

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Study Center
Affordable strategies & tactics for community outreach

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Introduction

Increasing public awareness with limited resources is a major challenge. This calls for a strategic and creative approach to community engagement that is cost-efficient and delivers results.

Methods

This begins with a strategy that selectively creates specific outreach activities for the Study Center and hits precisely the target audience—women 18-49 years-old and other residents in 12 socially diverse segments—in a cost-efficient manner. Examples of created activities include: 1) information booths and canvassing in or near Study segments; 2) special events in two segments helped to nurture support for enumeration in one wary ethnic neighborhood and one ambivalent condominium community; and 3) a one-hour television program that showcased the Study to a prime-time statewide audience. A YouTube channel, e-mail marketing, and direct-mail campaigns augmented these efforts. Future ideas will seek to tap the explosive growth in mobile communications by using applications such as Quick Response (QR) codes.

Results

In the first four months of Enhanced Household Based Recruitment, community events generated 25 percent of the consents received. The YouTube channel has recorded 4,000 views, while the e-mail marketing address list has grown to nearly 300.

Conclusion

Creating highly-localized activities to reach target audiences can produce strong results, inexpensively. These activities may be grown, evolving into recurring events that help to foster community-wide support or, perhaps, to help recruit and to retain participants. Study Centers may consider collaboration on a compilation of “Best Practices in Community Outreach” to share ideas for possible application in different communities.