FORTY SUGGESTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

About Question Construction

1. First, ask yourself, “Is this question worth asking?”

2. Keep items as short and concise as possible.

3. Use conventional language but avoid slang or colloquial expressions as well as jargon and technical terms.

4. Avoid abbreviations.

5. Do not phrase questions in a way that suggests a response.

6. Avoid questions that presuppose a certain state of affairs.


9. Provide definitions (if needed) before a question or item.

10. Use multiple questions for some content.

11. Avoid biasing or emotion-laden words or phrases.

12. Avoid double-barreled questions.

13. Avoid sexist language.

14. Avoid negative questions.

15. Avoid “If yes, then…” questions.
16. Be sure respondent realizes you are seeking either a factual answer or an opinion.

17. Use cautiously words such as most, usually, often, several, etc.

18. Use appropriate item format (open vs. closed).

   *For response choices........*

19. Focus response choices for desired response.

20. Make certain response categories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

21. Decide whether you should group response categories.

22. Use meaningful scales.

23. Decide on the number of rating scale points.

24. Use a balanced scale.

25. Use a neutral category whenever appropriate.

26. Decide on using a “Don’t know” choice.

27. Place the positive end of the scale to the right.

**About Questionnaire Construction**

28. Make the questionnaire as "appealing to the eye" and easy to complete as possible.

29. Keep questionnaire as short as possible.
30. Include brief but clear instructions in bold print. Provide examples whenever necessary

31. Number questionnaire items and pages.

32. Put the study title in bold type on the first page of the questionnaire.

33. Put the name and address of the person to whom the form should be returned at the beginning and end of the questionnaire.

34. Group items into logically coherent sections.

35. Begin with a few interesting and "non-threatening" questions.

36. Avoid putting important items at the end of a long questionnaire.

37. Try to make smooth transitions between sections.

38. Avoid constructing sections of the form to be answered by only a subset of respondents.

39. If you have sections with items consisting of long checklists, skip a line after every third or fourth item.

40. If questions appear on both sides of a page, put the word "over" on the bottom of the front side of that page.