

California Library Literacy Services

Literacy Program Public Awareness and Action Project

Market Survey Results
(excerpts)

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Introduction

This document presents the initial results of a market survey of California library literacy program participants – learners and tutors – conducted during December 2005 and January 2006.

The survey was administered in person, by staff and volunteers at twelve literacy programs, identified in this document as Programs A-L.

The survey addressed two main marketing objectives:

1. To collect information about what motivates literacy learners and tutors to act – to take the step(s) necessary to get involved in a literacy program, and
2. To capture accounts of participants' experiences in the library literacy programs in their own words.

This information will be used to craft meaningful new public awareness and recruitment messages, to communicate those messages through effective channels to reach more prospective learners and tutors, and to create new templates for public awareness materials for use throughout California.

The consultant would like to thank everyone who participated in this research.

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Recurring Themes in the Market Survey Responses

Learner Surveys	
Channels	Friend Family member School Social service agency Radio TV Children's library Work
Triggers	Personal invitation Referral
Value Proposition	Relationships Comfortable Free
Keywords	Nice, kind, friendly, helpful, private, one-on-one, person-to-person, patience, free, my reading, my spelling, my math, my tutor, willing to help, surprised myself, want to learn, learn English, GED, like family, comfortable, positive, confidence, no pressure, your own pace, everyone's here for the same reason
Tutor Surveys	
Channels	Newspaper Library Friend Church Club Guide to volunteer opportunities TV Online Outdoor sign/banner
Triggers	Change in status/lifestyle/residence Personal invitation Presentation Previous experience teaching or tutoring

Tutor Surveys, continued	
Value Proposition	Relationships Needed Good use of time See results Importance/value of reading Materials available
Keywords	Rewarding, give back, make a difference, help someone, eager to learn, one-on-one, see progress, meet people, different backgrounds, community, had time, contribute, had always wanted to, worthwhile, feel good, support, training materials, everything I needed, comfortable, appreciated, fun, enjoy, committed, I learn, friends, hope, self-esteem, satisfaction, results, opens doors, perspective, love it

Conclusions Drawn from the Survey Responses

- No learner uses the term “literacy” – except when referring to the name of a program. The consistent phrase is “help with my reading.” To reach this group, we need to offer “help with your reading.”
- We don’t need to explain to prospective learners how much better their lives will be after they’ve learned to read. They already know that. What they need to hear from us is how friendly and supportive this learning process will be. Testimonials should focus on what it’s like to learn, not just what it’s like afterwards.
- The fact that we’re friendly surprises both learners and tutors. We need to do a much better job of showing people our friendly side.
- Learners and tutors highly value the personal relationships they develop by participating in these programs. Our “product” is essentially relationship-based learning. That means we shouldn’t be promoting ourselves by showing solitary individuals – we should always show people interacting. We need to highlight the friendly and supportive relationship between learner and tutor that makes these programs so successful.
- The vast majority of learners come to our programs because somebody they know and trust has nudged them. We need to prepare/equip everyone associated with these programs to do personal recruitment. We also need to encourage the general public to recruit learners and tutors for us. “If you know someone who...”
- After personal encouragement, the most promising avenue for recruiting learners is the library itself, particularly the children’s department. Even parents who don’t read will bring their kids to the library for story hour, homework help, and videos. We need

to prepare children's staff to recognize and recruit these parent learners.

- Tutors find these programs very rewarding because they can actually see the difference their efforts make. We should emphasize the “give back and get back” nature of this work.
- There is some misconception that classroom teaching experience is required/desirable for tutoring. We need to be clear that this is not the case – “no previous teaching experience needed.”
- Many tutors volunteer at the point of some life change – retirement, loss of a spouse, move to a new city, job change, etc. We may reach prospective tutors by partnering with organizations that serve people in these situations, e.g. financial planners, realtors, etc.
- Tutoring is clearly a significant time and scheduling commitment. We need to consider other ways people can volunteer and contribute to these programs without actually becoming a tutor.