

An overhead view of four business professionals in an office setting, gathered around a table. They are looking at documents and a tablet, engaged in a collaborative discussion. The image has a blue tint and a white diagonal overlay on the right side.

Key Insights and Practical Strategies for Enhancing Engagement

Motivating Business Decision Makers to Participate in B2B Research

GMO
RESEARCH & AI

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Executive Summary

B2B Research Experiences

The survey indicates that prior participation in B2B marketing research surveys is concentrated among **higher-ranking executives**, particularly those in C-suite roles. **Middle management** represents the largest share of overall respondents but appears underrepresented among those with past survey experience. Notably, none of the specialist-level respondents have participated before, highlighting an opportunity to engage this overlooked group. These insights suggest a need to **diversify future outreach efforts** to include mid-level and specialist professionals to gain a broader perspective.



The survey clearly suggests that **individuals with prior experience** in B2B marketing research are **significantly more motivated** to participate in future surveys. Over half of experienced respondents fall into the “Motivated” or “Highly motivated” categories, compared to just under a quarter of those without experience. Conversely, inexperience is closely associated with low motivation, with nearly 40% expressing little to no willingness to engage. These findings emphasize **the importance of fostering initial participation**, as it appears to positively influence future engagement and interest.

Importance of Senior Management's Approval and Hierarchical Structure



The importance of obtaining senior management approval before participating in B2B surveys varies based on prior experience. **Experienced participants** are significantly more likely to **regard such approval as important**, potentially due to greater familiarity with internal corporate procedures. In contrast, those new to survey participation are more likely to see approval as unnecessary. While a consistent minority in both groups view it as “Extremely important,” the broader data points to the need to **clarify and support internal approval requirements**, especially for **less experienced participants**.

The survey reveals that a **majority of respondents** believe their company’s **hierarchical structure influences their willingness** to participate in B2B surveys. This effect is especially pronounced among those with prior survey experience, 80% of whom report being impacted. In comparison, just over half of inexperienced participants feel the same. These results suggest that **hierarchical constraints are a meaningful factor in survey engagement** and may need to be addressed when designing outreach strategies—particularly for more senior or seasoned professionals.



Survey Length Tolerance

Survey length tolerance **varies significantly based on participants' prior experience.**

While nearly **half of inexperienced respondents** are only willing to engage in surveys under 10 minutes, **experienced participants** demonstrate far **more flexibility**—most are open to spending 20 minutes or more.

Despite this, **short surveys remain the general preference** across the total sample. These findings highlight the **importance of tailoring survey length expectations**, particularly when targeting first-time participants, to prevent early dropouts and boost response rates.

Motivations for and Barriers to Participation in B2B Marketing Research

The findings reveal a **cautiously receptive but highly selective audience** when it comes to B2B research participation.



While a **slight majority (53.4%)** of respondents show moderate willingness to engage, a significant **34.3% remain generally unwilling**, indicating that **participation cannot be taken for granted and must be actively earned** through thoughtful survey design and outreach.



Trust and perceived value are the most influential drivers of participation. Respondents prioritize **anonymity, fair compensation, and a clear understanding of the research purpose**, far more than convenience or technical ease. This highlights the importance of positioning B2B research as **credible, confidential, and worthwhile** to the respondent.



In terms of **methodology**, online formats are clearly preferred. **Face-to-face methods**, especially group discussions and in-person interviews at facilities, encounter noticeable resistance. In contrast, **remote options**—such as online interviews and virtual group discussions—are seen as more acceptable, reinforcing the need to **prioritize digital engagement channels**.



While 42.8% of respondents prefer surveys under 10 minutes, nearly one-quarter (22.7%) are willing to engage for 30 minutes or more when the topic is relevant or sufficiently incentivized. This suggests a dual-path strategy: **keep standard surveys brief**, while **reserving longer formats for high-value, high-trust participants**.



Beyond time concerns, respondents express **worry over privacy, fear of follow-up spam, survey complexity, and skepticism toward the research sponsor**. These concerns reflect an overarching need for **transparency, simplicity, and professionalism** at every stage of the research process.

In summary, effective B2B survey design must **prioritize trust-building, concise structure, digital accessibility, and value communication**. Organizations that address these concerns directly will see **stronger engagement and higher-quality responses** from their target audiences.



Recommendation



1. Prioritize Trust and Transparency

- Clearly communicate **anonymity guarantees** and **data protection measures** in all recruitment and survey materials.
- Disclose the **purpose of the study** and **the firm conducting the research** to reduce skepticism and build legitimacy.



2. Adopt a Digital-First Approach

- Use **online interviews** and **virtual group discussions** as primary methodologies to align with participant preferences.
- Avoid face-to-face methods unless specifically required, as they pose a participation barrier for many.



3. Design for Time-Efficiency

- Aim to keep most surveys **under 10 minutes** to match the preference of the majority.
- For in-depth research, provide **clear value or incentives** to secure participation in longer sessions.



4. Communicate Value Clearly

- Explain **how participation will benefit the respondent or their business**, even if indirectly.
- Consider sharing **executive summaries or aggregated insights** as post-survey value-adds.



5. Simplify the Experience

- Ensure **straightforward, jargon-free survey design** that minimizes cognitive load.
- Test survey logic and question clarity in advance to avoid confusion or drop-offs.



6. Build a Participant-Friendly Recruitment Process

- Avoid excessive follow-up or unclear opt-in terms to mitigate **fear of spam or misuse**.
- Offer clear opt-out options and honor communication preferences to build long-term goodwill.

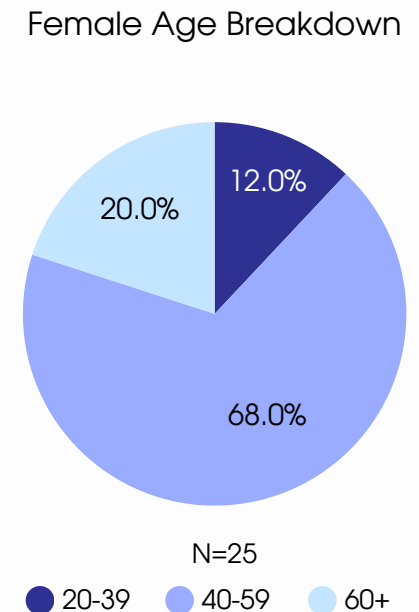
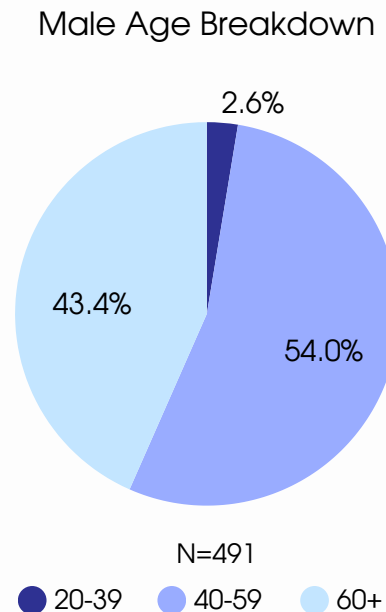
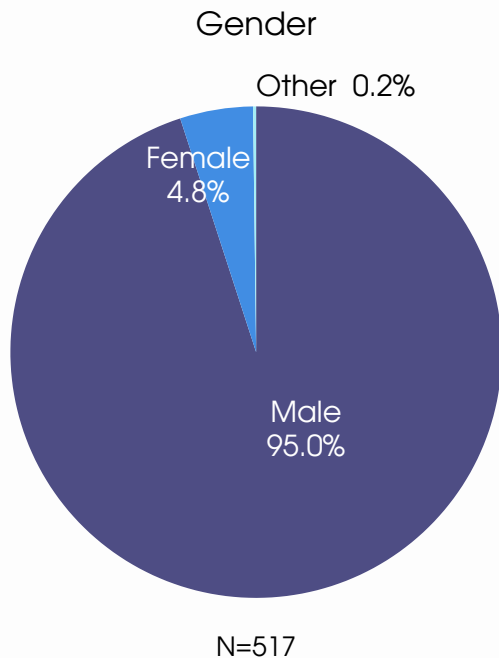


7. Segment and Target Strategically

- Use short surveys for **broad outreach**, and longer, more detailed engagements for **pre-qualified or high-trust participants**.
- Match **incentive levels** and messaging to the participant's profile and expected effort.

Respondents' Profile

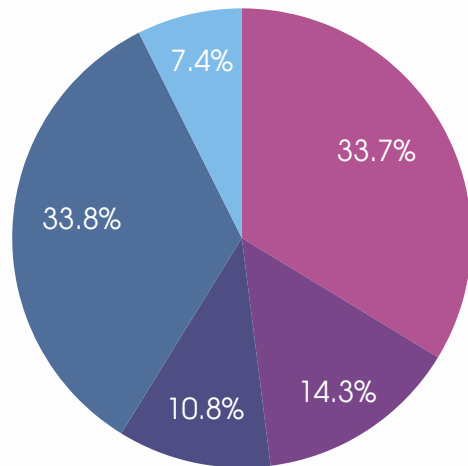
- A total of 517 individuals participated in the survey. The overwhelming majority of respondents were male (95.0%), while females accounted for 4.8%.
 - ✓ Among male respondents, 2.6% were aged 20–39, 54.0% were aged 40–59, and 43.4% were aged 60 or above.
 - ✓ Among female respondents, 12.0% were in the 20–39 age group, 68.0% were aged 40–59, and 20.0% were 60 years or older.
- This indicates that the respondent pool skews heavily toward older male professionals, with nearly all females being under 60.



Q1. What is your gender? (SA)
Q2. What is your age? (SA)

- The survey gathered responses from 517 participants, with a strong representation across various management levels: 33.8% are in Middle Management, 33.7% hold C-suite positions, 14.3% are in Senior Management, 10.8% are Department Heads, and 7.4% are classified as Specialists.
- This indicates that most respondents (over 90%) hold leadership or decision-making roles within their organizations.
- In terms of company size:
 - ✓ 28.6% are employed by Medium-sized Enterprises (201–500 employees), 64.2% by Large Enterprises (501–10,000 employees), and 7.2% by Mega Corporations with over 10,000 employees.

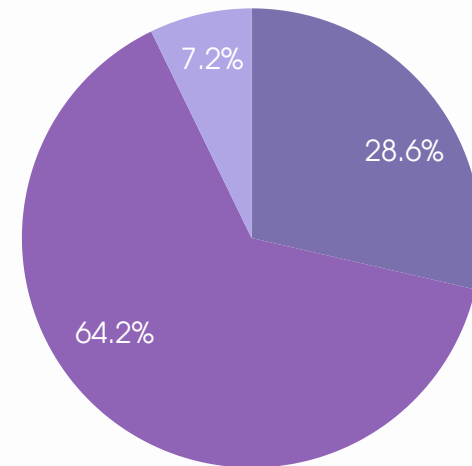
Job Title



N=517



Number of Employees



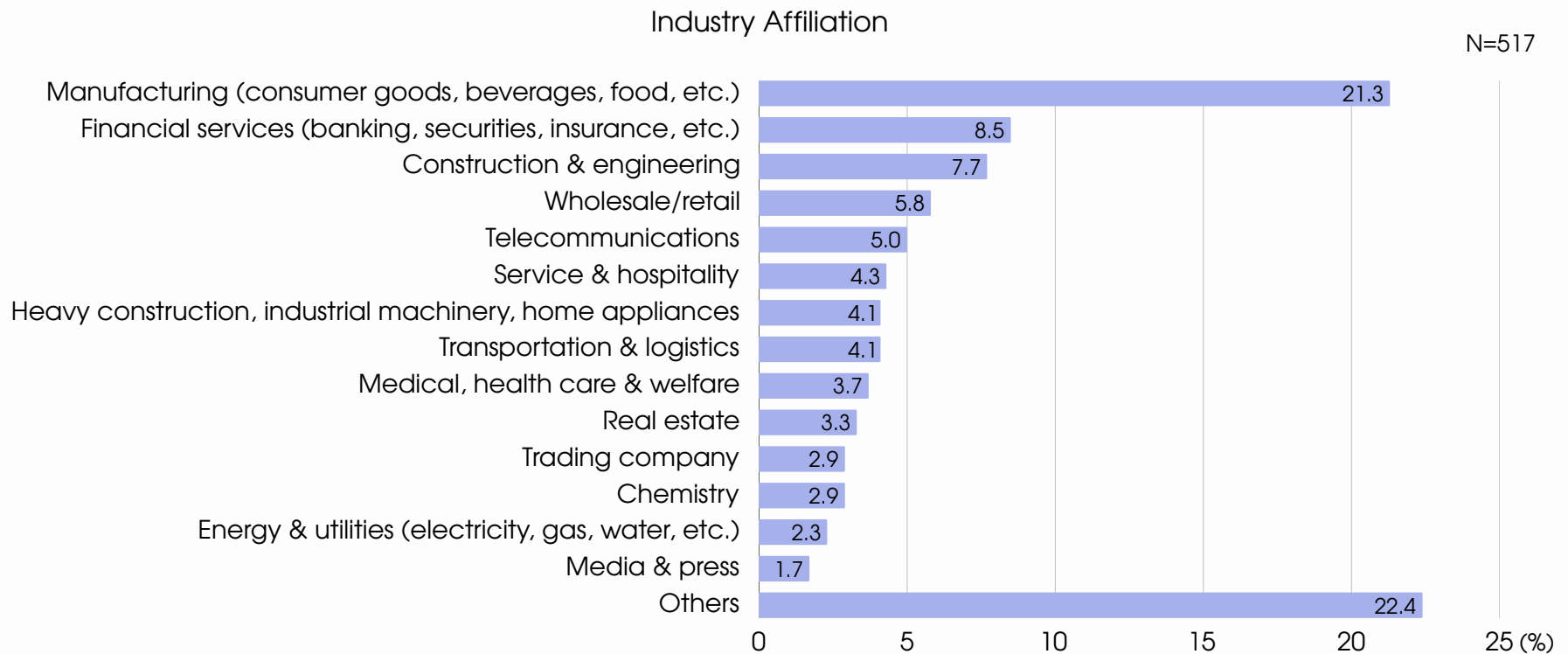
N=517



Q3. What is your current job title? Please select the one that applies the most. (SA)

Q5. How many employees does your company have? (SA)

- Respondents represent a wide range of industries, with the largest segments being:
 - ✓ Manufacturing (consumer goods, beverages, food, etc.) – 21.3%
 - ✓ Financial services – 8.5%
 - ✓ Construction & Engineering – 7.7%
 - ✓ Wholesale/Retail – 5.8%
 - ✓ Telecommunications – 5.0%



Q4. What industry do you work in? (SA)

B2B Research Experience

Most respondents have no prior experience participating in B2B marketing research, and among those with experience, self-administered online survey is the most common.

- Only **17.2%** of respondents indicated they had participated in B2B research before, while **82.9%** had **never taken part**.
- Among those with experience (n=89), the most common methodologies they had participated in were: **Self-administered online interview** (62.9%), **Online face-to-face interviews** via platforms like Zoom or Google Meet (28.1%), **Face-to-face interviews at facilities or offices** (24.7%), **Telephone interviews** (23.6%), **Group discussions**, either online (19.1%) or face-to-face (12.4%).



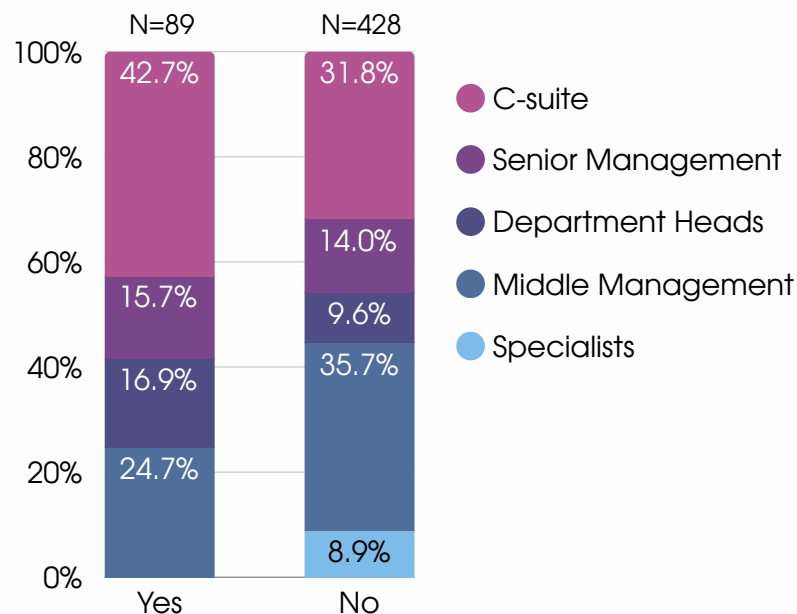
Q14. Have you participated in any B2B marketing research survey prior to this one? (SA)

Q15. Which of the following B2B marketing research methodologies have you participated in? Please select all that apply. (MA)

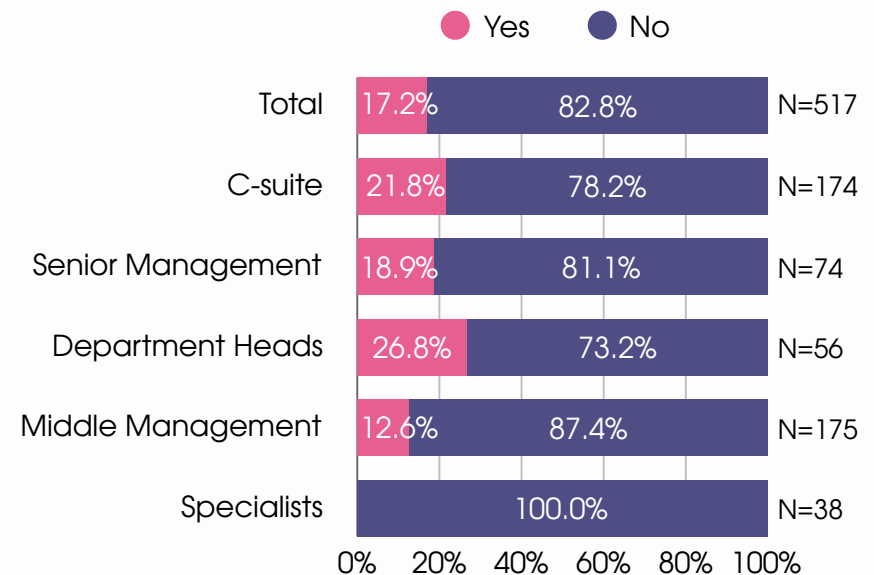
Participation experience is higher among senior roles.

- 42.7% of respondents with prior survey experience are in the **C-suite**, compared to only 31.8% of those with no experience.
- **Department Heads** also show a higher representation among those with prior experience (16.9%) than those without (9.6%).
- **Middle Management** makes up the largest share of all respondents (33.8%), but only 24.7% of experienced participants — versus 35.7% of inexperienced ones — fall in this category.
- **Specialists** appear only in the inexperienced group (8.9%) and none reported prior participation.

Past B2B Research Experience by Job Title



Past B2B Research Experience by Job Title



Q14. Have you participated in any B2B marketing research survey prior to this one? (SA)

B2B Research Experience

Pro

"It's worthwhile."

"There were no problems with the themes or topics that they wanted us to talk about that day, as they explained them to us at the beginning of the meeting. As a wish, I would like to be told in advance what the theme would be."

"I felt that there are things that we are not usually aware of, but by verbalizing them, we can be made aware of them anew."

"I think it was just fun."

"Easy to understand and attractive."

Con

"Concerns about participating with competitors."

"Lack of anonymity."

"Unclear quality of feedback to my own operations."

"Many poorly designed questions and questions that lead to answers."

"Long ones are tedious."

"I thought I would refrain from accepting the offer in the future. I thought it was just for socializing, but there is no guarantee of confidentiality, and I don't know how it will be used."

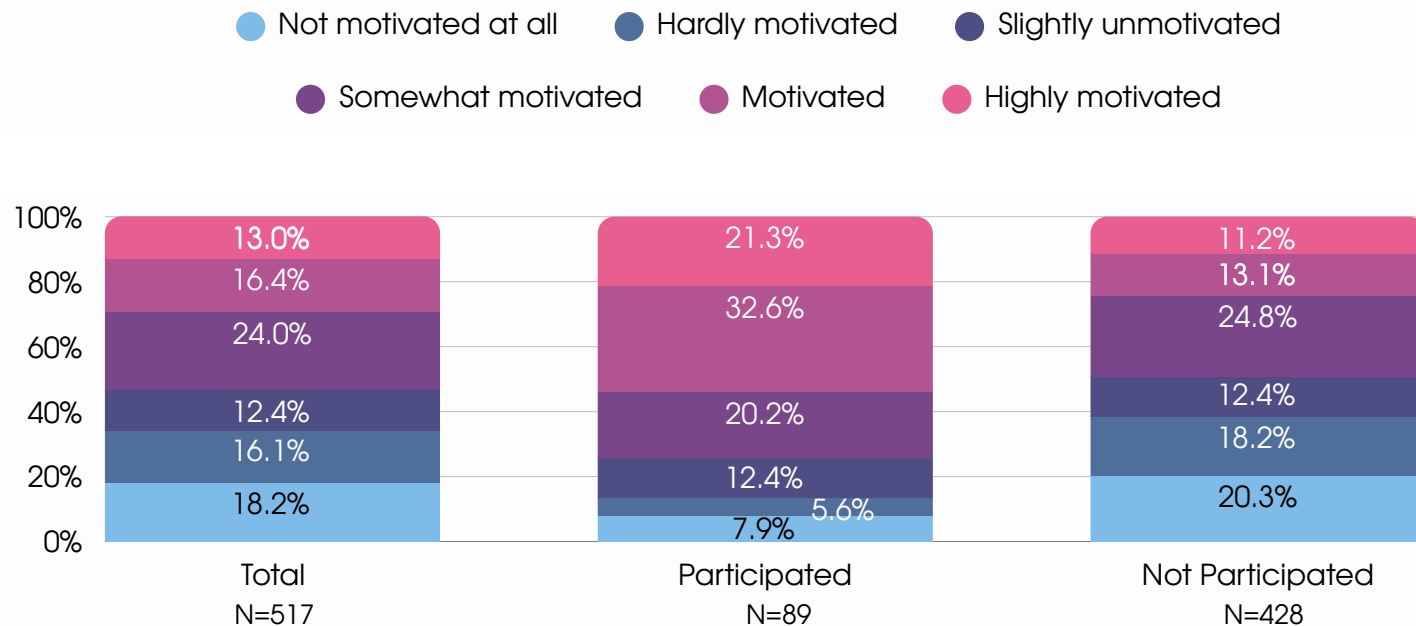
Q16. What was your experience participating in the B2B marketing research? Please share your background/motivation, findings, and/or concerns of participating in those surveys, if any.

Experienced respondents are more motivated.

- Among those **with prior experience**, more than a half of respondents (53.9%) are **“Motivated.”** In contrast, only 24.3% of **inexperienced respondents** are motivated.
- **Inexperienced respondents show greater apathy.** A combined **38.5%** of respondents without prior experience are either “Not motivated at all” or “Hardly motivated.” That figure drops significantly to **13.5%** among experienced participants.
- This suggests a strong correlation between prior participation and current willingness.



Willingness to Participate

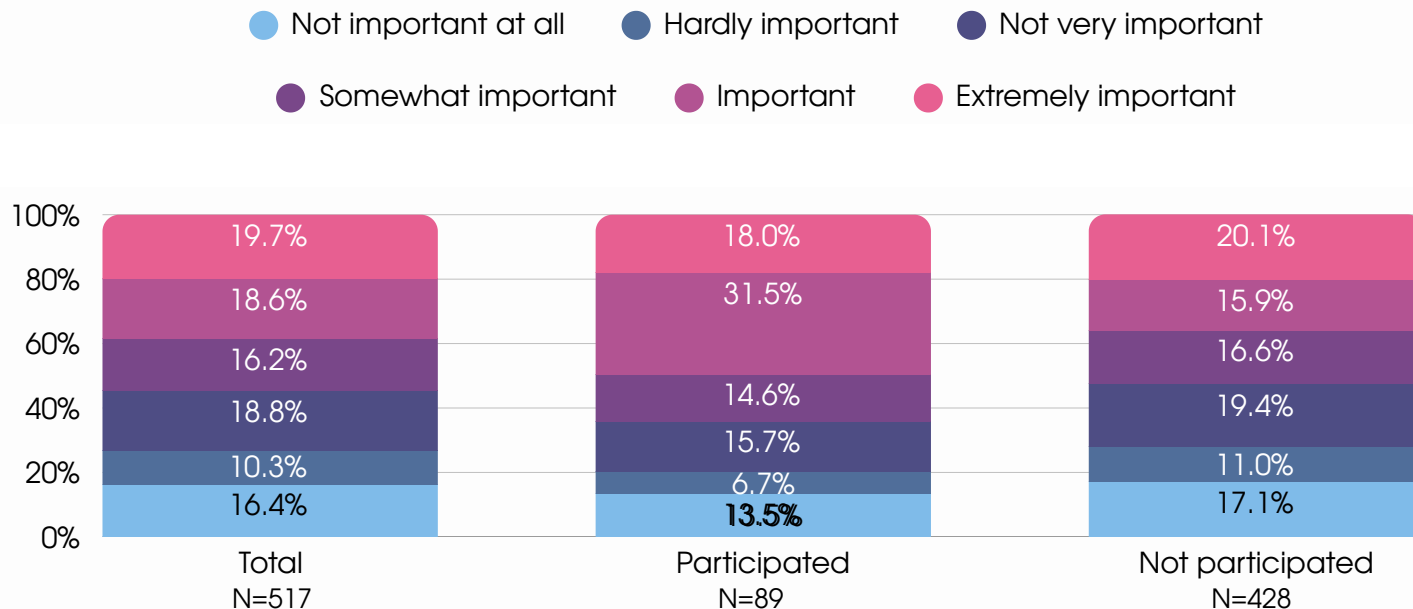


Q6. How willing are you to participate in any B2B marketing research? (SA)

Experienced participants place greater importance on approval.

- **49.5%** of those with prior B2B survey experience view senior management approval as “Extremely important” or “Important,” compared to **36.0%** of those without prior experience. This suggests that those familiar with such surveys may better understand internal protocols or have encountered approval processes before.
- Inexperienced participants are more likely to view approval as unimportant.
- Across both groups, roughly one-fifth of respondents consider senior management approval to be “Extremely important,” indicating a baseline sensitivity to organizational hierarchy.

Importance of Senior Management Approval by Past Experiences



Q8. How important is it for you to have approval from senior management before participating in a B2B survey? (SA)

Internal organizational dynamics—such as reporting lines, decision-making authority, or perceived roles—may act as either barriers or motivators to survey engagement.

A majority of respondents (59.0%) indicated that their willingness to participate in B2B surveys is influenced by their company's hierarchical structure. Understanding and addressing these hierarchical factors could be key to improving participation rates, particularly in more structured or top-down corporate environments.

No

"Because I think it should be left to the individual, especially if it's an anonymous survey."

"If it is anonymous and the name of the company or department you work for is not identified, you don't have to ask permission from your supervisor."

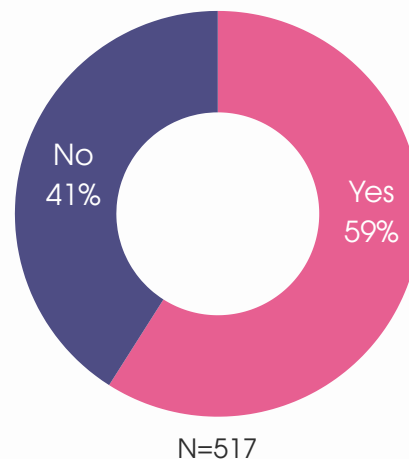
"If it is anonymous, no problem arises."

"It is not a matter of particular interference."

"To not provide information about the department or person in charge at my place of employment. Since (the information provided) is only general information, there is no particular need to ask permission from your supervisor."

"As long as you don't touch the issue of secrecy, the only key is whether you can use your time."

Impact of Hierarchical Structure towards Motivation



Yes

"Because there is compliance determined by the company and it cannot be implemented at the discretion of the individual."

"Because I can clarify the scope of disclosure of information about my employer."

"Because it could lead to disclosure of the company's business."

"Aside from the content, I think the company organization needs to agree to this."

"If there is any suspicion of a breach of confidentiality or other violation, participation is not allowed."

"Because the decisions of superiors and upper management take precedence."

"A prerequisite as a member of the organization."

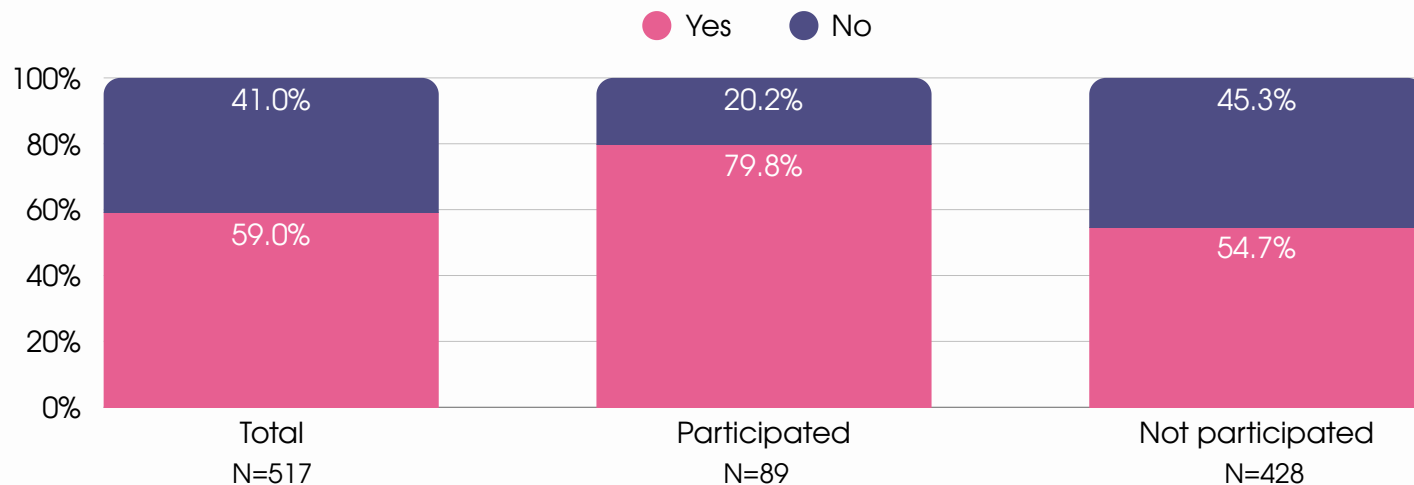
Q9. Do you feel that the hierarchical structure in your company affects your willingness to participate in B2B surveys? (SA)

Q10. Please provide a brief explanation of why you answered <"yes" / "no"> to the previous question.

Experienced respondents may be more attuned to or cautious of internal power dynamics.

- Experienced participants are highly aware of hierarchy. A striking 79.8% of those with prior B2B survey experience report that company hierarchy does affect their willingness to participate.
- Inexperienced participants are less constrained by hierarchy. Only 54.7% of those without prior experience feel affected by hierarchy — still a majority, but significantly lower than experienced participants.
- Across the full sample, 59.0% report that company hierarchy influences their willingness to engage in B2B surveys, highlighting a structural barrier to participation.

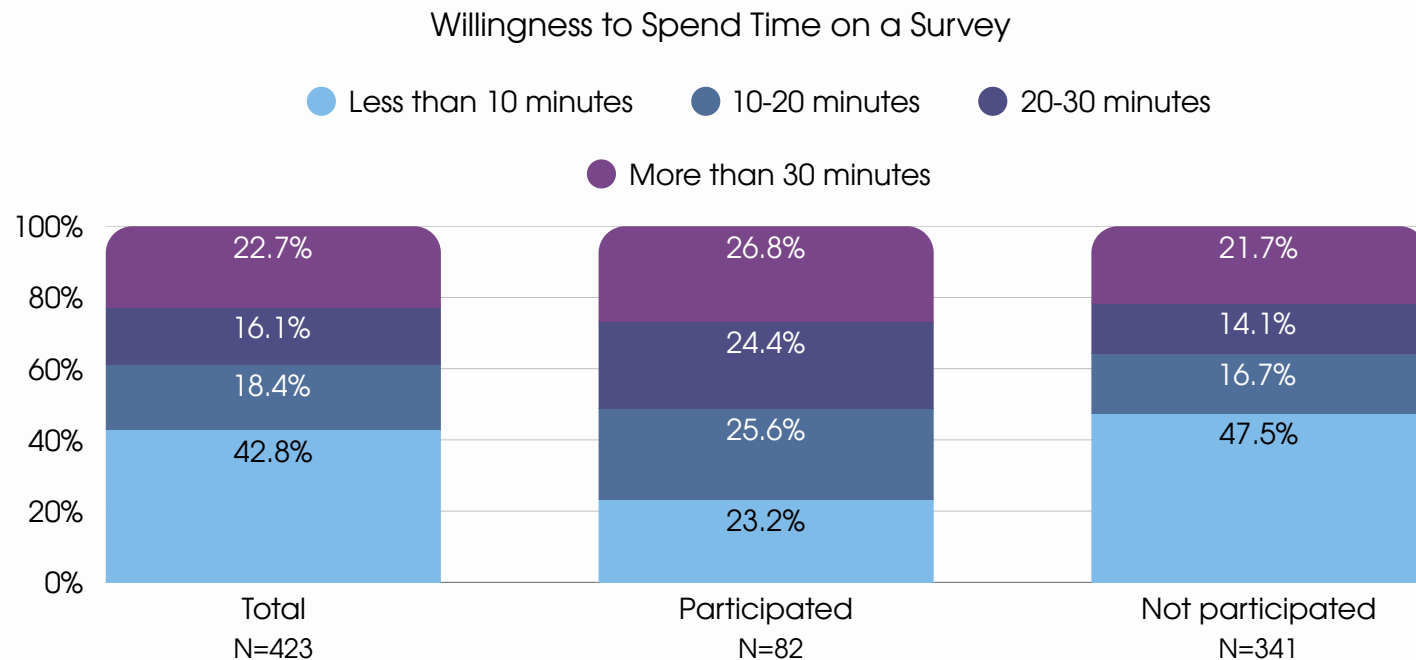
Hierarchical Structure's Impact Towards Motivation



Q9. Do you feel that the hierarchical structure in your company affects your willingness to participate in B2B surveys? (SA)

Inexperienced participants strongly prefer short surveys.

- 47.5% of those who have not participated in a B2B survey before prefer surveys under 10 minutes. This group shows significantly less tolerance for longer surveys compared to experienced respondents.
- **Experienced participants are willing to spend more time.** Only 23.2% of experienced participants prefer surveys under 10 minutes. Meanwhile, over 50% of them are willing to spend 20 minutes or more.
- Across all respondents, 42.8% prefer surveys shorter than 10 minutes, making it the most common preference overall. Only 22.7% are open to spending more than 30 minutes, which remains a minority.



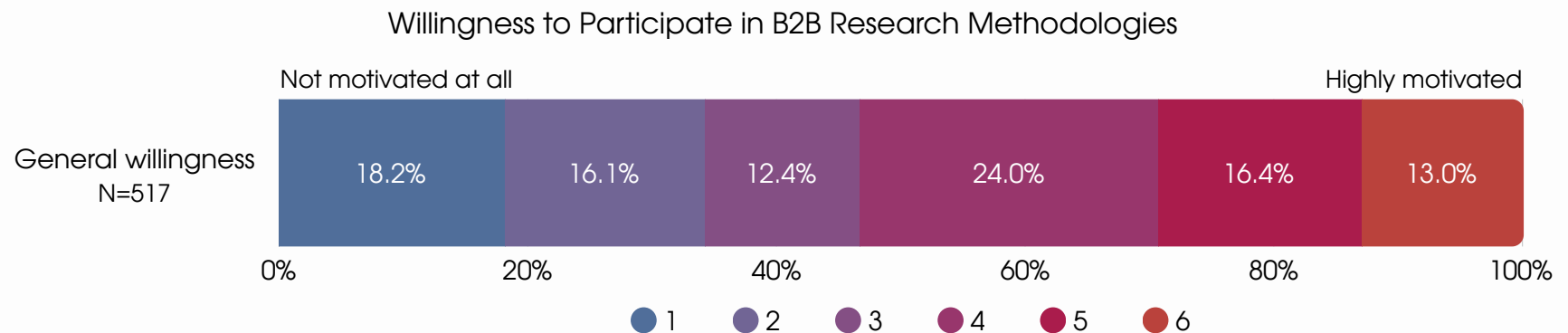
Q12. How long are you willing to spend on a B2B survey? (SA)

Base: those who answered other than Q6=1 (not willing at all)

Motivations for and Barriers to Participation in B2B Marketing Research

The overall willingness to participate in B2B marketing research is mixed, with a tendency toward moderate interest, and a notable level of reluctance among some respondents.

- Combined, **53.4%** of respondents chose levels 4–6, indicating a slight majority are at least somewhat open to participating in B2B research.
- **18.2%** of respondents reported being not willing at all (level 1), and **16.1%** selected level 2, indicating that over one-third (**34.3%**) are generally unwilling to participate.

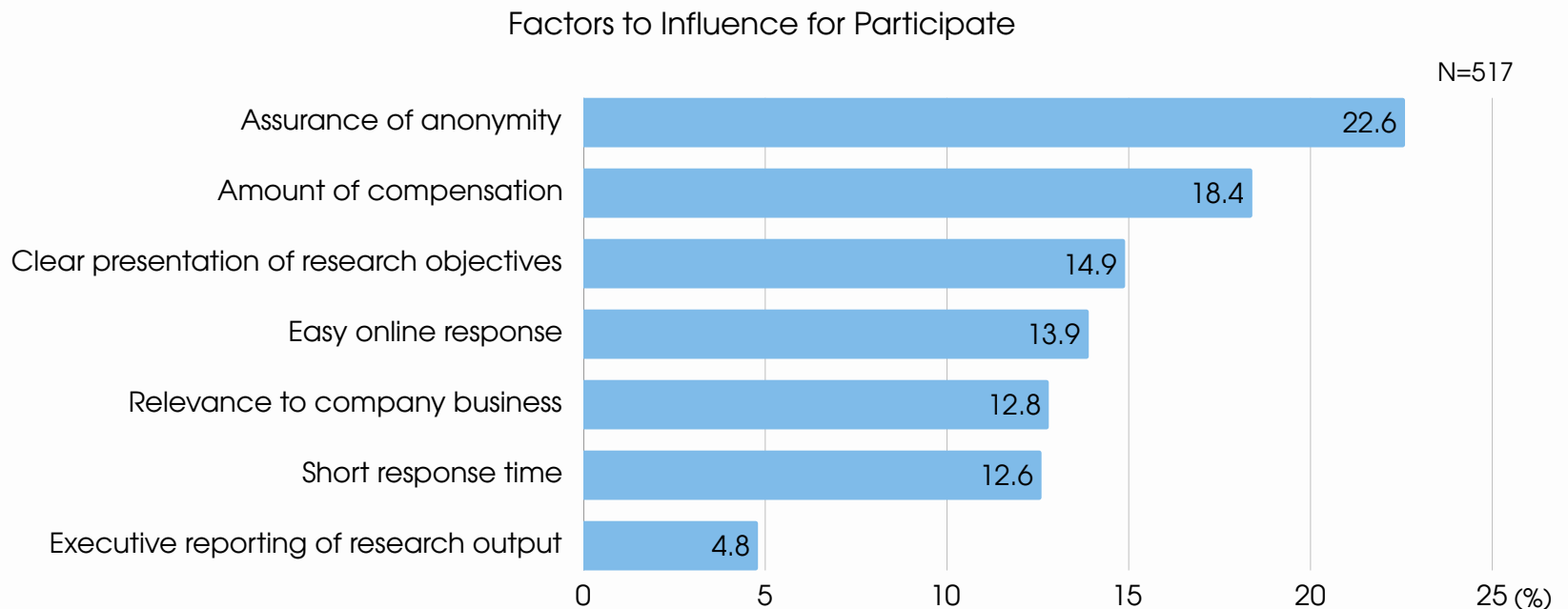


Q6. How willing are you to participate in any B2B marketing research? (SA) 1=not motivated at all / 6=highly motivated



Participation is influenced more by credibility and fairness than by convenience alone.

- When designing B2B surveys, it is essential to **emphasize participant anonymity, offer appropriate compensation**, and ensure **clarity and business relevance** in the research topic.
- While convenience factors such as online accessibility matter, they play a secondary role compared to trust and perceived value.



Q7. What factors influence your decision to participate in a B2B survey? Please rank in order of greatest influence. (SA) rank 1

First-time participants are more risk-sensitive and extrinsically motivated, while experienced participants are driven more by the perceived value and integrity of the research itself.

- **Experienced participants** are more motivated by factors related to the **quality and relevance** of the research itself. Specifically:
 - ✓ They place significantly more emphasis on a **clear presentation of research objectives** (27.0% vs. 12.4%), suggesting that transparency and purpose are key for those familiar with such surveys.
 - ✓ They also value the **relevance of the topic to their company's business** more (16.9% vs. 11.9%), indicating a stronger focus on strategic alignment.
- In contrast, **inexperienced participants** are more influenced by **peripheral or practical concerns**:
 - ✓ **Assurance of anonymity** (23.8% vs. 16.9%) and **amount of compensation** (19.6% vs. 12.4%) are more prominent factors for those who have never participated.
 - ✓ These responses imply a higher level of caution and a need for external incentives to overcome hesitation or uncertainty.

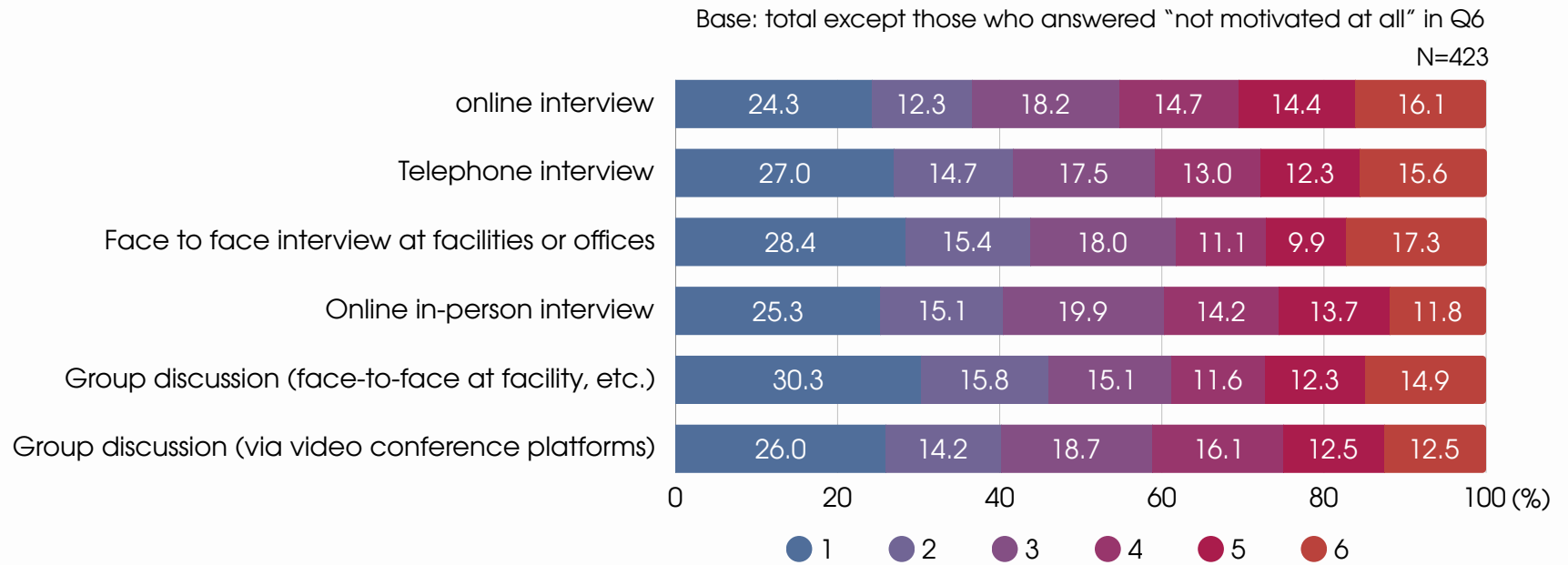
	Total		Have participated in B2B survey prior to this one.		Have NOT participated in B2B survey prior to this one.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Base	517	100.0%	89	100.0%	428	100.0%
Assurance of anonymity	117	22.6%	15	16.9%	102	23.8%
Amount of compensation	95	18.4%	11	12.4%	84	19.6%
Clear presentation of research objectives	77	14.9%	24	27.0%	53	12.4%
Easy online response	72	13.9%	10	11.2%	62	14.5%
Relevance to company business	66	12.8%	15	16.9%	51	11.9%
Short response time	65	12.6%	11	12.4%	54	12.6%
Executive reporting of research output	25	4.8%	3	3.4%	22	5.1%

Q7. What factors influence your decision to participate in a B2B survey? Please rank in order of greatest influence. (SA) rank 1

Digital and remote methods should be prioritized for wider engagement.

- While there are no major differences in willingness to participate by survey method, there is general reluctance toward participating in **face-to-face methods**, especially for **group discussions and interviews at facilities**.
- **Online interviews** received the most balanced responses, with 30.5% expressing high willingness (scores 5 and 6), suggesting this method may be the most acceptable among participants.

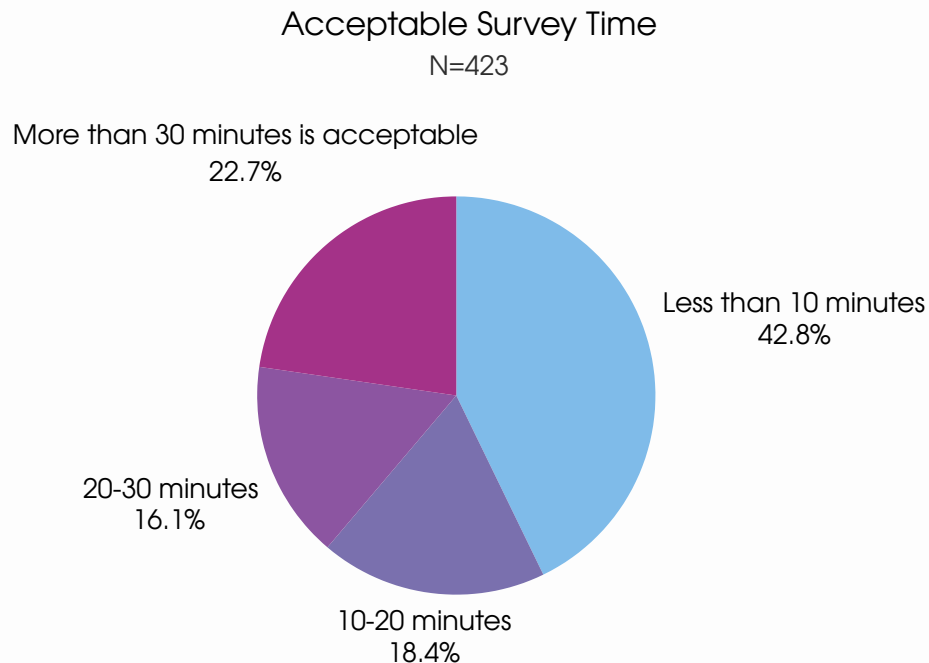
Willingness to Participate in B2B Research Methodologies



Q11. Please indicate your willingness to participate in the following B2B research methodologies. 1=not motivated at all / 6=highly motivated

Respondents show a clear preference for shorter surveys, but a significant portion is also open to longer engagements.

- **42.8%** of respondents prefer surveys that take **less than 10 minutes**, making it the most preferred duration by far.
- **18.4%** are willing to spend **10–20 minutes**, while **16.1%** accept **20–30 minutes**, indicating that a combined **34.5%** can tolerate moderate survey lengths.
- Notably, **22.7%** indicated that **more than 30 minutes is acceptable**, showing a substantial minority willing to commit more time under the right conditions.

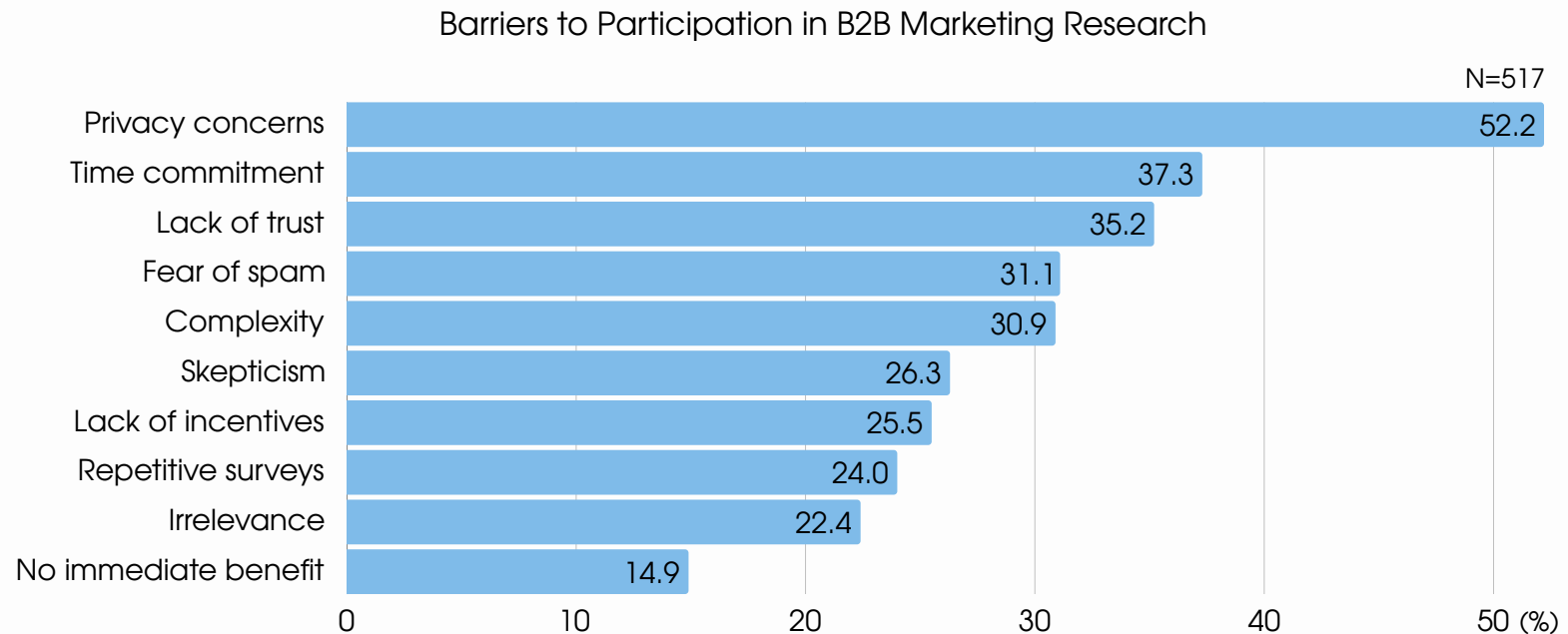


Q12. How long are you willing to spend on a B2B survey? (SA)

Base: total except those who answered "not motivated at all" in Q6

Transparency, data protection, and simple user experience are essential.

- **Time commitment** is the second most common concern (37.3%), reflecting a desire for short, efficient research engagements.
- Other frequently mentioned barriers include:
 - ✓ **Lack of trust in the organization** (35.2%)
 - ✓ **Fear of receiving spam** or follow-up contact (31.1%)
 - ✓ **Complexity of the survey** (30.9%) and **skepticism about the research purpose** (26.3%)



Q13. What factors would make you hesitant to participate in B2B marketing research? Please select the three factors below that apply most to you. (MA)

BtoB Sampling

Headquartered in Tokyo, GMO Research & AI holds the No.1 market share in Japan as a sample panel provider, enabling localized consultation tailored to the latest trends in Japan.
We support not only quantitative research but also recruitment for offline research and its operational support.



1,260,000+

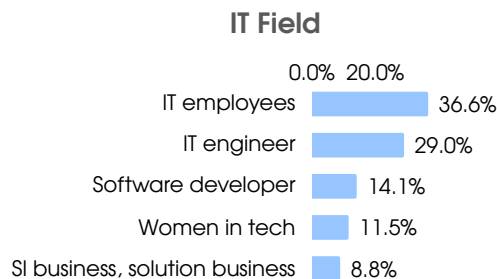
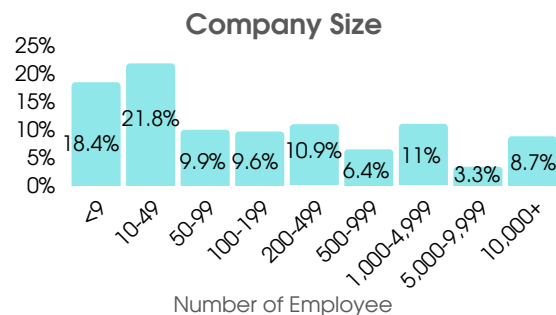
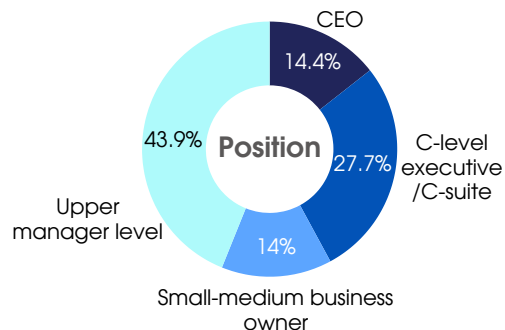
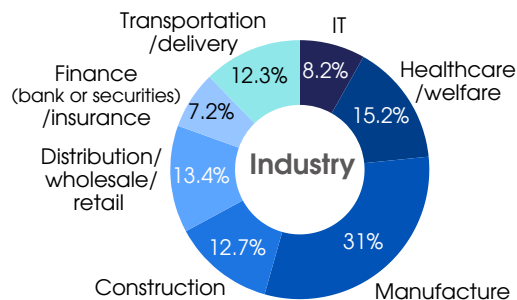
BtoB professionals



50+

Business profiles

Approximately 150 additional basic attributes can be cross-referenced with business profiles!



IT Decision Makers (DMs)

Approximately
100,000

individuals with
20 profiles are available!

- Schedule management system and groupware
- Internal network construction/infrastructure importing
- Commercially available software package
- Marketing & market research services
- Customer management system
- Internal trunk system
- Payment system
- Accounting system
- Security system
- Other system
- Hardware (server)
- Hardware (customer PC)
- Network security
- Maintenance services
- Advertising services
- Corporate insurance services
- Legal related services
- Consulting services
- Financial services
- Cleaning services

GMO RESEARCH & AI

GMO Research & AI offers an audience engagement platform that allows access to our multi-country online panel network, which consists of over **65 million** consumers across **16** APAC markets.

Diverse profile attributes, including **B2B, healthcare, automotive** and **gaming** are available to meet your specific research needs.

[Find out more](#)

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