



Response Rate Benchmark Report



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The Relevance of Response Rates

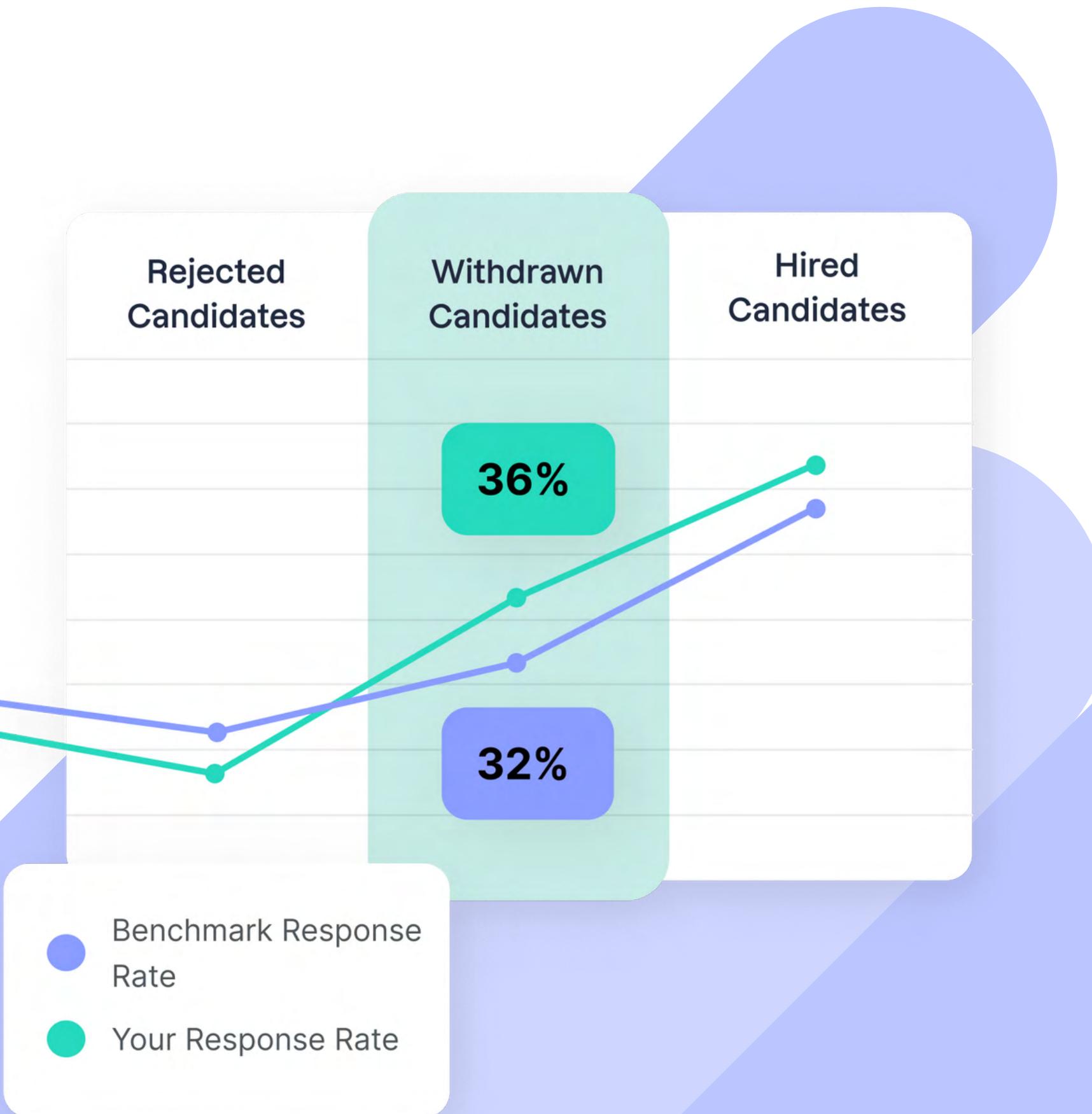
Before we begin examining the data together, you might be wondering “why response rates?”. As a Recruitment Analytics company, we’re keenly aware that response rates are one of the most important metrics when it comes to ensuring that you receive valuable and relevant information.

Response rates ultimately impact how much data you have to work with, and can make a world of difference in terms of data collection, quality, and your end results.

The response rate can also be seen as a measure of how much your respondents care about responding. A low response rate would mean they’re more disconnected. A higher response rate is better in any way you look at it.

That’s why understanding how your response rates are performing - and where your peers, competitors, and partners stand - is a crucial step to contextualizing your own efforts in gathering Recruitment Analytics data.

Seeing that you fall short of the benchmark may clue you in to understanding what you can prioritize in order to improve it, while noticing that you are outperforming your peers will likewise inform you of your competitive advantage.



Average Response Rates

HIGHLIGHTS

- The average response rate is **28%**
- The worst performing companies' rates are between **8%** and **23%**
- The best performing companies' rates are between **34%** and **67%**
- These figures only give a very basic overview, and breaking the data down further is crucial

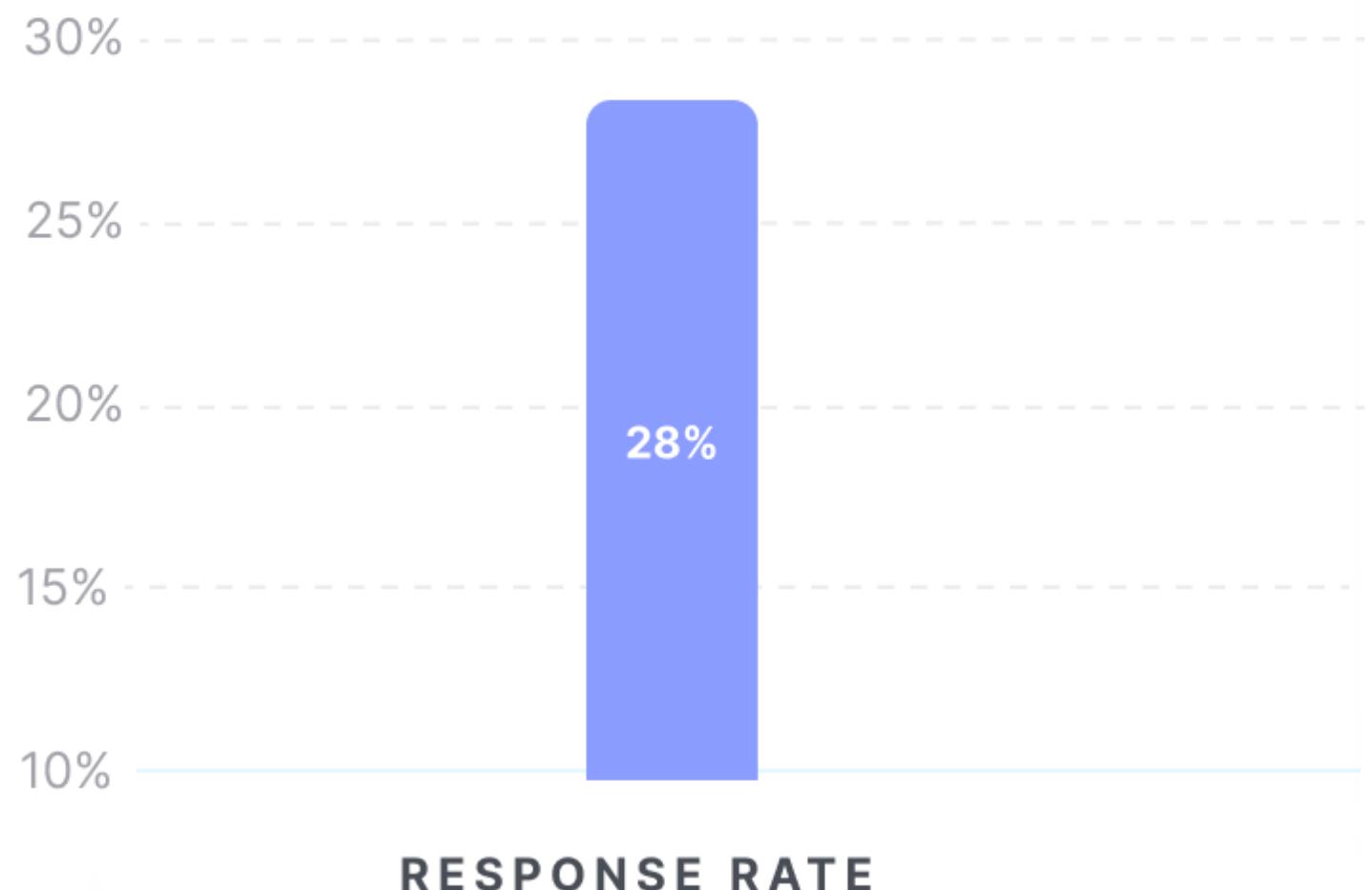
To begin, we see that the global average response rate is 28%, meaning that almost a third of all candidates and hiring managers respond to the surveys they receive.

However, the data becomes much more interesting once you begin to break it down by quartiles. This uncovers a much wider spread of response rates, and reveals the difference between the best performing companies and the worst ones.

WHAT ARE QUARTILES?

In statistics, a quartile is a segment comprising one quarter (25%) of your data. In total, there are 4 quartiles, two above the median and two below the median.

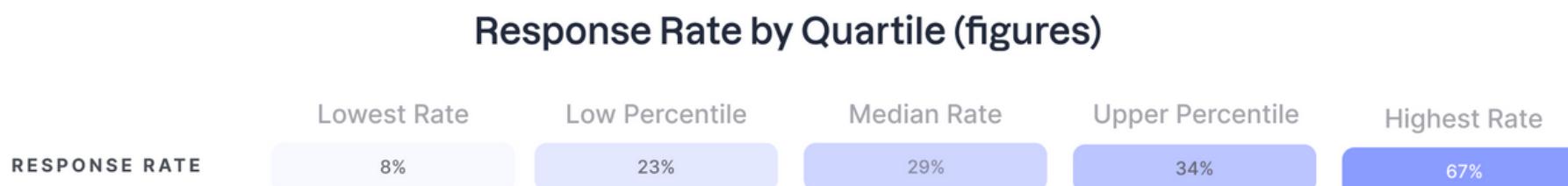
Average Response Rate



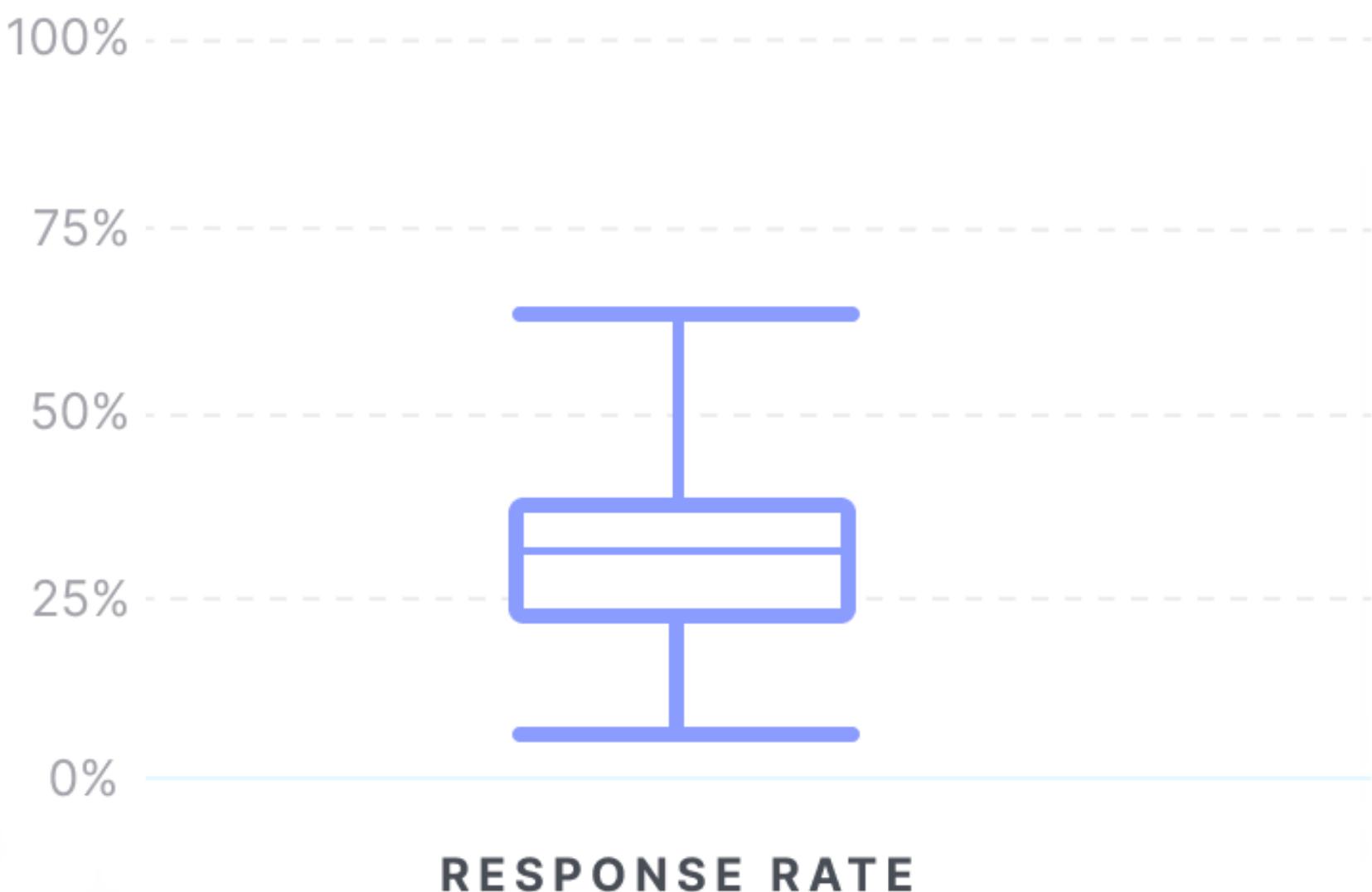
Average Response Rates (Quartiles)

Looking at the quartiles, the largest spread is visible in the **bottom 25%** and the **top 25%** of companies. The response rates in the bottom quartile range from **8%** to **23%**. The **middle 50%** of companies represent a smaller range, stretching from **23%** to **34%**. The top quartile stretches from an impressive **34%** all the way to a high **67%**.

This data shows us that the worst-performing companies only receive responses from anywhere between **1 in 10** to **1 in 4 of respondents**, while the best performing companies receive feedback from **over a third** of all respondents, with the truly exceptional ones achieving a response rate of over two thirds of all respondents.



Response Rate By Quartile



Response Rates by Journey Stage

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hired candidates have double the average response rates of other candidates
- Top performing companies can reach double the average response rate for Rejected and Withdrawn candidates
- Hiring Managers have the lowest response rates

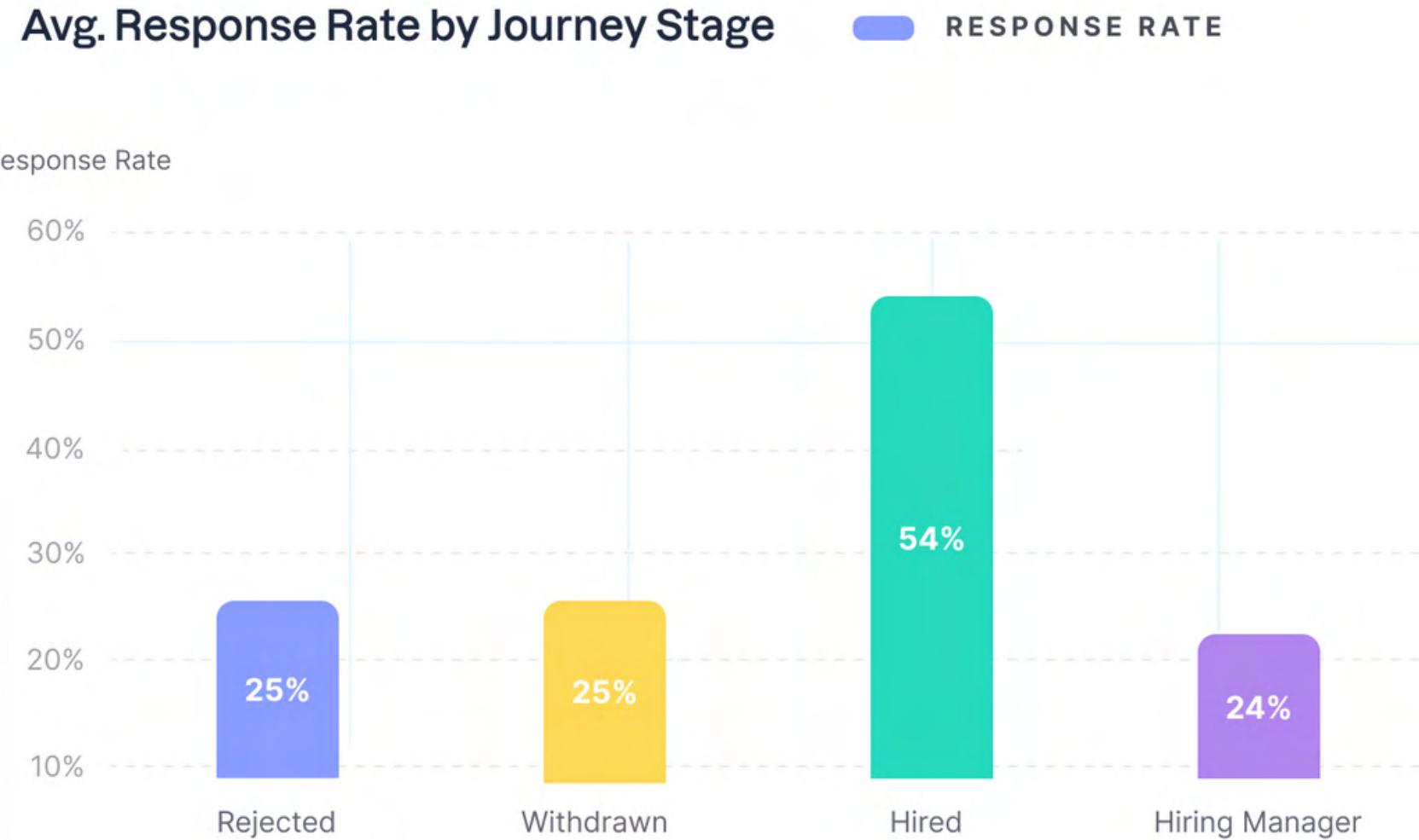
WHAT ARE JOURNEY STAGES?

A journey stage represents the part of the process at which the candidate exits the hiring pipeline and is then sent the survey. There are three main stages: **rejected**, **withdrawn**, and **hired**. **Hiring Managers** have been separated into their own journey stage, since they receive different surveys after the conclusion of the hiring process.

Examining the average response rates by journey stage reveals an interesting pattern: hired candidates respond at over twice the rate that rejected and withdrawn candidates do, at **54%** compared to averages of **25%**, and hiring managers have the lowest average response rate, at **24%**.

However, diving the data down into quartiles once again reveals interesting patterns that would otherwise go unnoticed. First, as we saw with the overall quartiles in the preceding chapter, response rates differ widely across the spectrum.

Avg. Response Rate by Journey Stage



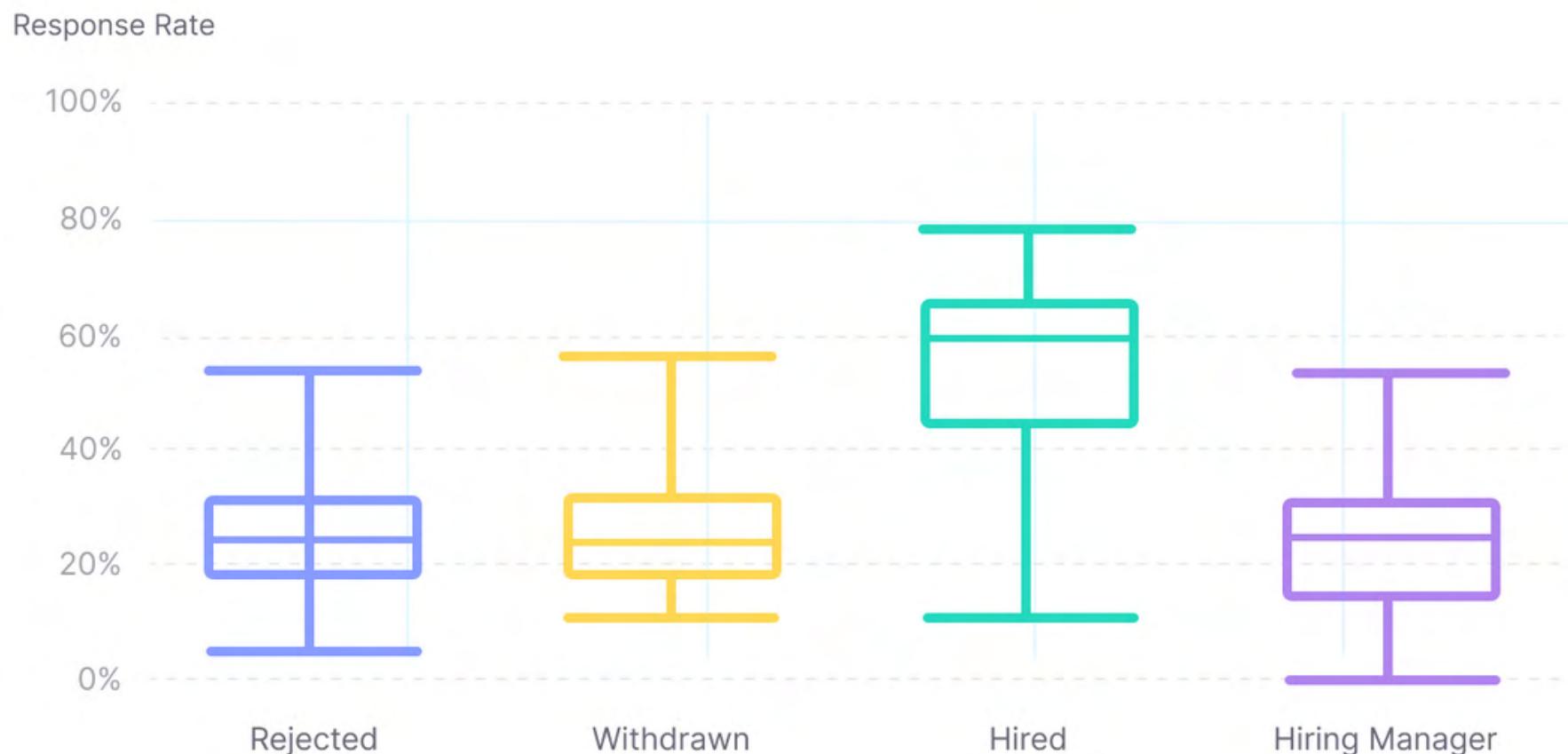
Response Rates by Journey Stage

Response rates for the lowest performing companies are particularly low for Hiring Managers, ranging from **0%** to **16%**, followed by Rejected (**5%** to **19%**), Withdrawn (**10%** to **18%**), and Hired (**13%** to **43%**) candidates. The middle 50% range is similar for Rejected candidates (**19%** to **31%**), Withdrawn candidates (**18%** to **31%**), and Hiring Managers (**25%** to **31%**), signifying that on average the middle 50% of companies receive responses from between **1/5** to **1/3** of all candidates and Hiring Managers.

Low response rates for Hiring Managers should also be taken as a red flag for a lack of internal recruiter-hiring manager alignment on the importance of providing feedback.

Hired candidates have particularly high response rates, with the middle 50% ranging from **43%** to **66%**, with the top quartile stretching from **66%** to **79%**, signifying that anywhere from **2/3rds** to **4/5ths** of all candidates respond to surveys.

Response Rate by Journey Stage (Quartile)



Response Rate by Journey Stage (Quartile)

Journey Stage	Lowest Rate	Low Percentile	Median Rate	Upper Percentile	Highest Rate
REJECTED	5%	19%	26%	32%	56%
WITHDRAWN	10%	18%	25%	31%	59%
HIRED	13%	43%	60%	66%	79%
HIRING MANAGER	0%	16%	25%	31%	55%

Response Rates by Touchpoint

HIGHLIGHTS

- Top performers in Rejected after Phone Screen and Rejected after Interview have the highest response rates of all Rejected candidates
- Rejected after Application and Rejected after Assessment have the most room for improvement
- Rejected after Interview has the highest average of all Rejected touchpoints

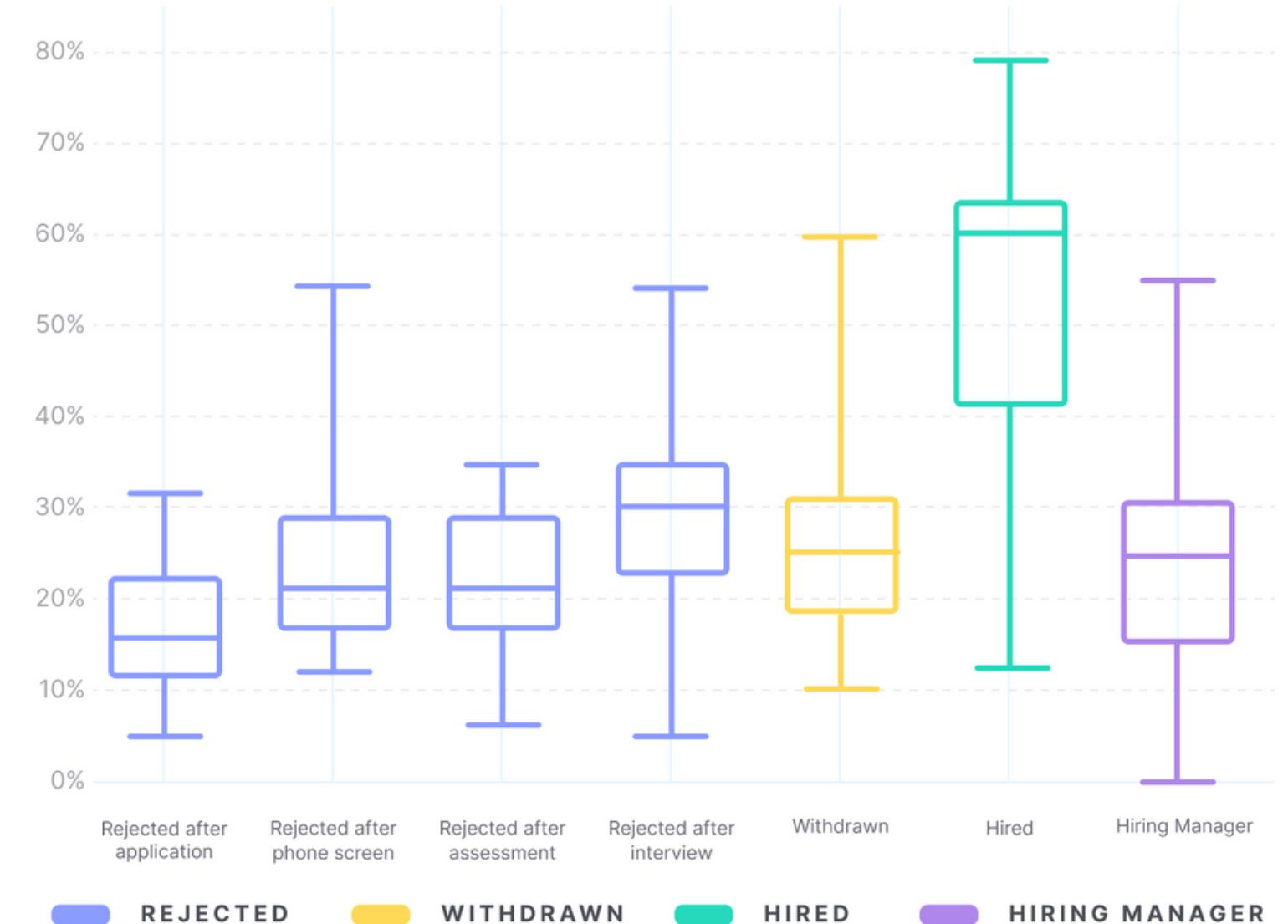
Rejected candidates can be sent a survey at multiple different stages, so it's important to compare different response rates across these various touchpoints, which you can see in the graph.

The results show that Rejected touchpoints can be divided into two groups.

Rejected after Application and Rejected after Assessment show similar ranges, with the first one ranging from **5%** to **31%** and the second one ranging from **7%** to **36%**. Rejected after Phone Screen and Rejected after Interview have much wider ranges, especially in the top quartiles, which range from **28%** to **55%** for the first one and **35%** to **56%** for the second among top performing companies.

We can also see that Rejected after Interview has the highest response rate overall, with a median of **30%**, well above **15%** to **22%** found in the other Rejected touchpoints, indicating their higher likelihood of answering a survey.

Response Rate Distribution by Touchpoint



Response Rate Distribution per Rejected Touchpoint

Quartile	Rejected after Application	Rejected after Phone Screen	Rejected after Assessment	Rejected after Interview
Top 25%	23% to 31%	28% to 55%	28% to 36%	35% to 56%
Middle 50-75%	15% to 23%	22% to 28%	22% to 28%	30% to 35%
Middle 25-50%	11% to 15%	18% to 22%	18% to 22%	24% to 30%
Bottom 25%	5% to 11%	13% to 18%	7% to 18%	5% to 24%

Response Rates by Company Size

HIGHLIGHTS

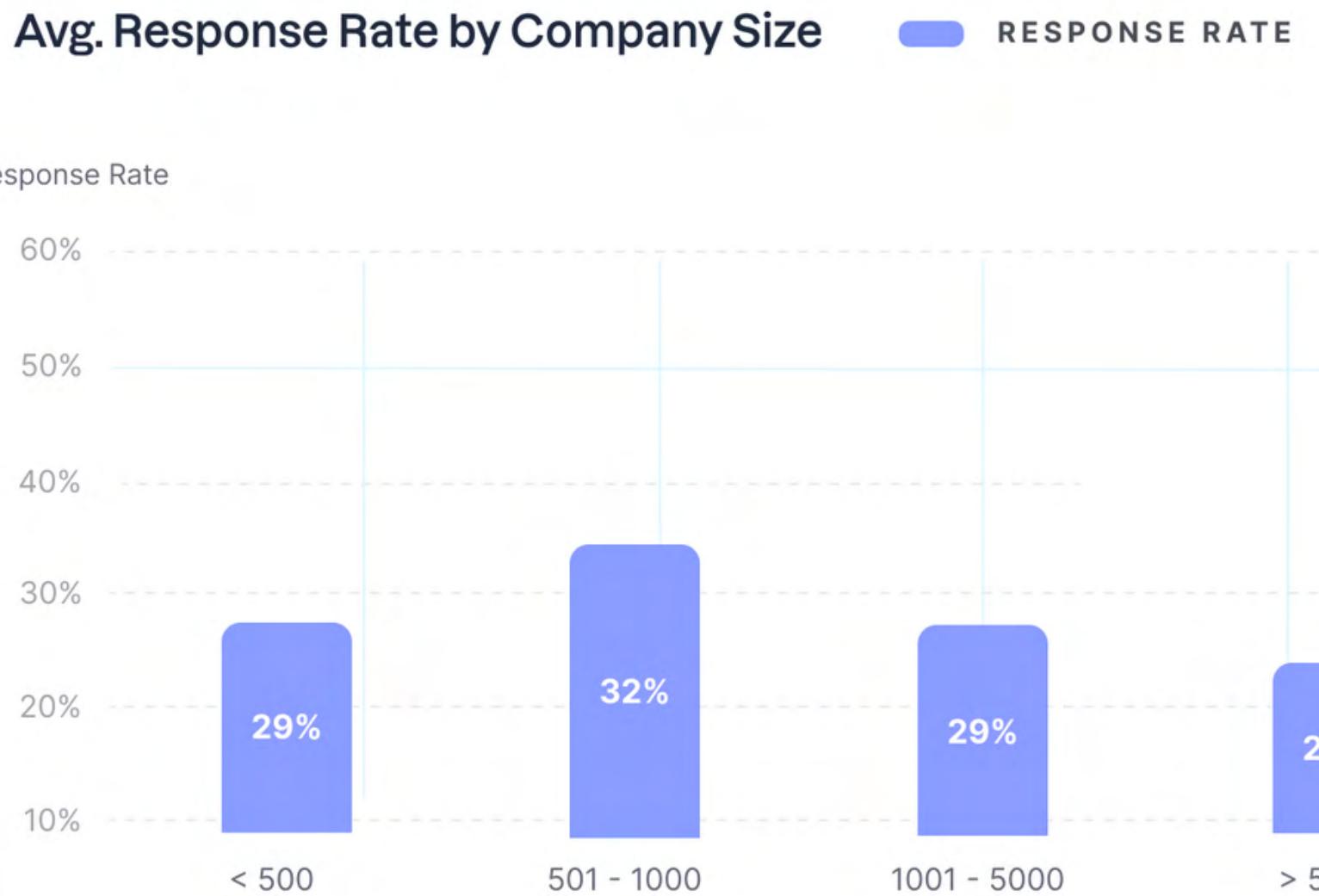
- Medium sized companies have the highest response rates on average, with top performing companies reaching up to **67%**
- Small and Enterprise sized companies have the lowest response rates, on average
- Small companies have the widest range of response rates from all sizes

Next, examining the response rates according to the amount of full time employees that a company has also reveals interesting trends.

We identified four main categories of company size, based on the amount of full-time employees that each company has. These are Small, (<500 employees), Medium, (501-1000 employees), Large, (1001-5000 employees), and Enterprise (>5000 employees).

Our analysis reveals that Medium companies have the highest average response rates, at **32%**, followed by Small and Large companies, which are tied at **29%**. Enterprises come last, with a lower rate of just **26%**.

Once again, we can dive into the quartiles here to see what type of rates are found for the best and worst performing companies.



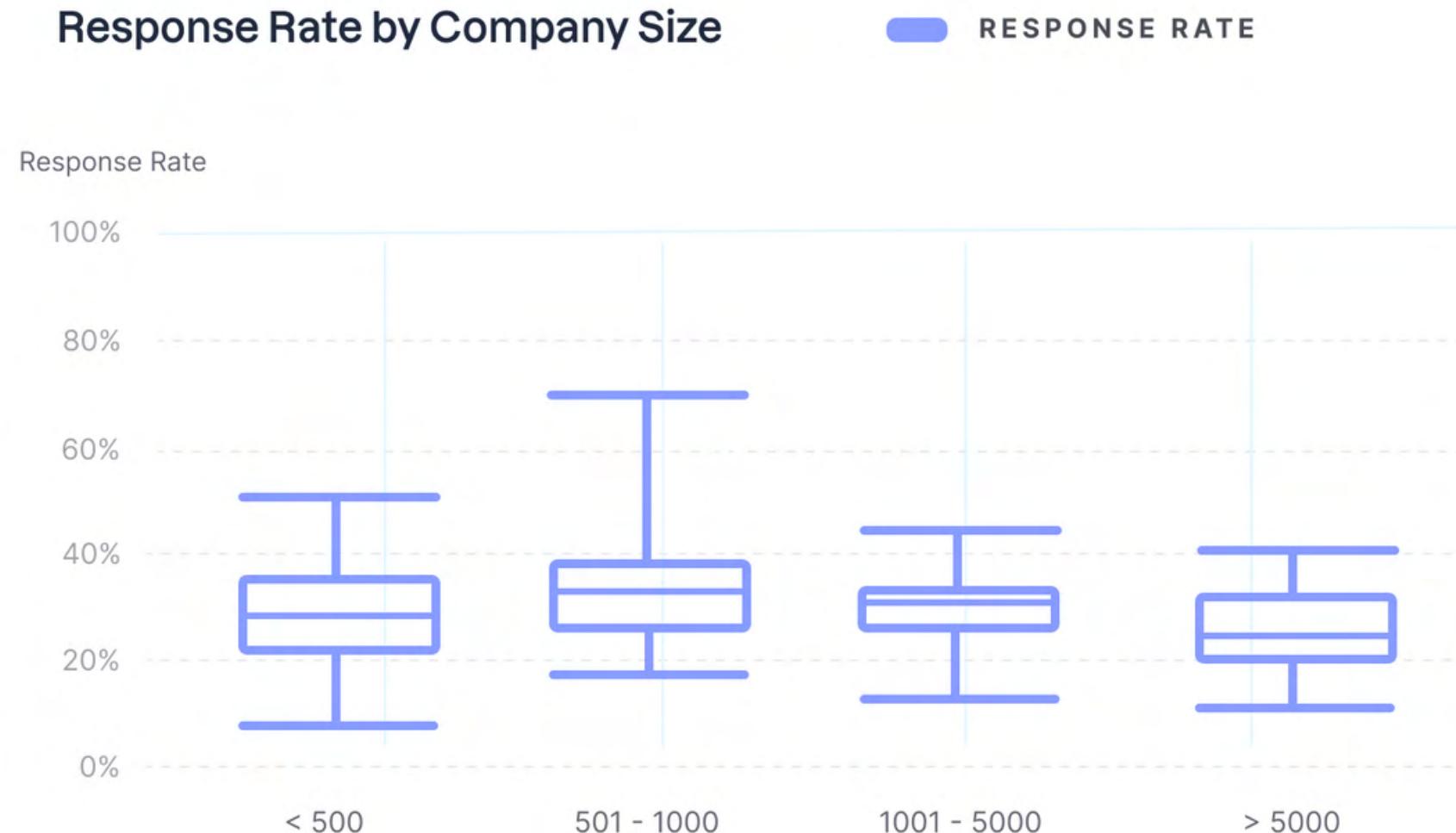
Response Rates by Company Size

Medium sized companies stand out as having the widest range of response rates, with the highest minimum rate (**18%**) and the highest maximum (**67%**). The top quartile reaches from **37%** to **67%**, signifying that the best performing Medium-sized companies see respondents filling out between **1/3rd** to **2/3rds** of all surveys that are sent.

Small companies also show a wider range at the top quartile, from **37%** to **55%**, but also have the widest range of response rates in the bottom quartile, from **8%** to **21%**. Large and Enterprise companies show similar spreads, although Large companies have a noticeably higher median.

However, the worst-performing Large companies still outperform the worst-performing Small and Enterprise firms, signifying lots of room for improvement for these types of firms specifically. The lowest-performing Small companies are doing especially poorly, highlighting more potential for improvement.

Response Rate by Company Size



Response Rate by Company Size

Company Size	Lowest Rate	Low Percentile	Median Rate	Upper Percentile	Highest Rate
<500 FTE	8%	21%	28%	37%	55%
501 - 1000 FTE	18%	25%	30%	37%	67%
1001 - 5000 FTE	14%	24%	30%	33%	45%
>5000 FTE	12%	20%	26%	34%	41%

Response Rates by Region

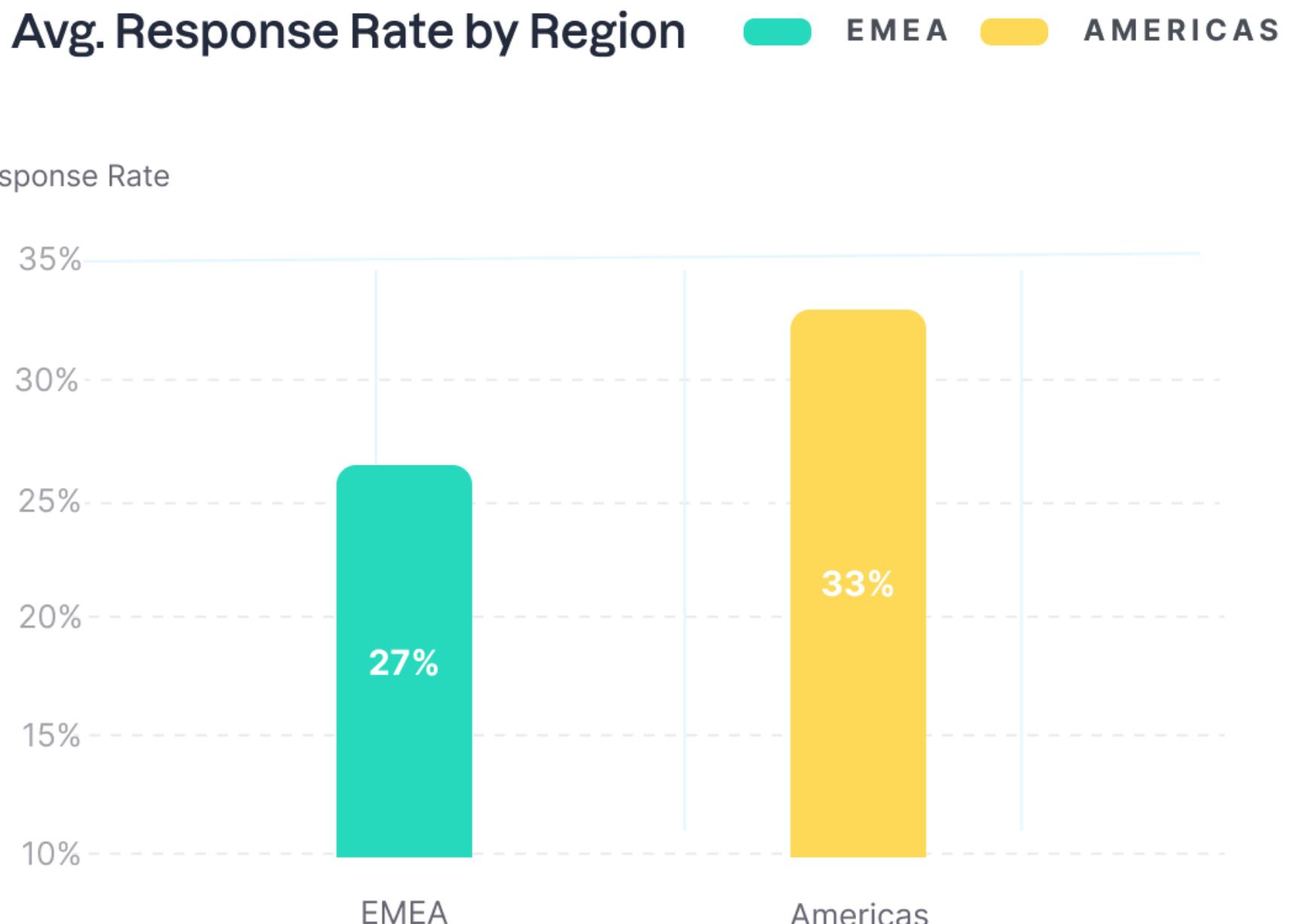
HIGHLIGHTS

- The Americas have a higher response rate than EMEA, on average
- The middle 50% of EMEA companies outperform the same quartiles in the Americas
- Top performing American companies have much higher response rates than top performing EMEA companies

Next, let's take a look at the response rates according to region. Due to similar results, we've bundled the UK in the EMEA region, and focused on comparing EMEA to the Americas region, which includes both North and South America.

We can immediately see that the Americas show a higher average response rate than EMEA, with a response rate of **33%** compared to EMEA's **27%**.

Breaking this down further by quartile, we see that the main differences lie in the performance of companies at the bottom and top quartiles.



Response Rates by Region

The worst-performing EMEA companies have response rates ranging from **10%** to **19%**, while the same quartile in the Americas has response rates of **19%** to **24%**.

The middle 50% perform similarly for both groups, although the top EMEA companies in the penultimate quartile outperform their American counterparts, with a **36%** response rate compared to **34%** for the American companies.

The main difference can be seen in how top-performing companies do in EMEA vs. the Americas. Top performers in EMEA range from **36%** to **44%**, while the same group in the Americas range all the way from **34%** to a very high **67%** response rate.

There is undoubtedly a cultural difference at work between these two regions, but the similarities between middle performers and stark differences between top performers highlight that EMEA companies may benefit from learning from their American counterparts.

Response Rate by Region



Response Rate Quartiles by Region

Region	Lowest Rate	Low Percentile	Median Rate	Upper Percentile	Highest Rate
EMEA	10%	19%	28%	36%	44%
AMERICAS	19%	24%	32%	34%	67%

Response Rates by Department

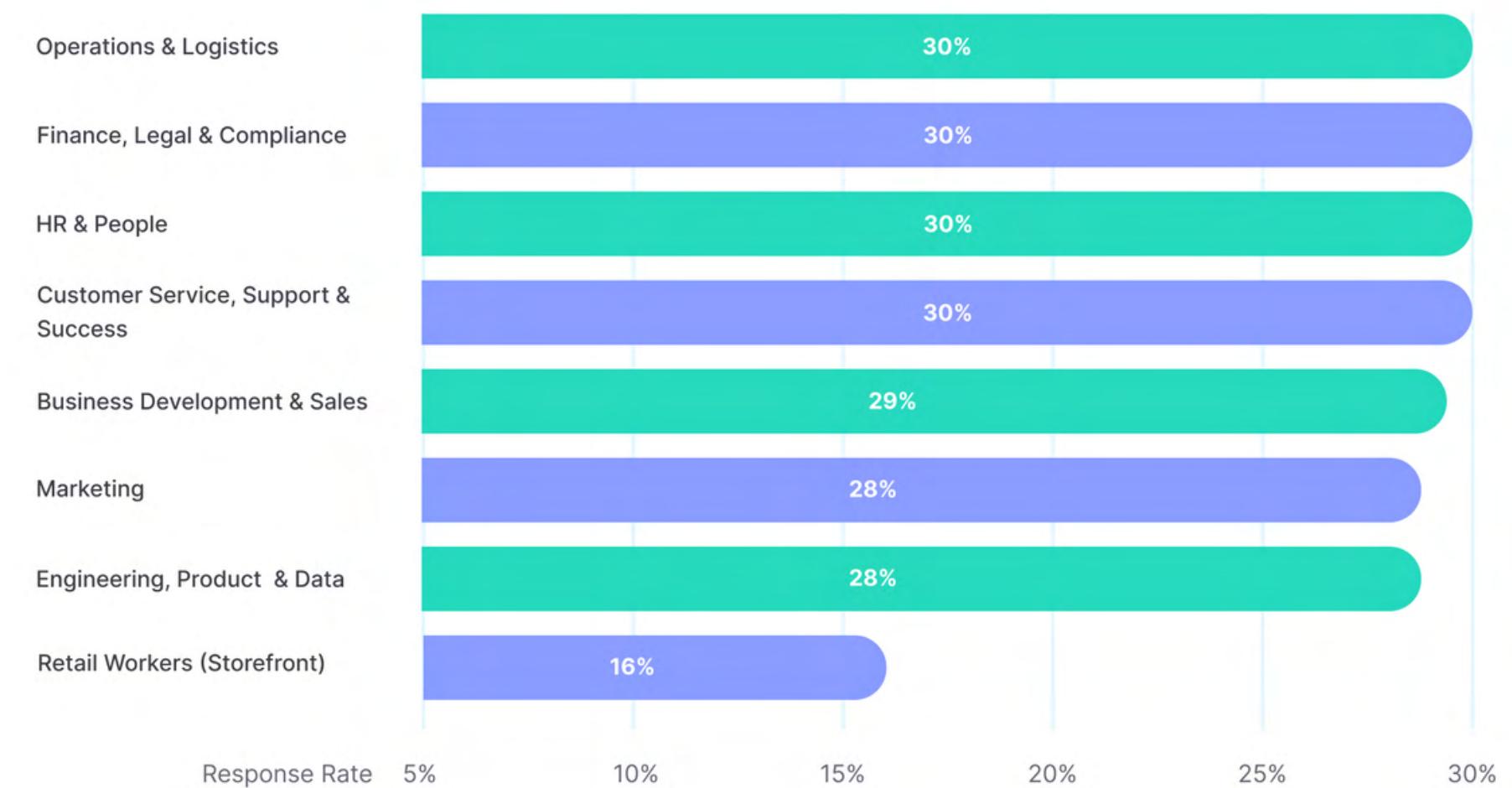
HIGHLIGHTS

- Retail Customer Service has by far the lowest response rates, presumably due to rapid hiring, turnover, and low candidate attachment
- The middle 50% of Marketing departments underperform compared to all other departments, except Retail Customer Service
- Top performers in Customer Success, Support & Success and Engineering, Product & Data fall short of other departments

Finally, let's break down the difference in response rates across departments. Looking at the data on average response rates, three groups immediately jump out.

We see that Operations & Logistics, Finance, Legal & Compliance, HR & People and Customer Service, Support, & Success are leading the pack, with average response rates of **30%**. Business Development & Sales are slightly lower at **29%**, and Marketing and Engineering, Product & Sales are tied at **28%**. Retail Customer Service noticeably underperforms compared to other departments, sitting at a low **16%**.

Average Response Rates per Department

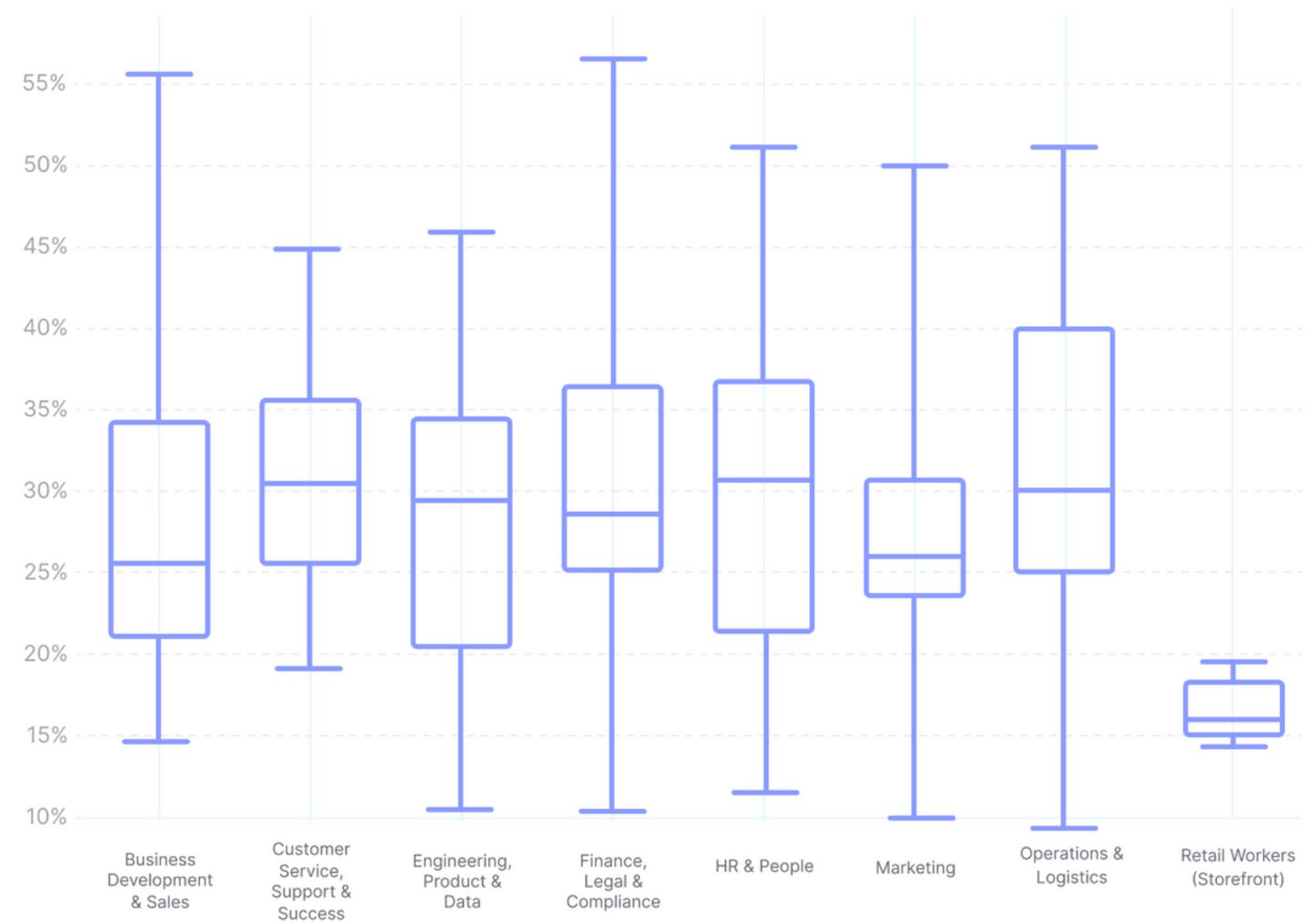


Response Rates by Department

Examining the rates in detail according to quartile helps to answer the questions raised by the average graph. First, we can see that the bottom quartile is relatively consistent across departments, ranging from **11%** to **25%** in all departments, with the noticeable exception of Retail Customer Service.

The middle 50% of Business Development & Sales, Engineering, Product & Data and HR & People show similar response rates, ranging from **22%** to **38%**. Customer Support, Service & Success and Finance, Legal & Compliance slightly outperform other departments in the middle 50%, ranging from **25%** to **37%**, while Marketing falls short of the pack, ranging from **23%** to **31%**, highlighting lots of room for improvement.

Response Rate Distribution by Department

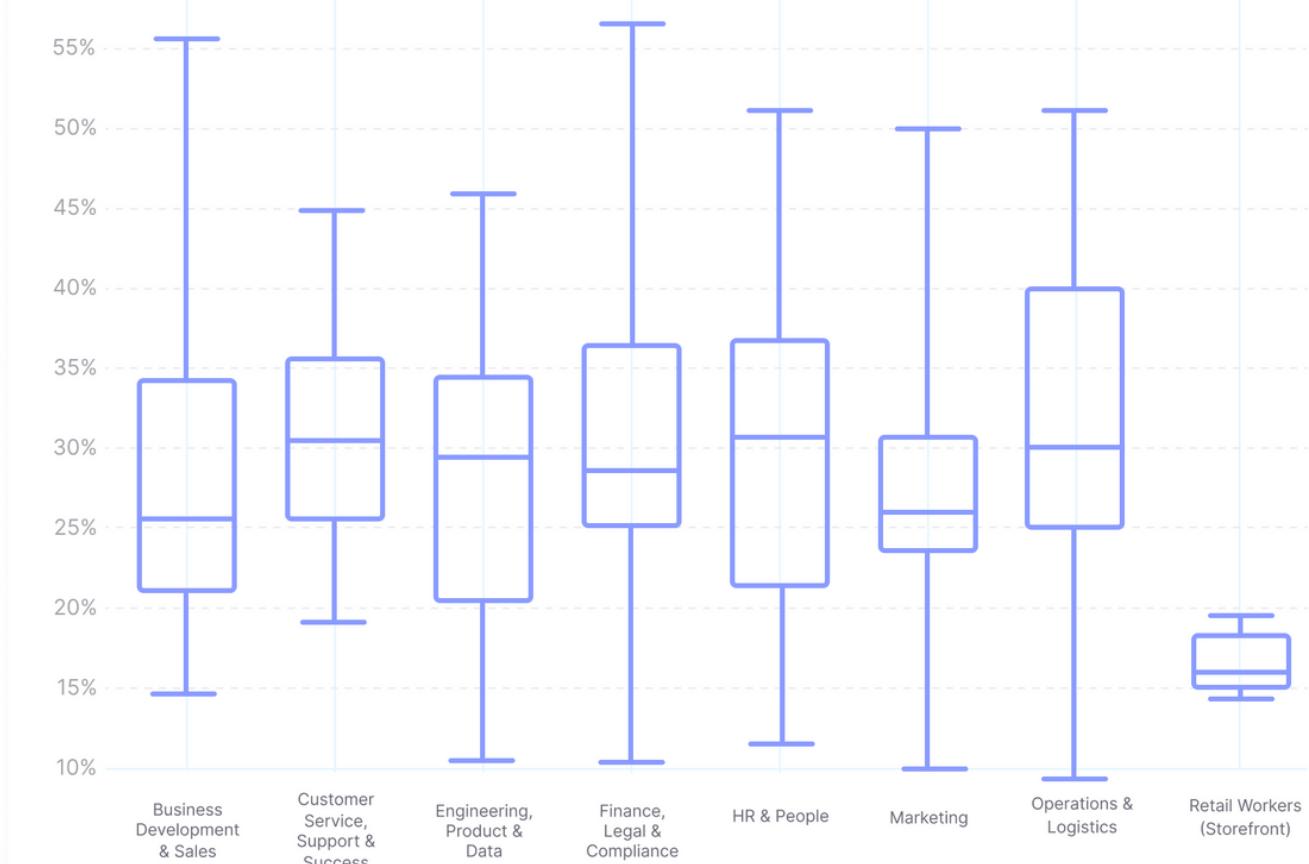


Response Rates by Department

Looking specifically at the companies in the top performing quartile, we see that Finance, Legal & Compliance (37% to 57%) leads the way, followed by Business Development & Sales (34% to 56%), HR & People (38% to 51%), Operations & Logistics (35% to 53%), Marketing (31% to 50%), Engineering, Product & Data (34% to 46%) and Customer Service, Support & Success (36% to 45%).

There is a large outlier in Retail Customer Service, which shows a much smaller range and a much lower average than other departments, spanning only 14% to 19% in response rates. This is presumably due to the nature of retail work, which is often marked by volume hiring, rapid turnovers, and a low degree of attachments for candidates.

Response Rate Distribution by Department



Response Rate Distribution per Department

Quartile	Business Development & Sales	Customer Service, Support & Success	Engineering, Product & Data	Finance, Legal & Compliance	HR & People	Marketing	Operations & Logistics	Retail Workers (Storefront)
Top 25%	34% to 56%	36% to 45%	34% to 46%	37% to 57%	38% to 51%	31% to 50%	35% to 53%	18% to 19%
Middle 50-75%	26% to 34%	31% to 36%	29% to 34%	28% to 37%	31% to 38%	26% to 31%	30% to 35%	16% to 18%
Middle 25-50%	23% to 26%	26% to 31%	22% to 29%	25% to 28%	22% to 31%	23% to 26%	25% to 30%	15% to 16%
Bottom 25%	14% to 23%	18% to 26%	11% to 22%	11% to 25%	12% to 22%	10% to 23%	9% to 25%	14% to 15%

Best Practices to Improve Response Rates

The following section will break down various ways which we've noticed to be especially effective at improving your response rates. With almost a decade of experience in providing various survey solutions we've tried many different approaches, and all of our experience has shown that these are the most effective when it comes to improving both candidate and hiring manager response rates.

SURVEY TIMING

First, we see that the timing is very important, especially when it comes to Candidate Experience. Many companies choose to send a Candidate Experience survey right after a candidate is rejected. A rejection is an emotional moment, and immediately asking for feedback raises the risk of receiving skewed results from disappointed candidates, or never hearing back at all. Giving candidates some space is a key part of securing high response rates, since it allows them to process the rejection and allow their emotions to cool off a bit.

We also see that waiting too long can also have a detrimental effect and lower the quality of your data. As we explained previously, sending a survey too soon is likely to gather emotionally charged responses and skew your dataset.

However, the same effect applies to If you wait too long, respondents will lose interest and partially forget parts of the process. They will be less likely to report accurate information, and may answer questions without being as sure as they were previously.

That's why we [**recommend waiting a couple days**](#) after a candidate has been informed of a rejection before sending them a Candidate Experience survey. This will give them sufficient time to calm down and give you objective, rational feedback that accurately reflects their feelings on the hiring process.

Best Practices to Improve Response Rates

SURVEY FREQUENCY

Our methodology recommends only sending a single survey at the end of the process, both for Candidate Experience and Hiring Manager Satisfaction.

There are two main reasons for this:

We routinely see that the best and most objective insights can only be drawn after the process has completed. If candidates receive a Candidate Experience survey while they're still in the process, they'll often give you perfect scores on all questions to come off as motivated and eager to continue the hiring process.

We've seen specific examples of candidates leaving comments such as "Super excited to hear back from on the next steps!" despite being slated for rejection, which results in an understandably awful Candidate Experience once the candidate is informed of the outcome.

For Hiring Managers, the reason is much simpler: they cannot provide a comprehensive answer on their opinion of the process if it hasn't yet been completed.

Recruiter Performance

How would you rate the experience you had with our recruitment team?

Role, Team & Company Overview
The recruiter had a strong understanding of the role, team and company

 n/a

Screening Questions
The recruiter asked questions that allowed me to highlight my skills and experience

 n/a

Communication & Feedback
The recruiter clearly communicated the next steps and provided me with helpful feedback in a timely manner

 n/a

Is there anything else you would like to add?
Enjoyable, exciting, and I am definitely waiting to hear back from the recruiter :)

Best Practices to Improve Response Rates

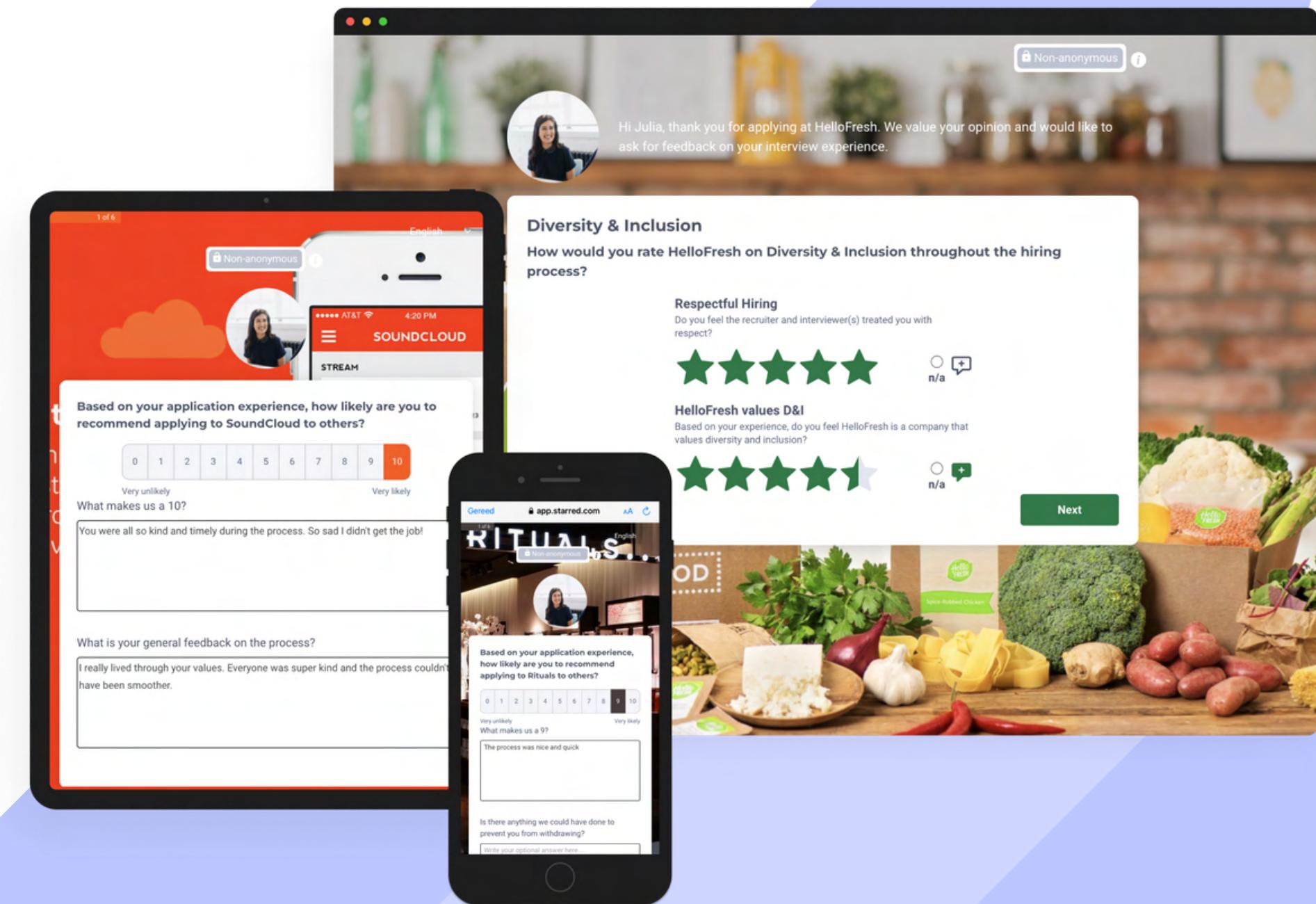
AUTHENTICITY, PERSONALIZATION & BRANDING

Another important part of ensuring a high response rate is authenticity, personalization, and branding. This is more important for Candidate Experience than for Hiring Manager Satisfaction, although it benefits both.

Candidates want to feel like Candidate Experience is a core part of your recruitment process, even if they weren't successful. Using an impersonal survey provider leads to lower response rates and situations in which candidates are less willing to fully complete the entire survey.

Part of making sure that your surveys come across as personalized is by making sure that your branding is well represented. Featuring a background of your offices and styling the colors in a way that is consistent with branding is a great way to make candidates feel like Candidate Experience is a core priority and that your surveys are a key part of your brand.

Surveys should come off as being a tightly integrated part of your overall process, and respondents should be encouraged to feel like they are being heard. Consider the difference between how a default Google Forms survey looks, compared to a fully branded fit-for-purpose survey. Candidates are more likely to start and finish surveys that appear to come straight from the company they applied to.



Best Practices to Improve Response Rates

AUTHENTICITY, PERSONALIZATION & BRANDING

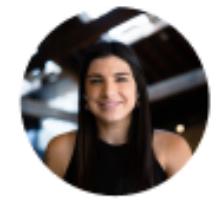
Part of this personalization aspect is the use of personalized language as well as approachable survey practices. First, personalized language refers to parts of the survey that specifically refer to the candidate's name, the office location, the job they applied for, and the people they interacted with. Consider the difference between:

"Hi, thank you for applying to a job at Company Co. Please let us know how you found the process"

and

"Hey John, thanks for your application for the Software Engineer position at our San Francisco office. We regret that you were rejected, but we'd like to hear all about your experience:"

Candidates are only familiar with the companies they work with, so receiving a survey that looks like it came from a real authority figure in the company, such as a Head of TA, will be more impactful for candidates than a generic email from an unknown third party like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms.



Alexandra Bianco
Recruiting Operations Manager
Dropbox



Dear @FirstName,

We are sorry you were not a match for our job opening of @JobRole at our @Location office. Would you mind filling out this quick survey? Please be as honest as possible, it helps us improve

Based on your application experience, how likely are you to recommend applying with Dropbox to others?



very unlikely

very likely

Thank you for taking the time and we'll hope you will land your dream job soon.

Best Practices to Improve Response Rates

SURVEY LENGTH

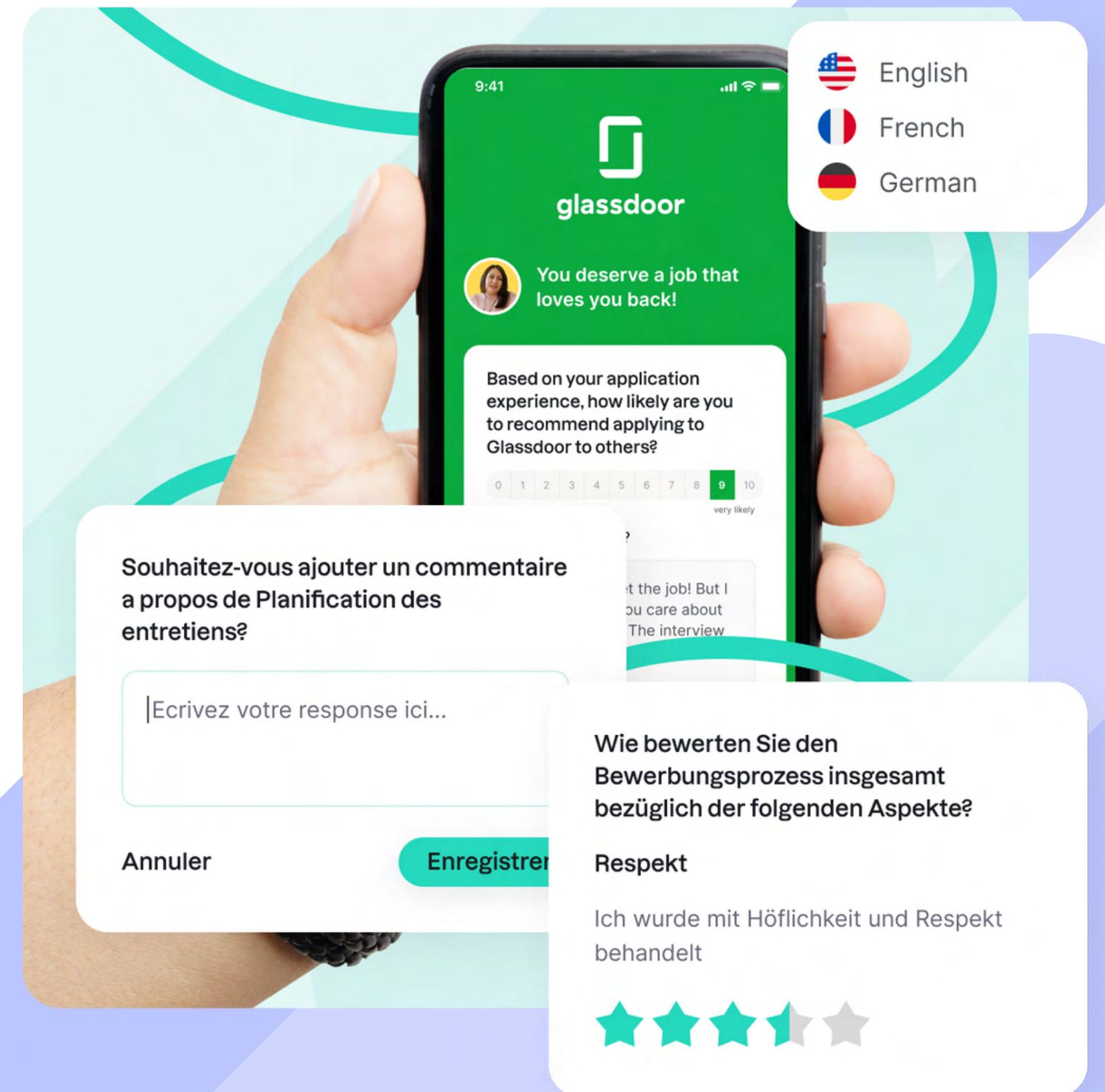
The length of each survey can differ, but the important part is striking a balance between user experience and the amount and quality of the data you can gather. Surveys should be short enough to capture a representation of a respondent's experience within just a few minutes without reducing the quality of the potential insights from the respondents.

RELEVANCE OF THE QUESTIONS

Surveys - and their questions - should be tailored to each touchpoint of the process. For example, a post-interview survey would look very different from a post-application or post-screening survey. In the same vein, questions should be tailored to the role(s) in question and to candidate concerns. For example, an internal applicant for a software engineering position would have different concerns from an external applicant for a sales position, and should be asked different questions.

AUTOMATIC TRANSLATIONS

As the often-cited Nelson Mandela quote states, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart". Part of crafting a memorable survey experience, especially for multinational corporations operating and hiring in a wide variety of countries, can come from sending surveys in the local language that is most relevant to the candidate in question.



Best Practices to Improve Response Rates

CUSTOM SENDING DOMAINS

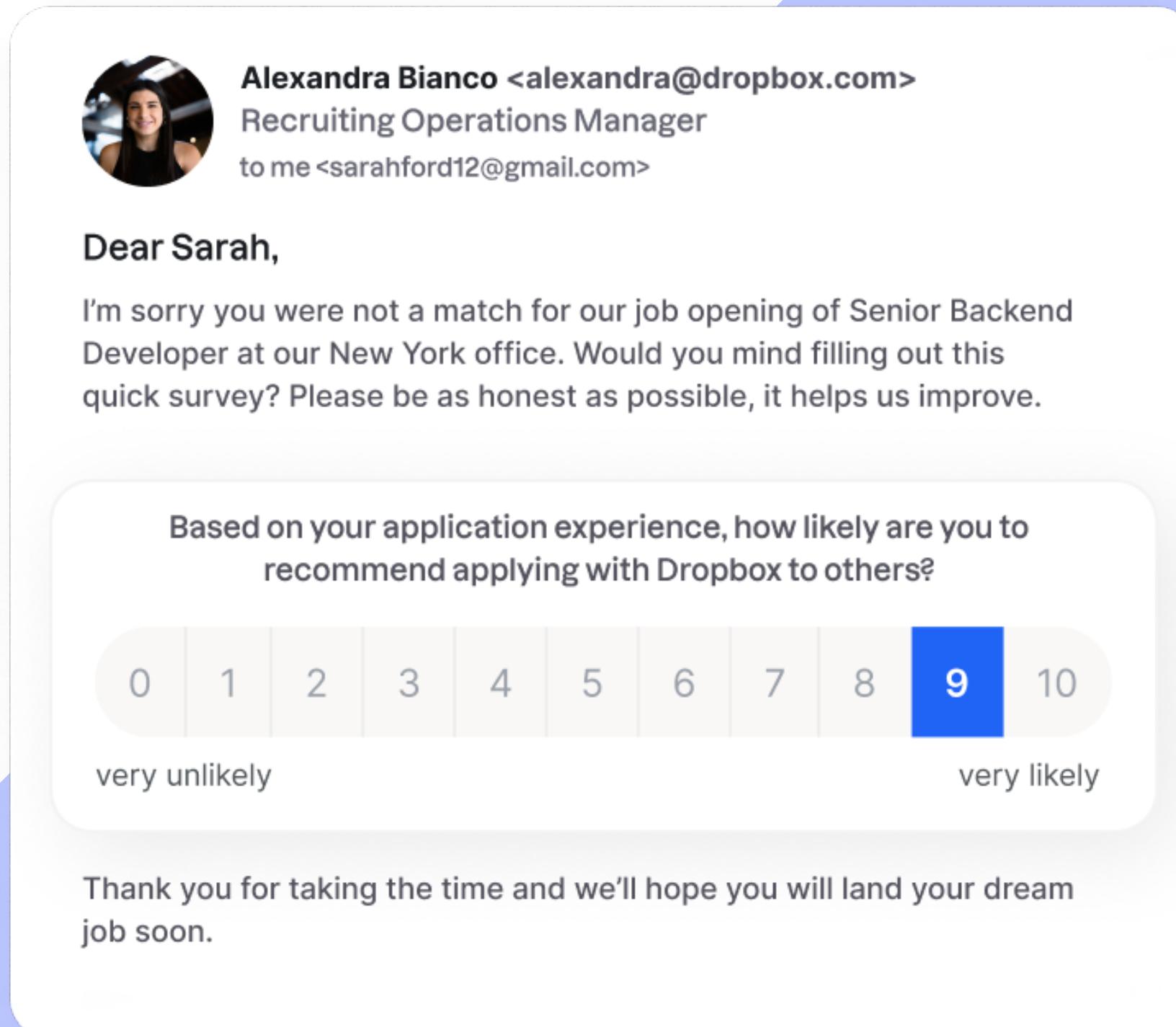
Something else we commonly see is candidates reacting positively to **custom sending domains**, which send the surveys directly from a company domain, such as "feedback@acme.com" or directly from a real team members' email. This makes the invitation come across as authentic and real.

NPS EMBEDDING

Finally, a large part of fostering higher response rates is making sure that your surveys are easily accessible. We recommend embedding the initial NPS question into the email so that candidates can immediately begin answering the survey, increasing your completion and response rates.

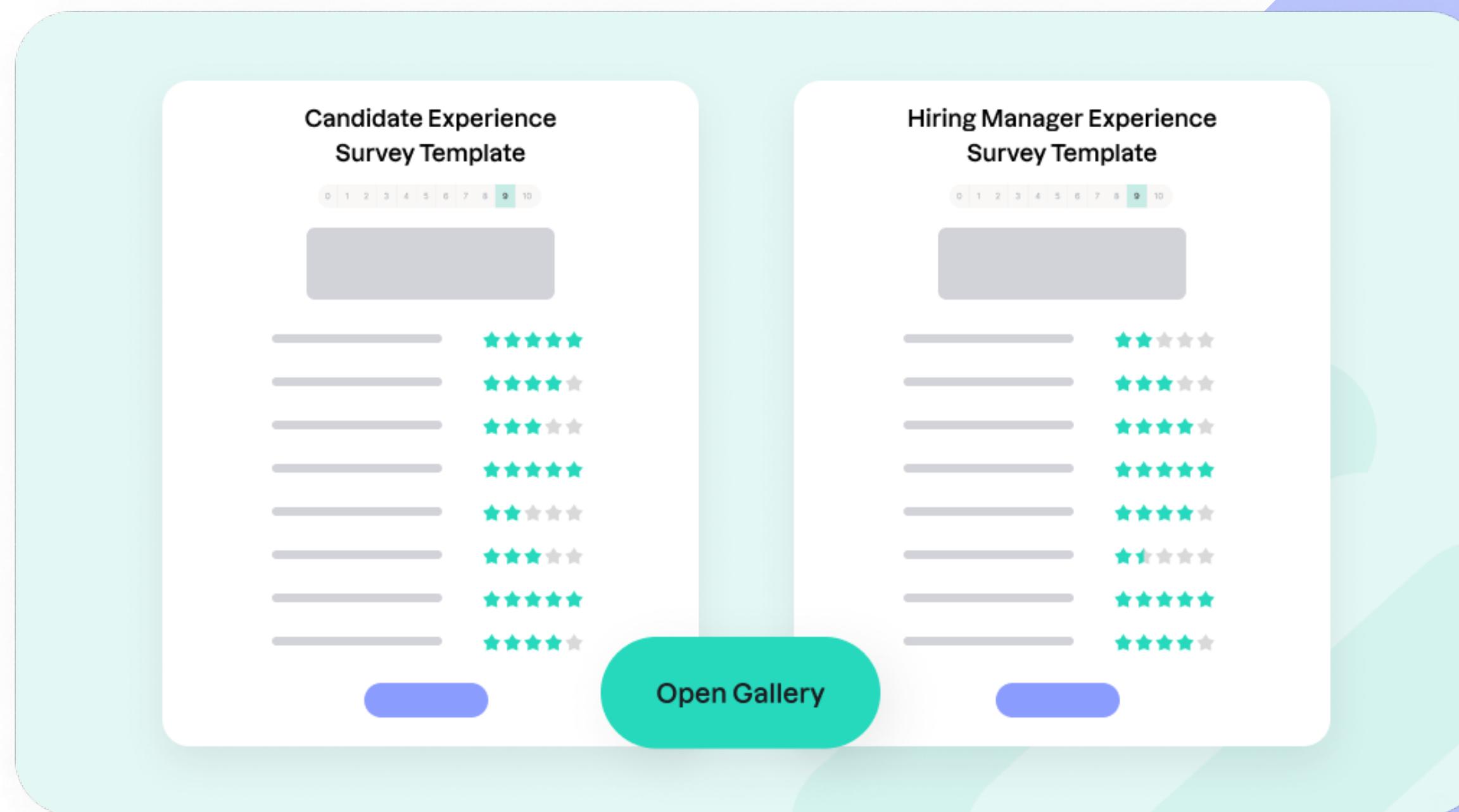
CANDIDATE COMMUNICATION

Another important part of increasing survey rates is informing the candidate ahead of time that they will be receiving a survey. Plus, your subject line impacts the click-through rate substantially, so make sure to choose an effective subject line that catches the respondent's interest, with appropriate personalization. Scheduling a reminder after a couple days can also help nudge forgetful candidates to fill out their surveys.



The Starred Survey Template Library

If you're in need of a relevant template that follows best practices, make sure to check out our exhaustive Template Library which features ready-made surveys for all types of candidates, hiring managers, and more! You [can access it here](#), or through the image below:



Candidate Experience Benchmark Report

If you found this report interesting, we recommend checking out our 2022 Candidate Experience Benchmark Report. Candidate Experience and Hiring Manager Satisfaction are intertwined. They both support each other and are the strongest when they're both measured and optimized together.

Our Candidate Experience Benchmark report is the most in-depth breakdown of all Candidate Experience data to date, and features dedicated chapters on:

- NPS breakdowns per touchpoint and stage
- NPS per Company Size
- NPS per Department
- NPS per Region
- NPS per Candidate Source
- A unique Candidate Comment Analysis, which used machine learning to identify what candidates discussed the most in their qualitative comments

[You can access the full report here](#), or by clicking on the image (with no email required!).

 Starred

2022 Candidate Experience Benchmark Report

Candidate NPS and the drivers behind it



Hiring Manager Satisfaction Benchmark Report

We've also recently released our Hiring Manager Satisfaction Benchmark Report, which takes the entirety of our Hiring Manager dataset and answers questions such as:

- The differences in Hiring Manager NPS according to company size and region.
- How the best-performing companies compare to the worst-performing ones and what the most relevant areas of improvement are.
- How Hiring Managers rate candidates, recruiters, their kick-off meetings, and the recruitment process.

[You can access the full report here](#), or through the image (with no email required!):

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Hiring Manager Satisfaction Benchmark Report

NPS

+29

NPS

23% Detractors 25% Passives 52% Promoters

Read full report

What is Starred?

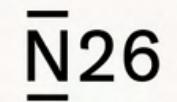
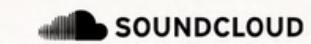
Starred is a Recruitment Analytics platform designed to help recruitment teams to improve their recruitment processes and enhance Candidate Experience, Hiring Manager Satisfaction, Quality of Hire, and more. With Starred, you can automatically gather real-time feedback from all key stakeholders in your recruiting process, including candidates, hiring managers, recruiters, and new hires. This data is then analyzed and presented in a way that is easy to understand, so you can quickly identify areas for improvement and take action to optimize your hiring strategies.

There are no manual steps involved. Feedback is collected automatically and the data transformed into insights on various aspects of your recruitment process, such as your Candidate Experience, Hiring Manager Satisfaction, and the effectiveness of your recruitment efforts. This allows you to make data-driven decisions that will help you to attract and retain top talent

"We have been able to more than double our candidate response rate through Starred and appreciate that the platform enables us to capture more nuanced feedback from our candidates."

Esther Chou

People Strategy & Operations





A final word from our side. We truly appreciate you reading this report, and we hope you enjoyed it. We trust the information was useful, and that it aids you in strengthening your recruitment process and improving your Candidate Experience and your response rates. We also wanted to thank you for getting this far, and for reading this report in the first place.

We're seeing a large amount of interest in Recruitment Analytics, and we're very happy to see that an increasing amount of companies are continuing to increase their use of feedback from candidates, hiring managers, and recruiters.

If you want to start measuring your Candidate Experience, Hiring Manager Satisfaction, Quality of Hire or Recruiter Experience and uncover hidden insights, feel free to book a discovery call to discuss how you could utilize Starred.

[Book a call](#)