

Department of Recreational Sports

Marketing Survey

Spring 2018

Background

According to its website (<http://recsports.tamu.edu/about-us-2/>), the mission of the Department of Recreational Sports is to “provide quality programs, services and facilities to a diverse Texas A&M community. We encourage the lifelong pursuit of active healthy lifestyles, and enhance student development by providing leadership and employment opportunities.” The Recreation Center is comprised of more than 400,000 square feet of recreation space that includes a strength and conditioning room, a walking and running track, handball/racquetball/squash courts, an indoor climbing facility, dance/activity rooms for classes, a natatorium, an outdoor activity area, equipment check out, locker rooms, gymnasium space, and much more. The building recently underwent a renovation and expansion project. Additionally, the department is developing two satellite facilities on campus.

The Department of Recreational Sports conducts a marketing assessment every few years to understand the effectiveness of their marketing efforts as well as monitor changes in how students gather information. This is the third time Rec Sports has worked with Student Life Studies on a marketing assessment.

Method and Sample

The survey was developed using Qualtrics®, survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The electronic survey contained 14 quantitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. Additionally, demographic data was gathered from university student records. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

A random sample of 2,500 students from the College Station campus were selected to participate in the survey. These students received an email invitation to participate in the survey on March 22, 2018; however, five email addresses were not valid or the email message did not go through. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on April 6th. Of the 2,495 students who received the survey, 245 completed some part of it, yielding a 10% response rate.

Results

Results will be reported as and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending frequency percentage order. The last marketing assessment focused on the departments’ website. This assessment focused on various marketing methods students used; therefore there will not be comparisons to previous years.

Using a check all that apply question, the first question asked students about the method(s) they most often use to get information about Rec Sports programs, events, services, and facilities. Table 1, on the following page, illustrates that students go to the Rec Sports website most frequently for information, followed by learning from word of mouth. Students who selected the “other” response option were provided the opportunity to write a response and seven students did. Most indicated learning about Rec Sports through email, one person said a call, and one person reported Google.

Which method(s) do you use most often to get information about Rec Sports programs, events, services, and facilities? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
Rec Sports website (http://recsports.tamu.edu)	46%
Word of mouth	39%
Rec Sports Guide (published every semester)	21%
Banners or posters in Rec Center	21%
Restroom readers in Rec Center restroom stalls	19%
TV's in Rec Center	18%
Rec Sports social media	13%
None	13%
Rec Sports fliers	11%
Campus events/resource tables	9%
Advertisements in local publications	5%
Rec Sports listserv	5%
Other:	4%

Table 1 – Marketing Methods (n=179)

Students were asked about the local publications in which they had seen Rec Sports advertisements. Also using a check all the apply option, Table 2, reveals that two-thirds of the students did not see an advertisement in any of the publications listed. Of the publications provided, *The Battalion* was the most common one for students to see any advertisement for Rec Sports. Those who wrote a comment for the “other” response option included email, merch, bathroom door, and that the only time they hear from the Rec is when they want to raise prices.

Select the local publications in which you have seen Rec Sports advertisements. (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
None	67%
<i>The Battalion</i>	17%
<i>Maroon Life</i> (special publication by <i>The Battalion</i>)	8%
Texas A&M Visitor Guide	8%
Student Insider	7%
<i>Aggieland Illustrated Magazine</i>	2%
<i>Insite Magazine</i>	2%
Other:	2%
The Eagle's Aggieland Primer	1%

Table 2 – Publications (n=164)

When asked if they ever picked up a printed Rec Sports Guide, almost half (48%) of the 179 students responding said they never picked one up, 35% reported picking one up occasionally, but not every semester, and 17% said they picked one up each semester. Those indicating they never picked up a printed Rec Sports Guide (n=86) were asked a follow-up question to understand why they did not pick one up. Table 3, on the following page, demonstrates that half of the students prefer to receive information electronically rather than in print. A majority of the 29 students who wrote in a response for the “other” option indicated they did not know the Rec Sports Guide existed or what it was. Others indicated they did not see it or know where it was, did not use the Rec Center, or just never bothered to get one.

Why do you not pick up a Rec Sports Guide? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
I prefer to receive information online/electronic rather than in print	50%
Other:	37%
It is not environmentally friendly (waste of paper)	27%
It is not visually appealing	4%
The information is not organized in a user-friendly manner	2%

Table 3 –Rec Sports Guide (n=85)

Respondents were asked how often they visit the Rec Sports website. Over half (57%) of the 177 responses reported going to the website once or twice a semester, 16% said weekly, and 5% reported daily. Alternatively, 22% indicated never going to the website. Those who did not use the Rec Sports website (n=39) were asked a follow-up question about why they did not use the website. Using a check all that apply question, Table 4 indicates that “other” options were the main reason for not going to the department website. There were 27 students who wrote in a response mostly indicating that they did not know there was a website, did not need to go there, do not use the Rec Center, or received information in other ways.

Why do you not visit the Rec Sports website? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
Other:	76%
Hard to navigate	16%
Visually unappealing	11%
Broken links	5%

Table 4 –Rec Sports Website (n=38)

Students were asked about the social media platform(s) if any, that they used to follow Rec Sports. Using a check all that apply formatted question, Table 5 shows that a majority of the students did not follow Rec Sports on any of the platform options provided. However, of the platforms beings used by students, Facebook was the most common and Snapchat was the least common. Furthermore, using a check all that apply option, those students who reported not following Rec Sports on any social media platform (n=127) were asked to explain why. Table 6 indicates that almost two-thirds of the students were not aware that Rec Sports was on social media. Of the 17 students who provided a comment for the “other” response option, most stated that they did not want to follow Rec Sports, did not need the information, had no interest, or were not participating in anything at the Rec Center.

On which social media platform(s) do you follow Rec Sports? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
None	72%
Facebook	14%
Twitter	11%
Instagram	10%
Snapchat	4%

Table 5 – Social Media Platforms (n=177)

Why do you not follow Rec Sports on social media? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
I was not aware Rec Sports was on social media	64%
I do not use social media	20%
Other:	16%
I would like to see more contests and prizes	6%

Table 6 – Social Media Non-Followers (n=124)

Respondents were asked about which, if any, Rec Sports videos they had seen. Also using a check all that apply question, Table 7 reports that almost half of students had not seen a Rec Sports promotional video. For those who had seen a video, the videos utilized this academic year for the Vote Rec campaign were the most seen.

Which Rec Sports videos have you seen? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
None	47%
Vote Rec campaign videos	34%
Fish Camp video	30%
Rec Sports program information or instructional videos	18%
Other:	--

Table 7 – Rec Sports Videos (n=174)

Using a check all that apply question, students were asked about the campus events where they received information about Rec Sports. Table 8 demonstrates that just over half of the students received information about Rec Sports at New Student Conferences. The three students selecting the “other” response option wrote in that they did not attend other events, they could not remember, and that they were not participating in Rec Sports.

At which of these campus events have you received information about Rec Sports? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
New Student Conferences	54%
Fish Camp	40%
None	28%
MSC Open House	26%
T-Camp/Howdy Camp	8%
Other:	2%

Table 8 – Information at Campus Events (n=173)

When asked if they have attended Rec-A-Palooza, the free event held during Howdy Week, 79% of the 175 students responding reported that they had not attended, 19% said they had attended, and 2% did not remember. There was a follow-up question for those who stated that they had attended Rec-A-Palooza (n=34). They were asked the reasons they attended Rec-A-Palooza, using a check all that apply option. According to Table 9, giveaway items and it being a fun event were the most common reasons students attended. One student shared a response to the “other” option stating he/she attended promoting club golf.

Which were reasons you attended Rec-A-Palooza? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
Free food and giveaways	79%
It is a fun event to attend with friends	68%
To learn about Rec Sports programs, services, or facilities	35%
Other:	3%

Table 9 – Rec-A-Palooza (n=34)

When asked if they would use a Rec Sports mobile app, 174 responded to the question with 40% reporting they would use an app, 32% said they would not, and 28% were unsure.

The final question utilized a check all that apply option to find out what actions students have taken as a result of learning about Rec Sports programs, events, services, and facilities. Table 10, on the following page, illustrates that a majority of students used the Rec Center for open recreation the most. Students were least likely to receive a therapeutic massage or participate in an Outdoor Adventures trip or clinic. Those selecting the “other” option were provided the opportunity to write a response and three students share a comment including dancing classes, towel service, and event planning.

Which actions have you taken as a result of learning about what Rec Sports programs, events, services, and facilities? (Check all that apply)	Frequency Percentages
Used Rec Sports facilities for open recreation	70%
Joined an Intramurals team	28%
None	17%
Purchased a Group RecXercise class pass	11%
Climbed on the indoor climbing tower or bouldering wall	11%
Rented equipment from Outdoor Adventures	10%
Tried out for a Sport Club	8%
Taken a specialty class or boot camp	8%
Engaged with a Rec Sports partner at a table inside the Rec Center lobby	5%
Taken an Aquatics class	4%
Worked with a personal trainer	3%
Other:	2%
Participated in an Outdoor Adventures trip or clinic	1%
Gotten a therapeutic massage	1%

Table 10 – Marketing Results (n=174)

Student demographics were collected through the student information system. Table 11, in descending order by the survey respondents for each category on the following page, displays this information for the respondents and random sample. A majority of the respondents were female, white, seniors who were not first generation. There were more masters, doctoral, international, and female students responding to the survey compared to the sample.

	Random Sample	Survey Respondents
Classification	[n=2,426]	[n=220]
Senior	33%	27%
Junior	19%	19%
Masters	12%	16%
Sophomore	17%	15%
Freshman	12%	12%
Doctoral	8%	11%
College	[n=2,442]	[n=221]
Engineering	30%	27%
Agriculture	13%	16%
Liberal Arts	14%	14%
Education	12%	11%
Business	9%	10%
Science	6%	9%
Architecture	5%	4%
General Studies	4%	4%
Veterinary Medicine	6%	4%
Geosciences	2%	2%
Sex	[n=2,500]	[n=221]
Female	46%	61%
Male	54%	39%
Ethnicity	[n=2,500]	[n=221]
White only	59%	53%
Hispanic or Latino	20%	16%
International	8%	15%
African American/Black	4%	7%
Asian	6%	6%
Multi-Racial (excluding Black)	2%	3%
Unknown or Not Reported	1%	1%
American Indian	<1%	--
First Generation	[n=2,500]	[n=221]
No	66%	61%
Yes	23%	22%
Unknown	11%	17%

Table 11 – Student Demographics

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Department of Recreational Sports engages in an active marketing and communications strategies with its customers. Students report utilizing the website and word of mouth the most to find out information. If the website is the most common way information is gathered, the marketing staff may want to ensure that information on the website is accurate and that all links and navigation features work properly. Additionally, the staff may want to look at analytics to understand the pages customers go to the most and how long they stay on the website.

When looking into individual marketing methods, several had half or more of respondents indicating they did not know about the method or did not utilize that particular method. These may be opportunities to look at different ways to utilize these methods and connect with a larger audience. Rec Sports marketing may want to specifically look at printed publications, the Rec Sports Guide, social media, and promotion videos. Furthermore, the

department may want to explore developing a mobile app for customers. Just under half of the students responding reported that they would use an app and another quarter was unsure so may use an app. This also lines up with several of the comments students shared about preferring to receive information electronically and not wanting paper formatted options such as the Rec Sports Guide and printed publications.

A majority of the students reported that they had not attended Rec-A-Palooza. Rec Sports could consider different options for encouraging students to attend this event as a way to get new students inside the Rec Center. It could be to create contests for residence hall floors or Fish Camp Discussion Groups (DGs) to attend together or make it a contest for the group with the highest percentage attending receives a free pizza party or something.

Rec Sports staff are encouraged to share the results of this assessment with various stakeholders including the department staff and students.

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***Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by Texas A&M University Advancement Fees.
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