

How to Keep Respondents Engaged



Keeping respondents engaged and active while taking surveys or participating in discussions is one of the most important steps towards quality data for researchers; yet few remember to keep it in mind throughout the research process. But respondents aren't born disengaged. And it's up to the researchers to make sure they don't become that way throughout every step of the research process.

Choose the Right Respondents

Starting with a general population sample is okay, but it's good to have respondents who make sense with the objectives and the topic of the research. For example, if the research is on a specific brand's messaging, having respondents who are aware of or more familiar with the brand can help target respondents who are more likely to want to share feedback. Other examples to hone the sample to a more engaged audience, depending on the research, include targeting based on more frequent product usage, brand awareness, and brand non-rejectors.

Warning Signs They Aren't Engaged



- The average time spent taking the survey isn't as long as anticipated
- Open-ends are short and emotionally detached
- The data or respondent level data is contradictory

What Disengaged Respondents Can Cause



- **Poor data quality**
- **Lack of confidence in market research (for both the researcher and stakeholders)**
- **Waste of time and money if research has to be repeated**



Craft an Engaging Questionnaire

Whether it be for quantitative or qualitative research, a well thought out questionnaire can be very impactful to keeping respondents engaged. A strong and engaging questionnaire should

- Define the purpose and timing of the survey or discussion to respondents
- Limit the number of concepts
- Limit the number of more complex questions (i.e., grids, ranking, etc.)
- Keep it short in quantity of questions
- Keep it simple in language

For example, for most studies we recommend no more than 4 concepts tested per respondent, a maximum of 20 questions in a quantitative study and 12 per day in a qualitative study, and a length-of-interview time between 5 to 15 minutes.

Set the Right Technology Parameters in Place

Specific to the online market research environment, setting the right technology could apply to a variety of things from making sure the respondents have a good internet connection to making sure image resolution is clear. However, it also applies to the specific program or tools used to actually conduct the research, and may require a little back-end work:

- Set timing restrictions to automatically disqualify speeders
- Incorporate transitional language and callouts to keep respondents attentive
- Include progress bars when applicable
- Set frameworks in place to remove respondents who are only providing bottom-box or top-box answers
- When in doubt, use human monitoring to actively check open-ends and respondent level data to make sure answers are applicable



Not only do these parameters help to keep respondents engaged...

they also **increase efficiencies** by removing the low quality respondents without any effort on the part of the researcher.

To learn more about how to keep respondents engaged, check out our other eGuide,

How to Use Projective Techniques

This eGuide provides more detailed tactics on question design that can improve respondent engagement, creativity, and expression.