

6 Ways to Combat Survey Fatigue and Supercharge Your CX Initiative

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Any firm that embarks on a CX (or “client experience”) initiative knows that means asking their clients for feedback. These days, that feedback method is usually a digital survey, sent to clients via email, asking for quantitative and qualitative feedback on the experience they’ve had with your firm.

The benefits of implementing a digital survey are immense. A well-designed digital survey provides access to client feedback in real-time, makes responses easy to search, segment, and filter, allows you to integrate client feedback data with your CRM, ATS, or other important client database, and sets the stage for a scalable CX initiative that grows with your organization and team.

As more businesses implement CX initiatives and digital surveys, clients are, in-kind, being asked for feedback more frequently by the brands and service providers they work with. I’ve heard from many business and service leaders who are concerned about clients expressing overwhelm with the amount of feedback they’re being asked for. This phenomenon is known as “survey fatigue,” and it can dramatically impact [survey response rate](#) as well as general client sentiment as it relates to your CX initiative.

What can your firm do about survey fatigue?

Survey fatigue is real. Your clients are experiencing a deluge of demands on their time, and everyone from their dentist to their coffee shop to their software provider are asking for feedback, and they’re asking often. Your firm is just one more drop in the bucket of feedback requests.

When faced with survey fatigue, it’s easy to become discouraged, to think about surveying less or not at all. But, as any firm embarking on a CX initiative knows, asking for and responding to client feedback *matters*. We know that [client satisfaction is tightly correlated to survey frequency](#)—and that if the goal is truly to improve the client experience, that surveys must maintain their seat at the center of the strategy.

6 Strategies for Combating Survey Fatigue

We have found a few key strategies that, when integrated into a CX initiative, can help boost client engagement with your survey initiative and keep response rates high for the long run:

1. **Personalize the ask.** In their simplest form, surveys can feel wildly impersonal. Some might see this as a benefit but, in reality, an impersonal ask for feedback is a one-way ticket to low response rates.

At ClearlyRated we find that the more personal the ask, the more likely a client is to take the time to provide feedback. We encourage firms to send survey invitation emails from an actual human (rather than a generic inbox) and to have relationship owners sending supplemental emails and making phone calls to encourage their clients to respond to the survey. Not only does the personal touch make it more likely that clients will respond, but it will begin to demonstrate the import of their feedback to your business.

- 2. Follow up on responses.** Regardless of how a client responds to your survey, hearing back about their response goes a long way to keeping them engaged in the survey process. It's critical to follow up with any unhappy clients (once you've identified a service issue the speed and [caliber of your response](#) are critical to retaining that account), but even clients who are "fine" or "happy" deserve to know that you have received and processed their feedback. This can be as simple as bringing up a client's response on your next account call with them, taking time to thank them for their feedback, and using their feedback to guide the conversation about how you can create a remarkable experience for them going forward.
- 3. Communicate about results to your entire client-base.** Your clients deserve to know what you learned from your survey, and what actions you plan to take based on it. Whether they participated in the survey or not, [being privy to the findings and next steps](#) will help your clients feel included and make it more likely that they will take time to respond to future surveys.
- 4. Keep the questionnaire short.** Perhaps the simplest strategy (but the most difficult to stay disciplined on) is survey length. We've tested all manner of surveys, and have found that no more than 10 questions (ideally fewer!) maximizes response rate. What's more, most of those questions should be multiple choice, so that the total time burden of the survey stays small. Be sure to let clients know that it's a brief survey when you send your survey invitations!
- 5. Provide opportunities for clients to recognize star performers.** Clients who feel supported by your team will want to seize every opportunity to recognize the folks who have gone above and beyond for them. Providing [an avenue for clients to formally recognize service superstars on your team](#) will give them one more reason to prioritize your survey over the many other feedback requests that they receive every day.
- 6. Offer an incentive.** A final tactic to increase survey response rate is to offer an incentive. You may have seen this idea applied through a "drawing" for some type of monetary value. For example, survey respondents are entered into a drawing for a gift card (we commonly see \$150 or \$200 values used in this incentive). Another route, which some of our professional service providers have seen success with, is to make a monetary donation on behalf of all respondents. For example, your firm could donate \$2 (or other sum) to a community organization or non-profit for every client who completes the survey. This route provides the benefit of clients feeling a direct impact based on their action, and provides another talking point (sharing the total donation made) when your team follows up with their clients about their survey response and findings. It's important to note that, to the greatest extent possible, the incentive should be tailored to match the interests and motivations of your clients. Be sure to mention any survey incentives at the time of the ask (for example, in the email where you ask clients to participate in the survey) and also within any additional communications to support the survey program.

Set Your Survey Apart, Supercharge Your CX Initiative

Implementing the steps above will demonstrate to clients that their feedback is an integral component of your business strategy, and that the time and energy they spend to complete your survey will fuel continuous improvement in the service you deliver and the experience they have with your firm. Once clients understand that your survey is more than “just another survey,” they’ll feel invested in the process and help to fuel the insights and improvements that your CX program is designed to deliver.

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