

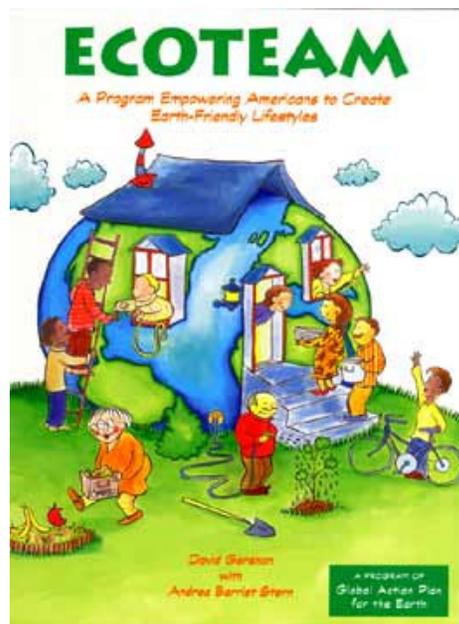
Chapter 5

The EcoTeam Program and Survey Analysis

This chapter provides an in-depth description and analysis of a program that incorporates the use of the community-based social marketing to change resource consumption behavior among citizens of Deschutes County, Oregon. The first section provides a description of The EcoTeam Program, the community-based social marketing tools used, and the results of the program. The second section reveals findings from the “Deschutes County EcoTeam Participant Survey”.

5.1- “The EcoTeam Program”- A Sustainable Lifestyle Campaign in Deschutes County, Oregon

Description



EcoTeam Workbook Cover from www.globalactionplan.org.

Founded in 1989, Global Action Plan for the Earth (GAP) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to “promote and support the development of sustainable lifestyles and livable neighborhoods in communities around the United States through service contracts with

local, state, and federal government agencies” (Global Action Plan).

The U.S. program is part of a larger international effort that is operating in seventeen countries with the combined participation of 150,000 people. The EcoTeam Program is just one of GAP’s projects. The EcoTeam Program’s primary goal is to reduce resource consumption at the household level by promoting individual behavior change.

Staff, volunteers, and a workbook called “EcoTeam- A Program Empowering Americans to Create Earth-Friendly Lifestyles”, are the primary resources used to promote behavior change. The program is initiated when an interested community member contacts The EcoTeam Program office.

Staff coordinates a neighborhood walk with the individual and a volunteer EcoTeam “coach” to invite other neighbors to form an EcoTeam. Teams are optimally between three and seven households in size and are located in the team initiator’s neighborhood. The program format consists of eight meetings conducted at two-week intervals usually taking place in team



Sample Garbage "Action" from EcoTeam Workbook- www.globalactionplan.org

member's homes. Meetings last between two to three hours; several days between meetings are needed to perform "actions", or behavioral changes, agreed upon during the meeting. The whole process takes approximately four-months.

Using the EcoTeam workbook provided by GAP as the primary guide, individuals take action to develop "sustainable lifestyle practices" in six areas: Garbage, Water, Energy, Transportation, Consumption, and Empowerment. The sixth area, called Empowerment, enables teams to broaden their sustainable actions to reach out to the greater community in which they live. Figure 2 illustrates an action for reducing junk mail in household garbage. Other examples of actions include obtaining and using cloth bags for shopping, switching to fluorescent light bulbs, drying clothes on a clothesline, sharing tools between neighbors, and sharing the EcoTeam lifestyle ideas at work.

There are four EcoTeam offices currently staffed and operating in the U.S. These offices are located in Madison, WI, Columbus, OH, Rockland, County NY, and Deschutes County, OR. Offices are staffed using public and foundation funding. The Deschutes County program operates with two part-time staff and 20 volunteer coaches. Fifty percent of its operating budget comes from a foundation grant, with the remaining fifty percent obtained by local match from Deschutes County Solid Waste, the City of Bend, and the City of Redmond (Santasiero, personal interview). In addition, the program and workbook are

available to anyone outside of these cities through GAP by phone, e-mail, or fax.

Community-Based Social Marketing Tools Used

Tools used in this case study were:

- Overcoming Barriers
- Building Motivation
- Using Norms
- Obtaining Commitment
- Word-of-Mouth
- Modeling

Results

Results of the EcoTeam Program show varying levels of success in reducing household consumption of resources. The method used to secure results is to measure participant's consumption rates before and after the program. For example, recording the amount of garbage (measured in lbs/yr) that a participant's household sends to the landfill before and after the program indicates whether actions taken during the program help to reduce overall garbage production. The EcoTeam program measures overall consumption by first asking participants to take a "Lifestyle Assessment" that evaluates and measures current lifestyle practices. Throughout the program measurements are taken that are later compared to results of the original consumption level measured by the Lifestyle Assessment. New measurements are summarized on a form given to each participant at the final meeting, so that they can see individual and team progress. An example of this form taken from a random, four-household team in Bend, Oregon is shown in Table 4. On this particular team, a 60.2% reduction of garbage sent to the landfill is seen.

Table 4- Sample EcoTeam Accomplishment Form

| ACTION | GARBAGE | | WATER | | ENERGY | TRANSPORTATION | | CONSUMPTION | CO2 | DOLLARS |
|--------------|----------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | lbs/year saved | % cut | gal/yr saved | % cut | % cut | gal/yr saved | % cut | # of actions taken | lbs/yr saved | \$/yr saved |
| Names* | | | | | | | | | | |
| n/a | 468 | 56.3 | 4,800 | 19.0 | 3.7 | 27 | 5.0 | 3 | 1,048 | 58 |
| n/a | 884 | 68.0 | 8,380 | 14.0 | 17.2 | 117 | 8.3 | 1 | 8,007 | 415 |
| n/a | 52 | 50.0 | 7,405 | 61.9 | 3.7 | n/a | n/a | 5 | 269 | 11 |
| n/a | 728 | 66.7 | 3,328 | 10.5 | 5.9 | 8 | 0.7 | 4 | 1,476 | 76 |
| ACTION | GARBAGE LBS/YR SAVED | | WATER GAL/YR SAVED | | ENERGY % CUT | TRANSPORTATION GAL/YR SAVED | | CONSUMPTION # OF ACTIONS TAKEN | CO2 LBS/YR SAVED | DOLLARS SAVED |
| Total | 2,132 | | 23,913 | | N/A | 151 | | 13 | 10,801 | 560 |

*Names of participants are deleted to protect anonymity.

Source: EcoTeam Accomplishment Form, Bend Oregon, 6/13/2000.

The results shown in Table 5 reflect the range of averages from all cities participating in the program. These results indicate overall success of the program.

Table 5- U.S. Results of EcoTeam Program

| ACTION | RESULTS |
|----------------|--|
| Garbage | 41-51% less garbage sent into the waste stream |
| Water | 25-34% less water used |
| Energy | 9-17% less energy used |
| Transportation | 16-20% less fuel used for transportation |

Source: www.globalactionplan.org

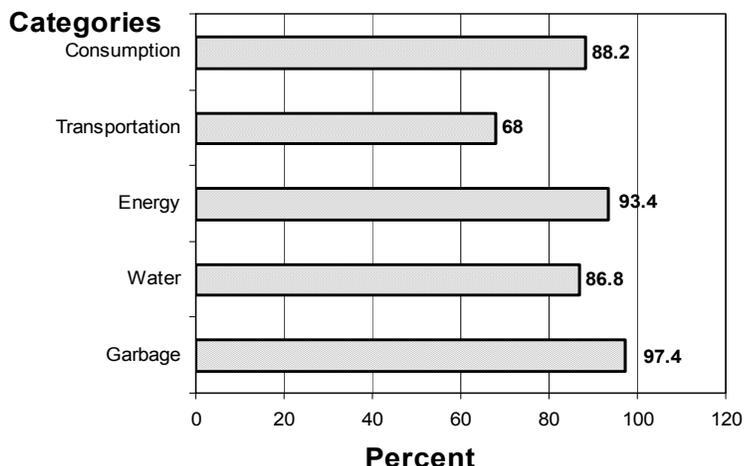
5.2- Survey Analysis

Since record keeping began in 1995, approximately 3,500 people have participated in the EcoTeam Program. Of the 250 surveys mailed, 76 valid responses were received, yielding a response rate of 36.0%. The remainder of this chapter provides an analysis of the “Deschutes County EcoTeam Participant Survey”.

Initial survey questions queried in what time period respondents participated on an EcoTeam, and whether or not they completed it. Question 1 asked, “Approximately what year did you participate on an EcoTeam?” Nearly all responses, 94.7%, came from the category “in the last five years (1998-2001)”. The remaining respondents participated “this year (2002)”, 1.3%; “between 6 and 8 years ago (1994-1997)”, 1.3%; and “during the first year of the program (1993)”, 2.6%. Next, respondents were asked if they completed the program. A very high positive response was recorded. The survey yields 94.7% responding that they had completed the program, and 5.3% responding that they had not completed the program. Some responses for not completing the program were “lack of time”, “family illness”, and “other team members dropped out”.

The focus of the EcoTeam program is to reduce consumption habits of individuals at the household level. During the course of the program, specific actions are suggested to team members in order to promote resource reduction. These habits translate to a reduction of resources. Questions 6 thru 15 of the survey addressed these actions by asking the participant if they continued to reduce amounts of garbage, water, energy, transportation, and consumption habits after they completed the program. The actions, Garbage (97.4%), Energy (93.4%), Consumption (88.2%), and Water (86.8%), all had recidivism rates of 85% or greater, while Transportation lagged behind with a 68% recidivism rate. Figure 3 highlights the recidivism rate by category.

Figure 3- Recidivism Rate by Category



The survey also broke down the categories into specific actions and queried on the recidivism of these specific actions. A majority of actions in each category continue to be carried out after the participant completed the program. Actions with 50% or greater recidivism are shown in Table 6.

Table 6- Actions with 50% or greater recidivism

| ACTION | PERCENT |
|--|---------|
| Garbage | |
| Recycling | 97.4% |
| Composting | 71.1% |
| Eliminating Junk Mail | 64.5% |
| Water | |
| Watering Lawn and/or garden efficiently | 76.3% |
| Using Water efficiently in kitchen sink | 64.5% |
| Using water efficiently in Bathroom sink | 61.8% |
| Reducing shower time | 55.3% |
| Energy | |
| Remembering to turn things off | 90.8% |
| Lowering your thermostat | 75% |

| ACTION | PERCENT |
|--|---------|
| Transportation | |
| Combining trips | 57.9% |
| Consumption | |
| Purchasing Ecowise products | 65.8% |
| Buying organic products | 60.5% |
| Purchase of less packaging | 60.5% |
| Finding satisfaction through non-shopping activities | 55.3% |

The primary purpose of the survey was to answer whether EcoTeam participants feel that their behavior has changed and whether they believe that the community-based social marketing tools employed during the program influence their ability to change their own behavior. Questions 3 and 4 address these research questions.

Question 3 asked, “Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, feel neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.” The statements, the percentage response rate, and the behavior change tool associated with it are shown in Table 7.

Table 7- Agreement with the Community-Based Social Marketing Model

| PRINCIPLE | STATEMENT | STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE | NEUTRAL | DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Commitment | “Making a verbal commitment to my teammates to complete an ‘action’ encouraged me to actually follow through with it.” | 89.5% | 10.5% | 0% |
| Modeling | “EcoTeam Coaches and Staff serve as a role model for sustainable lifestyles.” | 85.6% | 10.5% | 3.9% |
| Taking Action | “My behavior changed more by participating on an EcoTeam than it would have if I read a book or brochure about similar actions.” | 86.8% | 7.9% | 3.9% |
| Behavior Change | “The EcoTeam program helped me move from awareness of an issue to actually taking action to change that habit in my life.” | 85.5% | 9.2% | 3.9% |
| Diffusion | “I learned or shared sustainable lifestyle habits with my teammates that were not in the workbook.” | 67.1% | 30.3% | 2.6% |
| Evaluation | “I receive positive feedback from community members for participating on an EcoTeam.” | 46% | 43.4% | 10.5% |

In addition to sampling respondent’s agreement or disagreement with the model, five major actions or categories were sampled for persistence of behavior change. These actions fall under the categories of Garbage, Water, Energy, Transportation, and Consumption. When reviewing all five categories as a whole, 55.3% of respondents show persistence of behavior change in all 5 categories, 28.9% show persistence in 4 categories, 10.5% show persistence in 3 categories, 3.9% show persistence in 2 categories, and 1.3% show persistence in 1 category. Table 8 summarizes these percentages.

Table 8- Number of Behavioral Changes Sustained

| NUMBER OF ACTIONS | PERCENT |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1 | 1.3 |
| 2 | 3.9 |
| 3 | 10.5 |
| 4 | 28.9 |
| 5 | 55.3 |

Further analysis of the survey indicates a strong correlation with sustained behavior change actions and agreement with the community-based social marketing model. Table 9 shows that the more the respondent agreed with the model, the more sustainable behaviors or actions were performed.

Table 9- Average Number of Actions Taken

| NUMBER OF ACTIONS* | MEAN |
|--------------------|------|
| 1 | 14.0 |
| 2 | 22.3 |
| 3 | 22.3 |
| 4 | 24.4 |
| 5 | 24.7 |

*- Actions surveyed were- Garbage, Water, Energy, Transportation, Consumption.

The next table shows correlations between actions and specific principles in the model.

Table 10- Correlations and Statistical Significance

| PRINCIPLES | ACTIONS | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Garbage strength^ | Water strength^ | Energy strength^ | Transportation strength^ | Consumption strength^ |
| Commitment | .057 | .289* | .114 | .083 | .031 |
| Modeling | .137 | .167 | .328* | .112 | .223 |
| Taking Action | .357** | .208 | .297** | .127 | .391*** |
| Behavior Change | .338** | .239** | .322** | .076 | .337** |
| Diffusion | .082 | .147 | .166 | .058 | .209 |
| Evaluation | .013 | .110 | .075 | .039 | .142 |
| CBSM Model | .231* | .283* | .337** | .072 | .350** |

^= strength of relationship

* p≤ .05 ** p≤ .01 ***p≤ .001

Question 3-d specifically addressed whether participants feel that The EcoTeam Program helped to move them, “from awareness of an issue to actually taking action to change that habit in my life.” Nearly all respondents, 85.5%, strongly agree or agree with this statement. Of the remaining, 9.2% felt neutral, and 3.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. These results indicate that the EcoTeam Program is fulfilling its mission to reduce resource consumption at the household level by promoting individual behavior change.

Not only do a high percentage of EcoTeam participants feel that their personal behavior has changed as a result of the program, but a high percentage believe that they are influencing the behavior of others as well. Question 4 asked, “Do you believe that your actions have influenced others?” A high percentage, 82.9%, of respondents answered “yes” to this question. The two highest categories of those influenced are family, 69.7%, and friends, 52.6%. Table 11 below provides the percentages of other categories of people that participants believe they influence with their actions.

Table 11-People Influenced by EcoTeam Participants' Actions

| CATEGORIES | PERCENT |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Family | 69.7% |
| Friends | 52.6% |
| Co-Workers | 35.5% |
| Non-Participating Neighbors | 18.4% |
| Strangers | 5.3% |
| Other | 7.9% |

