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Customer Surveys That Engage



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Successful businesses are driven by customer satisfaction. Happy customers keep buying, and become your evangelists. It is that simple. What isn't so simple is finding out what customers want or need, and how your business, product or service can help them.

It is important to conduct surveys throughout the entire lifecycle of your business - so you can refine your marketing and product strategies and improve customer experience and satisfaction.

So what drives a great survey? So here are our top 10 tips for developing a winning Customer Survey.



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1) Define your (single) objective. What are you hoping to understand from your customers at this point in time? Did you just release a new product? Is the survey for a recent transaction experience?

If you focus on a single objective for your survey, you have a better chance of receiving the feedback you need. Write down in one to two sentences what you hope to achieve from your survey.

2) Keep it short and simple. When have you ever been excited about answering a survey? Especially if it is more than a few minutes in length. It is better to have multiple short surveys spread over a short period of time, than one lengthy survey that has high abandon rates.

Keep the questions short and simple as well. If you have to use a lot of words to ask the question, then you're either potentially leading the customer, or you haven't defined your objective well enough.



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3) Create clear, smart questions.

- a. Revisit the objective often when creating your questions to make sure they will meet the objective of your survey.
- b. Keep your opinions to yourself - don't lead the audience. You may get the results you'd like, but they may not be the true opinions of the audience.
- c. Start with brief questions (try simple 'yes/no' questions) to get the audience comfortable with the survey, and then include a couple of open-ended questions that encourage longer responses at the end.
- d. One question topic per question! Don't ask - "How did you find us? Do you know what we do? Why? Or Why not?" all in one survey question. It is overwhelming and abandon rates will be high! You may also have a hard time deciphering the responses to determine which answer goes with which question.
- e. Don't be too vague. Ask questions that are a lot more specific. For example: "Do you regularly buy dog supplies online?". This is quite vague. But asking "Do you buy dog supplies from XYZ online store once a month" is more specific and will garner you better data to work with.
- f. Stick with one or two question types per survey. You can include comment boxes, sliding scales, drop down menus, radio button selection lists... Pick one or two so your survey looks clean and simple.



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4) Keep your jargon to yourself. Most of us have words and acronyms related to our specific business or industry that we use frequently in the office and amongst colleagues. Your customers aren't likely to know or understand your jargon. Keep it out of your surveys to yield higher response rates.

5) Encourage detailed feedback. If there is something specific you want to focus on – perhaps a business problem, or an issue that has been identified – ask your audience an open question and then ask them specifically for specific, detailed feedback. If you don't, they're likely to keep their responses short. For example: "How do you feel about our onboarding process? Feel free to provide detailed feedback!"

6) Great subject lines make for higher open rates. This is your first hurdle in garnering responses to your survey, so make it good! Use active language and be concise. Appeal to the human desire to help. Even include the approximate amount of time you're asking them to commit to. A few examples: "We need your help. Take our 2-minute survey". "We need your feedback. Have 3 minutes?"



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7) Create your invitation. The body of your email should be an invitation to take the survey. It should be friendly and appealing, but simple and to the point.

a. Headline. in a quick one-liner, what is your email about?

- i. "Help us help you"
- ii. "Can we ask you something..."
- iii. "We're all ears and listening"
- iv. "We're eager to know what you think about us".

b. Body

- i. Greeting. Should be warm and fuzzy... "Thank you and we appreciate you."
- ii. Explain briefly who and what the survey is for. For example "To help us improve our service".
- iii. Time it will take to complete the survey. Don't forget this. It is the second most important part of your survey! "It will only take 3 minutes".
- iv. Incentive (if you can offer one). Offer cash or gift card reward, prizes etc.
- v. Close. "Thank you" or a signature line will suffice.

c. Call to action. Create a call to action button with text, like "Take the survey" linking to your survey page. Good call to action button colors are red or orange.



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8) Create your list. A lot of people will send their survey to everyone on their email list. Sometimes that will be fine - but make sure your questions are tailored to that broad an audience. It is better to segment your list and narrow the focus of your survey so you receive the most relevant responses.

9) Review and test. If possible, have a colleague review your email and go through the process of taking the survey to see if the copy makes sense, and the links work. Do a final copy review one more time.

10) Schedule your email. Timing is everything. There are nuances on this by industry, and the type of survey you're sending out (consumer versus B2B), however most studies show that sending out surveys on Mondays, Fridays and Sundays yield higher open rates and click through rates.



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11) Set up a reminder. A few days after you send out the original survey email, consider sending out a reminder to those who haven't responded. If you are able to remove responders from your list, then do.

12) Collect and analyze responses. If you have focused on your objective, left out any leading questions, kept it simple, and crafted a welcoming invitation to your respondents, the survey results should start coming in. Take the time to analyze the data, and use it to help to make informed business and marketing decisions.

Survey Making Tools:

Survey Monkey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

Constant Contact: <https://www.constantcontact.com>

Typeform: <https://www.typeform.com>

Facebook (survey your fans): <https://www.facebook.com/>

About the Author:

Sonya Ross is a marketing strategist, with 20 years experience leading product and marketing strategies and teams in a variety of industries.

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