

LOCAL MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS OF FLORIDA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AGENTS

By

ASHLEY MARIA HURST

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2005

Copyright 2005

by

Ashley Maria Hurst

This document is dedicated to my husband Grant, my parents, and my friends for their continued support and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Ricky Telg, whose support, guidance, and friendship not only helped me to complete my thesis, but has also helped me grow both personally and professionally.

I would like to thank Dr. Tracy Irani for her support, guidance and friendship in both my undergraduate and graduate careers.

I would also like to thank Dr. Mark Kistler for his knowledge and guidance over the past year.

I owe thanks to the faculty, staff and students of the Agricultural Education and Communication Department for their knowledge, friendship, and support throughout the years.

I must thank my husband Grant for his love and support throughout my college career.

Lastly, I thank my parents, Charles and Deborah Craft, for encouraging my endeavor into higher education. I appreciate them always being there for me and I could not have completed this without them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose and Objectives.....	5
Definition of Terms	6
Cooperative Extension Service.....	6
Marketing	6
Media/Medium	6
Organization of the Remaining Chapters	7
2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	8
History of Extension in the United States.....	9
Florida’s Extension History.....	11
Integrated Marketing Communication.....	12
Extension Marketing.....	14
Customer Satisfaction.....	16
Theoretical Framework.....	18
Media Richness Theory	18
Uses and Gratifications Theory	23
Summary.....	26
3 METHODOLOGY	27
Introduction.....	27
Research Design	28
Population	28

Instrumentation	29
Data Collection	31
Variables	32
Data Analysis.....	32
Summary.....	33
4 RESULTS	34
Demographics of Respondents	35
Objective One	38
Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Specific Methods or Materials Used to Market Florida Extension Programs and Activities.....	38
Objective Two	39
Describe the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Usefulness of Particular Methods and Materials in the Promotion of Extension Programs and Activities.....	39
Objective Three	40
Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Methods of Promotion the Extension Agents are Most Likely to Use with Current Clientele, and the General Public.....	40
Objective Four	42
Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Current Beliefs About Marketing/Promotion of Extension in the Extension Agent’s Programs, in General, as well as in Specific Programs.....	42
Objective Five.....	44
Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Extension Agent’s Confidence in Their Marketing and Promotion Capabilities.....	44
Objective Six	46
Determine the Perceived Need for Media Skills Training, as well as Local Promotion and Marketing Activities.....	46
Summary.....	48
5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	50
Summary.....	50
Conclusions and Implications of the Study	51
Limitations.....	55
Recommendations.....	56
Directions for Future Research.....	56
Recommendations for Practice.....	57
APPENDIX	
A SURVEY INSTRUMENT.....	59

B	INITIAL CONTACT LETTER.....	66
C	INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT	67
D	REMINDER POSTCARD.....	69
E	SURVEY COVER LETTER (2 ND WAVE)	70
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	71
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	78

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>page</u>
2-1 Level of familiarity with UF/IFAS and major sub-unit designations	15
4-1 Number of respondents by age.....	35
4-2 Population of county/counties worked in and current position held in Extension...35	
4-3 Clientele respondents' work with or targeted.....	36
4-4 Overall years in the Cooperative Extension Service.....	37
4-5 Times in a typical year a specific method or material was used.	38
4-6 Usefulness of methods and materials used in the overall marketing/promotion of Extension agents' particular Extension programs and activities.....	40
4-7 Likelihood Extension agents are to use particular methods to market/promote an Extension program or activity with the clientele they work with most often.	41
4-8 Likelihood agents are to use the particular methods to market/promote an Extension program or activity with the general public or people who do not typically use Extension services.....	42
4-9 Respondents' beliefs about Extension marketing.	43
4-10 Respondents' beliefs about marketing/promoting their specific programs.....	43
4-11 Respondents confidence in their marketing/promotion capabilities.	44
4-12 Cross tabulations of years in Extension versus confidence.....	45
4-13 Respondents' level of agreement pertaining to marketing and promotion of Extension.....	46
4-14 Respondents' likeliness to participate in training programs.	47
4-15 Cross tabulations of years in Extension versus likelihood to participate in training	48

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>page</u>
2-1 Media richness model.....	19
2-2 Communication media and media richness.....	20

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

LOCAL MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS OF FLORIDA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AGENTS

By

Ashley Maria Hurst

December 2005

Chair: Ricky Telg

Major Department: Agricultural Education and Communication

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of what Florida Extension agents do to promote and market programs in their county. This research will help in the development of marketing and promotional tools that would be most effective in disseminating Extension information to the public.

The objectives of the study were to determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to specific methods or materials used to market Florida Extension programs and activities; describe the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to usefulness of particular methods and materials in the promotion of Extension programs and activities; determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to methods of promotion the Extension agents are most likely to use with current clientele, and the general public; determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to current beliefs about marketing/promotion of Extension in the Extension agent's programs, in general, as well as in specific programs; determine the perceptions of

current Florida Extension agents as to Extension agents' confidence in their marketing and promotion capabilities; determine Extension agents' perceived need for media skills training, as well as local promotion and marketing activities.

The research design for this study was a descriptive census survey of the population of all Extension agents in the state of Florida. A total of 175 people responded in this study, for an overall response rate of 54.18%. The respondents were 56% (n=98) female, and 40% (n=70) male; 4% did not respond to the question. The largest percentage of respondents, 39.2% (n=64), ranged in age from 51-60. The majority of respondents identified themselves as county or multi-county Extension agents (56.0%, n=94).

Results of this study indicated that Extension agents would benefit from the development of marketing and promotional tools that would help them to disseminate information to the public.

It was found that those with more years of experience were more confident in their marketing and promotion capabilities. It was also found that those who had been in Extension for longer did not necessarily feel more confident in their abilities. This could be explained by the fact that newer Extension agents have been trained in a university setting more recently, while Extension agents that have been in Extension longer have had more hands-on experience.

The study's findings indicate that respondents who were new to Extension are more likely to attend sessions, and many who had been in Extension for over 20 years were also interested in training sessions. Therefore, it is important to target the newer Extension agents, but not leave behind those who have been in Extension for many years.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Among their many other duties and responsibilities, county Extension agents are in charge of promoting programs that are beneficial to the residents of their county.

According to Varea-Hammond (2004), three main reasons exist for marketing Extension. The first is political so that funding and support is gained. The second is the internal benefits which happen when high-performance teams are created and good staff is attracted. The third is survival or competing for clientele who have a growing number of resources available. Promotion and marketing helps to enhance the impact of county Extension agents' efforts and to help maintain their presence. In order to do this, Extension agents have access to a variety of local promotional and marketing tools.

Marketing emphasizes the understanding of the target audience of educational programs as an association with program development. In order to modify the programs to the needs and the acceptance of the audience (Duncan & Marotz-Baden, 1999). Chappell (1990) stated that there is more to the Extension marketing process than merely developing good programs and then making them available for public use. Chappell suggested that the success of an Extension program relies on one that can communicate with the public in a way that creates awareness, stimulates interest, and, in the end, produces involvement by targeted clientele. According to Nehiley (2001), there is a four-step plan for marketing Extension programs: (a) conduct an inventory of the prospective

audience, (b) define the goals and the objectives of the marketing program, (c) decide on the nature of the message, and (d) choose the appropriate media to use.

There are many information sources available to help Extension agents market and promote their programs in order to create awareness, stimulate interest, and produce involvement (Kansas State University, 2004; Snow & Benedict, 2003; University of Georgia, 2002). Kansas State University (2004) had outlined more than 100 ways for Extension agents to market their programs, including writing a weekly newspaper column, using direct mail campaigns, and posting flyers. Another helpful publication by the University of Georgia (2002), entitled “Ideas That Work,” describes how to plan a marketing campaign.

In a study of Clemson Cooperative Extension Service customers, Radhakrishna (2002) found that 82% of the respondents have used the information put out by Extension and of this, 76% have used the information to solve problems or find out information. Radhakrishna also found that 97% of the respondents felt the information was up-to-date, accurate, useful and easy to understand, while 96% found the information to be relevant.

As cited in Boldt (1988), a recent study conducted by Anspach, Grossman, and Portugal, Inc., a New York-based public relations firm, found that in 1986 and 1987 over 2,000 companies had changed their names. These name changes, the researchers concluded, were an effort to generate a new and unifying image. Similarly, Verma and Burns (1995) stated that in the 1980s, “marketing Extension” became popular in several states’ Cooperative Extension Services. New names, logos, outreach materials, and staff training programs were initiated. These materials together provided a unified, consistent, and cohesive image of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Yet the usage of Extension is declining in many areas, and public awareness of Extension programs are decreasing (McDowell, 2004). According to Alberts, Wirth, Gilmore, Jones, and McWater (2004), more than 65% of the general public did not know the location of their County Extension Office, they were not aware of the Extension services and the information it provided, and they also did not know that a portion of their tax dollars sustain the County Extension Office. The use of marketing is one way to raise the awareness and use, but limited research exists on what Extension is currently doing both nationally and locally. Extension marketing is an organized, planned, and controlled effort that involves designing Extension programs that meet the needs of clientele. These programs use “effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service clients” (Chappell, 1994, para. 3). The main objective of Extension programming is to meet the needs of their clientele (Boldt, 1988). Extension agents must use effective communication and distribution in order to best inform, motivate, and service their clients (Chappell, 1994). However, with the change in the diversity of the clientele, finding the most effective communication vehicle is becoming increasingly difficult. The future will bring about value, cultural, language, as well as conceptual differences, and “being everything to everybody will be a distant memory” (Dik & Deshler, 1988, para. 8). King and Boehlje (2000) pointed out that Extension’s day of being a sole-source provider of information is gone. They mentioned that technology, combined with an open access to information, lure private organizations to compete for people who once relied solely on Extension’s services.

For many, the mass media play an important role in public awareness of Extension (Verma & Burns, 1995). In a study conducted by Fett, Shinnars-Gray, Duffy, and Doyle

(1995) residents of Brown County, Wisconsin, were selected as participants, due to their diverse population. The study indicated, in general, the audience liked the information they received from Extension and classified it as being useful, with 42% of people using newspapers as their main source for obtaining Extension information. According to Bouare and Bowen (1990), only other farmers and family members come before Extension agents as sources of marketing decision information for farmers in Ohio.

Although Extension professionals are being encouraged to market their programs, their reaction to increasing their marketing efforts is mixed (DeYoung, 1988). DeYoung stated that some agents are hopeful that their marketing efforts will increase funding for future projects. Others, however, fear the success of their efforts. They fear that if a new audience is acquired, their time and resources will be overloaded (1988).

In Florida, the same concerns can be voiced due to the increasing population. Between the years 2000 and 2003 the population in Florida has grown 6.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). According to Dr. Larry Arrington, Dean and Director for UF/IFAS Florida Cooperative Extension Florida, the Cooperative Extension service addresses the needs of its clientele. Arrington (personal communication, November 29, 2004) stated the Florida Cooperative Extension service is unique in the following ways:

- Florida has a larger amount of urban programming than most states.
- Sea Grant programs are fully integrated into Extension, which contributes to the urban programming.
- Funding relies strongly on county funding and this, in turn, influences marketing efforts.
- Florida has one of the most diverse programming portfolios in the country.

Problem Statement

Little research has been conducted on the marketing and promotional training needs of county Extension agents in the state of Florida. However, Extension agents are

expected to use the media to varying degrees in order to get information out to their audience. A study of what media Extension agents currently use and what they feel comfortable using will help to provide a basis for developing marketing and promotional training tools for Extension agents.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of what Florida Extension agents do to promote and market programs in their county. This research will help in the development of marketing and promotional tools that would be most effective in disseminating Extension information to the public.

What are Extension agents doing locally, in terms of media, to promote their programs and activities? Do Extension agents feel confident in their current marketing and promotional skills? Would Extension agents participate in training, if offered? These are important questions to answer in order for agricultural communicators to be able to help the Extension agents in their marketing and promotional needs. Without this information, it would be tough to effectively train the Extension agents in media skills.

Not only will this information help current Extension agents, it will also help Extension faculty at universities train their students to use this media. In the end this will make Extension offices better able to effectively communicate with their clientele and the general public.

The following research objectives guided this study:

- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to specific methods or materials used to market Florida Extension programs and activities.
- Describe the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to usefulness of particular methods and materials in the promotion of Extension programs and activities.

- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to methods of promotion the Extension agents are most likely to use with current clientele, and the general public.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to current beliefs about marketing/promotion of Extension in the Extension agent's programs, in general, as well as in specific programs.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to Extension agent's confidence in their marketing and promotion capabilities.
- Determine Extension agent's perceived need for media skills training, as well as local promotion and marketing activities.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, terms were defined as follows:

Cooperative Extension Service

It is a component of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). It uses non-formal education in order to provide research information to the public (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000).

Marketing

Marketing is defined as the process of planning and executing the outset, pricing, promotion, and allocation of ideas, goods, services, organizations, and events in order to create and maintain relationships that will satisfy individual and organizational objectives (Boone & Kurtz, 1998).

Media/Medium

Media/medium is a channel or system of communication that generate messages designed for large, heterogeneous, and anonymous audiences (Harris, 1994).

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

The format of this thesis consists of five consecutive chapters. Chapter 1 establishes the background and need for the study. Chapter 2 examines past theoretical frameworks and research that have been conducted in the field. Chapter 3 explains the methodology, as well as the design of the study. In Chapter 4, the results are interpreted from the collected data. Chapter 5 summarizes the study, as well as provides implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Little research has been conducted on the promotional and marketing efforts of Extension agents. According to Fett, Shinnars-Gray, Duffy, and Doyle (1995), most persons' only contact with Extension is through the mass media. Due to the ease of obtaining information by the general public, it is very important for Extension to market its programs. It is also imperative that Extension works on keeping its clientele satisfied with the information that they are providing. American population centers have shifted from 80% rural to predominantly urban areas since the creation of Extension (Place, 2003). Extension has traditionally focused on disseminating information to people within surrounding communities (McDowell, 2004); however, studies have demonstrated that the general public does not possess a clear understanding of the mission and funding of the Cooperative Extension Service (Adkins, 1981; Blalock, 1964). In fact, Extension is perceived as better at carrying out effective programs than at communicating these programs (Warner, 1993).

A goal in marketing is the development and repetition of a good name or brand image (Marken, 2001). Extension programs across the nation have identified with this goal, using marketing techniques to increase public awareness of their programs (Boldt, 1988; Maddy & Kealy, 1998; Nehiley, 2001; Verma & Burns, 1995; Warner, 1993; Warner, Christenson, Dillman, & Salant, 1996). Many state Extension services, from the mid-1980s on, began constructing a consistent and uniform statewide identity with new names and logos (Verma & Burns, 1995). According to Verma and Burns; however, if

Extension, or any other organization, is repeating a brand image or name that does not resonate with its stakeholders, the organization may be wasting its time and resources. As Topor (1986) stated: "A well-executed marketing plan will touch the lives and activities of practically everyone involved at your institution at one time or another. It's important, then, to involve as many people as possible" (p. 52).

A review of the literature indicates that little research has been done in the state of Florida regarding the marketing and promotion of Extensions activities and programs. This chapter will provide a brief history of Extension in the United States and Florida. This chapter will discuss integrated marketing communications, Extension marketing, and customer satisfaction. Finally, the media richness theory and uses and gratifications theory will be discussed.

History of Extension in the United States

Under the provisions of the first and second Morrill Land-Grant College Acts of 1862 and 1890, land-grant universities were established. These laws were to "promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life' by establishing colleges to teach 'such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts" (Alberts, Wirth, Gilmore, Jones, & McWater, 2004, para. 4). The University of Florida and Florida A&M University are the two land-grant universities in the state of Florida.

In 1887, Congress established agricultural experiment stations through the Hatch Act. Then the Smith-Lever Act was signed on May 14, 1914, by President Woodrow Wilson. This act established the Cooperative Extension Service and stated that these offices had to be associated with a land-grant university in each specific state. The act also provided that all state and local funds would be matched by a state in order to

support the Extension offices and experiment stations. The provisions of the act were to transfer information “through teaching, developed through research, and utilized through Extension. These functions represent a dynamic continuum of knowledge that connects, or engages, land-grant universities with the people of the state and the needs of society” (Fisher, 2000, p. 3). Although it was originally meant to be a partnership between the land-grant university and the United States Department of Agriculture, the Smith-Lever Act also provided a partnership to the counties within the states. Although each county is independent in funding, staffing, and program development, their functions are meant to be seen as a whole (Rasmussen, 1989). In the United States, Extension utilizes the resources of 105 land-grant colleges and universities, certain community colleges, and thousands of county agents (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, & Conklin, 1997). The state Extension employees are located at the land-grant universities in each state, and are overseen by a director or dean selected by the university with the agreement of the secretary of agriculture (Rasmussen, 1989). Each year the state Extension director submits a plan of work for approval by the federal secretary of agriculture.

Those who work at the university or research center-level and conduct research or specialize in disseminating research-based information are called “state Extension specialists” and are generally members of an academic department associated with the sponsoring land-grant institution. These are the people county Extension agents turn to for help in applying university-based research for local situations. The Extension agent “serves as an educational broker for the community” (Seevers et al, 1997, p. 52). The job of the county Extension agent is ultimately to gain the trust of the public in order to help

them improve their lives through education, based on scientific knowledge (Rasmussen, 1989).

Florida's Extension History

Florida Extension began in 1909 when the State Legislature gave \$7,500 to the Extension program. What is now known as the Cooperative Extension Service was started May 25, 1915, when the provisions of the Smith-Lever Act were accepted. Extension was placed under the umbrella of the state land-grant university.

“The UF/IFAS (University of Florida/ Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) is a federal, state, and local government partnership dedicated to education, research, and Extension, a result of the University of Florida's designation as a land-grant university” (Alberts et al., 2004, para. 5). Florida Cooperative Extension Service, which is a part of IFAS, can be found in each of the state's 67 counties. Extension provides information and conducts educational programs on issues such as sustainable agriculture, competitiveness in world markets, natural resource conservation, energy conservation, food safety, child and family development, consumer credit counseling, and youth development (University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, 2003).

In Florida, the IFAS/Cooperative Extension Service has evolved into becoming a county-based, county-funded, program (Alberts et al, 2004). Generally, each Extension office is home to at least two Extension agents. The Extension agent's area of specialization is largely due to the type of agriculture that can be found in the particular county. Examples of subject areas include dairy cattle, beef cattle, 4-H, marine science, horticulture, family and consumer science, and many more.

Integrated Marketing Communication

To thrive in local promotional and marketing efforts, the concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC) must be incorporated. According to Maddy and Kealy (1998), becoming involved in the entire strategic planning process and then providing communication solutions and executions is necessary for IMC. For this study IMC will be defined as follows:

[IMC is a] concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines - general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relation – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact. (Thorson & Moore, 1996, p. 18)

Integrated marketing includes seven stages of integration: awareness, image integration, functional integration, coordinated integration, consumer-based integration, stakeholder-based integration, and relationship management integration (Thorson & Moore, 1996, p. 23). Awareness refers to the demand for new business systems due to the change in the business, social, technological, political, and cultural environment. Image integration refers to the organization being consistent in all that it does. Functional integration is moving the separated areas of communication into a process where they are more involved with each other. Coordinated integration is where barriers of the integration start to disappear. Consumer-based integration is when the previous steps have been completed and the products are beginning to reach consumers. Stakeholder-based integration is where the information is reaching inside the company. The final step, relationship management integration, is where everything comes together and communication professionals are brought into the management functions of the business (Thorson & Moore, 1996).

In a study conducted by Caywood, Schultz, and Wang (1991), the researchers drew a sample of respondents from *Advertising Age's* listing of the 100 leading advertisers and from Adweek. A similar study by Duncan and Everett (1993) also drew its sample from client marketing managers who were subscribed to *Advertising Age*. In both studies 59% of the respondents said that they were familiar with the term “integrated marketing communication.” When given the definition, four out of five of the respondents said that the value of IMC would increase the impact and effect of their marketing communication. Both studies also found that the respondents believed that the use of IMC would increase within five years.

A prime example of integrated marketing communication can be found in Thorson and Moore (1996). The authors use the following example as an illustration of what can happen when marketing communication and public relations boundaries are crossed. As with most comic book characters, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles illustrate the use of integrated marketing communication in a campaign. Not only were they found in the comic books, they were on television, made into action figures, featured on clothing, found on items in the supermarket. More than 600 products were on the market by the end of the year in 1988.

The Cooperative Extension Service can benefit from this integrated approach by focusing on marketing communications that are strategic to the program development process (Maddy & Kealy, 1998). According to Maddy and Kealy, the Cooperative Extension Service must work on brand equity in order to attract repeat customers. Otherwise, if Extension educators do not effectively communicate the Cooperative Extension brand, the consumer may not become a regular customer because they do not

know how. They also point out that information is important to marketing in the future because due to the diversity in people, one medium will not work for all consumers (1998). For example, a study conducted by the Magazine Publishers of America and J. Walter Thompson (Confer, 1992) indicated when print advertising was used with television advertising, the breadth and depth of the communication is enhanced and the advertiser achieves greater profits.

Extension Marketing

Breeze and Poucher (1999) conducted a study on the marketing of UF/IFAS, which included Extension. Respondents (n=594), which consisted of stakeholders, were asked if they were familiar, somewhat familiar, or not at all familiar with the following organizations that conduct research and educational programs on food, agriculture, natural resources, and family and community issues. The organizations were listed as the "University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, or UF/IFAS," "University of Florida Agricultural Research and Education Center in your area," "University of Florida College of Agriculture," "Your County Extension Office," and "Your County University of Florida Extension Office."

The majority of respondents were not familiar with any of the UF/IFAS and major sub-units. The respondents were least familiar with the county UF Extension office with 85% responding "not familiar." Only 3% of the people were "very familiar" with the county UF Extension office. The county Extension office, however, was the most recognized with 11% of the respondents answering "very familiar." For a complete list of the results of the study, see Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Level of familiarity with UF/IFAS and major sub-unit designations

	<i>Very Familiar</i>	<i>Somewhat Familiar</i>	<i>Not Familiar</i>
	%	%	%
County Extension Office	11	29	60
UF College of Agriculture UF/IFAS	5	37	58
UF Research and Education Center	4	26	70
County UF Extension Office	4	21	75
County UF Extension Office	3	12	85

(Breeze & Poucher, 1999)

Breeze and Poucher (1999) found that people did not know the County Extension Office and County UF Extension Office were the same. As can be seen in Table 2-1, more people were familiar with the County Extension Office. Breeze and Poucher stated that “if the UF-IFAS-Extension linkages were clearly understood, there should be no confusing and very similar results for these two terms” (para. 33).

Breeze and Poucher (1999) also noted that UF/IFAS units were not recognizable by most of the public. It was generalized that people familiar with UF/IFAS were educated, wealthier, older, lived in Florida for a long time, single, or those who have children in college. It was also reported in the study that blacks, Hispanics, and women were usually less familiar with UF/IFAS than the rest of the population.

Breeze and Poucher (1999) addressed this issue by stating that “given demographic trends in Florida, this pattern should be an area of concern for communicators trying to strengthen recognition and understanding of UF/IFAS among the population” (para. 37). As of the last published census in 2000, the population of Florida was 51.2% female, 14.6 % Black and 16.8 % Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

A telephone survey conducted by Warner, Christenson, Dillman, and Salant (1996), found that 45% of respondents, which consisted of a random sample of the general public, had heard of the Cooperative Extension Service, while only 26% indicated they or a member of their immediate family had ever used the services of Extension. These researchers noted that Extension continues to have a fragmented image and must do a better job of establishing linkages between individual programs and the overall mission of Extension. “Communicating the impacts and accomplishments of the Cooperative Extension programs is vital for the continued support of these programs by legislators, community leaders, and the general public” (Hogan, 1994, p. 3).

In a study conducted by Fett, Shinnars-Gray, Duffy, and Doyle (1995), 42% of the respondents, residents of Brown county, Wisconsin, recognized Cooperative Extension by name. Sixty-four percent were aware of the Extension service, while 85% had received their information about Extension through the mass media.

Customer Satisfaction

According to Daniel Schorr of National Public Radio, “If you don’t exist in the media, for all practical purposes you don’t exist” (Adams, 1995, p. 7). According to Boehlje and King (1998), Extension is at a disadvantage to other private information providers as the amount of information available is at an all-time high. As Extension clientele has increased and diversified, meeting needs has become increasingly difficult (Boone, Sleichter, & Miller, 2003). Resources to meet these needs are diminishing (Smith & Swisher, 1986). Differing solutions have been sought in order to address these issues, an example includes building relationships with other service organizations (Martin-Milius, 1994). By studying customer satisfaction it can be established how well

the solutions work. The studies can provide a benchmark for future work (Radhakrishna, 2002).

According to Boehlje and King (1998), farmers are more educated than in previous generations; therefore, many look to places other than Extension for their information. Agribusiness is able to offer the information, as well as give services, that the Extension office can not, especially in a time when Extension budget restraints are common. A possible way to combat other information sources is to know the needs of the clientele and stay committed to providing for these needs. Boehlje and King state, Extension has done very little to find out about its customers and its markets. However, this is something that competitors would likely do. Since most agricultural information providers are being paid directly by the client, they have motivation to provide tailored information to the client.

“Meeting customer demands is a daily task for communications units. Documenting how well demands are met is a measure of accountability” (Boone & Furbee, 1998, p. 7). The public will learn to trust the Extension office and will seek information from them in the future if they have a positive experience. It is in this way that Extension can truly serve the public as it was intended to do. “Productivity for a communications unit often is judged by clients’ perceptions of how well the unit meets or services customer needs. Determining how well one is servicing customers provides information for performance documentation as well as improvement and decision making support” (Boone & Furbee, 1998, p. 7).

Boone and Furbee (1998), examined the customer service and customer satisfaction of the Kansas State University, Department of Communications. Of the respondents,

which were comprised of faculty members, 45% were very satisfied, 38% were satisfied, 13% were somewhat satisfied and 5% were dissatisfied with the departments' customer service. A similar study conducted by Boone and Sleichter (2003) surveyed both clients and non-clients on their satisfaction with the materials and services provided by Kansas State Research and Education. The clients indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied (95%). For the non-clients, 93% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the materials and services provided.

According to Terry and Israel (2004), 20% of Florida Extension clients are satisfied and 80% are very satisfied with the services that they receive. The researchers also found that as the Extension agents experience and evaluation score increased, so did the level of satisfaction of the services they received from that particular agent. Radhakrishna (2002), found that 82% of the respondents, which consisted of Clemson Extension clients, have used the information put out by Extension and of this 76% have used the information to solve problems or find out information. Radhakrishna also found that 97% of the respondents felt the information was up-to-date, accurate, useful and easy to understand, while 96% found the information to be relevant.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study consisted of two theories that help to explain why people choose to use certain types of media over others. The following section will discuss the media richness theory and the uses and gratifications theory.

Media Richness Theory

The media richness theory stems from contingency theory which argues that the changing environment of an organization must respond by redesigning the organization's internal processing capabilities using a new structure as well as new technologies (Rice,

1992). According to Rice, “Contingency theory makes at least one very explicit proposition: performance is not assured by any particular organizational design, but is contingent on an appropriate match between contextual variables (such as task demands) and organizational arrangements (such as communication structures and media)” (p. 476). In other words, the type of media that should be used to disseminate information is dependent on the task at hand. The contingency theory model was extended to include the use of organizational media and then became known as the media richness theory.

The media richness theory proposes that performance on tasks will improve when the requirements for processing task-information are matched to a medium's capability to express richness in information (Suh, 1999). An example of the media richness model can be seen in Figure 2-1. In the model the task characteristics and communication media characteristics come together to form dyadic communication. Then the task/media fit is broken down into task performance and task satisfaction.

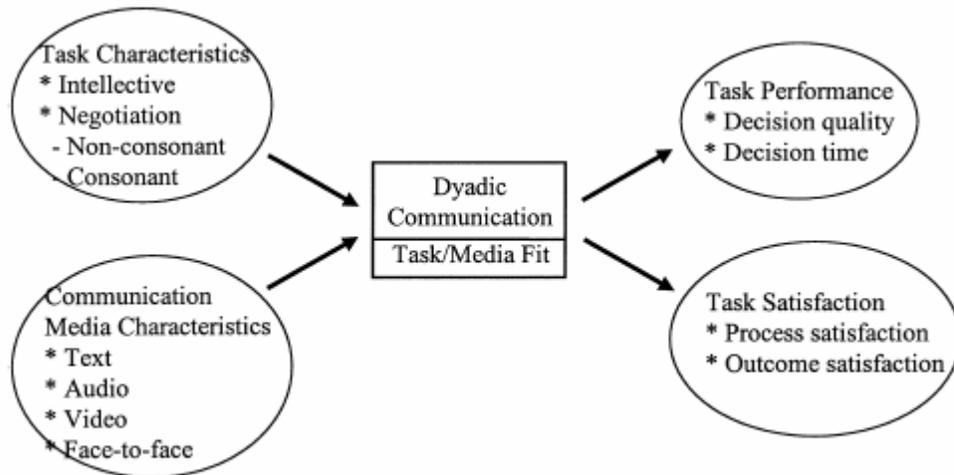


Figure 2-1. Media richness model. (Suh, 1999).

According to Dennis and Kinney (1998), there are four factors that influence the media richness. The first factor is the promptness of feedback, which is important because the faster a positive reply is acquired, the richer the media. The second factor is

the capability of the medium that is chosen to convey various cues, such as text verbal or nonverbal cues. In other words the media are richer when there are more ways that a decision can be communicated, such as the use of both telephone and a letter. The last two factors are the diversity of the language and the individual focus of the particular medium (1998). Examples of the richness of a particular medium can be seen in Figure 2-2.

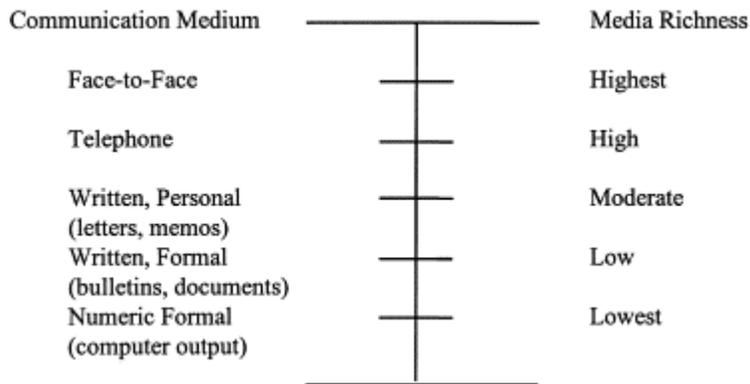


Figure 2-2. Communication media and media richness (Suh, 1999; Ngwenyama & Lee 1997).

A study conducted by D'Ambra, Rice, and O'Connor (1998) focused on media richness theory and found face-to-face and telephone to be the top two media types in media richness factors. Voice mail is ranked third and email and memos are ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. Face to face is the highest because people can get both verbal and nonverbal cues by using this communication medium. Questions can be asked and information can be made clearer. The lowest in media richness is numeric formal. Although often used in surveys, numeric formal (or computer output) does not get very much information out.

According to Suh (1999), the media richness theory can be seen as either a descriptive or prescriptive model. The descriptive model is how a person perceives and selects the type of media to use. Prescriptive models show the effects of matching the

tasks to effectiveness of media richness. When being described in a prescriptive manner, it is said that those with media sensitivity usually go farther in their organizational positions (Kelleher, 2001). Both of these models are valuable because if understood, they will ultimately lead to understanding of which media should be used in certain situations.

Dennis and Kinney (1998) suggested that media should be richer when the tasks are more vague and complex so that the issue at hand can be better understood. In turn, less rich media can be used when something clearer because the task is routine. However, in Dennis and Kinney's (1998) study, people did not necessarily use the best form of media in every occasion. Daft and Lengel (1984) explained this by arguing that the use of any medium to communicate information has both associated costs as well as capacities for information that can be exchanged. Daft and Lengel also explained that the costs may be greater than the benefits of using a particular channel. However, D'Ambra, Rice, and O'Connor (1998) counteracted this by mentioning that using media that are not well matched will degrade the performance of the communication. A 1987 study by Trevino, Lengel, and Daft (Rice, 1992) found face-to-face communication to be the top choice of 100 managers (46%) when ambiguity to be involved. E-mail was more likely to be chosen (62%) when situational constraints were involved in tasks.

According to Kelleher (2001), in order to be effective, Extension agents need to choose the type of media they use based on what they want the outcome of the media to be. Media such as demonstrations or spokespersons should be used when feedback is important to the selected mission of the media. Press releases, brochures/pamphlets and direct mailings, should be used when simply trying to get basic information out about

UF/IFAS Extension. In other words, oral communication is generally richer than communication that is written.

According to a study conducted in North Carolina, Bouare and Bowen (1990), state that computers will move in ranking from 19th in current use to 8th in future use. They also found that Extension agents in New York needed the most training in computer use. They were also deficient in desktop publishing but did not need much training in writing, design, meetings, and radio. The use of the Internet by the American Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers, men and women ages 18 to 35, has increased from 10.5% of its members in 1996 to 79.7% in 2001 (American Farm Bureau, 2002). Also during that time, the Young Farmers and Ranchers' use of e-mail jumped from 31.8% in 1998 to 79.7% in 2001.

The use of the mass media is important not only in Extension but other fields as well. A study by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the National Association for Black Journalists (Rogers, 1998) found that African Americans received most of their general information from television (78%). In this study, which looked specifically at health care information, the respondents reported that most of their information came from television (25%), doctors (20%), family and friends (10%), employers (9%) and newspapers and magazines (8%).

An example of using media to be effective for their audience can be seen in a study conducted by Bouare and Bowen (1990) of Ohio Cooperative Extension Service Extension agents' office visits, telephone calls, bulletins, newsletters, on-farm demonstrations, classroom sessions, and individualized instruction on-site were the most appropriate methods to use. The researchers reported that mass media methods such as

newspapers and television were the least appropriate. However, in a similar study conducted by Martin and Omer (1988), young farmers in Iowa preferred group methods of communicating, such as county meetings, and they ranked mass media higher than the Ohio agents in importance.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

A question that Extension agents may want to ask before choosing a certain medium is, “What are people going to do with the medium being provided to them?” This question is the basis of the uses and gratifications theory to choosing media. Severin and Tankard (2001) defined the uses and gratifications approach as “an approach to the media that involves a shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the receiver to determine what functions mass communication is serving for audience members” (p. 303). The objectives of uses and gratifications are as follows:

- to find out how needs are met by using a certain type of media,
- to understand media behavior motives, and
- to find out the identity of functions or consequences that stem from motives, needs and behavior (Rubin, 2002).

In a study conducted by Telg, Basford, and Irani (2005), 268 agricultural leaders were surveyed. Respondents were asked to rank order how they would prefer to receive and send information: telephone, postal mail, fax, or e-mail. The most preferred method was postal mail and e-mail was split evenly between “most preferred” and “least preferred.” Florida Farm Bureau leaders indicated that e-mail would be an adequate substitute for some forms of communication; however, more personal methods of communication, such as telephone conversations or face-to-face meetings were preferred. In a similar study by Maddox, Mustian, & Jenkins (2003), respondents reported that they

looked for information in the following places: magazine articles (83.8%); family, friends, and neighbors (83.0%); organizational newsletters (79.1%); bulletins and fact sheets (74.8%); on-farm visits (69.9%); and meetings (69.9%). Similarly the respondents use the following methods to disseminate information: newsletters (60%); magazine articles (46%); bulletins/fact sheets (45%); family and friends (42%); and on-farm visits (36%).

The needs of the audience are something that the Extension agents should be concerned with. The needs of the audience can usually be placed into five categories: cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative, and tension release (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Therefore, the materials that the Extension agent chooses to use need to fit one of these needs for their clientele. In the end, the user is in control and can choose to accept or reject the media that is put in front of them. This approach places the recipients of a message as active communicators rather than as just passive recipients (Rubin, 2002). Rubin (2002) stated:

The principal elements of uses and gratifications include our psychological and social environment, our needs and motives to communicate, the media, our attitudes and expectations about the media, functional alternatives to using the media, our communication behavior, and the outcomes or consequences of our behavior (p. 527).

Each of these elements are key in the uses and gratifications approach. For example, newer technology such as the Internet provides many of the different media in one package. Therefore, one could say that the Internet would be more gratifying than a newspaper article.

Again as with media richness theory, media such as radio interviews and programs, television interviews, online methods, and demonstrations are more likely to be gratifying

and rich because they have more interaction than a simple press release. These types of media are more likely to be used “structurally” or “relationally” (Rubin, 2002).

Boone and Sleichter (2003) looked at Kansas State Extension clients and non-clients to determine the most popular ways to disseminate information. For the existing clients, newsletters, newspapers and classes/meetings were the highest rank. For non-clients, newspaper, television, and radio were the highest ranked. The Internet was rated very likely to use 27% of the time by clients, and 35% by non-clients.

In a study conducted by Baker and Wilson (1998), 30% of Florida Farm Bureau County Directors had received some type of formal training with computers. Seventy-six percent of the overall respondents wanted to receive training on how to use the Internet in their business. Seventy-two percent wanted computer training sessions, and 74% wanted Internet training sessions to be offered by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.

In a study by Lundy, Telg, Irani, and Locke (2004), respondents for the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists indicated that they were confident to very confident in their capabilities referring to their relationship to the news media. Sixty-eight percent would be likely or very likely to receive training on how to be interviewed by a news reporter, 50% would be likely or very likely to learn how to contact news media, 67% would like training on how to handle a crisis situation, and 44% would be likely to learn how to establish a program on news media relations. In a similar study by Lundy, Ruth, Telg, and Irani (2005), respondents, which consisted of members of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, reported that they would be more likely to attend a media relations training if they felt it would benefit either their university or themselves personally.

Summary

In this chapter a brief history of Extension in both the United States as well as Florida has been presented. The concepts of integrated marketing communications, Extension marketing and customer satisfaction can all be related to the use of the mass media in Extension for promoting and marketing the Extension activities and information. The media richness theory and uses and gratifications theory has also been examined as the theoretical framework that has guided this research.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, little research has been conducted on the marketing/promotional needs of Extension agents in the state of Florida. Based on the lack of studies that focus specifically on marketing/promoting Extension in Florida, there is a need to look at what is currently being done by Extension agents in Florida to market/promote their programs. Therefore, this study was designed to descriptively survey Florida Extension agents to assess their use of marketing and promotional tools.

In Chapter 1 the following objectives were established:

- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to specific methods or materials used to market Florida Extension programs and activities.
- Describe the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to usefulness of particular methods and materials in the promotion of Extension programs and activities.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to methods of promotion the Extension agents are most likely to use with current clientele, and the general public.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to current beliefs about marketing/promotion of Extension in the Extension agent's programs, in general, as well as in specific programs.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to Extension agent's confidence in their marketing and promotion capabilities.
- Determine Extension agent's perceived need for media skills training, as well as local promotion and marketing activities.

By using objective measurements and statistical analysis, the study, which was quantitative in nature, was conducted in order to understand and explain how Extension agents market/promote their activities (Rossi & Freeman, 1993). By using applied research methodology, this study was designed to assess how the programs and activities are marketed/promoted activities in order to develop tools and training programs for the Extension agents (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002).

Research Design

The research design for this census study was a descriptive survey of a population of Extension agents in the state of Florida. The study revealed the existing state of marketing and promoting Extension programs and activities. The survey was conducted via mail using an adapted form of Dillman's Tailored Design method (2000). A total of 331 Extension agents were identified in the state of Florida. Eight of the Extension agents, however, were no longer with Florida Extension by the time the survey was sent out. Therefore, the final number of accessible Extension agents in the state of Florida after August 10, 2004, numbered 323. The survey instrument was delivered via mail to all Extension agents in Florida.

Respondents were given a period of eight weeks to respond to the survey. Non-respondents were then contacted and sent a second, and final, wave of the survey. The study obtained a response rate of 54.18% (n=175).

Population

To conduct the study, a descriptive mail survey was used to ascertain perceptions of the population of county Extension agents in Florida (N=323) in order to understand how Extension agents go about marketing their local programs. The population was defined as a census of all Extension agents in the state of Florida. This population was

selected due the relatively small population size. Similar studies of county Extension faculty also used a census (Albright, 2000). The population of Florida county Extension agents displays a variety of demographic features. These features are to be described in this study in conjunction with the agents' use of marketing and promotional techniques in the county/counties in which they work.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire, consisting of 25 questions, was adapted from two previous questionnaires of politically active agricultural leaders and of agricultural scientists in the southern United States (Lundy, Ruth, Telg, & Irani, 2005; Lundy, Telg, Irani, & Locke, 2004; Ruth, Telg, Irani, & Locke, 2004; Telg, Basford, & Irani, 2005). The first question in the questionnaire determined how many times per year a specific method, including press releases, newspaper columns, public service announcements, radio interviews, radio programs, television interviews, brochures/pamphlets, paid newspaper advertisements, pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials, signs and posters, word-of-mouth, demonstrations, online methods, point of purchase ads, newsletters, direct mailings, the use of a spokesperson, and other methods were used by Extension agents in order to market their programs. Respondents scaled their answers as “not used at all,” “used one to five times,” “used six to ten times,” “used 11 to 15 times,” “used 16 to 20 times,” and “used more than 20 times per year.”

The next part of the questionnaire asked the respondents to rate, on a five-point Likert scale, how useful the methods were in the overall marketing and promotion of the local Extension programs and activities. The answers ranged from “not at all useful” (1) to “very useful” (5), with 3 being “neutral.”

The next part of the questionnaire allowed Extension agents to rank the clientele they target most often. Extension agents were only to rank the top three types of clientele that they predominantly work with or target.

The next two questions used a five-point Likert scale to show how likely Extension agents were to use specific marketing and promotional tools with different groups of people. The first of these two questions dealt with the clientele that Extension agents work with most often, while the second question dealt with the general public or people who do not often use Extension's services.

Question six asked Extension agents to indicate their level of agreement with several statements on local marketing and promotion techniques. The answers ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5), with 3 being "neutral."

The next two questions utilized a semantic differential scale to show the level of agreement regarding general, as well as specific, attitudes of Extension marketing/promotion programs. Sets of bipolar adjectives, each on a one-to-five point semantic differential scale were used. The sets of descriptors were good (1) to bad (5), positive (1) to negative (5), beneficial (1) to not beneficial (5), favorable (1) to unfavorable (5), important (1) to not important (5), difficult (1) to easy (5), up to me (1) to not up to me (5), and in my control (1) to out of my control (5).

The final two Likert scale questions assessed how confident Extension agents were in their job, relating to their marketing and promotion capabilities as well as how likely Extension agents would be to participate in various training sessions if offered.

Seven open-ended questions were included that described the local promotional and marketing efforts of Extension agents. Demographic questions were utilized to

determine the age, gender, position in Extension, number of years employed in Extension, and the population make-up in their counties.

A concern for all surveys, however, is non-response error. According to Bosnjak (2001), “Non-response is of particular importance to researchers because the unknown characteristics and attitudes on non-respondents may cause inaccuracies in the results of the study in question” (p. 2). Bosnjak then identifies three traditional types of response to requests to participate in a survey. The first is unit non-response which is where an individual does not receive the survey, refuses to respond, or is unable to respond. Second is item non-response where some answers may be left blank in a returned survey. The final type of response is complete response.

Non-response error was addressed by collecting information from early versus late respondents. The researcher defined early respondents as those who responded before October 4, 2004, and late respondents as those who responded on or after October 4, 2004. October 4, 2004 was chosen because this is when the second wave of the questionnaire was mailed to the Extension agents.

Data Collection

The initial survey (Appendix A) was sent August 10, 2004. A cover letter (Appendix B), explaining the purpose of the study, as well as asking for the Extension agents cooperation in completing the survey, was included. This mailing also included two copies of an informed consent form (Appendix C) – one for agents to keep for their own records and one to sign and send back, the survey instrument, and a postage-paid return envelope with which to return the completed instrument. A follow-up postcard (Appendix D) was then sent, serving as a reminder to complete the survey. On October 4, 2004 the population of Extension agents who had not completed the survey were sent,

via mail, a second cover letter (Appendix E) the survey instrument, two copies of an informed consent form, and a self-addressed postage paid return envelope with which to return the completed instrument.

Variables

The independent variables in this study are the agents' demographics, including the county the agent worked in, the overall population of the county where they worked, their years of experience, their position in Extension, their area of expertise, their degree level, age, and gender, and attitudes toward marketing and promotional efforts.

The dependent variables are their usage of techniques, and all the factors that affect their needs, as well the factors that act as constraints. The techniques that will be assessed include press releases, newspaper columns that they write, public service announcements, radio interviews, radio programs, television interviews, brochures/pamphlets, paid newspaper advertisements, pre-produced University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension materials, signs and posters they design, word-of-mouth, demonstrations, online methods, point-of-purchase ads, newsletters, direct mailings, and the use of a spokesperson.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The SPSS® 12.0 for Windows software package was used for the analysis. Frequencies, standard deviation, mean, and cross tabulations were calculated for all of the appropriate questionnaire items and they are presented in tabular form (Albright, 2000; Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the scale items in order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The standard alpha for this study was $\alpha=.88$.

Summary

This was a descriptive study using a mailed survey research design. A census of Extension agents in the state of Florida (N=323) were surveyed. An instrument consisting of three parts was sent to the participants. Simple descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, standard deviations, and means, were used in the analysis of what Extension agents currently do to market/promote their programs and activities.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The intention of this study is to gain a better understanding of what Florida Extension agents do to promote and market programs in their county in order to develop the marketing and promotional tools that would be most effective disseminating Extension's information to the public. To find out, a 25-question survey instrument was distributed to a population of Florida Extension agents (N=323). An overall response rate of 54.18% (n=175) of the population was attained. Chapter Four presents findings according to the objectives stated in Chapter One. These objectives were:

- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to specific methods or materials used to market Florida Extension programs and activities.
- Describe the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to usefulness of particular methods and materials in the promotion of Extension programs and activities.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to methods of promotion the Extension agents are most likely to use with current clientele, and the general public.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to current beliefs about marketing/promotion of Extension in the Extension agent's programs, in general, as well as in specific programs.
- Determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to Extension agent's confidence in their marketing and promotion capabilities.
- Determine Extension agent's perceived need for media skills training, as well as local promotion and marketing activities.

Demographics of Respondents

In terms of gender, 56% (n=98) of the respondents were female, while 40% (n=70) were male; 4% did not respond to the question. The largest percentage of respondents, 39.2% (n=64), ranged in age from 51-60; 4.2% (n=7) reported being above 60 years in age. For a list of the number of respondents by age, see Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Number of respondents by age

<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
26-30	17	10.5
31-40	24	14.7
41-50	51	31.3
51-60	64	39.2
61-66	7	4.2
Total	163	100.0

In terms of the highest educational level achieved, the majority of respondents, 76.3% (n=129), reported having a master's degree, 13.6% (n=23) hold a bachelor's degree; and 10.1% (n=17) had a doctoral degree. As for the population size where they served, the largest percentage of the agents, 34.9% (n=61), reported working in an urban setting. The majority of respondents classified their current position within Extension to be "County Extension Agent" or "Multi-County Agent" (56.0%, n=94). "County Extension Director" (17.3%, n=29) was the next most common response. For a list describing the population of county/counties worked in and current position held in Extension, see Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. Population of county/counties worked in and current position held in Extension

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Population</u>		
Urban	61	34.9
Suburban	47	26.9
Rural	42	24.0
Other	1	0.6
Total	151	100.0

Table 4-2. Continued

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Current Position</u>		
County Extension Director	29	17.3
County Program Coordinator or County Program Leader	22	13.1
County Extension Agent or Multi-County Agent	94	56.0
Courtesy Extension Agent	22	13.1
Other	1	0.6
Total	168	100.0

Respondents were asked to indicate their primary, secondary, and tertiary clientele audiences. Homeowners (n=38, 23.5%) were cited the most frequently as respondents' primary targeted audience. Volunteers were the second-most targeted clientele group (n=39, 31.0%), and the third-most targeted clientele group was youth (n=27, 17.9%). For a list of the clientele respondents predominantly work with, see Table 4-3.

Table 4-3. Clientele respondents' work with or targeted.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Number one targeted clientele</u>		
Large producers	21	13.0
Small producers	19	11.7
Large businesses	2	1.2
Small businesses	4	2.5
Government/regulatory	8	4.9
Youth	34	21.0
Homeowners	38	23.5
Volunteers	12	7.4
Service providers	5	3.1
Other	19	11.7
<u>Second most targeted clientele</u>		
Large producers	15	9.5
Small producers	19	12.0
Large businesses	1	0.6
Small businesses	5	3.2
Government/regulatory	7	4.4
Youth	23	14.6
Homeowners	20	12.7
Volunteers	49	31.0
Service providers	14	8.9
Total	158	100.0

Table 4-3. Continued

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Third most targeted clientele</u>		
Large producers	3	2.0
Small producers	10	6.6
Large businesses	2	1.3
Small businesses	15	9.9
Government/regulatory	24	15.9
Youth	27	17.9
Homeowners	14	9.3
Volunteers	20	13.2
Service providers	24	15.9
Other	12	7.9
Total	151	100.0

Respondents were asked how many years of overall experience they have working in the Cooperative Extension Service. The highest number of respondents had been an Extension agent for five years or less (26.9%, n=45). Only 4.8% (n=8) had worked in the Cooperative Extension Service for more than 30 years. For a list of how many years all of the respondents had worked in the Cooperative Extension Service, see Table 4-4.

Table 4-4. Overall years in the Cooperative Extension Service

<i>Years of Service</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
0-5 years	45	26.9
6-10 years	38	22.8
11-15 years	15	9.0
16-20 years	18	10.8
21-25 years	29	17.4
26-30 years	14	8.4
More than 30 years	8	4.8
Total	167	100.0

Finally, early versus late respondents were compared. Early respondents (64.6%, n=113) were defined as those who returned their surveys before October 4, 2004. Late respondents (35.4%, n=62) were defined as those who returned their surveys on or after October 4, 2004. In the comparison of early versus late respondents, they are similar in regards to age, gender, position within Extension, and number of years with Extension.

This indicates that those who did not respond to the survey would also be similar to the respondents of the survey.

Objective One

Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Specific Methods or Materials Used to Market Florida Extension Programs and Activities.

The most used method or material that was used in a typical year to market Extension programs and activities was word of mouth. More than 72% of respondents (n=122) used word-of-mouth 16 times or more in a given year to promote their programs. The second-most popular method used was online methods (46.5%, n=79). Respondents ranked brochures/pamphlets to be the third-most popular method (34.1%, n=58).

Respondents also were able to rank what methods were used the least. The least popular method or material that was used was paid newspaper advertisements, where almost 98% (n=163) of respondents used paid newspaper advertisements one to five times in a typical year. Two other methods or materials that were not used frequently were point of purchase advertisements (91%, n=151), using the method one to five times a year, and radio programs (89.2%, n=49). For a list of all methods and materials used yearly, see Table 4-5.

Table 4-5. Times in a typical year a specific method or material was used.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>1-5 times</i>		<i>6-15 times</i>		<i>More than 16 times</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Word-of-mouth	9	5.4	38	22.5	122	72.2
Online methods (Website, email)	49	28.8	42	24.7	79	46.5
Brochures/Pamphlets	29	17.1	83	48.8	58	34.1
Spokespersons (advisory committee members, volunteers, clientele)	66	38.6	50	29.2	55	32.2
Newsletters	56	32.2	89	51.1	29	16.7

Table 4-5. Continued

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>1-5 times</i>		<i>6-15 times</i>		<i>More than 16 times</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Press releases</i>	59	35.0	67	39.7	43	25.4
Demonstrations (booths at fairs, civic meetings)	67	38.7	74	42.8	32	18.5
Signs and posters you design	81	47.4	65	38.0	25	14.6
Pre-produced UF/IFAS	83	50.6	41	25.0	40	24.4
Extension materials						
Direct mailings (postcards)	93	54.5	40	23.6	37	21.8
Newspaper columns you write	108	64.3	30	17.8	30	17.9
Public service announcements	125	74.8	28	16.8	14	8.4
Television interviews	147	87.0	16	9.5	6	3.6
Radio interviews	150	87.2	18	10.5	4	2.3
Radio programs	49	89.2	12	7.6	6	3.6
Point of purchase ads (grocery store)	151	91.0	13	7.8	2	1.2
Newspaper advertisements (paid)	163	97.6	4	2.4	0	0.0
Other	9	45.0	7	35.0	4	20.0

Objective Two

Describe the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Usefulness of Particular Methods and Materials in the Promotion of Extension Programs and Activities.

The respondents ranked word of mouth ($M=4.72$, $n=169$) to be the most useful method or material used to promote Extension programs and activities. Rankings were on a Likert-type scale with 5="very useful" to 1="not at all useful." The second-most useful method was direct mailings ($M=4.27$, $n=168$). Respondents ranked newsletters ($M=4.23$, $n=171$) to be the third-most useful. The least useful method or material that was used was paid newspaper advertisements ($M=2.91$, $n=128$). Two other methods or materials that were the less useful were print materials provided at retail outlets ($M=3.03$, $n=144$) and public service announcements ($M=3.39$, $n=157$). For the ranking of how useful were the methods and materials Extension agents used in the overall marketing/promotion of their particular programs and activities, see Table 4-6.

Table 4-6. Usefulness of methods and materials used in the overall marketing/promotion of Extension agents' particular Extension programs and activities.

<i>Method or Material</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Word-of-mouth	169	4.72	0.58
Direct mailings	168	4.27	0.94
Newsletters	171	4.23	0.93
Demonstrations	171	4.09	0.99
Signs and posters you design	170	3.94	0.96
Press releases	169	3.93	1.02
Newspaper columns you write	148	3.86	1.25
Online methods	164	3.73	1.05
Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	163	3.55	1.15
Television interviews	148	3.50	1.31
Radio interviews	148	3.41	1.14
Public service announcements	157	3.39	1.15
Print materials provided at retail outlets	144	3.03	1.17
Newspaper advertisements (paid)	128	2.91	1.38

*5 point scale, with 1="not at all useful" to 5="very useful"

Objective Three

Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Methods of Promotion the Extension Agents are Most Likely to Use with Current Clientele, and the General Public.

Respondents were asked to rank the methods of promotion that they were most likely to use with the clientele they target the most often. Extension agents responded that they were most likely to use word of mouth (M=4.67, n=175). Rankings were on a Likert-type scale with 5="very likely" to 1="not at all likely." The next most popular method was newsletters (M=4.29, n=174). Respondents ranked direct mailings (M=4.19, n=173) to be the third-most likely method to use. The least likely method or material to be used was paid newspaper advertisements (M=1.79, n=160). Two other methods or materials that were less likely to be used included point of purchase advertisements (M=2.09, n=160) and television interviews (M=2.43, n=163). Table 4-7 provides the

methods and materials respondents are likely to use to promote/market an Extension program or activity with the clientele they work with most often.

Table 4-7. Likelihood Extension agents are to use particular methods to market/promote an Extension program or activity with the clientele they work with most often.

<i>Method or Material</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Word-of-mouth	175	4.67	0.70
Newsletters	174	4.29	1.16
Direct mailings	173	4.19	1.17
Signs and posters you design	172	4.03	1.10
Demonstrations	170	3.95	1.18
Online methods	163	3.85	1.24
Press releases	173	3.70	1.38
Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	168	3.20	1.40
Newspaper columns you write	161	3.20	1.52
Public service announcements	167	2.84	1.37
Radio interviews	165	2.56	1.39
Television interviews	163	2.43	1.38
Point of purchase ads	160	2.09	1.29
Newspaper advertisements (paid)	160	1.79	1.26

*5 point scale, with 1="not at all likely" to 5="very likely"

Respondents also were asked to rank the methods of promotion that they were most likely to use with the general public or people who do not typically use Extension's services. Respondents stated they were most likely to use press releases (M=4.21, n=174). Rankings were on a Likert-type scale with 5="very likely" to 1="not at all likely." Respondents tended to use word-of-mouth (M=4.13, n=168) next. Respondents ranked online methods (M= 3.84, n=165) as being likely to use, as well. The least popular method or material was paid newspaper advertisements (M=1.94, n=161). Two other methods or materials that were less likely to be used included point of purchase advertisements (M=2.25, n=164) and television interviews (M=2.77, n=164). For a list of all the materials and methods that the respondents were likely to use to market/promote an Extension program or activity with the general public or people who do not typically use Extension, see Table 4-8.

Table 4-8. Likelihood agents are to use the particular methods to market/promote an Extension program or activity with the general public or people who do not typically use Extension services.

<i>Method or Material</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Press releases	174	4.21	1.16
Word-of-mouth	168	4.13	1.13
Online methods	165	3.84	1.28
Demonstrations	169	3.78	1.20
Signs and posters you design	171	3.77	1.20
Newsletters	171	3.47	1.42
Newspaper columns you write	165	3.41	1.52
Public service announcements	164	3.38	1.39
Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	166	3.34	1.35
Direct mailings	169	3.25	1.44
Radio interviews	162	2.91	1.42
Television interviews	164	2.77	1.47
Point of purchase ads	164	2.25	1.33
Newspaper advertisements (paid)	161	1.94	1.39

*5 point scale, with 1="not at all likely" to 5="very likely"

Objective Four

Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Current Beliefs About Marketing/Promotion of Extension in the Extension Agent's Programs, in General, as well as in Specific Programs.

Respondents were asked to rate their attitudes toward Extension marketing/promotion. Sets of bipolar adjectives, each on a one-to-five point semantic differential scale were used. The sets of descriptors were good (1) to bad (5), positive (1) to negative (5), beneficial (1) to not beneficial (5), favorable (1) to unfavorable (5), important (1) to not important (5), difficult (1) to easy (5), up to me (1) to not up to me (5), and in my control (1) to out of my control (5). Overall, the findings indicated the respondents felt Extension marketing/promotion was good, positive, beneficial, favorable, important, difficult, up to them, and in their control. For a complete list of the general beliefs about marketing/promotion of Extension, see Table 4-9.

Table 4-9. Respondents' beliefs about Extension marketing.

<i>I believe that extension marketing/promotion, in general is...</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
*Good (1), Bad (5)	167	2.86	1.25
Positive (1), Negative (5)	167	2.03	0.87
Beneficial (1), Not Beneficial (5)	169	1.94	1.01
Favorable (1), Unfavorable (5)	166	2.01	0.84
Important (1), Not Important (5)	167	1.40	0.73
Difficult (1), Easy (5)	168	2.51	1.01
Up to me (1), Not up to me (5)	166	2.29	1.09
In my control (1), Out of my control (5)	167	2.77	1.11

*Descriptor word sets were on a five-point scale

Respondents were then asked to rate the marketing/promotion of their specific Extension programs. The same sets of bipolar adjectives, each on a one-to-five point semantic differential scale, were used. Similar to the general beliefs of Extension marketing/promotion, the findings indicate the respondents felt that Extension marketing/promotion of their specific programs, was good, positive, beneficial, favorable, important, difficult, up to them, and in their control. For a complete list of the beliefs of Extension marketing/promotion of specific programs, see Table 4-10.

Table 4-10. Respondents' beliefs about marketing/promoting their specific programs.

<i>I believe that extension marketing/promotion, of my specific programs, is...</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
*Good (1), Bad (5)	167	2.29	1.05
Positive (1), Negative (5)	168	1.85	0.83
Beneficial (1), Not Beneficial (5)	170	1.69	0.84
Favorable (1), Unfavorable (5)	167	1.77	0.80
Important (1), Not Important (5)	169	1.38	0.72
Difficult (1), Easy (5)	169	2.54	1.04
Up to me (1), Not up to me (5)	169	1.58	0.94
In my control (1), Out of my control (5)	169	1.99	1.04

*Descriptor word sets were on a five-point scale

Objective Five

Determine the Perceptions of Current Florida Extension Agents as to Extension Agent's Confidence in Their Marketing and Promotion Capabilities.

Participants were asked to indicate how confident they were in their marketing and promotions capabilities in specific areas. Respondents were most confident in writing and designing a newsletter (M=4.26, n=175). Rankings were on a Likert-type scale with 1="very unconfident" to 5="very confident." The second and third methods that respondents were most confident with were writing newspaper columns and press releases (M=4.07, n=175). The respondents were least confident in developing an educational program for radio (M=3.13, n=175). Two other methods respondents were less confident in using included establishing a marketing/promotions program (M=3.21, n=175) and writing a public service announcement (M=3.83, n=175). For a list of respondents' confidence in marketing/promotion capabilities, see Table 4-11.

Table 4-11. Respondents confidence in their marketing/promotion capabilities.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Writing and designing a newsletter	175	4.26	0.96
Writing a newspaper column	175	4.07	1.00
Writing a press release	175	4.07	1.01
Designing displays/exhibits	174	3.95	1.04
Designing posters	173	3.94	1.00
Contacting the news media	174	3.93	1.10
Designing brochures	174	3.90	1.06
Being interviewed by a news reporter	175	3.86	1.20
Writing a public service announcement	175	3.83	1.13
Establishing a marketing/promotions program	175	3.21	1.14
Developing an educational program for radio	175	3.13	1.25

*5 point scale, with 1="very unconfident" to 5="very confident"

Cross tabulations were run between all of the demographic information and the variables included in the respondents' confidence of their marketing/promotion capabilities. Years in Extension and gender showed the strongest relationship overall in

respondents' confidence in marketing/promotion capabilities. See Table 4-12 for a sample list of cross tabulations of confidence in marketing/promotion capabilities.

Overall, the respondents with 26 or more years were more likely to respond that they were "somewhat confident" or "very confident" in their marketing/promotion capabilities. Those with 25 or less years experience were more likely to respond that they were "neutral" or "somewhat confident" with the marketing/promotion capabilities.

Overall, males were more likely than females to mark that they were very confident in their marketing/promotion capabilities. Females were more likely to mark "very unconfident" and "somewhat unconfident" as compared to the males.

Table 4-12. Cross tabulations of years in Extension versus confidence

<i>Years in Extension</i>	<i>0-10 n</i>	<i>11-25 n</i>	<i>More than 26 n</i>
<u>Writing and designing a newsletter</u>			
Very Unconfident	6	0	1
Somewhat Unconfident	0	2	0
Neutral	32	26	1
Somewhat Confident	39	32	12
Very Confident	6	2	8
<u>Writing a newspaper column</u>			
Very Unconfident	5	0	1
Somewhat Unconfident	4	1	1
Neutral	29	26	4
Somewhat Confident	31	32	9
Very Confident	13	3	7
<u>Writing a press release</u>			
Very Unconfident	6	0	1
Somewhat Unconfident	4	2	0
Neutral	25	27	2
Somewhat Confident	38	29	11
Very Confident	10	4	8

Objective Six

Determine the Perceived Need for Media Skills Training, as well as Local Promotion and Marketing Activities.

Respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement of seven statements pertaining to marketing and promotion of Extension. Respondents agreed the most with the statement, “Marketing/promotion is an important part of my job” (M=4.21, n=168). Rankings were on a Likert-type scale with 1=“strongly disagree” to 5=“strongly agree.” Respondents also agreed with the statement, “I feel comfortable contacting local news media outlets” (M=4.08, n=172). The least popular statement was, “I would consider using paid television commercials to market/promote my next event” (M=2.37, n=167). The next statement that they agreed with the least was, “I would consider using paid radio commercials to market/promote my next event” (M=2.54, n=147). For a list of all the statements, see Table 4-13.

Table 4-13. Respondents’ level of agreement pertaining to marketing and promotion of Extension

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Marketing/promotion is an important part of my job.	168	4.21	0.85
I feel comfortable contacting local news media outlets.	172	4.08	0.95
I would like to learn more about the use of marketing to promote my local activities.	170	3.93	1.00
I am very knowledgeable about the use of marketing to promote my local activities.	172	3.54	0.98
I would consider using paid newspaper advertisements to market/promote my next event.	166	2.71	1.41
I would consider using paid radio commercials to market/promote my next event.	147	2.54	1.43
I would consider using paid television commercials to market/promote my next event.	167	2.37	1.36

*5 point scale, with 1=“strongly disagree” to 5=“strongly agree”

Respondents were asked to indicate how likely they would be to participate in training if it were made available. Respondents would be most likely to attend a training on how to establish a marketing/promotions program (M=3.78, n=174). Rankings were on a Likert-type scale with 5="very likely" to 1="not at all likely." The second and third trainings that respondents would be most likely to attend were how to design displays/exhibits (M=3.62, n=175) and how to design brochures (M=3.55, n=175). The respondents were less likely to attend training programs on how to write a newspaper column (M=3.13, n=174), how to write a press release (M=3.15, n=174), and how to be interviewed by a newspaper reporter (M=3.17, n=173). For a list of how likely respondents are to attend training sessions, see Table 4-14.

Table 4-14. Respondents' likeliness to participate in training programs.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
How to establish a marketing/promotions program	174	3.78	1.15
How to design displays/exhibits	175	3.62	1.27
How to design brochures	175	3.55	1.25
How to design posters	175	3.43	1.29
How to develop an educational program for radio	175	3.43	1.30
How to write and design a newsletter	175	3.38	1.37
How to contact the news media	174	3.22	1.25
How to write a public service announcement	175	3.18	1.36
How to be interviewed by a news reporter	173	3.17	1.36
To write a press release	174	3.15	1.34
How to write a newspaper column	174	3.13	1.38

*5 point scale, with 1="not at all likely" to 5="very likely"

Cross tabulations were run between all of the demographic information and the variables included in the respondent's likeliness to participate in training programs. The number of years in Extension showed the strongest relationship regarding if an agent would participate in future training. For a sample list of the cross tabulations of respondents' likeliness to participate in training see Table 4-15. Overall, those with 25 or

fewer years of experience were more likely to respond that they were “somewhat likely” and “very likely” to participate in training sessions. Those with over 26 years of experience were more likely to respond that they were “somewhat likely” or “not at all likely” to attend training. It was also found that overall, men were less likely than women to participate in training sessions.

Table 4-15. Cross tabulations of years in Extension versus likelihood to participate in training

<i>Years in Extension</i>	<i>0-10 n</i>	<i>11-25 n</i>	<i>More than 26 n</i>
<u>How to establish a marketing/promotions program</u>			
Not at all likely	11	2	6
Not very likely	6	8	2
Neutral	11	10	4
Somewhat likely	30	29	7
Very likely	25	13	3
<u>How to design displays/exhibits</u>			
Not at all likely	10	3	5
Not very likely	6	9	1
Neutral	6	9	4
Somewhat likely	32	25	8
Very likely	25	16	4
<u>How to design brochures</u>			
Not at all likely	4	3	6
Not very likely	5	2	2
Neutral	10	11	0
Somewhat likely	39	28	10
Very likely	24	18	4

Summary

In this chapter, the 175 respondents were described in terms of demographics, as well as the demographics of the county/counties in which they worked. Overall, respondents agreed that marketing/promotion is an important part of their job. The

respondents also felt that Extension marketing/promotion was good, positive, beneficial, favorable, important, difficult, up to the respondents, and in the respondents' control. Respondents would be most likely to attend training in the areas in which they felt the least confident.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter will present key summary, conclusions, and implications of the study, limitations, recommendations for future research, and recommendations for practice. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of what Florida Extension agents do to promote and market programs in their county in order to develop the marketing and promotional tools that would be most effective disseminating Extension's information to the public. In order to carry out the study, a census of Extension agents in the state of Florida were asked to respond to a mailed questionnaire on local Cooperative Extension marketing and promotion efforts. The survey was adapted from two previous questionnaires of politically active agricultural leaders and of agricultural scientists in the southern United States (Lundy, Ruth, Telg, & Irani, 2005; Lundy, Telg, Irani, & Locke, 2004; Ruth, Telg, Irani, & Locke, 2004; Telg, Basford, & Irani, 2005).

Data analysis and results were presented in Chapter 4. A total of 175 people responded in this study, for an overall response rate of 54.18%. The respondents were 56% (n=98) female, and 40% (n=70) were male; 4% did not respond to the question. The largest percentage of respondents, 39.2% (n=64), ranged in age from 51-60. The majority of respondents identified themselves as county or multi-county Extension agents (56.0%, n=94).

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

Objective one was to determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to specific methods or materials used to market Florida Extension programs and activities. Based on the analysis of this objective, conducted by calculating frequency distributions of the specific methods or materials used, results indicated that the majority of respondents use word-of-mouth 16 times or more in a year to market their programs and activities. Paid newspaper advertisements were the least used method for marketing and promoting Extension programs and activities being used only one to five times a year. An implication to this finding is that Extension agents are relying on current and previous clients to disseminate their information. This may also indicate that Extension agents are more confident in contacting the audience they already have, rather than trying to get information to the general public. The findings on using paid newspaper advertisements also indicate a possible lack of budget for promoting and marketing activities and programs.

Objective two was to describe the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to usefulness of particular methods and materials in the promotion of Extension programs and activities. Again, word-of mouth was ranked as the most useful, and paid newspaper advertisements were ranked to be the least useful method or material used to promote Extension programs and activities. Again, this further solidifies the finding that respondents rely on their current and previous clients to disseminate Extension information.

Objective three was to determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to methods of promotion the Extension agents are most likely to use with current clientele, and the general public. This is important due to the fact that differences

can be seen in how the respondents market/promote to the general audience and to the audience they have already obtained. With current clientele, Extension agents responded that they were most likely to use word-of-mouth. However with the general public, they were most likely to use press releases. For both of these groups the least likely method to be used was paid newspaper advertisements. These findings with current clientele, again indicate that respondents depend on their current clientele to help get the information out about Extension. However, it also indicates that respondents know that to disseminate their information to the public at large, the best way is to write a press release because this allows information to go through mass media channels. As press releases are not included as one of the most useful method or materials used, it can be inferred that the respondents are not necessarily trying to obtain a new audience. This supports findings in the study conducted by Fett, Shinners-Gray, Duffy, and Doyle (1995) where the majority of residents of Brown County, Wisconsin, had received their information about Extension through the mass media. Therefore, the use of methods and materials that can be widely dispersed are crucial to the success of an Extension program.

A study conducted by Boone and Sleichter (2003) surveyed both clients and non-clients on their satisfaction with the materials and services provided by Kansas State Research and Education. The highest ranked methods for the existing clients were newsletters, newspapers and classes/meetings and for non-clients newspaper, television, and radio. The Internet was rated “very likely” to be used 27% of the time by clients and 35% by non-clients. The results of the Kansas State University study were similar to the results in this study. Newsletters were one of the most popular methods used for existing

clients. Although television and radio were not popular methods in Florida, Extension agents' use of online methods was implemented for non-clients.

Objective four was to determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to current beliefs about marketing/promotion of Extension in the Extension agent's programs, in general, as well as in specific programs. Overall respondents found Extension marketing to be good, positive, beneficial, favorable, important, difficult, up to them, and in their control. The overall findings here indicate that respondents are satisfied with the job of marketing Extension. Not only do they think it is a necessary part of their job, they also find it to be rewarding. It is interesting to see that in the perceptions of "general" and "specific" Extension marketing, it is found to be difficult to market Extension. This indicates that training on how to market Extension may be useful in the future.

Objective five was to determine the perceptions of current Florida Extension agents as to Extension agents' confidence in their marketing and promotion capabilities. The Extension agents felt most confident in writing and designing a newsletter, writing a newspaper column, and writing a press release.

As compared to previous objectives, this one indicates that while methods such as press releases and newspaper columns are not used as often as other methods, Extension agents feel the most confident using these methods. Therefore, it can be inferred that some type of training has been obtained previously on these methods. This training could either be formal training or just training by use of the particular methods in an Extension agent's program due to being in Extension for many years. It is also interesting that one of the least confident areas for the respondents is establishing a marketing/promotions

program. This indicates that while Extension agents may be able to produce media separately, they do not know how to combine them in order to establish a marketing/promotions program. This also indicates that their marketing efforts would be more useful to their clientele if they established marketing/promotions programs for materials that they already have established.

It was found that those with more years of experience were more confident in their marketing and promotion capabilities. In the study conducted by Terry and Israel (2004), the researchers found that as the Extension agents' experience and evaluation score increased, so did the level of satisfaction of the services they received from that particular Extension agent. Therefore, it can be inferred that the agents become better, as well as more confident, in their marketing/promotion capabilities the more times that they have to utilize them. It was also found that those who had been in Extension for longer did not necessarily feel more confident in their abilities. This could be explained by the fact that newer Extension agents have been trained in a university setting more recently, while Extension agents that have been in Extension longer have had more hands-on experience.

Objective six was to determine the perceived need for media skills training, as well as local promotion and marketing activities. The study indicated that respondents would be most likely to participate in training on how to establish a marketing/promotions program. Respondents also indicate that they were least likely to attend training sessions on how to be interviewed by a news reporter, how to write a press release, and how to write a newspaper column. These findings indicate that Extension agents would most benefit from training on how to establish a marketing/promotions program, as well as how to design displays and exhibits. It is inferred from the study that Extension agents

feel comfortable with the more straightforward promotional methods, such as writing press releases or newspaper columns; however, they do not know how to put the pieces together to develop a promotional program on a topic. They need the most training on how to get started and what is necessary for a successful campaign.

The study's findings indicate that respondents who were new to Extension are more likely to attend sessions, and many who had been in Extension for over 20 years were also interested in training sessions. Therefore, it is important to target the newer Extension agents, but not leave behind those who have been in Extension for many years. These findings indicate that while not as open to new methods and materials as newer agents, those who have been with Extension longer do not want to be left behind in their skills. A possible reason for this is that those who have been with Extension longer are more experienced in their promotional and marketing skills because they have learned the necessary skills over time.

Limitations

This study was descriptive and it was unique to the population that it addressed. Therefore, much of the information from this study can be applied to future research. The limitations to this study mostly relate to the sample of respondents, as well as the instrumentation procedure.

A strength of this study was the use of a census of Extension agents in the state of Florida. The response rate for this study was 54.18%. While this percentage is considered to be satisfactory for the population, the limitation occurs in terms of the possible non-response error. However, the error was addressed, as noted in Chapter 4, by comparing early versus late respondents. The early versus late respondents were found

to be similar in regards to age, gender, position within Extension, and number of years with Extension.

The instrument that was used for this study (Appendix A) was quite lengthy. Some of the respondents made comments that the survey took longer than was expected. Therefore, on several of the surveys, the last few questions were left unanswered. Due to the format of the survey, this often included the open-response questions as well as the demographic questions. Another limitation to this study is that the results can not be generalized to other states and regions of the country. The scope of the present study was limited to those who held a position in Extension in the state of Florida.

Recommendations

Directions for Future Research

The field of agricultural communication would benefit from conducting this study in other states, as well as at a national level. This information would be the basis of a more uniform training program that could be offered to Extension professionals at meetings, conferences, or possibly as online training sessions. It is assumed that so few studies exist on Extension marketing because of the time it takes to get the results, due to the Extension agents not responding to the surveys, and because there has not been a focus on marketing Extension.

More research needs to be conducted in the state of Florida on clients' needs. This study specifically focuses on Extension agents' use of the media, what they are confident in using, as well as the areas in which they need training. It would also be important to survey both clients and, potentially, non-clients to find out their needs and in what methods they prefer to receive their information.

This study does not support the media richness theory that was discussed in the theoretical framework because the findings show that some of the methods and materials that are generally considered “rich” are used the least by Extension agents. A possible reason is that Extension agents may not know what methods or materials that they should be using in order to be most effective in the task at hand. Another reason that Extension agents may not use the richest media is possible budget constraints. Another reason is that the Extension agents may not know their clients’ needs and preferences. Further research on clients’ needs, as well as research dealing with Extension agents’ perceptions of media richness needs to be conducted in order to be able to better educate the Extension agents in their future marketing and promotional methods.

The uses and gratifications theory was supported in this study. Extension agents use the methods and materials that are most convenient and helpful to them. However, this may not be the most rational media choice. Again, budget constraints may keep Extension agents from pursuing a type of media. They also may not use some materials, such as the pre-produced materials, because these materials are not localized. In this study it was found out what Extension agents are using, further research should look into why they choose these methods and materials.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the research, it can be concluded that Florida Extension agents would benefit from the development of marketing and promotional tools that would help them to disseminate information to the public. Communication professionals, therefore, should use the findings of this study as a basis for developing training sessions to be presented to Extension agents. It is recommended that training be conducted in the areas the respondents were most interested, which included how to establish a

marketing/promotions program, how to design displays/exhibits, and how to design brochures. However, it also would be beneficial to offer training in all the areas of marketing/promotion. While gender and years in Extension played a part in Extension agents' confidence or likelihood to attend training, it is important to offer the training to any Extension agent who would be interested.

An interesting finding in this study was that pre-produced IFAS materials were not high on Extension agents' list of usefulness. This indicates that these materials may not be held in high regard or not seen as useful. Therefore, the promotional material developers need to find out the needs of the local Extension agents. It is recommended that rather than pre-producing materials, that templates of materials be created so Extension agents can insert their own information into the templates.

It is also important that Extension university professors teach their students the fundamentals of marketing/promotion. Based on this study, the faculty would benefit from teaching their students not only the skills necessary to write press releases and newspaper columns, but also the fundamentals of how to establish a marketing/promotions program. If necessary, new courses should be offered to include this coursework as a requirement for graduation.

While many see that an Extension agent's job is to educate the public, the role may be changing over time to become communicators. As educators, the Extension agents rely on the public to come to them to acquire information. Communicators, on the other hand, use the media to disseminate their information to the public. Due to the less face-to-face or word-of-mouth contact, it will be imperative to learn marketing/promotional skills in order to disseminate information.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Local Cooperative Extension Marketing & Promotional Efforts

In order to enhance the marketing and promotional efforts of individual county Extension offices, it is important to gauge the current marketing efforts that are taking place at the local level throughout the state. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on your current marketing/promotion efforts, interest, and abilities. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated!

- 1) Please circle approximately how many times in a typical year that you personally use the following methods or materials to market/promote extension programs and activities.

a. Press releases	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
b. Newspaper columns you write	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
c. Public service announcements	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
d. Radio interviews	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
e. Radio programs	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
f. Television interviews	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
g. Brochures/pamphlets	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
h. Newspaper advertisements (paid)	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
i. Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
j. Signs and posters you design	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
k. Word-of-mouth	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
l. Demonstrations (booths at fairs, civic meetings)	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
m. Online methods (Website, email)	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
n. Point of purchase ads (grocery store)	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
o. Newsletters	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20

p. Direct mailings (postcards)	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
q. Spokespersons (advisory committee members, volunteers, clientele)	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
r. Other: _____	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20

2) Please circle how **useful** you feel the following methods and materials are in the **overall marketing/promotion of your particular** extension programs and activities.

	<i>Not At All Useful</i>	<i>Not Very Useful</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Useful</i>	<i>Very Useful</i>
a. Press releases	1	2	3	4	5
b. Newspaper columns you write	1	2	3	4	5
c. Public service announcements	1	2	3	4	5
d. Radio interviews	1	2	3	4	5
e. Television interviews	1	2	3	4	5
f. Newspaper advertisements (paid)	1	2	3	4	5
g. Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	1	2	3	4	5
h. Signs and posters you design	1	2	3	4	5
i. Word-of-mouth	1	2	3	4	5
j. Demonstrations	1	2	3	4	5
k. Online methods	1	2	3	4	5
l. Print materials provided at retail outlets	1	2	3	4	5
m. Newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
n. Direct mailings	1	2	3	4	5

3) Which of the following describes the clientele You predominately work with/target? Rank the top three, with 1=group you work with most often.

PLEASE RANK ONLY YOUR TOP THREE TARGETED CLIENTELE

- ___ Large producers
- ___ Small producers
- ___ Large businesses
- ___ Small businesses
- ___ Government/regulatory
- ___ Youth
- ___ Homeowners
- ___ Volunteers
- ___ Service providers
- ___ Other: _____

*If your work with non-agricultural clientele, what kind of clientele do you primarily work with?

- 4) Please circle how **likely** you are to use the following methods to market/promote and extension program or activity with the **clientele you work with most often.**

	<i>Not At All Likely</i>	<i>Not Very Likely</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely</i>	<i>Very Likely</i>
a. Press releases	1	2	3	4	5
b. Newspaper columns you write	1	2	3	4	5
c. Public service announcements	1	2	3	4	5
d. Radio interviews	1	2	3	4	5
e. Television interviews	1	2	3	4	5
f. Newspaper advertisements (paid)	1	2	3	4	5
g. Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	1	2	3	4	5
h. Signs and posters you design	1	2	3	4	5
i. Word-of-mouth	1	2	3	4	5
j. Demonstrations	1	2	3	4	5
k. Online methods	1	2	3	4	5
l. Point of purchase ads	1	2	3	4	5
m. Newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
n. Direct mailings	1	2	3	4	5

- 5) Please circle how **likely** you are to use the following methods to market/promote an extension program or activity with the **general public** or **people who do not typically use extension services.**

	<i>Not At All Likely</i>	<i>Not Very Likely</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely</i>	<i>Very Likely</i>
a. Press releases	1	2	3	4	5
b. Newspaper columns you write	1	2	3	4	5
c. Public service announcements	1	2	3	4	5
d. Radio interviews	1	2	3	4	5
e. Television interviews	1	2	3	4	5
f. Newspaper	1	2	3	4	5

advertisements (paid)					
g. Pre-produced UF/IFAS Extension materials	1	2	3	4	5
h. Signs and posters you design	1	2	3	4	5
i. Word-of-mouth	1	2	3	4	5
j. Demonstrations	1	2	3	4	5
k. Online methods	1	2	3	4	5
l. Point of purchase ads	1	2	3	4	5
m. Newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
n. Direct mailings	1	2	3	4	5

6) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I would consider using paid television commercials to market/promote my next event.	1	2	3	4	5
I would consider using paid newspaper advertisements to market/promote my next event.	1	2	3	4	5
I would consider using paid radio commercials to market/promote my next event.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel comfortable contacting local news media outlets.	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing/promotion is an important part of my job.	1	2	3	4	5
I am very knowledgeable about the use of marketing to promote my local activities.	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to learn more about the use of marketing to promote my local activities.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

7) I believe that extension marketing/promotion, <u>in general</u> , is...						
Good	1	2	3	4	5	Bad
Positive	1	2	3	4	5	Negative
Beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	Not Beneficial
Favorable	1	2	3	4	5	Unfavorable
Important	1	2	3	4	5	Not Important
Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
Up to me	1	2	3	4	5	Not up to me
In my control	1	2	3	4	5	Out of my control

8) I believe that extension marketing/promotion, of my specific programs, is...

Good	1	2	3	4	5	Bad
Positive	1	2	3	4	5	Negative
Beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	Not Beneficial
Favorable	1	2	3	4	5	Unfavorable
Important	1	2	3	4	5	Not Important
Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
Up to me	1	2	3	4	5	Not up to me
In my control	1	2	3	4	5	Out of my control

9) How confident are you in your marketing/promotions capabilities in the following areas?

	<i>Very Unconfident</i>	<i>Somewhat Unconfident</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Confident</i>	<i>Very Confident</i>
a. Being interviewed by a news reporter	1	2	3	4	5
b. Establishing a marketing/promotions program	1	2	3	4	5
c. Contacting the news media	1	2	3	4	5
d. Writing a newspaper column	1	2	3	4	5
e. Writing a press release	1	2	3	4	5
f. Writing a public service announcement	1	2	3	4	5
g. Writing and designing a newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
h. Developing an educational program for radio	1	2	3	4	5
i. Designing brochures	1	2	3	4	5
j. Designing posters	1	2	3	4	5
k. Designing displays/exhibits	1	2	3	4	5

10) How likely are you to participate in the following training, if it were available?

	<i>Not At All Likely</i>	<i>Not Very Likely</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely</i>	<i>Very Likely</i>
a. How to be interviewed by a news reporter	1	2	3	4	5
b. How to establish a marketing/promotions program	1	2	3	4	5
c. How to contact the news media	1	2	3	4	5
d. How to write a newspaper column	1	2	3	4	5
e. How to write a press release	1	2	3	4	5
f. How to write a public service announcement	1	2	3	4	5
g. How to write and designing a newsletter	1	2	3	4	5

h. How to develop an educational program for radio	1	2	3	4	5
i. How to designing brochures	1	2	3	4	5
j. How to designing posters	1	2	3	4	5
k. How to designing displays/exhibits	1	2	3	4	5

11) In 2003, how much money (indicate your closest estimate) was spent to market/promote events and programs that you were a part of?

12) What was the name of your most successfully marketed or promoted program, event, or activity?

13) What was this event's purpose or objective?

14) Briefly describe how this event/program/activity was marketed/promoted.

15) What do you believe made this event/program/activity a success?

16) What ***challenges*** do you face in marketing/promoting your programs?

17) What ***barriers*** do you face in marketing/promoting your programs?

Demographic Information

18) What county or counties do you work in? _____

19) Which of the following best describes the overall population of the county or counties you work in?

- Urban
 Suburban
 Rural

20) How many years of **overall** experience do you have in the Cooperative Extension Service?

21) Which of the following best characterizes your current position within the Cooperative Extension Service?

- County Extension Directory
 County Program Coordinator or County Program Leader
 County Extension Agent or Multi-county Agent
 Courtesy Extension Agent
 Visiting Extension Agent or Program Assistant
 Other: _____

22) What is your program area expertise (agriculture, natural resources, 4-H, urban horticulture, Sea Grant, family youth and community sciences, community development, energy, etc.)?

23) What is your highest degree earned?

- High School Diploma
 Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree
 Doctoral Degree

24) What is your age? _____

25) What is your gender?

- Male
 Female

Thank you for your time in completing this survey. Please return the survey in the postage-paid envelope or fax it to:

Tracy Irani
 305 Rolfs Hall
 P.O. Box 110540
 Department of Agricultural Education and Communication
 University of Florida
 Gainesville, FL 32611-0540
FAX: (352) 392-9585

APPENDIX B
INITIAL CONTACT LETTER

Dr. Tracy Irani, Assistant Professor
Dr. Ricky Telg, Associate Professor
University of Florida
Department of Agricultural Education and Communication
P.O. Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611-0540

August 10, 2004

County Extension Agent
University of Florida
IFAS

Dear County Extension Agent,

One of your many responsibilities as a county extension agent is to promote your programs to your clientele in order to enhance the impact of your efforts and maintain a presence in your county. Depending on your county, that may mean using a variety of local promotion and marketing techniques. We want to gain a better understanding of what you do to promote and market your programs in your county so that we can help develop those marketing and promotion tools that you find to be most effective.

This is a request for approximately 15 minutes of your time to participate in a mail survey on county Extension agents' use of and need for local promotion and marketing tools. As such, it is an opportunity for you to express your opinion about the need for local promotion and marketing activities, as well identify those tools that you feel you could make best use of to do your job more efficiently and effectively. The information you provide will help determine what future promotion and marketing tools and training should be offered to county Extension agents.

In addition to the survey, we have included two copies of an informed consent form. Please read over and sign your name to one copy and return this along with the completed survey in the no postage required return envelope provided in this packet. You may keep the other copy of the informed consent form for your records. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on any report. We will be happy to share the results of the study with you upon its conclusion. If you have any questions or experience any difficulties with the survey, please feel free to contact us by email (tai@ifas.ufl.edu) or (rtelg@ifas.ufl.edu). You can reach Tracy Irani by telephone (352-392-0502 ext 225) or Ricky Telg (352-392-0502, ext. 224).

Thank you in advance for your help. **Please return the survey by August 24, 2004.**

Sincerely,

Tracy Irani and Ricky Telg

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: Local Cooperative Extension Marketing & Promotion Efforts

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this census study is to collect information from Cooperative Extension faculty and staff on their marketing and promotion efforts, interests, and abilities. The questionnaire will gather important information that will be used to assess the current marketing situation at local levels throughout the state and to make recommendations for future marketing and promotion strategies.

What you will be asked to do in the study: You will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding your previous experience with marketing/promotion of your extension programs, perceptions and opinions of marketing/promotion methods and materials, your perceived ability to market and promote your extension programs, and your interests in marketing/promoting extension services and programs.

Approximate time required: 15 minutes

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated risks or benefits associated with your participation in this study.

Compensation: There is no compensation offered for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned an alias name. The information connecting your name to the gathered data will be kept in a locked file in the principal investigator's office. When the study is completed and the data has been analyzed, the information will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Tracy Irani, Assistant Professor, 305 Rolfs Hall, P.O. Box 110540, Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-0540, phone: (352) 392-0502, fax: (352) 392-9585

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: UFIRB Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone: (352) 392-0433.

Agreement: I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D
REMINDER POSTCARD

Dear Florida Cooperative Extension Services faculty,

Recently we sent you a questionnaire asking about who you market and promote your local Extension programming efforts. If you have completed and returned the questionnaire, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for helping us with the survey.

If you have not returned your questionnaire yet, please do so as soon as possible. Your answer to this questionnaire is very important to us and will help determine how Extension marketing materials are developed and utilized. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Tracy Irani & Ricky Telg
Department of Agricultural Education and Communication

APPENDIX E
SURVEY COVER LETTER (2ND WAVE)

Dr. Tracy Irani, Assistant Professor
Dr. Ricky Telg, Associate Professor
University of Florida
Department of Agricultural Education and Communication
P.O. Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611-0540

October 4, 2004

County Extension Agent
University of Florida
IFAS

Dear County Extension Agent,

We recently asked you to fill out a survey we are doing on county extension agents' local promotion and marketing programs. As of today, however, we have not received your completed survey. Your answers, along with others who respond, are very important, as they will be used to determine what future promotion and marketing tools and training should be offered to FCES county Extension agents.

In addition to the survey, we have included two copies of an informed consent form. Please read over and sign your name to one copy and return this along with the completed survey in the no postage required return envelope provided in this packet. You may keep the other copy of the informed consent form for your records. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on any report. Please note that the identification number on the questionnaire is used to check your name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. All answers to the completed questionnaires will be grouped together and we will not release information that could identify anyone who participates in the study.

If you have any questions or experience any difficulties with the survey, please feel free to contact us by email (tai@ifas.ufl.edu) or (rtelg@ifas.ufl.edu). You can reach Tracy Irani by telephone (352-392-0502 ext. 225) or Ricky Telg (352-392-0502 ext. 224).

Won't you take a few minutes right now to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed envelope? Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Tracy Irani and Ricky Telg

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adams, W. C. (1995, Fall). Marrying the functions: The importance of media relations in public affairs planning. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 40(3) 7-11.
- Adkins, R. (1981). Motherhood, apple pie, state legislators and Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 19(2), 7-11.
- Alberts, C. A., Wirth, F. F., Gilmore, K. K., Jones, S. J., & McWater, C. D. (2004, August). A case study on marketing the Florida cooperative Extension service. *Journal of Extension*, 42(4). Retrieved September 14, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004august/a5.shtml>
- Albright, B. B. (2000). Cooperative Extension and the information technology era: An assessment of current competencies and future training needs of county Extension agents. (Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2000). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61, 2668.
- American Farm Bureau. (2002, March 14). *Young farmers, ranchers more optimistic despite challenges*. Retrieved November 14, 2004, from <http://www.fb.org/news/nr/nr2002/nr0314.html>.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (2002). *Introduction to research in education*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Baker, M., & Wilson, M. (1998). *Internet access, on-line resources used, and training needs of Florida Farm Bureau county directors*. Proceedings of the 25th National Agricultural Education Research Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Blalock, T. C. (1964). What legislators think of Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 2(2), 75-81.
- Boehlje, M. D. & King, D. A. (1998). Extension on the brink – meeting the private sector challenge in the information marketplace. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 82(3), 21-35.
- Boldt, W. G. (1988). Image: Creating a unique and unified one for Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 26(1). Retrieved September 17, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1988spring/rb3.html>
- Boone, K., Meisenbach, T., & Tucker, M. (2000). *Agricultural communications: Changes and challenges*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

- Boone, K., & Sleichter, L. (2003, January 20). Data report on perceptions of clients and non-clients in 10 metropolitan counties in Kansas. Retrieved January 23, 2005, from <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/marketing/documents/MetroCountiesStudy.pdf>
- Boone, K. M., & Furbee, R. (1998). Are you being served? Gauging customer service. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 82(3), 7-19.
- Boone K. M., Sleichter, L. & Miller R. (2003). *What do they want from us? Communications programming preferences among Extension users and non-users*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural Communications Sections, Mobile, AL. Retrieved May 17, 2005, from <http://agnews.tamu.edu/saas/2003/boone1.htm>
- Boone, L. E., & Kurtz D. L. (1998). *Contemporary marketing wired* (9th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press.
- Bosnjak, M. (2001). Classifying response behaviors in Web-based surveys. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 6(3). Retrieved November 12, 2004, from <http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol6/issue3/boznjak.html>
- Bouare, D., & Bowen, B. E. (1990). Communications methods used by agricultural Extension agents. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 74(1), 1-7.
- Breeze, M. H., & Poucher, D. W. (1999, January). *Measuring public awareness of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural Communications Sections, Lexington, KY.
- Caywood, C. L., Schultz, D. E., & Wang, P. (1991). *A survey of consumer good manufacturers*. New York: American Association of Advertising Agencies.
- Chappell, V.G. (1990). Use creative platforms for better marketing communications. *Journal of Extension*, 28(4). Retrieved November 23, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1990winter/tt2.html>
- Chappell, V. G. (1994, August). Marketing planning for Extension systems. *Journal of Extension*, 32(2). Retrieved December 12, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1994august/a5.html>
- Confer, M. G. (1992). The media multiplier: Nine studies conducted in seven countries. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 32(1), RC-4-RC-11.
- Cooper, J. F. (1976). *Dimensions in history – recounting Florida Cooperative Extension Service progress, 1909-76*. Gainesville, FL: Alpha Delta Chapter, Epsilon Sigma Phi.

- Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1984). Information richness: A new approach to managerial behavior and organization design. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 6, 191-233.
- D'Ambra, J., Rice, R. E., & O'Connor M. (1998). Computer-mediated communication and media preference: An investigation of the dimensionality of perceived task equivocality and media richness. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 17(3), 164-174.
- Dennis, A. R., & Kinney, S. T. (1998, September). Testing media richness theory in the new media: The effects of cues, feedback, and task equivocality. *Information Systems Research*, 9(3), 256-275. Retrieved February 10, 2005, from Business Source Premier database.
- DeYoung, B. (1988, Fall). What's relationship marketing. *Journal of Extension*. 26(3). Retrieved April 19, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1988fall/a9.html>
- Dik, D.W. & Deshler, J. D. (1988). Why wait until 2010? *Journal of Extension*, 26(3). Retrieved June 3, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1988fall/fut1.html>
- Dillman, D. (2000). Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Duncan, S. F., & Marotz-Baden, R. (1999). Using focus groups to identify rural participant needs in balancing work and family education. *Journal of Extension*, 37(1). Retrieved May 23, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999february/rb1.html>
- Duncan, T. R., & Everett, S. E. (1993). Client perceptions of integrated marketing communications. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 33(3), 30-39.
- Fett, J., Shinnars-Gray, T., Duffy, K., & Doyle, C. (1995). Evaluation of a county Extension office's use of mass media: a user perspective. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 79(1), 34-44.
- Fisher, J. R. (Speaker). (2000, November). The idea of the land-grant university. Clemson, SC: President's Colloquium at Clemson University.
- Harris, R. J. (1994). *A cognitive psychology of mass communication* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hogan, M. (1994). Effective public relations in Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 32(3). Retrieved March 3, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1994october/a1.html>
- Kansas State University. (2004) Marketing 101: Marketing ideas for your county. Retrieved April 7, 2005, from <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/marketing/documents/marketing101.PDF>

- Kelleher, T. (2001). Public relations roles and media choice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 13(4), 303-320.
- King, D. A., & Boehlje, M. D. (2000). Extension: On the brink of extinction or distinction? *Journal of Extension*, 38(5). Retrieved January 5, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2000october/comm1.html>
- Lundy, L., Ruth, A., Telg, R., & Irani, T. (2005, February). *It takes two: Public understanding of agricultural science and agricultural scientists' understanding of the public*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural Communication Section, Little Rock, AK.
- Lundy, L., Telg, R., Irani, T., & Locke, D. (2004, February). *Media relations skills and training needs of Southern agricultural scientists*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural Communication Section, Tulsa, OK.
- Maddox, S. J., Mustian, R. D., & Jenkins, D. M. (2003, February). *Agricultural information preferences of North Carolina farmers*. Paper presented at the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural Communications Section, Mobile, AL.
- Maddy, D. J., & Kealy, L. J. M. (1998, August). Integrating a marketing mindset: Building Extension's future in the information marketplace. *Journal of Extension*, 36(4). Retrieved October 21, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1998august/comm1.html>
- Martin-Milius, T. (1994). *University to community and back: Creating a customer focused process*. Paper presented at the Fifth Annual Conference on TQM in Colleges and Universities: Reengineering the University. Chicago, IL.
- Martin, R. A., & Omer, M. H. (1988). Factors associated with participation of Iowa young farmers in agricultural Extension programs. *The Journal of the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture*, 29(1), 45-52.
- McDowell, G. (2004). Is Extension an idea whose time has come--and gone? *Journal of Extension*, 42(6). Retrieved February 13, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004december/comm1.shtml>
- Nehiley, J. M. (2001). Developing a simple four-step marketing plan for Extension programs. *Journal of Extension*, 39(2). Retrieved February 18, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2001april/iw3.html>
- Ngwenyama, O. K., & Lee, A. S. (1997, June). Communication richness in electronic mail: critical social theory and the contextuality of meaning. *MIS Quarterly*, 21(2), 145-168. Retrieved February 26, 2005, from Academic Search Premier database.

- Place, N. T. (2003). *Land Grants: Events leading to the establishment of Land-Grant universities*. University of Florida: Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Retrieved July 6, 2005 from http://ifas.ufl.edu/ls_grant/whatislg.htm.
- Radhakrishna, R. (2002). Measuring and benchmarking customer satisfaction: Implications for organizational and stakeholder accountability. *Journal of Extension*, 40(1). Retrieved March 27, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2002february/rb2.html>
- Rasmussen, W. D. (1989). Taking the university to the people: Seventy-five years of cooperative Extension. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Rice, R. E. (1992, November). Task analyzability, use of new media, and effectiveness: A multi-site exploration of media richness. *Organization Science*, 3(4), 475-500.
- Robinson, L., Dubois, M., & Bailey, C. (2005). County-level Extension programming: Continuity and change in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. *Journal of Extension*, 43(1). Retrieved April 5, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2005february/rb3.shtml>
- Rogers, C. L. (1998, September 18). *Listening to audience for science information*. Paper presented at the 5th International Conference on Public Communication of Science and Technology, Berlin, Germany.
- Rossi, P. H., & Freeman, H. E. (1993). *Evaluation – a systematic approach*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Rubin, A. M. (2002). The uses-and-gratifications perspective of media effects. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (2nd ed.). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Russell, M. M. (1990). The truth is...Extension has multiple truths. *Journal of Extension*, 28(4). Retrieved January 15, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1990winter/tp3.html>
- Ruth, A., Telg, R., Irani, T., & Locke, D. (2004, February). *Agricultural scientists' perceptions of fairness and accuracy of science and agriculture coverage in the news media*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural Communication Section, Tulsa, OK.
- Seevers, B., Graham, D., Gamon, J., & Conklin, N. (1997). *Education through Cooperative Extension*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.
- Severin, W. J., & Tankard, Jr., J. W. (2001). *Communications theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media* (5th ed.). New York: Longman.

- Smith, M. F., & Swisher, M. E. (1986). The best little programming tool in Extension: Audience identification helps determine needs and justify programs. *Journal of Extension*, 24(3). Retrieved April 26, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1986fall/a3.html>
- Snow, G., & Benedict, J. (2003). Using social marketing to plan a nutrition education program targeting teens. *Journal of Extension*, 41(6). Retrieved December 7, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2003december/a4.shtml>
- Suh, K. S. (1999, May 3). Impact of communication medium on task performance and satisfaction: An examination of media-richness theory. *Information and Management*, 35(5), 295-312.
- Telg, R. W., Basford, A., & Irani, T. (2005, February). *Communication preferences of politically active agricultural leaders*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Ag Communication Section, Conference, Little Rock, AR.
- Terry, B. D., & Israel, G. D. (2004, December). Agent performance and customer Satisfaction. *Journal of Extension*, 42(2). Retrieved January 3, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004december/a4.shtml>
- Thorson, E., & Moore, J. (Eds.). (1996). *Integrated communication: Synergy of persuasive voices*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. (2003). *Acts, history, and institutions*. Retrieved May 15, 2004, from http://ifas.ufl.edu/ls_grant/index.htm#extension
- University of Georgia. (2002). Ideas that work. University of Georgia Extension. Retrieved March 18, 2005, from <http://www.ect.uga.edu/marketing/ideas.htm>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, February). *Florida quickfacts*. Retrieved May 10, 2005, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12000.html>
- Varea-Hammond, S. (2004, April). Guidebook for marketing Cooperative Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 42(2). Retrieved January 8, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004april/tt5.shtml>
- Verma, S., & Burns, A. (1995, December). Marketing Extension in Louisiana: Image and opportunity. *Journal of Extension*, 33(6). Retrieved November 28, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1995december/rb1.html>
- Warner P., & Christenson, J. A. (1984). *The Cooperative Extension Service: A national assessment*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Warner, P. D. (1993). It's time to tell the Extension story. *Journal of Extension*, 31(1). Retrieved January 19, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1993fall/tp2.html>

Warner, P. D., Christenson, J. A., Dillman, D. A., & Salant, P. (1996). Public perception of Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 34(4). Retrieved December 23, 2004, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1996august/a1.html>

Weigel, R. R. (1986). Is Extension changing its mission? *Journal of Extension*, 24(1). Retrieved January 3, 2005, from <http://www.joe.org/joe/1986spring/f1.html>

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author was born Ashley Maria Craft on August 2, 1981, in Visalia, California. After moving around during her childhood her family settled in Niceville, Florida, where she graduated from Niceville High School in 1999.

Ashley's college career began in August of 1999 at Okaloosa Walton Community College where she was active in the Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa.

In August of 2001 she transferred to the University of Florida where she pursued her Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural communications. While working on her degree Ashley interned at the Okaloosa County Extension office in Crestview, Florida. She graduated cum laude in December of 2003.

After completing her bachelor's degree, Ashley went on to pursue her Master of Science in agricultural communications. While completing her degree, Ashley served as a teaching assistant for both Writing for Agricultural and Natural Resources and Electronic Media Production.

Ashley married her high school sweetheart, Grant Hurst, on August 14, 2004.

Ashley is a member of the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, Agricultural Education and Communication Graduate Student Association, Alpha Tau Alpha Honor Society, Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society of Agriculture, Alpha Zeta National Honor Fraternity, Sigma Alpha National Sorority, and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.