

Overview of UUA Regional Marketing Efforts 2003-2007
January 2008 Report for Growth Team
(updated 4/08)
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Since 2003, the UUA has conducted several regional advertising campaigns. The following is an executive summary of results.

Regional advertising campaigns:

- Kansas City: January- May 2003
- Houston: January - April 2005
- Southern California (Orange County, Long Beach and South Bay): Fall 2006
- San Francisco Bay Area: Fall 2007

All the campaigns had the following goals:

1. Generate brand awareness of Unitarian Universalism
2. Increase visitor attendance at local congregations
3. Increase membership
4. Create excitement and pride among Unitarian Universalists in the area

All campaigns had congregational preparedness as a component.

This report summarizes each campaign with results-to-date, chronologically starting from the most recent campaign in San Francisco. At the end of the report is a summary of combined results as well as "lessons learned".

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: Fall 2007

Campaign Highlights: 17 congregations participating

Time: Mid- September– November 2007

Budget: \$275,000 (\$300,000 raised- remainder for creative materials, production, media buy and a January 2008 radio plan)

Media Mix:

- **TV Advertising:** Four weeks on Comedy Central Network - Daily Show and Colbert Report – 17 spots
- **Radio:** Three stations, (KQED – public radio, KQKE and KGO) 4-6 weeks – 400 spots
- **Print - Specialty Publications:** Newspaper ads in the major **GLBT weekly publication - the Bay Area Reporter**; full page four color ads in the following national magazines - **Parents, Parenting, Family Fun and American Baby** reaching 200,000 subscribers
- **Direct Mail:** 250,000 oversized postcards were sent to households the week of September 24th. Those same households received the four page insert mailed directly to their homes the week of October 15th for a one-two punch
- **Transit Advertising:** 100 transit boards on BART stations the month of October
- **Newspaper Inserts:** 460,000 four page, 4-color flyers were inserted in four major newspapers the weekend of October 4-7. These were inserted by targeted zips provided by the congregations
- **Internet:** Google ads and web banners on specialty sites; 500,000 impressions on SFGate.com
- **Guerrilla Marketing:** \$10,000 was provided to a local regional marketing group for ads in small specialty niche publications and media
- **Public Relations** – Newspaper articles in major publications

Measurable Results:

First Time Visitors: Over 946 first time visitors attended a Unitarian Universalist congregation in the SF Bay area from September 16 – December 2, 2007.

Visitor acquisition costs: First 10 weeks - ~\$290.

Four congregations (highlighted below) accounted for nearly 40% of the visitors – Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco and Santa Rosa.

CONGREGATION	TOTAL NUMBER FIRST TIME VISITORS SEPT. 16 – DEC. 2 2007
Berkeley Church	85
Berkeley Fellowship	43
Livermore	28
Marin	51
Mission Peak	27
Mount Diablo	52
North Bay	31
Oakland	128
Palo Alto	41
Petaluma	35
Redwood City	66
San Francisco	85
San Jose	53
San Mateo	61
Santa Rosa	95
Starr King	25
Sunnyvale	40
TOTAL	946

The UUA's Pacific Central District monitored new visitor attendance and weekly visits to the uuba.org website. Prior to the campaign, website visits averaged ~20/day – during the campaign visits increased three fold. Graph #1 below shows a correlation between website hits and the media buy.

Chart # 2 shows new visitor and website visits. Weekly visits to the website (the red column and left y-axis) mirrored the bell-curve spending of the campaign, with a campaign high of over 900 website visits the first week in October. Visitor attendance (the blue line and right hand y-axis) also peaked that week with over 100 visitors. Visitor attendance experienced another spike after the second direct mail dropped several weeks later, and remains strong, reflecting the lag effect of the advertising.

Both charts were provided by Cilla Raughley, District Executive of the Pacific Central District.

Graph # 1:

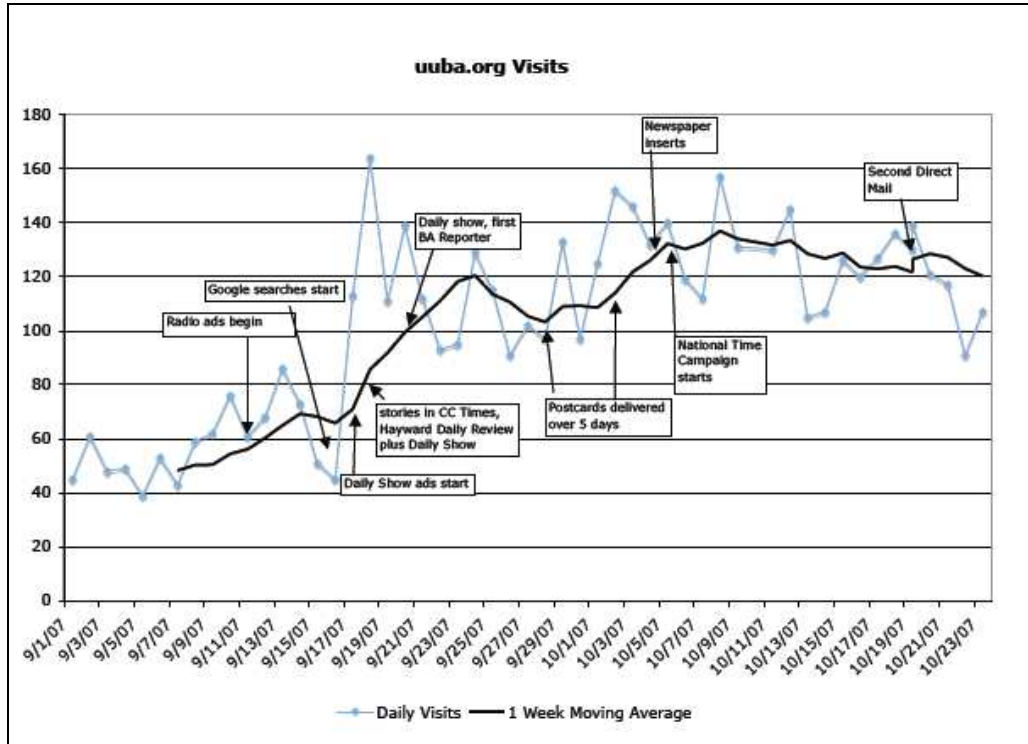
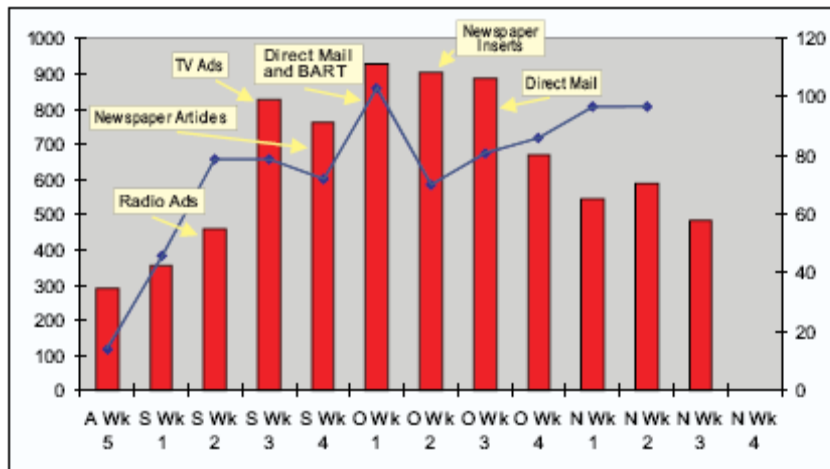
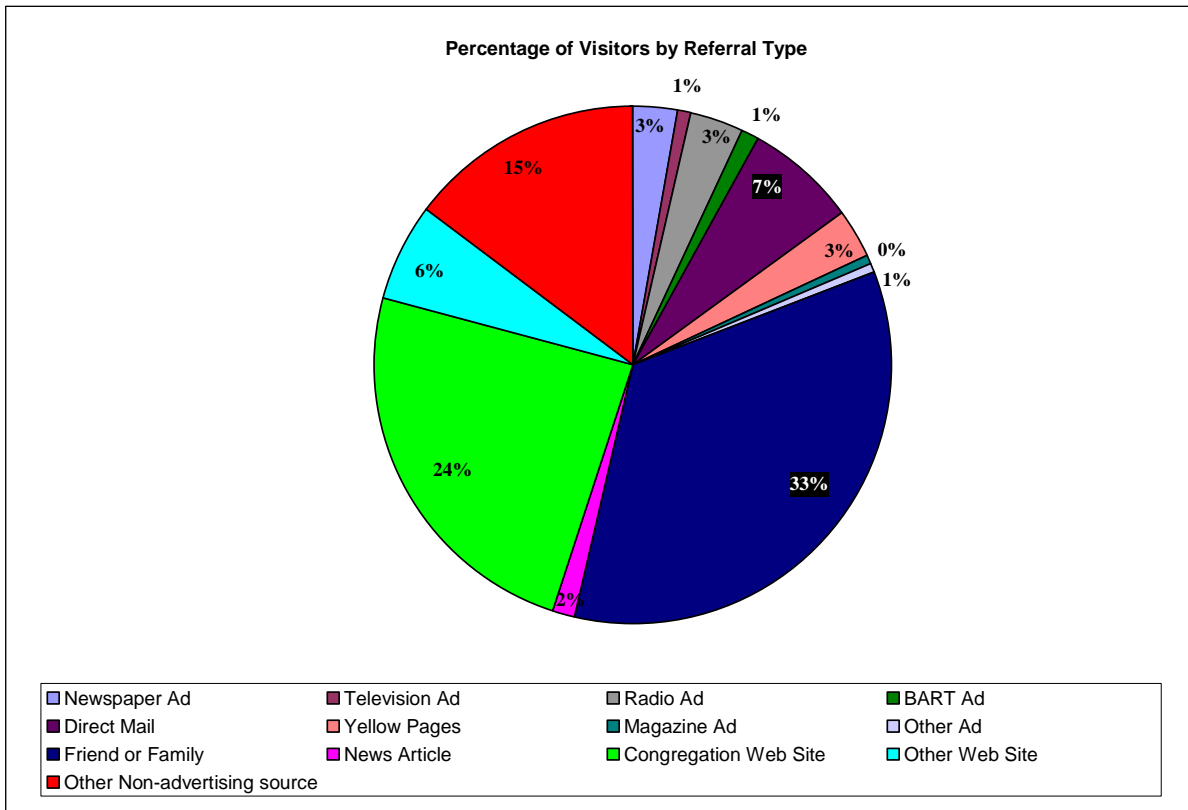


Chart # 2:



Advertising Effectiveness

The congregations asked visitors “how did you hear about us?” They collected over 1,100 responses from the start of the campaign through January. The highest responses were - Family/friends (34%), the congregation’s website (24%), other non-advertising source (15%), direct mail (6%) and other website (6%). These results are not surprising – rarely do respondents mention advertising. Yet, both the increase in website visits and visitor attendance would indicate that the advertising had impact.



The congregations were asked to report returning visitors. The data is incomplete and is problematic; it appears that the congregations had different methods of determining, and therefore reporting, “return visitors”.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – ORANGE COUNTY, LONG BEACH AND SOUTH BAY: 2006

Campaign Highlights: 7 congregations participating

Time: September - November 2006

Budget: \$95,000

Media Mix:

- **Radio:** 3 week/70 public service announcements on KCRW and KPCC, the area public radio stations
- **Direct Mail:** 160,000 households received post-cards week of September 14th
- **Print Ads:** Ads were placed in niche publications serving the BGLT market (The Blade and DOT Magazines) , environmentalists (Southern Sierran newspaper) and the general public (LA Times)
- **Tabloid Insert:** A 4-page insert, was distributed to 547,000 households in the Sunday LA Times, Orange County Register, Press Telegram and Daily Breeze
- **Ancillary Public Relations:** The LA Times printed a major story about the campaign; smaller newspapers also covered the campaign

Measurable Results:

First Time Visitors: The campaign resulted in a significant increase in first time visitors.

Below is a chart comparing first time visitors September- November 2005 & 2006:

Congregation	September November 2005	September – November 2006	% Change 2005 v. 2006
Orange Coast UU Church	72	102	42%
Pacific Unitarian Church	35	37	6%
Tapestry, A UU Congregation*	43	65	51%
UU Church in Anaheim	NA	38	NA
UU Church in Fullerton	16	43	169%
UU Church in Long Beach	71	85	20%
UU Fellowship of Laguna Beach**	12	56	366%
TOTAL	249	426	71%

*Two Sundays data only in Sept. 2005 & 2006 ** Did not separate first time from returning visitors
Visitor acquisition cost: \$224.00.

First Year Net New Member acquisition cost: \$2,794.00

First Year After Campaign - New Members: The seven congregations involved in the campaign have all experienced strong growth over the last several years. However, 2007's growth (FY 2008) was lower than prior years, with a total of only 34 net new members. The new member acquisition cost is substantially higher than for the other campaigns. While there may be many dynamics, it is possible that the congregations had difficulty converting visitors to members. The congregation that had the best growth, Pacific UU Church in Rancho Palos Verdes, recorded the lowest number of visitors. This would indicate that their growth was fueled by events other than the campaign. They do have a strong pro-growth minister, Rev. John Morehouse.

Results below are reported members as of February of the prior year (for example FY 2002 represents membership numbers as of February 2001, reported in 2002 UUA Directory)

Congregation	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	% Change 2003 v. 2007	% Change 2006 v. 2007	FY 2008	% 2007 v. 2008	FY 2009	% 2008 v. 2009
Orange Coast UU Church, Costa Mesa	224	241	239	233	249	11%	7%	238	-5%	203	- 11%
Pacific Unitarian Church, Rancho Palos Verdes	220	225	208	208	252	15%	21%	291	15%	311	7 %
Tapestry A UU Congregation	105	112	130	142	155	48%	9%	157	1%	166	6%
UU Church in Fullerton	125	124	120	124	137	10%	10%	138	1%	144	4%
UU Church in Long Beach	245	250	276	261	279	14%	7%	283	1%	271	-4%
UU Fellowship of Laguna Beach	75	106	121	119	136	81%	14%	130	-4%	130	0
UU Church in Anaheim	41	33	36	41	48	17%	17%	53	10%	50	-6%
TOTAL	1035	1091	1130	1128	1256	21%	11%	1290	3%	1275	-1%

HOUSTON: 2005

Campaign Highlights: 8 congregations participating

Time: January through April 2005

Budget: \$212,000

Media Mix:

- **Billboard:** Two months (January and February) of billboard advertising in three high traffic locations (average drive-by circulation 500,000 daily)
- **Direct Mail:** 200,000 households received post-cards, each three times, in late January, February and March. Total mailing – 600,000 pieces
- **Print Ads:** Eight ¼ page b/w print ads in the Sunday Houston Chronicle and three in the Sunday Galveston Daily News. Approx. 750,000 subscribers, 1.5 million readers. Total impressions: ~ 12 million
- **Magazine Ads:** Three months of advertising (1/2 page four color ads) in OutSmart, a GLBT special interest magazine, and banner ads on the OutSmart website
- **Tabloid Insert:** An 8-page insert, with stories about all eight congregations, in the Sunday Chronicle on February 20, 2005. Subscriber list of 750,000 households and a readership of >1.50 Million
- **Web Banner ads:** Six weeks on the Chronicle News homepage. 38,326 impressions
- **Directory listing in Chronicle Religion section:** The eight congregations were listed in Houston Chronicle Religion section (complimentary), Saturdays for six weeks
- **Radio:** 7 week/105 radio announcements on KUHF, the Houston area public radio station. Average listeners ~200,000
- **Banners:** Large outdoor banners, duplicating visuals of billboards, outside each congregation
- **Tri-fold Brochure:** 5,000 brochures with detailed information about all the congregations.
- **Ancillary Public Relations:** The Houston Chronicle ran an article on church marketing June 12th. The UUA marketing campaign was prominently referenced. There were also several events around rights where UU ministers and lay leaders participated.

Measurable Results:

First Time Visitors: Over 605 first time visitors attended a Unitarian Universalist congregation in the greater Houston area from January – April 2005; 1,174 for all of 2005.

Visitor acquisition costs: First four months - ~\$350; for the 2005 Year - ~\$180.

New Member acquisition cost during campaign: \$1,482.00

First Year new member acquisition cost: \$754.00

2005 New Members:

- 143 new members joined a Houston UU congregation during the first five months.
- 281 new members joined in 2005.
- New member acquisition costs ranged from: ~ \$1,500 to \$750 (calculation varies based on time frame – first five months or full year).

The “conversion percentage” of visitors to membership was 24%.

Total new members for 2005 represent 15% of total membership – yet the congregations’ net membership was 8%, indicating a “revolving back door” or high churn rate.

Not all new members can be attributed to the advertising campaign. Some churches felt there was a direct correlation with the campaign; while others were skeptical about claiming a relational impact of the campaign to membership growth.

New Members: The following is a summary of new members and first time visitors during the campaign and end-of-year 2006:

Church	Campaign Jan.- April New Members*	Total New Members 2005	First Time Visitors Jan.- April 2005	Total First Time Visitors 2005
Bay Area	22	34	106	200
Emerson	47	86	125	250
First UU Church	35	71	109	252
Henry David Thoreau	3	19	45**	37**
Northwest Community	10	20	67	129***
Northwoods	17	33***	90	173***
Fellowship of Galveston	4	8***	38	73***
Fellowship of Houston	5	10	25	~ 60
Total	143	281	605	1,174

* New members are not necessarily a result of the campaign; many attended prior to campaign and joined during that period.

**Obvious discrepancy in reporting.

*** No Data Available:

2005 Total New Members. Assumptions based on average results of the six other congregations that reported - 96% increase in new members first four months v. total first year.

2005 Total First Time Visitors. Assumption based on average results from three congregations (Bay Area, Emerson, First Church) reporting – 93% increase first four months v. total first year.

Results below are reported net membership figures as of February of the prior year (FY 2004 represents membership numbers as of February 2003, reported in 2004 UUA Directory)

Congregation	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	% 2005 2006	FY 2007	% 2006 2007	FY 2008	% 2007 2008	FY 2009	% 2008 2009
Bay Area	207	214	206	-4%	223	8%	247	6%	252	2%
Emerson	410	390	383	-2%	453	18%	450	-.06%	443	-2%
First UU Church	483	504	539	7%	552	2%	503	-9%	396	-21%
Henry David Thoreau	133	133	142	7%	157	11%	150	-4%	121	-19%
Northwest Community	75	80	78	-2%	88	13%	88	0	79	-10%
Northwoods	151	160	183	14%	186	2%	158	-21%	173	9%
Galveston Fellowship	78	77	81	5%	75	-7%	60	-20%	65	8%
Fellowship of Houston	74	72	74	3%	74	0%	73	-1%	73	0
Total: Houston	1,611	1,630	1,686	3%	1808	7%	1729	-5%	1602	-7%

The chart indicates a significant increase in membership following the campaign. However, the growth was not sustainable.

Churches vary in their membership growth. Bay Area has a new minister with an enthusiasm for growth. First UU Church is experiencing some church stress that may be adversely affecting membership. The marketing campaign is just one dynamic, of many, influencing congregational vitality.

KANSAS CITY: 2003

Campaign Highlights: 4 congregations participating

Time: January – May 2003

Budget: \$212,600 - \$130,000 for the media buy; the remainder for focus groups, pre-post advertising awareness research, creative materials, etc.

Media Mix:

- **Billboard:** Six locations over four months (rotating location after two months) with two billboard locations for an additional month. Total circulation ~ 34 million.
- **TV Advertising:** Two weeks - total of 92 spots and 55 "TV billboards" on Channels ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX. Delivering 3,847,000 impressions.
- **Radio:** Ten stations, 1,023 spots and 338 sponsorship "billboards" over a six-week period. 3 Million+ impressions.
- **Print:** The Call and The Globe newspapers - 2 ads each
- **Tri-fold Brochure:** Metro Kansas City/Lawrence congregation brochure (paid for with PSD Chalice Lighter grant).
- **"Tab" insert:** Kansas City Star (late August - post campaign).
- **Seven Public Relations Events**

Measurable Results:

Website hits: "Visiting from KC area?" site on the uua.org home page received over 9,000 hits. This page linked to further information about Unitarian Universalism and to the Kansas City congregations' web sites.

Attendance: Increase in attendance at the four participating congregations was between 10% and 25% (comparing Dec 01-June 02 with Dec 02-June 03) with an average increase of 14% for all four congregations.

Membership: New Members: 75 new members joined during the campaign. Acquisition cost per member for that period: \$1,733.

Net membership for the four Kansas City as reported to the UUA in February of each year, is as follows (FY 2002 represents membership for 2001 as reported in UUA 2002 Directory):

Congregation	2003	2004	% 2003 2004	2005	% 2004 2005	2006	2007	% 2004 2007	2008	% 2007 2008	2009	% 2008 2009
Shawnee Mission	188	187	-.5%	232	24%	250	255	36%	303	18%	335	10%
All Souls	390	387	-.7%	400	3%	423	458	18%	517	13%	568	10%
Lawrence	137	112	-18%	134	22%	147	149	29%	152	6%	157	3%
Gaia	25	21	-16%	34	62%	44	40	90%	35	-12%	45	29%
Total four congregations	740	707	-4%	800	13%	864	902	28%	1007	12%	1105	10%

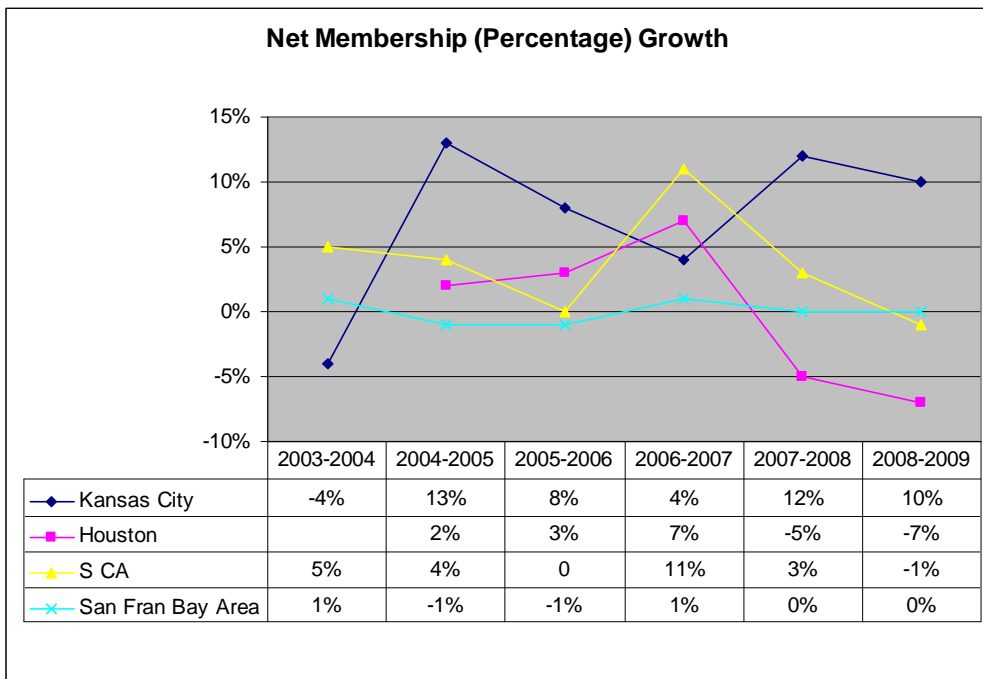
The congregations involved in the campaign had a significant increase in membership in 2004 (the first year of reporting after the campaign) and have sustained their membership growth. For the most recent reporting 2008 v 2009, the four congregations had a 10% growth. Particularly impressive is the strong sustained increase in membership in the larger congregations – Shawnee Mission and All Souls.

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

The below chart shows the disparity in market size, concentration of congregations, acquisition costs and results. It also highlights the difficulty in drawing causality conclusions.

	Kansas City	Houston	Southern CA	SF Bay Area
Media Buy	\$130,000	\$212,000	\$100,000	\$300,000
Population of Market	1.1 M	4.7 M	4 M	6.7 M
Congregations	4	8	7	17
First Time Visitors over campaign: ~ 10 weeks	NA	605	426	946
Visitor Acquisition Cost	NA	\$350	\$234	\$291
Net New Members Year One (% and actual)	14% 93	8% 136	3% 34	NA

The chart below shows a growth trend line for the congregations that have participated in the regional advertising campaigns. The Kansas City congregations continue to growth; Houston has seen a decline, largely a result of congregational dynamics; and the Southern California congregations have been relatively flat after years of impressive gains. The San Francisco Bay area has had flat growth – it will be interesting to see if the campaign results in an increase in membership over time.



LESSONS LEARNED:

Managing Expectations:

Ascertaining whether “advertising works” is problematic. Some goals, such as brand awareness, are difficult to measure. The UUA does not have comparative data (either internally or from other religious organizations) to evaluate visitor and member acquisition costs. What the UUA does know is that name awareness/perception of Unitarian Universalism is low and that membership growth is modest and declining as a percentage of the U.S. population. Advertising is one of many legitimate methods of outreach.

Measurement of Results:

Getting accurate data and interpreting that data is difficult. Each campaign suffered from:

- 1) *“Definitional” inconsistency.* Congregations define members and membership, first time visitors, returning visitors, and attendance very differently, making comparative analyses impossible.
- 2) *Lack of measurements.* Getting congregations to provide data is extremely difficult. Repeated requests were made with little response.
- 3) *Interpreting data:* It is difficult to ascertain a campaign’s “success”. What are the criteria for success? What is a low cost of acquisition? What might have happened without the campaign? What is the best media mix? What are the indirect and ancillary benefits that are NOT reflected in the results? These questions continue to challenge the UUA as we attempt to improve results.

Recommendation - More response mechanisms (special websites addresses, promotional giveaways, etc.) should be integrated into the campaigns to measure advertising effectiveness.

Correlation Between Enthusiasm for Campaign and Results:

There is a strong correlation between a congregation’s enthusiasm for a campaign and positive campaign results. The Minister plays a critical role in the campaign’s success. This strong correlation would imply that the campaign is a catalyst, but not the only factor, in church growth.

Long Term Impact:

While we know that these campaigns are transformative in the way that congregations look at their outreach and hospitality, there is a need to make outreach and hospitality systemic. In order to create long term “behavior change” the UUA should consider designing campaigns with longer durations that can be self-sustaining. A different model might include a mentoring component, benchmarks for change, and behavioral learning that can be embedded into the congregations’ culture.

Strategic Marketing:

It is time to re-evaluate the regional marketing model within the overall strategic marketing vision of the UUA. There are several questions that should be reviewed including:

1. How can these campaigns be better integrated into our national efforts?
2. Are there other marketing methods that might be preferred? (trade-off or cost-benefit analysis)
3. What can we do to improve the regional marketing campaigns?