



Response Rates

What is good? What is too high? What is robust?

Response Rates

Response rates can tell you a great deal about the power of your survey data.

Response rates can help you answer questions like:

- Did employees see the survey as a helpful option to share their voice/perspective?
- Did we communicate effectively about the survey and make it accessible enough for all/most employees to be included?
- Did managers and leaders effectively encourage/support employees to participate in the survey?
- Did the survey design enable easy and meaningful participation from respondents?
- Can I trust my data; is it statistically significant?
- Can I extrapolate these results to represent my company and/or groups even if I didn't have 100% participation?

Perceptyx clients average 79% response to census surveys. Below are response rate rules of thumb for answering these common questions for an employee census survey:

Response Rate	Insights
85% to 100%	Nearly everyone took the survey. This is likely due to one of the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly compliant workforce (told to take a survey, so they take the survey)• Mature survey culture (at this point they are familiar with the process to participate in the survey, obstacles to participation are removed, employees believe action will be taken based on their feedback)• In rare cases, response rates are “too high” for the population, meaning we suspect foul play (managers coercing participation to meet certain targets)
66% to 85%	Enough participants to be confident that the results represent the views of the broader population (for most group sizes), and indicative of sound survey administration practices. There is likely differentiation among groups where there is higher or lower participation, telling us where improvement is needed based on the above or below guidance.
50% to 65%	Majority of employees took the survey. Results are likely significant so we can trust the data represent the views of the broader population (with large groups), but there is still much room for improvement to encourage and enable employees to participate.
Below 50%	Less than half of employees participated. It is likely that one or more of the following was a factor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distrust or weariness in the survey process• Unavailable/discouraged from taking the survey (too busy, not aware)• Survey topics felt irrelevant/unhelpful• Survey administration was not long enough• Do not believe action will come from feedback provided

Other Considerations

Response rates (RR) for other types of surveys:

- **Pulse surveys** (Perceptyx Client Average 68% RR) – typically lower response rates as they have a narrower focus and are done more frequently. It is less of a “grand event” and may not receive as much attention.
- **Onboarding surveys** (Perceptyx Client Average 46% RR) – Varied response rates result from unique onboarding processes. High response rates come from the belief that opinions are valued and employees’ desire to comply and please. If they are low, it is likely evidence of employees being pre-occupied with onboarding activities or managers not encouraging participation.
- **Exit surveys** (Perceptyx Client Average 47% RR) – If administered BEFORE employees exit (in last 2 weeks), response rates are higher (50% or more). If administered AFTER their last day, expect very low participation (20%-30%). This is still very valuable information as past employees are likely to be very truthful and can reveal push/pull factors for turnover.

Response rates for other types of companies:

- Smaller companies may have higher response rates (similar for smaller teams) as communication is likely more fluid in that environment and the survey is an extension of closer-knit communication channels.
- Companies in certain industries and working environments will likely have different rates as well. For example, industries where most workers do not have personal access to a computer or time during the workday to complete surveys are likely to have lower rates (manufacturing, logistics, retail) compared to industries where people work more autonomously and have regular access to computers (tech, finance).
- Culture can also play a role in response rates. Compliant cultures (Asia, for example) may have higher response rates than less compliant cultures.