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WHITEPAPER

4 Participant Boosters: A Guide to Better Research Outcomes





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4 Participant Engagement Boosters: A Guide to Better Research Outcomes



WITH DIRECT
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK!

Participant engagement is the cornerstone of effective qualitative research. However, too often, we find ourselves pushing against the tide when championing the importance of the research participant's experience. These experiences are too often ignored, leading to disengagement, frustration, and ultimately, leading to a compromised data quality.

In this guide, we'll be exploring four key 'booster' strategies to bump-up your participant engagement. Along the way, we'll highlight direct participant feedback and industry insights to illustrate the impact of a well-designed engagement strategy.



BOOSTER 1

A Frictionless Screening Process

Your participants first point of contact with your research study is the screening process. If this step is cumbersome, unclear, or even boring, it can lead to frustration and participant drop-off. It has to be something your participants want to take part in. Many participants have voiced concerns over tedious long screeners that end in eventual disqualification, making them feel like they wasted their time.

Best practices for effective screeners:

- Ensure early disqualification where necessary; let participants know as soon as possible if they do not qualify for a study. This saves their time and prevents frustration.
- Streamline and simplify the screener process; a well-designed screener should be concise, intuitive, and respectful of the participant's time. Reducing redundancy in questions and ensuring a smoother flow increases engagement and completion rates.
- Clearly outline your expectations when you send your study invitation; participants should be fully aware of any special requirements that might affect their experiences, such as pre-work, video recordings, or eligibility criteria info, before they even begin the screener. Transparency reduces the chance of participant drop-offs and ensures only truly interested and suitable participants proceed.

BOOSTER 1

A Frictionless Screening Process



DIRECT PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"I do like those screeners that once you're screened out it stops the survey versus continuing answering questions."

- Female, Age 35

"I'll say your screeners are pretty easy. You answer a few questions and you can automatically tell if you're chosen or not, because if you put one wrong answer, 'Boop!' it goes, 'Thank you', and just sends you on your way."

- Male, Age 26



BOOSTER 2

Financial Incentives and Beyond

There's no denying compensation is a key driver, but meaningful engagement goes beyond what can be measured monetarily. Participants want to feel that their opinions matter and that they are contributing to a cause larger than themselves.

What can we offer?

- Providing opportunities for participants to contribute to innovation; many participants enjoy knowing that they can help shape real products and services. When they see their feedback reflected in the future product being developed it reinforces their sense of value and encourages future contributions.
- Offering a variety of engaging research experiences; a mix of methodologies, including focus groups, in-depth interviews, product testing, and online communities, keeps research interesting and prevents participant fatigue. The more diverse the experience, the higher the likelihood of continued participation.
- Ensuring credibility and transparency in the research process; participants are more likely to engage with research firms they trust. Providing clear information about data usage, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining a professional but personal approach builds trust and brings about long-term working relationships.

BOOSTER 2

Financial Incentives and Beyond



DIRECT
PARTICIPANT
FEEDBACK

"I enjoy being part of the development process of the things that we're looking at and talking about and testing. ... And I feel like, you know, hopefully, some of the things that we all talk about do provide some value."

-Male, Age 41

"I don't think it should surprise anybody. I mean, the main reason would be for the remuneration, the compensation that you receive. That being said, I have had the opportunity to be part of some stuff that was interesting on its own merit."

- Male, Age 37

"I'll admit, sometimes I feel kind of cool, like my friends, they asked me, well, what did you recently do? So a while back ago, when I was able to talk about it, I said, 'Oh, I tried on new [redacted] diapers!' Like, I actually get to say if it worked or not worked for my daughter, and it makes me feel kind of set apart from other people."

- Female, Age 38



BOOSTER 3

Build Trust

Participants who feel valued and respected by your teams are more likely to return for future research projects. Creating a sense of overall belonging through trust, communication, and respect makes this happen.

Ways to build trust:

- Maintain consistent communication throughout the research process; keeping participants informed before, during, and after a study reassures them that their contributions are going somewhere. Regular updates on your next projects steps, payment timelines, and study results can massively improve trust and long-term participation.
 - Show participants how their insights make an impact; whenever feasible, share how their feedback is being engaged with through product or through service development. Knowing their input has led to real changes will enhance their sense of purpose and make them feel a part of something greater than themselves and get them in touch with the credibility of your work.
 - Respect participants' time and effort; avoid lengthy, repetitive questions and make the scheduling process as smooth as possible. Providing estimated completion times for screeners is important to allow participants to plan-out their routine accordingly.
- By fostering a community built on trust, participants feel more invested in the process, leading to higher retention rates and better insights.

BOOSTER 3

Build Trust



DIRECT
PARTICIPANT
FEEDBACK

"I've also had a positive experience. Communication leading up to the study is really good. They stay on topic - and everything is relevant, and you feel comfortable in the studies. You don't feel like you're out of place, or that you are pressured, or anything like that. And then, even after the study communication is still good up to receiving payment. And so, the entire process, you know what's going on. You know what's expected of you."

- Male, Age 27

"As I'm sharing with some other friends and family, I can tell they have that same hesitation – 'Is this a scam?' So, I think, coming directly from someone they trust: I don't want to refer someone to something that I don't trust."

- Female, Age 60



BOOSTER 4

Make It Fun!

Research should not feel like a chore. We should strive to make sure the process is as enjoyable as possible as this can significantly boost participation rates.

Strategies for a positive experience:

- Implement gamification and reward systems; introducing point-based rewards or incentives for research, even for those who do not technically qualify, this keeps participants motivated and engaged in the overall process.
 - Offer flexible participation options to accommodate different needs; providing both virtual and in-person research opportunities ensures greater accessibility and allows all participants to engage in ways that suit them best.
 - Leverage user-friendly digital tools to improve accessibility; a well-designed participant portal should allow for easy tracking of study invitations, payments, and upcoming opportunities. Making it simple to participate encourages long-term involvement.
- A well-thought-out participant journey makes research more enjoyable, ensuring long-term engagement and high-quality responses.

BOOSTER 4

Make it fun!



DIRECT
PARTICIPANT
FEEDBACK

"We had a homework assignment first of watching a news program, and then we got on the focus group and we're talking about it, and I honestly enjoyed that one because there were a lot of different opinions. Everybody wasn't agreeing, but nobody was arguing. So that's the other thing that I really like about it as well. You can really kind of feel free to like - you can be honest, and it doesn't offend anyone, and that's what I really like about it."

- Female, Age 40



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What Can We Take From This

Effective research relies on creating engagement in your participants. The success of qualitative research depends on engaged and motivated participants. By making sure we take the screening process seriously, understand real motivations, and build trust we can create a positive environment where participants are heard, feel respected, becoming eager to contribute.

What are we doing about it?

At L&E Research we have been providing sampling solutions for over 40 years and have recently launched CondUX, a ResTech technology division, aimed at automating and enhancing the research process. Our U.S panel consists of over 1.6 million consumers, patients, and healthcare professionals, with more than 90% of participants being ID-verified and reliably human-validated. Our service team boasts a 96% “highly recommend” feedback score after each project.

What can we take from this



DIRECT PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“There are a lot of scammy research participant ones where they pay you in points, and I feel like through L&E I was able to figure out what I should be looking out for in other databases. Because of that, I was able to look through other websites and figure out which ones were a good fit.”

- Female, Age 23

“You get emails, you get text messages, you get the occasional phone call with the reminder. I think the communication is excellent. I’ve never felt like I was left in limbo with an upcoming L&E study.”

- Male, Age 46

“Efficiency is a big thing with you [L&E] guys, making it very user-friendly to go from the email process to getting booked.”

- Female, Age 42

Let’s challenge the status quo and create a research environment where participants enjoy being part of the process!



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We bring companies and people together to talk.
That's the magic behind smarter decisions.

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