Implementing Non-Monetary Incentives in the National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses

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*Any views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.
NSSRN Background

• NSSRN has served as the cornerstone of nursing workforce data since the late-1970s.

• The 2018 NSSRN was the first time the U.S. Census Bureau administered the survey.

• The 2018 NSSRN had a sample of about 100,000 Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners.

• The 2018 survey was administered via a web or paper questionnaire.
Motivation for Using Non-Monetary Incentives

• Prior experience working with monetary incentives
  • Potential for lower cost than providing cash incentives
  • Avoiding security risks associated with handling monetary incentives

• Provide something engaging for the sample
  • Nurses indicated during cognitive interviews that lanyards and pens were both used daily at the workplace

• Support from Sponsor (National Center for Health Workforce Analysis)
Non-Monetary Incentives

Mailing 1
Sent to half of the sample
(~50,000 nurses)

Mailing 5
Sent to half of nonrespondents who
did not receive Mailing 1 Incentive
(~16,000 nurses)
Process for Using Non-Monetary Incentives in 2018 NSSRN

1. Designed Prototype
2. Test Idea for Non-Monetary Incentive During Cognitive Interviews
3. Purchase Incentive
4. Design Packages for Mailout and Test
5. Perform Quality Control on Non-Monetary Incentive
6. Assemble Packages for Mailout
7. Mailout and Engage with Respondents
Non-monetary Incentives in Production

• Additional cost drivers:
  • Quality Control of the incentives
  • Time needed to assemble packages
  • Postage increase due to weight and package type
Quality Control

• Quality control was performed on 100% of the lanyards
• Issues with the lanyards
  • Missing parts
  • Frayed material
  • Bad stitching
• 1% defective lanyards
Assembly of Packages

- Hand assembly was required
- Full size envelopes were used
- Lanyards were folded prior to insertion
Postage for Incentive Packages

• Not eligible for presort discount

• Non-machinable

• Sent as parcel mailings

• Incentives increased the package weight by around 4 ounces
Cost Implications

• The expected cost for performing QC of the incentives and assembling the packages more than doubled what was expected

• Postage for the incentive package was an average cost of $3.50 while the same package without incentives cost on average $1.25
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Dear Census Bureau,

* We are nurses! * R.N.'s

My coworkers just love the lanyard you sent me. Can you please send me 4 more.

They are happy to fill out the survey if you send it as well.

Nurses are professionals. Would you mail a lanyard to a physician? No, didn’t think so. So it to be motivating? Consistent adequate staffing is what we want and patients deserve.
Lessons Learned

• Begin the acquisitions process early

• Build QC of the non-monetary incentive into the budget and schedule

• Consider additional packaging to reduce breakage during mailout

• Interest of potential participant population
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