

A Best Practices Manual for Outreach and Education to Private Well Owners

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Why A Best Practices Manual? Well Owners Are Hard To Reach

- **Belief that groundwater/well is safe**
- **Human nature, same for dentist and doctor**
- **Cost or perceived cost**
- **History-no one has gotten sick yet**
- **Lack of understanding**
- **Don't trust the government**
- **Independence**

Social Dimensions of Private Well Testing: Why Don't People Test their Water?

Barbara Liukkonen, U of MN Extension; Lori Severtson, School of Nursing, UW-Madison; Ruth Kline-Robach, Institute of Water Resources, MSU-East Lansing

	WI \$2 + free test	MN \$2 Bill	MI Coupon for free test	Totals
Surveys mailed	1459	596	635	2690
Surveys completed	1057	386	290	1733
Return Rate	72%	65%	48%	64%

1. We've been drinking it for years – **53%**
2. Didn't know what to test for – **41%**
3. Don't know how to test – **35%**
4. It's probably fine – **25%**
5. Didn't know I should test it – **17%**
6. Testing costs too much – **17%**
7. I'll Wait for others to find problems – **12%**
8. Dealing with problem would be too costly - **12%**
9. Missed the testing program – **8%**
10. I don't want to know – **8%**

❖ When asked, *“How worried are you about possible health risks from untreated well water?”* respondents said they are ...

Very Worried	Worried	Slightly Worried	Not Worried
3%	10%	35%	52%



Why Don't People Test their Water?

(Liukkonen, et al., 2009)- 1100 respondents

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Work We Have Completed

- ISWS has assisted Illinois well owners for over 100 years, started after a cholera outbreak in 1890's
- Developed The Private Well Class
 - 10 lessons, comprehensive overview
 - Webinars, answer questions
 - Provide support, phone and email
- Project for CDC (basis for manual)
 - Survey of programs around the country
 - Contract vs Grant limited success
 - Incorporated all information to develop manual

CDC Project Overview

- **Four pieces to the project**
 - Survey of up to 100 programs
 - Forum online for interaction
 - Literature review of motivations, barriers, and best practices for outreach
 - Participation in well owner workshops
- **Statistically evaluate survey results to look for trends in successful programs**
- **Summarize/describe qualitative responses**
- **Final progress report given to CDC in March, currently finalizing best practices manual.**

University of Illinois Statistics 427 Class

- Graduate level class to help teach students how to work with a client
- Provided our survey data to 3 student team
- 6 different sets of statistical analyses
- Their class project, results provided to us
- Simon Cho, Yihui Cui, and Meng Li
- Several of their results are included here

Scale Of The Programs

9-Local

7-Community

35-County

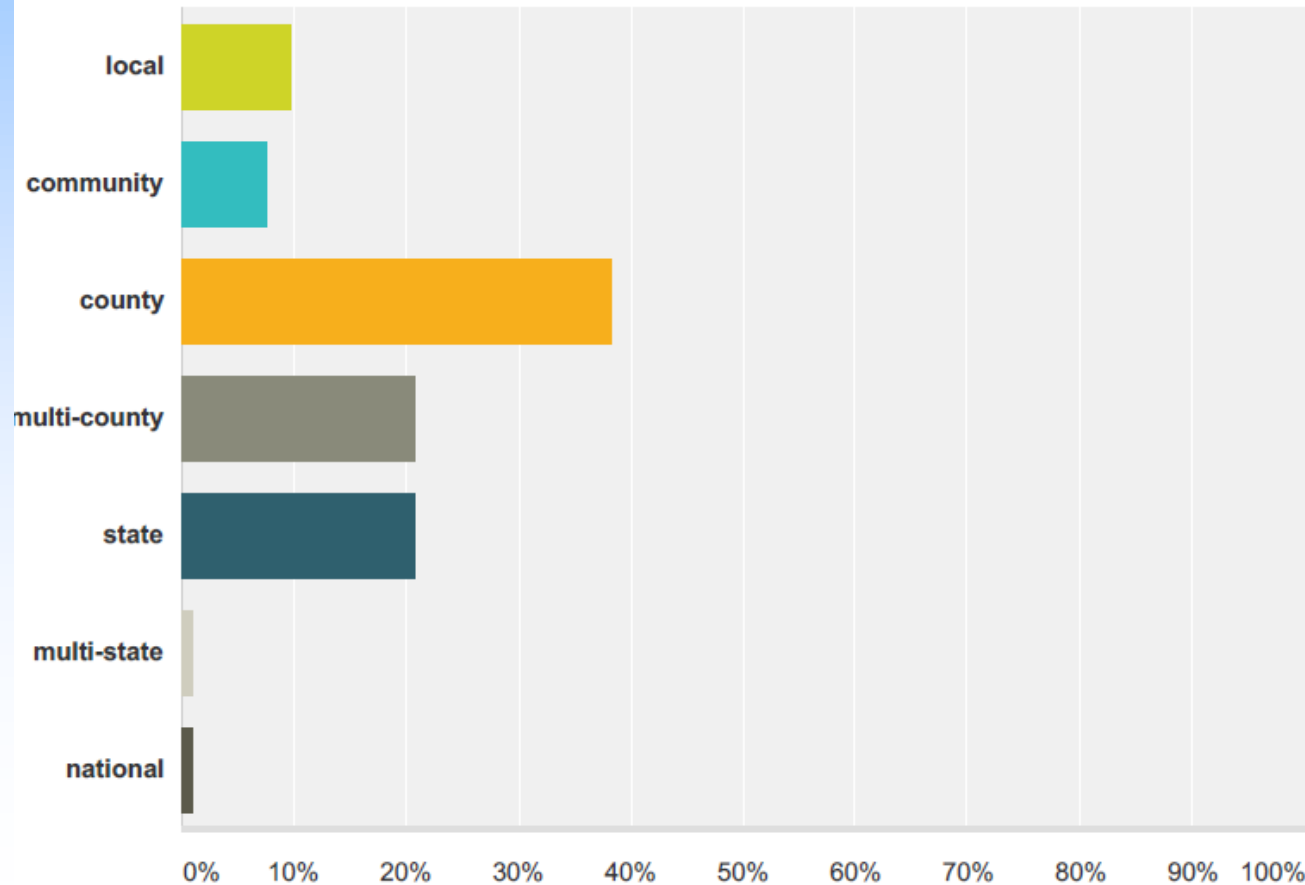
19-Multi-County

19-State

Identified about
180 candidate
programs for
final list (>400
initially)

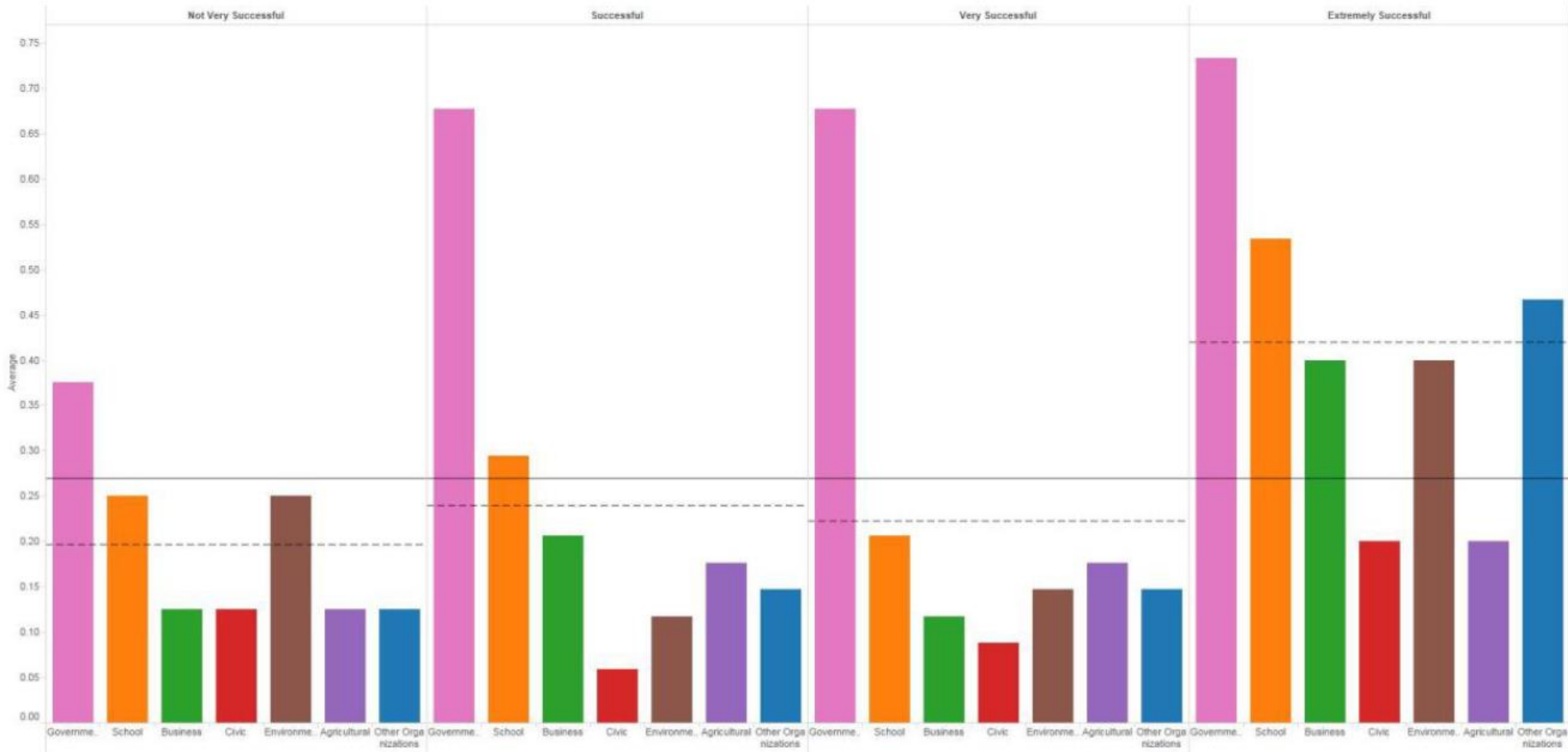
Q2 2. Your private well owner program was designed to serve well owners at what scale?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



Program Partners

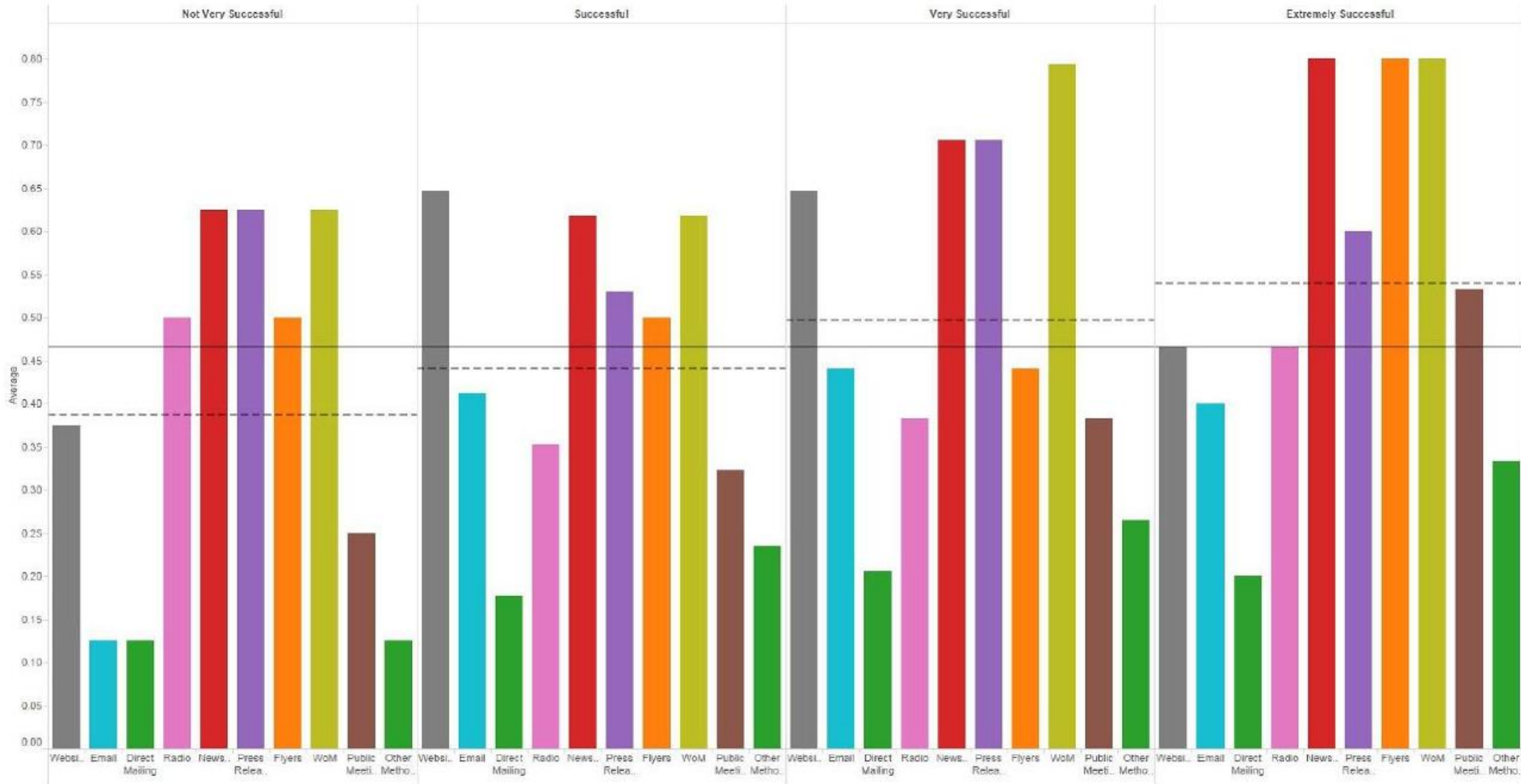
Q16: "What type of organization partnered with you to complete your private well owner program?"



Simon Cho, Yihui Cui, & Meng Li

Advertising Methods

Q17: "What methods were used to advertise your private well owner program?"



CDC Project Lit Review

- **Three areas of focus**
 - **Behavior Change Motivations**
 - **Behavior Change Barriers**
 - **Risk Communication Best Practices**
- **Collected data from several hundred research papers**
- **Submitted a paper to the Journal of Water and Health in April. Will be published in 1-2 months**

Partners = Success Because They Share:

- Costs**
- Effort**
- And spread the word**
- And can provide local buy-in**

**They are critical to creating and maintaining a
successful outreach program**

Some Key Practices To Encourage Participation

- Demonstrate the value of the information
- Consistent, slow and steady, build a reputation
- More publicity, show participants you care
- Find a way to fund cost share for needed treatment
- Use and information/education officer in schools
- Train a local trainer
- Use local and multiple partners in your program
- Use testimonials from past participants

Additional Ideas To Consider

- If local, use postcards to advertise programs
- Identify nearby labs for well owners and provide contact information, as well as sampling suggestions
- Start a local group that will focus on GW issues
- Offer to be a partner in your local area (with extension or county health) It will create buy in for your business with these groups.

The Key Is Breaking Down Barriers

Identify Barriers

Are they aware
of the risk?

No

Knowledge
Barriers

Yes

Do they feel
threatened?

No

Risk Perception
Barriers

Yes

Is change
convenient?

No

Barriers of
Inconvenience

Yes

Other reasons?

No

Personal or
Social Barriers

Select Motivational Strategies

Provide education and correct misconceptions so well owners are able to make informed decisions.

Increase perception of risk by informing well owners of the dangers of drinking untested water.

Make well stewardship as easy as possible so well owners don't feel inconvenienced.

Address personal barriers directly, and approach social barriers with social motivations.

Figure 1: Selection of appropriate motivational strategies through identification of significant barriers.

So How Do We Motivate Well Owners?

The goal is to make them aware and change their regular behavior

- Make it easy for them
- Provide cost incentives
- Do legwork upfront to dispel fears/concerns
- Be engaged over time to build trust
- Frame in terms of costs vs benefits
- Make sure they know about it

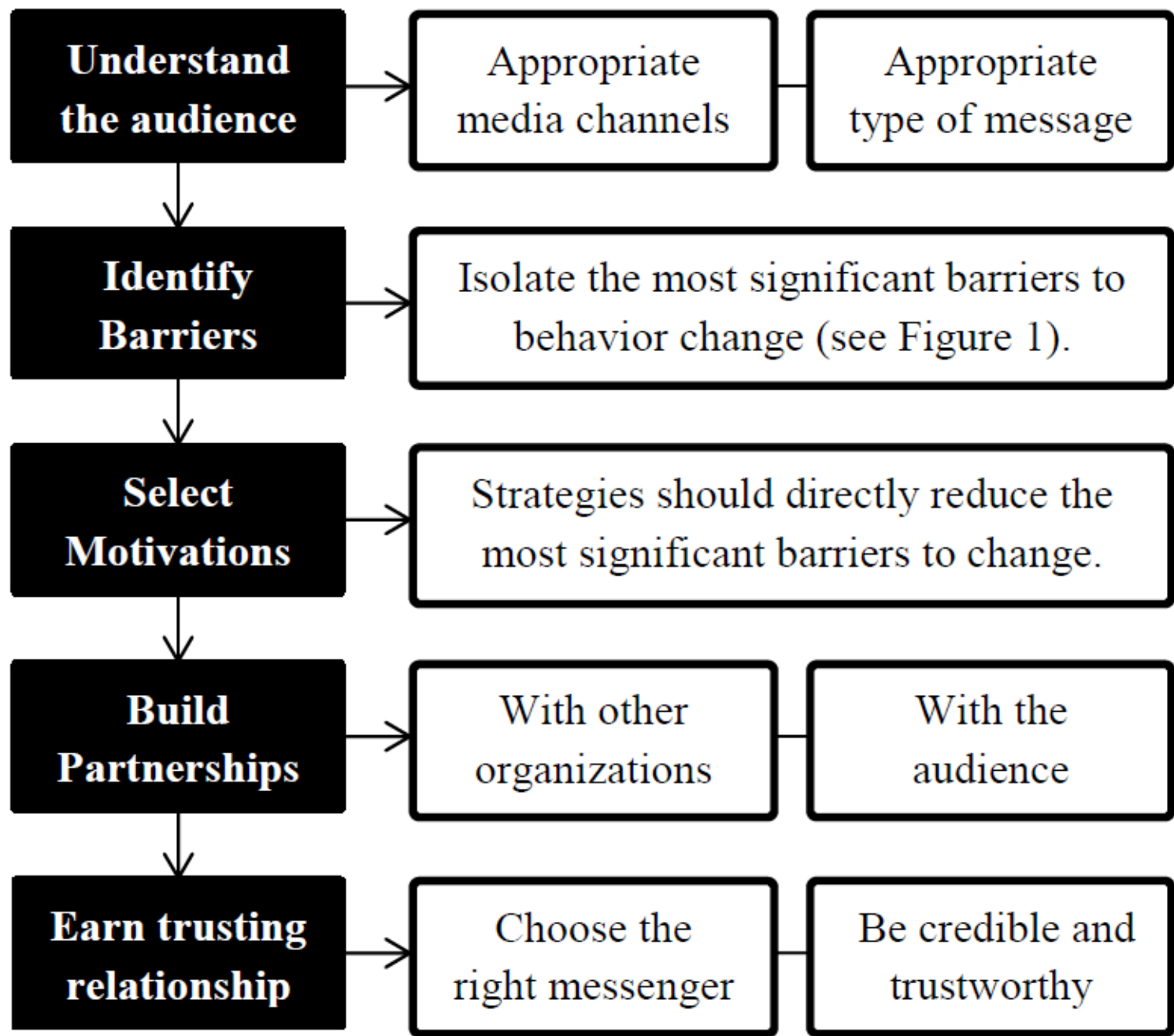


Figure 2: Basic steps for creating an effective outreach program.

Manual Outline

1. Introduction

- I. Why well owners are hard to reach
- II. What we all want from outreach
- III. What we hope you can do with manual

2. Summary of the CDC work we did

1. Survey results
2. Literature review
3. Workshops

3. Best Practices, Understanding Barriers, and Overcoming Obstacles

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

5. Appendices will have responses for most.

Questions?

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