MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

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Marketing in EFNEP

• **Circular A-421.**
  Section 42. *Selling and marketing.* Costs of selling and marketing any products or services of the institution [unless allowed under Section J.1.c. (allowable advertising costs) or J.34 (proposal costs)] are unallowable.

• **Public value of EFNEP**
  “The value of EFNEP to those who do not directly benefit from EFNEP.”

• **What do we need to do to tell the story of our programs and their impacts?**
Definitions

Marketing: sharing the public value of our program with agency partners

Recruiting: directly attracting prospective participants to enroll in our program
What do you think makes marketing and recruiting most difficult for county staff?
Purpose

• Support efforts of Cornell Cooperative Extension programs in marketing benefits to collaborating agencies and other stakeholders interested in nutrition programming SNAP-Ed and EFNEP target audience

• Support efforts of extension nutrition programs in recruiting and retaining eligible participants
Questions

• What are key marketing & recruitment challenges?
• How are these challenges being overcome?
• How can we do a better job of reaching our target audience?
• What training needs do we have?
Methods

- Advisory Committee
- Interviews with Partner Agencies
- Interviews with Nutrition Managers
- Focus Groups with Participants
- Advisory Committee
- Statewide Nutrition Manager Survey
## Partner Agency Interviews (n = 14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start/Even Start</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOEP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partner Agency Interviews: Results

- General positive perception of programs
- Inconsistent marketing message
- Misperception and confusion about what the intentions of the programs
- Perception of Cooperative Extension as a collaborator varies
- Personal relationships important at all levels
### Nutrition Manager Interviews (n = 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region, urban/rural</th>
<th>Managers Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Central, mixed (Capital)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central, mixed (Finger Lakes)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far north, rural (North Country)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western, mostly rural</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nutrition Manager Interviews: Results

- Some struggle with marketing, some with recruiting, some with both
- Many strategies are used for marketing & recruitment
- Various marketing messages are used
- Manager maintains agency relationships, frontline staff recruit (some frontline maintain relationships)
- Successful—In-person recruitment & formal agreements with agencies
- Unsuccessful—Events & cold calling names from partner agency client list
## Participant Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Groups (n=6)</th>
<th>Participants (n=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 1 Delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Participant Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for participating</th>
<th>Barriers to participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Help with kids meals</td>
<td>• Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health condition</td>
<td>• Family constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interest in cooking</td>
<td>• Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Something to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lose weight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help with budgeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Focus Groups

What participants liked

Format

- Discussion-based
- Group support
- Ownership of group
- Ideas/choices
- Convenience of home delivery

Content

- Portion size
- Label reading
- Cooking techniques
- Food safety
- Workshop materials
- Preparing healthier meals
- Practical information
Participant Focus Groups

Ppt 1: “...we own the group in terms of you know, we have a say, we know we have a say and we are invested. So when we decide we want to do something...
Ppt 2: We’re all in.”

“...it was just very practical. Which for me sums it up because you know everything we talked about we can all use, so practical, I would say, would be a very good word.”

“The easiness. Making it easy... I thought it was going to be difficult and it made it easy to consider and think about nutrition.”
Participant Focus Groups

Praise for educator
• Nice and/or helpful
• Knowledgeable
• Non-judgmental
• Values and respects participants

Why others don’t participate
• Too busy
• Negative connotation of “nutrition”
• Don’t want to be forced to change
• Don’t like classroom setting
• Focused on short term
• Need more encouragement
Participant Focus Groups

Ppt 1: “...sometimes when you take classes, especially when you are economically disadvantaged, it comes down as kind of preachy and it wasn’t. It was presented with, you know...”
Ppt 2: Dignity.
Ppt 1: ...she wasn’t talking down to us. Which was really important.”

Ppt 1: “...we need ten [educator]s!”

Ppt 1: “You could see that she was excited about what she was doing.”
Ppt 2: “…she wants people to be healthy!”

“...she didn’t criticize me if my house was a little messy.”
Participant Focus Groups

Participant Suggestions

Classes

• More or longer sessions
• Flexibility of times/make-up sessions
• More follow-up or encouragement
• Have option for more detail on topics of interest

Recruitment

• Partner with community outreach organizations
• Use mass media to advertise
Statewide Survey
(n=47 (>80%) managers; 44 counties)

Quantitative analysis: 2 categories created
  • Counties who met cost criteria in FY2008
  • Counties who did not meet cost criteria in FY2008

Qualitative analysis on open-ended questions
Statewide Survey: Agency Partners

- All or almost all are working with
  - WIC
  - Head Start
  - Department of Social Services
  - Food banks or pantries
  - Residential or day treatment centers

- Those who met cost criteria more likely (p<0.05) to work with these agencies:
  - Health Centers*
  - Shelters*
  - Transitional housing*
  - NOEP
  - Schools
Statewide Survey: Agency Partners

• Would like to partner more often with:
  – WIC, DSS, Head Start, grocery stores, schools, health centers, NOEP, food pantries/soup kitchens

• Barriers to partnering with these agencies:
  – Agency staff:
    • lack time
    • don’t see the program’s value
    • have high staff turnover
  – Participants:
    • lack time
    • lack interest
Statewide Survey: Marketing Strategies

• All or almost all use:
  • Face to face meetings
  • Phone or email to keep in touch with partner agencies
  • Nutrition trainings or presentations for partner agency
  • Community meetings to promote nutrition programs
  • Participation on task forces or committees
  • Promotional material distributed to partner agency
  • Attending partner agencies’ conferences

• **Counties who met cost criteria** more likely to use:
  • Advisory committees with partner agencies
  • Regular meetings with agencies to share program impact
Statewide Survey: **Comfort Level**

- Managers are most comfortable using:
  - Face to face meetings
  - Presentations and trainings for partner agency staff

- Managers are least comfortable using:
  - Impact statements
  - Hosting or joining advisory committees
Statewide Survey: **Comfort Level**

How difficult is marketing to partner agencies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Met Cost Criteria</th>
<th>Did Not Meet Cost Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statewide Survey: **Comfort Level**

- **Counties who did not meet cost criteria were more likely to agree:**
  - Working with community agencies to find participants is the hardest part of my job.*

- **Counties who did not meet cost criteria were less likely to agree:**
  - When I started this job, I thought I would spend as much time on marketing as I am currently spending.
Statewide Survey: **Comfort Level**

- What makes marketing easy?
  - Having a marketing plan
    - “We constantly review and reassess agencies we are not working with... we try to touch base with those agencies 1-2 times per year...”
  - Partner agencies recognizing the value of the programs
  - Long standing relationships with partner agencies
  - When partner agencies understand program goals and requirements

- What makes marketing difficult?
  - Partner agencies are too busy to be interested
  - Partner agencies feel our programs are competing for clients’ time
Statewide Survey: Marketing Messages

Hands-on
Free
Helps needy families plan healthy meals & stretch food dollars
Help families feed their families for less
Impact of behavior change is better quality of life & lower healthcare costs for taxpayers
Make healthy food choices on a limited budget
Helps families become healthier
Teach basic nutrition food safety for people receiving food stamps
Fun
Interactive
Dialogue based
Develop knowledge & skills for no cost
Knowledge to make informed decisions
Structured series
Delivered by trained nutrition educators in homes
What you can do with $14

Practical
Cooking skills
Improve food shopping skills
Money management
Menu planning
Aligning with agency’s goals for clients
Food tastings
Get kids to eat vegetables & fruits
Enhance agency’s program
Physical & fiscal fitness
Be smart about your food choices
Can be tailored to specific needs
Eat healthier & spend less
Confidential
Get the most from your food dollar
Planning & preparing safe & appropriate meals
Improve health
Economical meals without wasting food
Message tailored to meet needs of agency
Statewide Survey: Features of Programs

- Counties who met cost criteria were more likely to promote these program features:
  - Dietary analysis* (agencies)
  - New recipes* (agencies)
  - Interactive education* (agencies)
  - Graduation certificate* (agencies & participants)
  - Tasting new foods* (agencies)
Statewide Survey: Recruitment Strategies

- All or almost all counties
  - Attend health fairs or events to promote programs/enroll participants
  - Offer incentives to participants for completion of series
  - Ask partner agencies to refer participants
  - Recruit pre-existing groups from partner agencies
  - Do drop-in presentations at partner agencies
  - Ask partner agency to distribute promotional material or recruitment forms

- Some counties
  - Partner with agencies to offer programs together
  - Partner with agencies that offer incentives
  - Send newsletters
  - Use self-referrals (drop-boxes, interest surveys)

- Few counties
  - Get contact list from partner agency & make cold calls
  - Use public access TV, radio, newspaper articles or videos
  - Provide childcare or transportation
Statewide Survey: Recruitment Comfort Level

• Staff are most comfortable
  – Recruiting pre-existing groups
  – Doing “one-shot deals” or food demos
  – One-on-one participant recruitment

• Staff are least comfortable
  – Using mass media
  – Recruiting in waiting rooms
Statewide Survey: Recruiting Comfort Level

• How difficult is recruiting participants?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Met Cost Criteria</th>
<th>Did Not Meet Cost Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statewide Survey: Comfort with Recruiting

...what makes a difference?

• Planning and re-planning
  “As a team we continue to look at our current recruitment efforts & build on them. We also look at changes in community agencies & demographics to make sure we are marketing ... in the proper places.”

• Having agency support
  “If they buy into it, the participants will buy into it as well.”

• Educator experience and skill
  “Recruitment is a form of selling. I think this is new for most educators.”

• Reaching the eligible population
  “People are so busy- combining 2 or 3 jobs to get by.”
Summary of Themes

• Marketing savvy is essential.
• Community connections must be maximized.
• Having a marketing plan is important.
• Need to have a single, simple message that describes the program in a few words.
• Program impact should be shared.
• Educating agency partners and prospective participants about the specific features of the program works.
What have you heard that might apply in your state?

How do these ideas inform your plan to make marketing and/or recruitment easier and more productive in your state?
What is the first thing you will do when you get home to put your plan in motion?