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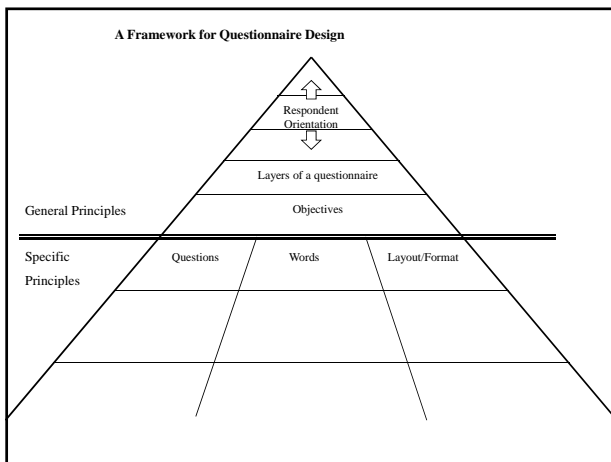
## Questionnaire Design

Professor Phil Gendall  
School of Communication, Journalism & Marketing  
[p.gendall@massey.ac.nz](mailto:p.gendall@massey.ac.nz)  
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## Questionnaire Design

- A planned, thoughtful process based on systematic principles.
- Involves the simultaneous integration of four layers:
  - Questions
  - Objectives
  - Words
  - Layout or format



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## Principle

- The respondent defines what you can do
  - the types of questions you can ask
  - the types of words you can use
  - the concepts you can explore
  - the methodology you can use

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## Estimating Wealth in the General Public

- “Overall, if you were to sell off all of your property and combine it with your liquid assets, about how much money would that be?”  
*Please include also property or possessions you may own other than real estate (such as businesses or cars).*
- Difficult concepts, difficult calculations
- Not recommended in Turkey!

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## Principle

- Let the respondent tell you what he or she means, and don't impose your values, perceptions or language on the respondent.  
Eg, “heavy traffic”, religiosity, “household”

32. Which of the following categories describe your ethnic origin?

PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS YOU NEED TO SHOW WHICH ETHNIC GROUP(S) YOU BELONG TO

N Z Maori	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
N Z European or Pakeha	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other European	<input type="checkbox"/>
Samoa	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cook Island Maori	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tongan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Niuean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (such as Fijian, Korean)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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### Principle

- Don't overestimate the respondent's awareness or knowledge.

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### Awareness or Consciousness

- Do respondents understand the implications of their answers?
  - Do you agree or disagree that in order to protect the environment New Zealand needs economic growth?

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### Knowledge

- Do respondents know what you are talking about?
  - For example, inflation, profit, greenhouse effect, victims of crime, scolded

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### Principle

- In general, keep questions short, simple and concrete.
- Sometimes you have to balance the conflicting objectives of clarity, conciseness and information sought.
- Use closed rather than open-ended questions wherever possible.

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### Principle

- The layout and presentation of a questionnaire should help the respondent to "navigate" through it and encourage the respondent to respond.

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## The Overriding Principle: Respondent Orientation

- See:
  - Gendall, P (1998). A Framework for Questionnaire Design: Labaw Revisited. *Marketing Bulletin*, 9, 28-39.
  - On-line at: <http://marketing-bulletin.massey.ac.nz>

7-10 Age Group Questionnaire Product X

Please circle the **ONE** best answer in this column for each question.

How old are you today?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 1  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ 2  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ 3  
4 \_\_\_\_\_ 4

Are you a boy or a girl?

Boy \_\_\_\_\_   
Girl \_\_\_\_\_

Practice Question 1. Do you like eating ice-cream?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_   
No \_\_\_\_\_

1. How sweet was the sample?

Not Sweet Enough \_\_\_\_\_   
Sweet Enough \_\_\_\_\_   
Too Sweet \_\_\_\_\_

2. When you ate the piece did it taste like strawberries?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_   
A Little Bit \_\_\_\_\_   
No \_\_\_\_\_

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## Open Vs Closed Questions

- What do you think is the single most important problem facing New Zealand right now?
- Would you please look at this card and tell me which of these is the single most important problem facing new Zealand right now?
  - AIDS
  - INFLATION
  - HIGH EXCHANGE RATE
  - LAW AND ORDER
  - INTEREST RATES
  - UNEMPLOYMENT
  - THE ECONOMY IN GENERAL
  - RACIAL PROBLEMS

Most important problem facing New Zealand	Closed Question %	Open Question %
Unemployment	56	50
Economy in general	22	11
Law and order	9	5
Racial problems	7	10
AIDS	6	-
Don't know	1	-
Unstable government	-	5
Declining moral standards	-	3
Other	-	16
Total	100	100

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## Question Wording

- Avoid:
  - Unfamiliar or difficult words
  - Many information-carrying words
  - Broad concepts (e.g. children)
  - Qualifying clause at end of a question
  - Two questions in one
  - Leading or loaded questions
  - Questions that require a lot of effort

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## Unfamiliar or difficult words

May be misunderstood by respondents

- "*Restitution* and compensation"
- "Should the Maori language be *compulsory* in our schools?"

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### Jargon

Respondents may not understand technical terms

“Which of the following diseases can smoking cause...  
Emphysema  
 Cancer  
 Impotence

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### Many information-carrying words

“Do you think our armed forces, rather than *some other organisations* should be responsible for *aerial surveillance* of the *exclusive economic zone of South Pacific Island countries*, if requested?”

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### Broad concepts

Respondents may narrow or widen concepts such as children, government, family

- “Do you think that *children* suffer any ill-effects from watching television programmes with violence in them, other than ordinary Westerns?”
- “Children” variously interpreted as “my children”, “children under 5”, “well brought up children”, etc

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### Qualifying clause at the end of a sentence

Respondents likely to ignore it, particularly in a telephone or face-to-face survey

- “How often have you been to the movies *in the last month?*”

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### Two questions in one

Respondents may agree with one concept but disagree with another

- “Would you vote for someone who is *young* and who has *never held office before?*”
- “When shopping for cheese, do you find much difference in the price for the same type of cheese in different stores?”

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### Leading or loaded questions

“When did you stop beating your wife?”

“Most modern passenger aircraft replace their cabin air once every three minutes. In addition, airlines have a policy of separate sections of their aircraft for smokers and non-smokers. Do you agree that this policy of having a smoking and a non-smoking section should continue?”

Commissioned by: NZ Tobacco Institute (1998)

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## Questions that require a lot of effort

"The New Zealand Government gives \$97 million, about 0.2% of its Gross Domestic Product, in economic aid. About 80% goes to the Pacific Islands and the other 20% to developing countries. Do you think the total sum should increase, decrease or stay the same?"

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## Questionnaire formatting

- Questions should follow a logical sequence, commonly a downward funnel.
- Start with interesting, non-threatening questions.
- Use graphic design to enhance "navigation".

13. If you were given the choice of going to one of these events on the next school sports day, which one would you prefer most?

14. Who is your favourite rugby player?

15. If you were given the choice of going to one of these events, which one would you prefer to attend?

16. Who is your favourite musician or band?

17. How often do you read books for pleasure?

18. Do you currently belong to a public library?

19. Have you ever belonged to a public library?

20. About how often do you go to a public library to do any work, for pleasure reading?

21. Which of the following best describes your general feeling about libraries?

22. About how often do you go to the cinema?

9. Where did you see or hear advertisements for prescription medicines?

10. Have you ever talked to your doctor about a prescription medicine after seeing or hearing an advertisement for that medicine?

11. Have you ever talked to your doctor about a health issue that you had not previously discussed after seeing or hearing an advertisement for a prescription medicine?

PLEASE THINK ABOUT THE LAST TIME YOU DISCUSSED A PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE YOU HAD BEEN ADVISED BY YOUR DOCTOR

12. When you last discussed a prescription medicine you had seen advertised with your doctor, did you make a special appointment to discuss the medicine, or did you talk about it during a visit or check-up that you had made for another reason?

2. PERFORMANCE OF THE INSTITUTE

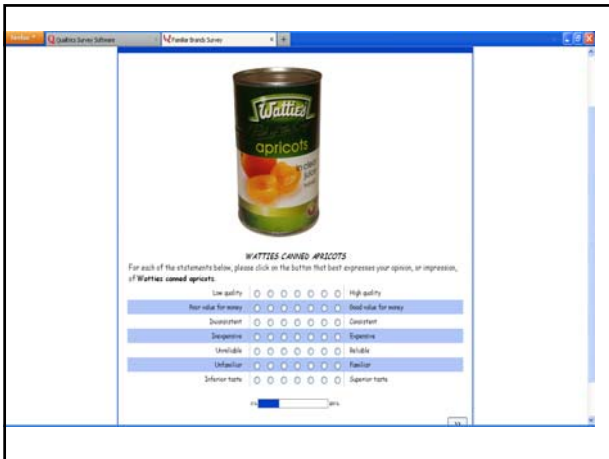
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
<b>The Sports Turf facilities...</b>							
1. Provides a high level of service to clients.	0	1	2	3	4	5	14
2. Meets all of our turf consultancy needs.	0	1	2	3	4	5	11
3. Provides affordable, value for money services.	0	1	2	3	4	5	14
4. Should expand the range of services it offers.	0	1	2	3	4	5	19
5. Should focus more on maintenance than grass growing.	0	1	2	3	4	5	10
6. Would still be used by us even if it had no national body funding.	0	1	2	3	4	5	11
7. Should continue to be funded by national organisations.	0	1	2	3	4	5	11
8. Overall, meets our requirements.	0	1	2	3	4	5	11
<b>The NZ Turf Management Journal...</b>							
9. Is informative on technical topics.	0	1	2	3	4	5	14
10. Is informative on the NZ Turf industry.	0	1	2	3	4	5	15
11. Is easy to read.	0	1	2	3	4	5	18
12. Is kept and used as a reference.	0	1	2	3	4	5	17
13. Has a good balance of articles on different sports turf surfaces.	0	1	2	3	4	5	19
14. Has an acceptable balance of articles and advertising.	0	1	2	3	4	5	19

Previewing Survey

Are you the main grocery shopper for yourself or your household?

I do all the grocery shopping  
 I do most of the grocery shopping  
 I share the grocery shopping equally  
 I don't do much or any grocery shopping

Survey powered by Qualtrics



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### Questionnaire Pretesting

- Pretesting is essential.
- Methods include:
  - Peer review
  - "Think aloud" techniques
  - Belson's double-back pretest

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### Questionnaire Pretesting

- Expensive and time consuming
- Traditional piloting methods don't reveal serious question misunderstanding and misinterpretation
- Plausible answers don't mean respondents have understood or interpreted a question as you intended
- See: Gendall, P. (1994) If the Answer Was "People Who Have AIDS Get Much Less Sympathy Than They Deserve", What Was the Question? *Marketing Bulletin*, 5, 1-12.

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### Where to Start

- With someone else's questionnaire.
- In questionnaire design, plagiarism is good. No point in reinventing the wheel
- But don't assume an existing questionnaire is necessarily a good one. Many aren't.

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### Remember ...

- Your questionnaire almost certainly means a lot more to you than to the respondent.
- The respondent is likely to be less well educated than you.
- You can't write a good questionnaire unless you know a lot about your topic and your respondents.