



Residential Focus Group

Case Study:
City of San Rafael



San Rafael Residential Focus Group

Situation:

- MSS: 75% diversion – no longer a garbage bill
- Current bill appears to bill for garbage
- Reduced garbage container size reduces bill
- For customers to value waste reduction, need to transform perception and dynamics



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Overview:

- ❑ Focus groups provide qualitative results:
 1. Better understand impact of new structure
 2. Identify problems with certain billing layouts
 3. Develop solutions to problems
- ❑ Insight into issues and nuances of achieving ZW



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Methodology:

- ❑ Two 90 minute focus groups:
 - ✓ 10 women 43 – 65
 - ✓ 10 men 26 – 72
- ❑ Qualifying criteria:
 - ✓ Current customer
 - ✓ Homeowner
 - ✓ Person who pays
 - ✓ At least neutral attitude about MSS
 - ✓ Must make some effort at recycling (3 out of 10)
 - ✓ Must have at least one other person residing in household.



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Summary of Findings:

- Improve communications (how to recycle and divert, how to save money, and why important to community and world)
- Need to deal with “ick” factor of food waste diversion, communicate beneficial impact and opportunity to save costs



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Summary of Findings:

- Recycling motivators, if unsure default is trash, misunderstanding that garbage is sorted
- Zero Waste misunderstood, skeptical but became encouraged and inspired, need for information and progress reporting
- Landfill negative attitudes, focus on land use and emissions, avoid new landfills



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Summary of Findings:

Billing

- ✓ Services are a good value
- ✓ Desire information they can use to reduce costs
 - Detail on bill only helpful if it achieves this objective
 - People may try to opt out of diversion services if separately identified
 - List detail but one bottom line charge
- ✓ Raise garbage service rates but not recycling

