this organization, you have a secure work environment? [The person writing this question thinks that their organization is better than others due to its additional security.]

  <u>Right</u>: This organization provides a secure work environment.

- Over-Demanding Recall

  <u>Wrong</u>: Considering how long you have worked here, name all the significant improvements you think this organization has made? [There maybe way too many to remember or list.]

  <u>Right</u>: Over the past year, name the most significant improvement this organization has made. Right: Name the most significant improvement this organization has made over the last 12 months.

- Over-Emphasis

  <u>Wrong</u>: I would recommend my work unit as the best place ever to work in. [This sentence has superlative wording which is not recommended because it can possibly cause responses that skew a negative score. The person may think this is a good place to work but maybe not 'the best' place.]

  <u>Right</u>: I would recommend my unit as a good place to work.

- Over-Specificity

  <u>Wrong</u>: How many minutes of your day is spent in meetings? [Do you really need to know the number of minutes spent? Does it actually matter in any way?]

  <u>Right</u>: The amount of time I spend in meetings is appropriate.

- Unstated Criteria

  <u>Wrong</u>: It is important to have a good relationship with customers. [Important to whom, the ABC company or the respondent?]

  <u>Right</u>: It is important to me that I have a good relationship with my customers.