

## **NCS Response Rates Over Time: Ways to Look Strategically at Segment Level Data to Increase Response Rates**

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**Background:** When using direct to consumer marketing to recruit participants, it is important to look not only at response rates overall, but also whether those rates change over time as community members learn more about a study, what is required of participants, and as the “branding” takes effect. We investigate response rate trends in Cache County, Utah over the first 6 months of recruitment to determine whether there is a general upward trend, and to understand whether there are areas of higher versus lower response rates, and if possible, why.

**Methods:** Our recruitment mailing strategy consisted of a postcard, followed a week later by the first packet (self-administered questionnaire), followed a week later by a 2<sup>nd</sup> postcard, followed a week later by the second packet to households that had not returned packet completed pregnancy screener.

**Results:** The percentage of mailed packets received from the first and second mailouts is shown in Figure 1. Variability in percentages returned among segments ranged from 6% to almost 16%. The overall trend of return rates by mail event (arranged sequentially by time) is presented in Figure 2, with the breakdown of actual return rates for each segment in each mail event is presented in Figure 3, indicating considerable variability in response rates by segment.

**Conclusion:** The results indicate that there may be a slight upward trend in overall response rates over time, although the trend does not appear to be practically significant. The next step in this process to investigate outreach events that have been held in each segment, and determine what additional outreach needs to occur, particularly in Segments 1 and 7; this information will be compiled and presented to present an overall picture of recruitment in Cache County. However, it does appear that some segments are considerably more likely to respond than other segments, and reasons for such gaps will be explored in the Poster session.

Figure 1.

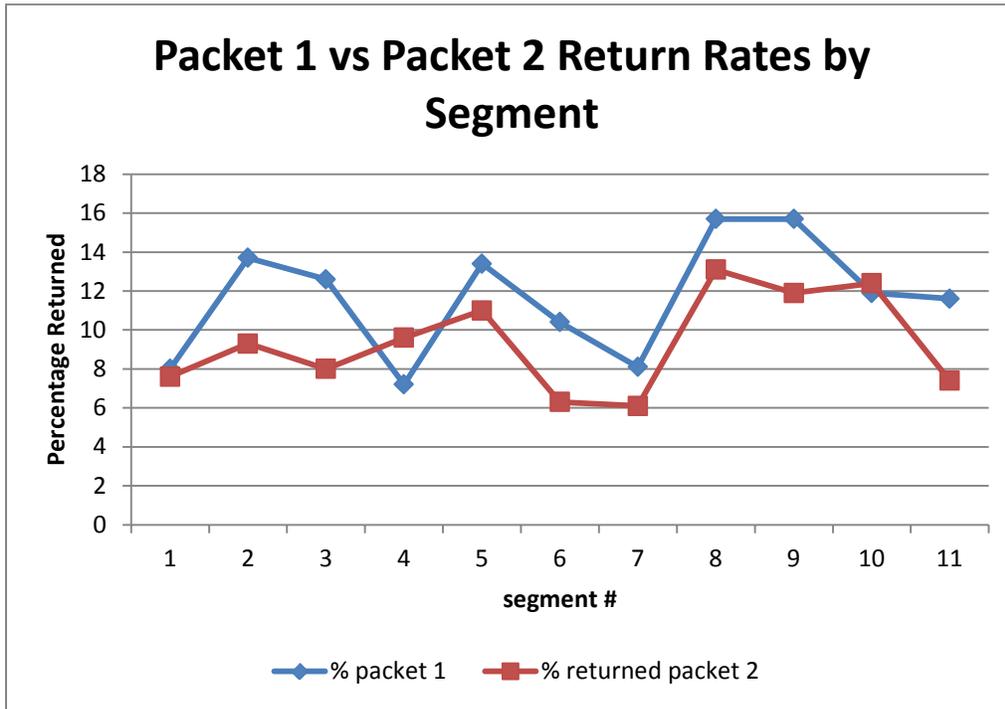
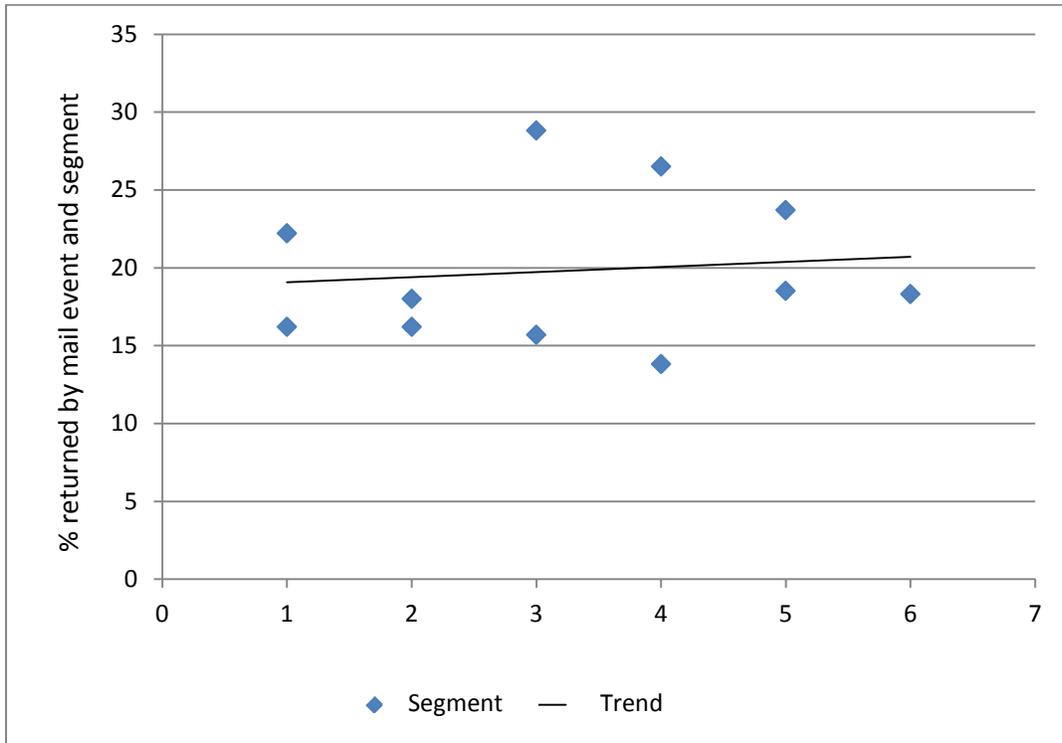


Figure 2. Percent returned by mail event



\*\*\*this chart should say % returned by mail event

Figure 3. Percent returned by mail event and segment.



The diamond should say Segment

The line should say it is just the trend drawn in.