

Will Color Printing Give Your Survey a Boost?

Occasionally we are asked if color printing (versus black and white) is better to use as part of a survey mailing? Will this treatment generate more attention and ultimately a better response?

Our Opinion: If you're looking to use color to boost your survey's response rate, it might not be worth the extra cost. While color printing is not extraordinarily expensive, we are all interested in controlling cost, even with a small mailing size. The use of color on a cover letter and outgoing survey envelope may be considered aesthetically pleasing, however our test shows that the survey response rate will be about the same.

We split a survey sample into two matched samples. Half of the survey sample received a questionnaire with a cover letter and outgoing envelope printed with color. The other half received the same questionnaire, but with a cover letter and an outgoing envelope printed in black ink on white stock. Those who received color printing responded at a rate of 29%, while those who received black and white responded at a rate of 30%.

The use of color might be desirable from a branding or corporate-policy perspective. This said, based on our test, if you choose to use printing, don't expect an increase in your survey's response rate.