# MHERO WORKFLOW DEVELOPMENT TIPS: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS THROUGH SMS

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Developing a workflow is a routine part of implementing mHero. However, careful design of the questions and content that make up a workflow will determine both the quality and quantity of responses you ultimately receive from health workers. The tips below are meant to aid in the development of thoughtful questions and messages for mHero workflows.

**General Guidance**

- Propose a name for each new workflow you create that will enable you to easily identify it from among many other workflows.
    - If you plan to send a workflow more than once, such as monthly or on a regular interval, be sure to note the month the flow is being sent in the name of your flow.
- Ensure you brand your first message as being from the Ministry of Health (MOH) or mHero or both.
    - If possible, include the name of the person who is sending the message.
- Be sure the first message tells recipients that all text message responses are free.
- Don't ask too many questions in the overall workflow. Ideal workflows should be between 5-10 questions to keep mHero users engaged and to prevent confusion in the event that the recipient moves in and out of a coverage area.
- When using RapidPro and other SMS tools, make sure each message is 160 characters or less.
- Workflows can be given an expiration date so that they become inactive after a certain period of time.
- Think about the exact information you are hoping to receive from health workers and ask very clear and concise questions that will elicit this information
- When creating your questions, think about the data analysis process. Will you have time to review a lot of free text questions or would you rather have multiple choices or Yes/No answers which are faster to analyze?

**Designing Questions in RapidPro**

- When you ask a question in the workflow, be sure to only ask one question at a time.

  For example, a poorly written question is:

  *"Is your health facility providing family planning and child wellness services?"*

  A better question would be:

  *"Is your health facility providing family planning services?"*

- Be sure that there are no ambiguous words in your questions.

  For example, a bad question is *"What commodities do you use regularly? a) male condoms b) IUDs c) pills?"* as term "regularly" is not defined and can be interpreted many different ways by health workers.

  A better question would be *"What commodities do you use on a monthly basis? a) male condoms b) IUDs c) pills?"*

- Always include guidance on how to answer the question.
- For questions in which you want to users to be able to select multiple options from a list of choices, you can either break the question into multiple yes/no questions or ask an open-ended question. RapidPro does not have the capability to capture more than one multiple choice response.


  For example, if you want to ask, *"Which of the following family planning methods do you experience stockouts with? A. implants, B. IUDs, or C. male condoms?"* You could do one of the following:

    ○ Ask the following three yes or no questions:
      ■ "Do you experience stockouts with implants? Please answer Yes or No."
      ■ "Do you experience stockouts with IUDs? Please answer Yes or No."
      ■ "Do you experience stockouts with male condoms? Please answer Yes or No."


    ○ Ask: "Which family planning methods do you experience stockouts with? List all that apply."
      ■ This question will require more analysis of free text answers


- If the question being asked is not open-ended, write out the answer choices you are looking for. For example: If you would like the participant to respond "yes" or "no," end the message with "Please answer Yes or No."
- You can create multiple choice questions in RapidPro. To do so, ask a question and then label the choices with letters that respondents can send back, making it easy to analyze their responses. For example you can ask: *"What is the family planning commodity you give clients the most? A. Male condoms B. IUDs C. Implants or D. other"*
    ○ Respondents should send back an A, B, C, or D for easy analysis.
    ○ Your response box for this question should be setup to capture the responses A, B, C, and D.

- - You should also create a follow-up question for respondents who answer D, so that they can explain what other family planning commodities are distributed.

- When designing questions with multiple choice responses, pay attention to the "other" response category that is generated under "Wait for Response," as this how to re-ask questions when the responses received do not conform. Include a text box with a response that says something similar to "I am sorry. I do not understand your response. Please answer Yes or No." or "I am sorry. I do not understand your response. Please answer A, B, C, or D." Connect this response back to the original question so that the respondent can answer again.
- When creating response types, be sure to include multiple ways something could be spelled. For example: if you are looking for "Yes", include "Ye", "Y", "Yea" as accepted responses for the answer "Yes".
- RapidPro is not case sensitive so upper- and lower-case answers should be accepted.
- Name each response so it is easy to identify which question they belong to when doing analysis. For example, if you ask *"What type of family methods do you provide clients?"*, the response title could be "family planning methods provided."
- For more information on sending workflows through iHRIS, please visit the mHero wiki page: http://wiki.ihris.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Using_mHero&amp;redirect=no

**RapidPro Definitions**

- Completed runs = SMS sent to and received by MNO (no way of determining whether MNO sends along to a phone unless the SMS requires a response and one is received).
- Contact Group = Cadre of employees in iHRIS to whom messages are sent
- Participants = phone numbers
- RapidPro = platform where messages are created, sent and received
- Runs = times sent
- Target group = Respondents/Recipients of a SMS message
- Trigger Word = Word that initiates a SMS flow
- Use Case = Message Topic
- Workflow = flow of message

**Were these tips helpful? Do you have any additional tips to share with mHero users? We'd love to hear from you. Please share feedback to digitalhealth@intrahealth.org.**
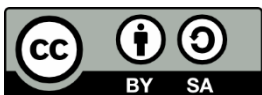
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