

# asking good questions well

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Preely meetup

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**What problem are we aiming to solve?**



**users report frustration:  
too many system errors during data entry**

**an update suppresses system errors:  
users report high satisfaction**

**Did we make the system better?**

hypothetical example

**What problem are we aiming to solve?**



**Why am I asking these questions?  
What decisions do I need to make?**

# the value of data lies in insights and interpretation

user research contributes  
to product development

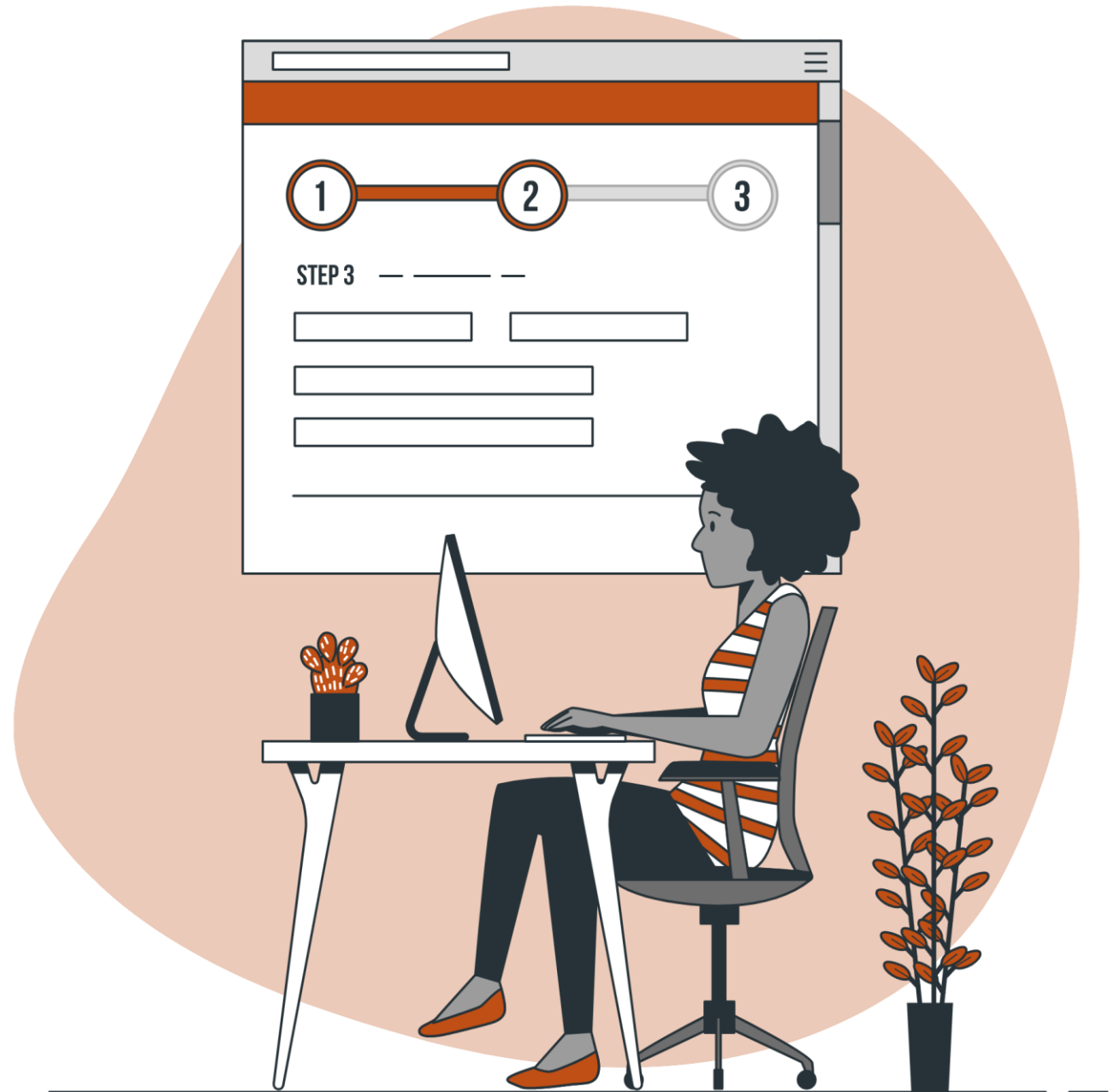


data must be actionable



research must be  
purposeful

# Why surveys?



**context**

Why do people respond to surveys?  
How do they respond?

**questions**

What am I trying to find out?  
What am I asking about?

**format**

How do I do that effectively?



# Context



Situation

Motivation

Social desirability bias

Social context

# What do I need to know?

evaluation of performance

behavior

attitude

demographics

## Questions



# Evaluation of performance



Ask for only one answer on only one dimension

Wording:

- be specific, clear, use simple sentences
  - avoid using *and*, *or*, *if*, *not*
  - do not use leading or emotional words
- ensure common ground

Latent constructs and scale development

# Behaviors



Saliency

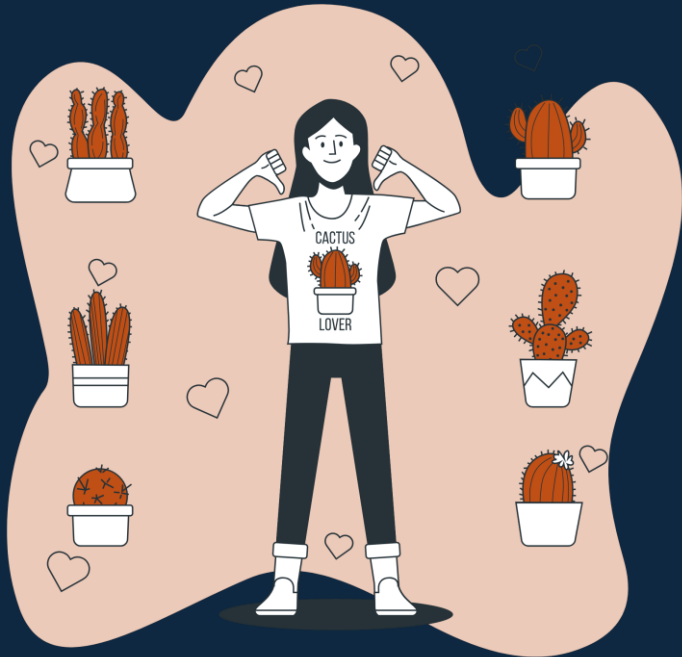
Frequency

Likelihood

Is a survey the best approach?

Is my question threatening?

# Attitudes



State versus trait

Motivated cognition:

- Identity protection and preservation

Order and flow of questions

# Demographics



Stereotype threat

Asking about:

- Age
- Gender
- Race and origin

How many questions should I ask?

What question format should I use?

Progress indicators

# Format



# Some final thoughts

- Not sure what is it that you need to know?
  - Consider focus groups or other open-ended approaches first
- Search for existing questionnaires and scales
  - Keep a database of successful questions for future reference
- When drafting new questions:
  - Pretest interviews
  - Peer feedback
  - Revisions – and then more piloting



# Q&A

