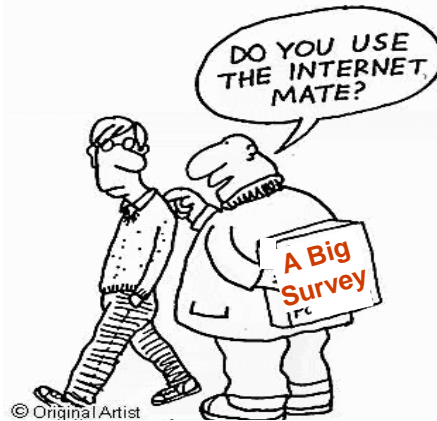


Questionnaire Design

**Isn't it just about asking Q's?
- Anyone can do that!**



Don Beverly
MRS Academy
June 2010



Isn't it just about asking Questions?

Question: what is the difference between a list of questions and a questionnaire?

A questionnaire is a list of questions that...

- is designed to meet a researcher's survey **objectives**
- is **structured**, including space/format for answers
- includes **instructions** and **admin** details
- has (should have) **flow** and **direction**

i.e. A measuring instrument, designed to obtain specific information

The issues in designing a Questionnaire are theoretically very simple (!?)

- **What** are you hoping to measure?
- **How** will you make it interesting/relevant?
- **Who** do you want to answer? [Screening/filters]
- **What** is the question? [Wording? Type? Layout?]

What are you hoping to measure?

- Examine the following example from a questionnaire which was sent to university housing managers. Identify the problems...

Q. Do you consider the many forms of accommodation available near your campus adequate for most of your undergraduate students?

Yes [] No []

IF NO, BRIEFLY WHY NOT?

What are the problems?

ONE

We are all experts – or think we are

TWO

Errors are difficult to detect/measure

THREE

We don't see the problems in the office



Why are they important?



ONE

Asking a series of Q's is not the same as designing a questionnaire

TWO

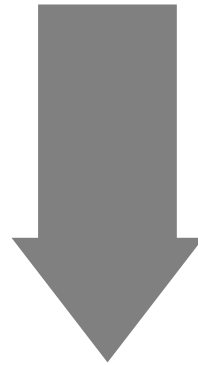
Errors are potentially much greater than those from any other source

THREE

Errors fall on others – e.g. respondents, interviewers - rather than the perpetrator!

Key consideration 1

Establish objectives



Prioritise objectives

Key consideration 2

**The questionnaire is a
means to an end**

Where does a Questionnaire fit in?

ISSUE

- Business Objective
- Research Objective
- Survey Question
- Decision Outcomes

AIM

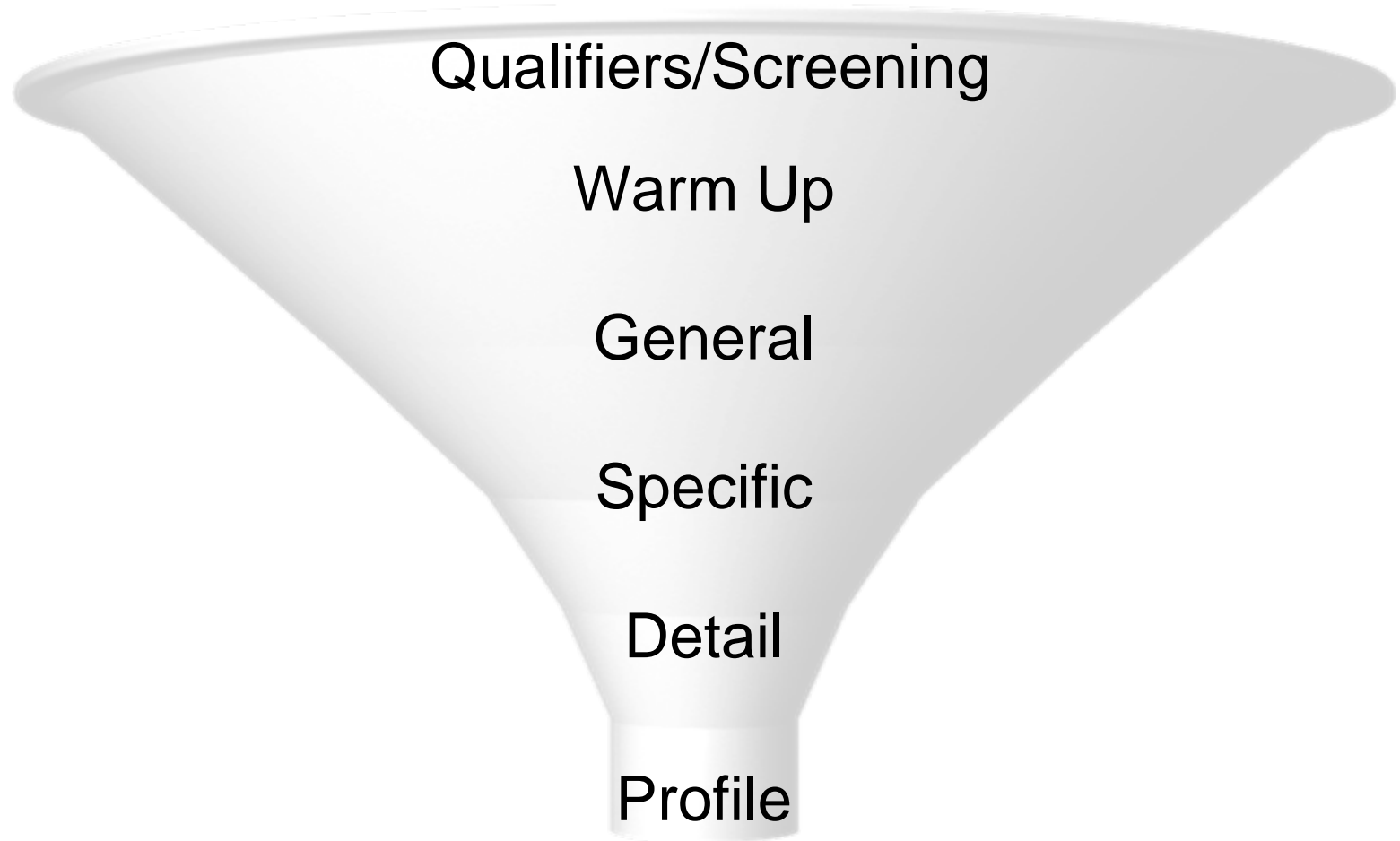
to **increase** hotel customers' satisfaction

measure hotel customers' satisfaction on a scale of 1 – 10 how would you **rate** the hotel?

prioritise services that need improvement to increase satisfaction

Key Elements of the Questionnaire – Structure

- The Funnel Approach



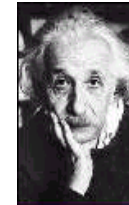
Key Elements of the Questionnaire – Content

- When composing questions, consider carefully...

Does each question add value?



Will the respondent understand the question?



Is the question asking what you thought it was asking?



Can the respondent answer the question?



Key consideration 3

**The answer you get often depends on
how and when you ask it**

Errors occur from:

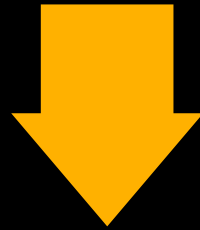
Question wording

Question order

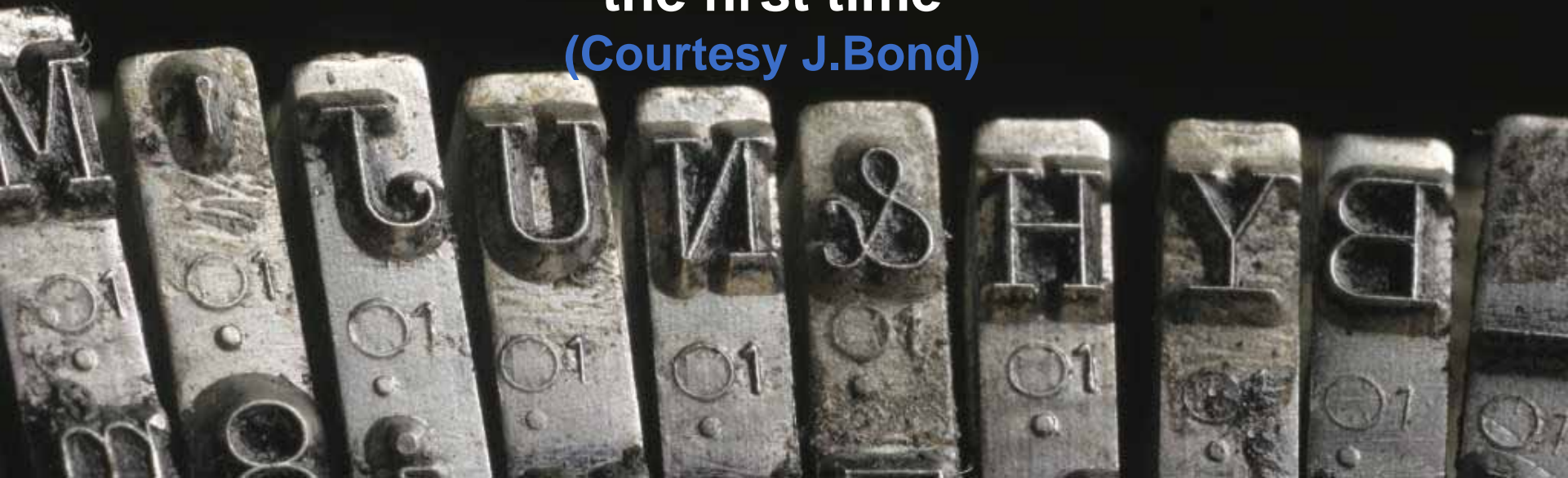
Question form



Small changes in wording can cause big differences leading to different marketing action



Never change a question and never ask one for the first time
(Courtesy J.Bond)



Beware Unfamiliar Words

- Insights
- Chocolate countlines
- CTN's
- White goods
- Depilatory creams –
“ I think I'll use my
50/50 lifeline Chris”!
- Carbonated soft drinks

Avoid marketing jargon:
'Fizzy drinks' is fine



But avoid over-complicated explanations in clarification:

Do you ever buy your dog any dog treats - by dog treats I mean any item that is outside the dog's normal diet, is consumable at one occasion (i.e.. excluding rubber toys) and is not fresh food e.g.. human biscuits or fresh bones?

(Courtesy J.Samuels)



Errors occur from:

Question wording

Question order

Question form



Example – Question Order

- Q5 Which of the following contributed to your decision to switch?
[READ OUT]
 - Too expensive
 - Poor customer service
 - Wanted to take up a new offer
 - Experienced problems with the equipment

- Q6 And what was the single most important reason to switch?
[PROBE DO NOT PROMPT]

Errors occur from:

Question wording

Question order

Question form



Example – Question Form (Beware long lists and repetition)

Q2. Thinking about the last time you researched a product or service online and purchased it offline, how helpful were each of the following resources in making a decision on which product or service to buy? VERY/QUITE/NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL HELPFUL (Select one for each)

- Search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo!Search, AOL Search etc.)
- Comparison site (e.g. Shopping.com)
- Portal (e.g. MSN, AOL, Yahoo, etc.)
- Manufacturer site (e.g. Ford.com, Procterandgamble.com, Panasonic.com, etc.)
- News site (e.g. NYTimes.com, WSJ.com)
- Merchant site (online store) (e.g. Amazon.com, Tesco.com etc.)
- Directory site (e.g. Yahoo.com)
- Yellow pages site (e.g. Infospace.com)
- Auction site (e.g. eBay)
- Consumer report site (e.g. which.co.uk)
- Yellow pages book (offline)
- Advice from friends/family
- Print magazine
- Print newspaper
- TV
- Radio
- Online advertisements (e.g. banner ads, paid search listings, etc.)
- Offline advertisements (e.g. TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc.)

Avoid questions that are:

- **Trivial**
- **Technical**
- **Intricate**
- **Irritating**



Key consideration 4

**Aim to maximise
willingness & ability
of respondent to answer**

Questions should be ...

- Unambiguous
- Quickly understood
- Simple to answer
- Relevant



- The most common set of problems associated with questionnaires lies in the area of design and planning...
- Or more specifically:
 - a **lack of** design and **too little** planning.



Piloting – ‘a small scale implementation of the questionnaire (or part of it)’...



It is invaluable and should be considered in all cases:

- test length and ease of completion**
- test order/flow/wording of Q's**
- test suitability of pre-codes/scales**

Summary

- A good questionnaire requires foresight, planning and TIME.
- There are constraints, such as audience, approach & cost. “Good” should be seen in terms of what is possible.
- Do not stray from the overall objectives, but remember it is the respondents who provide you with the answers - and then only if they understand your questions.
- A successful questionnaire is one which demonstrates clarity of thought, approach & presentation, resulting in a document which is easy to follow for both the respondent and interviewer.

Can you interpret (in advance) all possible answers?



Will you be comfortable presenting the findings?



Questionnaire Design

Thank you for your time

Don Beverly
MRS Academy
June 2011

