

# WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Dream big.  
Then call ICF.

## Impact of Prenotification Letter Personalization in Establishment Surveys

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### Background

As an independent, nonprofit, non-partisan global research and public policy organization, Pew Charitable Trust is dedicated to serving the public by conducting rigorous analysis on important issues that impact the world. In mid-2015, Pew Charitable Trust engaged ICF to conduct the Small Business Retirement Survey, a telephone survey of small businesses in the U.S. on retirement plans. Although retirement plans are often standard benefits offered by larger organizations, small businesses may find it difficult to afford or implement these for their employees. As such, some states are considering the feasibility of state-supported retirement programs for small businesses. Pew Charitable Trust seeks to help states understand the benefits and challenges small businesses encounter when it comes to offering retirement plans.

### Small Business Retirement Survey

The SBRS targeted individuals within the organization that were either benefit-related decision-makers (e.g., the Business Owner/CEO), or those with considerable input into benefit-related decisions (e.g., the Human Resources Director/Manager). The survey collected information related to retirement offerings: whether the business provides retirement benefits; what specific benefits it offers; and the advantages and challenges in offering such benefits. The survey included businesses not offering retirement benefits in order to obtain information on what barriers these employers face in offering such benefits.

- Sample was obtained from SSI and was stratified by census region and employee size.
- Survey was approximately 20 minutes long.
- Participants were mailed a \$20 check upon completion in appreciation of their participation.
- A total of 1,640 completes were obtained

### Current Study

- The current study looks to evaluate the effectiveness of three different types of letter personalization:
  - Listed POC
  - Targeted Respondent Position (Owner/Human Resources Manager)
  - Combination of two
- Assess cooperation rates, refusal rates, and overall response rates across the three groups, as well as letter recall

### Letters

- Letters were addressed in one of three ways – to the listed contact, the Human Resources Manager, or to both.

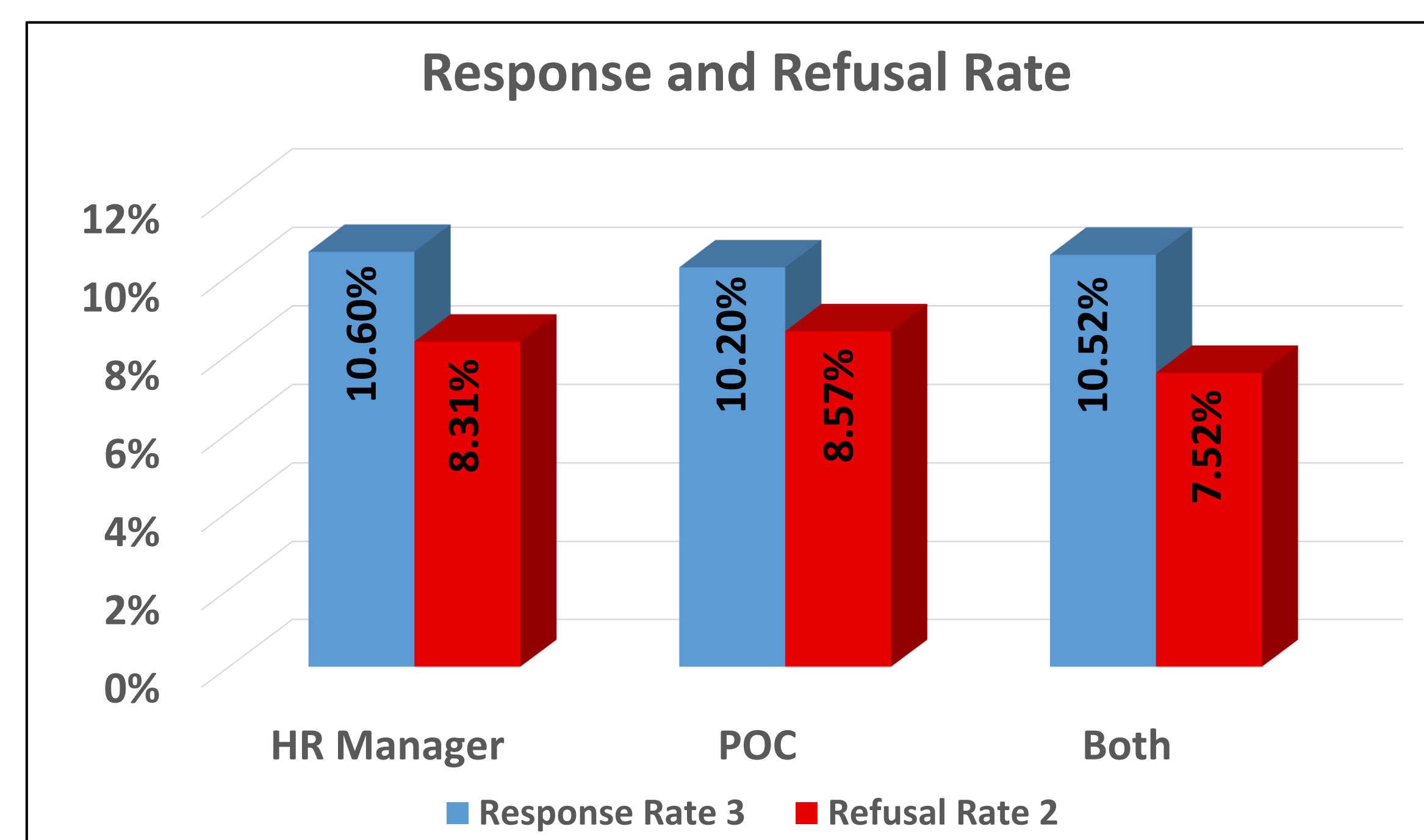
Dear <<Top\_Contact\_Name>>  
Dear Human Resources Manager  
Dear <<Top\_Contact\_Name>> or Human Resources Manager

- Distribution of Sample

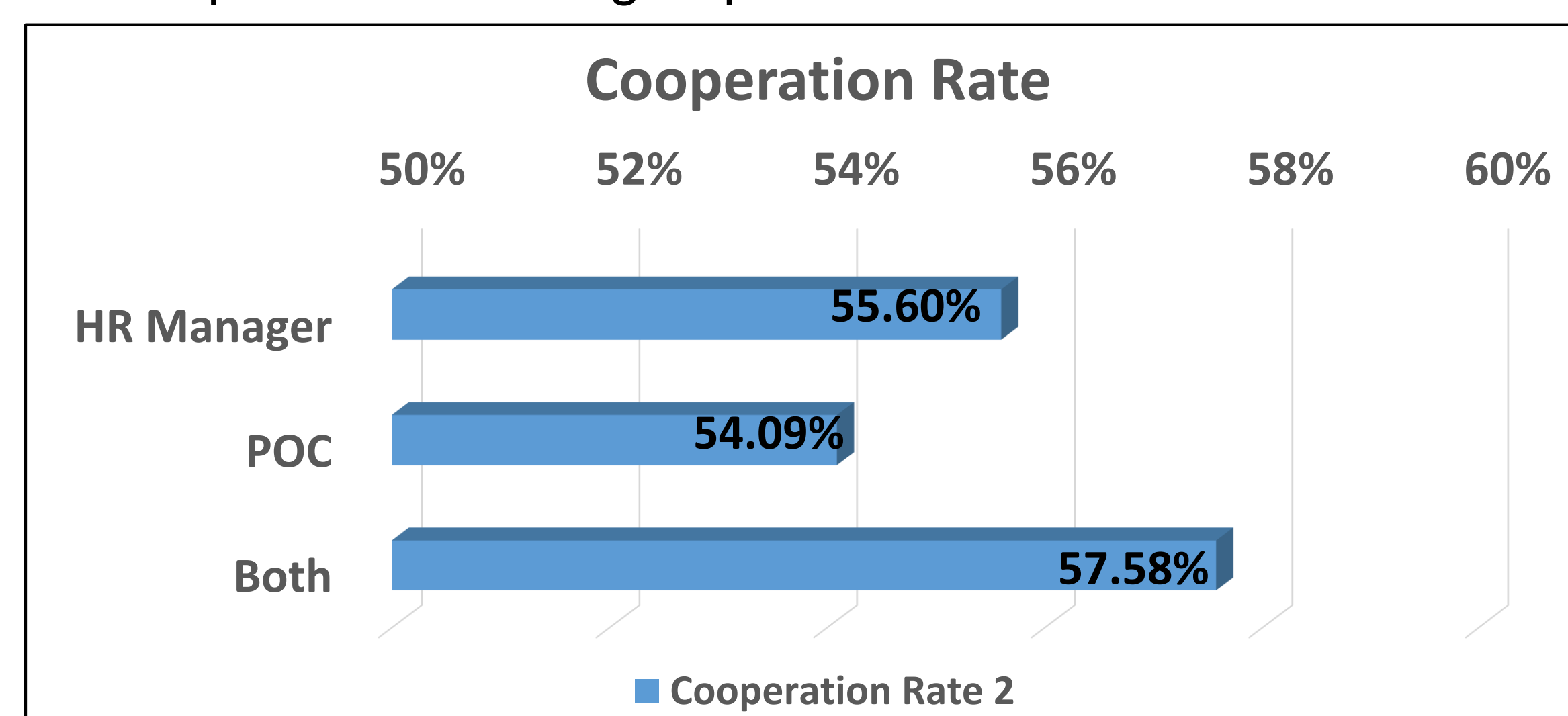
Personalization	Number of Records
HR Manager	7444
POC	7418
Both	7462
<b>Total</b>	<b>22324</b>



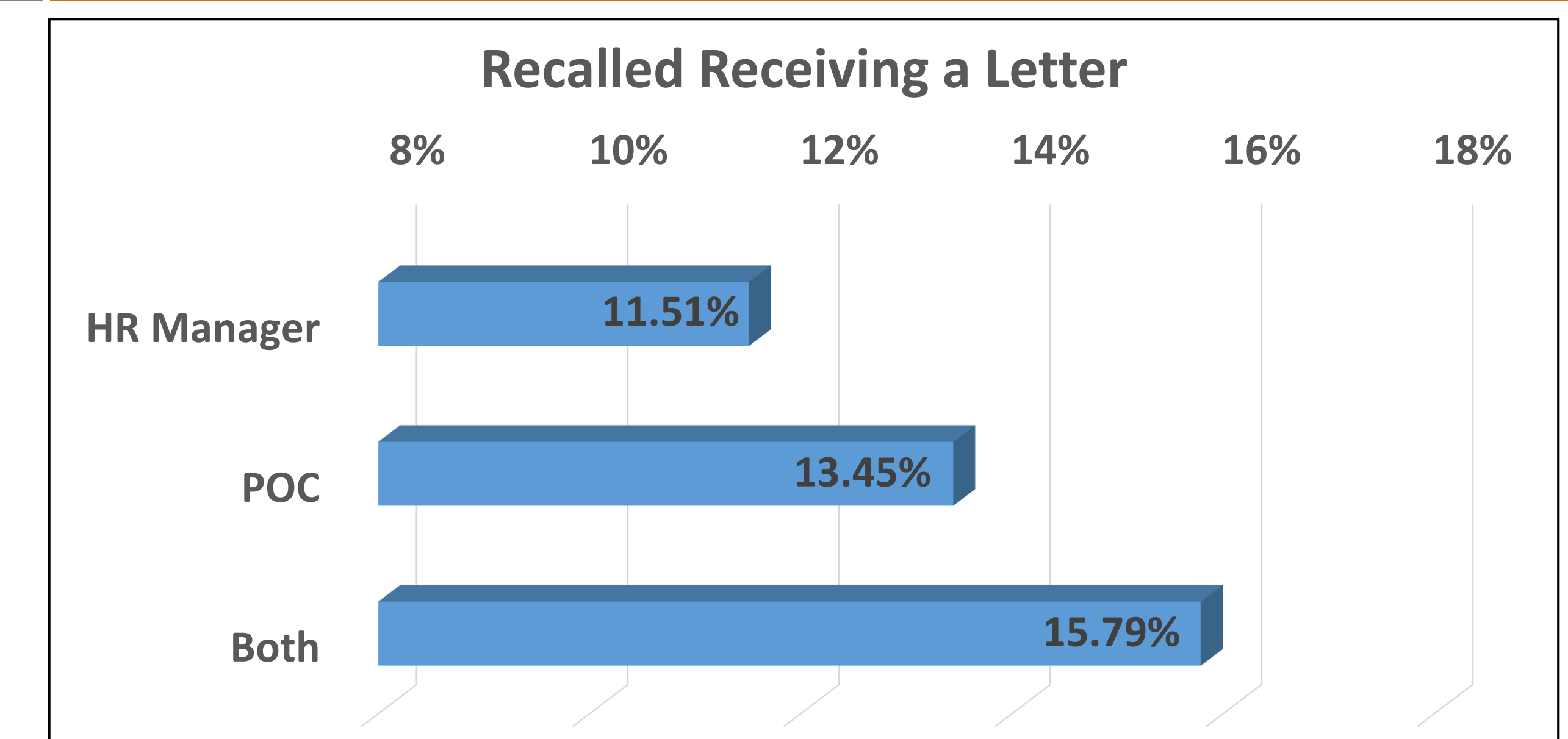
### Performance Metrics



- There were no significant differences in performance metrics across personalization groups



### Letter Recall



- There were no significant differences in letter recall across personalization groups

### Conclusions

- Personalization of letters had no impact on overall performance metrics or letter recall
- Low letter recall suggests that letters did not reach intended targets
  - Gatekeepers in organizations are charged with intercepting unsolicited materials. It is likely that many of our mailings never reached the intended recipients
  - HOWEVER – additional research found that response and cooperation rates were higher among respondents that received mailings.
- The cost of acquiring additional name flags to append to the sample may not be worth the investment

### Limitations

- Interviewers were encouraged to go off script as needed to reach the target respondent; as such variation between groups could be partly attributed to interviewer skillset differences
- Target respondent may not have been listed respondent. Consequently, recall of letter is less likely since it may have been addressed or routed to someone who wasn't interviewed
- End respondent was similar across all groups potentially accounting for why performance metrics are similar.