

the question in clear language with simple positive or negative statements. Then, the question is far less likely to lead the respondent with biased statements.

Question Arrangement

Three types of information must be taken into consideration when determining proper question orders.

- **Basic information** corresponds directly to the research problem.
- **Classification information** comprises socio-economic and demographic information used to classify respondents in order to analyze results across different groups.
- **Identification information** includes any necessary contact information for the respondent.

All information must be organized in a logical manner, pertaining to topic areas, with difficult questions placed later in the sequence.

Pretesting Your Questionnaire

Pretesting questionnaires on a small sample group helps to identify and eliminate any potential problems. Pretest areas can include everything from question content and sequence, to overall design and usability. Personal interviews conducted after the questionnaire is completed help to assess the performance of a particular survey.

New Technologies: Engaging the User and Maximizing Response

The latest developments in online functionality present a wealth of new opportunities for questionnaire design. Online questionnaires simplify what was once a complex task by introducing the ability to personalize and skip unnecessary questions. Enhanced graphics, animation, sound and full-motion video allow the researcher to control the amount and frequency of stimuli available to each respondent. These technologies recreate product decision-making experiences that would normally require an onsite or lab environment, but are now easily accessed from the comfort of home.

Reducing Respondent Boredom

Some traditionally difficult survey methods are easier to conduct in an online environment.

Question branching, a technique where a respondent's answer to one question directs them to a specific set of follow-up questions, can be cumbersome and confusing in a printed questionnaire.

Branching Logic in Action: Bass Pro Shops

When Infosurv worked with Bass Pro Shops on a survey centered on brand awareness and company image, they employed branching logic and variable piping to create a fully customizable questionnaire format. As a result, Infosurv invited over 1.2M Bass Pro Shops customers to participate in this invaluable research, which led to a long-term relationship with the retail company.

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However in an online format, a process known as **branching logic** makes the transition appear seamless, displaying questions to the user that only apply to them. Additionally, a technique known as **variable piping** incorporates answers from previous questions to those later in the questionnaire.

Virtual Shelf and Flash Demonstrations



Virtual Shelf Screenshot

Virtual Shelf⁷ allows respondents to interact with a particular market or store, through a virtual shelf of choices. With all movements tracked, this type of process provides great insight into a consumer's decision-making process, without the real-world expense.

Flash-enabled demonstrations⁸ are another way in which respondents can virtually interact with a product. Whatever the product, respondents are able to look at colors, design, and placement even before the product has been manufactured. This enhances the timeframe in which market research is completed.

Getting More Actionable Information, More Affordably

When you apply the right expertise to questionnaire design, you can expect great results, including:

- Better, more organized data that can be analyzed for a variety of outcomes
- Clear direction in your data so you can make decisions with accuracy
- More complete questionnaires
- More responsiveness from your surveyed group

A professional questionnaire is one of the keys to a successful survey research strategy that leads to actionable information—the kind you can make decisions on with confidence. For more information about trends and issues in modern survey research, consult the two Infosurv Insider whitepapers on Survey Research Design and Survey Analysis Design.

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² Concepts presented here based on work created by Dr. Naresh K. Malhotra, Dr. Mark Peterson, *Basic Marketing Research: A Decision-Making Approach*: 288-289.

³ This example based on work created by Dr. Naresh K. Malhotra, Dr. Mark Peterson, *Basic Marketing Research: A Decision-Making Approach*: 292-293.

⁴ Concepts presented here adapted by Jared Heyman, President of Infosurv, based on work created by Dr. Naresh K. Malhotra, Dr. Mark Peterson, *Basic Marketing Research: A Decision-Making Approach*: 296-297.

⁵ Concepts presented here based on work created by Dr. Naresh K. Malhotra, Dr. Mark Peterson, *Basic Marketing Research: A Decision-Making Approach*: 302-305.

⁷ Virtual Shelf concept is a technology currently in use by Infosurv, Inc.

⁸ Flash-enabled demonstrations is a technology currently in use by Infosurv, Inc.

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Contributing Editor

Jared Heyman

Jared Heyman is the founder and president of Infosurv, a full-service market research firm specializing in design, administration, and analysis of online and telephone employee, customer, and other market research studies. He leverages years of marketing research expertise to build for his clients the high-value, actionable intelligence they are searching for to facilitate the success of their strategic-level decisions.

Jared Heyman is the one companies listen to when they are planning their own marketing initiatives. He is quoted as a marketing research industry expert in everything from trade publications such as Quirks and Marketing News, to marketing research blogs such as Web Analytics World, to major media outlets such as the Chicago Tribune. Marketing professionals often rely on Jared Heyman's keen insights into the marketing research industry.

Jared Heyman is a fourth-generation entrepreneur, with a lineage of successful start-up companies contained within the family scrapbook. Heyman administered his first market research survey while at Collective Technologies in 1998. It was this experience that made him realize that there was definitely room for improvement in the marketing research arena. Jared Heyman left Collective to launch Infosurv just months later.

With an initial startup cost of less than \$3K, Infosurv has since experienced exponential growth over the past nine years. Infosurv currently has a client base of over 200, including dozens of Fortune 500 and major government agencies, and continues to specialize in market research, customer surveys, employee surveys, and online surveys.

Jared Heyman graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a BBA, double majoring in Business and Marketing Research. He also has an extensive international profile, with cultural experience in Greece, Turkey, Spain and Southeast Asia.

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Find Out More

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