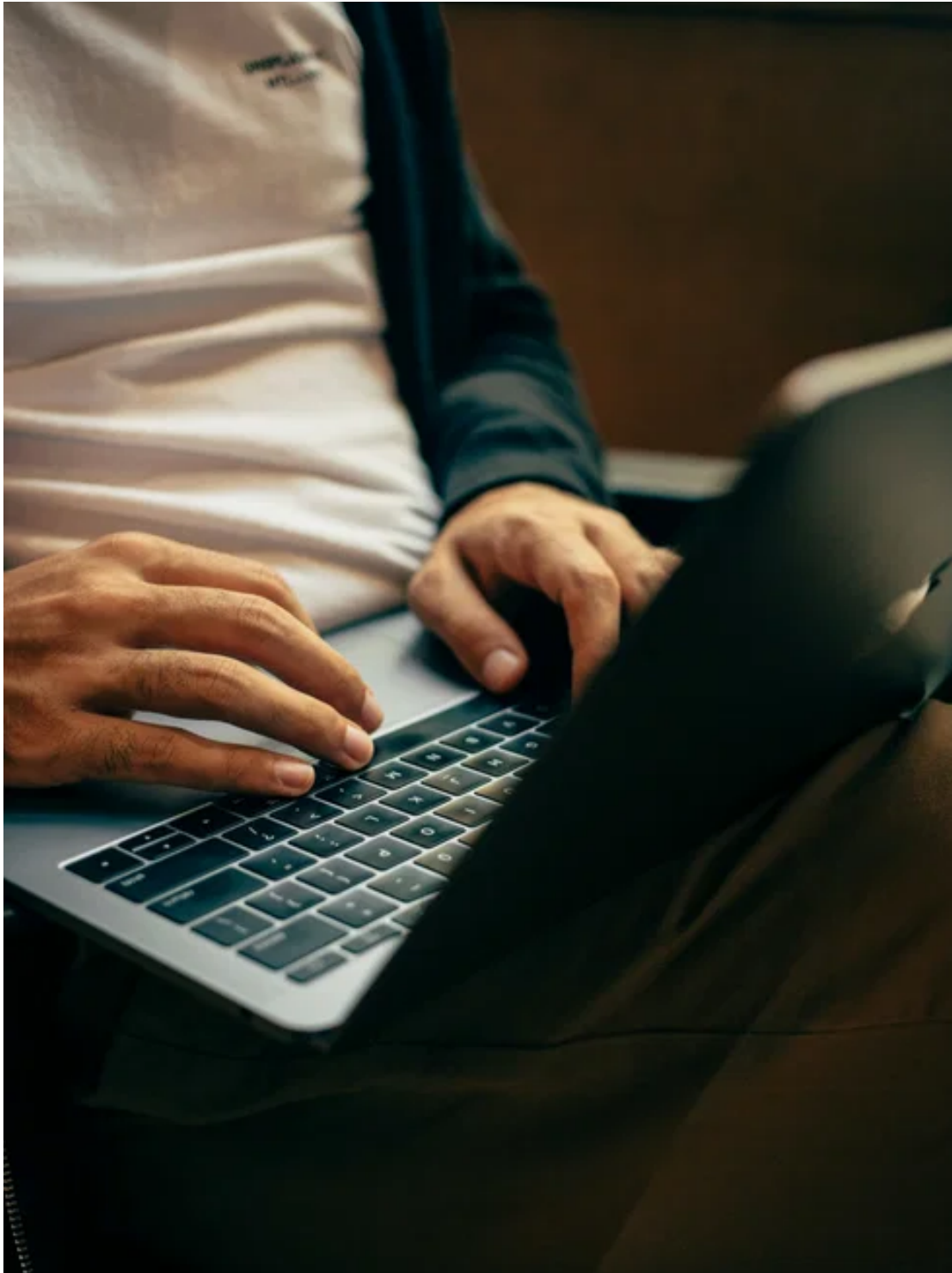


The Incentive Blind Spot

Research report by:
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Adrien Lopez Lanusse, Consumer Experience & Strategy Advisor, Giftbee





Agenda

What you will find inside:

- 1 . Rewards are the number #1 reason people participate in research.
- 2 . 2 in 3 panellists hit a reward failure last year, and most never told you.
- 3 . The fix is not always a bigger incentive. It is a better reward experience.
- 4 . Inside: a five-point checklist to pressure-test your own panel.



Incentives & rewards are the primary reasons people join market research studies.

But if the reward's a pain to redeem, your participants are less likely to come back.

The market research industry has made real progress on survey design, panel quality and data integrity. But the reward experience has been left behind. So, we asked participants for their views and experience with market research rewards. Their answers provide compelling direction for every researcher looking to attract and retain quality respondents.



About the study

Why we ran it?

This started in qualitative sessions. We kept hearing the same thing, unprompted: the reward was the reason people took part, and the reward was the part that let them down.

Our results found It does and it's bigger than we expected.

Fielded by Pureprofile, late 2025. This report presents our specific **Australian results**.

Who are we?



Mark Singer

Founder & CEO, Giftbee. Two decades launching and scaling multi-billion dollar gift card businesses for industry giants including Blackhawk and InComm Payments.



Adrien Lopez Lanusse

Consumer Experience & Strategy Advisor, Giftbee. ex VP Consumer Insights at Netflix, building its global insights function, following a decade as Group Lead and Partner at Cheskin Added Value (WPP) designing large-scale qual and quant programs.



The reward is the reason

We asked Australian participants why they take part in studies. One reason won by a mile.

Rewards are not a nice-to-have. They are the engine of survey participation. Enjoyment ranks a distant second at 17% of participants.

When participants weigh up whether to take part in research, the reward is the deciding factor not curiosity, not altruism.



57%

Rank reward as their number one reason for participating in research



71%

Rank reward first or second in their reasons for participating

#1

Rewards outrank enjoyment by a significant margin, making them the primary lever for participant engagement



This isn't curiosity. It's what sustains a panel.

61%

of respondents completed 10+ studies in the past year

78%

of respondents (roughly 4 in 5) had completed studies for two or more different companies

People give their time because they get something back, and for many, amid cost-of-living pressure, that reward genuinely matters. The participants doing the heavy lifting are committed regulars.





Finding two

The trust gap. The thing that matters most is the thing that most often goes wrong.

Confidence is low

Only 35% of respondents are very confident they received every reward promised to them in the past year.

Errors erode trust

38% have had to contact a research company about a missing or incorrect reward.

Every one of those conversations costs time on both sides and a little bit of trust.



Two-thirds hit a problem.

66% of respondents experienced at least one reward failure in the past year.

A further 22% had a reward expire before they could use it.

——→ These errors rarely arrive as a complaint.
They arrive as quiet churn.

66%

Experienced at least one reward failure in the past year

43%

Received a different reward from what they expected

36%

Lost track of a reward entirely



Managing rewards is a chore.

73% of respondents actively track rewards manually.

Screenshots, saved emails, printouts...



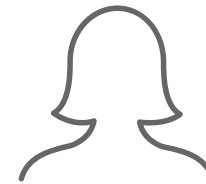
What frustrated participants most

Asked in their own words, participants pointed first to timeliness, how long a reward takes to arrive then to inflexible options and tracking problems.



“Can’t combine gift vouchers.”

Cam



“Having small left-overs in gift cards”

Francis



“Keeping track of them. It would be better if it was all in one place.”

Lee



When the reward becomes admin, it stops being a reward.

You'd expect the reward to be the easy part. But for too many participants, redeeming it lands in the too-hard basket.

33% save reward emails somewhere specific

28% take screenshots as a record

21% print rewards out for a physical reminder

24% can't easily check a gift card balance



73%

put active effort into keeping track of their rewards manually





Finding four

The biggest opportunity is with the people the industry most want.

Low study completion

18-34 year olds are half as likely as those 55+ to have completed 10 or more studies in the past year (35% vs 73%).

Yet they report more reward issues and less confidence they were paid correctly (68% vs 89%).

A critical future audience

The industry's future panel is the group having the worst reward experience today. They also show the strongest interest in tools to track and use their rewards a clear signal of unmet need.



Experience is just as important as the amount. Fix the journey, not the spend.

————> Key Insight

When engagement dips, the instinct is to raise the incentive. The data says the cheaper, more durable lever is the experience: visibility, flexibility and speed.

Raising spend every year is not sustainable. Fixing the experience is. Respondents told us better visibility and flexibility would make them do more research.



What participants want from a rewards platform.

Features that drive participation

One rewards dashboard

See all rewards received across studies in a single, unified place.

Combine rewards

Merge smaller gift cards into one larger card for easier, more meaningful spending.

Balance at a glance

View remaining balance and the date each reward was received in one quick look.

Gift a reward

Pass along a reward to a friend or loved one instead of keeping it yourself.

Swap for another brand

Exchange a gift card for a different brand to get more value from rewards received.

Respondents were asked to select up to three features that would make them most likely to participate in more studies.



The playbook.

Visibility, flexibility, consolidation & speed

01 Make every reward visible.

Balance, date received, redemption status all visible. If respondents keep paper logs, the platform has failed them. Visibility is the fastest trust repair available.

02 Make flexibility the default.

Swapping, combining and gifting are the top drivers of participation. Choice turns a payment into a reason to come back.

03 Measure the reward experience.

Redemption rate, time-to-reward and support contacts belong on the same dashboard as response rates. What isn't measured won't improve.

04 Recipients want speed.

Fast delivery of rewards in instants, not weeks. Any delay can quietly erode the value of the reward.



Checklist:

Ask yourself,
how do you
measure up?

Can respondents see rewards
in one place?

Unredeemed and forgotten rewards are
invisible churn drivers.

How fast does a reward arrive
after a study closes?

Delays were the number one unaided
frustration in this study.

Can respondents swap, split
or combine rewards? and give
to others?

Flexibility was the top feature respondents
said would increase participation.

How many support contacts
relate to missing rewards?

38% of respondents have chased one.
Each contact is measurable cost and trust
erosion.

Is redemption tracked? Who
owns the reward experience?

Breakage is spend that never
became engagement. Without a
clear owner, it stays in the blind spot.





Built for research incentives.

New to the market, built for research. Giftbee powers reward delivery for market research companies across Australia. Participants accept, swap, combine or regift their reward and research teams see full redemption.



A note on where Giftbee fits in...

Why Giftbee

We commissioned this study because we kept seeing the same problem and wanted to know how common it really was. That said. It's the problem Giftbee was built to solve.

Our platform lets participants accept, swap or regift their incentive and gives them the tools to see and manage rewards all in one place, rather than across multiple interfaces, inboxes and apps.

The bigger problems stands whether or not your with Giftbee. The reward experience is an understudied space and the industry has room to do much better.





“Giftbee is shaking up an industry built on breakage.

Their UX is designed to eliminate lost value, and the integration was seamless, so we can focus on what matters: our clients and the quality and engagement of our panel.”

Lorrie Yeung, PureProfile
Global Head of Operations





Sweet rewards & incentives. Given simply.

Trusted by leading Australian organisations



Thank you.

The reward experience is the industry's biggest untapped lever.

To learn more on how to sweeten your rewards program:

Talk to us: mark@giftbee.com

giftbee.com

