

# IMPROVING RESPONSE RATES

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Judith A. Ouimet  
Indiana University Bloomington  
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AIR Toronto

# THE NEXT 35 MINUTES...

The Problem

A Plan of Attack

Did it work?

Why we embarked on the Responder/Non-responder  
Incentive Study

What we did with the results—closing the loop

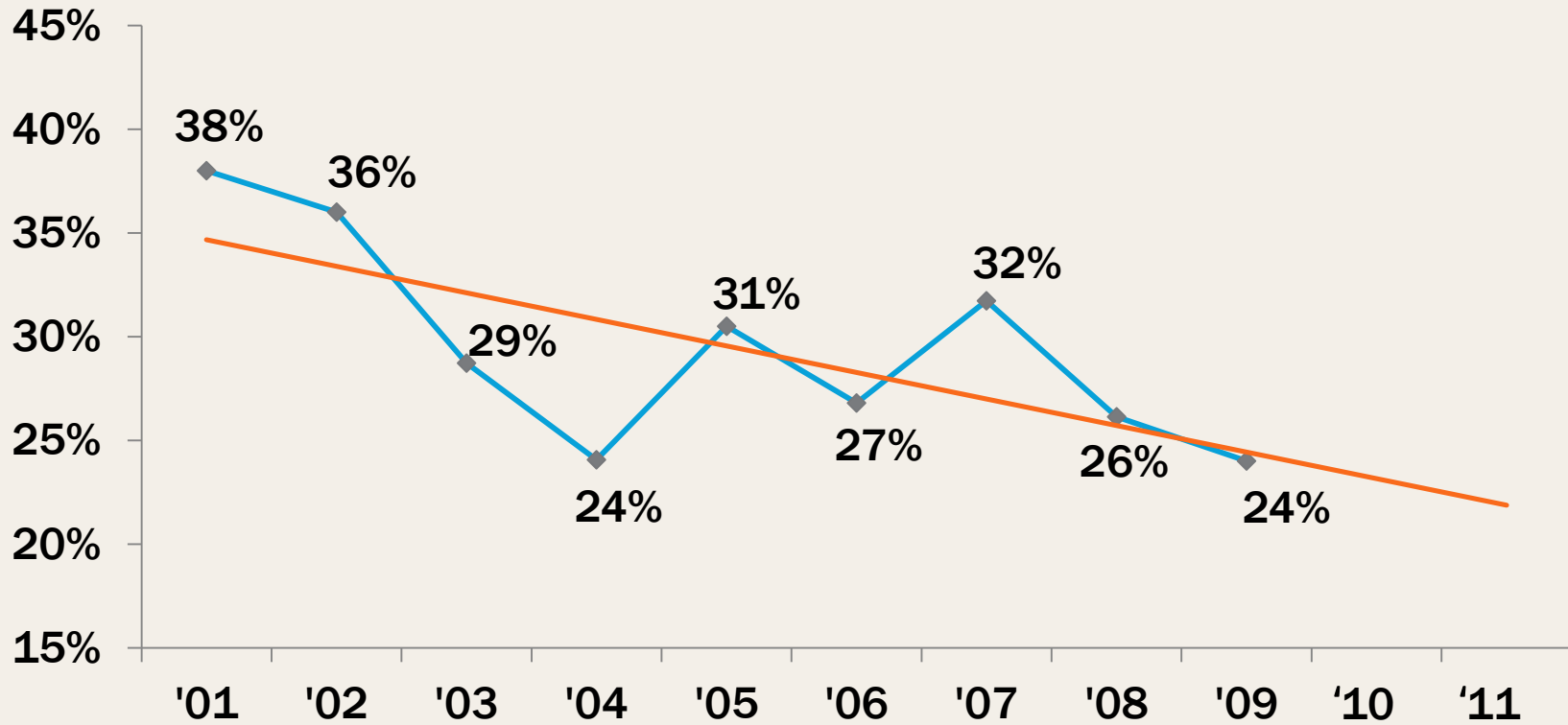
Did it work?

Next steps

## THE PROBLEM

Urge [fill-in the group] to complete  
the survey

# NSSE 2001-2009 RESPONSE RATES & TREND LINE



# PLAN OF ATTACK PART ONE

## Incentives for survey completers

- Every student receives a fountain drink at the Union
- Opportunity to win one of 82 prizes

# PLAN OF ATTACK PART TWO

## Marketing

- Personalized the correspondence to include incentives
- Placed posters in Residence Halls
- Monitors in IMU
- Newsletters
- Faculty announcements
- Sent out response rates by college and schools
- Placed announcements on IUB Homepage
- Placed announcements on OnCourse
- Computer lab monitors
- Flyers at the gymnasiums

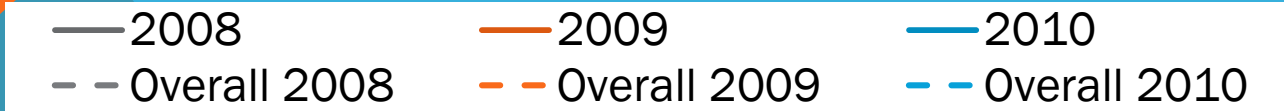
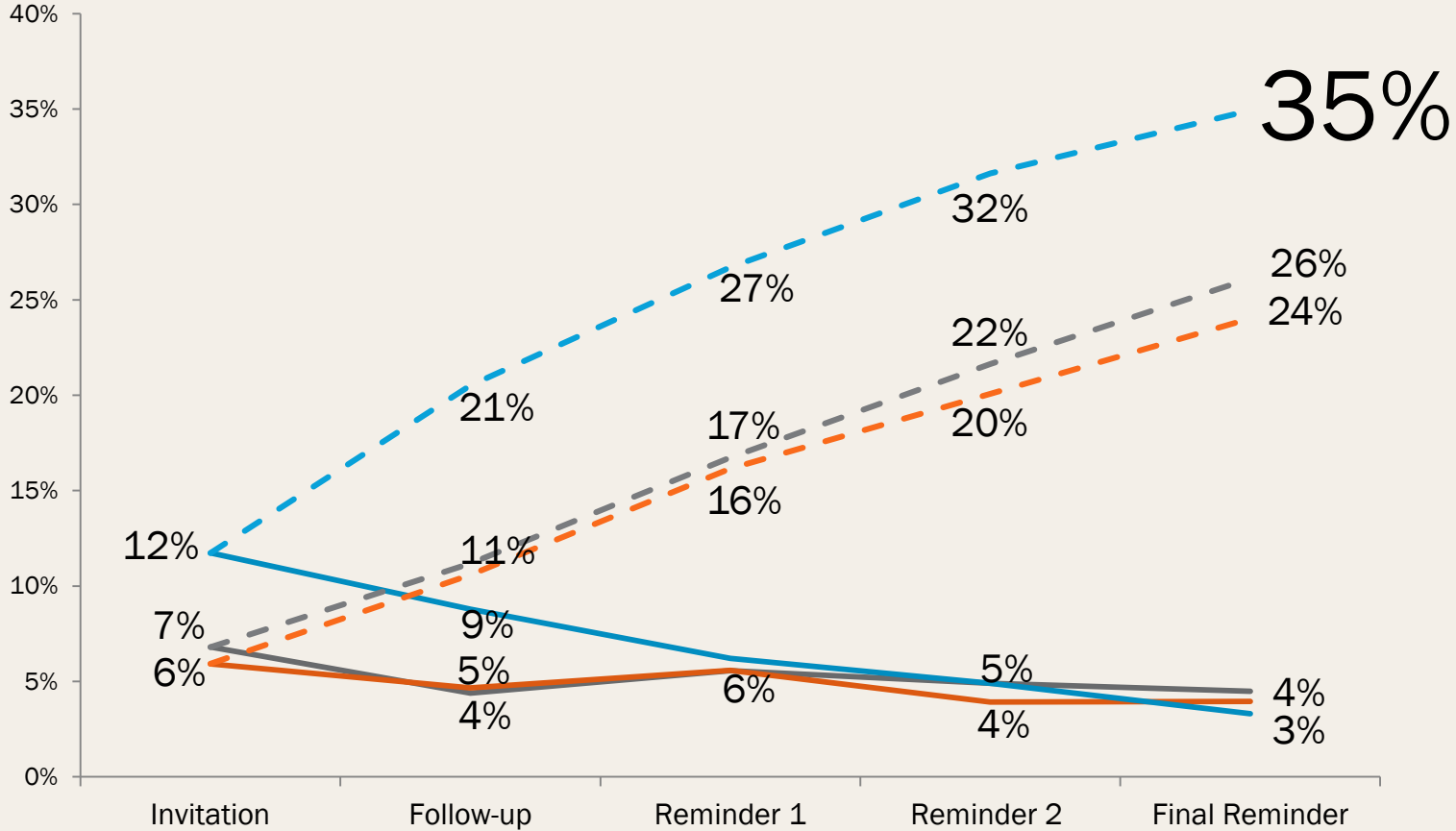
**THE MILLION DOLLAR  
QUESTION...**

**DID IT WORK?**

# NSSE Response Rates by Year & Reminder

## Completes & Partial

As of 5/7/10





# BUT DO WE REALLY KNOW?

Research Questions:

Did the marketing factor into higher response rates?

Do incentives matter?

What types of incentives are most enticing?

What can non-responders tell us that will help us to improve future response rates?

# INCENTIVE SURVEY PROCESS

## Step One:

Created three surveys with focused response options depending on whether students participated in the survey or did not.

## Step Two:

Sent email invitations and one reminder using Qualtrics

Responder Incentive Survey—April 27<sup>th</sup> & May 18<sup>th</sup>

Non-responder 1<sup>st</sup> year & Senior Incentive Survey—May 6<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>

# SURVEY FOCUS

## RESPONDER SURVEY

**Survey Recognition**

**Promotions**

**Survey-taking behavior**

**Survey request behavior**

**Future incentive types**

## NON-RESPONDER SURVEY

**Survey Recognition**

**Promotions**

**Why you do not complete surveys**

**Survey request behavior**

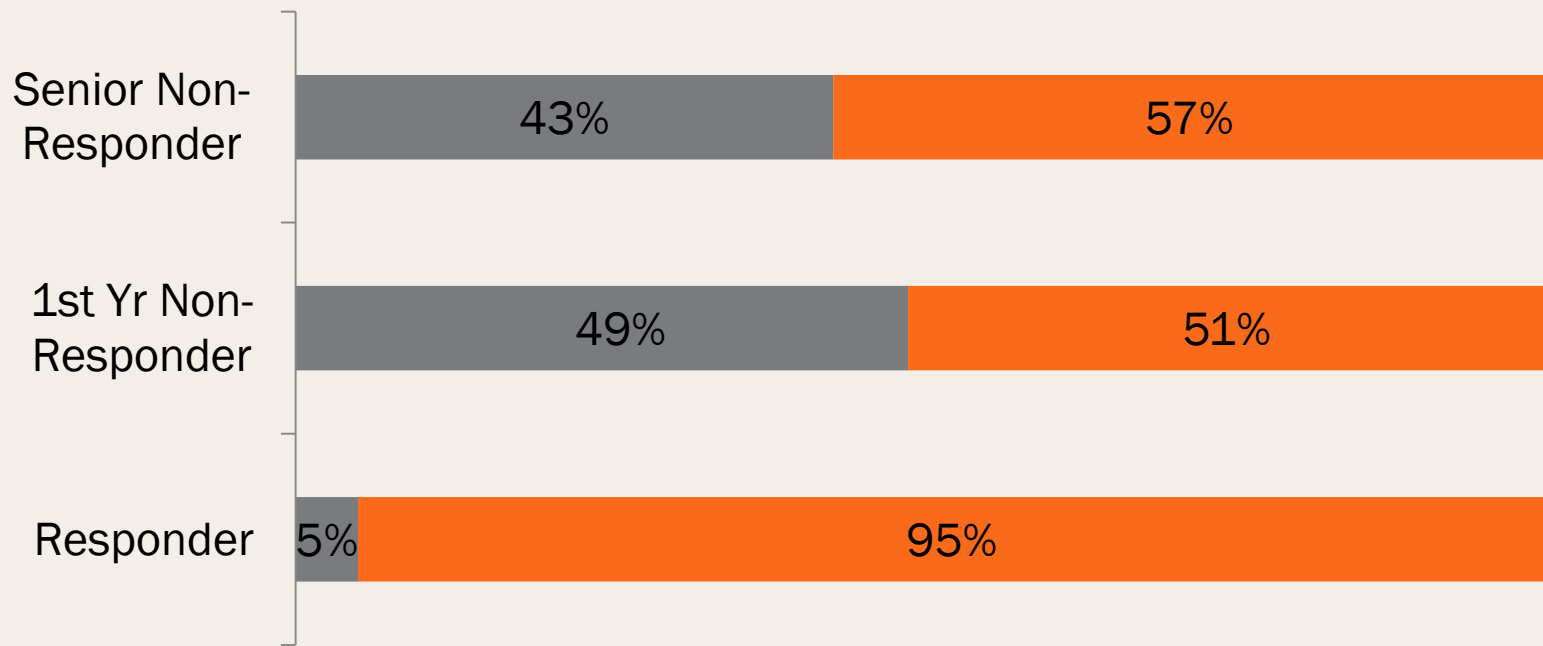
**Future incentive types**

# 2010 INCENTIVE SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

	Sample Size	Started	Finished	Response Rate*
Responder	2002	518	444	22%
Non-Responder 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2001	225	178	9%
Non-Responder Senior	1998	165	143	7%

\*Not adjusted for undeliverable emails

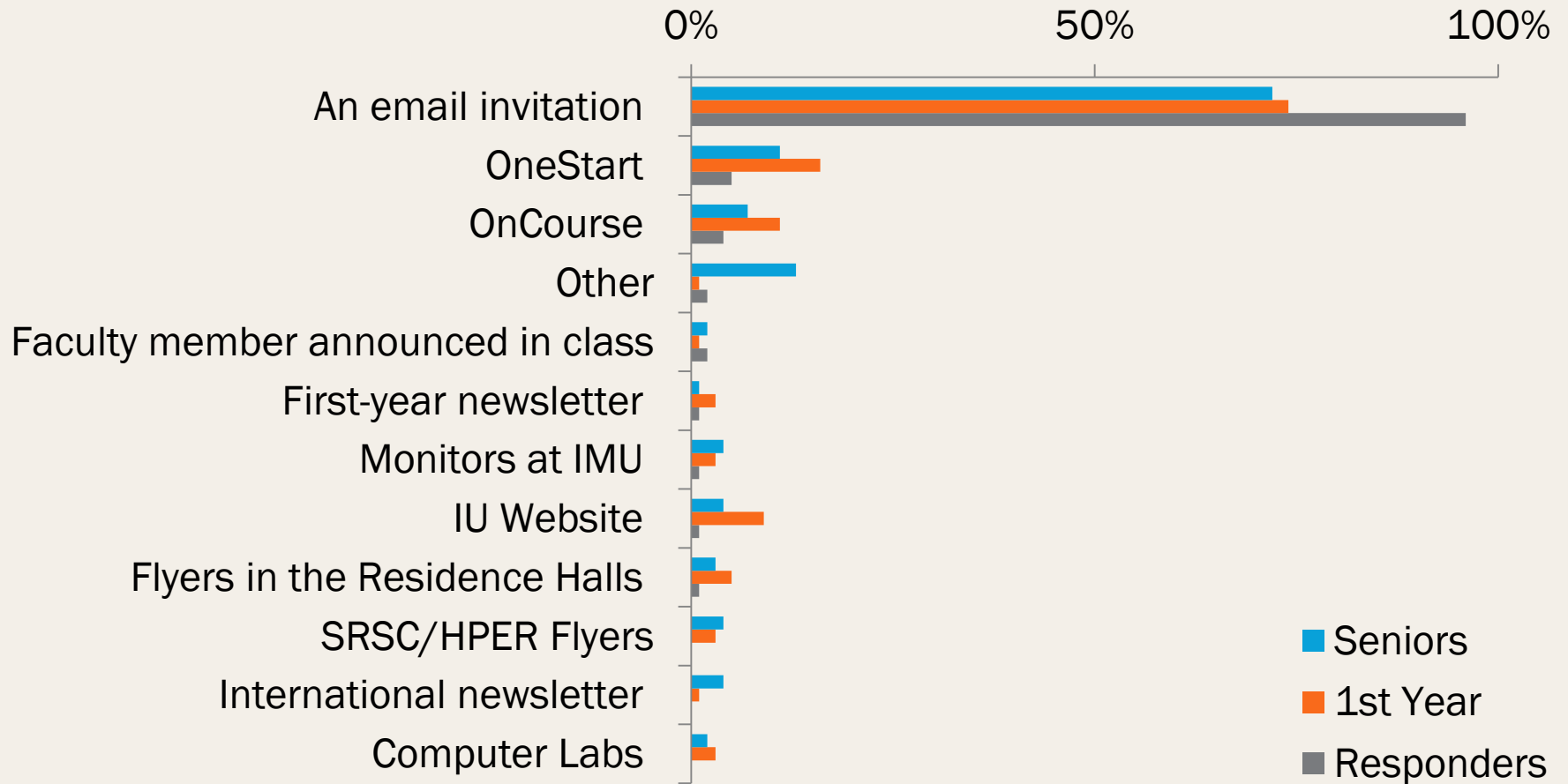
# DO YOU REMEMBER COMPLETING OR RECEIVING AN EMAIL INVITATION?



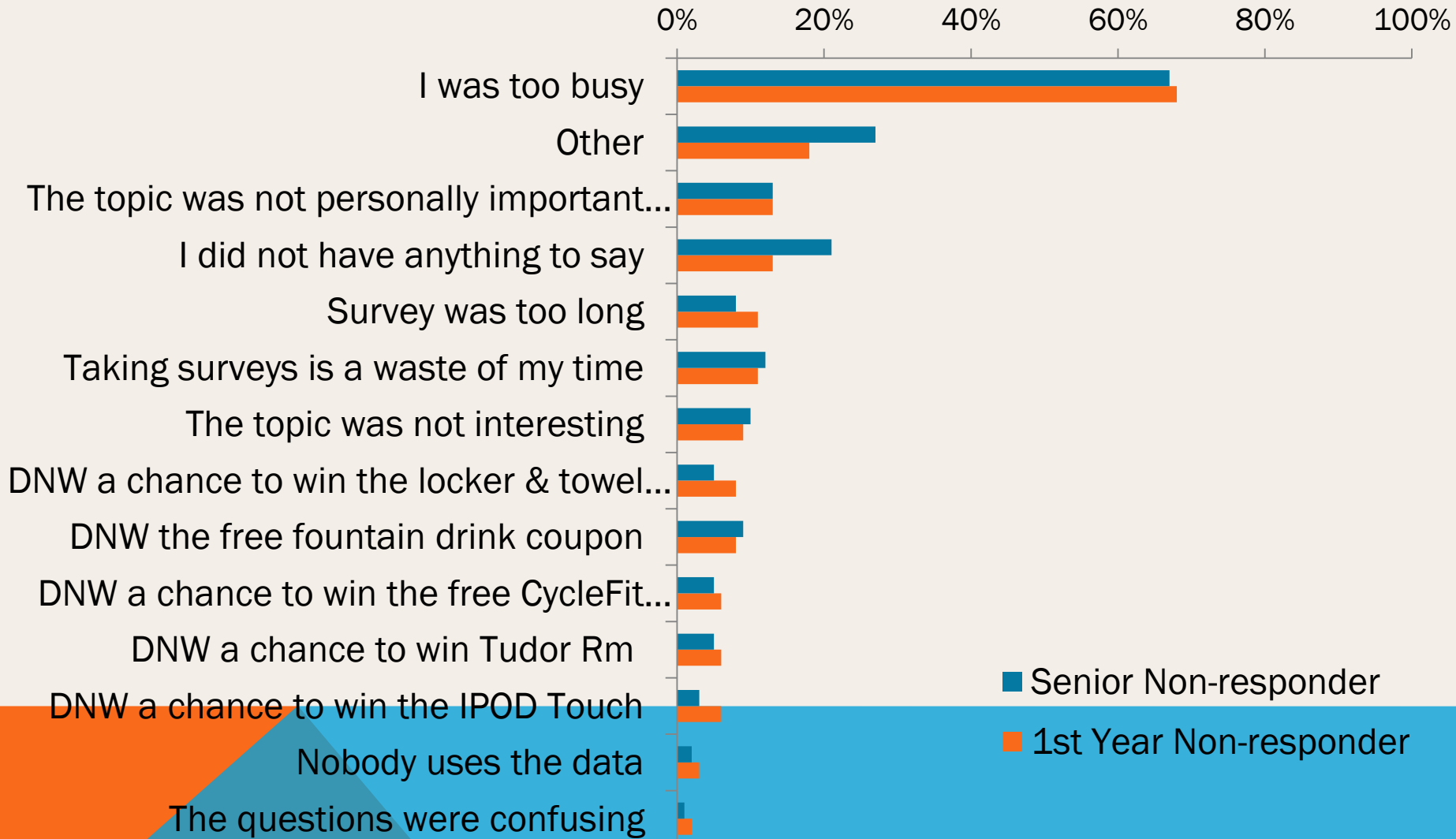
■ No

■ Yes

# WAS THERE A MARKETING EFFECT?



# WHY DID YOU NOT COMPLETE THE NSSE SURVEY



# OTHER “WHY NOT” COMMENTS

Deleted the email

Thought I did complete it

Forgot

Too long

I don't want a "chance" to win something, my information is worth something therefore I must be compensated accordingly. Having only a "chance" to win something is not enough. I must receive something.

The chances of winning an iPod touch or something of value were too low

Too many survey requests

Didn't know about the survey

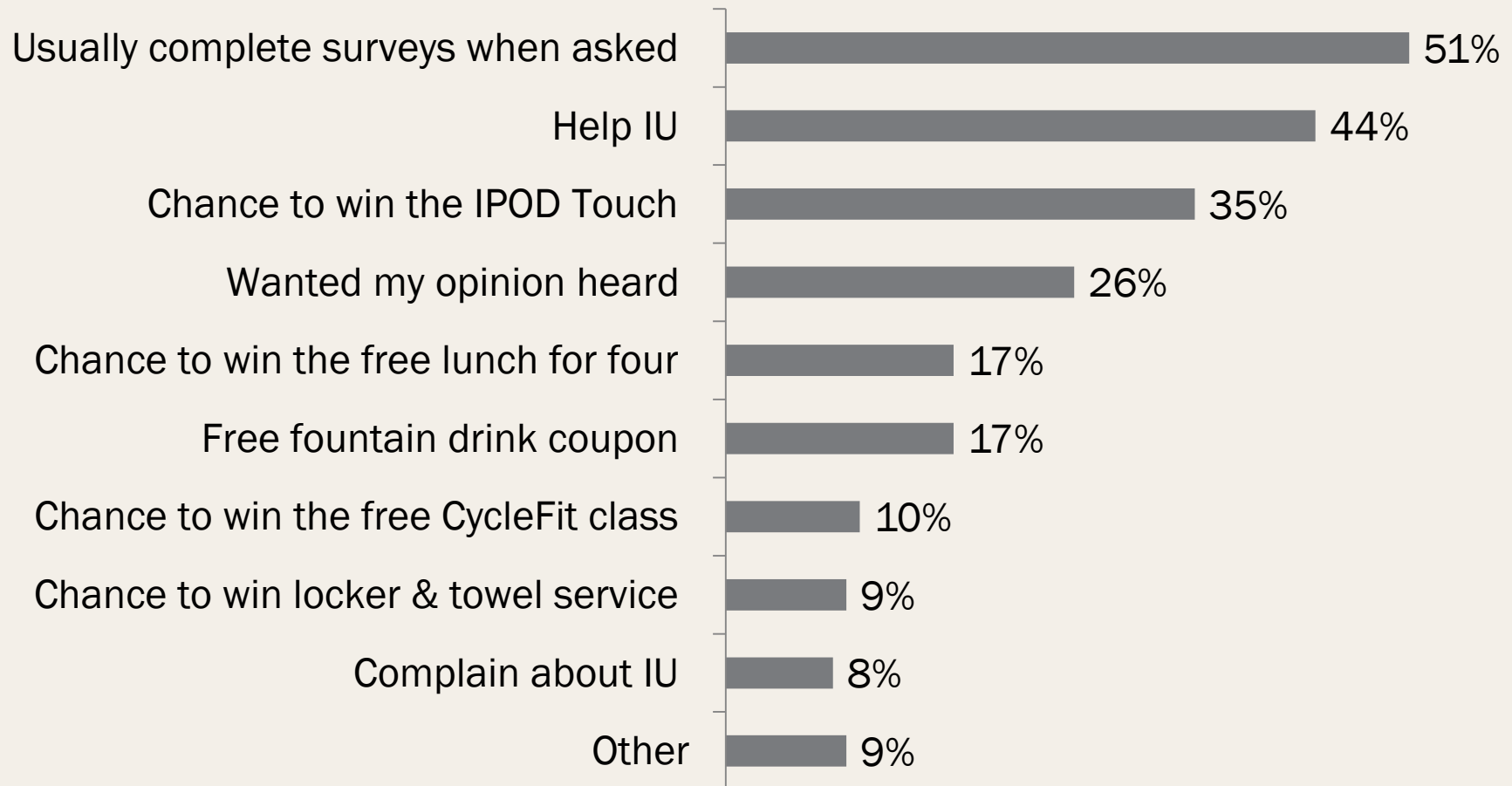
Out of the country

Graduated already

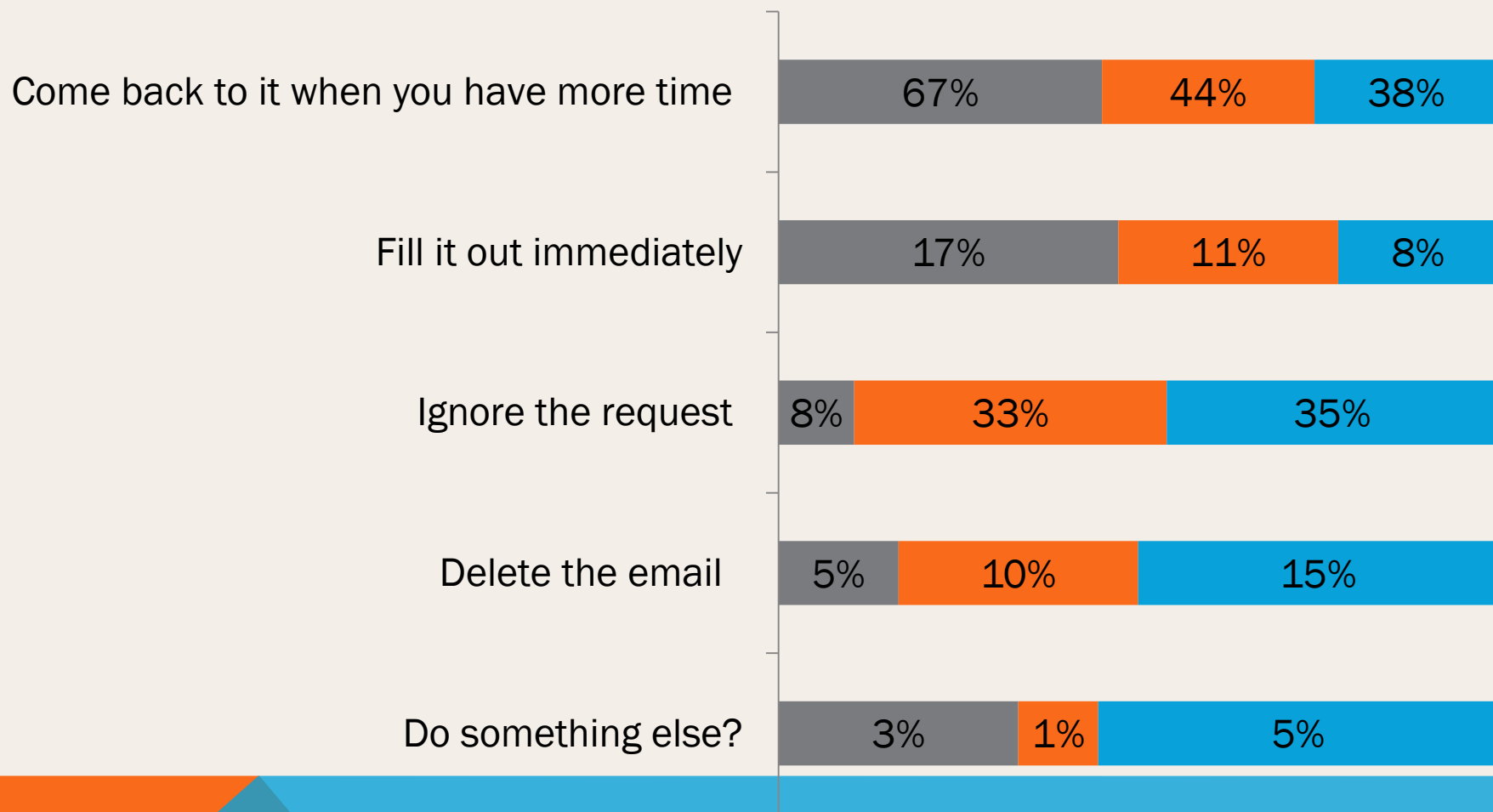
Looked like SPAM



# WHAT CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND?



# REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE ACTION



■ Responder

■ 1st Year Non-responder

■ Senior Non-responder

# RESPONDER STUDENT-SUGGESTED INCENTIVES



# NON-RESPONDER STUDENT-SUGGESTED INCENTIVES

Free Stuff

time survey money

nothing

Nothing

prizes Giftcards  
incentives

coupons  
Food something  
really

# CLOSING THE LOOP – INCENTIVES

- Increased the number of incentives
- Increased the odds of winning
- Drawing only

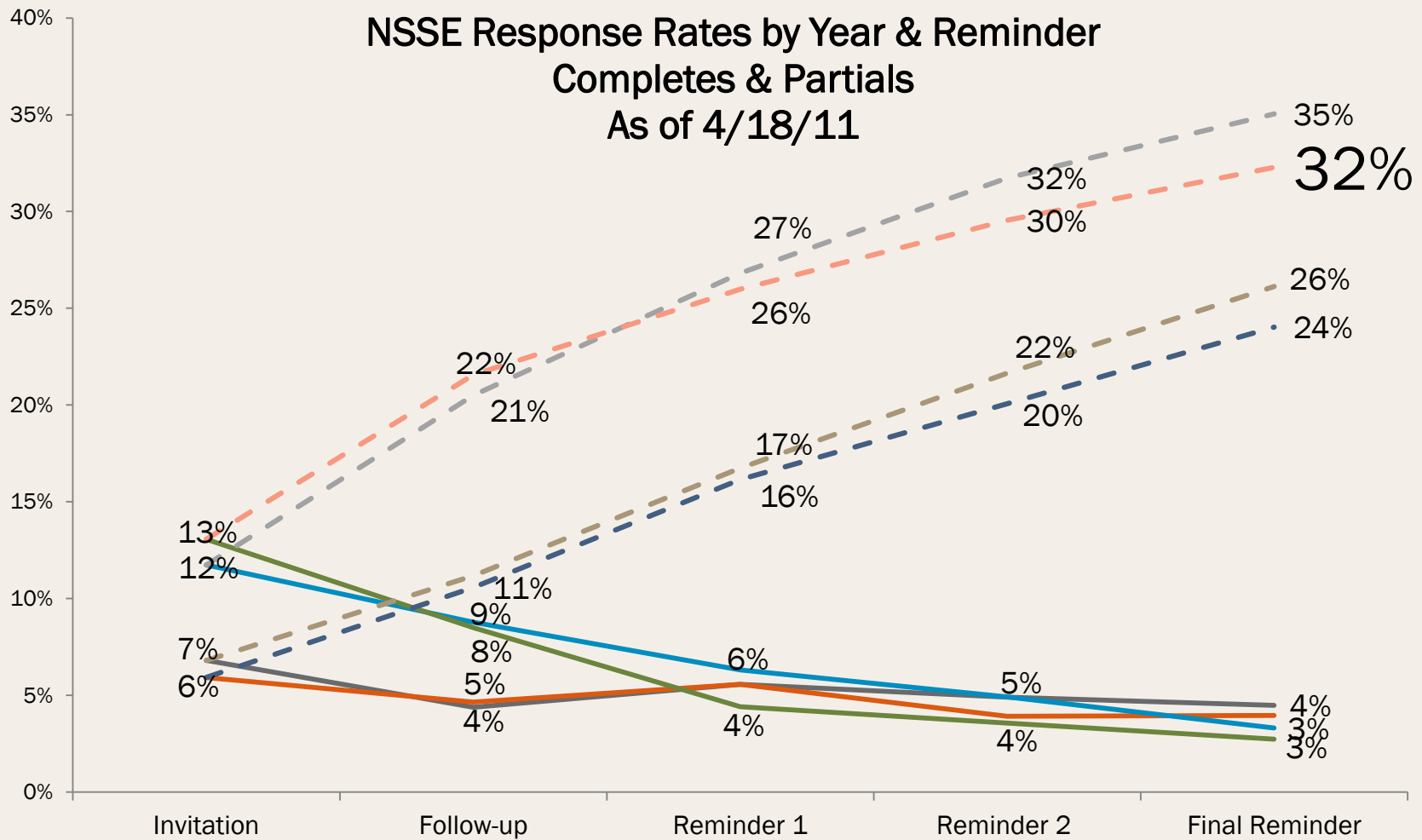
## CLOSING THE LOOP – MARKETING

- Cover letters had an example of how we used the data
- NSSE Trivia on IU Homepage
- Hot Spots on IU Homepage encouraging students to complete the survey
- Larger Hi-gloss Flyers around campus
- Monitors on campus
- Flyers at Sponsors' locations

**THE MILLION DOLLAR  
QUESTION...**

**DID IT WORK?**

# NSSE Response Rates by Year & Reminder Completes & Partial As of 4/18/11



32%





# INCENTIVE SURVEY PROCESS

## Step One:

Revamped the 2010 Incentive Surveys to address changes made to administration and added response options that were write-ins from 2010

## Step Two:

Sent email invitations and one reminder using Qualtrics

*Responder Survey*—within a week of NSSE survey completion and follow-up  
April 19

*Non-responder 1<sup>st</sup> year & Senior Survey*—April 11<sup>th</sup> & May 6<sup>th</sup>

## Step Three:

Survey winners were asked why they completed surveys

# 2011 INCENTIVE SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

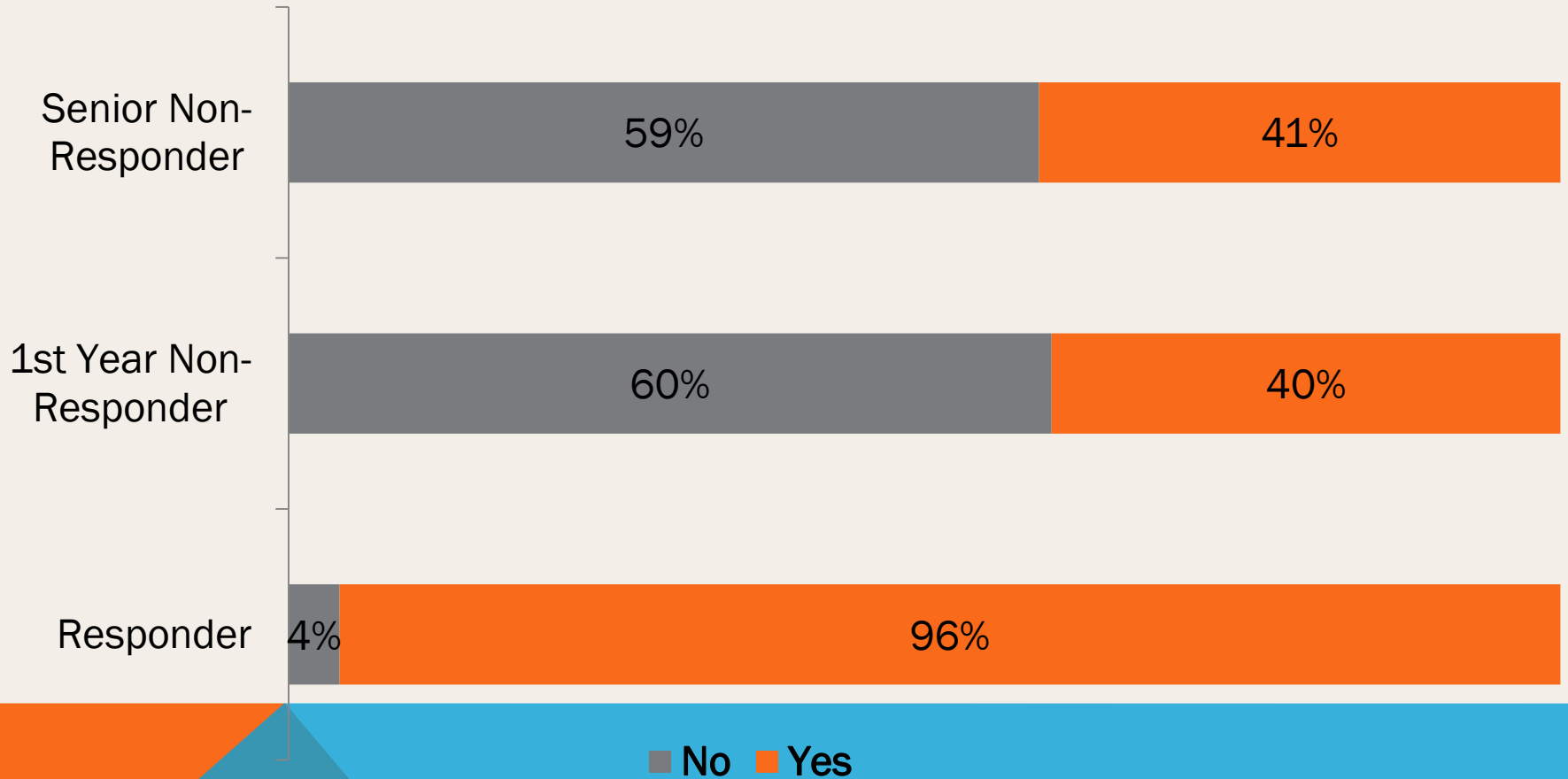
	Sample Size	Started	Finished	Response Rate*
Responder	684	373	368	54%
Non-Responder 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	1997	323	265	13%
Non-Responder Senior	2026	290	237	12%

\*Not adjusted for undeliverable emails

# 2011 INCENTIVE RESPONSE RATE COMPARISON

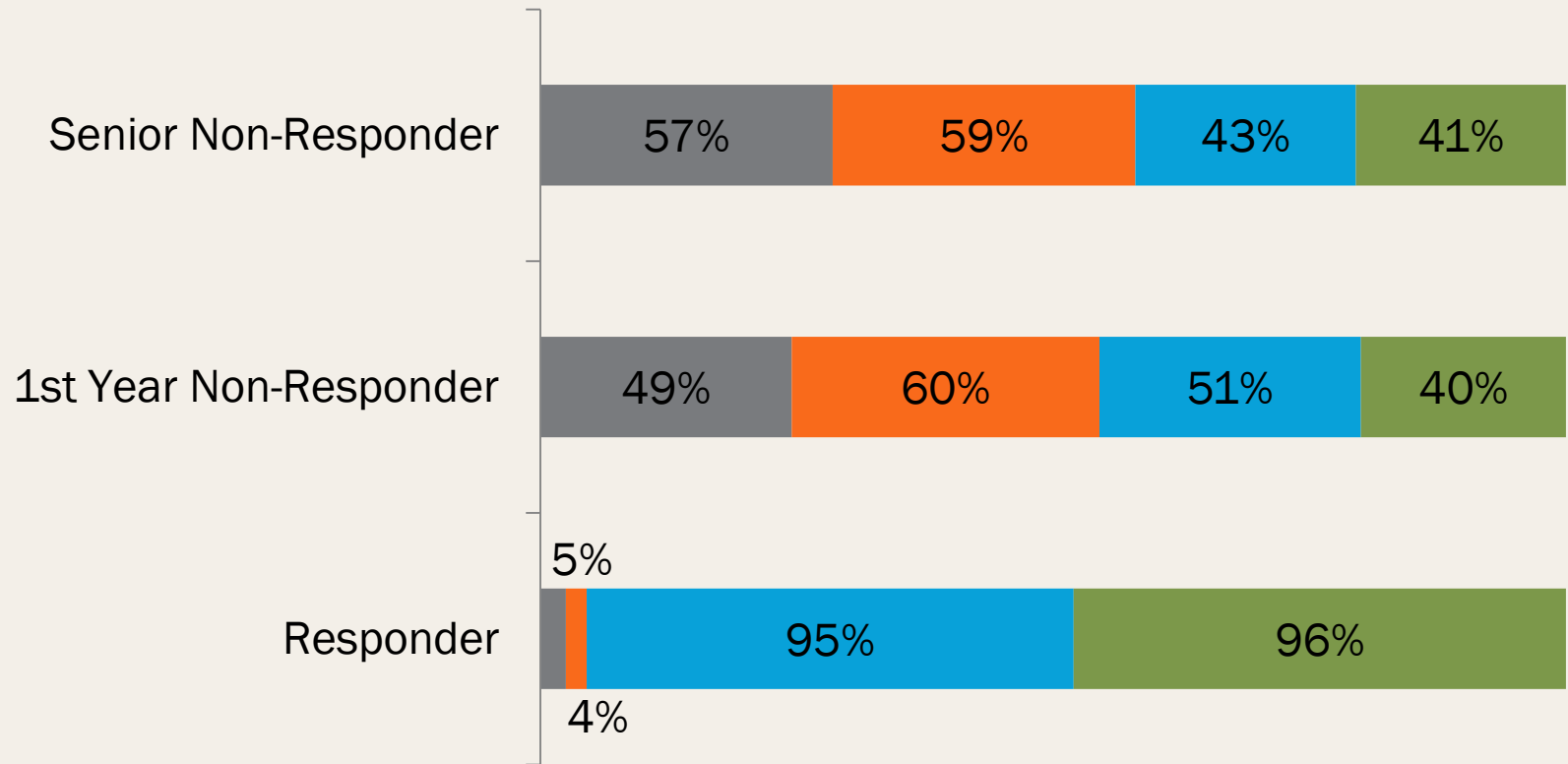
	2010		2011	
Responder	444	22%	368	54%
Non-Responder 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	178	9%	265	13%
Non-Responder Senior	143	7%	237	12%

# 2011 DO YOU REMEMBER COMPLETING OR RECEIVING AN EMAIL INVITATION?



# COMPARISON

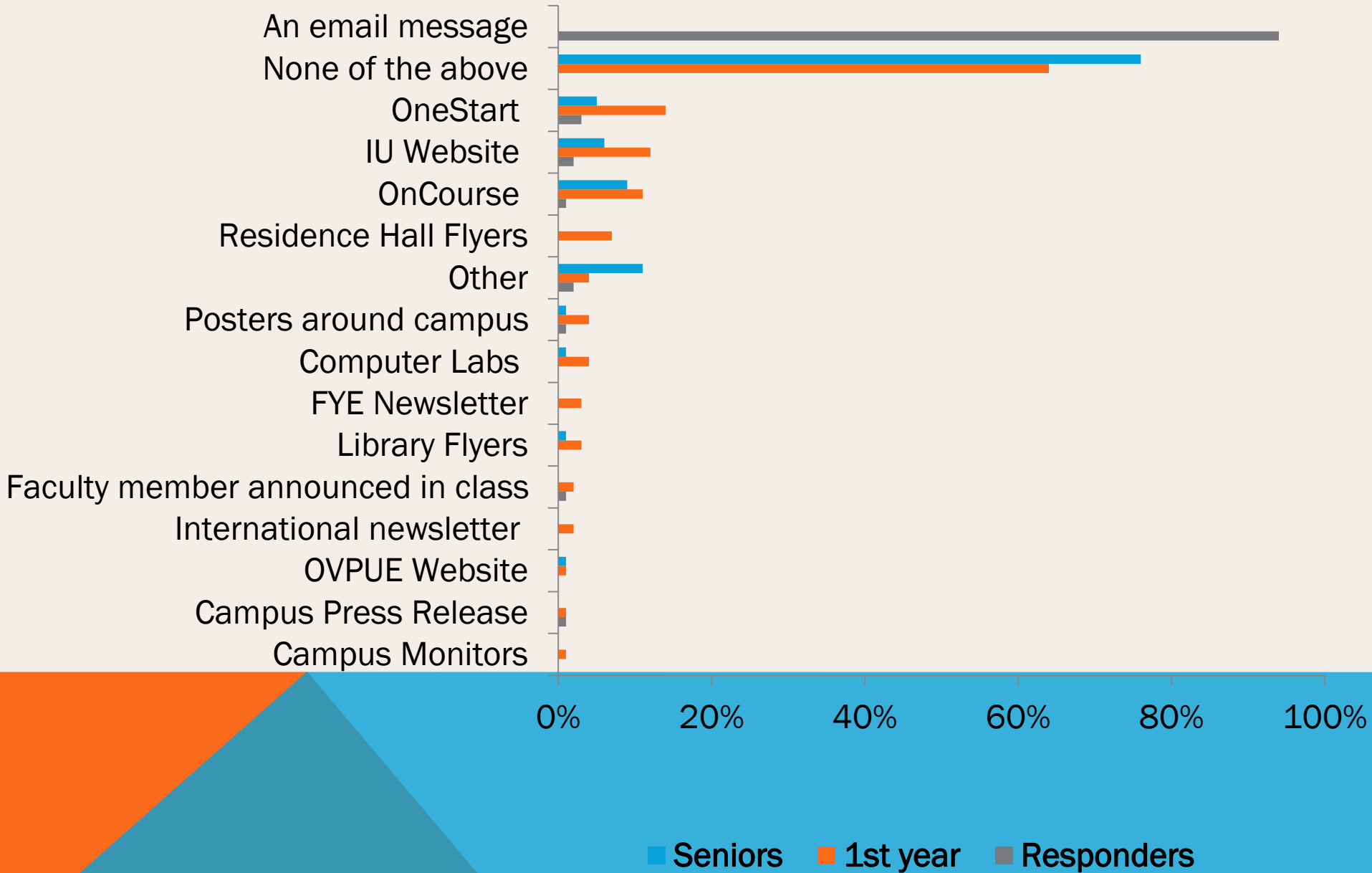
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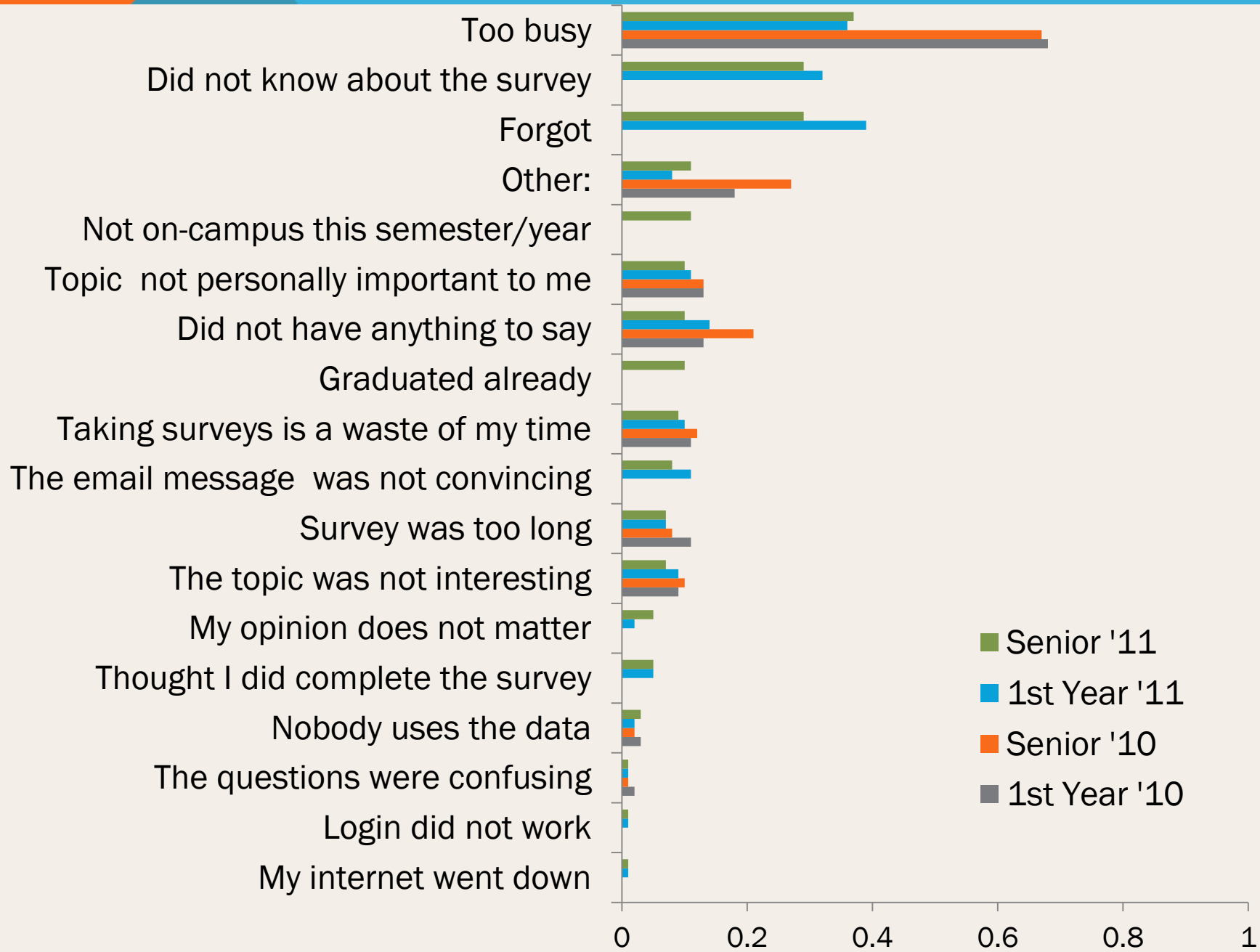


■ No 2010 ■ No 2011 ■ Yes 2010 ■ Yes 2011

# WAS THERE A MARKETING EFFECT?

2011





**Confidentiality Concerns**

**Why should I?**

**Non-traditional student**

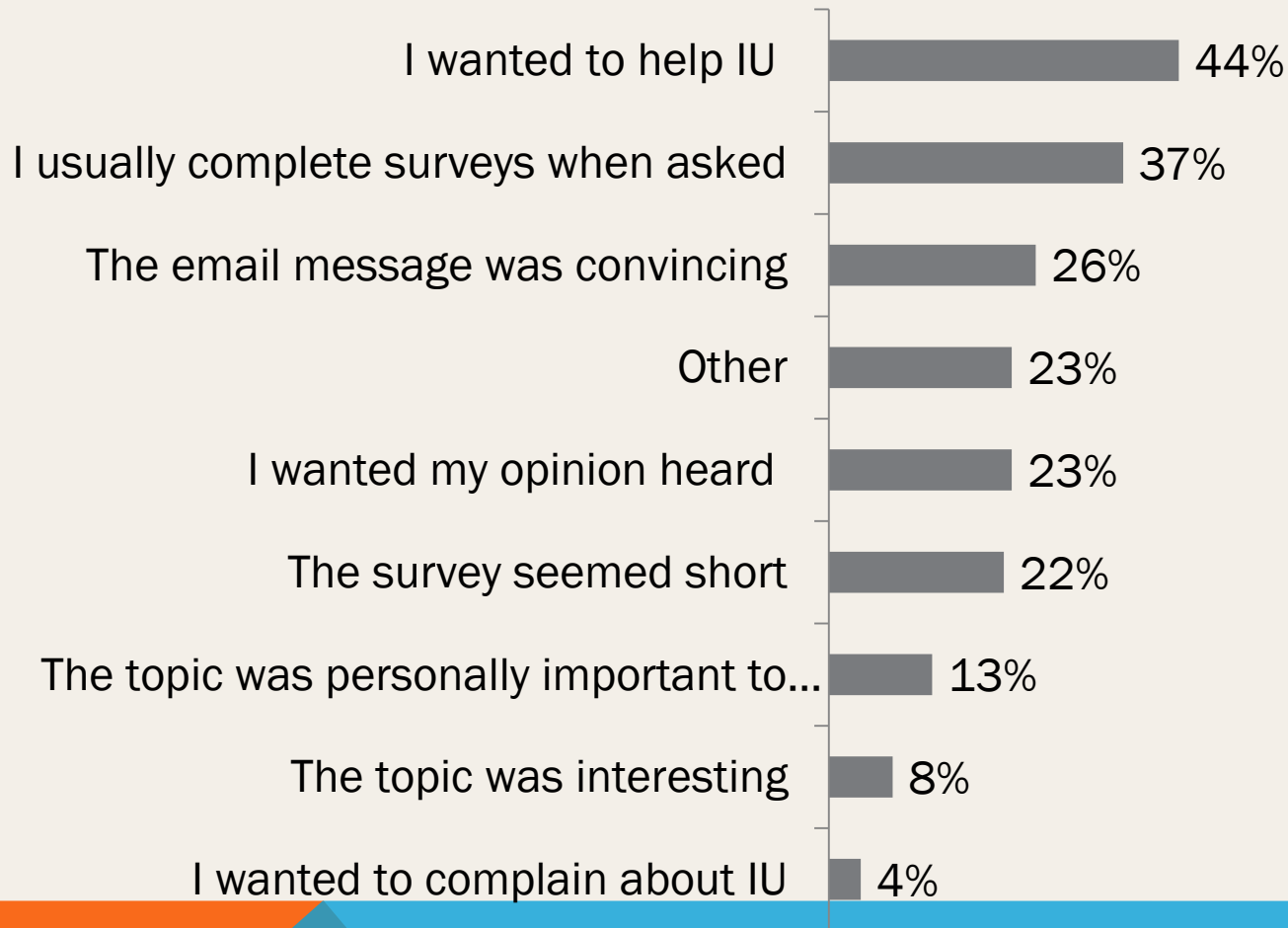
**Not a priority**

**Didn't know about it**

**Technical issues**

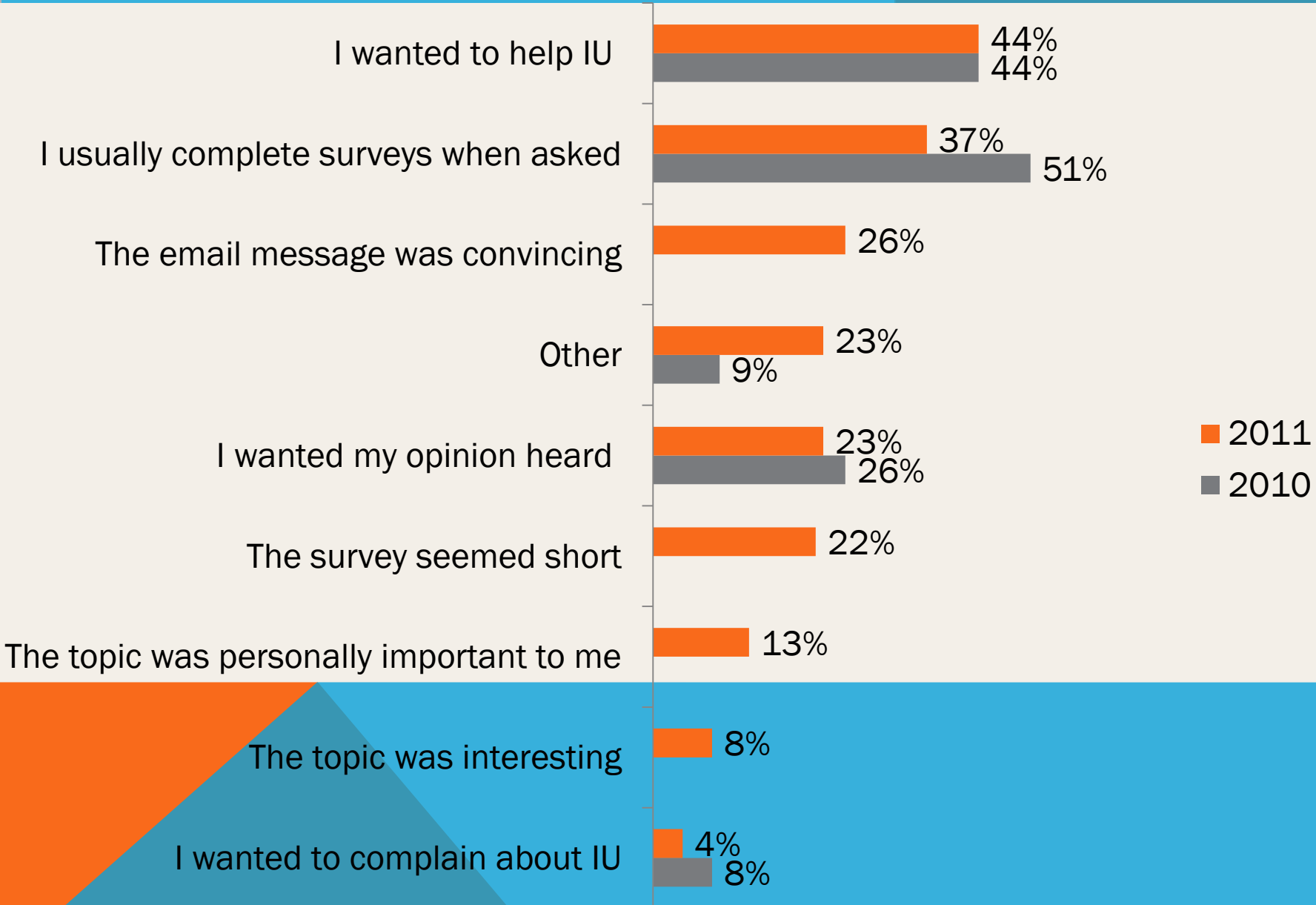


# WHAT CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND?

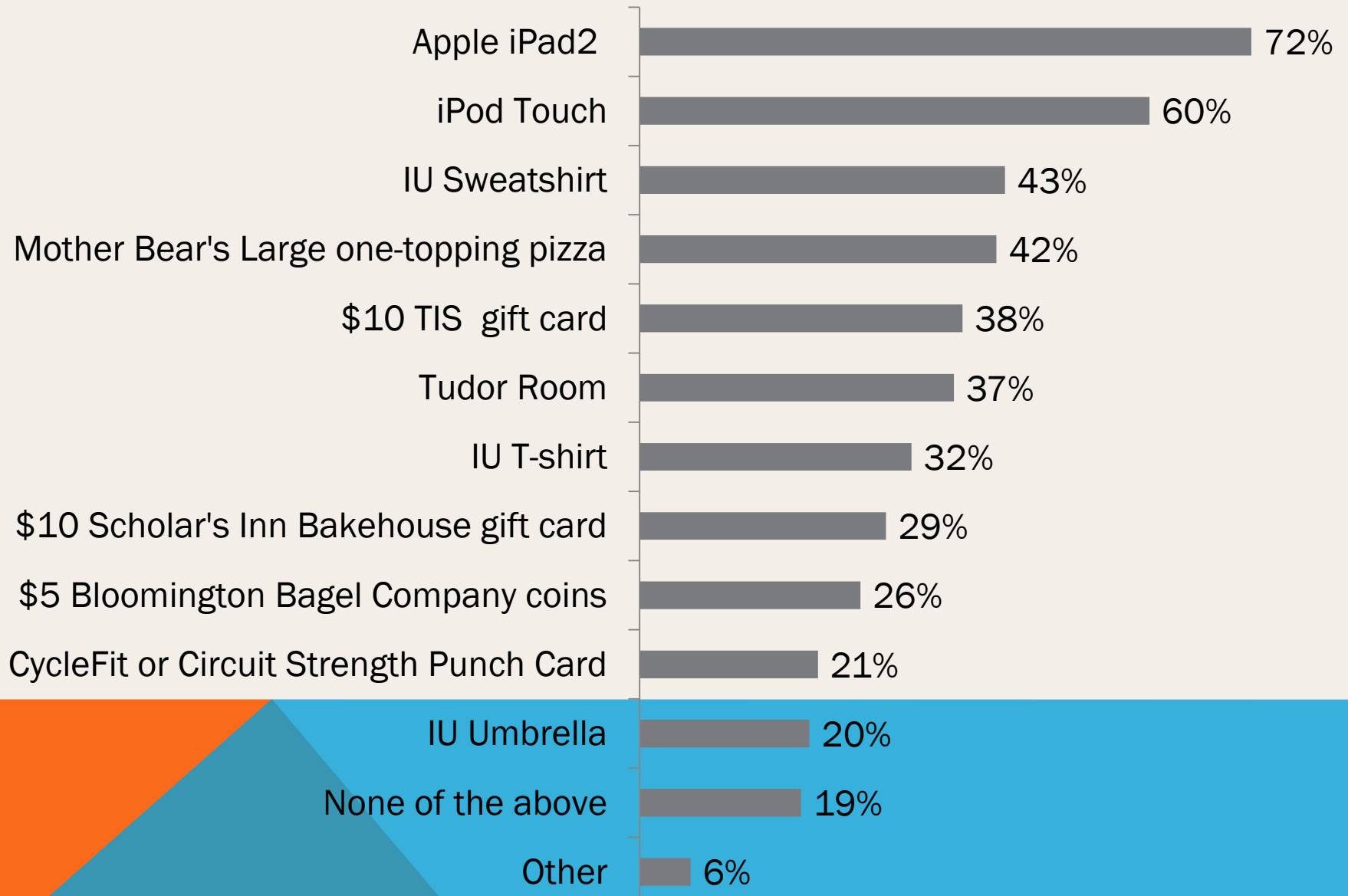


# COMPARISON

## WHAT CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND?



# WHICH AFFECTED YOUR DECISION TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY?



# REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE ACTION

COMPARISON

Fill it out immediately

17%

23%

11%

11%

8%

12%

Ignore the request

8%

10%

33%

34%

35%

23%

Delete the email

5%

5%

10%

14%

15%

17%

Do something else?

3%

2%

1%

1%

5%

5%

- Responder '10
- Responder '11
- 1st Year Non-responder '10
- 1st Yr Non-responder '11
- Senior Non-responder '10
- Senior Non-responder '11

**Gender effects**

**Race effects**

**Class-level effects**

**Differences in explanations by Responder  
& Non-responder**

**Are there differences across years?**



**Thoughts**

**Comments**

**Questions**

**Judy Ouimet**  
**Indiana University**  
**ouimet@indiana.edu**