

Does Community-Based Social Marketing Increase Used Oil Recycling?

(how can we tell?)

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Challenges

- Target audience is a very small % of the total population
- The behavior (oil changing) is performed infrequently
- Quantitative data has a huge margin of error
- People lie

Target audience is a very small % of the total population

- About 20% of households have a DIYer
- About 15% of DIYers improperly dispose of used oil
- That's 3% of households, and even less % of total adults!

The behavior (oil changing) is performed infrequently

- Most DIYers (apart from STMs) change oil 2 or 3 times/ year
- Change attributable to a particular outreach event or campaign is therefore spread over several months.

Collection data has a huge margin of error

- Oil and filters can be taken for proper disposal to multiple “official” locations in most areas
 - Collection centers
 - Curbside programs

Collection data has a huge margin of error (cont.)

- Oil and filters are often disposed at locations other than ‘official’ collection centers
 - Survey of 5000 off-roaders: of almost 1900 DIYers who named a specific recycling location,
 - Over 11% said they took oil “to work”
 - Another 2% named businesses that didn’t sound like collection centers

Collection data has a huge margin of error (cont.)

- Measuring collection of used oil and filters accurately is difficult or impossible at most collection locations
 - DIYer oil is mixed with other oil without being measured
 - Logs are almost always poorly kept, and are also based on estimates of quantities
 - Even when there is only DIYer oil (as at Kragens) accuracy of haul manifests depends on the driver.
 - Filters are generally counted by a multiple based on full drums

Collection data has a huge margin of error (cont.)

- Curbside quantities aren't accurate either
 - Haulers often use tank for multiple jurisdictions and for their own oil.
 - Counting set-outs and estimating % full is a common and very rough way to measure.

People Lie

- Surveys also have a wide margin of error because people report what they think they should do, not what they actually do.

Off-roader survey: of 3369 respondents who change their own oil

- 76 (2.2%) stated that they dispose of used oil in the trash, on the ground, burning, etc.
- 1901 (56.5%) named a specific recycling location.
- 1392 (41.3%) gave generic or vague answers

That's a big range!

Conclusions

- Tracking collection data may give us a very broad overview, but
- It doesn't make sense to use methodology with a margin of error of +/- 25% to evaluate specific outreach programs where our goal is likely <25% change!
- However, we do need to know whether our programs are working.

Solutions?

- Use quantitative evaluation methods sparingly
 - Example: a defined community with a single collection location that is possible to measure
- Better survey methodology
- Design programs to hit the targets identified by Dr. Browning, and develop methods for testing whether they are working.