

Unboxing Must-Have Marketing Campaigns: Survey & Feedback



When marketers are asked to provide feedback or take a survey via email, many of us feel compelled to do it.

Why?

Because we've been on the other end, hoping and praying for data to move forward on a difficult decision.

Unfortunately, survey design isn't as easy as it sounds...and writing a compelling message to convince people to take the survey is even more difficult.

Luckily, we have some ideas to help you, the brand marketer, succeed when it comes to sending and designing a high-converting customer feedback survey.

But before we begin, let's talk about why businesses should ask for feedback in the first place.

The #1 question companies (almost always) forget to ask about surveys

Thanks to the popularity of reviews on Amazon, Yelp and the like, the opportunity to receive immediate feedback on your brand's products or services is too good to pass up.

Instead of waiting for weeks or months to conduct a panel or focus group, companies can immediately find out what went well and what could be improved. Then they can use that information to target new customer segments or fine-tune their offerings.

In other words, they can get feedback straight from the customer's mouth themselves—otherwise known as [voice of customer \(VOC\) data](#).

But that's just the problem. Inexpensive survey tools like SurveyMonkey and Typeform have made it so easy for companies to execute their own market research via email that often, they forget to ask themselves the following question:

“Once we get this data, where is it going to go?”

It's too easy to get gung-ho about running a survey, hoard the data and never use or incorporate it into the customer lifecycle.

Not to mention, [consumers are inundated by surveys right now](#), so it's getting harder to send emails that stand out from the crowd—let alone convince people to do the work of sharing their experience.

Luckily, there's a path forward. We can share with you three essential ingredients you need before you create a survey/feedback campaign.

3 Essential Ingredients of a Survey/Feedback Email Campaign

1. A Question to Answer

We mentioned above that survey and feedback campaigns can be a way to get customer data to move forward on a decision.

However, those decisions are motivated by something much bigger: preventing negative customer backlash.

No company wants to make a decision that hurts their revenue or spend resources producing something that customers don't value or need.

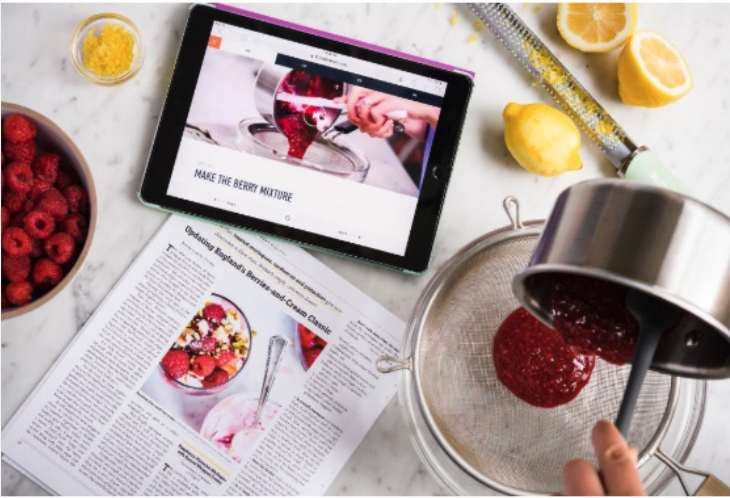
So whenever you do a survey/feedback campaign, the first thing you should ask yourself should be, “What question are you trying to answer?”

Surveys don't always need to be multiple questions with a graduate-level analysis.

It can be as simple as one question to break a tie or gauge how effective a company process is.

So, for example, if you're a [publisher like Milk Street Kitchen](#) and trying to figure out which photo to use on the cover of a special issue, you can run a quick survey to your list.

CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL'S
MILK STREET



We Want Your Feedback!

Dear Milk Streeter,

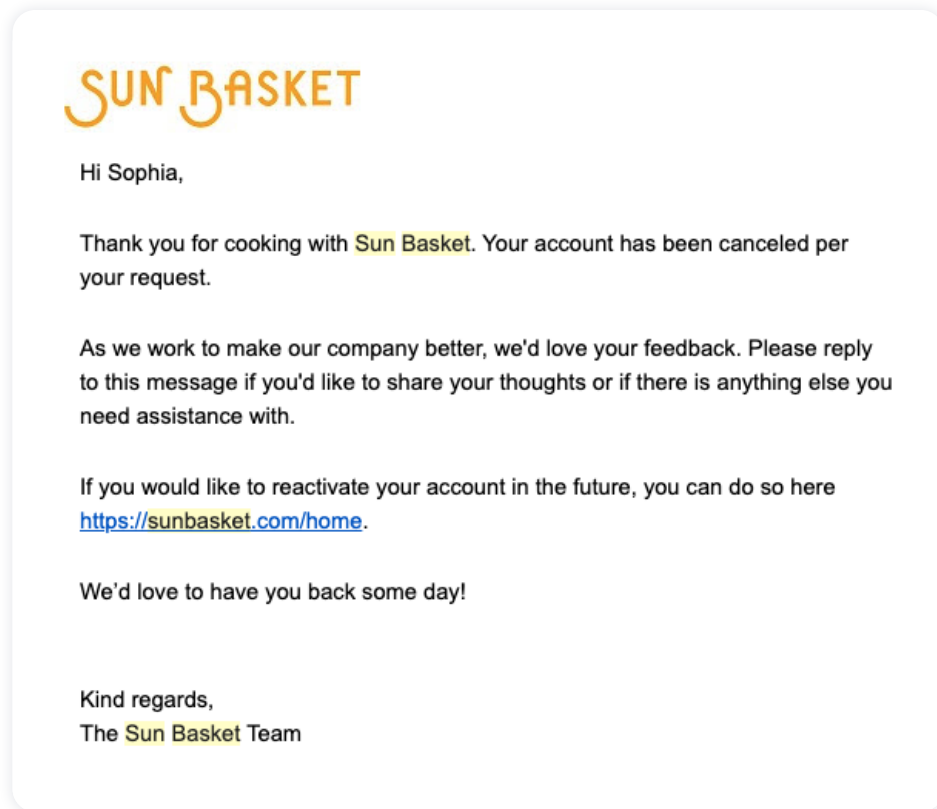
If you have just a minute to spare, we'd appreciate your input. Our magazine team is finalizing the cover for an upcoming special issue, and we'd love your feedback.

Simply click the link below and choose your favorite cover. Your vote counts!

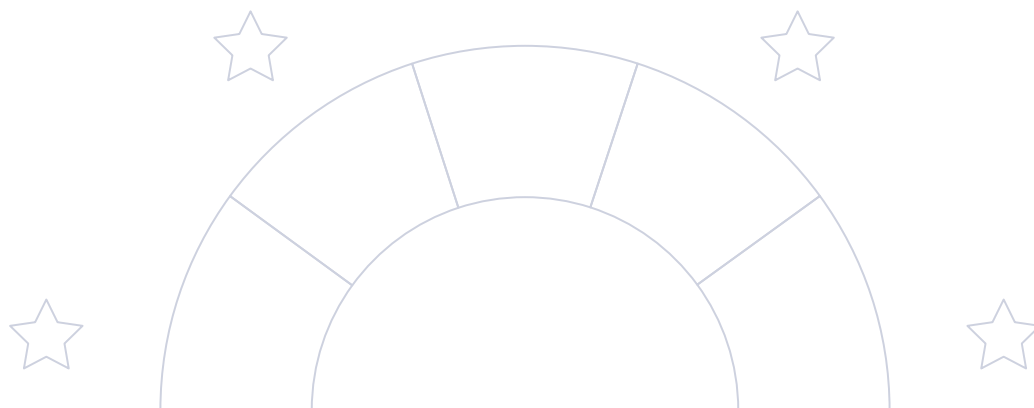
VOTE NOW

Publisher Milk Street Kitchen uses email to distribute a quick survey on the cover photo of an upcoming issue.

Or maybe you work for a subscription company and want to know why people cancel, like meal kit subscription service Sun Basket does. They automate a transactional email to those who discontinue service, by simply asking for replies in the body text of the message.



Meal kit subscription service Sun Basket asks for feedback from cancelling customers.



Another way to automate feedback via email is incorporating it into your help desk software, like [e-commerce site Food52](#) did. Doing this can help you answer questions, like which support agents have more satisfied customers than others, what types of issues do customers contact support about and more.

Regardless of how you initiate the survey, asking for feedback or running a survey always starts with a question your team wants to answer.

Hello Sophia,

We'd love to hear what you think of our customer service. Please take a moment to answer one simple question by clicking either link below:

How would you rate the support you received?

[Good, I'm satisfied](#)

[Bad, I'm unsatisfied](#)

Here's a reminder of what your ticket was about:

Sophia

Aug 22, 12:50 PM EDT

Thank you so much! **Food52** is the best :)

E-commerce site Food52 sends emails to users after they contact customer support, asking whether they were satisfied with the level of service.



2. An Irresistible Offer

Even when you're thinking about surveys, you have to think about what's in the recipient's best interest.

And even though your survey only takes five minutes, it could be five minutes the recipient doesn't have to waste on you.

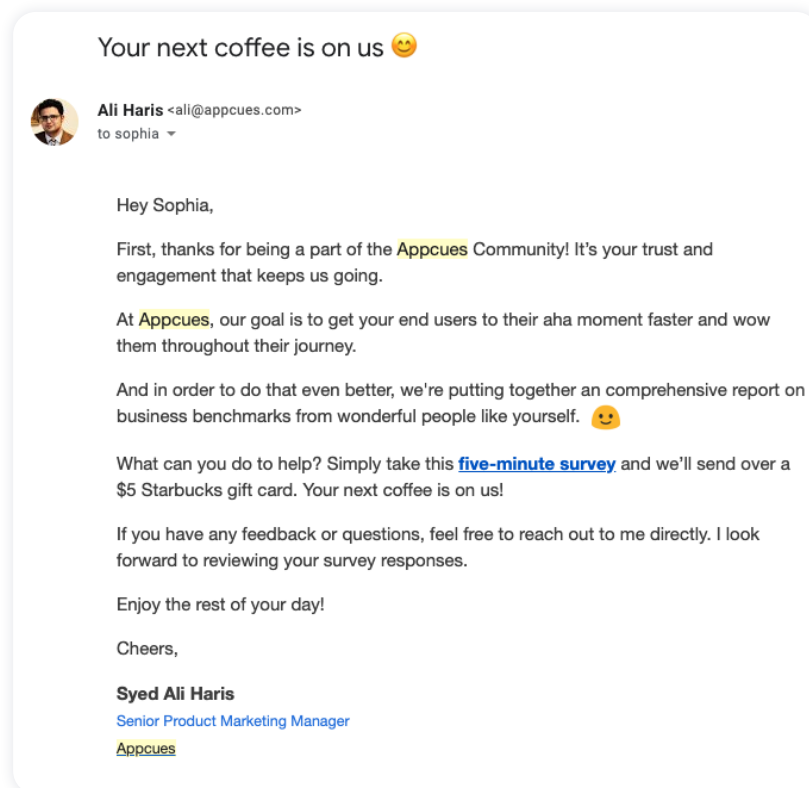
That's where an irresistible offer comes in.

Offering compensation in exchange for your opinion has long been a practice in market research circles. The only difference now is that as a brand, you don't have to pay a firm to put together (and compensate) a panel of consumers.

You can do it yourself.

It doesn't have to be money per se, but it has to be in the interest of someone to spend the time to take your survey.

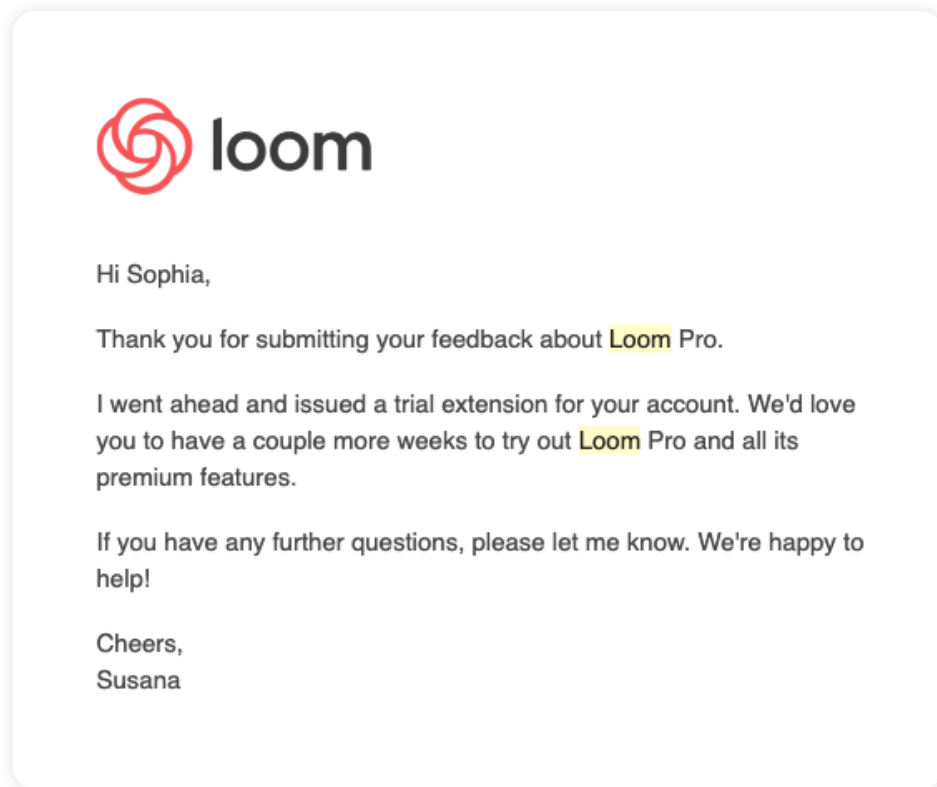
The most popular option for compensation in exchange for taking a survey is a gift card. See how [onboarding platform AppCues](#) used a Starbucks gift card (and an eye-catching subject line) to get survey responses.



Onboarding platform Appcues offers Starbucks gift cards to anyone willing to take their survey.

Of course, it doesn't always have to be money for coffee. If you already know you have an engaged list of customers, you can give them a voucher for your service.

For example, if you are a freemium software company like [video collaboration tool Loom](#) is, you can offer a trial of your paid plan.



Video collaboration tool Loom offers trials of their paid plan as a thank you to users who gave feedback.



Or if you're selling high-ticket items like furniture, you can offer coupons for future purchases, like [Design Within Reach](#) does.

Irresistible offers aren't always a surefire way to get a good sample size though—the wrong type of compensation can lead to a **voluntary response bias**, where your sample size consists of people only interested in taking advantage of an offer over providing insightful feedback.

If you offered Starbucks gift cards as an incentive, then you might leave out people who didn't like Starbucks in your data...and they might have different things to say than the people who like Starbucks (and want a free coffee).

It sounds nitpicky, but it's always something to consider when you're doing research. Whatever gift you choose, make sure to offer something enticing enough to get a good sample size without compromising the integrity of the data.



Furniture company Design Within Reach gives out coupons on future purchases as a thank you to survey takers.

3. Something to Measure

Not all survey campaigns ask for freeform text as feedback.

When your question needs data that only hard numbers can provide, this is when you bust out questions that have your respondents ranking how they feel on a scale of sorts.

There are many ways to do this, but the two most commonly used by growth-driven consumer brands include Net Promoter Score and Likert scale.

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

The first is the **Net Promoter Score** (NPS). Developed by [consulting firm Bain & Co](#), the general idea is that happy customers recommend brands to their friends and colleagues.

Respondents respond on a scale of 1-100 about their likeliness to make a recommendation, and the brand takes those scores and groups them into three different categories:

1. **Promoters (90-100)**: Loyal and enthusiastic fans. They love your product or service and spend all of their time telling their friends and colleagues.
2. **Passives (60-80)**: Satisfied (but not necessarily loyal) customers. They're happy but could be persuaded by cheaper prices or shiny features from a competitor.
3. **Detractors (0-60)**: Unhappy customers. They hate your product or service, will probably leave and have no issues telling their friends and colleagues why.

It's also easy to calculate—it's simply the percentage of promoters subtracted by the percentage of detractors.

The higher an NPS score is, the less likely your customers will churn on you.

You can see the usage of Net Promoter Score in practice in the body of an email template, like [food delivery service Goldbelly](#) does.



Food delivery service Goldbelly uses the above email to measure Net Promoter Score for first-time purchases.

Once respondents choose their number, they are taken to the landing page below and asked to write in why they chose that number.

Goldbelly knows that customers don't buy specialty foods every day, so they rely heavily on paid ads and [their referral program](#) to acquire new customers.

By using NPS, Goldbelly can quickly gauge how happy first-time purchasers are, tie it directly to [voice of customer \(VOC\) data](#), and open up possibilities for [referral email campaigns](#) later on.

Rate Your Order from Russ & Daughters

How likely is it that you would recommend Goldbelly to a friend or colleague?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not likely Very likely

What did you like about it?

What could have been better?

How was your overall experience with this order?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For respondents who want to give more feedback, Goldbelly offers options to write in additional comments using the above form.

Likert Scales

If you've ever taken a survey, you've done a Likert scale (also known as rating scales).

Named after American social scientist Rensis Likert, Likert scales ask respondents to rank their level of agreement on a series of statements provided by the brand.

This was a game-changer in the social science world.

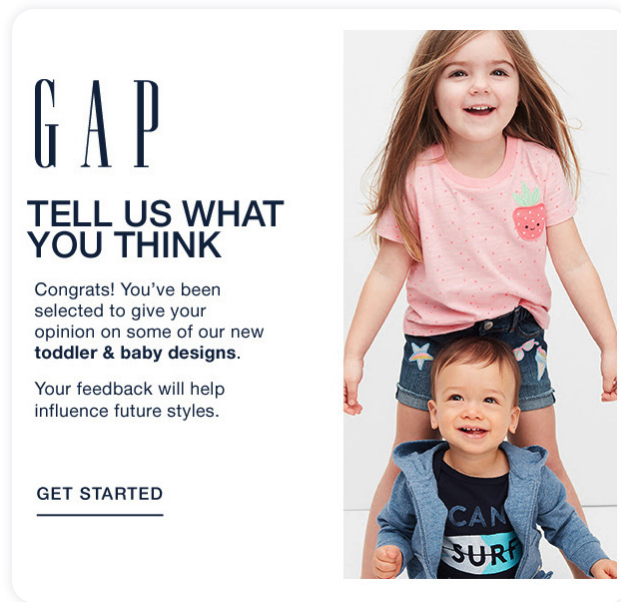
Why? Because now researchers could ask questions beyond a simple "Yes/No" question—and had more analytical substance than a blank text box.

So for instance, [clothing retailer Gap](#) once asked us to provide some feedback on new baby and toddler clothing designs.

Once we clicked on their link, they showed us a series of designs and asked us what price we'd be willing to pay, as well as whether we liked it, hated it, or felt neutral about it.

Thanks to a Likert scale survey, Gap can get direct feedback on designs that resonate with potential customers—and manufacture clothing in a much more efficient manner than before.

So whether you're using Likert scales or Net Promoter Scores, your team (and your C-suite) will appreciate numerical data as a result of running a survey; it makes things easier to measure than unstructured text data.



Gap wanted our opinion on new toddler and baby designs.



Gap uses a visual Likert scale to ask our opinion on prospective baby clothes designs.

Beyond Basics: 4 Advanced Tactics for Survey/Feedback Campaigns

Once you've mastered the basics of running a survey/feedback campaign using email, you can start to get creative with other messaging channels.

Here are a few ideas.

1. Text Messaging (SMS)

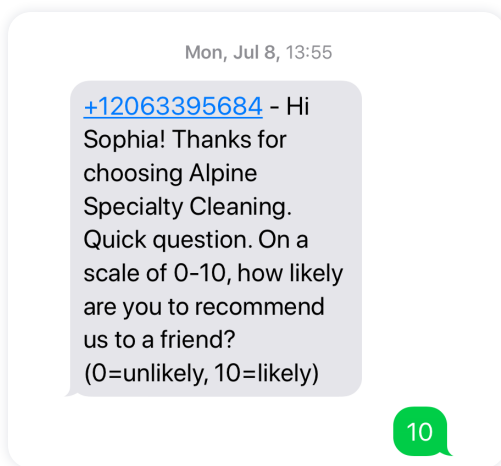
For service-based businesses, sending customers reminders and real-time updates via SMS is a no-brainer.

But did you know you could also send surveys using SMS as well?

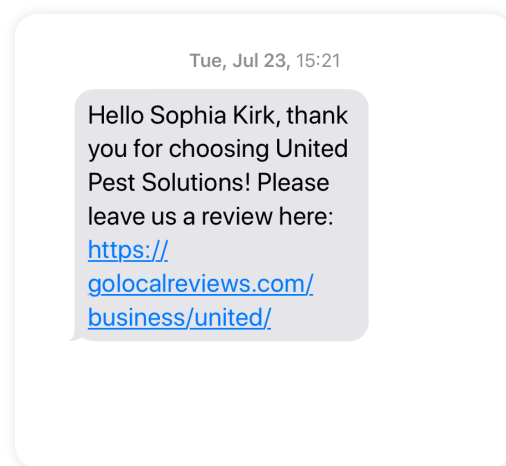
Because SMS has character limits, it's best to keep the message short and sweet—and provide an easy way to respond numerically.

Alpine Specialty Cleaning heavily relies on Net Promoter Score to gauge their customer satisfaction and asks for respondents to respond with a score from 1-10.

If a brand is looking for reviews, they can always do what this pest service company does and add a link to provide feedback.



Alpine Specialty Cleaning sent us an NPS survey via SMS after a carpet cleaning.

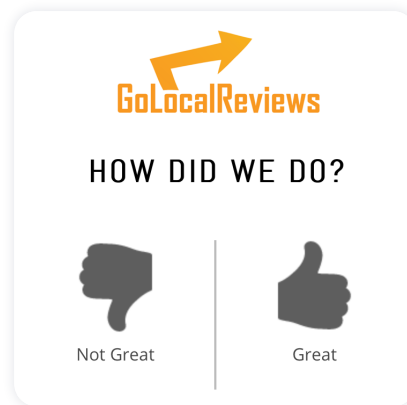


The text message United Pest Solutions sends asking for a review.

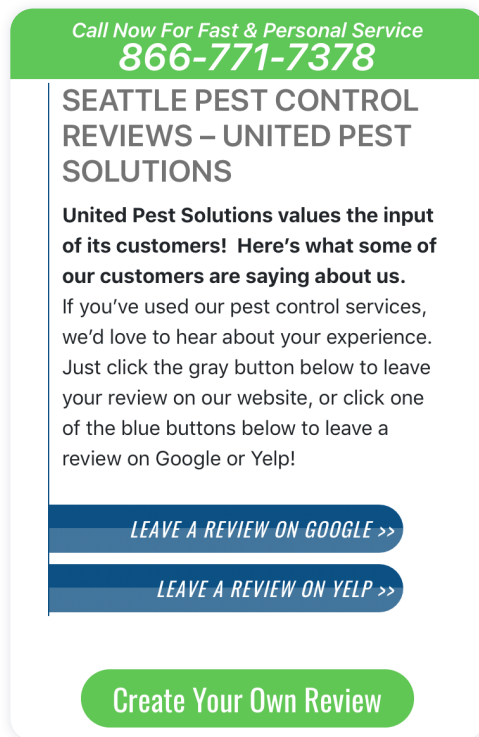
If you click Thumbs Up, you're prompted to leave a review either on Google, Yelp, or their own website.

But if you click Thumbs Down, you're rerouted to a feedback box to leave your input.

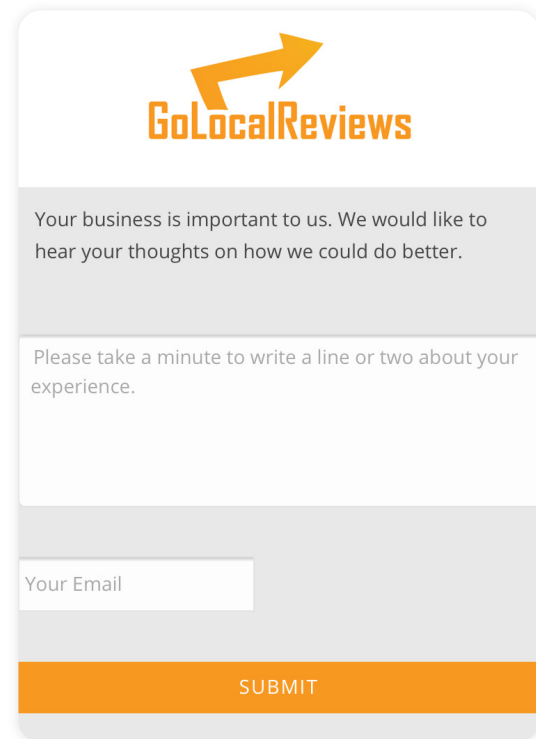
Respondents are on their mobile devices, so as a general rule of thumb, it's best to stick with simple questions like "Yes/No" or numerical ratings like NPS or Likert.



The hyperlink in the text message directs to the page above, asking, "How did we do?"



Clicking a "Thumbs Up" directs to a page on their website, prompting the customer to write a review on Google, Yelp, or their own website.



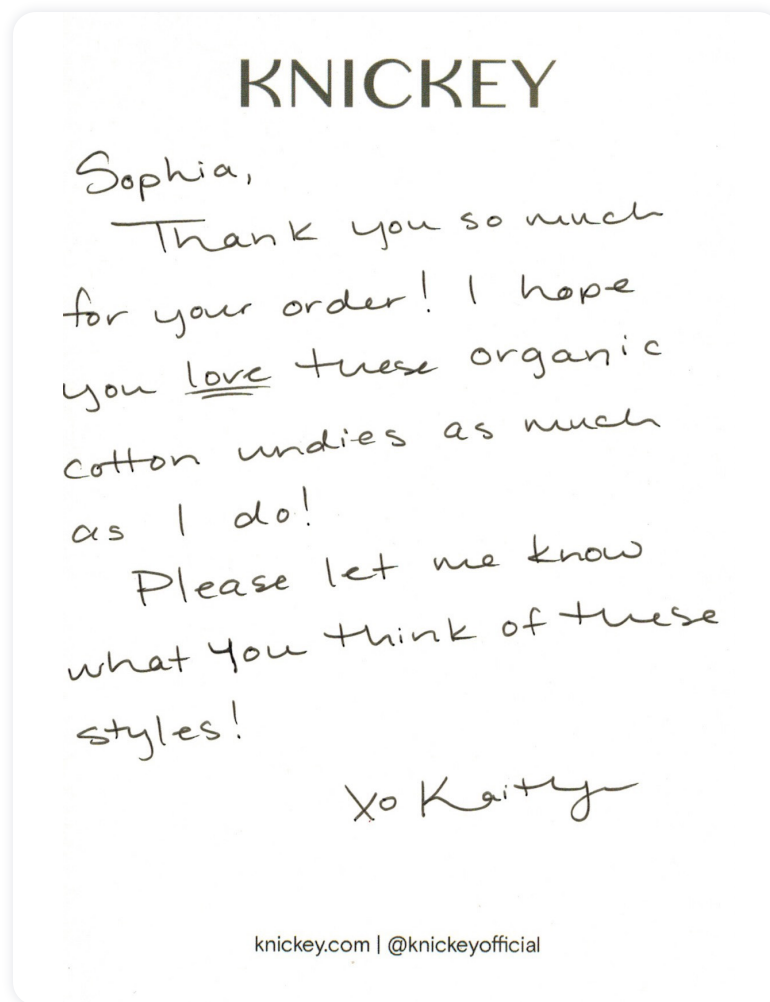
Clicking a "Thumbs Down" directs the customer to a page with a freeform text box to leave additional feedback.

2. Personalized Notes

For consumer brands that ship products, the unboxing experience is just as important as the online one.

While it seems easier to set up a survey or feedback campaign via email, sometimes a personalized note asking for feedback stands out.

If you're an up-and-coming brand like [organic lingerie manufacturer Knickey](#) is, a handwritten note asking for feedback is a nice touch.



The handwritten note organic lingerie manufacturer Knickey wrote and placed in our package order.

But if you're a more established brand, you can do more.

Take, for instance, [StitchFix](#), the online personal styling service that [went public in 2017](#).

A friend of the Iterable team tried it out the service six years ago when it was still a fledgling startup and was “not remotely impressed with their picks.” (Yup, she used those exact words.)

Thankfully, StitchFix didn't take it personally, but rather apologized and refunded her styling fee. Sophia never thought about using an online personal shopper again until she became a new mom and *desperately needed* some new threads.

She reordered a box and, to her surprise, the following message was included in her package.

Needless to say, Sophia was impressed they remembered her feedback from six years ago—and took the time to write her a personalized message saying so.

Your Style. Delivered.

Sophia Kirk

Sophia, I want to first apologize for the disappointment in your first Fix and that you were not heard. We truly value you as a client and want to earn your trust as your personal styling service. This month I've selected some pieces for your upcoming trip to the Oregon coast, two blouses that are nursing friendly and a pair of denim jeans to pair with them. A fun summer maxi dress (also nursing friendly) that you can pair with a cardigan or denim for cooler nights. Kindly, Liz

The personalized message that online personal styling service Stitch Fix wrote and placed in Sophia's package order.



3. Recognition & Rewards


[Great customer service goes hand-in-hand with marketing](#), so why not include it in your survey/ feedback campaigns?

[Thrive Market](#) takes the typical “How did we do?” email and personalizes it by adding information about the customer success agent, asks the customer to rate their level of service, and—wait for it—choose a reward.

This email accomplishes two things: 1) Gauges the success of the interaction with the customer and 2) Rewards their staff members for a job well done.

**THRIVE
- MARKET -**


You recently emailed with:



Stefanie
Pixley, California


I Thrive By: Getting my daily dose of proper nutrients.
Favorite Product: Thrive Market collagen peptides in my cup of coffee every morning!

Overall, how would you rate the email?




POOR EXCELLENT


If you think we should reward Stefanie for great service, simply select one of the options below...



Wine



Movie Tix



Spa Day

Submit

The email Thrive Market sends after customers speak with a customer success agent.

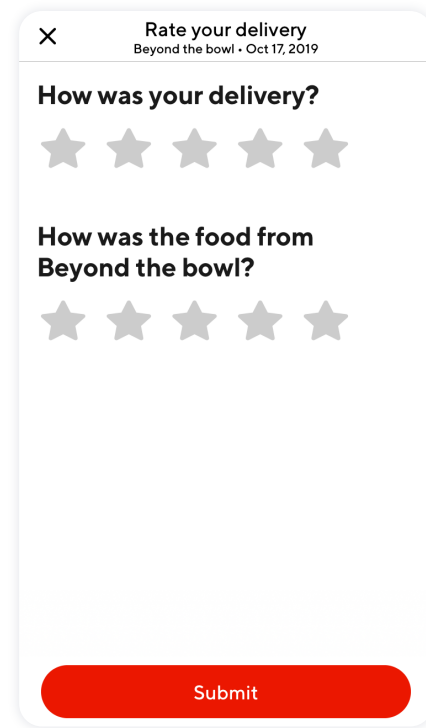
4. In-App Surveys & Notifications

Of course, if your product or service has a native mobile app, you can ask for feedback while users are inside.

Meal delivery service DoorDash directs users to a page to rank their delivery experience and food quality on a scale of 1-5 (as seen to the right).

But that's not all—don't forget about [in-app messaging capabilities](#). Online ticket exchange service StubHub uses in-app notifications (seen below) to ask users if they're enjoying the app and whether they're up for writing a review in the App Store.

Like text messaging (SMS), remember that respondents are on their mobile devices, so “Yes/No” or numerical questions like NPS and Likert are best when asking for feedback.



DoorDash uses a 5-star scale to rate food deliveries.



Online ticket exchange service StubHub utilizes in-app messaging to get feedback from users. Image credit: [RubyGarage](#)

Now, a Recap

Despite the problems associated with running surveys, they are still an incredibly valuable tool to help brand marketers make decisions.

If you're just getting started with survey/feedback campaigns, remember that you need these three essential ingredients for the best results:

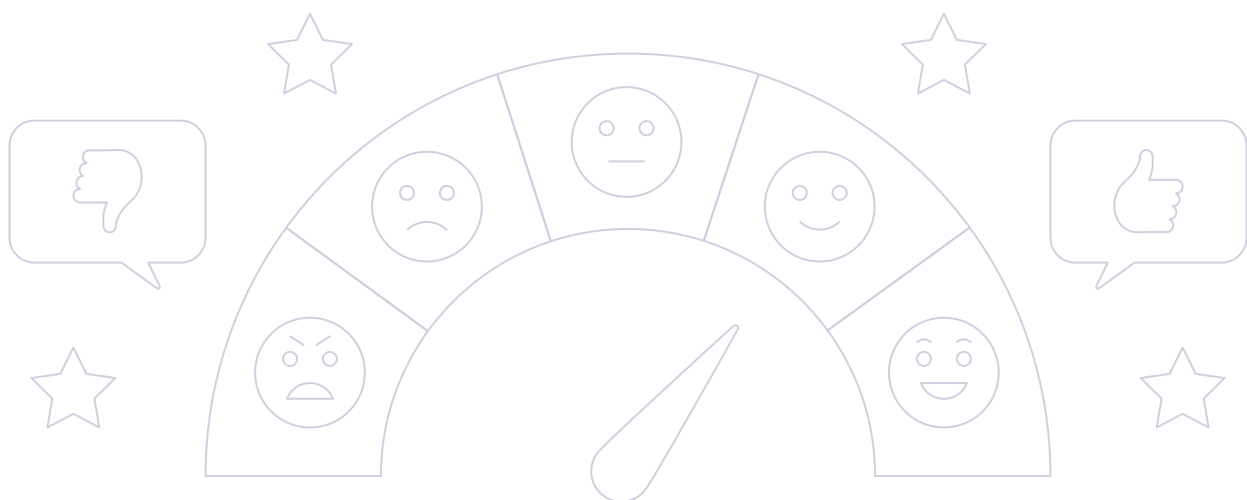
1. **A question to answer**
2. **An irresistible offer**
3. **Something to measure (either Net Promoter Score or Likert scales)**

Once you master the essentials, you can get creative with these four advanced tactics:

1. **Text messaging (SMS)**
2. **Personalized notes**
3. **Recognition & rewards**
4. **In-app surveys & notifications**

If you're looking for more inspiration, you can always check out the [survey/feedback section](#) from our friends at Really Good Emails.

Now that you're an expert on how to build a high-converting survey/feedback campaign, what are you going to do to stand out from the crowd?



About Iterable

Iterable is the growth marketing platform that enables brands to create, execute and optimize cross-channel campaigns with unparalleled data flexibility.

Leading brands, like Zillow, SeatGeek and Box, choose Iterable to power world-class customer engagement throughout the entire lifecycle.



Data Flexibility at Your Fingertips

Access real-time user, behavioral and event data to trigger personalized messaging at virtually unlimited scale. Support an audience of millions while appealing to each subscriber's unique preferences.



Unified Brand Experience

Orchestrate seamless customer engagement across email, mobile push, SMS, in-app, web push, direct mail and more throughout every lifecycle stage, from activation to re-engagement.



Agile Iteration & Optimization

Launch, measure and fine-tune campaigns with ease to deliver more relevant messaging faster than the competition. Experiment and iterate on-demand to determine the right content, channel and cadence for each user.



Customer Journey Mapping

Visualize the entire customer journey and build sophisticated, cross-channel segments and campaigns with Iterable's intuitive, drag-and-drop Workflow Studio.

If you want to learn more about Iterable, please request a demo:

[REQUEST DEMO](#)

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