Library Surveys for Success

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Today's Goals

- Understand why and how to conduct a survey
  - Steps to running a survey
  - Elements of an effective survey
  - 5 main question types

How surveys impact our lives

Associated Press photo by Byron Rollins.

Why a survey?

- Make informed or “good” decisions
- The results might surprise you
- Fast & easy to administer
- Meeting peoples’ needs = success

Surveys are great for:

- Short answers
- Identifying issues
- Evaluating programs
- Input from many people
- Decisions based on numbers (quantitative data)

Surveys are poorer for:

- Knowing why
- Complex issues
- Input from few people
- Knowing “how good” not “how much” (qualitative)

How to run a survey

A. Steps to running a survey
B. Elements of an effective survey
C. Five 5 main question types

Steps in running a survey

1. Clearly define your goal

- Why are we conducting this survey?
- What do we want to know?
- How will we use this info?
- Keep your goal focused and specific.

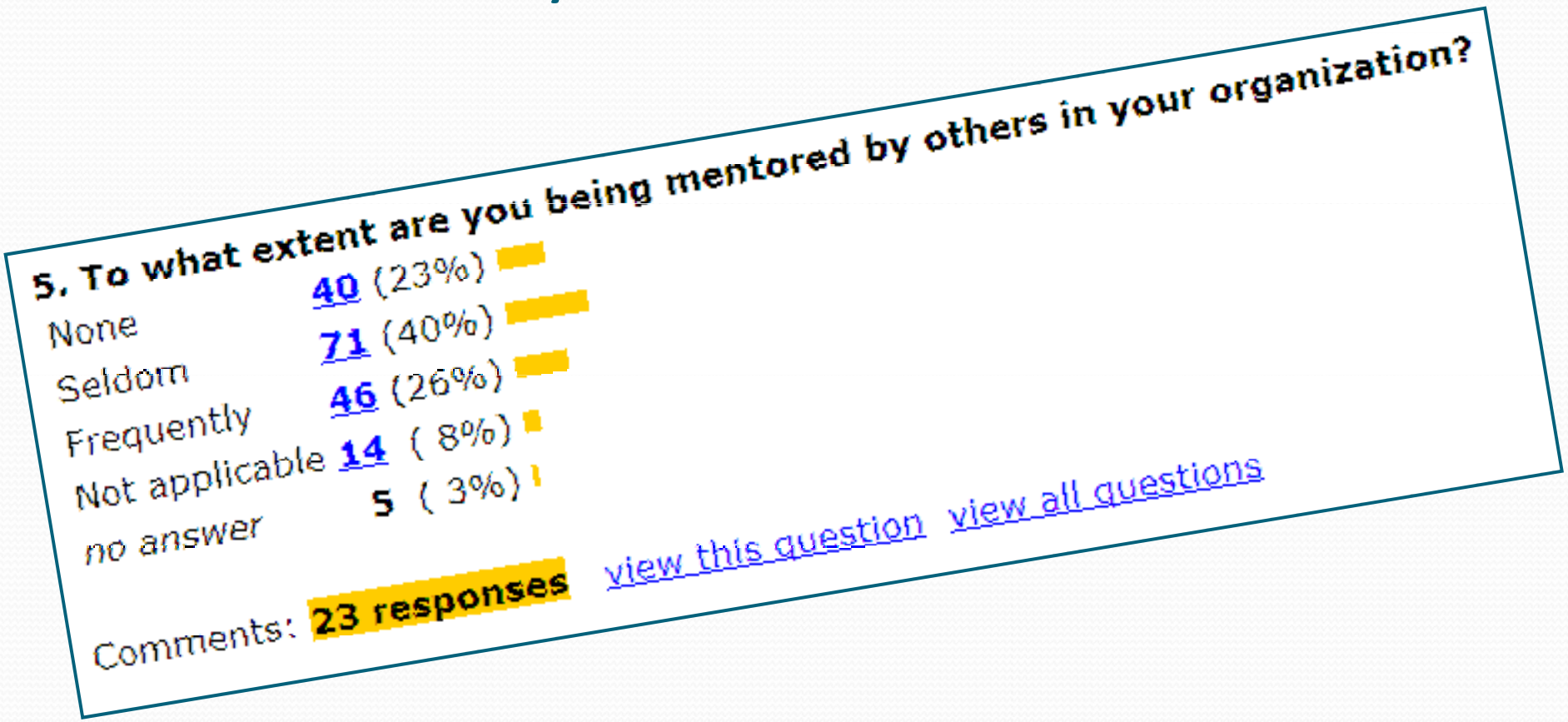
- EX: “The goal of this survey is to understand the needs of our customers in the next two years- 2014-16.”

2. Decide whom to survey

3. Prepare questions that match the goals

4. Decide: online vs. paper, or both

Advantage: computerized surveys summarize for you

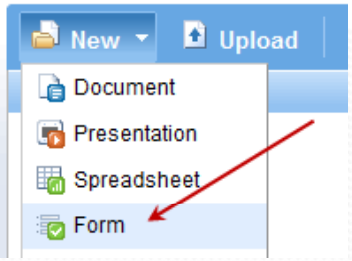


Free online survey tools

QuestionPro
Online Research Made Easy™

www.questionpro.com

Google



docs.google.com/forms

SurveyMonkey™

www.surveymonkey.com

5. Pre-test your survey

- Ask 5-10 people to take the survey
- Was anything difficult or confusing?
- Look at how people responded—
  Did the right questions get asked?
  Did people answer consistently with what was asked?
  (If you expected an apple did you get one?)

Make improvements based on the pre-test

6. Get the survey out

- Listservs
- Your website
- Facebook
- Utility bill
- Paper copy

By March 31 2014

Publicize the survey

Be sure your target audience knows about the survey

Elements of an effective survey

Effective library surveys

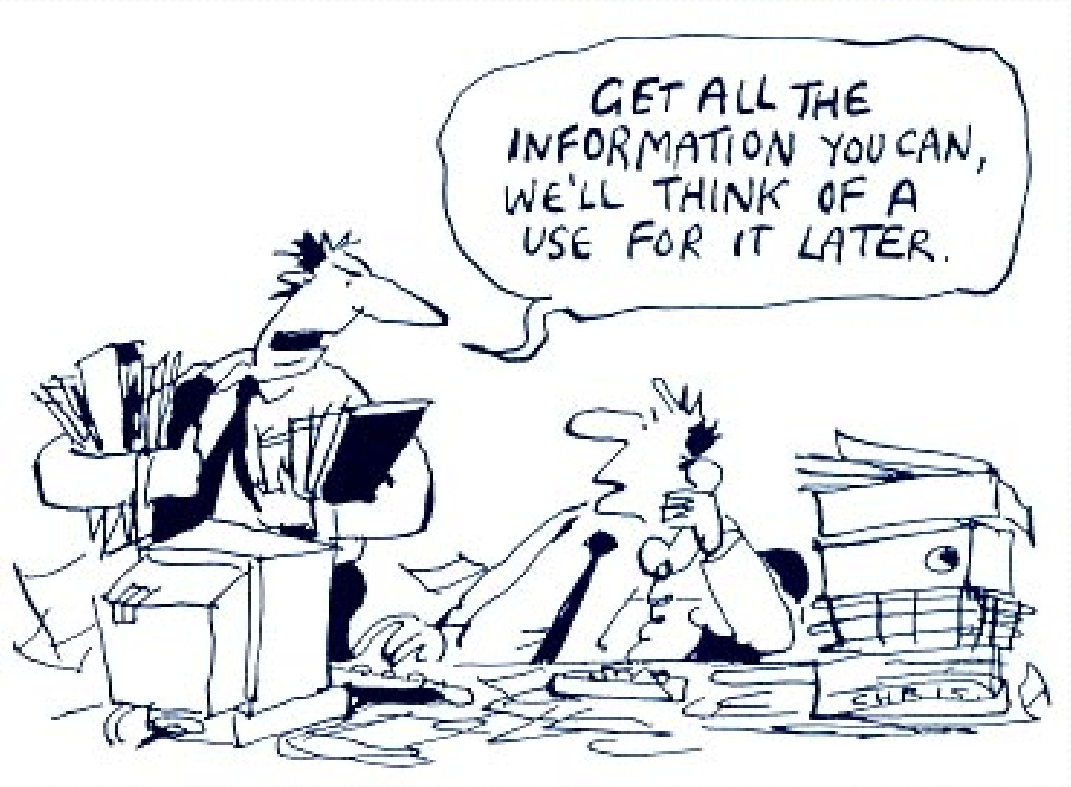
have clear questions & answers

Keep It Simple Surveyor!

- Clear, straightforward language that is easy for everyone to understand
- No trade talk (EX: library acronyms)
- No highfalutin words

Divide questions into 3 groups:

1. Must know
2. Useful to know
3. Nice to know



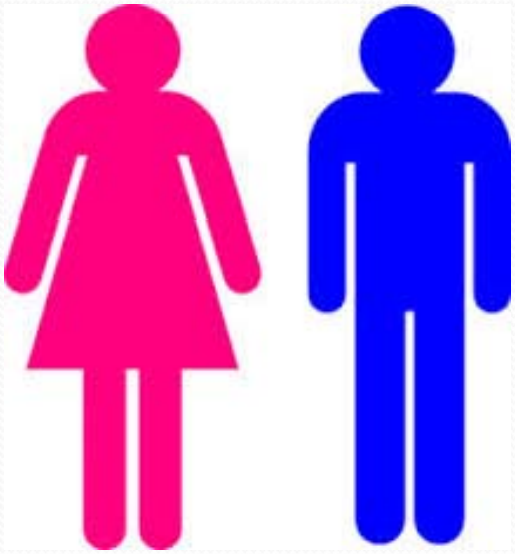
Focus on #1 and get rid of the rest

Clearly outline what info you need

Logical flow to the questions

Use demographics

- Age in roughly equal ranges
- Gender
- Library use
- Other things that may impact the results



Avoid biased questions

- EX: Do you think it is unfair for training to only be offered when mothers are at home during the day?

- Better: When do you think training should be offered at the library?

Avoid words that may not mean the same thing to everyone

Usually Often
Sometimes Seldom
Rarely Many Several

EX: I use the library

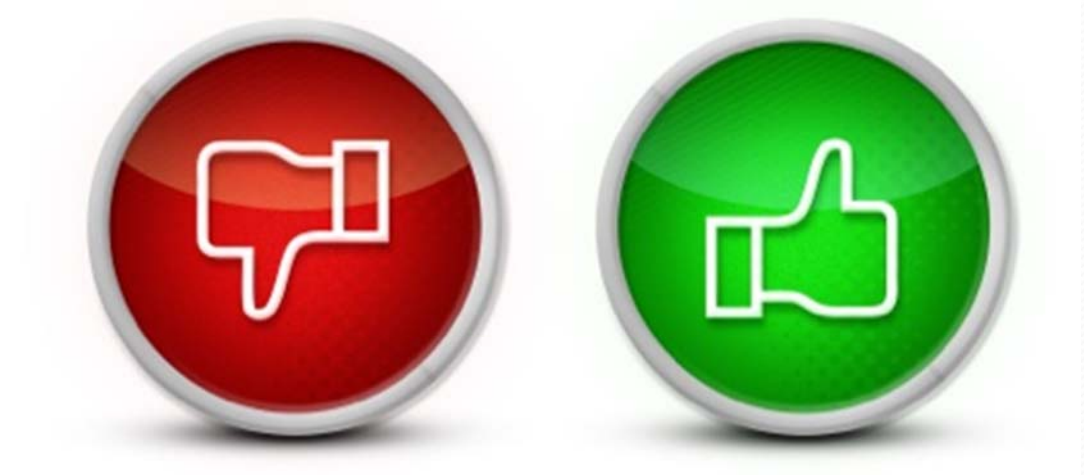
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom

2, 12, 120 times?

Avoid questions with negatives

- EX: Are you against having computer training for seniors?

- Better: Would you like computer training for seniors?



Effective Answers:

Have mutually exclusive options – A or B, not both (unless they can check all that apply)

If using multiple choice, list all possible responses

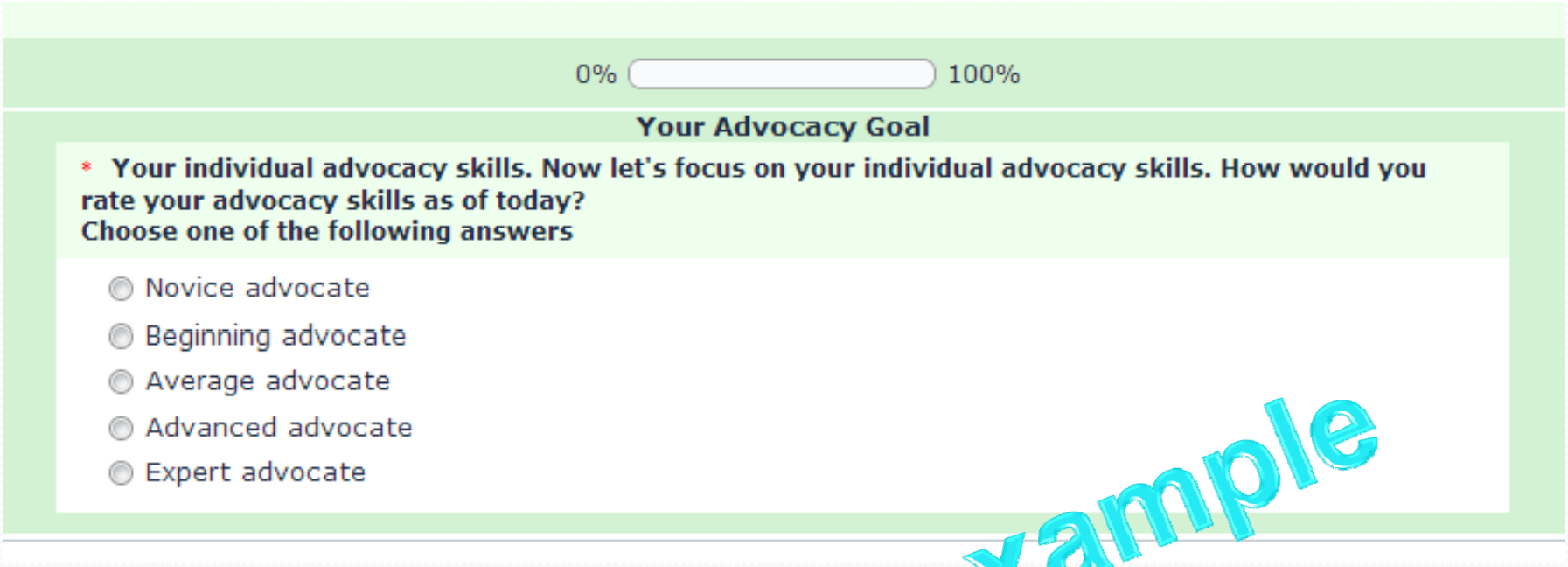
Give "other" option and let them write in their answer, if appropriate

Which answer set is better?

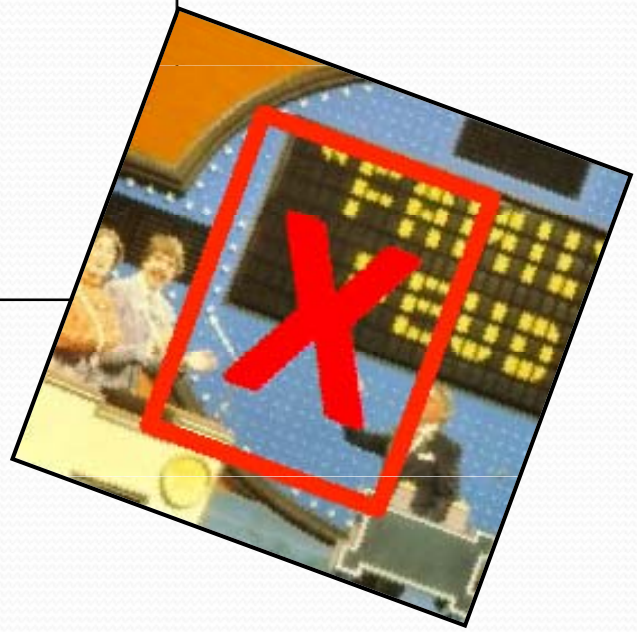
Poor –Average –Above Average –Excellent –Superior

Poor –Below Avg. –Average —Above Avg. –Excellent

Distinct answers



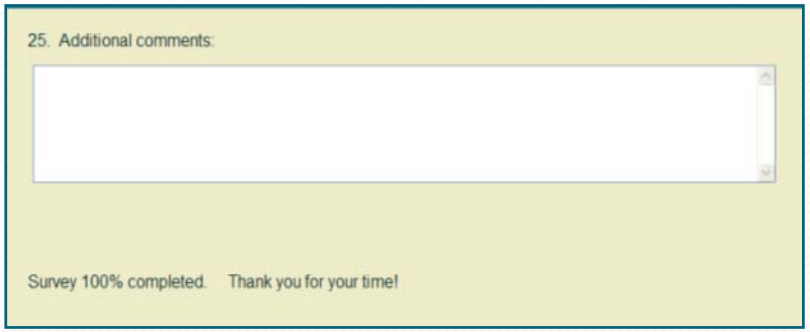
Standardize the arrangement of responses



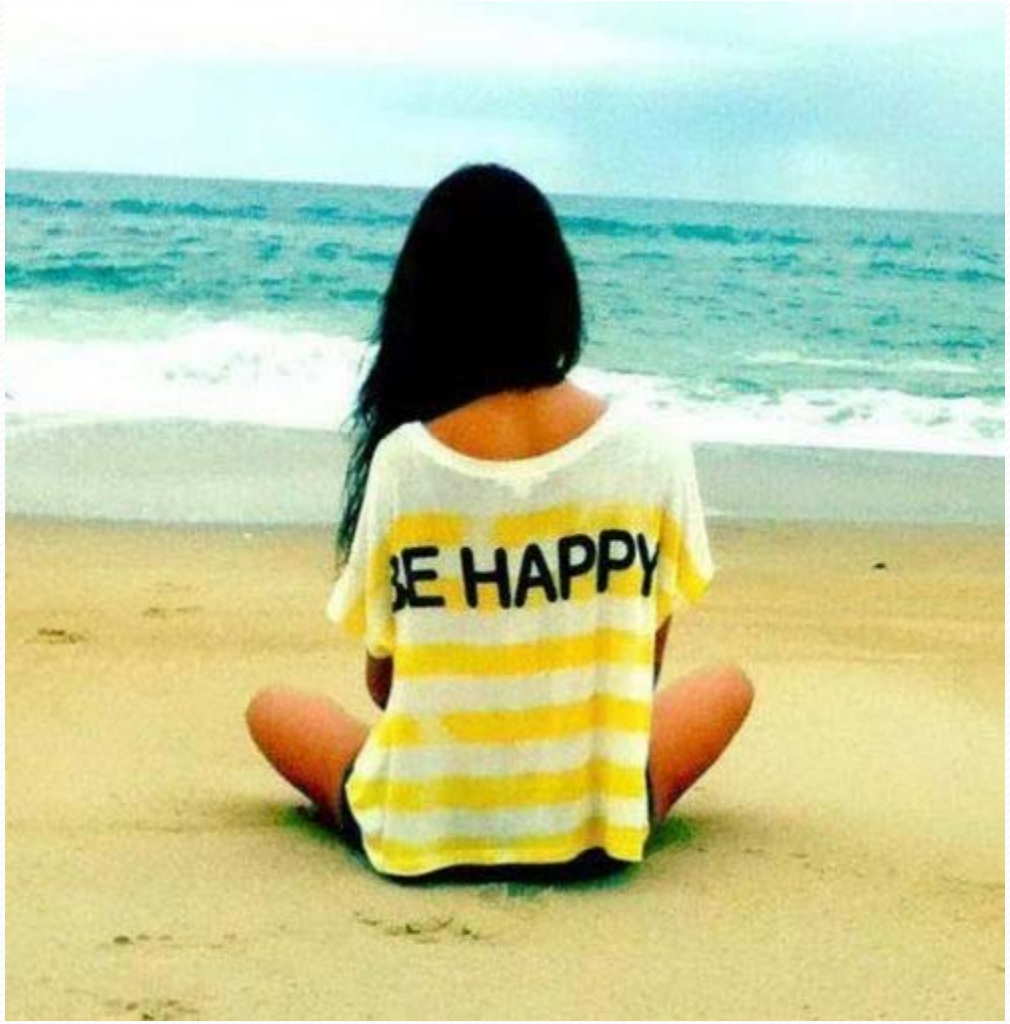
EX: high to low in all

Add a comments section

- People can write in things not asked elsewhere
- Adds stories & interest to the results
- You'll get lots of positive feedback



End the survey with a positive tone



5 types of survey questions

Multiple choice

Ordinal

Interval

Ratio

Open ended

Multiple choice

- Choose from options

Use an “Other” option

Ordinal

Please rank the following from 1-5 in order of importance, 1 for the least important and 5 for the most important.

___ Hours open
___ Computers available
___ Books/ materials I want
___ Programs
___ Children's homework help

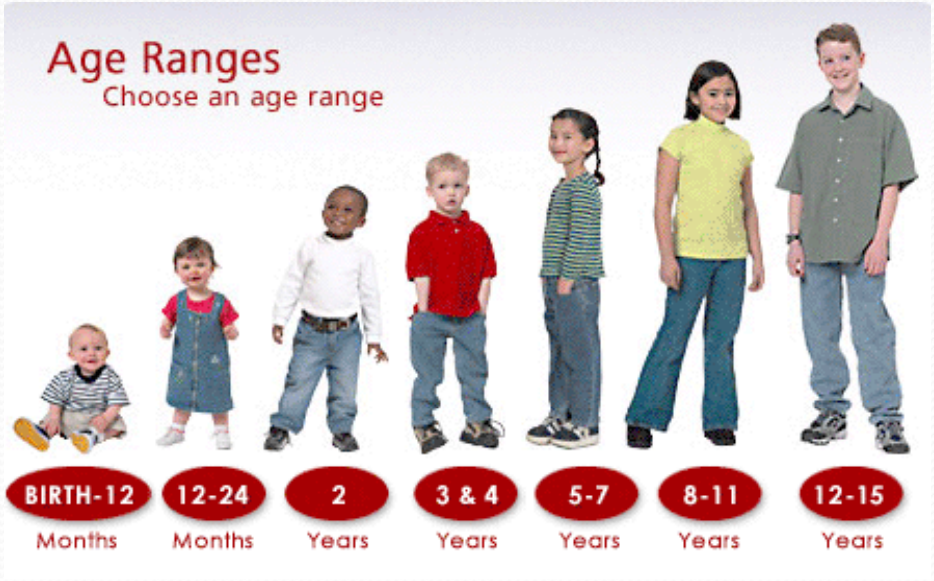
Interval

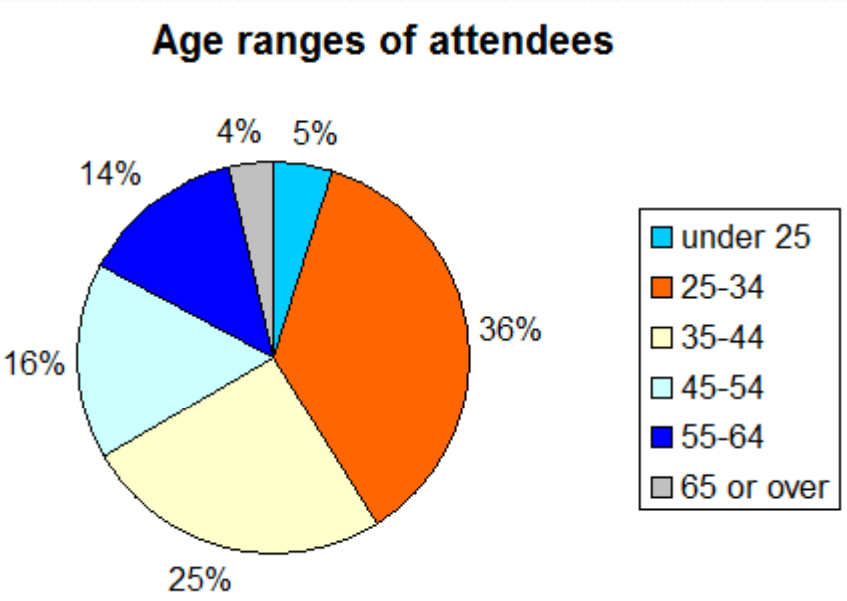
- Most commonly used—scales of agreement, satisfaction

Facility / Service	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(1) The Library is a comfortable, clean, well-lit place	○	○	◉	○	○
(2) The Library has sufficient evening and weekend hours of service	○	○	◉	○	○
(3) Library resources are well arranged, with clear directions on finding them	○	○	◉	○	○
(4) The Library provides adequate training on resources and databases	○	○	◉	○	○

Ratio

- EX: Income, hours, age





Open ended

1. Cannot be answered with simple "yes" or "no"
2. Begin with words and phrases such as:
   - *Who?*
   - *What?*
   - *When?*
   - *Where?*
   - *Why?*
   - *How?*
   - *Tell me about…*
   - *Explain to me…*

Use a combination of question styles

- Mostly checklists, with one or two open-ended questions.
- Get hard facts & supporting beliefs and feelings.

Improving your response rates

- The shorter your survey the better the response rate
- Make the questions relevant to your audience
- Third party endorsement

Incentives

Use the results to

Evaluate

Improve

Advocate

Save the galaxy

We can do this!

- Colleen Eggett, Training Coordinator
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