

MN Marketing Program - Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2007, the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and Wildlife Forever partnered to test an integrated marketing program to encourage lapsed anglers to purchase fishing licenses. The integrated marketing program leveraged the Take Me Fishing™ national advertising campaign and included a billboard advertising campaign that coincided with Minnesota's fishing opener, a direct mail marketing program and public relations tactics.

Target Audience

As is the case with most state agencies, the budget for the marketing program was limited and therefore, the team had to prioritize the target audiences such that the greatest response rate would be achieved. A key finding of RBFF's experiences in working with state agencies to implement integrated marketing programs was that lapsed anglers who have a more frequent purchase history (i.e. are recently lapsed) and a longer purchase history (i.e. have purchased numerous fishing licenses in the past) have the greatest response to marketing (when compared to those lapsed anglers who have a distant purchase history and a shorter purchase history). Accordingly, the target audience for the direct mail program included 48,500 lapsed anglers classified into one of two groups:

- Group 1: 36,914 anglers who bought a license in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, but not 2006
- Group 2: 11,586 anglers who bought a license in 2003, 2004, 2005, but not 2006

Program Overview

Minnesota's integrated marketing program was an investment of \$60,000 and included billboard advertising, direct mail and public relations tactics.

In partnership with Wildlife Forever and the MDNR, Minnesota's 2007 state fishing season opener on May 12th was promoted with billboard advertising in the Twin City metro market. Electronic billboards counted down the days to the fishing opener and 16 static billboards prominently displayed Take Me Fishing imagery, logo and TakeMeFishing.org.

In partnership with Rapala, Premier Marine, Inc. and the MDNR, this advertising was leveraged with a direct mail program targeting lapsed anglers statewide reminding them to buy a fishing license. Direct mail postcards featuring Take Me Fishing imagery and logo were timed to arrive just after the opener, with a follow-up reminder being distributed in June.

In addition, during this time, the MDNR was actively engaged in heightening awareness about the decline in angling participation through media awareness via newspapers and radio.

Timeline

Billboard advertising campaign:

- Static billboards displayed April 25th through the month of May
- Digital billboards displayed May 7th through May 13th

Direct mail marketing program:

- Postcards were sent May 11th to 48,500 lapsed anglers statewide
- Reminder postcards were sent June 12th to 38,974 of the above lapsed anglers who had not yet purchased their fishing license

Results

- The target audience's **response rate** to the integrated marketing program was 20.3 percent and resulted in the sale of 9,846 fishing licenses. It is important to note that the definition of a response rate is the total number of people who respond to the offer divided by the total number of people to which the offer was made.
- Another type of measure sometimes used when analyzing the results of an integrated marketing program is **lift**, which is defined as the difference between the fishing license renewal rates for a treatment group and a control group. In Minnesota, the lift was 2.4 percent. However, lift is complicated by an integrated marketing program because variables are introduced that cannot be controlled. For example, members of the control group had a presumably equal chance of being exposed to the marketing messages through numerous media channels.
- The integrated marketing program generated approximately 9.4 million impressions in the greater Twin City metro area.

Key Findings and Implications

- License sales among members of the target audience were tracked according to the timing of two direct mail advertisement mailings. The target audience's response rate following the first direct mail advertisement (12.5 percent) was greater than the second direct mail advertisement (7.8 percent); however, the second direct mail advertisement did result in incremental license sales.
 - The response rate to an integrated marketing program can be optimized through multiple contacts with the target audience.
- The response rate of Group 1 (21.2 percent), which included lapsed anglers with a more frequent purchase history and a longer purchase history, was greater than that of Group 2 (17.3 percent).
 - This further supports the key finding noted in [A Summary of Key Learnings from State Marketing Programs](#) that lapsed anglers who have a more frequent purchase history and a longer purchase history have the greatest response to marketing.

- In analyzing the results, it was determined that if the top tier lifestyle segments for fishing participation (as defined by Tapestry™, which provides detailed demographic and lifestyle information for all neighborhoods in the U.S.) were used to prioritize the target audience for Minnesota’s integrated marketing program, the response rate would have been significantly greater.
 - The use of Tapestry™ data can optimize the response rate to a marketing program. This further supports a key finding noted in Lifestyles and License Buying Habits of America’s Anglers: A Five-Year Examination of U.S. License Buyers that using traditional data, such as age, gender, etc., in fishing recruitment and retention programs is limited in its utility and need to be complemented by lifestyle or psychographic data.
- Suburban residents in the target audience responded better to the marketing program than urban residents in the target audience.
 - Those who reside in suburban settings respond better to marketing programs when compared to those who reside in urban settings – a key finding that is consistent with a report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). According to the USFWS, urban residents had a lower 1995 – 2005 fishing participation retention rate when compared to residents of other settings.
- Those in the target audience who reside in neighborhoods with above average incomes responded better to the marketing program than those from neighborhoods with below average incomes.
 - Those who have higher incomes respond better to marketing programs when compared to those who have lower incomes – a key finding that is consistent with a USFWS report. According to the USFWS, the 1995 – 2005 fishing participation retention rate for anglers is highest for those with incomes of \$40,000 or more and lowest for those with incomes of \$25,000 or less, suggesting that the costs associated with fishing are a deterrent to participation among those in the lowest income strata.
- The integrated marketing program increased traffic to TakeMeFishing.org.
 - The number of visitors to TakeMeFishing.org from Minnesota in May 2007 increased by 137% compared to April 2007, which was a greater than average increase in the number of visitors to TakeMeFishing.org from Minnesota.

Conclusion

Minnesota’s integrated marketing program generated many key findings and implications. The first year of a marketing program is a learning in and of itself – there is no “silver bullet”. As such, a marketing program needs a commitment of more than one year, and the MDNR will build on its first year of learning and implement an integrated marketing program again next year.