Comparing Social Media and Traditional Recruitment Methods: Which is Most Effective?

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Social Media is Everywhere
Method
Purpose of Recruitment Study

• Compare traditional and social media methods of recruitment of adult women for a focus group research project

• Measure cost and effectiveness of recruiting across the two methods
NCI Focus Group Research Project

• Recruited for eight focus groups about health with women ages 20-50
  – 2 groups with physically inactive African-American women;
  – 2 groups with physically inactive Latina women;
  – 2 groups with physically inactive white women; and,
  – 2 groups with women (mix of race/ethnicity) who are physically active.

• $30 for 100-minute evening focus group

• No food offered

*The research project was approved by both NCI’s and Westat’s Institutional Review Board.
Traditional Recruiting

• Flyers, Newspaper Ads, Craigslist Ads

Craigslist Ad

$30—Women needed for focus group
Westat is looking for women between the ages of 20 and 50 to participate in a focus group we are conducting for the National Cancer Institute. During the focus group, we will discuss your thoughts about exercise and being active. We are interested in hearing from people who exercise regularly and those who do not.

The focus group will last about an hour and 40 minutes and will take place in the evening at our offices at 1600 Research Boulevard in Rockville, Maryland. You will receive $30 as a thank you for your time.

All information you give us will be treated as strictly confidential. No information about you will be shared with others, and you will not be put on a marketing/mailing list.

If you want to know more about Westat, please visit our website: www.westat.com.

If you are interested in participating, please call 1-888-963-5578. In your message, please specify that you’re calling for the focus group.

Someone from Westat may then contact you and explain the details and meet certain eligibility requirements. If you do, we will send you a confirmation.

Please understand that we may not be able to use everyone who calls.

Women Needed for Focus Group

Receive $30

Westat, a social science research organization, is looking for women between the ages of 20 and 50 to participate in a focus group we are conducting for the National Cancer Institute. The focus group will last about an hour and 40 minutes and will take place in Rockville, Maryland. Participants will receive $30 cash. If you are interested in participating, please call toll-free 1-888-963-5578.

$30 Latina or Hispanic Women Needed for Focus Group

The groups will be held in English.

Contact Westat at 1-888-963-5578

Westat is looking for women between the ages of 20 and 50 to participate in a focus group we are conducting for the National Cancer Institute. During the focus group, we will discuss women’s life goals, interests, and values.

The focus group will last about an hour and 40 minutes and will take place at 1600 Research Boulevard in Rockville, Maryland.

All information you give us will be treated as strictly confidential. No information about you will be shared with others.

For more information, please visit www.westat.com.
Social Media Recruiting

- Facebook Ads, Google Ads, LinkedIn Ads, Blogs/Forums
Traditional Recruiting

- Historically effective
- Inexpensive

- Subject to “professional respondents”
- Unable to easily target who sees the ad

Social Media Recruiting

- Ability to easily target respondents
- Ability to quickly adapt recruiting strategies

- New approach so there is little research
Recruitment Study Design

- Two-month recruitment
- Utilized two equally experienced recruiters who shared responsibility
- Tracked time and money spent for each method separately

Recruitment Process

1. Respondents saw ad
2. Respondents called or emailed
3. Respondents screened over telephone
4. Respondents selected
5. Respondents scheduled
6. Focus Group
Effectiveness of Recruiting

- Responses to ad
- Screening rate
- Eligibility rate
- Selection rate
- Show rate

Cost

- Labor hours
- Advertisements
- Cost per eligible
- Cost per show
Results
Recruitment Effectiveness

**Traditional**
- 408 responses
- 238 screened
- 170 eligible
- 24 invited
- 16 showed

**Social Media**
- 668 responses
- 315 screened
- 235 eligible
- 66 invited
- 25 showed
# Recruiting Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional Recruiting</th>
<th>Social Media Recruiting</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses to ad</td>
<td>408 people</td>
<td>668 people</td>
<td>More people responded to social media ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening Rate</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>Significantly higher screening rate for traditional ads p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility Rate</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>No significant difference p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Rate</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>No significant difference p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Rate</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>No significant difference p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recruitment Sources

Percentage of Focus Group Participants by Source

- Social media (n=25) - 61.0%
- Traditional (n=16) - 39.0%
Recruitment Sources

Percentage of Focus Group Participants by Source

- Facebook (n=22) - 53.7%
- LinkedIn (n=0)
- Google (n=1)
- Blogs/Forums (n=2)
Cost in Labor Hours

- Traditional Recruiting: 236 hours
- Social Media Recruiting: 350 hours

Legend:
- Recruiter
- Management of Recruitment
Cost of Ads

- Traditional: $471.00
- Social Media: $4,907.56
Cost per Eligible
(including both labor & ads)

Traditional
170 eligible
$163

Social Media
235 eligible
$192
Cost per Participant

Traditional
16 shows
$1,729

Social Media
25 shows
$1,806
Summary of Results

Traditional

• More success at contacting respondents to screen for eligibility
• Lower advertising and labor costs
• Lower cost per eligible
• Comparable cost per participant

Social Media

• More responses, leading to ultimate higher participation
• Higher advertising and labor costs
• Higher cost per eligible
• Comparable cost per participant
Discussion
Things to Consider

• Challenging recruit (specific demographics and physical activity levels, low incentive)

• Conducting screening by phone may have reduced screening rate for individuals responding to social media ads
Next Steps

• Experiment with less challenging recruit (less specific recruitment criteria, better incentive)

• Experiment with online screener to perhaps increase screening rate for social media

• Experiment with other social media platforms
  – Mturk, Twitter, TrymyUI, Instagram, “next new thing”
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References


