RADIO SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

RADIO ADVISORY COUNCIL
MARCH 1986
CLAIRE KUMMER

ARBITRON RATINGS
RADIO
RESPONSE RATES

- DEFINITION

- TRENDS
  - INDUSTRY
  - ARBITRON

- ARBITRON INVESTMENT IN IMPROVEMENT
  - IDEAS THAT WORKED
  - IDEAS THAT DIDN'T
  - CURRENT EFFORTS

- "MODEL CITY" PROGRAM
SURVEY COOPERATION DEFINED

- **CONSENT RATE** = PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS IN DESIGNATED SAMPLE AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE

- **RETURN RATE** = PERCENT OF PERSONS AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE WHO ACTUALLY DO RETURN A 7-DAY USABLE DIARY

- **RESPONSE RATE** = PERCENT OF ESTIMATED PERSONS IN DESIGNATED SAMPLE WHO RETURN A 7-DAY USABLE DIARY
SURVEY COOPERATION DEFINED

EXAMPLE:

1000 RESIDENCES IN DESIGNATED SAMPLE
2500 ESTIMATED PERSONS 12+ IN DESIGNATED SAMPLE
800 RESIDENCES AGREE TO PARTICIPATE
2000 PERSONS WERE SENT A DIARY
1000 PERSONS RETURNED A 7-DAY USABLE DIARY

CONSENT RATE = 800/1000 = 80%
RETURN RATE = 1000/2000 = 50%
RESPONSE RATE = 1000/2500 = 40%

www.americanradiohistory.com
INDUSTRY TRENDS

CASRO (COUNCIL OF AMERICAN SURVEY RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS)

- TRADE ASSOCIATION WITH A MEMBERSHIP CONSISTING OF THE 130 LARGEST SURVEY RESEARCH COMPANIES

- 1984 SURVEY RESEARCH IMAGE SURVEY
  - RESPONDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SURVEY PROCESS ARE DOWN, SOMewhat
  - DISGUISED SALES PITCHES ARE AN INCREASING PROBLEM FOR THE INDUSTRY
INDUSTRY RESPONSE RATE TRENDS

MAJOR SUPPLIERS OF LOCAL TV BROADCAST RATINGS TRENDS
AS FOLLOWS:

Arbitron/Competitor Response Rate and Trends

---

*Source: NAB Local Television Trend Analysis, November Survey*
ARBITRON RESPONSE RATE TRENDS

ARBITRON RADIO RESPONSE RATES HAVE ALSO BEEN ON A DECLINE:

Radio Metro Response Rate Trends
1981-1985
TRENDS

SOME CHANGES TO REDUCE RESPONSE ERROR HAVE RESULTED IN LOWER RESPONSE RATES:

- INCLUSION OF UNLISTED TELEPHONE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE SAMPLE FRAME (1976-1982)

- ELIMINATION OF TELEPHONE RETRIEVAL IN FAVOR OF BLACK DIFFERENTIAL SURVEY TREATMENT (WINTER 1982)
IN TRENDS:

CONCLUSIONS:

- The general public has become less responsive to unsolicited requests of all kinds.

- Survey research industry has increased its demand for information from the public.

- "In-home selling", telemarketing, etc., has also increased in frequency and persistence.

- Householders have become more selective about what they will support.

- Some have turned off completely.

Arbitron Ratings Radio

RAC/March '86
C. Kummer
OUR OBJECTIVE:

- INCREASE SURVEY COOPERATION THROUGH THOUGHTFUL INVESTMENT IN SURVEY MATERIAL RESEARCH AND THE "INTERVIEWING" PEOPLE AND PROCESS
INVESTMENT IN RESPONSE RATE IMPROVEMENT

SINCE 1980:

- 23 RESEARCH PROJECTS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED TO PROCEDURES THAT MIGHT IMPROVE RADIO SURVEY COOPERATION

- 24 OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS WHICH HAD RADIO RESPONSE RATE AS A SECONDARY OBJECTIVE

- TOTAL EXPENDITURE $4 MILLION
RESPONSE IDEAS THAT WORKED:

- DOLLAR DIARY PREMIUM
- WINDOW ENVELOPE/RESPONDENT-ADDRESS LETTERS
- SIMPLIFIED LETTERS
- ESF POST-PLACEMENT LETTER
- INTERVIEWING SYSTEMS TEST
- NEW DAYPART DIARY
IDEAS THAT DIDN'T:

- NON-MONETARY INDUCEMENTS
- "FAST REPORT" FOLLOW-UP LETTER
- "REWARD FOR DIARY" PREMIUM
- RETURN DIARY ENVELOPE
CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

- ALTERNATIVE FOLLOW-UP
  - MAILGRAMS RATHER THAN PHONE CALLS AND LETTERS

- DIARY REVIEW WITH RESPONDENTS
  - "GO GET IT AND BRING IT TO THE PHONE"

- GEODEMOGRAPHIC PREMIUM
  - APPLY CLUSTER ANALYSIS TO PREMIUM EXPENDITURE;
    VARY THE PREMIUM BY LIFESTYLE

- MALE 18-24 PROCEDURES
  - PREMIUM AND SPECIAL FOLLOW-UP INDUCEMENTS TO
    HOUSEHOLDS WITH A YOUNG MAN IN RESIDENCE
IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR OPERATIONS IN 1985 AND 1986
RESULTING FROM INTERVIEWING SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

- RECRUITING, HIRING AND TRAINING
  - PHONE-IN RECRUITING AND HIRING
  - INCREASED "FIELD BRIEFINGS"

- SUPERVISION AND MOTIVATION
  - NEW PERFORMANCE-BASED PAY PLANS
  - NEW HIGH-LEVEL STAFF POSITION DEDICATED TO
    PERFORMANCE OF INTERVIEWERS
  - FIELD MANAGEMENT REORGANIZATION: MORE HOME
    OFFICE SUPPORT TO FIELD INTERVIEWERS

- TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS
  - PILOT TESTING NEW APPROACHES TO RESPONDENTS
  - IMPROVED SUPPORT MATERIALS
"MODEL CITY" PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE: USE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN A LIVE SETTING TO LIFT RESPONSE RATES. DUPLICATE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS IN OTHER LOW RESPONSE MARKETS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE

CITY SELECTED: HOUSTON
WHY HOUSTON?

GENERALLY A TOUGH MARKET FOR COOPERATION WITH SURVEY RESEARCH EFFORTS:

- IN TELEVISION, ALSO RESPONSE RATES IN THE 30'S
- IN OTHER RADIO SERVICES, BELOW NATIONAL AVERAGE
"MODEL CITY" PROGRAM

- INCREASE DIARY PREMIUM (SPRING 1986)
- NEW DAYPART DIARY (SUMMER 1986)
- PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN (TENTATIVELY PLANNED TO BEGIN IN MAY AND CONTINUE)
- USE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PROSPECTIVE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS (SUMMER 1986)
"MODEL CITY" PROGRAM

- TAKE SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO OTHER LOW RESPONSE MARKETS IN 1987