

## **Get Your Mind Set On Census Mindsets**

***Featuring:***

Vita Harris  
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**Elkie:** Today we have with us Vita Harris, Chief Strategy Officer at Draftfcb New York, discussing the intricacies of the Census mindset. Thank you so much for taking the time to share with us today.

**Vita:** Thanks Elkie for having me. I'm really excited about this.

**Elkie:** You know, the sheer scope of this integrated Census campaign is rather impressive, encompassing the efforts of 14 partner agencies and the development of more than 400 pieces of creative, including 159 print ads, 79 out-of-home ads, 97 radio spots, and 62 TV spots. For all this effort, it must have been necessary to adopt a very strategic approach in crafting the Census messaging. With that in mind, tell me a little about the research that led to the Census mindsets?

**Vita:** We proposed conducting a segmentation study that would allow us to take a look at the entire population. And understand what specifically would motivate people. What kinds of messages we needed to develop in order to get people to actually respond to the Census. And with that in mind, what we did was developed a study that consisted of over 4,000 respondents. So we interviewed a cross section of America looking at a diverse population within our country, including those people who we would consider to be hard-to-count and

hard-to-reach. And ensuring that we used a methodology and modes that would allow us to reach those people.

So we included in our interviewing methodology landline telephone, but we also incorporated cell phones to ensure that we reach a population that's more transient as well as younger people. And we also included in-person interviews to ensure that we were able to go into areas that were somehow isolated either by geography like rural areas or that they were isolated in terms of language -- so high-density areas where people are not speaking English, etc.

So in doing that we were able to get a really good cross cut of America in our research.

**Elkie:** Well, counter to previous assumptions, the notion that people's perception of and response to the Census was based not on their particular racial background or experience, but on certain mindsets is really fascinating. Tell me a little more about that.

**Vita:** Sure. Well first and foremost there had been a perception that we could take a look at the population based on race and ethnicity. And first we had to take a look to see if in fact race and ethnicity were the key drivers in terms of participation in the Census. And not surprisingly, race and ethnicity is not the thing that most highly correlates with the propensity to participate in the Census or not. So what we found was five mindsets that cut across race and ethnicity. But I don't want to leave out the importance of saying that we did find that there were cultural cues and indicators that were important to understand and combine with these mindsets.

**Elkie:** So obviously the next question would be could you provide a breakdown of what exactly each mindset is and what it signifies?

**Vita:** So the five mindsets are the leading edge, the head-nodders, the insulated, the unacquainted, and the cynical fifth. The leading edge which represents about 26% of the population. And the leading edge is a group of people who have the mindset of being very committed to the Census. These are the ones who are the low hanging fruit and you really don't have to put a lot of marketing dollars in targeting this group because they're gonna do it. They're more upscale, better educated people. They're people who have participated in the Census previously. They understand a great deal about the Census and how it is used. And they think of the Census now less in terms of how they will personally benefit and more in terms of how their communities will benefit. Keep in mind these are people who are highly likely to be homeowners. And so they're looking for the value of the Census as it relates to improving their overall community.

The second group is a group called the head nodders. And I think this group is the most interesting group because for many years, the Census had told us that the measure of likelihood to participate in the Census wasn't really predictive of who would or who would not participate in the Census. And it sounds sort of strange because you would think that if someone says that they're not going to participate it's highly likely that they're not and vice versa. If someone says that they will participate, that they're highly likely to. But that's not the case with the Census. And the head nodder group which represents about 41% of the country is the reason why that measure is not predictive of actual participation.

This is a group of people who are highly impressionable and they pretty much just go with the flow. So if there's a lot of positive information out there about the Census, they are highly likely to be very positive. But if a wave of negative information comes through or negative publicity comes through, they may become very negative. And you know I always equate them to I have a friend in particular who always tells me that she's going to show up and be somewhere she's supposed to be. But then she doesn't show up. And when I talk to her later about it she says oh something else came up and I decided to do that instead. These are those kind of people. They say that they will participate, but you really can't depend on them because again they're highly impressionable and they might be a yes one moment and then a no the next moment.

This group of people pretty much mirrors the demographic profile of our country. It doesn't necessarily skew younger or older or more upscale or more downscale. They are a pretty good reflection of our population. But I think what's really important to know about this group is that they think they know more about the Census than they actually know. When we asked a series of true-false questions about the Census, despite the fact that they said that they were highly knowledgeable about the Census, they got the vast majority of these true/false questions wrong.

So they don't know a lot, but they don't know that they don't know a lot. And so this is a group of people we have to absolutely secure as we move forward. And what we found with this group is by constantly being out there with messaging that's very positive about the Census is the way to keep them positive and likely to participate.

Okay our next group is a group called the insulated. And they are about 6% of the population. And although they are a small percentage of the population, they are extremely important to the Census because they are considered a hard-to-count group. Or a group that is likely to be under-represented in the Census. And so a great deal of effort will go against trying to reach this group with messaging that will keep them likely to participate in the Census.

This insulated group is what we call indifferent. And they're indifferent because they're slightly older. There tend to be a lot of older females in this segment. And they have not seen the benefits of the Census manifest in their neighborhoods. This is a segment that tends to be slightly more downscale in terms of education as well as lower income groups. And when they look around their community, they can't point to any evidence that the Census is real. Now that doesn't mean that the Census hasn't led to improvements in their community. This group is just not knowledgeable of that. So as a result of that, they have become very indifferent about the Census. And what we've seen with this group is that the messages that would motivate them are messages that speak personally to how the Census will benefit them. So things like child care or daycare in their communities. Things like job training or the fact that the Census can improve their schools and make education better for their children. So personal references to how the Census works is what will motivate this particular group.

We have another group called the unacquainted. They are about 7% of the population. And this is a group of people who sort of live on the periphery of our country. And what I mean by that is that these are a people who are most likely to have not been born in the U.S. versus the other segments. So we see about half of the segment not born in the U.S. Many of

the people in this segment are not speaking English as their first language, but highly likely to be speaking another language at home. We find that they are much more transient. And what we believe is driving that is that these are people who may be new to our country and may be living with relatives and looking for places of their own. And so this group of unacquainted again we call them peripheral. And they're called unacquainted because they have never heard of the Census. And they know absolutely nothing about it. So even when we read them a description of what the Census is and ask them if they've ever heard of that, they say no.

So as you could see this is a really difficult group to tap. And they are undercounted and we will be placing a great deal of emphasis on reaching this group too. We will have things like messaging that's in-language, driving them to the web potentially to see that. We will have Census forms that are in-language. We will have other materials that are in-language to meet the needs of this particular group. We will also have communications that focus in on the specifics of the Census. How it works, what it does, when it is. Even right down to messaging that emphasizes that you have to mail it back. Versus someone necessarily coming to your home. Or versus you having to drop it off somewhere the way that it may occur in a different country. So the messaging really focuses more on the mechanics of the Census and how they can participate.

Our last group is called the Cynical Fifth. The Cynical Fifth is about 19% of the population and we've code named them the resistant. This is a group of people who just philosophically don't believe in the Census and collecting the type of information that they believe the Census is collecting. This is a group who is highly, as their name states, cynical. They are the hardest group we believe to persuade to participate in the Census. And in fact,

what we believe is that we would never go toe-to-toe with them in an argument or a deep discussion about why the Census is good versus their belief about why the Census is not good. But in fact, what we think will motivate them and we've seen this in other categories as well as marketers is whenever you come up against someone who is cynical, the best way to have a conversation with them is to elevate that conversation to an emotional level.

So what we're looking to do with the Cynical Fifth is to touch their heartstrings in some way. Is to help them understand that while they may not philosophically believe in the Census, that the Census does have its benefits for their families, their children and future generations. And so what we want to be able to show from a messaging standpoint and from an advertising standpoint is something that resonates with them emotionally and promises a better future for their children and family. So the Cynical Fifth is our last group and I think the hardest to move. But as we've been out talking to the Cynical Fifth, what we've also seen is that when they understand that the Census is going to be basically 10 questions that can be completed in 10 minutes, it helps disarm them and makes them more willing to participate.

So those are our mindsets Elkie.

**Elkie:** Well this has been very illuminating. Thank you so much, Vita, for speaking with us today and providing such in-depth insight into the Census mindsets.

And to everyone listening, please don't forget to complete your Census form and mail it back. Thanks!