

Overview of UUA Marketing Outreach 1999-2005 October 2005 Tracey Robinson-Harris

Five years ago, the ground work was laid and opportunities created for the Association to experiment with new ways of sharing and growing our faith. In 1999 the Executive Staff Council completed work on a strategic plan that included two significant shifts relative to growth. These were to:

“Undertake a major revision of the existing extension grant-making programs, moving toward a strategy in which underserved and/or high-potential metropolitan areas are identified and locally tailored growth plans developed and resourced.”

“Develop and test new means for attracting and retaining new members in preparation for a major national campaign for that purpose.”

Out of the first objective came what we now know as metropolitan/regional growth strategies process that was piloted in the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex (2000 – present) Out of the second came the “Uncommon Denomination” media campaign test in Kansas City in 2002-2003.

Since Kansas City, we have experience with marketing in Long Beach (around GA04); in Houston (January – April 2005) and in Fort Worth (June – August 2005). These campaigns build on the success and promise of The Uncommon Denomination in both marketing and hospitality and allow us to continue to try new things and learn as we go.

At the conclusion of the Kansas City media campaign test data showed that the increase in attendance at the four participating congregations was between 10% and 25% (comparing Dec 01-June 02 with Dec 02-June 03) with a collective attendance increase of 14% for all four congregations. Comparison of membership numbers also showed a collective 14% increase when looking at the same periods of time. June 2004 membership numbers show a modest continued increase as do the numbers reported by February 2005 for the annual congregational reporting process. Numbers reported for certification for three of the four Kansas City congregations and for the Prairie Star District as a whole are:

Congregation	Feb 03	Feb 04	Feb 05
Shawnee Mission	187	232	250
All Souls	387	400	423
Lawrence	112	137	147
Gaia	25		44
Prairie Star District	7996	8455	8699

In partnership with the GA Planning Committee we did a mini marketing campaign in June 2004 in Long Beach built around the "seeker" service held the Sunday of GA. During the month of June we ran bill board ads (including a mobile unit), radio spots and print ads. Though there were reports of increased visitors following the campaign, congregational reporting was not detailed enough to allow us to develop a sense of the impact of this effort.

In Houston a four month marketing campaign (January – May 2005) has just concluded, made possible by the 8 area congregations, generous donors and the UUA. We worked closely with the Houston Chronicle to develop the second generation of The Uncommon Denomination resources - "Imagine A Religion". Reports on the campaign prepared by Valerie Holton, marketing outreach consultant, are available on line . (see excerpt attached)

In partnership with the GA Planning Committee, the North Texas Association of UU Societies (NTAUUS) and the DFW congregations, we launched a three month marketing campaign in Fort Worth on June 1. We are using/adapting the second generation graphics created for Houston - "Imagine A Religion". As in Long Beach, we invited folks to join us for the Sunday morning service during General Assembly. We also extended an invitation to visit one of our DFW area congregations. We did a follow up in late August with a tab insert in the Fort Worth Star Telegram, Dallas Morning News and other local papers.

A focus on welcoming and hospitality is always a part of our marketing outreach efforts. We provide assessment tools, workshops and other resources to assist congregations, adding to/improving on what they already know and do.

Our marketing outreach has sought to make our name, values and messages as widely known as possible. While we have not "targeted" historically marginalized communities, we are paying attention to demographic data, choice of media outlets and other means of reaching diverse communities.

For more information go to
<http://www.uua.org/programs/congservices/uncommon/>

Houston Marketing Outreach Campaign Measurable Results:

Visitors: Over 605 first time visitors attended a Unitarian Universalist congregation in the greater Houston area from January – April 2005. This represents 36% of current membership. Visitor acquisition costs were ~\$350.

- Northwoods' new visitor attendance increased 296% from a year prior
- Bay Area experienced a 100% increase from a year earlier
- Emerson estimates a 100% increase
- First Church's "Total visitors" count (includes new and returning) was double (100%) last year

New Members: The following is a summary of new members for first quarter 2005

Church	New Members
Bay Area	22
Emerson	47
First UU Church	35
Henry David Thoreau	3
Northwest Community	10
Northwoods	17
UU Fellowship of Galveston County	4
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston	5
Total	143

New members represent 8.5 % of total membership, though not all can be attributed to the advertising campaign.

Anecdotal Comments

Bay Area states that their second highest attendance EVER at the church was Easter Sunday, with 226 folks. Matt Tittle, the Minister, mentioned that the day the insert dropped, Sunday 2/20 a person called the church at 8:30 AM. Matt took the call, the gentleman came that day and has been coming every Sunday since.

The Unitarian Fellowship of Houston states "we averaged 2-3 times our regular number of visitors through-out the campaign with a peak of 15 one Sunday...I've also seen folks come in with the insert in their hands as they walked in the door."

Northwest Community UU said that "over 50% of the visitors cited the campaign as their reason for coming."

Henry Groppe, Emerson Church member states, "We welcomed 47 new members – a record number...they stretched all the way across the sanctuary in 1 ¼ lines...the whole church buzzes with new life these days. You have helped us achieve the rarest of all accomplishments, a change in our culture"

UUA Media Plan Summer 2005 Dallas/Ft. Worth

The UUA and NTAUUS (North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies) partnered to conduct an advertising campaign for Unitarian Universalism in the Dallas/Ft. Worth (N. Texas) area, June through August 2005.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following were the campaign objectives:

- Generate “brand awareness” of Unitarian Universalism in N. Texas
- Create excitement and pride for UUA GA attendees visiting Ft. Worth
- Invite visitors to the GA Sunday Seekers Service
- Increase visitor attendance at the UU congregations in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area
- Increase membership in the DFW congregations

MEDIA STRATEGY

The campaign rolled-out in two phases with different messages.

In June, we ran advertising to create brand awareness, invite folks to attend the GA seeker service, and extended an invitation to visit a local congregation.

In mid-August we returned to the market with a targeted campaign to encourage families that might be “church shopping” during the back-to-school/church season to visit one of our congregations.

June Media Strategy:

- Three billboards in high-traffic locations:
 - I-30 1.2 miles West of Morrison (East Facing)
 - I-35 .4 miles South of Sandy Lake (North Facing)
 - 121 .3 miles East of Minnis (West Facing)
- Radio. Stations used were KERA (NPR) and KOAI a lite-jazz station
- A print ad in Ft. Worth Telegram promoting GA Sunday service
- Direct mail to 60,000 households that profiled to be potential UUs (based on their lifestyle characteristics) and were located within a geography around three mid-size churches and the new start-up (Horizon, First Jefferson, Plano and Pathways).
- Telemarketing campaign to the same 60,000 households. Message was an invitation to attend the Seekers Service at GA and/or a local congregation. Telemarketers were local UUs conversant about our faith and knowledgeable about our local church environments.

In addition, NTAUUS ordered tri-fold brochures for all the congregations to use. These rack brochures highlighted our faith, and gave contact information for the 13 NTAUUS congregations.

August “Back-to-school” Media Strategy

Target market strategy:

- Direct mail to the same 60,000 households as mailed to in June
- Telemarketing to ~38,000 new homeowners (September)
- 110,000 4-page, 4-color insert in the Ft. Worth Star Telegram, Dallas Morning News and other regional papers. Inserted by targeted zip codes provided by the NTAUUS congregations. Insert editorial content described Unitarian Universalism

BUDGET

Media	Approx. Cost	Paid for by	NTAUUS Costs	UUA Costs
3 billboards	\$11,350	NTAUUS and UUA	\$5,675	\$5,675
Radio- four weeks, KERA and KOAI	\$8,650	NTAUUS and UUA	\$4,325	\$4,325
Direct mail, 60,000 June 60,000 August:	\$27,500	NTAUUS and UUA	\$13,750	\$13,750
Newspaper Advertising Sunday 6/19 Ft. Worth Star Telegram	\$4,300	NTAUUS and UUA	\$2,150	\$2,150
Telemarketing	\$21,000 (June) \$5,800 (Sept)	UUA	\$10,700	\$16,100
Telemarketing Thank you postcards	\$1,000	UUA		\$1,000
110,000 Inserts in Sunday papers August 28th	\$9,500	NTAUUS (\$4,000) and UUA (\$5,500)	\$4,000	\$5,500
Tri-fold brochures for all congregations	\$1,400	NTAUUS	\$1,400	
Media Consultant	\$3,800	UUA		\$3,800
TOTAL	\$94,300		\$42,000	52,300