



brightline
GROUP

I want my \$2!

Assessing the impact of various incentive mechanisms on response rates in market research

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**An iconic character that had
stayed with me since
childhood:**



**The \$2 paper boy
Better Off Dead (1985)**

Have you ever taken a survey?



What motivated you to take the survey?

What do you think motivates the general public to take a survey?

Money? (an incentive)

Interest in the topic?

Getting tired of being contacted about it?

Influences on Response Rates

What do market researchers have control over?

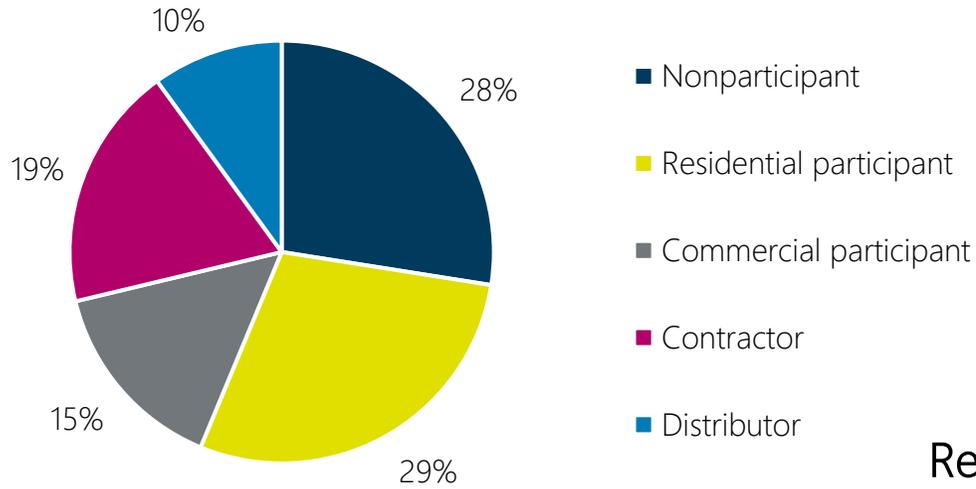
- × Quality of contact information
- × Interest in the topic
- × Brand credibility
- × Customer type
- × Geographic Location
- × Other societal happenings
- × Time constraints
- ✓ Length of the survey or interview
- ✓ Survey mode
- ✓ Incentives

Our Research

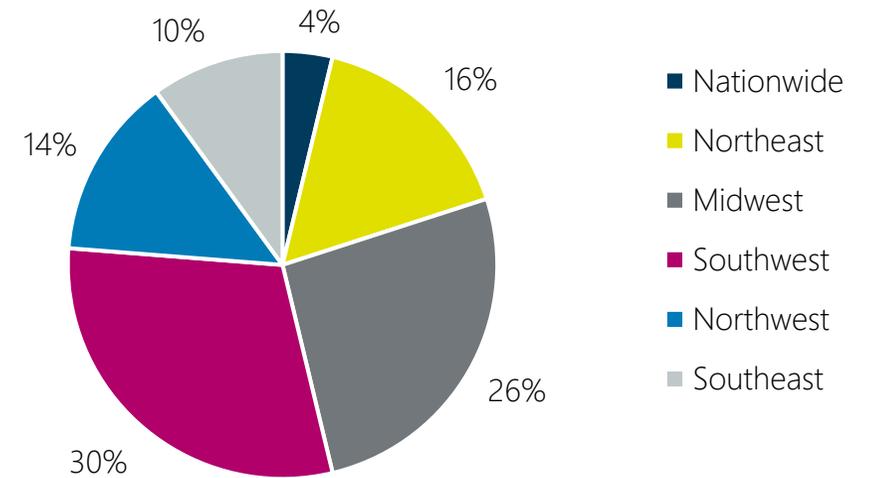
- ▶ Researched the impact of incentives and the mechanisms used to deliver them—on response rates.
- ▶ Findings are analyzed by respondent type and geographic region to offer targeted, actionable insights for improving engagement across diverse audiences.
- ▶ We looked at a total of 80 studies conducted over the past six years (2019-2024):
 - **Fifteen (15) Planning studies** (baseline studies, willingness to adopt studies)
 - Typical audience: A broad cross-section of a utility's customer base (both residential and commercial).
 - **Sixty-five (65) Evaluation studies** (process evaluation, market evaluation, satisfaction studies, net-to-gross studies, barrier studies...)
 - Typical audience: Recent program participants, non-participants, and key market actors such as trade allies, contractors, and distributors.

Representation of Studies

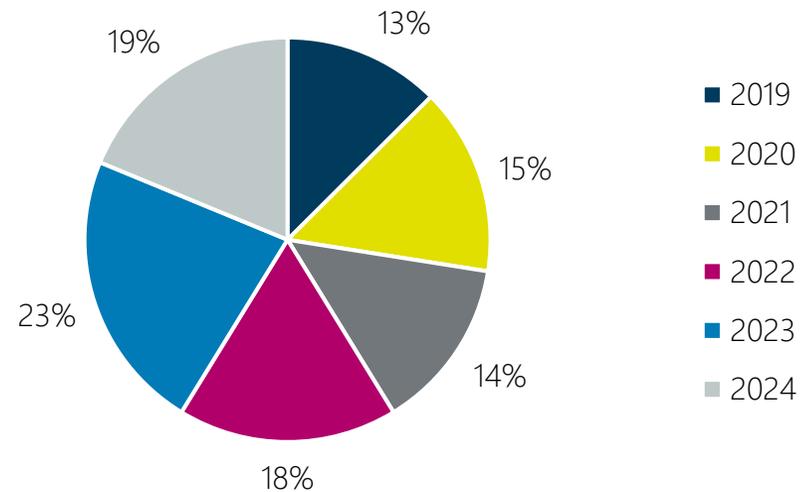
Representation by Respondent Type



Representation by Region



Representation by Study Year

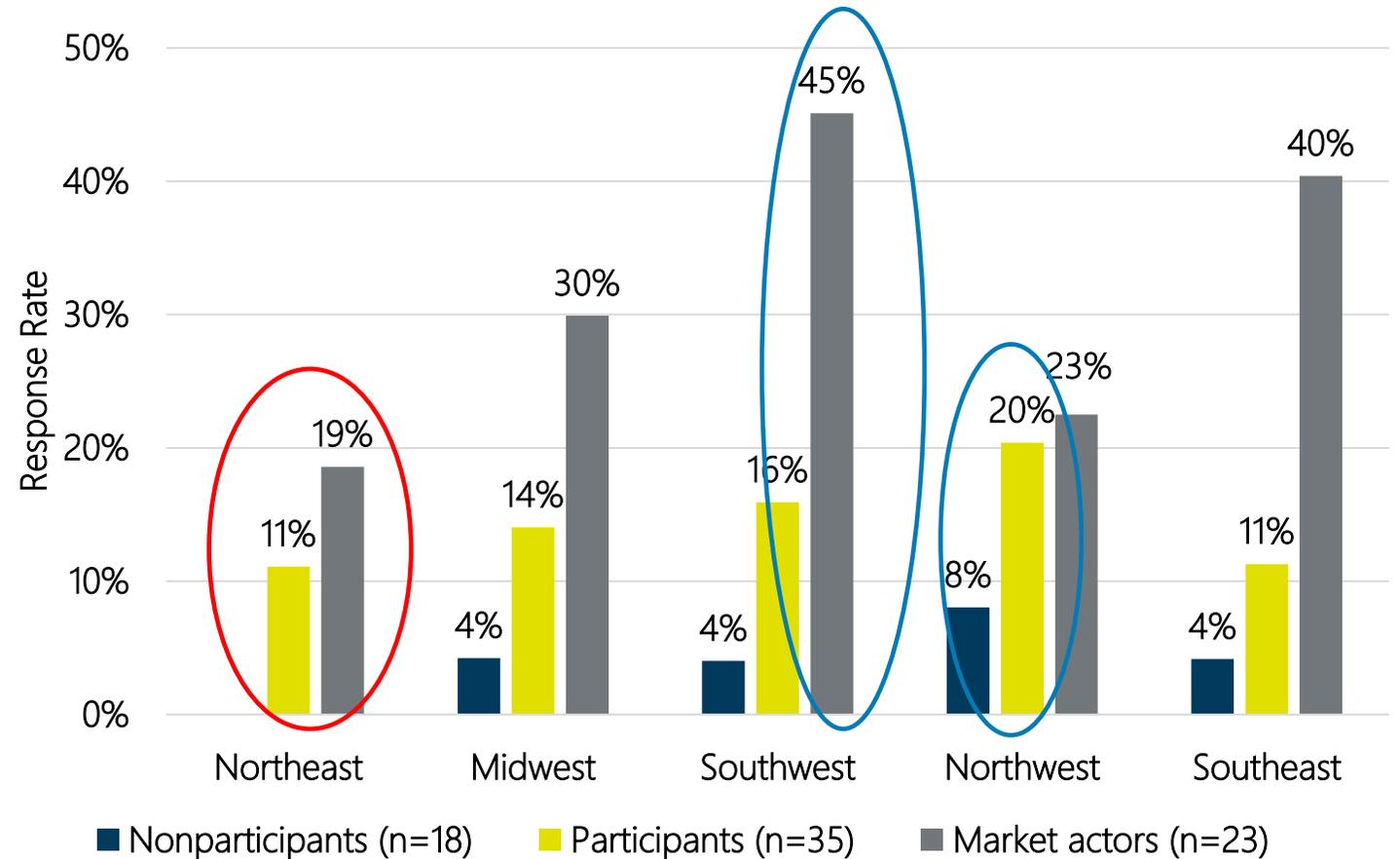


What did we find?

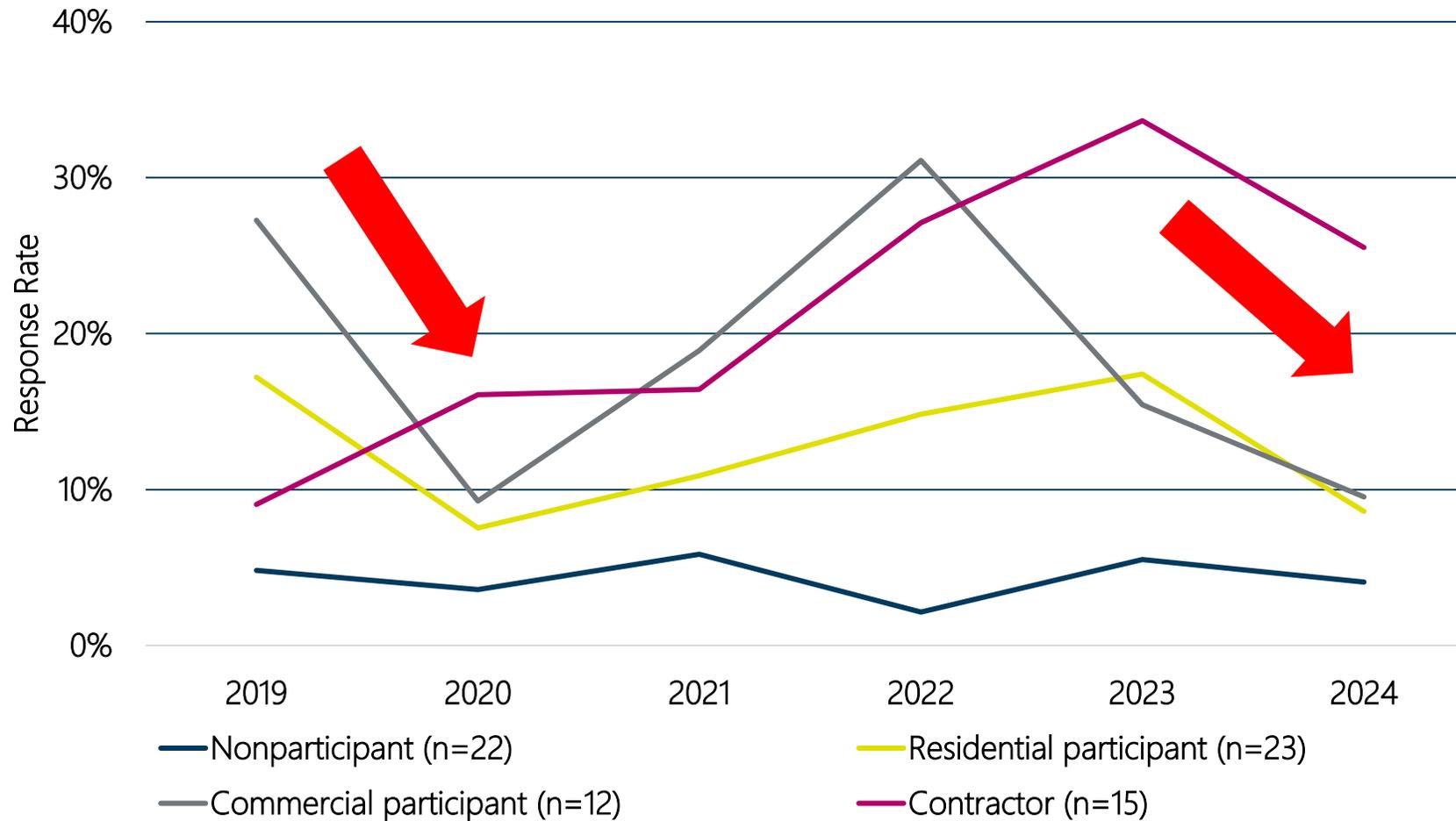


By Customer Type and Region

- Highest overall response rates were observed among market actors (contractors and distributors) in the Southwest and among participants and nonparticipants in the Northwest.
- In contrast, the lowest response rates were seen among market actors and participants in the Northeast.

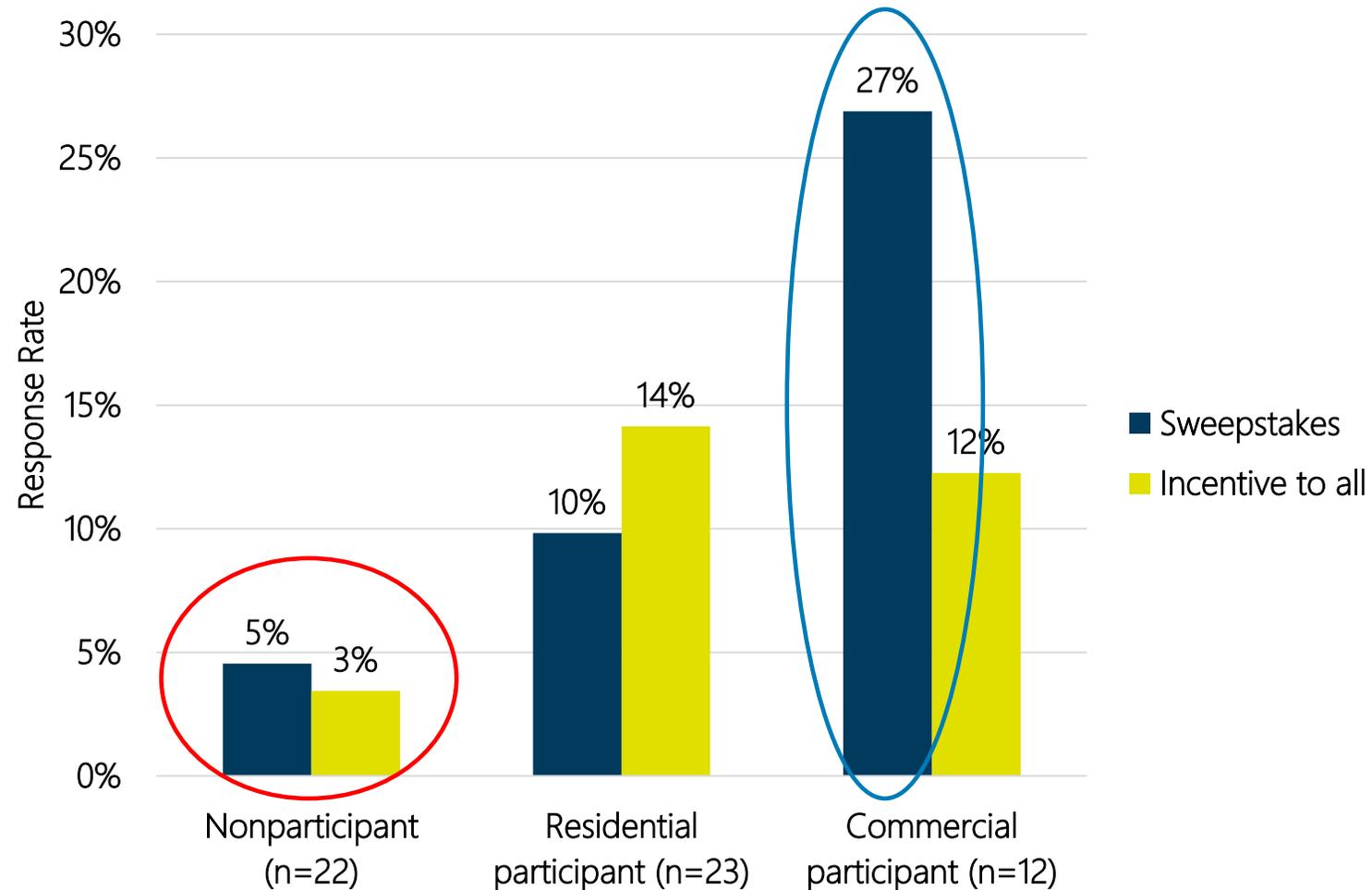


Trends over the Study Period



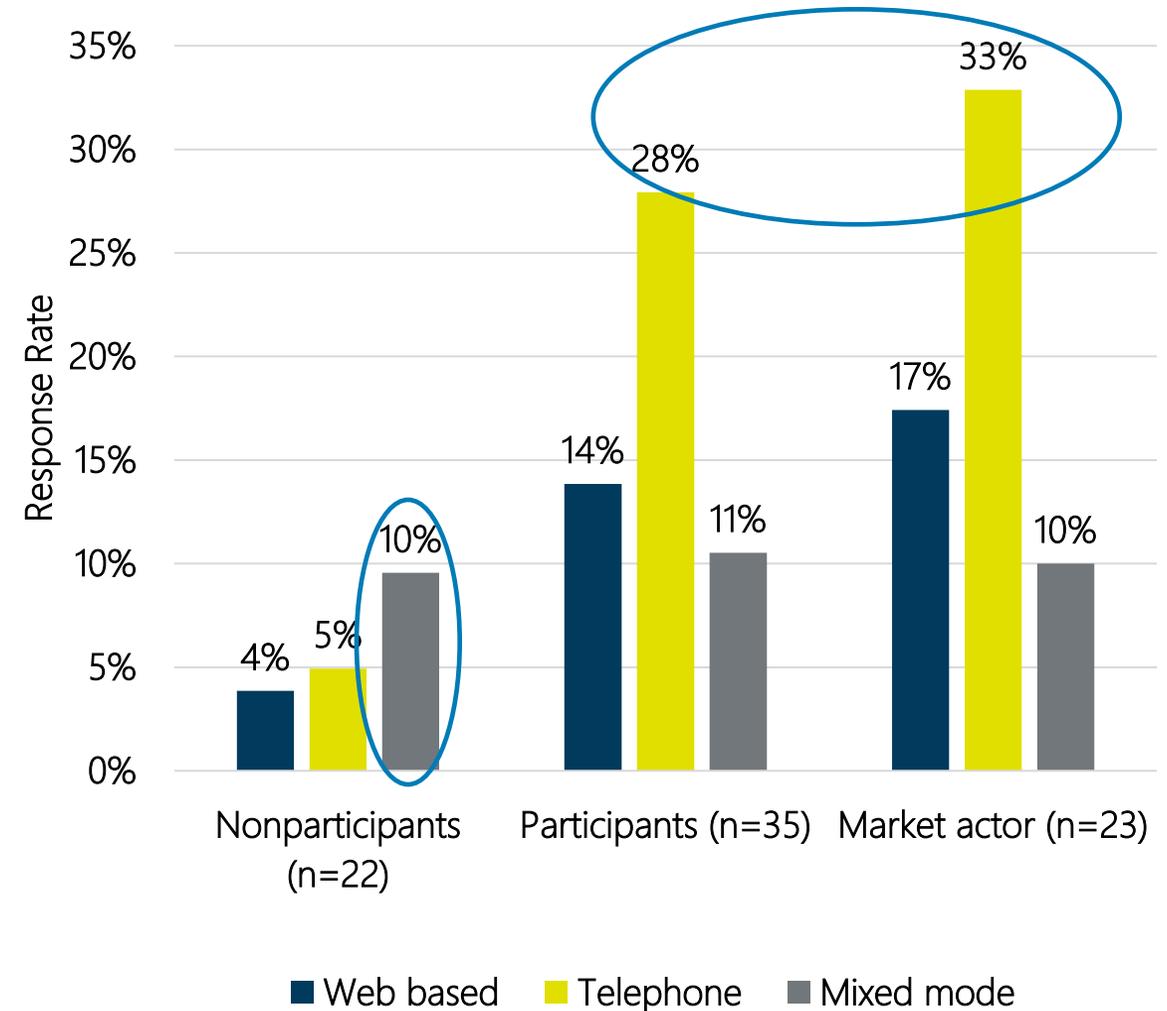
Incentive Mechanism

- Commercial participants seem to respond better to sweepstakes over a direct incentive.
- Nonparticipants and residential participants reported very little difference due to incentive mechanism.
- *Not shown, but interesting to note is that for residential participants, a lower incentive (less than \$25) resulted in a higher response rate compared to incentives in \$25-\$50 range.
- Perhaps indicating that other factors are influencing response rates and may suggest diminishing returns on higher incentive amounts.



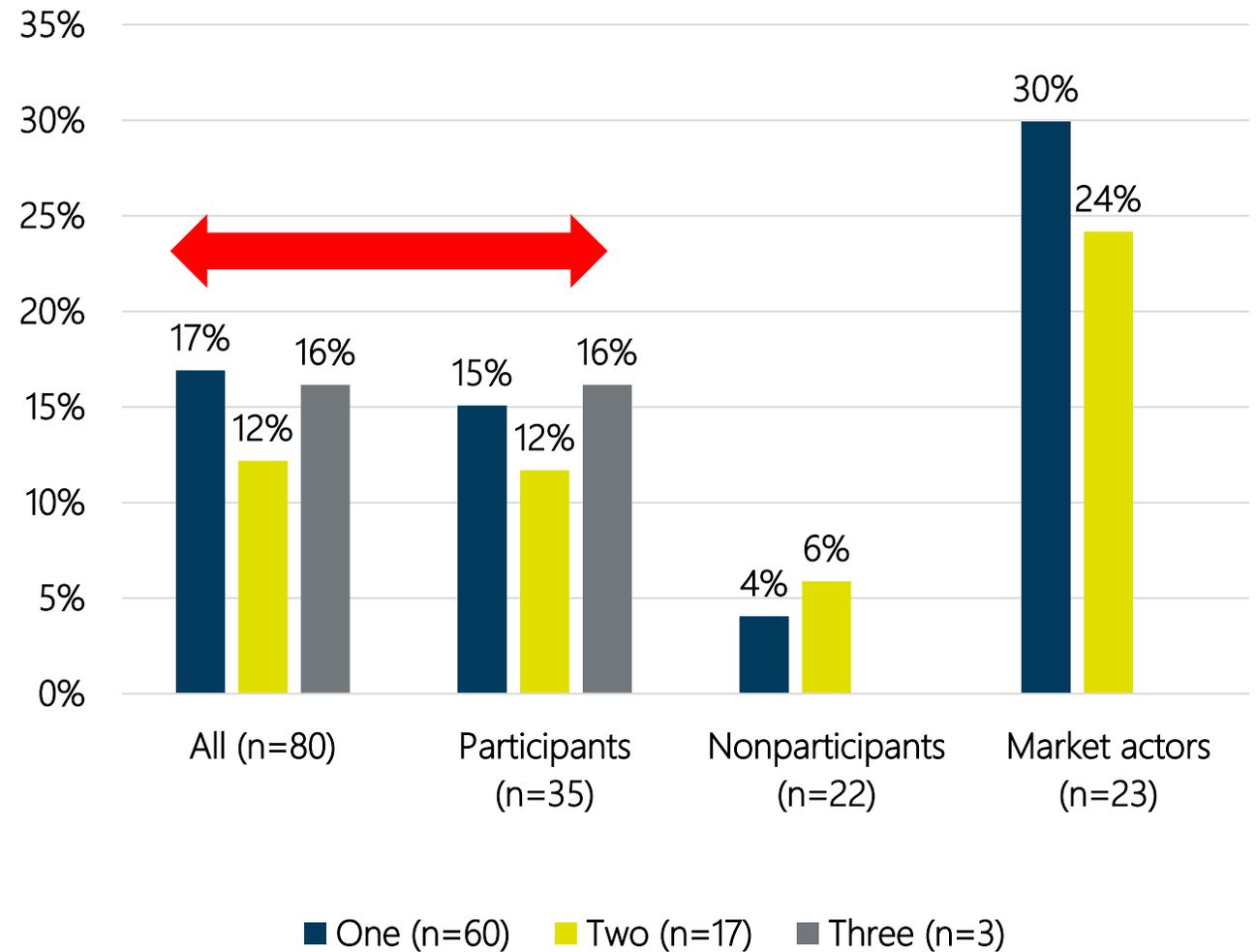
Survey Mode

- ▶ Telephone only surveys achieved highest response rates among participants and market actors.
- ▶ Mixed mode served nonparticipants best
 - opposite with participants and market actors
- ▶ **Important to acknowledge that the use of mixed mode approaches is often more common for harder to reach populations.*



Number of Recruitment Methods

- ▶ Methods included telephone, email, and postcard
- ▶ The number of recruitment methods used had minimal overall impact on response rates
- ▶ Minimal difference in response rates was found between the use of email+phone vs the use of email+postcard for participants



What do market researchers have control of?

▶ Out of our control:

- × Quality of contact information
- × Interest in topic
- × Brand credibility
- × Time constraints

▶ Out of our control, but important for us to consider:

- Customer type: residential customers seem to respond better to a direct incentive, commercial customers better to a sweepstakes
- Geographic location: customers and market actors in Southwest and Northwest were more 'responsive' than those in Northeast
- Other societal happenings: pandemics and Presidential election years do have an impact on response rates

What do market researchers have control of?

▶ In our control:

- ✓ Length of the survey or interview
- ✓ Survey mode: telephone only surveys achieved highest response rates among participants and market actors. Mixed mode served nonparticipants best.
- ✓ Number of recruitment modes: utilizing multiple recruitment modes did not lead to higher response rates.
- ✓ Incentives: appears to be a point of diminishing returns on incentive and sweepstakes amount

Thank you!





I want my two dollars

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