

**KANSAS CITY MEDIA CAMPAIGN TEST  
JANUARY -JUNE 2003**

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## Overview of the test

From January – June 2003 the UUA conducted a media campaign test in the greater Kansas City, Missouri/Kansas market.

The goals for the campaign test were to see if, by the use of media, we could:

- Increase awareness of UUism in the community at large (research conducted pre and post campaign)
  - Reach: Minimum 70% of adults age 25-54
  - Frequency: 7 impressions
- Increase attendance at primary worship services by 25% in six months – assess capacity to welcome and include visitors and new members & make adjustments as needed; track data on contacts, visitors, new attenders, new members
- Increase membership in participating congregations

We chose the Kansas City market after reviewing five potential test markets because it offered:

- Healthy and growing congregations
- Diversity of congregations (including size – from small to large midsize)
- Vision, support and resources from Prairie Star District Board and staff
- Affordable market allowing us to test the full campaign

The media test process included:

- Pre campaign awareness research
- Pre campaign focus groups on drafts of the tag line, messages and graphics
- Pre campaign work with the area congregations following the initial invitation to be the test market including meetings with congregational leaders, open meetings for congregation members, meetings with staff and leaders to assess congregational capacity for welcome and inclusion, follow up work as needed
- Selection of congregational campaign coordinators and an overall coordinator/liaison
- Reporting of prior years data on guests and new members
- Reporting of current year data, visitor interviews, phone/email contact reporting and other information gathering
- The media campaign (details below)
- Post campaign awareness research
- Debriefing and assessment by congregational coordinators
- Data reporting as related to goals of the campaign test
- On going reporting of congregational data through December 2003

Components of the media campaign:

### 1.) Billboards

- Six billboard locations over four months (rotate location after two months) with two billboard locations for an additional month

- Delivering 7,463,500 impressions to 93% of our target audience on the average of 34.3 times per person for a total circulation is 34,245,200 exposures.

## 2.) TV Advertising

- Two weeks from 1/29-2/9 including NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox
- Total of 92 spots and 55 "TV billboards" ran on Channels ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX
- Morning, early and late news, and on the Sunday 2/1 and 2/9 and Friday 2/7 Dateline on NBC
- Delivering some 3,847,000 impressions to 88.2% of our target audience on the average of 4.7 times per person

## 3.) Radio Advertising

- On 10 stations including KBEQ-FM, KCIY-FM, KCMO-FM, KFKF-FM, KMBZ-AM, KMXV-FM, WHB-AM, KCUR-FM and KANU-FM, KPRS-FM
- 1,023 spots and 338 sponsorship "billboards" over the six-week period
- Delivering more than 3,029,400 impressions reaching 59.8% of our target audience on an average of 16 times per person.

## 4.) Posters (donated for cost of printing)

## 5.) Print

- Tabloid insert in the KC Star distributed in late August
- Two ads each in The Call and The Globe – 2 for the Bobby Watson Quintet concert, 2 for Sinkford event
- Metro Kansas City/Lawrence brochure (paid for with PSD Chalice Lighter grant)

## 6.) Seven public events

- Commercial Closet – Feb. 14 – video presentation/lecture on advertising portrayals of gay, lesbian and transgender persons
- The Miracle of Jazz: Leadership, Virtuosity, Limits – March 6- Internationally renowned jazz artist Bobby Watson and social ethicist Dr. Sharon Welch explore the aesthetic power of jazz, and the ways in which the virtuosity of jazz serves as a creative model of democracy in action. The panel discussion will be followed by a performance by the Bobby Watson Quintet.
- Empty Bowls – March 30 – a benefit for Harvester's Community Food Network at SMUUCH. Attendees buy a bowl filled with soup, keep the bowl. Bowls made by members of a local pottery guild, children and youth from SMUUCH.
- Eldar Djangirov Trio in concert – April 12 - (led by 16-year-old Russian jazz pianist Eldar Djangirov) at SMUUCH
- Wes Jackson – April 13- environmentalist, founder of The Land Institute at All Souls

•Rev. Dr. William Schulz, Executive Director, Amnesty USA (invited) – April 15, KU campus, Lawrence

•Rev. William Sinkford, UUA President, May 10-11

7.) “Visiting from KC area?” site on uua.org

- over 9,000 hits during the campaign test period
- information about UUism
- links to KC congregations web sites

8.) Phone info line

### **Assessment Summary:**

#### ***Awareness in the community at large:***

The pre campaign research was clear that we had "nowhere to go but up." – telling us that one person in 500 in the greater Kansas City area could name Unitarian Universalism unaided. Our post campaign research showed that the advertising had made a difference. Top-of-mind awareness (unaided –though still low) increased by 4 points following the advertising campaign (.2% to .6%). Aided awareness increased nearly 6 points (57.6% to 63.4%). Those who know more about such things than I tell me that, given the relatively short duration of the campaign, this increase in awareness is very, very good.

Nearly 2 in 10 (16.2%) recalled seeing/hearing an ad, when asked specifically. They were most likely to remember radio (61.7%), followed by TV (33.3%) and billboards (27.7%). Billboards were mentioned most often by those in the 18-34 age group.

Messages most frequently recalled were “everyone is welcome regardless of individual beliefs” and “the uncommon denomination.” (This tag line is now a service mark of the UUA.)

Awareness of UUism as positively representing the stated principles/ values increased significantly. Most familiar enough to have formed a perception agreed that UUism:

- Respects individual freedom of belief (77.5%)
- Supports social justice issues (69.1%)
- Promotes ethnic diversity (66.7%)
- Is extensively involved in the community (62.5%)

#### ***Attendance:***

Readiness of congregations to reach out to seekers, welcome guests and include new members is what makes for “long term success” in increasing attendance and membership. No ad, however well done, can accomplish that. The most important things any congregation can do (and we did in KC) is 1.) an honest assessment of its own

readiness and 2.) do what is needed to improve where needed.. Growth is, as Loren Mead wrote years ago now, "more than numbers." The practice of careful and consistent tracking of data means knowing more about who's coming through the doors. With increased awareness about guests, the capacity to welcome and include can be created, adjusted, fine tuned. Gathering and using data as a means to this end is an important aspect of hospitality.

During the period of the test, all four congregations experienced increases in numbers of visitors and returning visitors of more than 25% as compared to the previous year. Knowing that meant congregations could be better ready to welcome – in the small things like adding to the numbers of greeters, having an adequate supply of visitor nametags, forms and pens, and by making changes such as adding a "Welcome Back" table for returning visitors with different information than the first time visitor ("Welcome") table offered.

Seeking to increase attendance at the primary worship services by 25% was an ambitious goal. One of the congregations reported a 24.9% increase during the period of the test. The others also showed increases in attendance - significant but more modest with one reporting an increase of 11-12%.

### ***Membership:***

We did not set a numeric goal for increases in members during the campaign test period. We expected we would not see new members as a result of the campaign until fall 03. In fact folks began joining the congregation they had chosen about two months into the campaign. New members as a result of the campaign continued through the spring. The congregations are tracked and reported data through December 2003.

## **Changing the environment and behaviors:**

### ***Environmental changes – personal, institutional, community***

While hard to measure in numbers, two intangible results of the campaign are clear. One is the sense of “pride” in the congregations and in individual members for our faith. Another is that community awareness of our faith opens a door - sharing our faith with friends, neighbors, co-workers, congregational guests is no longer a “cold call.” The challenges in such a changed environment are to keep pride from turning to arrogance and to walk through the door opened by heightened awareness, inviting the seeker in.

A third change is the impact on other congregational advertising. Remember that in Kansas City only 1 in 500 residents could name Unitarian Universalism unaided. With such low community awareness of UUism, advertising the congregation, its worship services, other events and/or programs has no larger context for meaning. It appears in a “vacuum” of awareness about UUism. Increased awareness in the community provides a context for recognition and meaning.

### *Changes in Congregational Behaviors*

Congregational leaders tended to think they were more ready and able to welcome and include guests than they were. All found there were a number of things to consider including their capacity to track and respond to guests. While each congregation had areas of strength, none had a fully adequate and complete system. All congregations took steps to improve before the campaign began. All reported improvements in their data gathering and welcoming processes as a real and long term plus from the campaign. Accurate data is one means to the end of hospitality.

From September 2002 through mid January 2003 both UUA and District staff worked with KC congregational leaders to help them prepare for the media campaign test. As the test went along, congregations continued to tweak and adjust, and learn from the experiences of seekers, guests and new members. The following list is a sample of changes made to prepare:

- first time purchase or upgrading software for tracking data/ information
- attitude toward data gathering and use - as a tool for enhancing welcome
- greeter training developed and shared
- an FAQ for those answer phones and respond to email
- welcome/visitor table practices – “no church business” here
- "super greeter"
- a "welcome back" table for returning guests
- addressing worship space & building challenges – from the simple (who knows where the extra chairs and how to get them) to the somewhat complex (with so many entrances how can we direct visitors easily to the welcome area)
- after service lunches for newcomer connections (such as Coming of Age lunches)
- follow up with visitors/guests by phone – one congregation saw 42 guests come to a Sunday lunch after a phone call invitation was made
- additional nursery/infant/toddler volunteers/care givers – proactive not responsive child care
- ways to help visitors find seats until children leave the service ("family hold back")
- focus on media relations and communications

### *Working together*

At the conclusion of the test period, all of the congregations expressed their appreciation for the stronger ties, the “lateral relationships”, that developed. Along with this greater sense of partnership and collaboration, we also realized the value in being candid about such things as turf, competition, and assumptions about the “other” congregations that needed to be named and checked out.

Together we really can do more than any one of us can alone. The KC collaboration included a Prairie Star Chalice Lighters grant for the area congregations brochure, the

support of the District and District Executive, collaboration among the congregations in events, and the UUA focusing on what we can do to support growth working with the District and area congregations.

## **Congregations and the media**

The impact of the campaign in the congregations varied. While the two largest (and both minister led) showed increases in members and visitors directly as a result of the campaign, the impacts on the two smaller (and lay led) congregations were largely in terms of improvements in media skills, data tracking, welcoming and inclusion, and relationships with the other congregations. Only the smallest of the congregations (and most specialized) showed no visitors as a direct result of the campaign. The two larger congregations also noted the improvements noted by the smaller congregations.

Generally media “know how” of congregations is not strong. A variety of simple resources would make a huge difference, creating greater access and effectiveness. These might include templates for press releases, tips for talking to editors, how to use various media opportunities such as faith page ads, calendars; a simple “media 101” tips sheet, how to build media relations beyond placing an ad. This is an area where the UUA can take a resource and training role by providing basic and easily accessible resources. One specific and simple example: Public Service Announcements are often mentioned in relation to “religious advertising” and a simple PSA kit could help congregations develop the skills and tools needed to take advantage of this medium.

## **Surprises**

We saw folks joining the congregations as a result of the campaign within 2-3 months. We had expected visitor numbers to go up during the campaign but not to see new members as a result of the campaign within that short a time frame.

Visitor and return visitor numbers increased by more than 25% over the previous year. The numbers were a surprise – a result of the campaign itself and of the congregations’ heightened awareness and better ways of knowing who comes through the doors.

The billboards met with some initial skepticism from two points of view – those who felt they did not “fit” us and those who felt billboards are an environmental problem. Research, data and anecdotes indicate that, in fact, they were very well received. Both members and visitors comments showed positive response even after some initial skepticism.

The tab insert in Kansas City Star – a late addition to the campaign – met with skepticism initially (“you mean like the grocery store ads?”) and ended with folks wanting it “delivered to MY zip code.”

The “different trinity” – our edgy test message – was also very well received with only one negative response from a KC resident who is a conservative Christian and read the

message as “bashing” the Christian trinity at worst or not understanding it at best. (FYI – the only other negative responses I am aware of were several phone messages left on the info line during the advertising of the “Commercial Closet” event focusing on portrayals of gay, lesbian and transgender folks in advertising – all of them saying we were going to hell.)

With a four and half month lead time, the congregations we were able to move quickly, make decisions, make changes and be ready for the mid January launch.

### **What could have been better:**

Time frame – four and half months is not much time. While awareness was increased we’d have a better read on our success and most likely a greater increase in awareness if we had run the full six months. (Costs consideration and timing of the test were reasons for the time frame we chose.)

Lead time - congregational leaders expressed the wish for more lead time for budgeting, training and preparation.

Public events – The intent of the events was to create a venue for “personal connection and invitation”. While each event was well done, and often successful for the congregation(s), only three were successful in the context of the campaign by bringing in folks from the community and making connections to UUism and the local congregations – Wes Jackson forum at All Souls co-sponsored with the Sierra Club, Bill Schulz event on KU campus in Lawrence co-sponsored with KU Amnesty group and Bill Sinkford preaching at All Souls. A challenge was lack of experience in doing major public events with a seeker focus. The good news is that the media (bill boards, radio and TV) were strong enough to get folks to make contact by phone, email or by visiting.

### **Now what? What’s next?**

Following General Assembly and by mid September approximately 100 congregations (either individually or as part of a cluster/region) had contacted me for more information about the resources of the campaign, what would be made available, and procedures for use. Other congregations visited the “Visiting from the Kansas City area? Click here.” web site and down loaded graphics for use. The tag line and one or another of our messages were showing up on t-shirts, in print ads and on web sites. With permission the television ad appeared on the CBS affiliate in Rockford, IL over a 13 week period this past fall. The test results from Kansas City showed both success (increases in awareness, guests and membership) and promise.

Following a Leadership Council decision to support a roll out of campaign resources, and in late September those who had advised us prior to the test, ( UUs with media/marketing experience including Denny Davidoff, Barbara Beach, Fred Garcia, and Nancy King Bernstein) were assembled again along with UUA staff with responsibilities in media and

marketing (John Hurley, Janet Hayes, Deb Weiner and Tom Stites) and our media consultant for the KC test (Arthur Parks) for advice and counsel.

We decided to develop and “roll out” three media resource packages along with a significant web based resource on congregational hospitality and belonging. Our decision was based on the success and promise of the test, the reality that the campaign test was resource rich, the volume of requests and positive response to the campaign and its resources, and the opportunities for growth and change.

Our “roll out” strategy was to go slow and do it in stages. The hospitality and belonging resources and Tier 1 were available on uua.org in late November with limited announcement (to those congregations - by this time some 200 either individually or as part of a cluster/region - that had contacted me, the District Staff, and the PR-L list serve.) This has given us time to work out bugs and fine tune resources. The challenge of the slow “roll out” has been managing expectations dealing with frustrations and nurturing opportunities – all at the same time.

The second Tier will roll out by February 1 with announcement in the congregational monthly packet, on uua.org and a number of email lists. This will be the major public announcement of The Uncommon Denomination resources. . It will no longer be necessary to have the url to find The Uncommon Denomination site. Tier 3 resources will roll out in mid to late February. The Tiers are described below.

Our “mantra” for The Uncommon Denomination resources is “irresistible consistency.” We will offer high quality, professionally developed, tested media resources that are compelling and user friendly. We will ask congregations to use the media resources as provided. We will ask congregations to focus their energies on hospitality and on media planning. We will ask congregations to help us learn from what they do so we can continually learn and improve our support for their growth and health. For both Tier 2 and Tier 3 resources we are asking congregational leaders that a Board vote (Tier2) or congregational decision (Tier 3) be taken. (See covenant for use and service mark information on the web site.).

What are we rolling out?

The Uncommon Denomination” provides users of any tier of the program with:

- an overview, goals, guidelines and covenant
- resources on congregational hospitality and belonging
- assessment tools for analyzing guest and newcomer welcoming & follow-up
- a Public Relations Manual
- a variety of materials using “The Uncommon Denomination.” design and theme:
  - newsletter masthead
  - stationery layout (letterhead, envelope, mailing labels)
  - lapel button and name tag designs
  - order of service covers
  - yellow pages/community directory ads

- opportunity to order bumper stickers already produced and available for purchase
- t-shirt design
- web site graphics
- signs for your Wayside Pulpit, event banner
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Tier 1 is about building “in-reach” in the congregation – developing a strong relationship among all parts of the congregation toward the goal of reaching out to those yet outside the door. It is about being proud of being a Unitarian Universalist; knowing how to share our own individual “elevator speeches” about what we believe and who we are. We have many resources to offer you which will not cost you a lot of money but which can make deep and lasting changes in your congregation and its members.

Tiers 2 and 3 will be available to congregations able to make increased financial and organizational commitment. These tiers will provide additional materials to support public service and paid media promotion. We know that congregations have different needs and different financial resources to dedicate to these efforts.

Tier 2 is about building outreach, raising awareness in the community about our faith and inviting guests to visit. These resources will be available to congregations whose board has reviewed and endorsed the program and allocated sufficient funds. Tier 2 resources include (in addition to all Tier 1 and welcome/inclusion resources):

- ad templates for newspapers and magazine
- generic public service announcements
- public service announcement that include recorded music and voiceovers

The congregational cost is largely determined by your marketing plan and the cost of buying media in your market.

Tier 3 is designed as a major marketing campaign. These resources will be available to congregational clusters and large congregations ready to commit significant funds, with both governing board and congregational endorsement for the program. Tier 3 resources include (in addition to all Tier 1 and 2 and welcome/inclusion resources):

- large-space print ad layouts for magazines and newspapers (4 x 6 col. Inches)
- institutional radio messages in various lengths
- institutional TV ads in various lengths
- five billboard designs, with space for your congregation/cluster’s website url to be inserted
- music beds and varying lengths
- templates and guidelines, as well as a series of generic stories/photos illustrating aspects of UUism, for a tabloid insert into a major daily newspaper.

Costs will depend on the specifics of your marketing plan and the cost of media in your market. The Kansas City market is reasonably priced and the media-buying budget for that area was \$135,000 for a four-and-a-half month campaign.

## Appendix I: Costs and Benefits

### Cost Benefit Analysis

This cost benefit analysis focuses on the cost of media buys and uses the Kansas City market cost.

- 75 new members joined the Kansas City congregations during the period of the campaign.
- Assume another 25 will join in the fall of 2003.
- Total new members for all congregations = 100.
- If each contributes an average of \$1,000 for FY04, total new income to the congregations is \$100,000
- In 16-18 months their contributions have more than "paid back" the cost of the media buys based on Kansas City market costs.
- Assume that these 100 new members remain UU for at least ten years and continue to give at the same level of \$1000 a year for those ten years . . . . .

### Summary of costs for the media test in KC:

\$28,600 creative and production for billboards, radio spots, TV ads and print  
 \$51,000 pre campaign focus groups; pre and post campaign awareness research  
 \$133,000 media buys - billboards, radio, TV, print (inclusive of 4 months of 6 billboards plus an additional month showing of 2 bill boards, two weeks of radio on 4 stations, week long flights of radio on ten stations over the four month period, print ads; KC Star tab insert August 03 and a late addition to the test)

\$212,600 total cost

Costs funded through the generosity of donors to the UUA's capital campaigns.