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July 11, 2012

2010 CENSUS PLANNING MEMORANDA SERIES

No. 212

MEMORANDUM FOR The Distribution List

From: Burton Reist *[signed]*
Acting Chief, Decennial Management Division

Subject: 2010 Census Integrated Communications Program Rapid Response Assessment Report

Attached is the 2010 Census Integrated Communications Program Rapid Response Assessment Report. The Quality Process for the 2010 Census Test Evaluations, Experiments, and Assessments was applied to the methodology development and review process. The report is sound and appropriate for completeness and accuracy.

If you have any questions about this document, please contact Mary Bucci at (301) 763-9925.

Attachment

July 11, 2012

2010 Census
Integrated Communications Program
Rapid Response Assessment Report

U.S. Census Bureau standards and quality process procedures were applied throughout the creation of this report.

Final

Monica Wroblewski

Census 2010 Publicity Office

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Executive Summary

The 2010 Census Rapid Response program was conducted by the Communications Directorate throughout the 2010 Census paid advertising campaign that was officially launched on January 17, 2010 and continued through June 15, 2010. The Rapid Response program was an integral part of the success of the 2010 Census Integrated Communication Program, and worked proactively with the media and through public relations to respond to stories and events as they developed.

Issues that came up during the advertising campaign included:

- Reactions to counting same sex couples,
- Census Bureau's partnership with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN),
- A census boycott,
- Finger printing of enumerators,
- Hiring ex-convicts,
- The Republican National Committee mailing that caused confusion with the 2010 Census respondents,
- The cost of Super Bowl advertisement,
- Perceived incorrect labeling addresses,
- The death of a Census Bureau Field Representative,
- Data collection issues in Brooklyn, New York, and
- Enumeration concerns in the colonias.

The Rapid Response program was used to make significant incremental increases in media buys; to increase mailback participation; and to encourage enumerator cooperation. Although the Rapid Response Program was implemented because of a lesson learned from Census 2000, a sufficient budget was not available at the start of implementation. Prior to the Census Bureau Director approving a funding increase of 18.5 million dollars on April 1, 2010, the national participation rate was only 56 percent, well below the goal we set to achieve before the start of the 2010 Census Nonresponse Followup operation. By the end of the 2010 Census mailback phase, the Census Bureau achieved a participation rate of 72 percent and the final budget for the Rapid Response program was 34.3 million dollars.

On a case-by-case basis, the Rapid Response program was implemented a total of 21 times for advertising. Some responses required the development of in-language materials for multiple audiences, the majority of which were targeted to the Hispanic population. Case studies primarily focused on advertising, but there were also many simultaneous rapid response initiatives focused on earned media and public relations.

When planning for the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau recommends including the Rapid Response program as a baseline to include its funding. Additional recommendations include creating an automated system to track all decisions and resolutions, determine metrics to measure success of the rapid response efforts, improve communications by utilizing subject matter

experts from all areas of the 2010 Census Integrated Communication Program, and issuing daily crisis reports for all internal and external stakeholders.

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

The primary purpose of the 2010 Census Integrated Communications Program (ICP) assessment for the Rapid Response program is to identify, describe, and assess these efforts related to the paid advertising campaign implemented by the Census 2010 Publicity Office (C2PO). The aim of this assessment is to describe the various efforts that the ICP engaged in during the 2010 Census and the outputs that resulted from this work. Analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing the measured effectiveness relative to program goals of the ICP is beyond the scope of this study.

1.2 Intended Audience

The intended audiences for this document are the program managers and staff responsible for the planning of the 2020 Census and those interested in learning more about the 2010 Census Rapid Response program efforts.

2. Background

The Census Bureau learned from past censuses that despite extensive planning and best efforts, unforeseen issues and concerns may occur during the communications campaign. The Census Bureau did not have a rapid response plan for Census 2000. However, this was a lesson learned and plans were made accordingly for the 2010 Census with funding set aside specifically for these activities. Therefore, the Census Bureau created a rapid response plan to develop solutions for addressing and/or mitigating any such issues as they arose. Services were planned to include increased advertising, development of new promotional materials and advertisements, and/or additional earned media or public relations efforts.

The Census Bureau awarded the ICP contract to the advertising agency, DraftFCB. DraftFCB, as the primary contractor, worked alongside a group of fourteen subcontractors who specialized in various targeted audiences. DraftFCB participated in all phases of campaign planning, implementation, and execution including rapid response, while directing work to and from the subcontractors, and always with Census Bureau oversight and approval.

Requirements for rapid response were included in two task orders – one for funding that came from the base plan (originally allocated ICP funding) and one for additional funding received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). While the original plans did not change, the ability to purchase additional advertising in reaction to these occurrences increased substantially with the ARRA funding.

The Census Bureau and DraftFCB developed proactive and effective solutions to situations or concerns that may have had a negative or counterproductive impact on the accomplishment of the goals of the ICP. Throughout the campaign, insights and metrics were analyzed from multiple sources in order to determine when an issue warranted a rapid response initiative. Examples of such possible situations included, but were not limited to: low responding areas,

negative or inaccurate media, and disruption of census operations due to disasters, boycott issues, enumeration issues, and the like.

The Census Bureau held daily rapid response meetings from March 15 through May 12, 2010 and after that twice a week or as needed, to discuss issues, their potential impact, whether or not a rapid response tactic was warranted, and to develop an agreed upon implementation strategy when a response was warranted.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methods

C2PO obtained the data necessary to answer the research questions by conducting in-depth informant interviews with Census Bureau staff and contractors who worked on the rapid response initiative. In addition, C2PO collected and reviewed documentation relating to rapid response including case studies and lessons learned reports. C2PO also considered the requirements included in the two task orders, for both the base plan and for funding received through the ARRA.

3.2 Questions to be Answered

1. From which external data sources did the Rapid Response program gather up-to-the-minute attitudes and opinions about the census? Did it use all practical sources? Were data ever in conflict? If so, how was this resolved?
2. How did the Rapid Response program prepare to sufficiently analyze each data source in real time?
3. Was there a broad set of techniques for reacting to rapid response situations? If yes, describe.
4. Did the Rapid Response program examine the information in a timely fashion and react promptly?
5. How did the Rapid Response program set decision thresholds and their respective responses?
6. How many times did the Census Bureau use the program during the communications campaign?
7. How many Rapid Response efforts were in-language?
8. Was the budget sufficient for the Rapid Response program?

4. Limitations

The effects of the 2010 Census Rapid Response program are hard to quantify and isolate into direct, attributable participation results. Over time, many efforts have been made to make such correlations, with mixed success. Therefore, this assessment at its barest level is designed as a mechanism to express the outcomes of measureable items such as the activities undertaken, rough inferences of impressions generated, the amount of usage, and the cost of the program. It is limited to this scope, and should be used as one of many tools for a truly thorough review of the rapid response program.

5. Results

5.1 From which external data sources did the Rapid Response program gather up-to-the-minute attitudes and opinions about the census? Did it use all practical sources? Were data ever in conflict? If so, how was this resolved?

Carrying out the Rapid Response Program required an understanding of what was happening and why, which was informed by the following data:

- Gallup: As part of the Gallup Organization's daily telephone survey of 1,000 respondents, we contracted for 200 respondents nightly to answer 10 questions regarding awareness of, attitudes toward, and intent to participate in the 2010 Census.
- Continuous Attitude Tracking Study (CATS): Internet quota sample of more than 900 respondents per week tracking attitudes, beliefs, motivators, and barriers toward 2010 Census participation.
- Radian6: Program with the ability to monitor social media activity relating to the Census Bureau from multiple forums including mainstream media, blogs, message boards, and social engagement sites like Facebook and Twitter.
- Mail Participation Rates: Real time mail participation rates for various levels of geography including national, regional, state, county, collection tract, and designated marketing area (DMA).
- Field Intelligence: Information coming from local stakeholders, such as Regional Directors and partners, who vigilantly reported local anomalies. (There is no formal record of this information exchange that occurred throughout the decennial census primarily through phone calls, conversations, meetings, and email.)

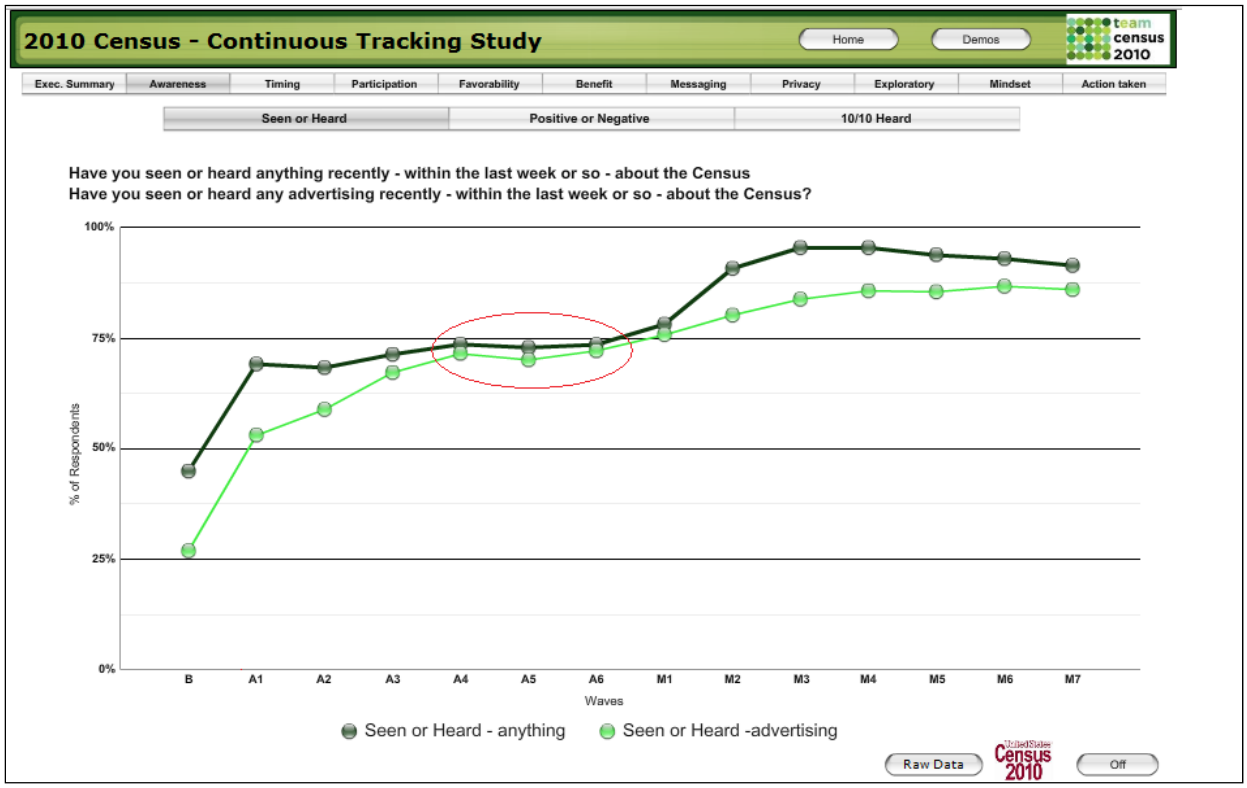
Smart Suite, a data dashboard maintained by DraftFCB and used during the 2010 Census, displayed real time data for each source listed above except for field intelligence, which was delivered directly to the appropriate Census Bureau staff.

When monitoring Gallup and CATS data, analysts looked at two consecutive rolling average weeks (in order to eliminate the daily fluctuations in data, we averaged the first seven days' values, then we continuously dropped the oldest day while adding a new day's value and recalculated the average.) to identify any statistically significant downward trend for a metric expected to increase as a response trigger. For example, when monitoring the awareness of a specific message, the level of awareness should be increasing if the message was communicated effectively. If the measure is actually trending downward, it is either not being received or insufficiently conveyed. Level trends over two consecutive periods were deemed early warnings; if the third consecutive period showed stability or decreases where increases were expected, then this also suggested a need for responsive actions.

For example, CATS data for the questions, "Have you seen or heard anything recently – within the last week or so – about the 2010 Census," and "Have you seen or heard any advertising recently – within the last week or so – about the 2010 Census?" was around 73 percent and 71

percent from Awareness Week 4 (February 9, 2010 to February 15, 2010) through Awareness Week 6 (February 23, 2010 to March 1, 2010) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: CATS Results for Overall Awareness Metric

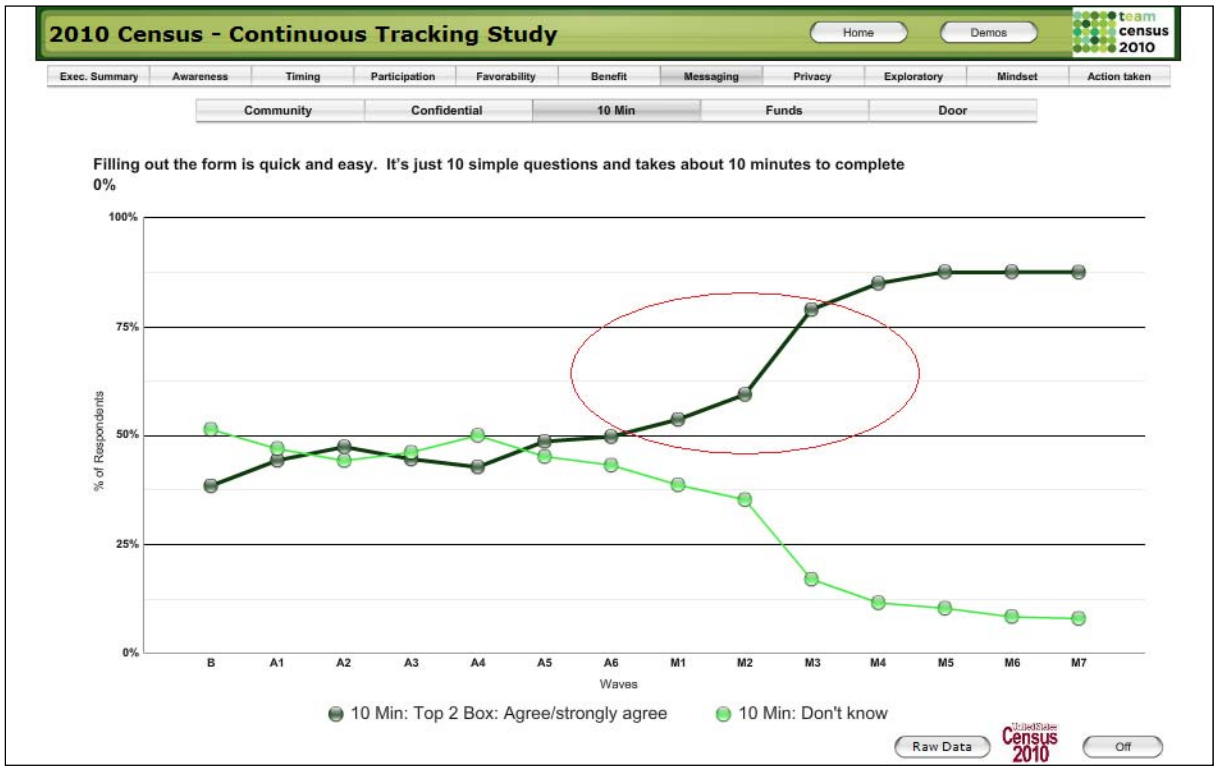


Source: CATS data display in Smart Suite

In addition to the plateau observed for the overall awareness metric, there was also a noticeable plateau reached for agreeing to the statement "Filling out the form is quick and easy. It's just 10 simple questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete."

A similar pattern emerged from Gallup data for the question, "Have you heard that the census form has 10 questions, and takes about 10 minutes to complete, or have you not heard that?" Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Survey (CBAMS) results showed that a person is more likely to participate if they understand that the census is quick and easy. Census 2000 results also confirmed a correlation between response burden and propensity to respond (Short Form Return Rate – 80.1 percent; Long Form Return Rate – 70.5 percent). Therefore, we commenced the Motivation Phase two weeks earlier than scheduled on March 1, 2010 rather than on March 15, 2010 to saturate this and other messages created to motivate mailback participation. Figure 2 displays the observed plateaus as well as subsequent upward movement after the start of the Motivation Phase. While much of this increase can be attributed to other factors, including the arrival of the advance letter and the forms themselves, the Census Bureau believes that the earlier start of the Motivation Phase helped.

Figure 2: CATS Results for 10 Questions/10 Minutes Awareness



Source: CATS data display in Smart Suite

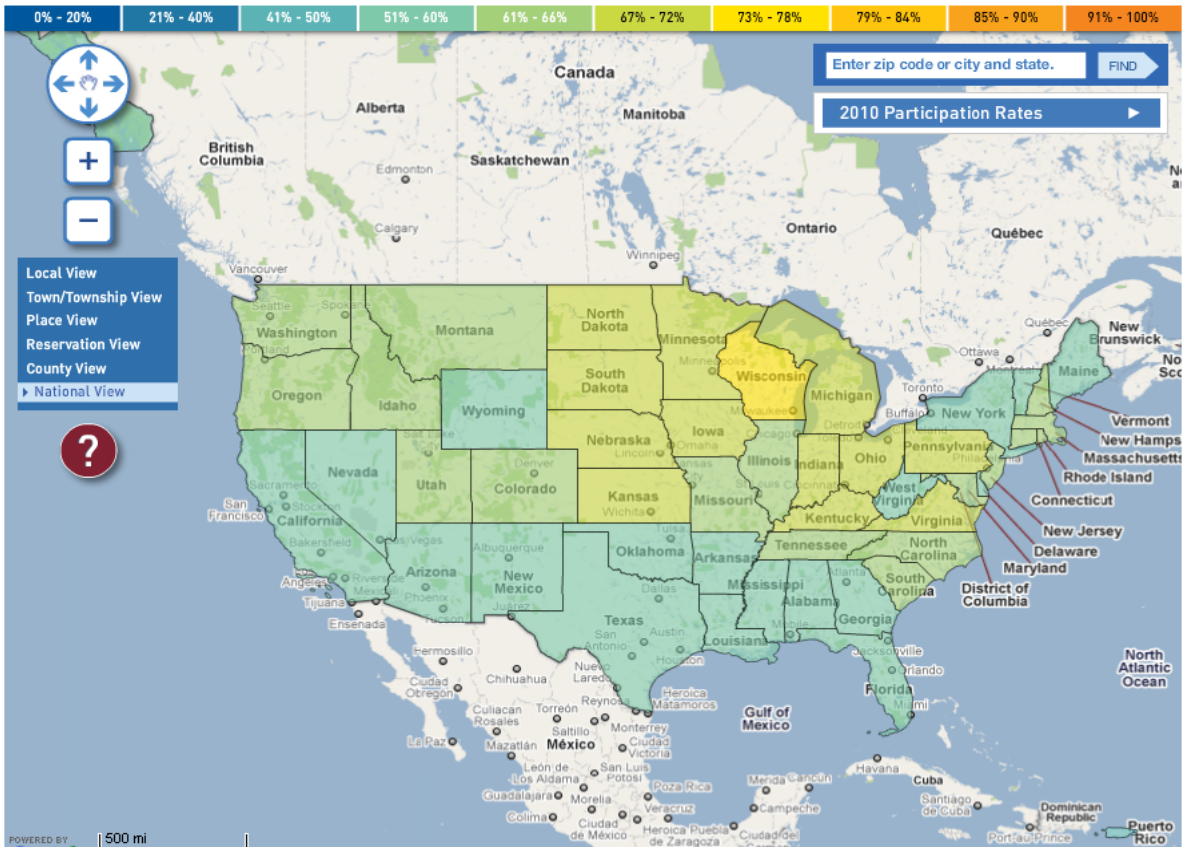
If a metric performed as expected, no additional action was necessary. For example, given the charged conversations about immigration in the news, the Census Bureau placed an exploratory question in CATS asking, "Have you heard or seen anything recently – within the last month or so - about the census counting both citizens and non-citizens." If the respondent had heard something, we asked whether having heard that would make them more or less likely to participate. Not only did the data show insignificant growth in awareness, but aware respondents also reported an increase in likeliness to participate. In this case, a rapid response action was not warranted.

On several occasions, analysts found minor conflicts between data from different sources. In those cases, it was the responsibility of data analysts from the Census Bureau and DraftFCB rapid response teams to evaluate the causes of the discrepancy and to investigate the issue further, looking for the most reliable field intelligence sources and media reports. Teams responsible for analyzing Gallup and CATS data also conducted supplemental analyses as requested. Decisions on how to proceed were made on a case by case basis.

Additionally, monitoring mailback participation rates daily allowed us to compare performance across the country to performance from Census 2000, and also made it easy to identify areas that were significantly lagging behind the rest of the country. This was the main trigger for a rapid response action in the Colonias – the border areas near Texas, which was the most underperforming area of the country in terms of mailback response, as illustrated by the

following figure taken from the 2010 Census website daily mailback participation rate map from early April 2010.

Figure 3: 2010 Census Participation Rate Map (Early April 2010)



Source: 2010 Census Website

5.2 How did the Rapid Response program prepare to sufficiently analyze each data source in real time?

Beginning in February 2010, prior to the delivery of the 2010 Census forms, "Team Census", consisting of decennial census staff, the Census Bureau's primary contractor DraftFCB and fourteen subcontractors, held weekly conference calls to review the data available from Gallup, CATS, and Radian6. With Gallup and CATS data, Team Census monitored trends in metrics including 2010 Census awareness and favorability, intent to participate, and knowledge of key messages. Radian6 enabled us to monitor the quantity, tone, and trends in online postings related to 2010 Census topics. After the delivery of the 2010 Census forms in March 2010, Team Census met daily in the morning to discuss the data previously mentioned, field intelligence, and mail participation rates, new issues, and response actions.

Additionally, there was a core team of Census Bureau analysts and independent contractors specializing in survey methodology who conducted in-depth analysis of Gallup Data. The DraftFCB research team also provided in-depth analysis of CATS data. Finally, C2PO researchers and representatives from ADCOM met each afternoon in the 2010 Census Operations Room to discuss all data displays in Smart Suite. Cumulatively, multiple people

from diverse backgrounds studied these data as they became available and then conveyed all observations and suggestions to the Census Bureau's senior level management. In early March, 2010, the Census Bureau Director convened a management team to meet daily at 4:30 p.m. to review all aspects of the 2010 Census operations. The team was made up of the following officials:

Director
Deputy Director
Associate Director for Decennial Census
Associate Director for Communications
Associate Director for Field Operations
Assistant Director for Communications
Chief, Center for Economic Studies
Chief, Field Operations
Chief, Decennial Management Division
Chief, Decennial Statistical Studies Division
Chief, Decennial Systems and Processing Office

Other officials and technical experts attended the meetings depending on the management issues that needed to be address. Rapid Response activities were discussed in this forum.

5.3 Was there a broad set of techniques for reacting to rapid response situations? If yes, describe.

There were a broad set of techniques for reacting to rapid response situations developed during planning for the Rapid Response Program. Situations were thought of in three ways when planning response levels, though there was no formal tracking system that officially assigned one of these three labels:

1. Severe Crisis: External issue requiring a significant multimedia campaign response.
2. Urgent Public Relations Challenge: External issue requiring a public relations and partnership focused response.
3. Warning Sign Issue: External issue trending in a negative direction, but not posing a risk at the national or mass appeal level.

After identifying and understanding a situation, or an event, requiring a rapid response, Team Census was able to choose one or more of five different pre-defined response levels and associated actions:

Level 1

- Distribute news release (from template)
- Distribute radio DJ scripts via media specialists
- Send email alert to local, national, and federal agency partners identified through the Integrated Partner Contact Database (IPCD) requesting display/distribution of customized flier

- Distribute call to action and flier through an automated email subscription management system called GovDelivery

Level 2

- Engage local government leaders and members of U.S. Congress
- Distribute template flier to regions, advisory committee members, Congressional members, etc.
- Encourage media specialists to engage local talk radio
- Engage social media

Level 3

- Host conference call with local media
- Conduct radio tour with senior U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) or Census Bureau official
- Conduct satellite television tour with senior DOC or Census Bureau official
- Discuss redirecting Road Tour vehicle to affected regions

Level 4

- Send senior DOC or Census Bureau official to area in question for press conferences, editorial board meetings, personal appearances, meeting with mayor, partnership meetings, and/or in-studio interviews

Level 5

- Place newspaper, radio, or digital advertisements

5.4 Did the Rapid Response program examine the information in a timely fashion and react promptly?

The Rapid Response Program examined the information daily and reacted in a timely manner following the protocols discussed in question 5.2 and question 5.3.

5.5 How did the Rapid Response program set decision thresholds and their respective responses?

During the Rapid Response Program planning phase, a management team led by ADCOM developed the decision thresholds and their respective responses as discussed in question 5.3. Group brainstorming resulted in a list of classification and action options that the team believed would adequately cover any type of issue that may have occurred during the campaign.

5.6 How many times did the Census Bureau use the program during the communications campaign?

On a case by case basis with respect to paid advertising and/or involving contract work by DrafFCB, the Rapid Response Program was implemented a total of 21 times; in addition, there were many simultaneous rapid response initiatives focused on earned media and public relations handled internally. The Census Bureau worked proactively with the media and through public relations to respond to stories and events as they developed. Some issues that the Census Bureau responded to included: reaction to counting same sex couples, our partnership with ACORN, a census boycott, finger printing of enumerators, hiring ex-convicts, the Republican National Convention mailing that resembled the 2010 Census mailing, the cost of the Super Bowl

advertisement, perceived incorrectly labeled addresses, the death of a Census Bureau Field Representative, and data collection issues in Brooklyn, NY. The 21 major rapid response case studies were:

1. Hispanic Boycott
2. Use of "Negro" on 2010 Census Form
3. Haitian Earthquake
4. Anti-Fed Sentiment
5. Engagement with the Census
6. Motiviation Period Commencing Two Weeks Early
7. 18 to 24 Year-Olds
8. English-Speaking Hispanics
9. Korean Digital Banners
10. Spanish-Dominant Hispanics
11. Black Community Newspapers
12. Asian Public Service Announcements
13. Take 10 Challenge
14. Facebook Banner Ads
15. Countdown Campaign
16. Hasidic Jewish Neighborhoods in Brooklyn
17. Extended Road Tour
18. Colonias
19. Arizona
20. Extending NRFU Buys
21. TQA Mississippi

The Rapid Response Case Studies document provides a detailed discussion of these 21 major events.

5.7 How many Rapid Response efforts were in-language?

Of the Rapid Response efforts addressed in question 5.6, some projects affected in-language audiences, meaning that Team Census produced advertising materials in English and at least one other language. Overall, materials were produced in the following languages: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Cambodian (Khmer), Chinese, English, Farsi, Filipino (Tagalog), Haitian-Creole, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Pakistani (Urdu), Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

5.8 Did we have a sufficient budget for the Rapid Response program?

The rapid response budget started at only 7.4 million dollars. Notably, the Census Bureau Director and his analytic team approved a funding increase of 18.5 million dollars on April 1, 2010. At that time, the national participation rate was only 56 percent, lower than the goal we set to achieve by Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) operation. Though we implemented a Rapid Response program in response to a Census 2000 lesson learned, we were not prepared with a sufficient budget from the start of implementation.

6. Related Evaluations, Experiments, and/or Assessments

- 2010 Census Integrated Communications Program Evaluation
- 2010 Census ICP assessment reports:
  - 2010 ICP Summary
  - Research
  - Paid Advertising
  - Earned Media and Public Relations
  - 2010 Census Website
  - Portrait of America Road Tour
  - Promotional Materials
  - Census in Schools
  - National Partnership
  - Regional Partnership
  - Mail Reponse Rates/Take 10

7. Key Lessons Learned, Conclusions, and Recommendations

While planning the 2010 Census Communications Campaign, the Census Bureau allocated funding for the Rapid Response Program in order to respond to external events that occurred during the campaign. While we could not anticipate actual events ahead of time, we were able to develop response tactics in advance. With a growing budget due to ARRA and the importance of maximizing participation rates prior to the 2010 Census NRFU operation, we were able to allocate additional funds across audiences to purchase supplemental media buys and to respond to the numerous rapid response situations detailed above.

Communicating and tracking rapid response issues was extremely difficult given the fast pace and near immediate turnaround time. With the experiences of the 2010 Census Rapid Response Program, these recommendations will assist in the preparation for the 2020 Census program.

Establishing a formal tracking system internally to include rapid response decisions across ICP programs is highly recommended. Additionally, issuing crisis reports for all stakeholders including talking points would be helpful.

In conclusion, we accomplished everything that was planned. The Rapid Response Program was an integral part of the success of the 2010 Census Integrated Communications Campaign and by the end of the mail back phase, a participation rate of 74 percent was achieved. In planning for the 2020 Census, funding needs to be allocated using the 2010 Census program as a basis for this program to be successful.

8. Acknowledgements

We recognize and thank those individuals who were instrumental in compiling and producing this report primarily Monica Wroblewski, Tasha Boone, and Kendall Johnson. Also, the information used to answer the questions were generated by C2PO and other ADCOM staff and to them we are thankful. We also would like to thank everyone who provided guidance on the direction and scope of this assessment, in particular: Mary Bucci, Jonathan Zapata, Robert Packard, Brenda Holmes, and Theodora Knight who read, fact checked, and provided comments on all draft versions of this report. Without such assistance, this report would not have been successful.

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