# 8 Proven Ways to Increase Survey Response Rates

**Sam O'Brien**
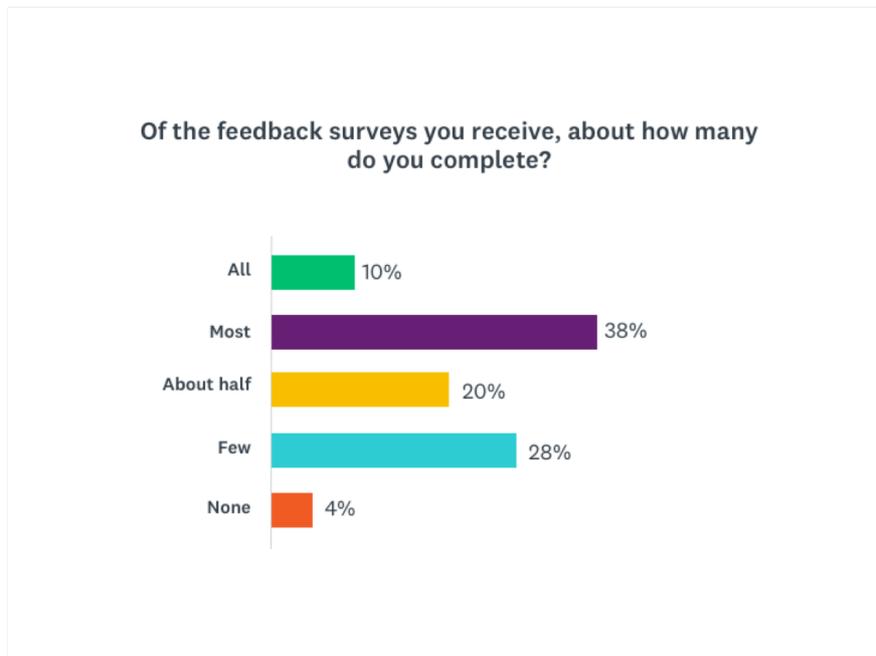Aug 19, 2020 — 7 min read

When you run a business, you can't improve things without knowing what actually needs improving. That's why customer surveys are so important. They provide the insights you can use to optimize your marketing campaigns and customer service strategies.

But here is the tricky part. Most people aren't big fans of taking surveys. You've surely noticed that if you've ever tried to conduct one.

To increase survey response rates, you need to think of it from your customers' perspective. For example, here are some of the reasons people quit surveys before completing them:

- The survey contains too many questions

- The survey requires too much typing

- The purpose of the survey is unclear

- There is no incentive for the respondent

To see how low your chances might be to get feedback, look at the research conducted by SurveyMonkey.

**Of the feedback surveys you receive, about how many do you complete?**

| | |
|---|---|
| All | 10% |
| Most | 38% |
| About half | 20% |
| Few | 28% |
| None | 4% |

Almost 50% of respondents stated that they complete half or just few feedback surveys they receive.

Sounds discouraging? Worry not! For this article, we've collected the best practices for improving survey response rates.

Feel free to jump to any section you're most interested in:

1. Offer something in return for participation

2. Give your customers a gentle nudge

3. Pick the right time to survey customers

4. Keep your survey short and sweet

5. Use fullscreen mobile-friendly forms

6. Pick the right channels to display surveys

# Guide to improving survey response rate

It can be difficult to establish what an 'ideal' survey response rate looks like because so many factors are involved.

Are respondents familiar with your brand? What type of survey are you conducting? Do you offer anything to them upon completion? Depending on these and many other nuances, the survey response rate can be anywhere between 5% and 60%!

> **To calculate a survey response rate, divide the number of people who completed the survey by the number of people who were invited to participate.**

How you go about inviting people to take part in your survey can also have a significant impact on the results. For example, you can send them an email request or you can survey them right on the website.

In both cases, you'll need to know how to keep your respondents engaged if you want to increase your survey response rates.

Here are a few helpful tips and tricks.

# 1. Offer something in return for participation

When you ask your customers to participate in a survey, you're asking them to spend their time and effort, so that you could gain valuable insights. But what is there for them?

Yes, you should think of an incentive.

Incentives work wonders when you're trying to get people to take your survey. Look at how TechRepublic offers a chance to win a $100 gift card if you answer a few questions:
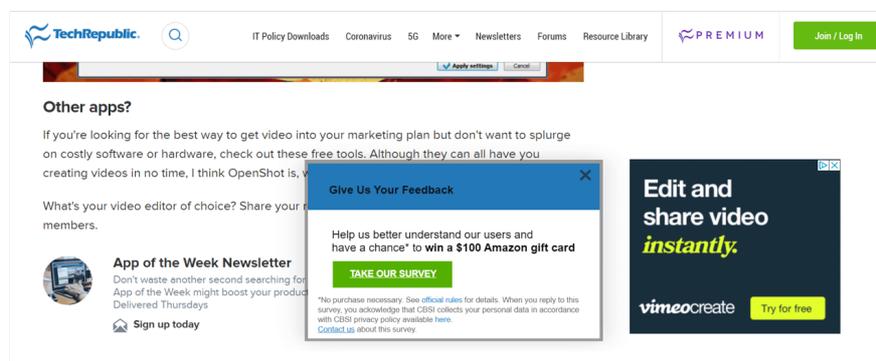


If you're conducting a particularly in-depth survey, gift cards are great to show that you value the time of the respondents. Don't want to go this route? Then consider discounts, samples, gifts, upgrades, or even unique content.

To deliver the incentive, just add an email capture field at the end of the survey form and use an autoresponder. This way, everyone who completes the survey will receive an email with a discount code, a download link, or whatever your offer was.

# 2. Give customers a gentle nudge

Filling in a survey probably isn't at the top of many people's 'to do' list. That's why, whether you're surveying customers on your website or via email, it's a common practice to give them a gentle reminder from time to time.

For instance, you can set up an automated reminder email that is sent 'X' days after the original invitation. If you're surveying people on the website or in an app, you can

nudge them by displaying a pop-up survey every 7-10 days until a customer fills out the form or declines the invitation.
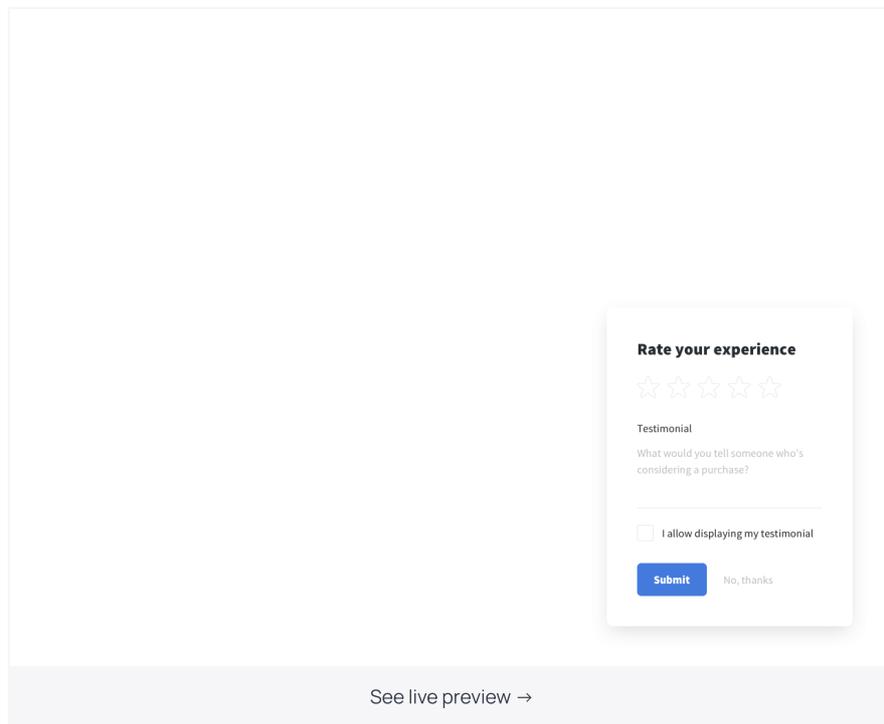


**Rate your experience**

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Testimonial

What would you tell someone who's considering a purchase?

☐ I allow displaying my testimonial

**Submit**    No, thanks

See live preview →

For example, the survey above involves a testimonial request. From experience, you probably know that many people won't fill it out right away – for various reasons. But after seeing it the second time, some will definitely respond.

Bottom line? There's no need to be too persistent when it comes to surveys, but if you only display them once, you might miss out.

## 3. Pick the right time to survey customers

In order to get people to take your survey, make sure you pick the right time for the invitation.

What is the best time? It depends.

Some surveys, such as customer satisfaction (CSAT) and customer effort (CES) surveys, are best displayed right after customers have interacted with your business.
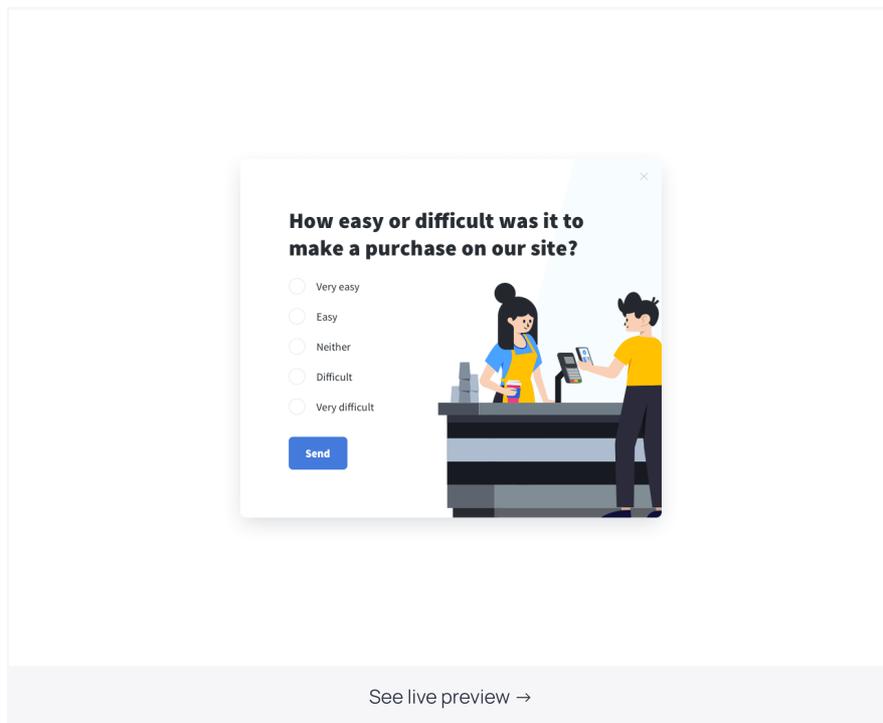
Others – such as the Net Promoter Score survey – can be sent via email up to a month after a customer has completed a purchase.

When in doubt, ask yourself: do I need to get feedback about the experience a customer just had, or do I want to give them more time to evaluate the product?

## 4. Keep things short and sweet

The fewer fields there are in a form, the higher survey response rates will be. That's a given.

However, businesses can't completely avoid using long-form surveys, right?

If you are running marketing research that includes multiple questions, there are a few tricks to make it easy for your customers to interact with it.

Include a progress bar to show how much is left

Some survey tools allow you to add design elements that indicate the progress. Those are great for improving survey response rates!

Seeing a dynamic progress bar or a percentage of the completed survey questions makes people feel as if they are advancing. Keep that in mind when designing your next survey.

When possible, use skip logic and branching

'Skip logic' is a feature that allows you to display questions based on the respondents' answers. As a result, irrelevant questions get automatically 'skipped'. For example, you will want to ask a customer about a feature you offer only if they have bought or used that feature.

Use questions that require minimum interaction

Open-ended questions are everyone's least favorite type because they require a lot of effort from the respondents. So, whenever you can – spare them typing the answers. Use checkboxes, dropdown menus, and radio buttons to minimize the interaction required.

## 5. Use fullscreen mobile-friendly forms

In addition to the way you phrase questions, there are a couple more tricks that might help you get people to take your survey.

First, you want to use fullscreen survey forms whenever it's possible. Fullscreen forms provide a distraction-free experience and increase survey response rates significantly.

Tell us about your experience

Did you find you were looking for?
○ Yes
○ No

How did you hear about us?

Is there anything we should improve?
Share your thoughts

Submit →

See live preview →

Second, you want to test your survey on mobile. With half of the Internet traffic coming from smartphones these days, chances are a large number of people will see your survey while using small screens. That's why it's important to make sure the questions will display well on both desktop and mobile devices. To ensure great user experience, only include one question per page and minimize the descriptions.

## 6. Pick the right channels to display surveys

We've just talked about the two most popular channels for inviting people to participate in surveys: email and websites. But when and where exactly should you do that?

If your goal is to increase survey response rates, the best moment to display a survey form is when your customers are most engaged:

- At the end of the checkout process

- Right after they've had a live chat

- At the end of a blog post

- On a thank you page

Whenever a customer accomplishes something on your website, they are more likely to provide feedback because they feel good about themselves, and chances are – about your business, too. Naturally, you want to avoid displaying pop-up surveys while your customer is in the midst of the checkout process. That's an unnecessary distraction that may cost you a sale.

Next step? Think outside the box to find more channels for sharing your survey. For instance, you can link to them directly from social media and messengers using tools like Getform.

## 7. Make sure you approach the right audience

If people ignore your survey, you might be trying to approach the wrong audience. To start getting quality responses, make sure you understand who you're targeting exactly.

For example, if you're displaying a survey on a website, you can use targeting settings to reach specific audience segments based on their location, device type, or user behavior. You can also display different surveys on different pages of your website or based on the resources people come to your website from.

If you're sending an email survey about your product, it's crucial to have the email list segmentation in order. For instance, only those who have been on a customer journey with you will be able to provide valuable insights based on their experience.

## 8. Use personalization when possible

Personalization is known for increasing email open rates and click-through rates. When it comes to surveys, it can be helpful, too.

If you're inviting people to participate in your survey via email, make sure to use their first name in the subject line and the opening part of the email.

Once you've got their attention, maintain it with a good email copy! For instance, before

getting to the questions, explain why you'd like them to take the survey and how long it will take.

Compare the following invitations:

- "Please participate in our survey"

- "We're working on improving our customer experience. If you could answer our quick survey, you would help us a lot. It will only take two minutes".

Which one sounds more personal and thoughtful? Clearly, it's the second one.

For instance, this is how Airbnb gets people to take their survey via email:
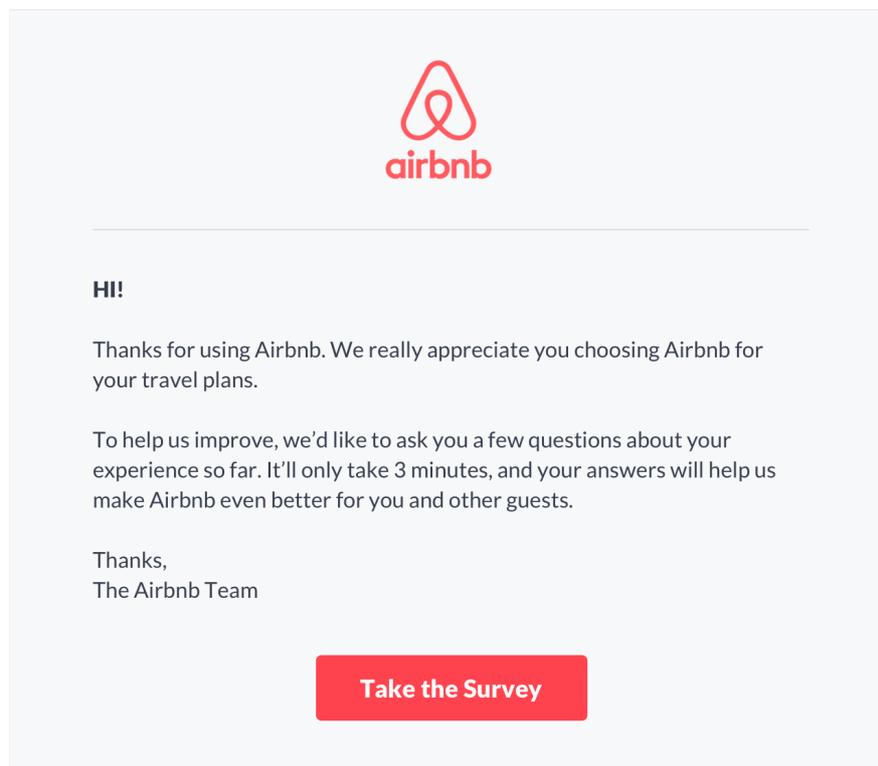


Notice that Airbnb used three components of a great survey invitation: their appreciation, the reasoning behind the survey, and expectations for the survey length.

# Wrapping up

When preparing your survey, you need to have a clear objective, a hypothesis, and an easy way to analyze the results. Based on these components, you should set up audience targeting and choose the channels to promote your survey.

Also, make sure you let users know what you're going to do with the data they submit through the survey form. Are you going to store it? Are you planning to use it for business intelligence purposes? In the age of GDPR, full disclosure is an obligation you just can't ignore.

Finally, if you're looking for a tool to survey your website visitors, try Getsitecontrol. It's a no-code online form builder that comes with lots of survey templates and requires zero technical skills. Getsitecontrol allows you to capture respondents' email addresses and deliver incentives via autoresponder. You can give it a free spin to see how it works for your business.

Sam O'Brien is the Senior Website Optimisation & User Experience Manager for EMEA at RingCentral, a Global VoIP, video conferencing and video conferencing solutions provider. Sam has a passion for innovation and loves exploring ways to collaborate more with dispersed teams.

You're reading Getsitecontrol blog where marketing experts share proven tactics to grow your online business. This article is a part of Customer engagement section.