“Skip a Week” Campaign: 
Getting Results With Social Marketing

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It’s All About the Water
Florida’s Water

Water Management Districts

Southwest Florida Water Management District
Community-Based Social Marketing at Southwest Florida Water Management District

Community-Based Social Marketing

- Select behaviors
- Identify barriers and benefits
- Develop a strategy
- Pilot the strategy
- Evaluate the strategy
- Refine or broadly implement
- Evaluate
Community-Based Social Marketing

Select Behavior — Impact and Probability

Selecting a Behavior—Impact

- Up to 50% of a typical home’s water use is for landscape irrigation
- 772,849 inground irrigation systems in District
- 254,000 always left on
- 2,100 gallons per week
- 533 million gallons saved if *all* skipped just *one* week
- 3.2 billion gallons saved if *all* skipped *all* 6 weeks
Selecting a Behavior—Probability

- Simple and normal
- Turn off your automatic irrigation system
- Turn on when needed

Selecting a Behavior

- Lawns need water only every other week during cooler months (Dec.–Feb.)
- “Skip a week”
- Lawns need no more than ¾” of water every 2 to 3 days in the summer — rainfall often provides enough
- “Watch the Weather, Wait to Water”
Focus Groups 2007

- University of Central Florida
- 5 focus groups, 38 participants
- Own homes, have lawns and irrigation systems
- Feelings about lawns, landscapes
- Barriers/motivators to change irrigation system

Focus Groups 2007

- Trusted spokespeople — University Extension staff and master gardeners
- Common beliefs:
  - Impossible to water Florida’s sandy soils too much
  - Brown spots mean yard needs water
- Many water at least every week because they are allowed to
Focus Groups 2007

• Newcomers learn how to care for their Florida yards from their neighbors
• Use social diffusion — less irrigation, attractive yards
• Where water is expensive, use cost savings
• Promote: Less water = Less maintenance

Pilot Irrigation Project

• 3 neighborhoods
• High water use
• 1,200 homes total
• Similar size/age
• Track water usage
Original Pilot Design

- **Lakeland**
  - Control Group
  - Reduced Social Marketing Campaign

- **The Villages**
  - Control Group
  - Full Social Marketing Campaign

- **Port Charlotte**
  - Control Group
  - Full Campaign
  - Reduced Campaign

Survey 2008

- University of South Florida Center for Social Marketing
- Staff training, research, strategy development, materials testing
- Districtwide telephone survey
- Oversampled in pilot areas
- 802 people — live in homes, have landscapes and automatic irrigation systems
Survey Results 2008

- 40% always left system on automatic
- 5% always left system off
- Average respondent watered 3.57 days per month in winter; 4.93 days in summer

Survey Results 2008

- 70% willing to water only every other week in winter
  - It rains enough so no need
  - Desire to conserve water
  - Barrier: “The lawn will suffer and grass will die.”
Survey Results 2008

• 90% willing to water only when it doesn’t rain (summer)
  — It rains enough so no need
  — Desire to conserve water
  — Barrier: “The lawn will suffer and grass will die.”

Survey Results 2008

• Most would support suspension of enforcement of rules during water shortage
• Interested in learning best way to water lawns to keep them healthy — Extension office
The P’s

Priority Audience:
59% “Willing to Lead the Way”

Product Strategy:
Rains enough — no need; conservation; don’t want neighbors to think they are wasting

Pricing Strategy:
Lawn will suffer/die; they take pride in yard

Placement Strategy:
Extension, master gardeners, District, lawn service

Promotional Strategy:
90% interested in learning more through utility bill, newspaper supplement

Pre-tested Logos/Messages/Materials
Ads Tested

Skip A Week...of irrigation
it just makes sense!

As long-time residents, we know that this time of year we don’t water every week.
We conserve water, our yard is healthy and we are proud to say that we don’t overwater. Join those in the know.

Florida Friendly Grow Smart

Skip A Week of irrigation this winter

This time of year yards don’t need water every week for your landscape to stay healthy. You will conserve water, you will save money and you will protect the environment. It Just Makes Sense.

Florida Friendly Irrigation
It Just Makes Sense

Skip a Week of irrigation
It just makes sense!

As Master Gardeners and long-time residents, we know that this time of year we can water every other week and still have a healthy yard. We conserve water, our yard is healthy and we are proud to say that we don’t overwater.

Florida Friendly Irrigating
It Just Makes Sense
• Implemented Pilot Program
• Florida-Friendly Irrigating Team
  – Web page, rain barrel workshops
• Newspaper supplement via direct mail
• Mouse pad calendar prompt
• Homeowners association outreach
  – Ordinances
  – “Jacobs” to skip a week
  – Master gardener irrigation audits
Results/Issues

- Pilot design — groups too small to test individual interventions.
- Homeowners association cooperation/commitment
- Water shortage and drought
  - Water restrictions
  - Other messages
  - Control groups can’t be insulated
- Significant savings in only one area — media

2009 Four-Year Drought—Need to Extend Existing Supplies
Campaign Development

- Lessons from Pilot Irrigation Program
- Develop messages
- Pretesting messages (focus groups)
- Pre-campaign survey
- Implement campaign
- Post-campaign survey

Behavior and Benefits

- Behavior: “Skip a Week”
- Barriers
  - Dead lawn
  - Bad reputation
  - Not knowing how to set irrigation timer
- Benefits
  - Avoid pests and disease
Brainstorming

- Ideas based on identified behavior
- Concept: “Skip a Week”
- Three ideas to test

Create Ads to Test

- Three scenarios
- Develop scripts
- Cast with staff
- Videotape/Flip cam
- Edit
Pretesting Messages

- 8 focus groups
- Look for agreement
- Shape the message

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRHOdgsS_rs

Focus Group Results

- “Skip every other week”
- Tom and Stan worked best
  - Relaxing, normal
  - Consequences to not skipping a week
- Additional lessons learned
  - Show most common types of timers
Final Ads

• Developed two ads
• Cast Tom and Stan
• Filmed Commercials
  – Timer Trouble
  – Pests and Disease

[YouTube - Pests and Disease]
[YouTube - Timer Trouble]

Integrated Campaign Elements

• Paid media
• Free media
• Social media
• Partnerships
• Special events
**Results**

Reach 98.9
Frequency 58.73
Campaign Recall (unaided) 22%

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**Results — Post-Campaign Survey**

- Conducted just after campaign
- 1,152 residents with irrigation systems
- RDD
- 2.9% sampling error
- 95% confidence level
**Results — Post-Campaign Survey**

- Public’s **awareness** of “skip a week” increased **450%**
- **Pre-campaign**
  - Irrigate **3.1** times/month
- **Post-campaign**
  - Irrigate **1.8** times/month

**Wasteful Behaviors Reduced**

- **11%** fewer always water on watering day
- **19%** fewer agreed yards need water each week year-round to remain healthy
- **23%** fewer agreed brown grass needs water
Target Behavior Increased

19% increase in those who reported skipping a week

Potential “Skip a Week” Water Savings

- # of irrigation systems
- Average amount used per week
- % change in skipping a week
- Calculate savings
Potential “Skip a Week” Water Savings

• 1.2 billion gallons
• 20.9 million gallons a day

Campaign Lessons Learned

- Lengthen campaign
- Extend reach through partners and programs
- Increase coherence, consistency
- Promote simple, easy actions that save water
Social Marketing Lessons Learned

- “Kitchen Sink” — advertising plus education worked best
- Pilot groups too small
- Look for market segment ready to take action
- Promote one simple, normal behavior

Social Marketing Lessons Learned

- Identify barriers and remove
- Test your materials
- Use research to evaluate
For More Information

Southwest Florida Water Management District
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