

Measurement **103****Cue up a better survey**

## Write better questions with these five tips

A survey is only as good as its questions. Vague, muddled questions will give you vague, muddled results. Here are five tips to polish your questions so your surveys shine.

**Ban the “and”**

To get the most out of each question, stick to a single topic. For example, if you want to find out how effective emails are from HR and from Employee Communication, write one question for each. Combining both into one question will simply skew your results. For example, an employee may believe that HR emails are effective but Employee Communication emails aren't. You'll never know if you lump them together.

**Be specific**

Use concrete language to boost understanding. For example, rather than asking about “supporting strategies,” ask about “knowing how to reach goals.” The less you leave a question open to interpretation, the more reliable your results.

**Pick one question per topic**

One common trap when drafting survey questions is to ask the same question in different ways. For example, asking if weekly update calls are “relevant to your job” is very similar to asking if they “help me do my job.” The second question is better because it's more specific. Removing repetitive questions will help you weed out weaker ones, and keep your survey short and sweet.

**Ask, don't tell**

When drafting survey questions, be sure that you are not leading employees to a particular answer. For example, don't ask if a topic like diversity is “critical to our success” because they're more likely to agree in order to avoid appearing insensitive. But if you ask if they understand why it's critical, they may be more willing to admit they don't know how it fits into the overall business strategy.

**Stick to a single open-ended question**

The longer the survey, the less chance you have of employees completing it. This is especially true with open-ended questions, which require more time and effort to answer. Stick to one open-ended question per survey. If you find yourself needing more, consider using focus groups where you can explore the topics through in-depth discussion.