

## LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #2 *Tips For Writing An Effective Online Survey*

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**Mary Kay Lofurno:** Hello and welcome to the [second edition](#) of the [SyberWorks E-learning podcast series](#). My name is Mary Kay Lofurno and I am the Director of Marketing here at [SyberWorks](#) and I am your host today.

In this edition we are going to talk with Dana Fine, Senior Instructional Designer here at [SyberWorks](#) about tips for writing and effective online survey.

Hi Dana, great to see you again, thanks for coming. How are you?

**Dana:** Great. How are you doing?

**Mary Kay:** Super. Dana, when I think about writing a [survey](#), most people think it is kind of standard stuff and then putting that [survey online](#). Why did you write an article about writing an online survey?

**Dana:** [Writing an effective online survey](#) is a lot harder than people think.

**Mary Kay:** Ok Dana, how come?

**Dana:** People tend to ignore online surveys if they are too long or too difficult to understand. A well written online survey quickly engages the respondent's interest, it is concise, it is easily understood. Every question in a good survey will provide important information when the analysis of the survey is completed.

The answers to an [online survey](#) are never nebulous. The difference between these answers; zero, one to three, four to six, seven or more and the following set of answers; once, every now and then, once a week, once a month. That difference between those kind of answers is huge.

One set of answers can be analyzed and it is not confusing to the respondent of the survey. The other, it just doesn't make sense to anyone. You should know how you are going to analyze the results of the survey before its release.

In addition [online survey](#) questions need to use neutral language and be unbiased, so that the results are not slanted to any particular agenda, except that of finding out how the information is going to be used, that caused you to make the survey in the first place.

**Mary Kay:** All right. Let us talk about some of your tips for writing a great [online survey](#).

**Dana:** First you should name your survey and write a short introduction that hopefully will capture the interest of the people that you want to respond to the survey, the respondents. You need to capture their attention, so that they will click to your survey and actually finish your survey. To that end, you have to make sure that your survey is short and easy to read.

People tend to not finish long surveys, since time is unfortunately of the essence. In addition, if the survey is too complex or difficult they just won't complete it. You have to use the simplest language possible. You have to construct it, so that you are respecting the person who is answering the survey.

Your survey responders will come from many different groups and may not all be native language speakers, like native speakers of English for the survey. You want to avoid colloquialisms, avoid slang if at all possible. You also want to use

questions that have definite answers. People who respond to the survey need to know what these answers mean. They have to be discrete amounts instead of general statements like I discussed earlier.

Also the responses have to be balanced. For example, if you offer a choice excellent, very good, good and terrible, you are going to miss all that important information between the values of good and terrible. In that case you are better off using a Likert scale of zero to ten for the answer, where ten is excellent and zero is terrible.

Finally, as a rule, avoid using open-ended responses. People just don't have the time to write in detail what they think and the results of an open-ended response are usually quite hard to interpret and analyze

**Mary Kay:** All those sound good. Do you have any more?

**Dana:** Well, if I'd give you any more, there would be no reason to read the article. Speaking of which.

**Mary Kay:** Dana's [original article](#) can be found in the [SyberWorks Mediacenter](#) on the [Syberworks web site](#) at [www.syberworks.com/articles/14surveytips.htm](http://www.syberworks.com/articles/14surveytips.htm).

Dana, is there anything else you would like to share with our listeners about our topic today before we close out our time together?

**Dana:** Just that you should always know how you are going to analyze the survey prior to sending out the survey in order to assure that the results of this survey will have meaning and can be interpreted.

**Mary Kay:** Dana, as always it is great to see you.

**Dana:** Great to see you too, thanks.

**Mary Kay:** Thanks. Thanks for those of you listening out there. In the [next edition](#) we will be talking about developing learning activities and [simulations](#) in E-learning content. Have a great week. Thank you.

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