centercode

Building Surveys for Delta Testing

Clear Insights That Answer Your Pressing Product Questions





Table of Contents

Introduction to Surveys 1

Using Surveys During Delta Testing 2

Setting Your Survey Objectives 3

A Quick Guide to Survey Writing 4

The Do's of Survey Question Writing 5

The Don'ts of Survey Question Writing 6

The 4 Key Delta Testing Surveys 7

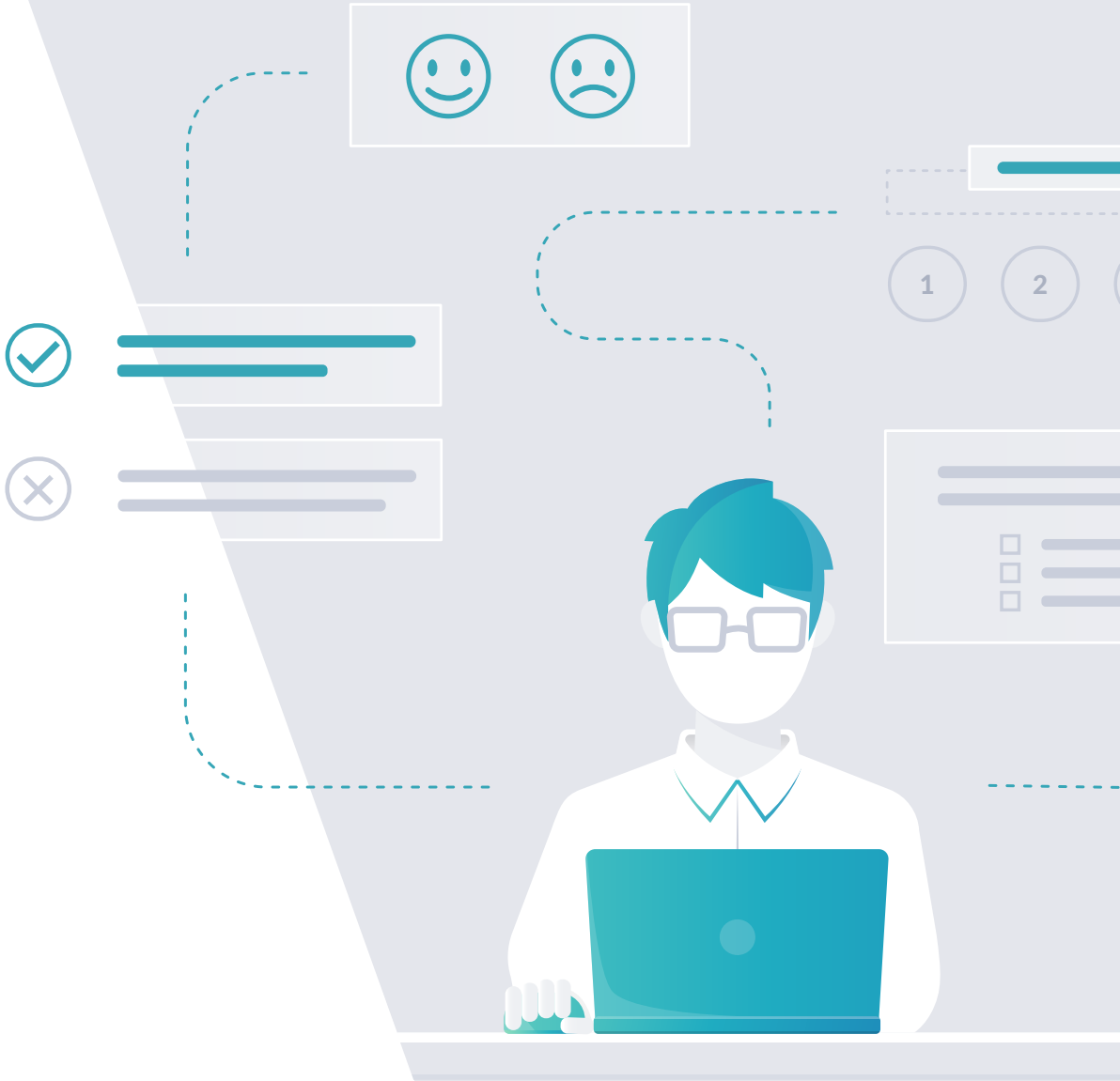
- Qualification Surveys 8
- Product Usage Surveys 11
- Additional Information Surveys 14
- Final Surveys 17

Last Stop: Before You Analyze Your Survey Results 20

Introduction to Surveys

Surveys are one of the most common and versatile research methods. Their quick ramp-up time makes them an easy and low-cost method for collecting customer feedback about your product.

When it comes to offering insight into the perceptions and attitudes of your target audience, surveys are incredibly useful. In the realm of delta testing, they're used to do things like screen potential testers, get feedback on specific product areas, and assess customer satisfaction.



Using Surveys During Delta Testing

Because surveys are powerful tools, it's tempting to try and use them to collect all the data you need for a given customer testing project. But it's important to understand that they can't answer all of the questions you have during delta testing.

When you're collecting a **large sample of data to measure your customers' attitudes**, surveys are very effective. They fuel your delta testing project with detailed metrics about your target audience.

On the flip side, surveys don't produce reliable behavioral data because people are typically unable to self-report their own behavior with accuracy. Your product analytics and qualitative feedback (issues, ideas, praise) tell a more conclusive story there. Similarly, survey responses don't provide enough context to answer probing ("why") questions. For that kind of data, asking questions via a tester forum, directly within an issue, or following up with individual interviews are great alternatives for gathering deeper qualitative insights.



Setting Your Survey Objectives

Like the key to any successful delta testing project, the key to each successful survey is having a **clear and concrete idea of the information you're trying to learn**.

It's common for your stakeholders to think your survey is a catch-all for all of the product questions your company has. But getting the depth of information you need to fully achieve your objectives means keeping your surveys focused on what they can achieve and using other feedback methods for additional coverage.

As you're writing your research questions, ask yourself and your stakeholders, "How will we act on the information generated by this question, and how will it help us achieve our objective?" **The more focused your survey questions are, the clearer and more useful your data will be**.

HOW MANY OBJECTIVES SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY SURVEYS?

It often takes asking more than one question to get the information you need to achieve a single objective. That's where it becomes very important to balance the number of objectives you're looking to achieve with the toll it takes on your respondents' energy.

There's no hard and fast rule, but it's generally best practice to limit your surveys to between **three and five objectives**. If you've managed a customer testing project before, you know that respondents have a finite amount of energy. Surveys that are too long or taxing lead to engagement fatigue — which causes a noticeable drop in the quality of responses.



A Quick Guide to Survey Writing

When it comes to writing surveys for a customer testing project, there are two goals. The first is securing clear, unbiased feedback, which also means achieving the second goal of making sure people complete your survey. How your survey questions are written will influence how you achieve both of these goals.

SUCCESSFUL CUSTOMER TESTING SURVEY CHECKLIST

- Focus on 3 to 5 survey objectives
- Use concise, easy-to-understand language
- Connect questions directly back to your objectives

AIM FOR

- Focused scope
- Logical flow
- Simplicity and clarity

AVOID

- Double-direct questions
- Introducing bias
- Using technical jargon

The Do's of Survey Question Writing

ORDER THE QUESTIONS IN A WAY THAT MAKES SENSE

Good survey flow maximizes respondent energy and keeps them engaged. Put your difficult questions at the beginning of your survey when your respondents' minds are fresh. Start with broad questions and narrow the focus as you go. Finally, use headings to group similar questions so that it's faster and easier for your respondents to focus.

USE CLEAR AND CONCISE LANGUAGE

Keep the language in your survey simple, straightforward, and conversational. This makes the questions easier for people to process and answer accurately.

SPECIFY THE CONTEXT OF YOUR QUESTIONS WHEN NECESSARY

Ambiguous terms (like "often" or "sometimes") or words with multiple meanings (like "bimonthly") confuse respondents and skew your data. Clarifying what you mean by using descriptive terms, providing additional context, or giving neutral examples serves the double purpose of reducing friction and increasing the consistency and reliability of your results.

TEST YOUR SURVEY

Asking volunteers to test out your survey and answer the questions out loud (especially if they are part of your target audience) is a great way to determine if your questions make sense. Use their feedback to make sure your question phrasing is clear and to expand on your answer options if necessary.

The Don'ts of Survey Question Writing

DON'T FIRE OFF DOUBLE-DIRECT QUESTIONS

Asking multiple questions within a single question clouds your results. Even something as simple as pairing two words or concepts together in a question makes it difficult for people to respond accurately.

✕ Is this tool interesting and useful?

✓ Is this tool interesting?
Is this tool useful?

DON'T SKEW YOUR DATA WITH LEADING QUESTIONS

A leading question guides or influences respondents in one direction or the other, which introduces bias to your data.

✕ How dissatisfied are you with automated customer service lines?

✓ How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with automated customer service lines?

DON'T USE JARGON THAT COULD CONFUSE YOUR AUDIENCE

Survey questions are easiest to understand when they use simple and conversational language. Actively defer from using industry-specific vernacular, professorial language, and technobabble that could obfuscate your intentions. (See what we did there? Using jargony, internal, and technical terms can distract or confuse your audience.) If it's absolutely necessary to include a technical term, consider providing a definition to eliminate any confusion.



The 4 Key Delta Testing Surveys

With a clear idea of the information you need to collect, the next step is identifying the type of survey that will help you get it. While there are many kinds of surveys during customer testing that help you bring in contextual customer insights, these four surveys are key to the success of every project: qualification surveys, product usage surveys, additional information surveys, and final surveys. Let's take a deeper look at each one.

Qualification Surveys

Qualification surveys (or screening surveys) are conducted at the beginning of your delta testing project as you're recruiting testers. Their sole objective is to help you **identify enthusiastic test applicants from your target market** who will provide the most relevant product feedback during your test.

They surface demographic and other data on an applicant-by-applicant basis so you can narrow your pool of possible testers to the ones who best fit the recruitment criteria for your test. For a more comprehensive look at qualifying applicants for delta testing, check out this Tester Recruitment Kit.



Which data can you collect using a qualification survey?

- Demographics
- Technographics
- Psychographics
- Geographics
- Purchasing behaviors
- Attitudes about branding
- Product familiarity

Qualification Surveys: Tips and Examples

TIP # 01

Try not to make it too obvious which characteristics you're looking for in your testers. Applicants are easily tempted to exaggerate or falsify information in order to qualify for the project.

TIP # 02

Make sure your questions are specific and concise. While it's tempting to use the qualification survey as a way to gather additional data, each question should relate directly back to the goal of recruiting qualified testers. Don't overwhelm applicants with questions that are just nice-to-haves.

EXAMPLE

Objective: Qualify testers who use social media at least once a week.

Which social media account do you use most often?

While this question is somewhat related to the goal of the survey, the data it provides doesn't support the objective in this example.

▷ Try this instead

Do you use social media?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (does not qualify)

How often do you use social media?

- ☐ **All the time**
- ☐ **Frequently**
- ☐ **Sometimes**
- ☐ **Not very often**
- ☐ **Never**

These options are confusing and don't provide the specific information necessary to satisfy your objective, since applicants will have different interpretations of what "frequently" and "sometimes" mean.

▷ Try this instead

How often do you use social media?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Several times a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ A few times a year

Does not qualify

Product Usage Surveys

Product usage surveys give you a chance to study how your target market perceives specific features and product areas before they're released. Its objectives mirror the topics and activities scheduled for each week of your project. These surveys surface tester attitudes toward the product areas that matter most to you and your stakeholders.

Which data can you collect using a product usage survey?

- Attitudes toward specific features
- Satisfaction with specific features
- Ecosystem compatibility
- Usage environments
- Ease of use for specific experiences



Product Usage Surveys: Tips and Examples

TIP # 01

Use descriptions or photos of specific features to direct your testers' focus. This is especially useful when their experience with your product might have been a few days or weeks ago. By illustrating examples of an experience they may have had with a certain product area, you'll be helping them to answer the question in a way that's useful to you.

TIP # 02

When you're asking complex product questions, provide an example or a scenario to give your testers additional context about the prompt. This will put them in the right frame of mind to answer your question effectively.

What's the first step you would take to install a smart home device?

Asking testers to give open-ended answers to complex questions can result in a wide range of answers that are difficult to quantify (and time consuming to analyze). Instead, use scenarios to give complex questions context and help you get data that satisfies your objectives.

▷ Try this instead

Imagine you're installing a smart home device, which involves connecting the device to your wifi. Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ I prefer to get help from a professional.
- ☐ I prefer to install the product myself, but I feel comfortable asking for help.
- ☐ I prefer to install the device without assistance.

How long did it take you to set up the product?

It's often difficult for people to report accurately on their own behaviors. Turning this into an attitudinal question by asking about perceived time will give you more reliable results.

▷ Try this instead

What are your thoughts on the amount of time needed to set up the product?

- ☐ Too much time
- ☐ Just the right amount of time
- ☐ Too little time

Additional Information Surveys

There are times when you need to follow up with your testers to gather more information on the feedback they've already provided. That's where additional information surveys come in. You can use this survey type as a follow-up to other customer testing surveys, or use it to expand on data you've collected using other feedback types like issues, ideas, and praise.

When following up on a qualification survey, additional information surveys help narrow down your applicant pool even further. After you've screened out applicants who don't fit the core requirements of your project, you can use these surveys to dig into those "nice-to-have" qualities and identify the applicants who will add even deeper value to your project.

When used to follow up on a product usage survey, additional information surveys allow you to go back and explore specific features in greater detail. They make it easy to zero-in on specific groups or segmentations within your tester pool and dig deeper into the trends and insights uncovered by your product usage surveys.



Additional Information Surveys: Tips and Examples

TIP # 01

Only include the relevant audience. If you're doing a deep dive based on a certain answer from a previous survey (for example, people who marked that a feature needs improvement), make sure you're only following up with the people who responded that way.

TIP # 02

When following up in a survey, use the respondents' previous survey answers to jog their memory and help them recall what made them answer that way in the first place. This is especially useful when a significant amount of time has passed since the initial survey.

EXAMPLE

Scenario: Certain respondents rated product set-up as difficult and you want to know more about their experience.

When you set up the product, did you need to use the website's frequently asked questions (FAQs)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

The wording of this question inadvertently introduces bias. The respondent may feel inferior if they did need the website for help. They may feel inclined to select "No," regardless of the truth, in order to provide a more socially desirable answer.

▶ Try this instead

What tools or aids did you use during product setup?

- ☐ Product FAQs
- ☐ Google
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Other, please specify
- ☐ I did not use any tools

Final Surveys

The final (or KPI) survey is an important chance for you to study your testers' impressions of your product overall at the end of your project (instead of focusing on their feelings about specific features or experiences). It's also a great opportunity to set expectations for your product or update's performance and satisfaction ratings with stakeholders before release.

During continuous testing, when projects don't really have an end point, these KPI surveys are distributed on a cadence (once a quarter or twice a year, for example). In this context, they serve the additional purpose of highlighting the ways attitudes surrounding your product are changing over time. They provide data for comparing attitudes, performance, and satisfaction between builds, which allows you to measure the impact that new features and updates are having on overall product success.



Which data can you collect using a final survey?

- Overall satisfaction
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Systems Usability Scale (SUS)
- Ratings and mock reviews

Final Surveys: Tips and Examples

TIP # 01

Resist the urge to ask testers about their thoughts on product price. Their answers will almost always be impacted by personal factors and behaviors rather than specific details about the product itself. This leads to biased feedback and data that's not useful the way you need it to be.

TIP # 02

In fact, be wary of asking behavioral questions in general (sound familiar?). This is especially true for final/KPI surveys when stakeholders are looking for overall sentiments about the product. Remember that behaviors aren't always aligned with attitudes, and people can provide much more accurate feedback about their attitudes and feelings than they can about their behaviors.

Would you purchase this product?

Even if your testers say that they would purchase your product, it may not actually be the case. Using common rating systems like the Net Promoter Score (NPS) or Likert scale will provide reliable insights on this topic.

▷ Try this instead

How likely is it that you would recommend the product to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely — Extremely likely

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Were you satisfied with your product experience?

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

A scale (such as the Likert scale) is a very standard format for asking testers to analyze their satisfaction with your product in an unbiased way. Pro Tip: Whether you use a 5, 7, or 100 point scale, be consistent so you're able to compare the data.

▷ Try this instead

How would you rate your overall experience with [product]?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied

Last Stop: Before You Analyze Your Survey Results

You've established clear survey objectives, written clear, unbiased questions, and collected relevant, targeted product feedback from your customers. Now what? Before you start slicing into your data, use this analysis prep process to get you started down the right path.

1. Remove missing or incomplete responses

Before you start your analysis, scan your data for incomplete or nonsense answers and remove them from the pile.

2. Organize your data according to your objectives

Often, looking at your raw data all at once can cause you to miss out on certain nuances of the information. Organizing your data into "piles" aimed at specific objectives or segments (for example, dividing data into iOS or Android users) gives your data a structure that makes it easier to answer your product questions.

3. Look at your project data as a whole

Delta testing puts a lot of information at your fingertips beyond just your survey data (think issues, ideas, and praise). Gather up all of your project data so you can get a birds-eye view at your results before you begin your analysis. This will help you understand what is driving the overall perceptions and attitudes surfaced as you analyze your survey results. With that context, you'll be able to dial in and make actionable recommendations for delighting customers and improving satisfaction.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Survey Monkey: How to Analyze Survey Data

Thematic: Best Practices for Actionable Insights from Survey Analysis

centercode

Delta Testing Solutions



WHY CENTERCODE?

Increase Revenue
½ ☆ INCREASE
in product ratings

Release Sooner
50% FASTER
test cycles

Gain Participation
75% INCREASE
in tester engagement

Save Time
40%+ DECREASE
in time managing tests

The Centercode Platform equips you with the automation and best practices you need to get actionable user insights for any use case.

PRODUCT LAUNCH

Engage your **Target Market** to successfully bring new products and services to market

USE CASES:

- Beta Tests
- User Acceptance Tests
- Field Tests

PRODUCT GROWTH

Recruit **Existing Customers** to continuously mature live products and services

USE CASES:

- Progressive Delivery
- Early Access
- Customer Advisory Boards

CUSTOMER ZERO

Gather **Employee** feedback to enhance your products while fostering a product culture

USE CASES:

- Alpha Tests
- Dogfooding
- Employee Tests

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Enlist **Competitors' Customers** to rapidly gain actionable intel about their products

USE CASES:

- Competitive Intelligence
- Market Testing
- Comparative Research