

Survey Optimization Checklist

Best Practices to Get Higher Response Rates

Today, people are asked for feedback from brands all day long. They get emails from their airline, dry cleaner, favorite restaurant, and dozens of others asking them to answer a few quick questions. The brand values their feedback! But if the brand isn't offering anything in exchange for that time investment, the recipient won't likely bother with clicking on and answering the survey.

When it comes to market research, it can be equally challenging to get respondents to complete surveys. Of course, the more responses you can get, the more dependable your data will be. You can make more reliable business decisions because you have a sizable response pool to analyze. That participation is the lifeblood of any research project.


Easier said than done. People may not be motivated to give feedback without some sort of incentive. Or you might suffer from what's called "squeaky wheel syndrome": You get responses only from people who are either ecstatic about your brand or who want to rant about a bad experience. There's no middle ground.


If you launch longitudinal studies, you need the same group of respondents to take a series of surveys over time, and often they'll become less engaged or even drop out before completing all the tasks. That can put your entire study at risk.


All these challenges boil down to one fact: You need to show that you value your respondents and make it simple (and fast) to complete your survey.


How to Maximize the Response Rate of Your Next Survey

Follow these best practices to optimize your survey and receive a higher number of qualified, representative responses.

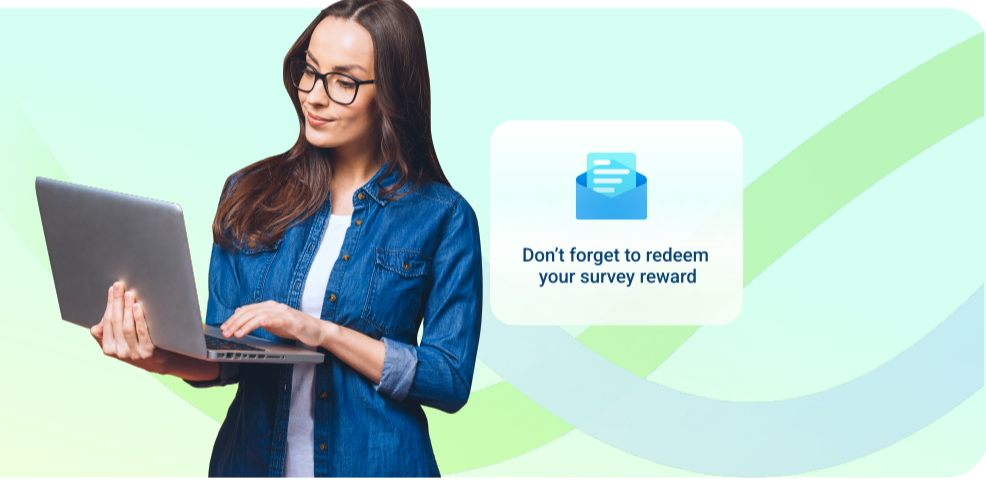
-  **1. Keep Your Survey a Reasonable Length**


A survey that takes a participant 30 minutes to complete is one that probably won't see many responses. Not sure how long is too long? Look at your survey analytics to determine which surveys are getting higher response rates and see how long those took to complete.
-  **2. Qualify Participants Early**


The sooner you qualify a participant, the sooner you can know whether you're getting useful data. Ask a few qualifying questions at the start of the survey. That way, anyone who doesn't qualify won't waste too much time. You can offer a modest reward for the small effort they put into the qualifying portion of the survey.
-  **3. Personalize the Survey Email Invitation**


When you address the participant directly in your survey email and explain the genuine purpose for requesting their feedback, you'll see higher email open rates and click-throughs.
-  **4. Create a Sense of Urgency**


Creating a sense of urgency is a great way to get a high number of responses in a timely manner. Try offering a reward or extra points to the first 50 or 100 respondents.





The first 50 respondents will
Receive a \$25 gift card!
-  **5. Let Participants Know How Long the Survey Will Take**


Be realistic about how long it should take to complete a response. For example, claiming that the survey will take only three minutes may get more people to start taking it, but they will soon abandon it when they realize it is taking longer.
-  **6. Keep Your Respondents' Information Anonymous**


Respondents may be more inclined to take your survey if they know that their name and contact information isn't tied to their responses. That way, they can be honest in their feedback, providing you with better data.
-  **7. Keep the Survey Focused on Essential Questions**

It's important to boil your survey down to just the questions you care most about. If a respondent's location isn't essential to the data you want to collect, for example, leave it off.
-  **8. Send an Email Reminder to Those Who Haven't Responded**

Sometimes your invitation may be forgotten or lost in inboxes, so send a polite reminder email about it. Include a deadline so recipients hurry to answer your survey.
-  **9. Use a Progress Bar in the Survey**

A progress bar lets respondents know how much of the survey they have left and can help ensure that they answer it to completion.
-  **10. Use Clickable Responses More Than Open-Ended Ones**

The less effort that's required from your audience, the higher your response rate will be. Offer multiple-choice options whenever possible and use open-ended questions only when absolutely essential.
-  **11. Offer the Right Reward**

Make sure the value and choices of rewards are appropriate for your audience and the amount of time required to fill out the survey.
-  **12. Automate the Reward Process**

The less time you have to spend manually sorting through who completed a survey and who gets a reward, the more time you can dedicate to the research. Automating the process can ensure that participants receive their rewards instantly upon completion of a survey.

Conclusion

If the data you want to collect is important to you, you'll need to put in the effort to ensure that the survey experience is positive and easy to complete. That may mean limiting the length of your survey, paying attention to survey analytics, and offering delightful digital incentives with a streamlined, easy-to-use tool like BHN Rewards. [Contact us](#) to learn more!