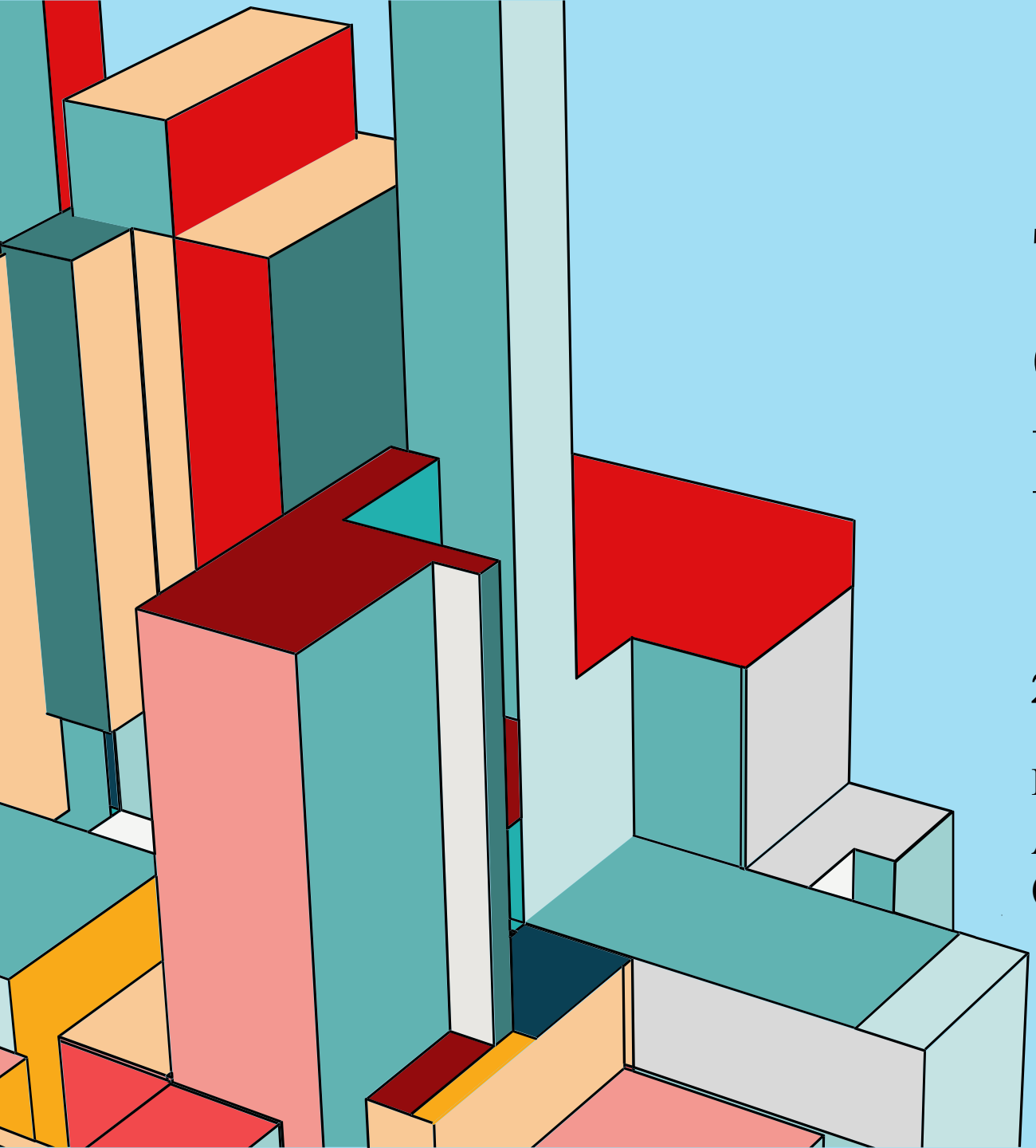


THE 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR BETTER SURVEY DESIGN

2026 AES Conference

Louise Parker

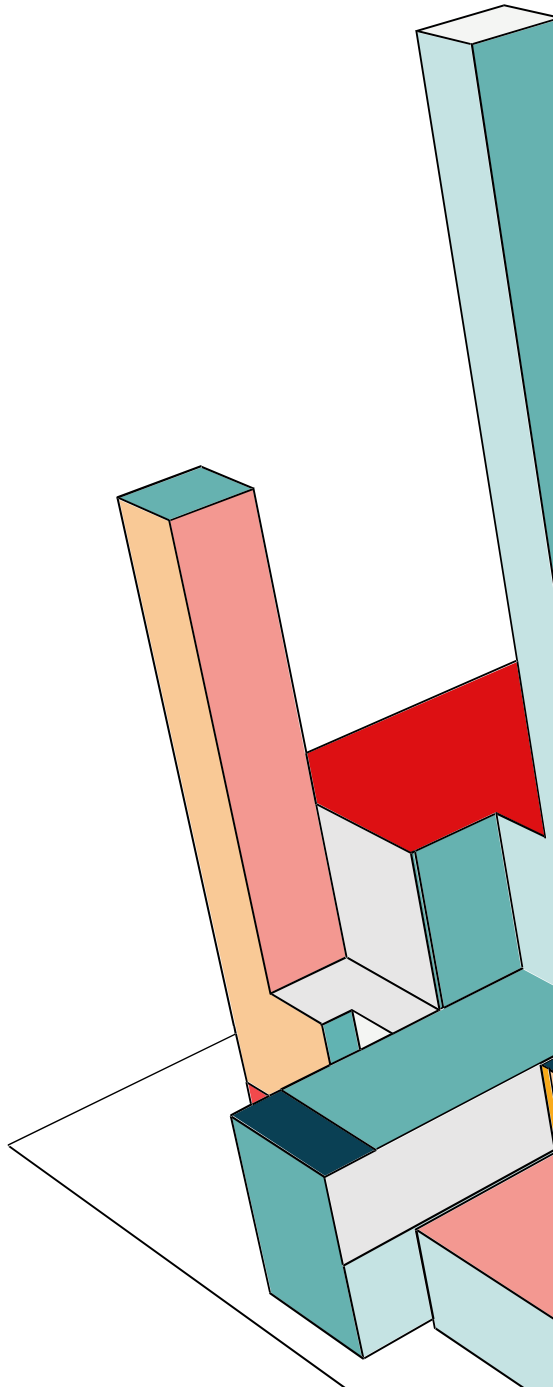
Australian Humanitarian Partnership Support Unit
(Alinea International)

1: THOU SHALT NOT ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS



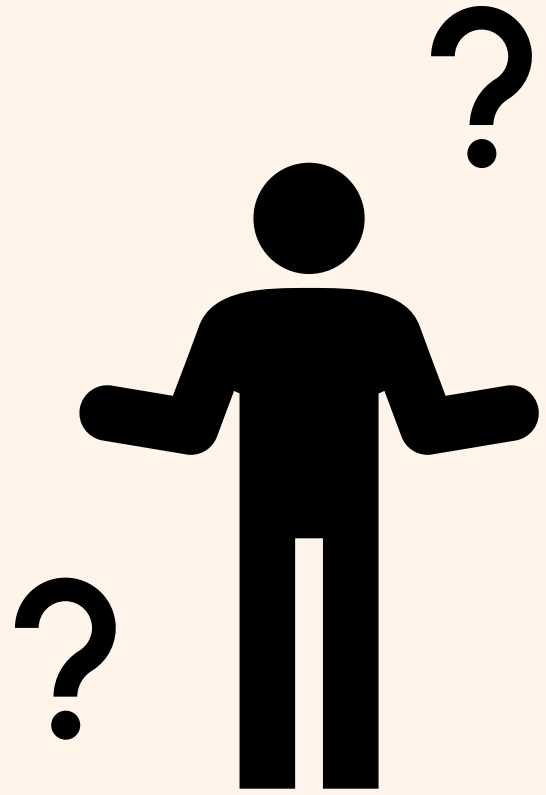
ASK YOURSELF

Does this question generate information that is absolutely vital to this study?



Further reading: www.surveyplanet.com/blog/survey-fatigue-types-causes-and-how-to-avoid-it

#2: THOU SHALT NOT ASK DOUBLE-BARRELLED QUESTIONS



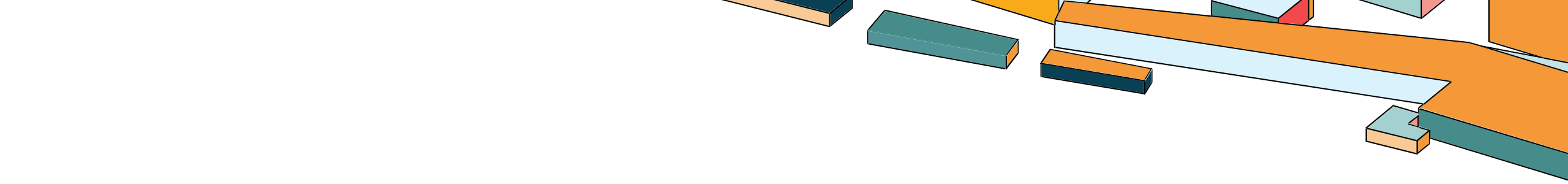
EXAMPLE

Yes or No:
Did you find the workshop **fun** and **informative**?



vs



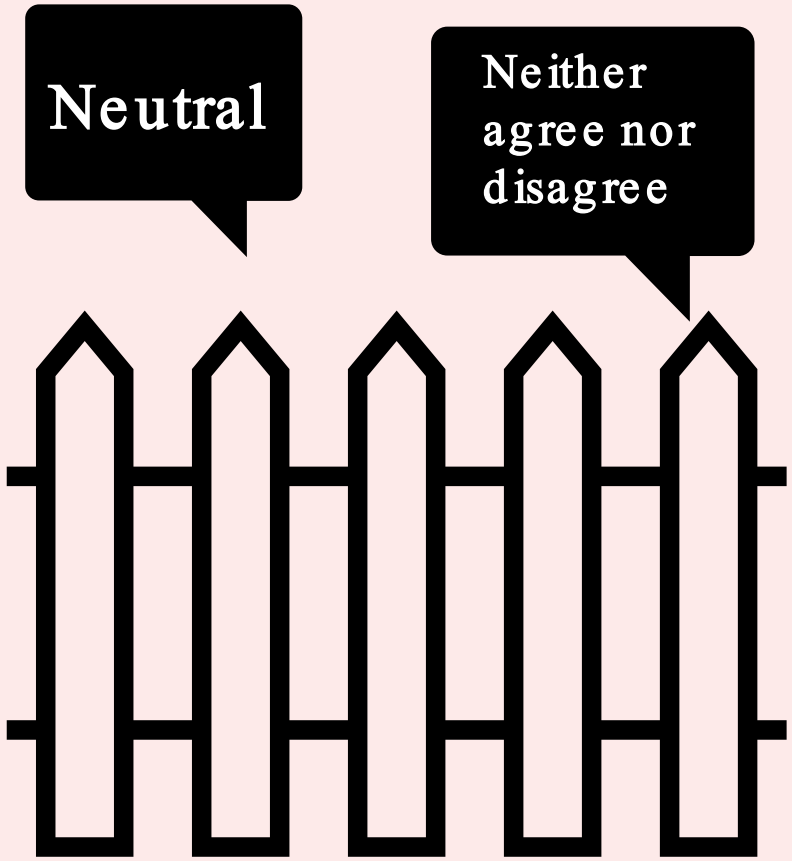


#3: THOU SHALT NOT ASK LEADING QUESTIONS

Example

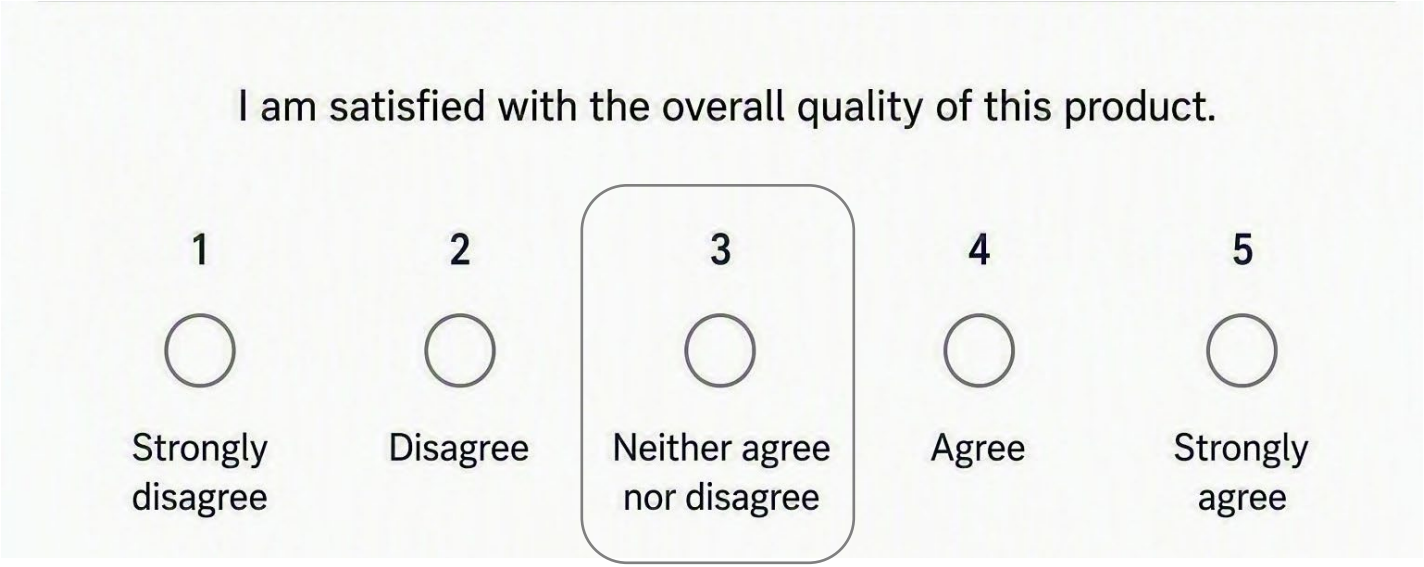
‘Given the success of the program, should it receive more funding?’

Further reading: www.casrai.org/guides/leading-questions-in-surveys



#4: THOU SHALT CONSIDER ‘THE FENCE’





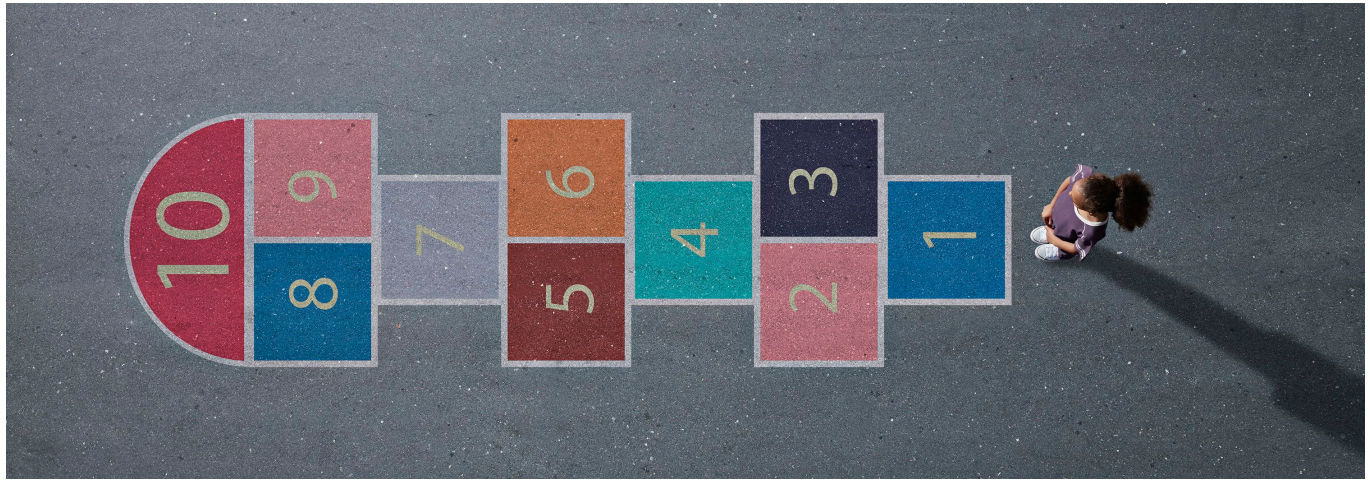


ASK YOURSELF

Is it useful to know if people are indifferent, or do you actually want to know which way they lean?

Further reading: www.evalacademy.com/articles/everything-you-need-to-know-about-likert-scales

#5: THOU SHALT CONSIDER THE ORDER OF THINGS



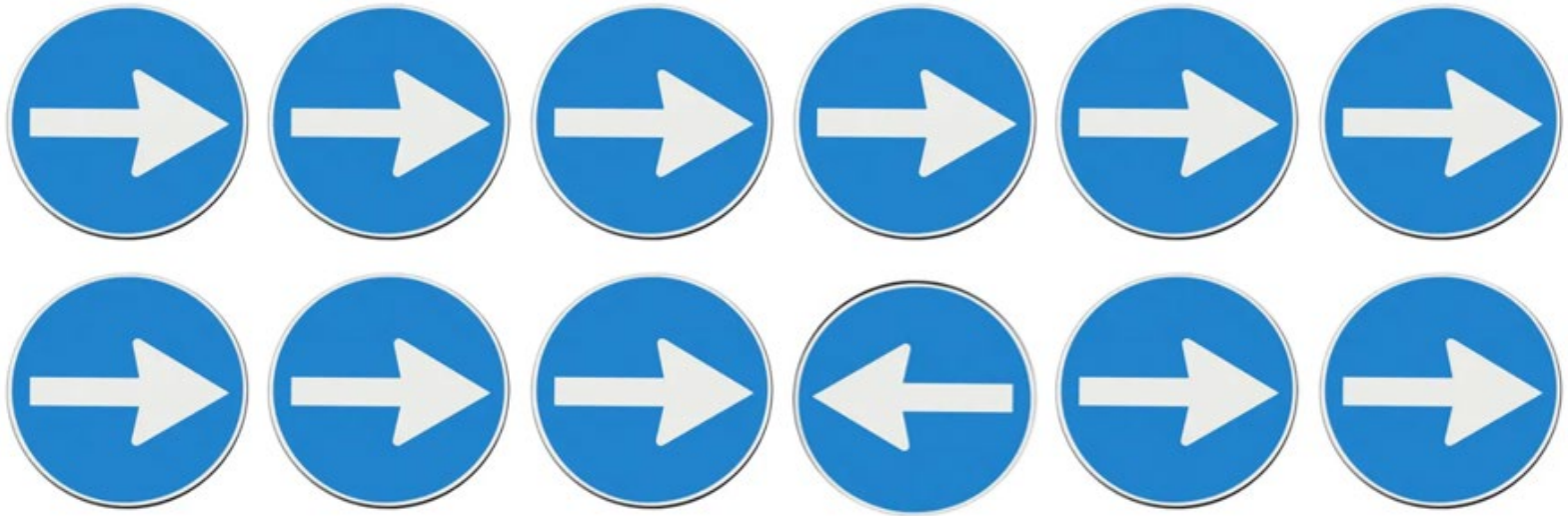
THINGS TO CONSIDER

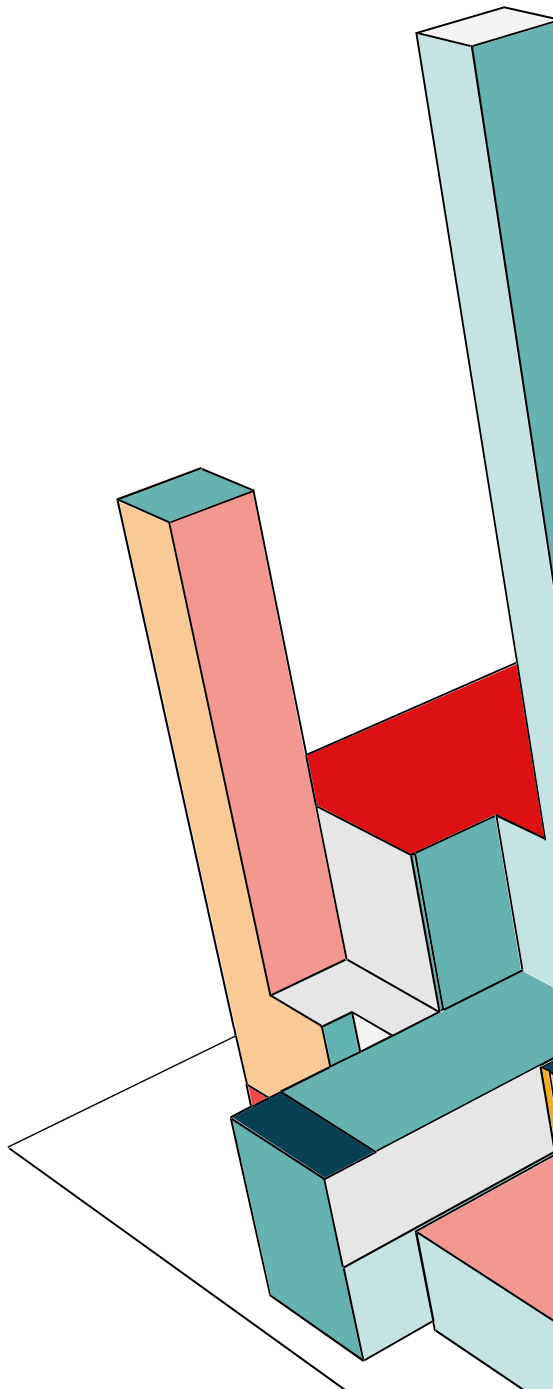
- Easy questions ➡ more complex/sensitive questions
- Demographics: better at the end

Further reading: www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/demographic-question

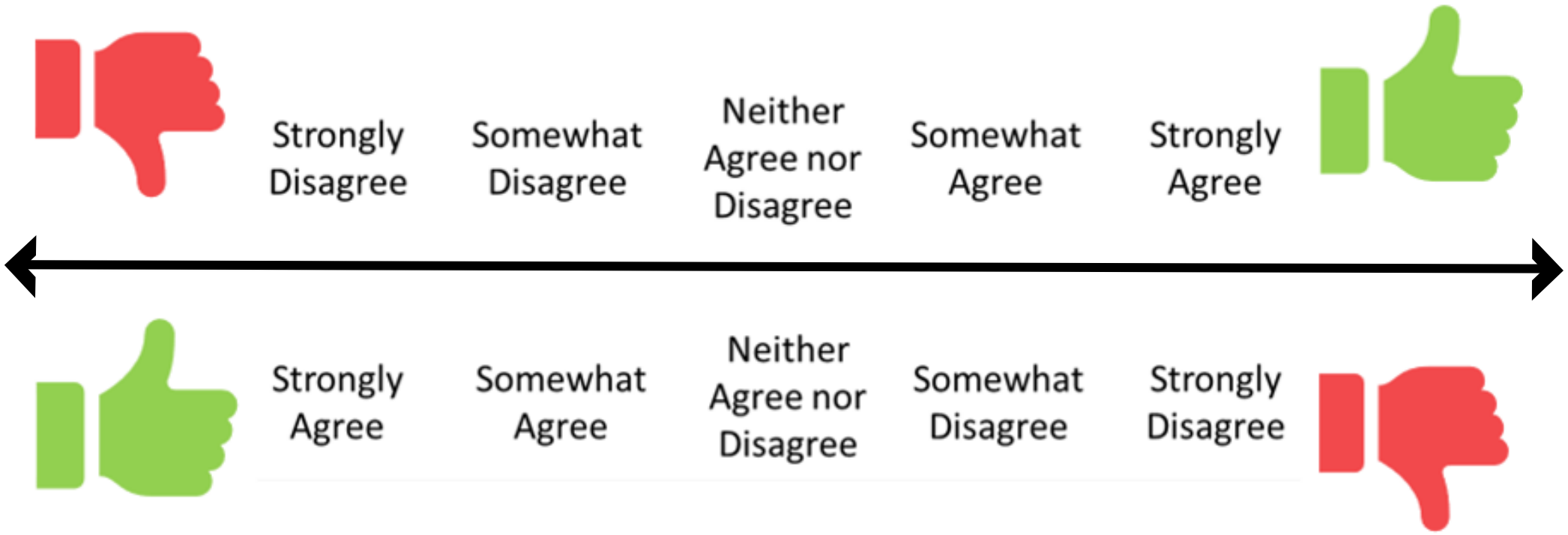


#6: THOU SHALT BE CONSISTENT





CHOOSE A DIRECTION AND STICK WITH IT!



Further reading: www.td.org/content/atd-blog/evidence-based-survey-design-strongly-agree-on-the-left-or-right-side-of-the-likert-scale

#7: THOU SHALT OFFER AN 'OTHER' OPTION



What is your favourite day of the week?

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday



What is your favourite movie genre?

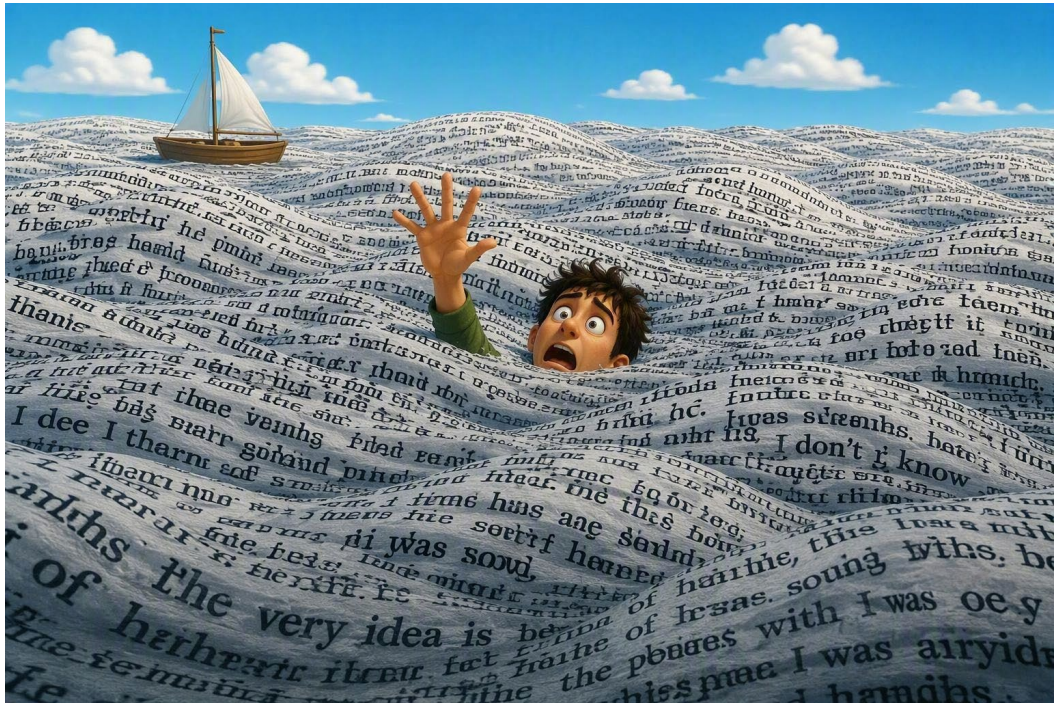
- Action
- Comedy
- Drama
- Horror
- Rom-com
- Fantasy

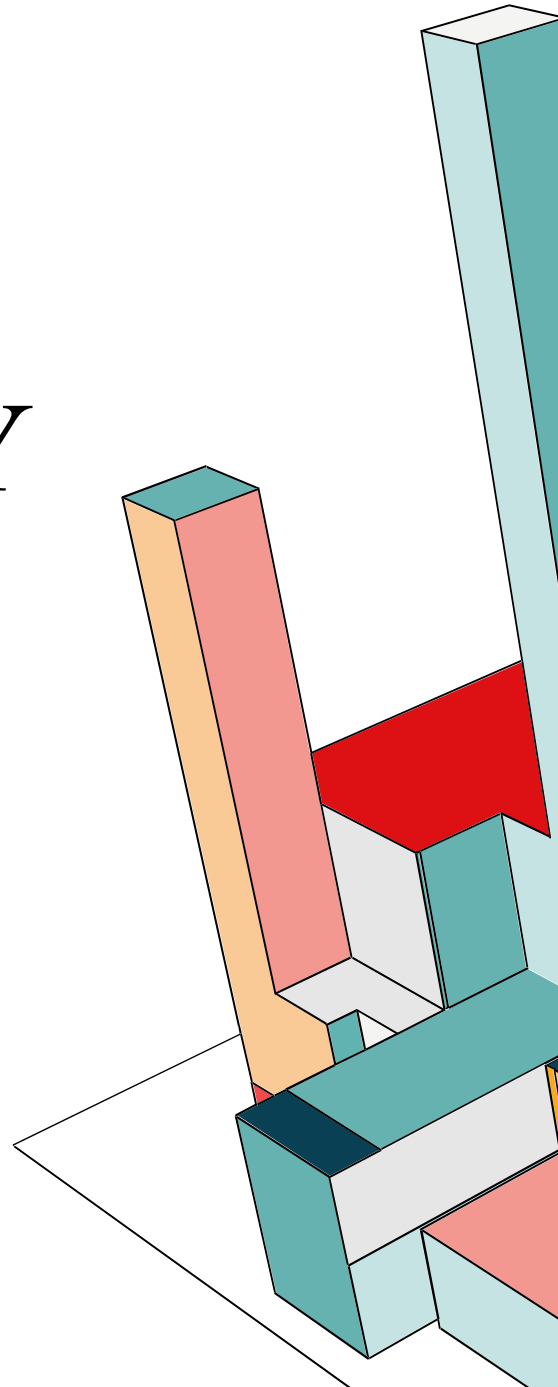


RULE OF THUMB:

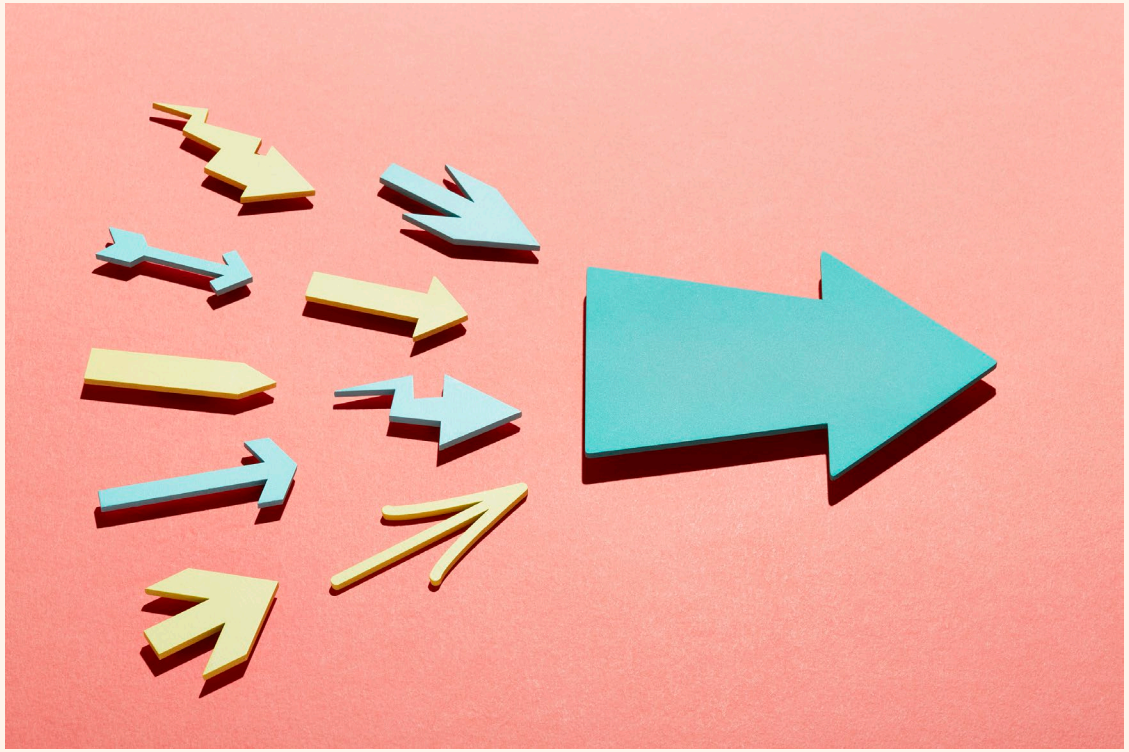
If you're not **100% sure** you've covered **all** possibilities, provide an 'other' category (with text box)

#8: THOU SHALT USE OPEN TEXT RESPONSES SPARINGLY





#9: THOU SHALT GUIDE SURVEY USERS WELL



CLEARLY EXPLAIN/ LABEL:

- Number of questions in survey
- Time required (estimate)
- ‘Select one’ vs ‘select many’
- Mandatory vs optional question
- Topic change: ‘This next set of questions is going to ask about household income…’

#10: THOU SHALT FOOLPROOF YOUR SURVEY

What is your age?

2345.3



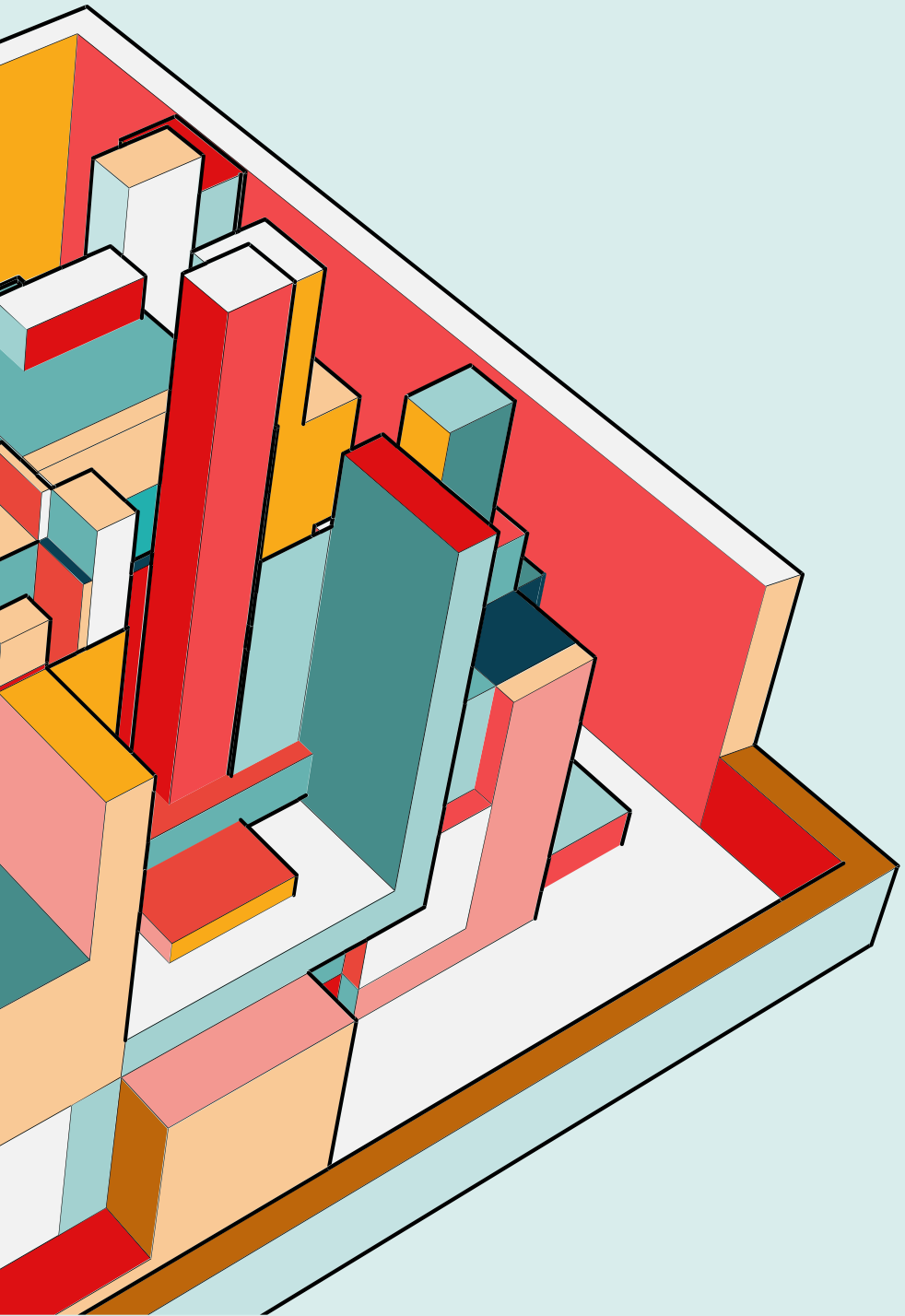


ONLINE SURVEY FUNCTIONS

- **Skip logic** – includes/excludes questions based on previous responses (e.g. sub-questions for women only)
- **Validation criteria** – puts parameters around acceptable answers (e.g. age value = 15-99)

Further reading: www.support.kobotoolbox.org/using-formbuilder.html





THANK YOU

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www.australianhumanitarianpartnership.org