The following list helps you design a perception survey:

Preparations

* Ensure the purpose of the survey is understood.
* Involve all stakeholders in the design.

Question design

* Ensure to cover all key topics that will help you do a better job.
* Think about the right type for each question, i.e. 1–5 scale, single or multiple choice, yes or no, or open-ended questions.
* To ensure that the response provides you with the required information, the question must be articulated in a simple and clear way.
* Keep it short – only ask questions where you are sure you will use the data.
* To avoid unnecessary data analysis, only add open-ended questions where further insights are needed.
* Include all the demographic variables you want to analyse the data by.

Scales

* Ensure the scales match the questions you are asking.
* Think about the wording used in the scale for each question, and whether it is perceptual or objective information you need?
* Check if the scales follow the same pattern (e.g. negative – positive).
* Include “Other”, “Do not know”, “Prefer not to answer” or “Does not apply” options where relevant.

Survey structure

* In the introductory section explain why you need this data, their honest feedback, and how you will use it.
* Explain how long it will take to complete the survey and be realistic about it.
* Tell them whether responses are anonymous or not, and who will have access to their responses.
* Start with an interesting question that makes the respondent keen to participate.
* Since the demographics section can be the most sensitive, only introduce it once the respondent is comfortable with the interviewer. Consider moving the demographic section to the end.
* Review the flow of the questions and adjust the sequence if needed to ensure a smooth flow of the interview.

Testing

* Test the questionnaire with people, including a sample from your target population, if possible? Does the questionnaire make sense? How long does it take to fill in?
* If the survey is conducted in different languages, make sure it is translated by professionals and have it tested.

At the end of the survey

* Ask what questions you may have missed that respondents would welcome the next time around. Also, ask if there is anything else he or she would like to add.
* Tell the respondent what the next steps of the survey process are. How you will communicate and discuss findings?
* Thank participants for their time.
* Explain that collecting data is only the first step and feedback on the analysis will be provided. Consider asking them how they would like to hear back on the results.

Review your questions regularly, and repeat this checklist process each time you administer the survey.