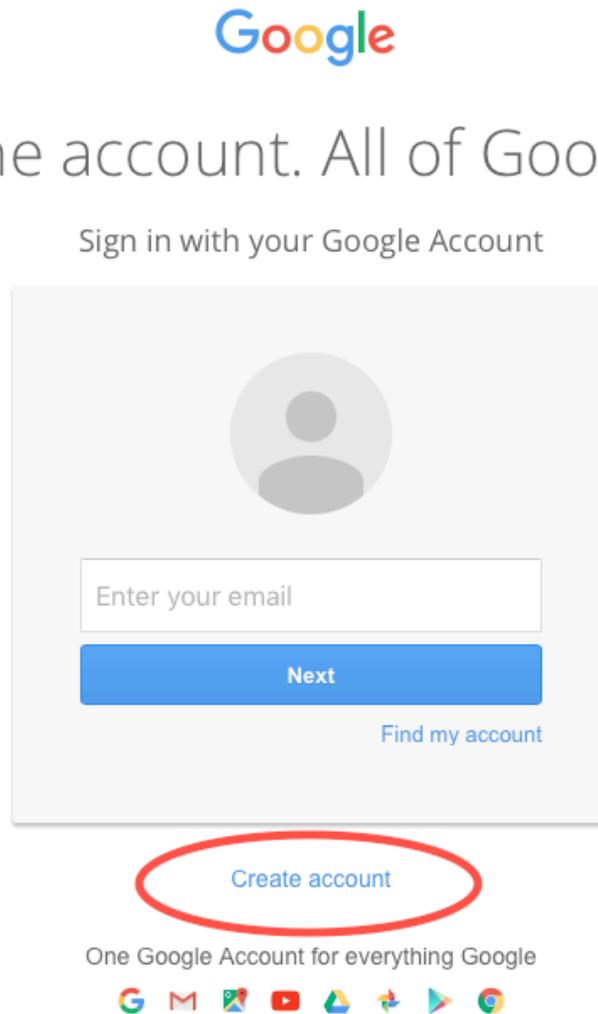# Google Forms Tutorial

Getting started

Step 1: Create a Google account.

If you have gmail or Google hangouts, for example, you already have this. If you don't already have a Google account, go to accounts.google.com and choose "Create account".
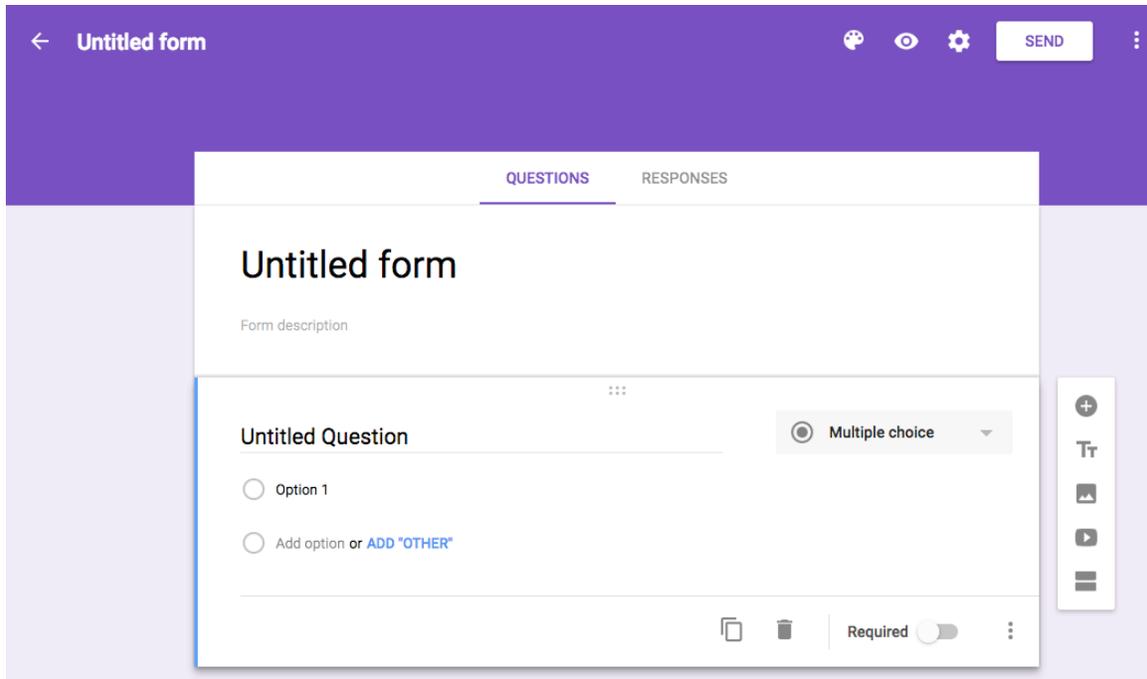

Step 2: Now you can go to google.com and log in or access Google from gmail or one of the other Google services. Click on the "apps" icon (the 3x3 set of dots) and select "Drive". In gmail it might look like this:
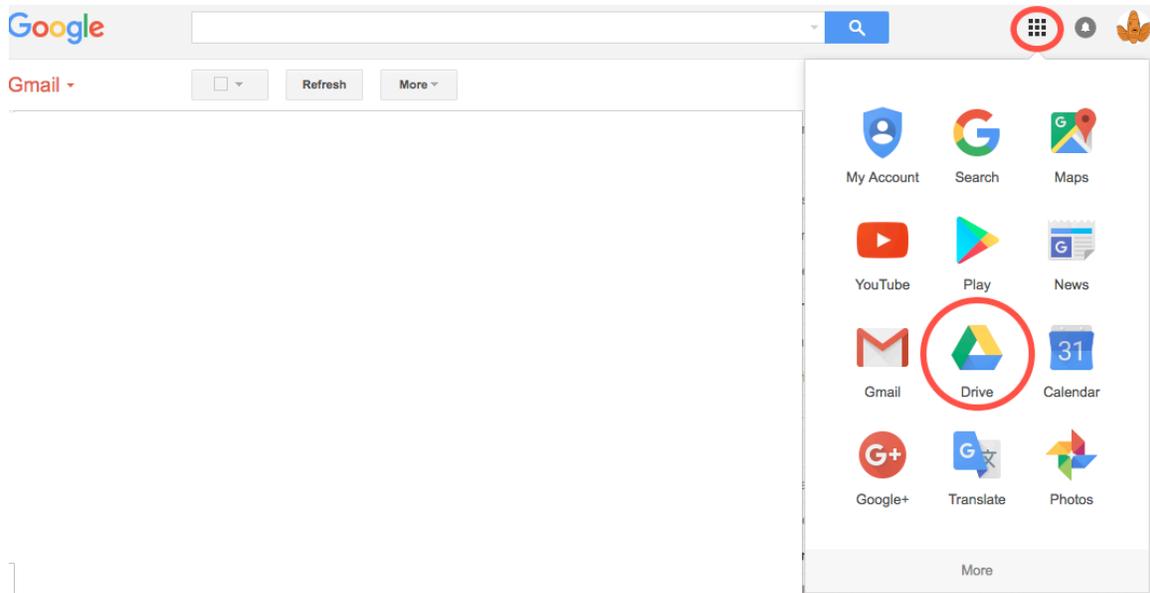
This brings up the Drive screen. Click on the blue "New", go down to "More" and select "Google Forms".
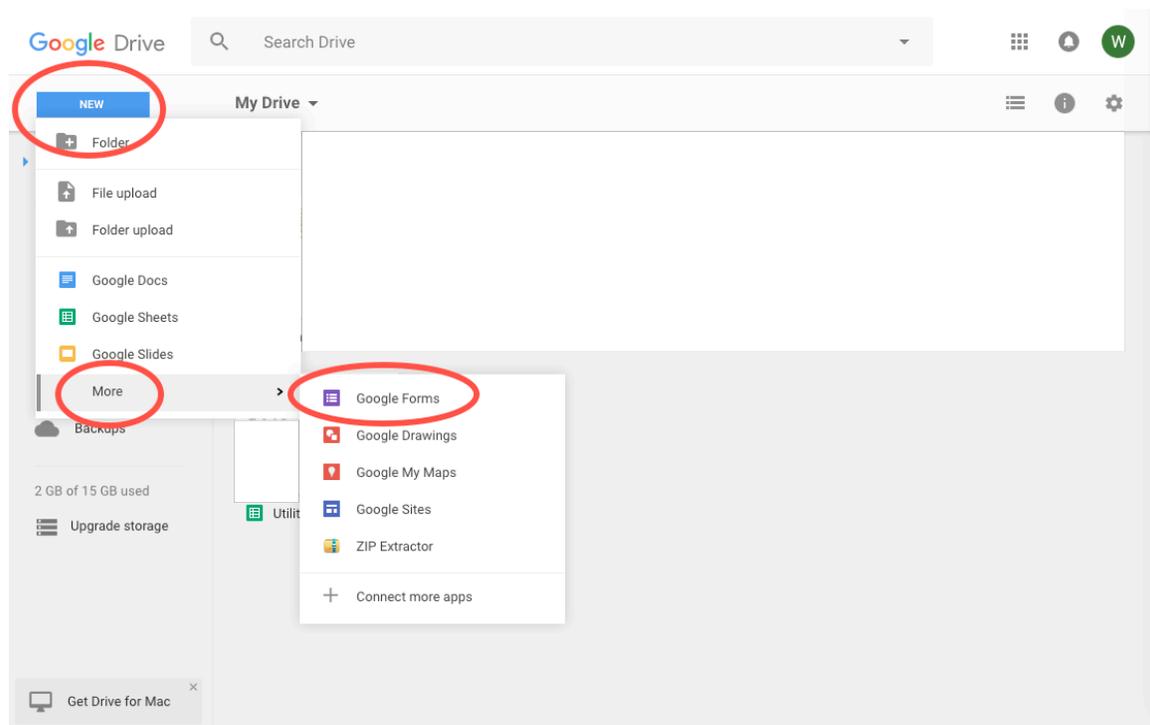
which brings up

and you're ready to begin.

A simple example

We'll begin with a simple example and step you through the major stages: writing the survey, distributing it and checking the results. Later we'll look at more sophisticated features of Google forms.

Writing the survey

Let's say you want to send out an RSVP to your customers for an upcoming event featuring XYZ Gear. First, we'll ask if they will attend. Then, if so, how many people they'll bring. Then we'll ask what gear they're especially interested in. And finally we'll ask them about their familiarity with XYZ and any special interests they may have.

First, give the survey a name by selecting "Untitled form" and typing in RSVP-XYZ.
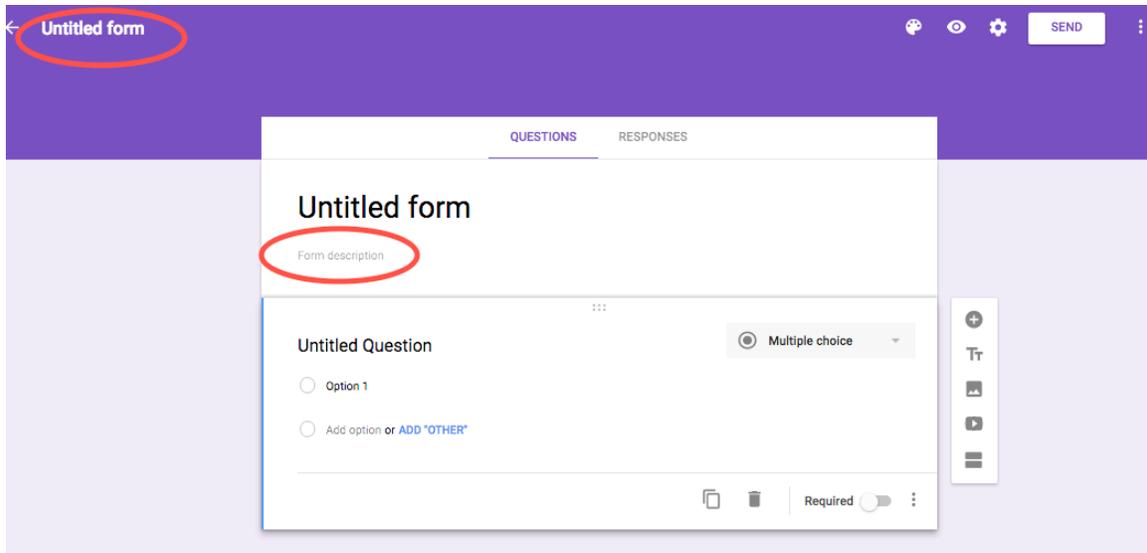
Then the "Form description" lets you put some introductory text into the survey. Here we'll describe the event and state the purpose of the survey: "We're having a special event with XYZ Gear next Thursday at 8PM at the shop. So we can be ready (and know how much pizza to get!), we'd like to get some information from you."
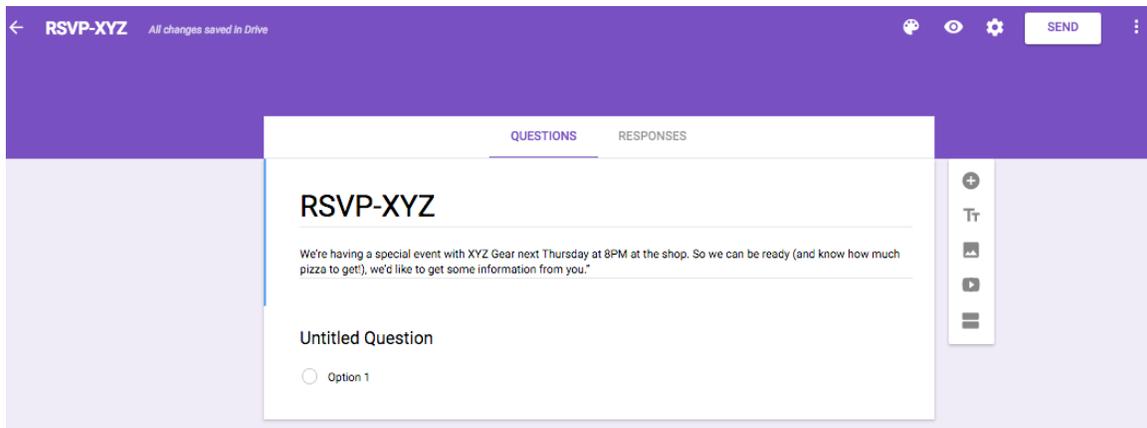

Now we're ready for the first question: will they attend, with possible answers yes, no, maybe. Because we want them to pick only one, this is a question Google calls "Multiple choice" (like radio buttons in Web pages). Google forms allow a variety of answer types. We'll look at the major types as we develop the form and other types in the Advanced section.

Click on the "Untitled Question" and enter "Will you be able to attend?". Multiple choice is the default so leave it there.
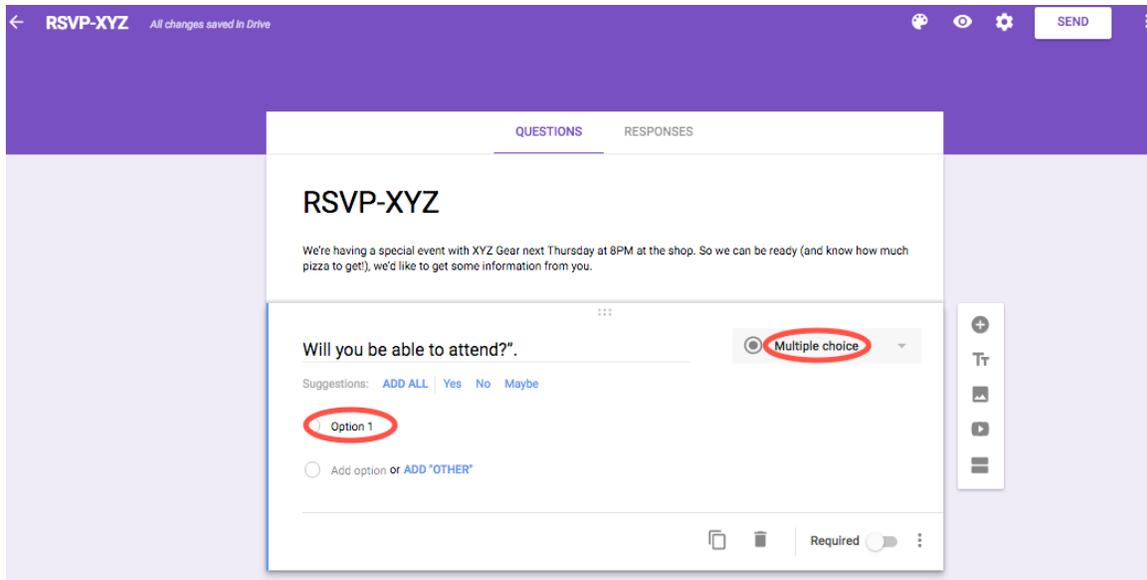
Click on "Option 1" and type Yes. Then click on "Add option" and type No and repeat for Maybe. And there's your first question. (As you can see, Google already suggests "Yes", "No" and "Maybe" and you can just click "ADD ALL". Google does a good job of guessing what you want and suggesting answers but if you want more control you can always put in your own options. We'll have to do this with a later question.)
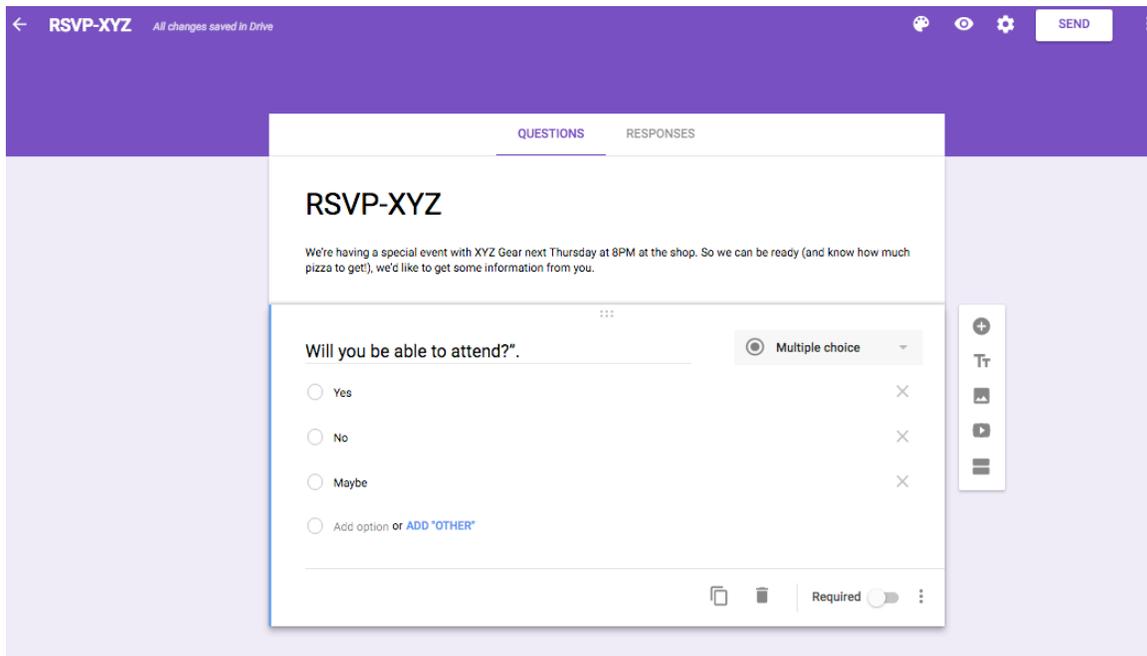
Add another question by clicking the + sign on the list on the right of the screen.
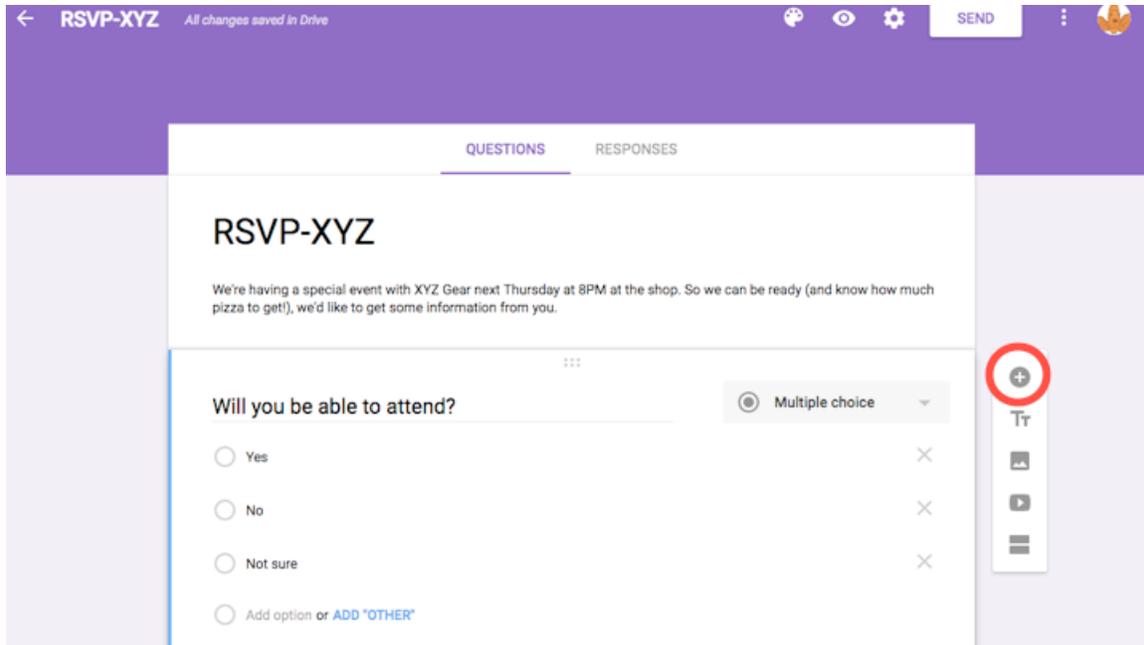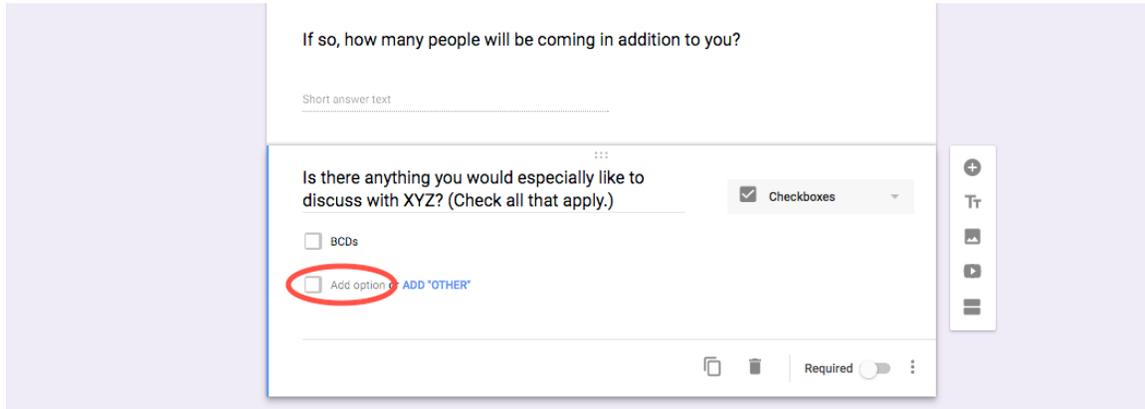
For the next question, enter "If so, how many people will be coming in addition to you?". A good answer type is "Short answer" which will give you a small (one-line) text box that they can type a number into. (Google will suggest this but you can always go the dropdown menu if you want a different answer type.)
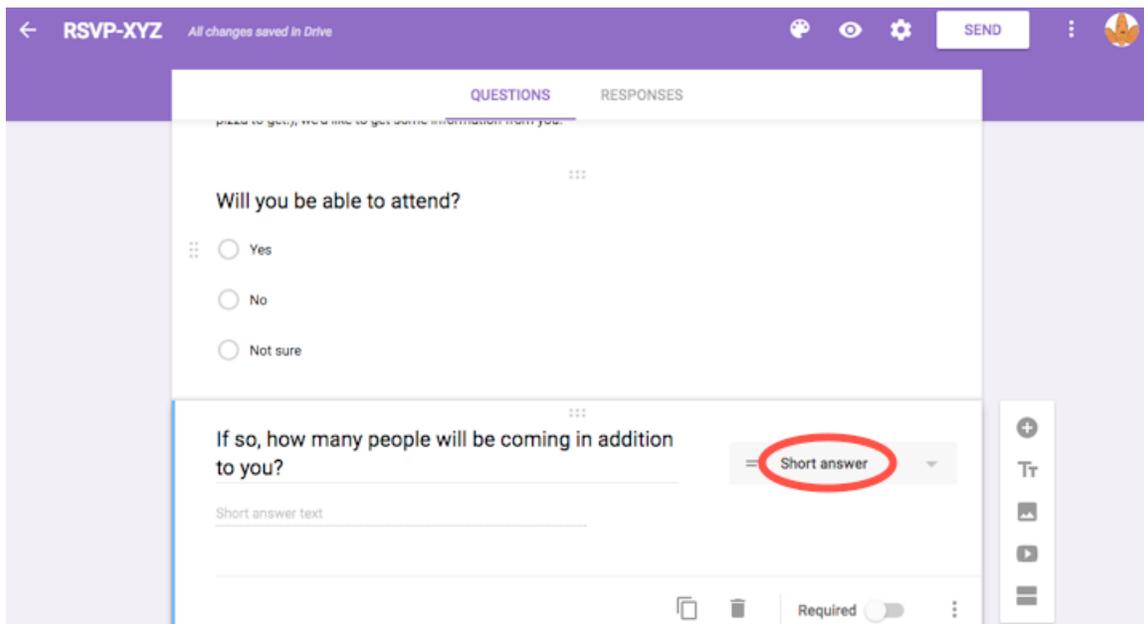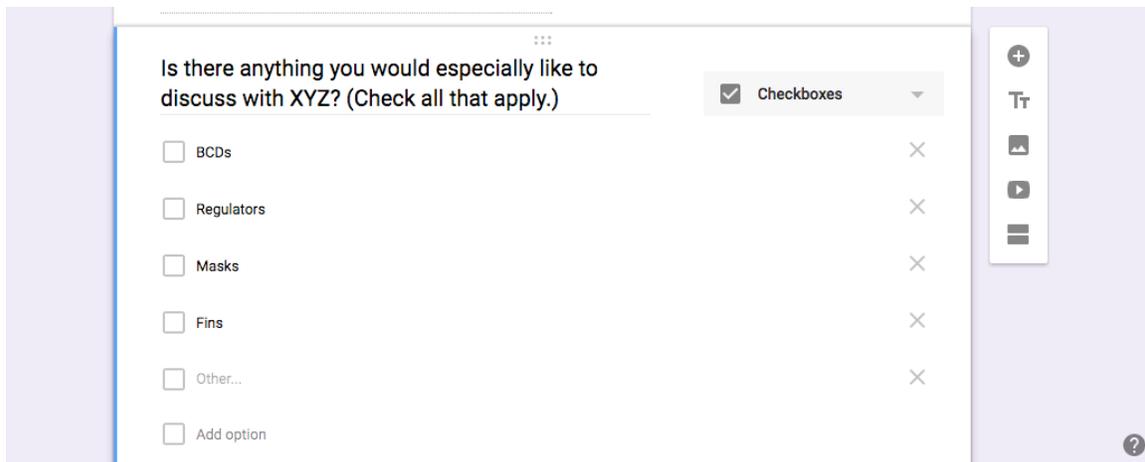

The next question will be about what gear they're interested in. This will allow multiple answers and so is of the type Google calls "Checkboxes". Add another

question with the "+" sign as before and enter in "Is there anything you would especially like to discuss with XYZ? (Check all that apply.)". Then, option by option,


add specific gear items. The "ADD OTHER" option will give them a text box to type into if they choose it.

Finally, we'll ask them for free-form input on what they think of the company, what special interests they have and any other comments they may want to make. Enter "We appreciate any thoughts you have on XYZ gear, any special interests you have and any other comments you might want to pass on to us." Because this is free-form, the answers may be long, not short. Google provides a "Paragraph" answer type for this case.

We appreciate any thoughts you have on XYZ gear, any special interests you have and any other comments you might want to pass on to us.

Paragraph

Long answer text
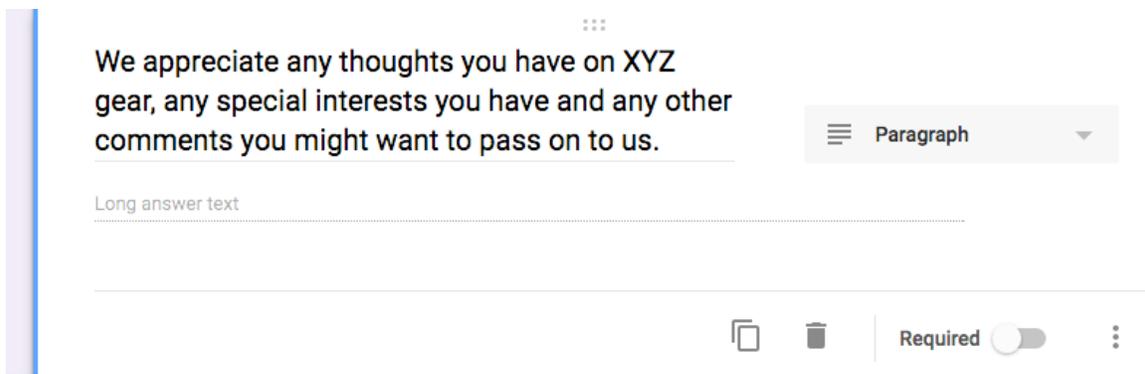
Required

And the survey is built.

Now you're ready to distribute it and wait for results. But first, let's look at some other useful features we have available at this point. The "trash can" icon deletes the currently selected question. The "Required" button requires that the customer answer the question to complete the survey. The "Preview" icon at the top (the one that looks like an eye) lets you see the survey as your customers will. You can even push buttons, type text, etc. And the "Settings" icon at the top (the one that looks like a gear) gives you extra options, like collecting email addresses and limiting each respondent to one response. This is also where you can add your "Thank you". Go to "Settings", then "Presentation" and enter a "Confirmation message", e.g., "Thanks for participating. It really helps us serve our customers.". Google also provides colors, themes, etc. but we'll let you explore these on your own. (You're your own best designer!)

Distributing it

Google offers you a couple ways to get your survey out to your customers. You can send email containing a link to the survey, post it to social media or put a link in another document – your website or newsletter, for example. For this example we'll send it out by email. But first we need to tell Google how we want responses to be saved. So click on "Responses" at the top of the form and you get:
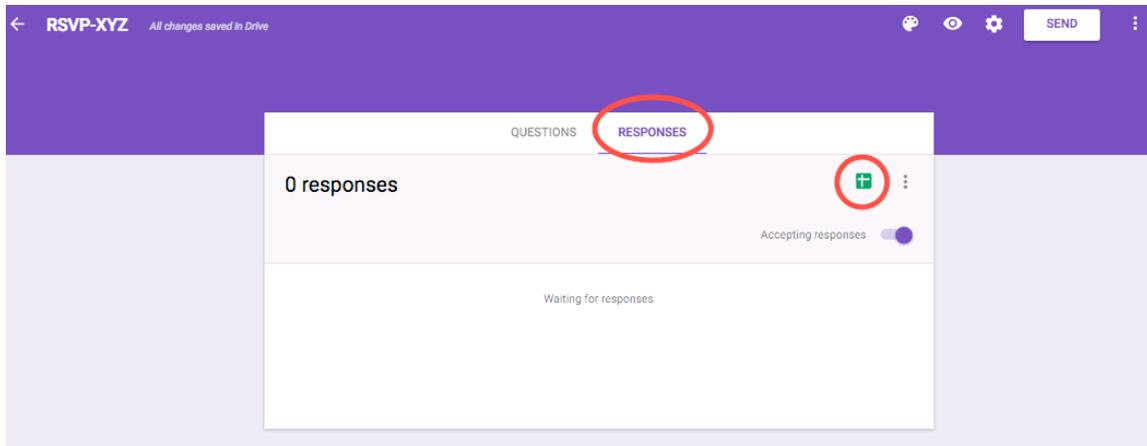
Click on the green button with the "+"-looking sign and and then on "Create" and have responses stored in a new spreadsheet.
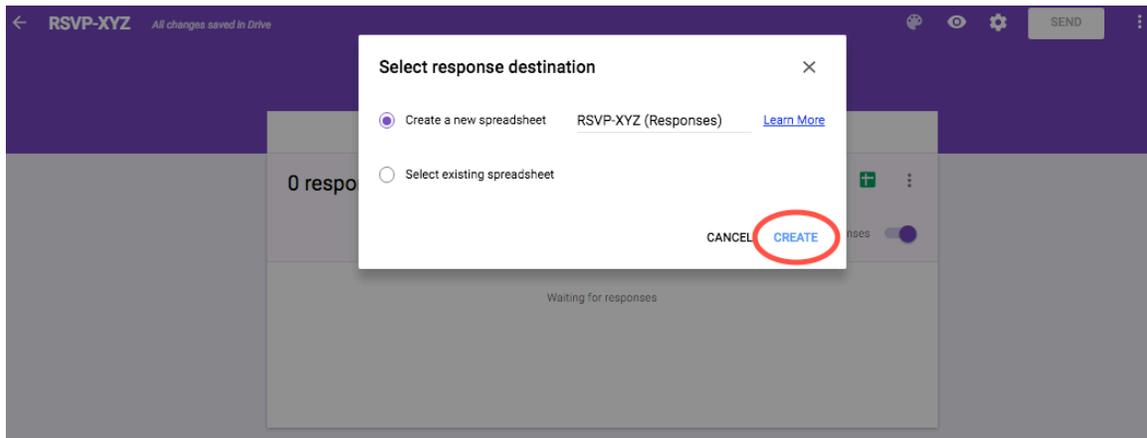

Now to send it out. Just to make sure you're getting what you want, first send it to yourself and, maybe, some family and friends or employees before blasting it out to your whole mailing list. In either case, when you're ready to send, click that "Send" button on the upper right.

You'll get this:
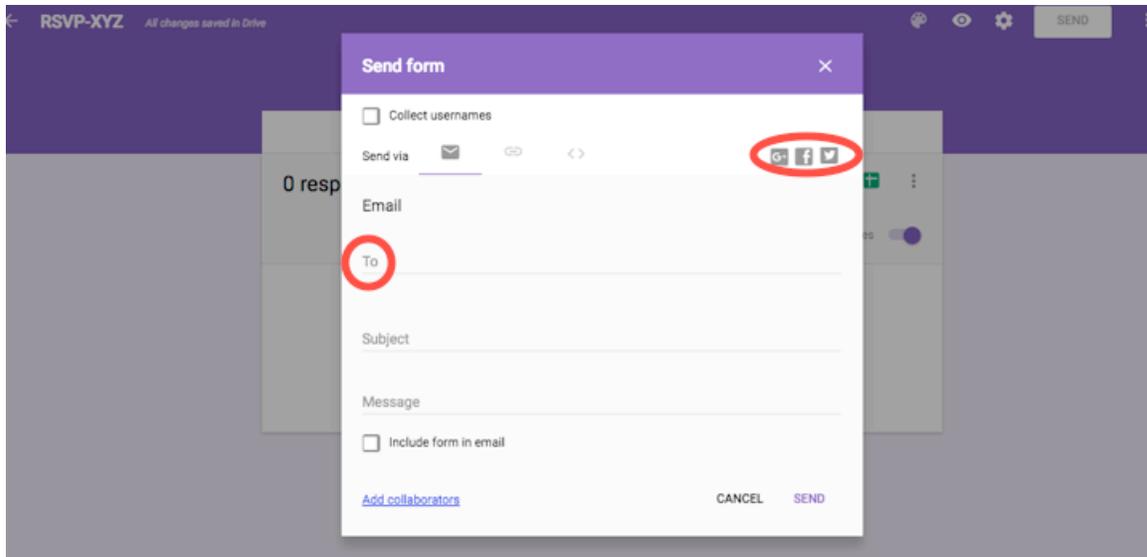
Enter in email addresses. Notice that there are spaces for Subject and a Message as well as options for distributing the survey over social media.
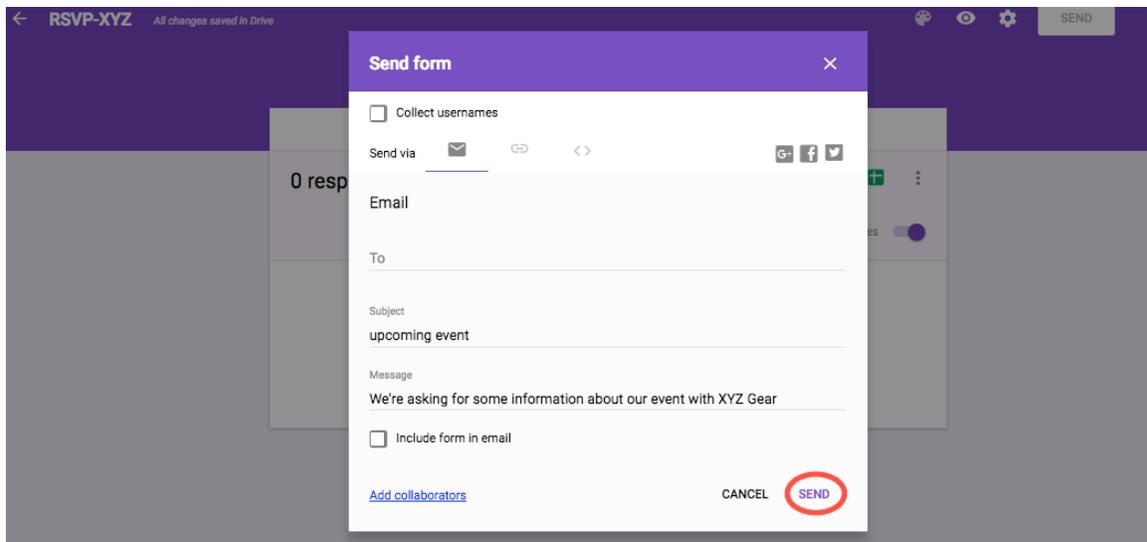
Then click on "SEND" and it's off to your customers.

Alternatively, choose "Link to share". You can include the link in an email, your newsletter, your website or wherever. You can even create a QR code.

Looking at the responses

If you chose "Create" for a new spreadsheet back when you sent the survey out, your Drive will have a spreadsheet with all the responses. This is a usual Excel-type spreadsheet with detailed information for each response and you can analyze it as

you would any other spreadsheet. But Google also provides graphical summaries of the responses. Go to your survey in Drive and click "Responses". The default is "Summary" and that will give you the basic information in graphical form.

Advanced features

Other answer types

Google offers a number of other answer types, in addition to those already reviewed. These include "drop down menu" (aka "choose from list"), "linear scale" (e.g., "On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate …"), "multiple choice grid" (e.g., "How important are each of the following features in your buying decisions?" with responses from "not very" to "very") along with time and date pickers.

A fancier form

You can also add a title and description from the two-T's icon on the right side of the form and, for longer forms, even break it into sections from the = icon there. There are also "add image" and "add video" options. And you can add color fields and a banner image to your survey using the "Color Palette" button. You can choose from their selection or add your own. (I suggest using these sparingly, at least at first.)

Some final thoughts

Don't be afraid of experimenting with this software. It's not rocket science. Think of it as an iterative-improvement process, aka trial-and-error. You can always test it out by first sending it to family and friends, employees or even just yourself. Google provides a lot of information (e.g., see https://gsuite.google.com/learning-center/products/forms/get-started/) and there is the usual collection of blogs and forums on the Internet.

And remember, it's not about the software, it's about your business. Asking the right questions is much more important than getting the perfect background picture.