The Changing Face of Respondents

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RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute
Overview of Presentation

- Population changes in the U.S.
- Welcome to the United States Survey
- Interview administration
- Challenges with non-U.S. populations
- Solutions to challenges
- Summary
Changing Face of the U.S.

- According to U.S. Census Bureau, 12% of the 2004 population (34 million people) were born outside of the U.S.
  - 50% of those were born in Latin American countries
  - 25% were born in Asian countries
- Hispanic population has grown 400% in the last 30 years
Interviewing non-English speaking populations

- With growing population, increased need to effectively interview and represent these populations in our survey samples
- Methods utilized include:
  - Translation of questionnaire
  - Cognitive Interviewing
- In some surveys, the non-English speaking populations is small enough that it may not warrant other considerations
The Welcome to the United States ("Welcome") Survey

- Sponsored by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) & Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- To collect satisfaction levels among international visitors to the US
- Data to be collected about experiences across designated Ports of Entry (POEs)
- Interviewed visitors to the U.S. via intercept method
Welcome Survey Methods

- Used stratified sample design to formulate 3 types of estimates:
  - Northern Land Border POEs (3 ports total)
  - Southern Land Border POEs (4 ports total)
  - Individual Airport POEs (4 airports total)
- Randomness during recruiting assured using a 1-in-n sampling rate (e.g., 1-in-3)
- Sample designed to produce 939 interviews
Welcome Survey Sample POE Locations

- Portal, ND
- International Falls, MN
- Jackman, ME
- Presidio, TX
- Fabens, TX
- Douglas, AZ
- San Luis, AZ
- JFK (New York)
- IAH (Houston)
- IAD (Dulles – VA)
- LAX (Los Angeles)
Administration of Interview

- Location at Port of Entry important
- Recruiting respondents
- Eligibility
  - Non-U.S. citizen
  - Speak English or Spanish
- ~3-5 minutes administration time
- Administered via HP iPAQ handheld computer
Interviewing challenges

- 3 main challenges
  - Linguistics
  - Cultural Barriers
  - Interviewing non-U.S. populations
Can respondents understand questions?

Project team required to:
- Produce questions to be easily understood by visitors to the U.S.
- Meet educational needs of respondents
- Consequences of not doing so could include high item non-response
Linguistics - solutions

- Background research into sample population
  - 90% could understand English or Spanish
- Multiple review of the questionnaire translations by DHS and RTI
- Flipchart with questionnaire
Cultural Barriers

- Anticipated populations:
  - English speaking Canadians at northern ports
  - Spanish speaking Hispanics at southern ports
  - World-wide populations at airports

- Major concerns at airports due to lack of understanding of potential cultural barriers

- Interviewers may be first impression of U.S. for visitors
Cultural Barriers - solutions

- Hired 2 interviewers, Hispanic women
  - Helped especially at southern ports, respondents more open with interviewers
  - At airports, believe the ethnicity and gender of the interviewers helped respondents feel at ease to listen and participate

- Applied learned cultural techniques
  - Bowed to Asians
  - Middle Eastern – women feared, tailored approach
Interviewing non-U.S. populations

- First impressions and visit to the U.S.
- Unknown experience with surveys in other countries
- Threat of terrorism and increased security at ports
- Other unknown cultural concerns
Interviewing non-U.S. populations - Solutions

- Non-verbal communication
  - Some potentially sensitive questions
  - Training focused on professionalism
  - Non-verbal cues
    - Eye contact
    - Hand movements
    - Smile
  - Uniforms
  - Picture IDs
Introducing non-U.S. populations - Solutions

- Recruitment approach
  - Adaptable to situation
  - Followed non-verbal cues from respondents
    - Looking away or towards family member
    - Fear
    - Smile
  - Personalized message to assist respondent in understanding they made a difference
- Population of U.S. changing
- Need for review of survey procedures and how they apply to foreign-born populations
- Include cultural training of interviewers
- Allow some flexibility for interviewers to address cultural concerns
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