

## insights

# Why a sweepstakes could seriously boost your customer surveys

**“Excellent Shopping Trip? We Want to Hear From You”**  
**“Your Opinion Counts”**  
**“How Was Your Experience?”**  
**“We Listen to You”**  
**“Survey Sweepstakes”**

If you have visited a restaurant, hotel, department store, grocery store, or other retail business, you probably have seen messages like these on the back of the receipt you received for your purchase.

These are only a few of the titles of the growing number of surveys that appear on these receipts. In the past, companies seeking input from their customers tried to entice them with discounts or coupons for future purchases. But more recently, many have switched to offering sweepstakes as an incentive to customers to complete survey questions. And, because of the use of more valuable prizes, customers have flocked to these types of sweepstakes.

The reliance on sweepstakes to generate survey responses should come as no surprise. Most customers are not willing to spend the time it takes to answer survey questions unless they receive something in return. A customer may want to recognize a helpful employee, a delicious meal, or a new product, or express their complaints about a product or store. But typically a coupon or discount is not valuable enough for them to spend the time to complete a survey.

However, it does appear that the possibility of winning a prize from a sweepstakes will increase a customer’s participation. A friend recently told me that his ad agency prepared a survey with a coupon for 10% off a future purchase. The response to that survey was under 1%. A few months later, he prepared a survey that offered an opportunity to enter a sweepstakes with a \$500 prize, and the response was almost 15% – which he described as a remarkable increase.

Today’s survey sweepstakes offer a wide variety of prizes, but by far the most successful prizes are those that involve money. Similarly, many survey sweepstakes have increased participation by offering instant winners, daily drawings, and other means of selecting winners immediately.

Regardless of the value of the prizes or the manner in which the sweepstakes are structured or implemented, survey sweepstakes are still sweepstakes and all state and federal laws still apply. Specific state and federal requirements vary, but in general all sweepstakes should include:

1. Official rules
2. Abbreviated rules
3. Clear beginning and ending dates
4. Specific eligibility requirements to enter
5. Options to enter without having to complete the survey
6. Link to sponsor’s privacy policy
7. Winners list



If you are thinking about launching a survey sweepstakes, remember that state and federal regulations apply to these types of sweepstakes and you should contact an attorney who has experience with these requirements to help you make sure your promotion is in compliance.

*This post was written by retired Thompson Coburn partner Dale Joerling. If you have any questions about the topics discussed in this post, please contact Thompson Coburn partner [Hap Burke](#).*

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