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**Survey communication in business surveys:
optimising the efficiency of web survey response**

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Statistics
Netherlands

Overview

- Developments for business web survey response improvement: Redesign of the Survey on International Trade in Goods
- Procedure to optimize web response for both Social and Business Statistics
- Brief overview of measures for Social Statistics

International Trade in Goods

- Important changes in the Survey on International Trades in Goods:
 - Introduction of a new web-based questionnaire (IDEP)
 - Reduction of reporting frequency
 - A new communication strategy
- Reduction of the response burden
- Two tier approach Communication strategy:
large companies ↔ SME's
- Goals:
 - To raise awareness
 - A smooth introduction of the new IDEP application
 - To convince SME's to report yearly
 - Inform Statistics Netherlands Staff
- Evaluation of the innovations
- Monitoring
- Adapting the design

Communication strategy



Pre-field communication (2014)

	what	when	Target population
V	Information about upcoming changes	First half October	communication managers Trade organisations
V	<u>Website</u> with Youtube video's, brief tutorials, FAQ's, web forms	From the end of October	Management companies and employees who will fill in the questionnaires
V	Brochure for companies	Mid-November	Management companies
V	Leaflet about IDEP	At the beginning of December	Intended respondents
V	Article in SN relation magazine (focus on international cooperation)	At the beginning of December	external relations Statistics Netherlands
V	Newsletter about this article	At the beginning of December	communication managers Trade organisations

Field-communication (2015)

	what	when	Target population
V	Instruction technical helpdesk.	December 2014- mid-January 2015	Employees International Trade, consultants (intended respondents)
V	Upgrade our technical helpdesk	From January to June	Intended respondents
V	Letter to all companies	Mid-January 2015	Intended respondents
V	Corporate press release	January 2015	Broad target group
V	Newsapp (focus on our technical support)	At the end of May	Broad target group, focus on trade organisations and companies

Internal communication 2014/ 2015

	what	when	aim
V	Internal staff magazine	December 2014	Inform colleagues about the making off, to honor the project team members
V	regular work meetings	2014 & 2015	Inform colleagues
V	News flash on intranet and TV screens	From february 2015	Information and company proud
V	Internal staff magazine	May 2015	Improvements technical helpdesk

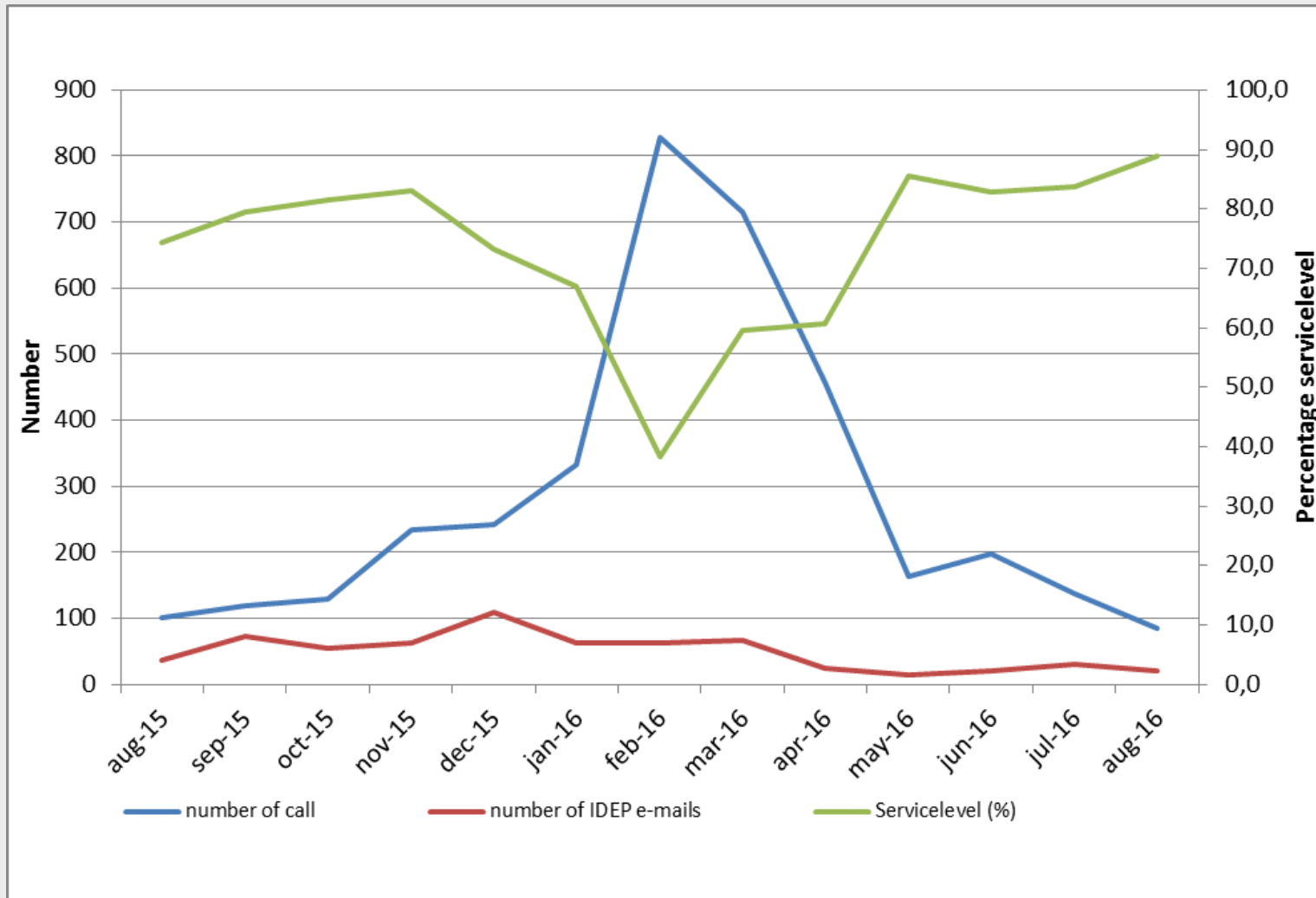
Post Field-communication SME's (2015-2016)

	what	when	Target population
V	Feedback trade organisations about results and our enforcement intentions	November 2015	Trade organisations, businesses
V	Feedback preliminary results	November 2015	Individual (intended) respondents
V	Upgrade our technical helpdesk (SME's)	From January to march 2016	Intended respondents
V	Written pre-due date reminder (before dead line of February 29 th)	Mid february 2016	Intended respondents
V	Telephone Reminder	First three weeks of March 2016	Intended respondents
V	Written reminder	At the end of March 2016	Intended respondents
V	Enforcement	Since June 2016	Non respondents

Monitoring

- Past response behaviour SME's and larger businesses: input for new design
- Workload of the technical helpdesk
- Reactions from the industry
- Response rates
 - Shift CBS-IRIS → IDEP
 - Response Large Companies
 - Response SME's
 - Response progression SME's in the post field phase.

Workload Technical Helpdesk



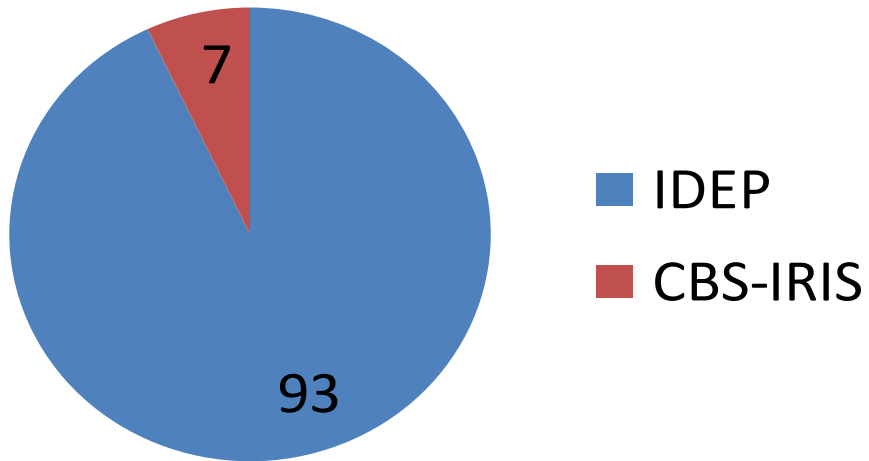
Quotes from the industry

- **Chairman of the Dutch Trade Organisation for the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Michaël van Straalen:** ‘SN made true what it said: reduction of the statistical burden for SME’s questionnaire on International Trade in Goods’
- **Director Communication of the Dutch Trade Organisation for SME Sigrid Verweij:** ‘...no other company is as innovative concerning the reduction of the response burden as SN. Many tips we got were already taken up by this project....’
- **Jan Meerman, Chairman Trade organisation INretail:** ‘Businesses are enthusiastic about the new SN IDEP application. With the introduction of this application SN met our request of making the data delivery easier’.
- The corporate press release was picked up on several sites, including the site of the Dutch Trade Organisation on Trafic, with a positive assessment

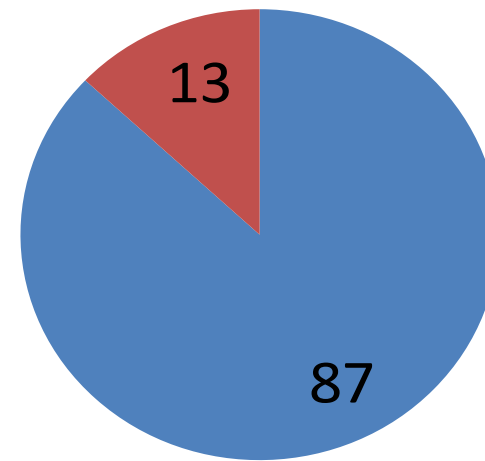


Shift CBS-IRIS → IDEP: first half-year 2015

Larger companies:



SME's:



Response large versus smaller companies

year	size class	import			export		
		total	response	% response	total	response	% response
ITG-declarants -large companies (adm response)							
2015	5	12339	11338	91,9	8423	7745	92,0
	6	31902	30390	95,3	35506	33417	94,1
	7	10766	10630	98,7	15130	14832	98,0
	8	3063	3020	98,6	6418	6336	98,7
2016	5	8774	6949	79,2	5240	4160	79,4
	6	23303	19668	84,4	26296	22018	83,7
	7	7227	6519	90,2	10101	8989	89,0
	8	2064	1860	90,1	4305	3894	90,5
ITG-declarants -small and medium size companies (adm response)							
2015		4068	3259	80,1	4384	3300	75,3

Response progression SME's in the post field phase

Date	Import	Export	Actions
	r(%)	r(%)	
4 January 2016	17	16	
17 February 2016	35	35	Written pre-due date reminder (before dead line of February 29 th)
29 February 2016	54	54	Deadline response
7 March 2016	59	59	Start Telephone reminder
22 March 2016	67	67	End Telephone reminder
30 March 2016	68	68	Written reminder
1 June 2016	74	73	Start Enforcement

Results (impact and Process)

- Response rate at the deadline of February 29th: 54%
- Pre-due date Reminder is effective
- Telephone reminder is effectively as well, and
- Telephone reminder was appreciated by the businesses and the interviewers of SN
 - Companies phoned : 40% rise in response rate
 - Companies not phoned: 4% rise in response rate
- Written reminder after deadline: some increase of the response
- We did the right actions at the right time

Results evaluation -> improvements

- Keep in touch with the trade organisations
- Invest in your technical helpdesk and your website
- Written reminder before the deadline works well
- Telephone reminder 'new style' works well
- Complete the phone numbers in our business register
- Incentive on a more detailed level
- A good Monitoring system for both administrative and statistical response is important
- Select, based upon the response results, a new target group for 2017, accompanied with a new communication strategy

Response optimisation

- SN Procedure tot optimize web response for both Social and Business Statistics
 - Increasing web response rates, particularly social surveys
 - Now: social surveys mostly below 50%, business surveys 70-95%
 - Improving efficiency, quality and cost reduction of the data collection process

SN project to optimize response on Business

Based on four principles:

1. Invest in a good relationship with the businesses
2. Reward good behaviour and discourage unwanted behaviour
3. Optimize communication by the use of tailoring and target group differentiation
4. Adapt a plan-do-check-act cycle to evaluate existing designs and to develop new ones



Improvement of designs

Analyses,
evaluation, and
inventory
improvements

Inventory of new
improvement

Post field
communication
and monitoring

Translate into
concrete proposals
for improvements

Field
communication
and monitoring

Prioritisation and
selection

Prefield
preparations and
communication

New design /
adaptation of an
existing design



Improving (web) response in person / household samples

- **Communication:**
 - Personalised invitation
 - Dedicated websites with information for all surveys
 - Use of social media to heighten awareness of CBS
 - One URL for all web surveys (www.antwoord.cbs.nl)
 - Contact by different channels / modes
 - Questionnaire compatible with all devices
 - Vlogs
- **Targeted group-focused approach:**
 - Research projects among the young, the elderly and ethnic minorities
 - Differentiated communication materials to subgroups
 - Experiments with advance letters, flyers and envelops
 - Personalised invitation
- **Use of incentives**
 - Experiments with unconditional incentives, conditional incentives to respondents and conditional incentives with lottery

More information? Contact

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Thank you

- Questions?

References

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