



# How an Intuitive SMS Survey Is Driving Higher Engagement and Targeted Learning



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# How an Intuitive SMS Survey Is Driving Higher Engagement and Targeted Learning

Mac Haik Restaurant Group struggled to source feedback from its frontline employees at its award-winning restaurants. Despite encouraging employees to respond to email surveys, response rates were low – and they needed a more effective feedback collection process. That’s where goHappy came in.

## Background

Mac Haik Restaurant Group operates a portfolio of award-winning restaurants that pride themselves on unforgettable guest experiences and a motivating work environment.

The team partnered with goHappy in 2024 to increase employee engagement survey response rates and give managers more actionable feedback. They also sought to build and maintain trust between leadership and the frontline restaurant workers as their business grew.

## Before goHappy: A Low Engagement Status Quo

Mac Haik Restaurant Group wanted more feedback from employees. So they sent surveys to their frontline employees’ personal email addresses. The problem? The response rate was reliably low – usually only around 6%.

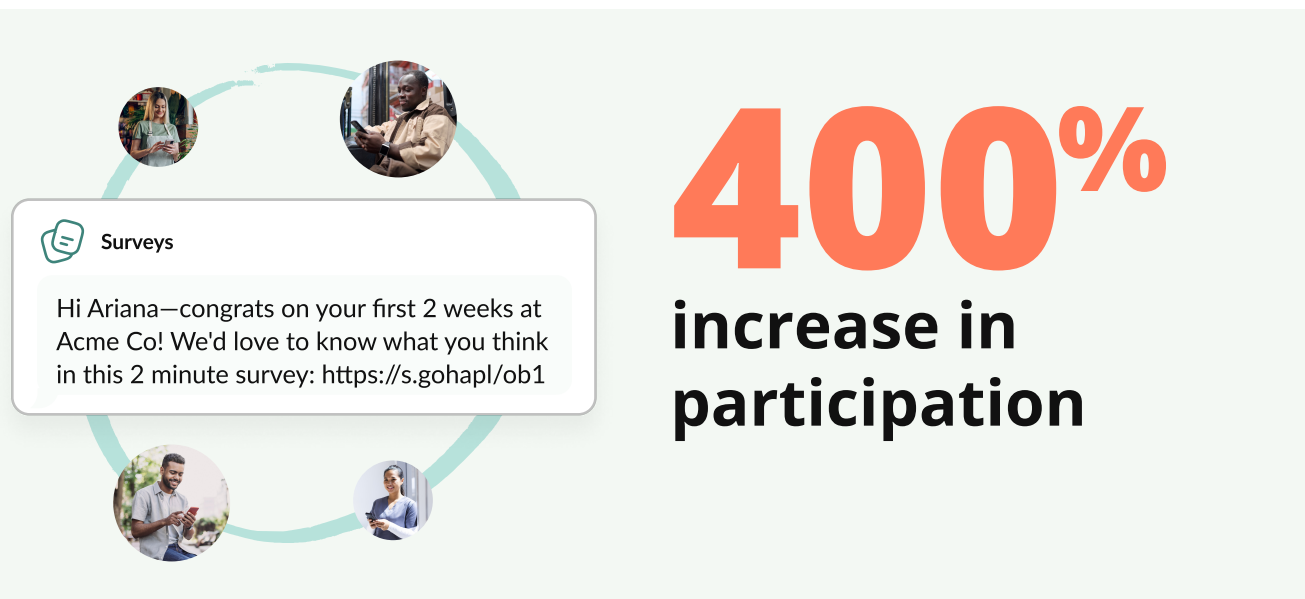
Mac Haik soon realized employees mostly looked at their emails when they first applied for jobs. After that, email use tapered off.

Some frontline workers even have dedicated email addresses for job applications, so email wasn’t a reliable or effective way to distribute the employee engagement survey.

**“When you get a guest complaint or feedback from guests, you have to have the same kind of urgency when you’re hearing things from your team members,”**

*Vanessa Varano, Vice President of Learning and Development, Mac Haik*

But with low response rates, the team wasn't getting enough employee feedback to act on. There was a disconnect between frontline and home office workers, and switching to goHappy was the solution for a more seamless and intuitive feedback collection process.



## With goHappy: Using SMS to Drive Engagement Survey Participation

In Q1, after switching from email surveys with a 6% response rate to SMS surveys in goHappy, Mac Haik Restaurant Group saw response rates hit 30% — a 400% increase in participation.

"We've just seen so many more detailed responses ... (employees) wanting to come forward and tell us about their feedback and ideas," says Chloe Hart, Director of HR.

By switching to goHappy to send surveys via text message, Mac Haik eliminated friction from the feedback collection process. The team also attributes part of the improved response rate to a shorter survey design and goHappy's automated system, which nudges recipients who haven't completed the survey.

## SMS Surveys Instead of Email

Email surveys weren't getting responses. Most employees ignored them. But SMS surveys now allow Mac Haik to send branded text messages that meet their employees where they are — making it easy for employees to leave feedback quickly.

The switch to SMS worked for a few key reasons:

- ✓ Most people have a cell phone that can receive text messages, even if they don't have smartphones.
- ✓ Frontline workers check email the most during the job application process, unlike desk workers who check email more often.
- ✓ SMS surveys allow them to send branded text messages instead of emails that appear to come from third-party systems.

"I think the branding has helped so much," Hart says.

"The text message comes through, and they see 'Mac Haik' first, unlike the email surveys, where it doesn't say Mac Haik .... It says the survey company's brand name and they aren't familiar with that."

## Brevity is the Soul of Wit (and also Survey Completion Percentage)

By integrating goHappy with their HR system, Alliance, the team can keep the survey much shorter, forgoing the need to ask demographic or job-function questions such as location, job title, or tenure.

- ✓ The longer a survey, the more difficult it is to complete, resulting in a lower response rate.
- ✓ Automatically tying the survey to data in the HR system means employees don't need to enter this info.
- ✓ Management can filter the data based on location, role start date, or other variables using the goHappy integration with Alliance.

## Automated Reminders Get the Job Done

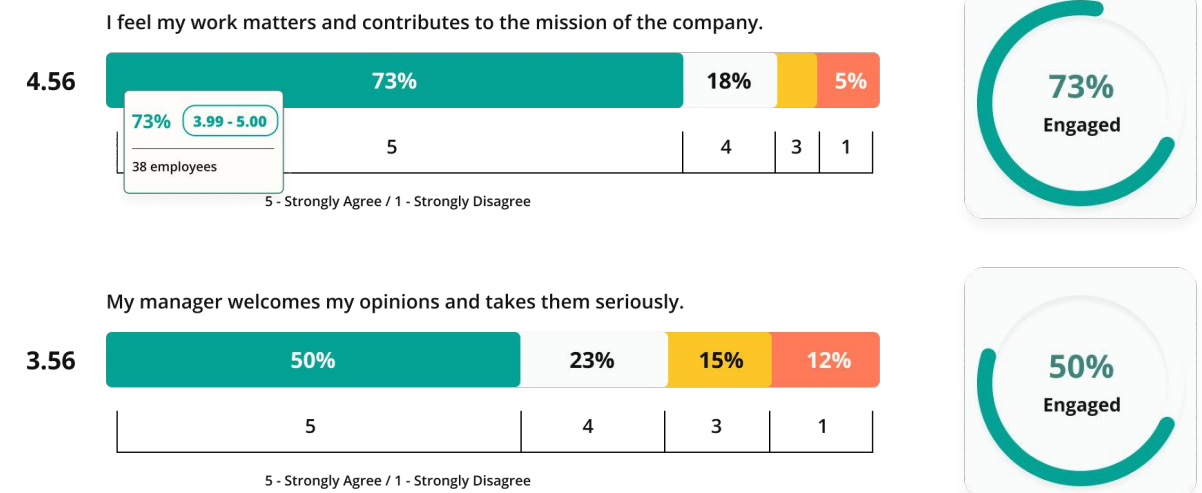
goHappy's SMS solution tracks which employees have and haven't responded to the survey, sending a friendly reminder notification to employees who haven't.

By combining SMS with shorter surveys and automated reminders, Mac Haik saw some pretty drastic improvement:

- ✓ Their old email survey got 37 responses, with no reminders.
- ✓ With goHappy's SMS-based surveys and automatic reminders, they received **177 responses**, a **378% increase**.

**"We're excited to be able to put some measurements in front of our teams on how they're doing, with onboarding and engagement"**

*Vanessa Varano, Vice President of Learning and Development, Mac Haik*



## Leveraging Feedback for Frontline Engagement Optimizations

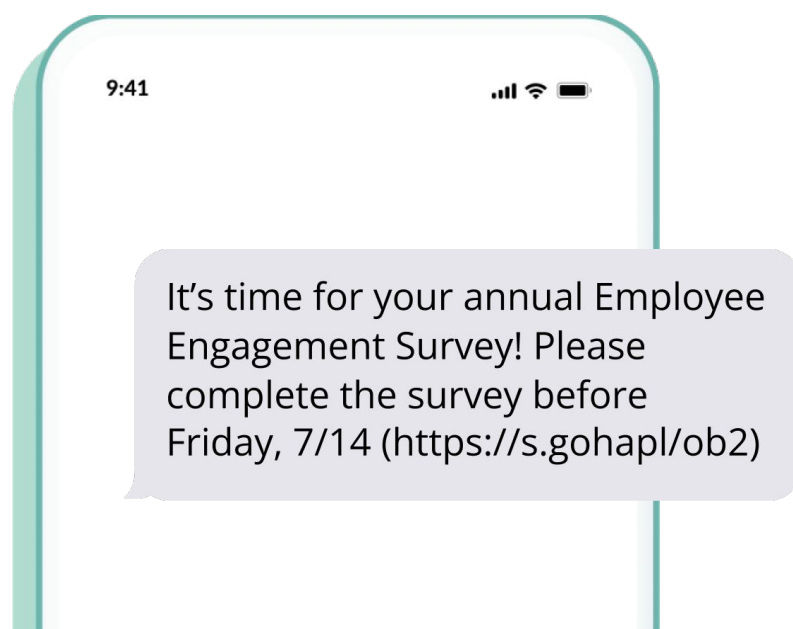
With rich insights from employees, Mac Haik Restaurant Group now has an effective way to collect feedback that they can use to improve the employee experience.

Since leveraging goHappy's feedback module, they've created a series of video messages explaining how they plan to act on the feedback. These videos are sent within a week of completing the survey, closing the feedback loop and making employees feel heard and understood.

Mac Haik also plans to incorporate goHappy into their onboarding process. They suspect survey response rates will only improve, as these surveys will come from the same number used during onboarding messaging, giving employees a single communication thread versus messages from various systems and channels.

Using data collected from goHappy, Mac Haik has started exploring how to increase data visibility across the org and align on new KPIs for frontline engagement, such as retention. This will also enable them to reference goHappy benchmarks to see how their team stacks up compared to industry standards.

“Instead of spending our time trying to get people to take surveys, we're spending our time working on what we heard from those surveys.”



## The Bottom Line

Mac Haik is now building more trust with their frontline employees than ever before. Giving them a simple way to provide feedback gives Mac Haik more valuable insights they can act on. Using goHappy to distribute survey recap videos also helps show employees that they are listening to the feedback.

goHappy helps companies create a more engaged and happier frontline workforce. It offers a simple one-way communication platform, allowing employees to submit feedback easily. The app-free platform means you can communicate with anyone with a mobile device, making it a great solution for engaging with deskless employees.

Interested in learning how you can increase employee engagement like Mac Haik Restaurant Group? Book [a free 30-minute demo today!](#)