All Marketing is Local: Utilizing Extension Local Marketing Efforts to Engage Current and Prospective Clientele

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Introduction
Extension faces the difficult mission of extending research and education to an increasingly diverse population with diverse needs. Chappell (1990) suggested that Extension must communicate with its constituents in a way that creates awareness, stimulates interest, and ultimately produces participation by targeted audiences. In order for states to be successful in their Extension marketing campaigns, the local approach also should be factored in to help create awareness, stimulate interest, and produce participation (Chappell, 1990).

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose and objective of this proposed poster is to illustrate the coordinated efforts of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service (FCES) to conduct market research and to develop and disseminate marketing efforts promoting programs locally to current and prospective clientele.

Major points
In January 2004, the Florida Cooperative Extension Service Marketing Extension Task Force was called together with the purpose of developing creative options to market its services directly to its audiences in a clear and definable way. Based on the task force’s deliberations, a set of strategic marketing priorities were developed to facilitate marketing and promotions at the local county level. These priorities included development of a consistent slogan for Extension, which focused on conveying the idea of Extension as providing answers or solutions for everyday life, as well as a new Web site portal and a marketing brochure designed to be used locally, with the ability to customize a panel highlighting the local impact of each county’s Extension programs. Taking an integrated marketing approach, all elements were designed to use the same slogan and a set of “public value” words designed to be meaningful to members of the general public while at the same time conveying the essence of each of the six major goal areas identified by the FCES. To develop concepts and ideas for these materials, as well as to assess current local marketing efforts and needs among county agents, a combined survey of county Extension faculty and a series of two focus groups with the general public were conducted, with the intent of using findings to refine and target materials specifically for local needs.

Conclusion and Educational Importance
This project represents a unique effort, the results of which may prove useful for Extension services in the U.S. and internationally as well, with respect to developing local marketing efforts designed to leverage resources and promote local programs to current and prospective clientele. Especially in light of limited resources currently being allocated in many Extension programs, it is extremely important to understand how to leverage marketing efforts to promote programs locally. It is hoped that this project will serve as a model as how to best market Extension programs in local communities.

References