



ADAPTING OUR THINKING:
*UTILIZING MAIL SURVEYS TO GATHER
DATA FROM GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED
COMMUNITIES IN A RURAL CALIFORNIA
COUNTY*

EVALCORP
Measuring What MattersSM



American Evaluation Association 2019
November 15th

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AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION 2019

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GOALS FOR OUR SESSION

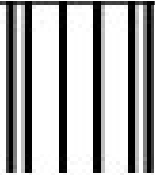
- What is Business Reply Mail?
- Why use it?
- How do you get started?
- What lessons did we learn?

ABOUT OUR PROJECT

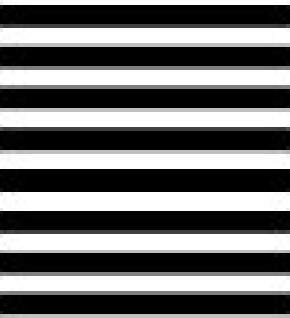
- County Library Needs Assessment
- Rural County in Southern California
- 3 methods to collect surveys
 - Mail
 - Online
 - In-person at library branches

WHAT IS BUSINESS REPLY MAIL?

- *Business Reply Mail* (BRM) is provided by the United States Postal Service (USPS)
- It enables a sender to provide a recipient with a prepaid method for replying to a mailing.
- This prepaid method to respond may increase the chances of receiving a reply.



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 651 OKLAHOMA CITY OK

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

MWC/DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
7217 SE 15TH ST
MIDWEST CITY OK 73110-9903



WHY USE A MAIL SURVEY?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What is the response rate for a mail survey?
- How many would we need to send out if we wanted a specific sample size?
- How will we get a mailing list?
- We used a mail survey because of the very specific challenges we faced in our county
 - Poor internet access
 - Extreme weather conditions
 - Large working class population
 - Need for hearing from non-library users

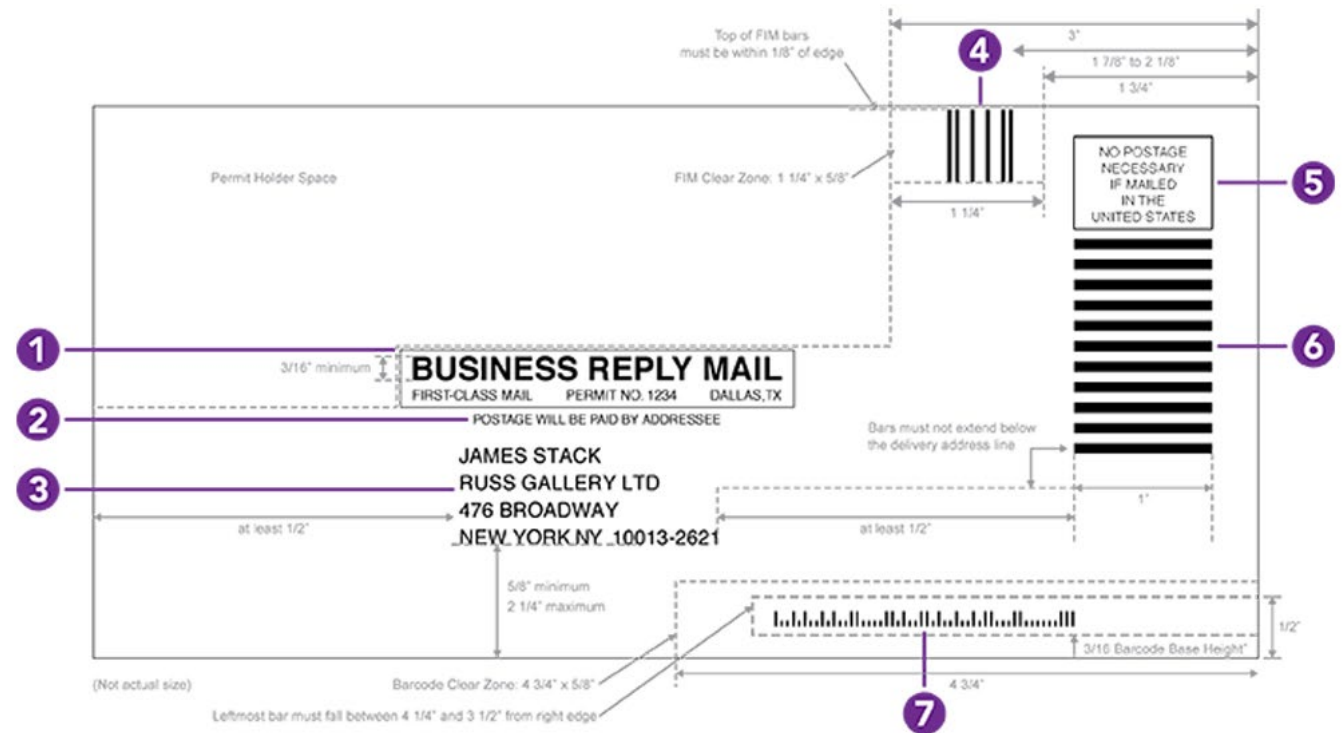
GETTING STARTED

- There are a few different types of BRM
 - Basic BRM
 - High-Volume BRM
 - **Basic Qualified BRM (QBRM)**
 - High-Volume QBRM
- Each one should be used for different needs such as the type of mail you anticipate receiving and how much of it
- You will need a permit
 - Apply using form PS 3615
 - The forms are available at your local Post Office or online
 - Fill out the company name, address where the mail will be returned, contact person, and telephone number.
- A permit number is issued at the Post Office where the form PS 3615 is filed and requires a fee that is paid annually.
- For Qualified Business Reply Mail approval and/or ZIP+4 Code assignment: complete form PS 6805

DESIGNING YOUR MAIL PIECE

- Do it yourself:
 - Using the Automated Business Reply Mail (ABRM) application (<https://gateway.usps.com>)
 - You will need to sign in or create an account for the USPS Business Customer Gateway
- Get some assistance:
 - Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA)
- Approval from an MDA is not a requirement for designing your Business Reply Mail piece **unless** you want to apply for Qualified Business Reply Mail.
- For following the relevant standards, a mailer using QBRM receives a discount not only on their per-piece handling fees, but also in actual First-Class Mail postage prices.

1. Business Reply Legend: BUSINESS REPLY MAIL, FIRST CLASS MAIL, PERMIT NO., CITY, STATE
2. Postage Paid Line: POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE
3. Address: complete address with name of permit holder
4. Facing Identification Mark (FIM)
5. Postage Imprint: NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES
6. Horizontal Bars
7. POSTNET Barcode Location: Zip+4 Barcode



SURVEY TOOL & FLYER USED

- We kept it brief!
- Spanish on one side, English on the other

Have a voice in your community!

Complete the enclosed survey to help the County Library System understand the needs of [redacted] County residents.

Once you've completed the survey, please use the enclosed prepaid envelope to mail your response. No postage is necessary.

Mail by 10/20/18

All survey responses are anonymous. We do not ask for your name or any other identifying information.

For more information or additional copies call: [redacted] email: [redacted]

You can also complete this survey online at: <https://tinyurl.com/ICFL-Survey>

[redacted] County Library Survey

All survey responses are anonymous. Please answer all items honestly. There is no right or wrong answer. We appreciate your feedback on Imperial County's library services. Thank you in advance for your time.

- Are you currently a County library card holder? Yes No
 1a. If yes, which branch do you visit the most? [redacted]
- In a typical month, about how often do you or your family go to a County Library branch?
 Never Once Two times Three times Four or more times

3. Do any of these apply?	Yes	No	4. Have you or your family used any of the following services provided by the County Library?	Yes	No
I don't know where a library branch is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using computer and printer stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The nearest branch is too far from my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessing free internet or Wi-Fi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find the hours of operation inconvenient or inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using fax services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't know how to get a library card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Borrowing books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am frustrated with poor customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Borrowing DVDs, CDs, or audio books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't feel comfortable in the library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessing online catalog of books, articles, magazines, or e-books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't borrow books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordering books through ZIP Books (i.e., books delivered to home)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't borrow DVDs, CDs, or audio books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting help finding information (e.g., research assistance from librarians)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't need to use a library computer, internet station, or printer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting help completing forms (e.g., job/career resources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't need help completing forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in library programs (e.g., movies, crafts, story time)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not interested in library programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in the library's literacy program (e.g., conversation class, citizenship assistance, computer class)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Using resources for families with children ages 0-5 (e.g., toy lending, family play space, parent/family collection)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- If the County Library provided the services below, which ones would you use? (Select all that apply)
 homework help laptop/tablet borrowing wireless/color printing
 3D printer online research journals Other: _____
- How do you hear about library events or programs? (Select all that apply)
 library website social media posters/flyers listserv or forwarded email
 word of mouth Other: _____

- What city or neighborhood do you live in? _____
- Are you: Male Female Transgender
- What race/ethnicity do you most identify with? (Check only one)
 White/Caucasian Black/African American Asian American Indian/Alaska Native
 Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian Hispanic/Latino Mixed (two or more) races
- What is your age?
 12-17 18-25 26-34 35-49 50-64 65+
- Are you a parent of a young child (under 17 years old)? Yes No

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION & COSTS

Survey Distribution

- Two school sites (2500 surveys)
- Four library branches (~200 surveys)
- Online
- Mailed directly to residences in two cities (~300 surveys)

Survey Cost

- Permit cost: \$160
 - There is an annual fee if you maintain your permit
- Per piece postage
- Printed 3000 QBRM envelopes (~\$400)
- Shipped 2500 envelopes to our client for distribution at school sites
- Paid postage for mailers to 2 cities
 - Additional supplies cost (envelope sealer, envelopes)
- Printing (in-house)
- Time (~70 hours)

SURVEY SUCCESS

- 113 surveys were collected through QBRM
- 51 surveys were completed online
- 133 surveys were collected across the 4 library branches

We had a 4%
response rate on our
mail survey method.
However...

The mail flyer also offered
online survey completion
or the chance to turn in
the survey to their local
library branch.

CHALLENGES

- Challenges Learning the Process
 - Working with older data collection approaches and your local USPS can be difficult
 - Resources and information on BRM is hard to interpret and hard to find when you are learning the terms
- Challenges Planning for the Distribution
 - Our timeline shifted based on when our client received mail address lists from *her partners*
 - Our timeline shifted again when school partners were delayed in sending the survey home with students
- Challenges Doing the BRM Work
 - We didn't foresee that we would need slightly smaller than standardized envelopes for the BRM envelope—we then had to special order slightly larger than standard envelopes to mail out surveys!
 - We didn't anticipate the time that it would take to prep the surveys and envelopes—we also could have considered outsourcing that to Staples or Office Max!
- Potential Issues in Hindsight
 - High response rate=More time-consuming data entry

LESSONS LEARNED – WHAT TO TAKE AWAY FROM OUR SESSION

- To Address Challenges Learning the Process
 - PLAN, PLAN, PLAN
 - Don't be afraid to leave a post office that isn't helpful
- To Address Challenges Planning for the Distribution
 - Ask about potential partners for survey distribution early, have direct conversations with these points of contact if possible
 - Build extra time into your timeline for mail surveys...Snail mail is slower than e-mail and it's good to keep that in mind
- To Address Challenges Doing the BRM Work
 - Learn from our mistakes—Consider the envelope size!
 - Think about time-consuming tasks and weigh the cost of your time vs. cost of outsourcing these tasks

QUESTIONS?

How might you approach the BRM method?

Is there anything we accidentally avoided or stages where we got lucky?

Contact us!

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RESOURCES

- https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Business-Reply-Mail#what_is_brm
- <https://pe.usps.com/MailpieceDesign/Index?ViewName=ABRMIntroduction>

Links for forms:

- <https://about.usps.com/forms/ps3615.pdf>
- <https://about.usps.com/forms/ps6805.pdf>