

As a former community club secretary turned ops-and-tools consultant, I've seen firsthand how grassroots clubs struggle with subscription bloat and ballooning software costs. Whether you're running a football, netball, or cricket club, managing a database of ~500 players, parents, and supporters—and engaging them through feedback surveys—can be daunting without breaking the bank.

In this post, I'll walk you through how to effectively run **end of season feedback surveys** for free, avoiding the common pitfalls of expensive tool stacks. Along the way, I'll explain why typical club software costs spiral, the difference between pay-per-send messaging and monthly tiers, and how you can leverage free forms for maximum **member engagement**.

Understanding the Subscription Bloat in Grassroots Clubs

One of the biggest issues I see with grassroots clubs is subscription bloat. It often starts innocuously—a committee member signs up for a free plan of a tool to help with registrations, then upgrades to a paid tier to get a few more features, like more emails or additional storage. Another joins for communication, and suddenly there are four or five tools with overlapping capabilities but separate monthly fees.

Here's a quick example:

- Registration platform: \$50/month
- Email newsletter: \$40/month
- Survey tool: \$30/month
- Volunteer roster app: \$20/month

That adds up to **\$140/month**, or roughly **\$1,680 per season** (a typical community sports season runs 12 months, but often clubs only operate the active season for about 6-8 months — however, annual budgeting is based on monthly plans).

For many grassroots clubs, this is a significant portion of their overall annual budget, and these costs often creep upward as new tools are added with little thought to integration or redundancy.

The Typical Club Tool Stack and Its Costs

Let's look more closely at the typical tool stack and where the costs often sneak in:

Tool Type	Common Features	Typical Monthly Cost	Notes
Registration Platform	Forms, payments, participant data	\$40 - \$80	Usually charged per season or monthly
Email Newsletter Service	Email marketing, templates, list management	\$20 - \$50	Charges based on list size or emails sent
Survey Tool	Custom surveys, reporting, analytics	\$15 - \$50	Often tiered by number of responses or features
Volunteer Roster App	Shift sign-ups, reminders, scheduling	\$15 - \$30	May lack multi-user support

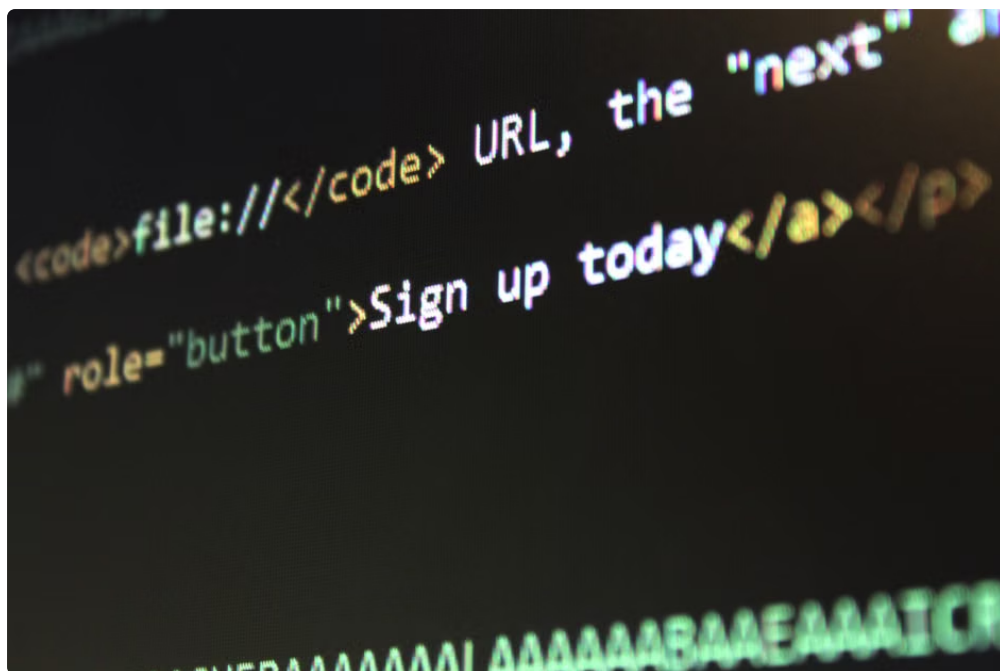
With overlaps across these tool categories, many clubs pay for features they don't fully use. And the pain point I constantly hear: "Why are we paying a premium for stored contacts who never get emailed?". This recurring cost frustration leads directly to our focus today — how to run feedback surveys free.

Pay-Per-Send Messaging vs Monthly Tiers: What Grassroots Clubs Need to Know

Many email and messaging platforms offer two fundamental pricing models:

1. **Monthly Subscription Tiers:** You pay a flat monthly fee for a set number of subscribers and/or emails, often with additional features locked behind higher tiers.
2. **Pay-Per-Send:** You pay only when you send messages, a fixed fee per email or text sent, with no ongoing subscription.

Here's why pay-per-send is often better for grassroots clubs:



- **Lower upfront costs:** No need to commit to a monthly bill just for storing contacts.
- **Spend control:** You pay exactly for what you use — perfect for seasonal spikes like mid-season updates or end-of-season surveys.
- **Simpler budgeting:** You avoid subscription creep during off-season months.

For a club with around ~500 players, parents, and supporters, sending a single end-of-season feedback survey email might mean just one or two campaigns a year. Locked into a \$40/month email newsletter plan, your total annual cost just to run one or two campaigns is hundreds of dollars. With pay-per-send, your cost might be only a few dollars total.

How to Run End of Season Feedback Surveys for Free Using Free Forms

A well-designed **feedback survey** gives you crucial insights into member satisfaction, helps with retention, and highlights areas for improvement — all for [thetechleaders](#) the next season.

Here's how to do it for free:

1. Choose a Free Form Builder

There are several free tools that let you create surveys and collect responses without monthly fees. Some popular options include:

- Google Forms – unlimited free forms and responses, easy Excel export, fully web-based
- Microsoft Forms – similar to Google Forms, included with many Office 365 plans

- JotForm Free Plan – free for up to 5 forms and 100 monthly submissions
- Typeform Free Plan – visually interactive, limited responses on free tier

For a club size of ~500 contacts, Google Forms usually blows others out of the water, with truly unlimited responses and zero cost.

2. Design Your Survey Thoughtfully

Keep it simple, with clear questions that ask about:

- Overall satisfaction with the season
- Quality of coaching and facilities
- Communication effectiveness from the club
- Volunteering experience
- Suggestions for improvement

Use a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to maximize useful feedback without making the survey too long (5–10 minutes maximum).

3. Distribute the Survey Without Extra Cost

Instead of paying monthly for newsletter software for one or two sends a year, use existing free communication channels:

- **WhatsApp groups** or Facebook groups managed by your club
- **Simple emails** via your personal or club email account, possibly using mail merge from an Excel export
- **Embedded links** on your club website or social media pages

This way, you avoid the fees associated with storing large email lists or sending bulk emails through paid tiers.



4. Analyze and Report Back

Free tools like Google Forms provide easy-to-read summaries and allow you to export raw data for advanced analysis if needed.

Make sure to feed information back to your membership, showing you've listened and are committed to change. This boosts **member engagement** and the likelihood of survey participation next time.

Summary of Free End of Season Feedback Survey Workflow

Step Description Cost
Create Survey Use Google Forms or Microsoft Forms Free
Design Survey Keep it simple, focused on key feedback areas Free
Send Survey Link Use WhatsApp, email, social media, or website posts Free
Collect Responses & Analyze Use built-in analytics, export if needed Free
Report Findings & Follow Up Free
Communicate results back to members Free

Bonus Tips: Avoid Hidden Costs and Maximize Your Impact

- **Beware of contact storage fees:** Many tools charge just to store large contact lists even if you rarely message them. Use pay-per-send or free options wherever possible.
- **Use a single login and platform:** Avoid tools requiring separate logins for every simple task (forms, surveys, email), which complicate committee handovers.
- **Keep documentation:** When committees change (post-AGM), leave a clear summary of what tools you use, login info, and instructions for next users to prevent admin headaches.
- **Keep the survey mobile-friendly:** Most parents and supporters use smartphones; Google Forms and others are automatically optimized.

Wrapping Up

Running end of season feedback surveys for free is entirely feasible for grassroots clubs with ~500 players, parents, and supporters. Avoid the trap of costly monthly tiers by leveraging free forms like Google Forms and communicating via existing free channels. This approach saves money, reduces admin headaches, and ultimately strengthens member engagement—all without adding to the subscription bloat that haunts many community sports clubs.

If you're curious about streamlining other club operations or cutting recurring SaaS bills, drop me a line. I'm always happy to share insights from nearly a decade of helping grassroots clubs thrive beyond spreadsheets and messy tool stacks.