

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER SURVEY AND NONUSER SURVEY

In the fall of 2003, Lincoln City Libraries contracted with Dubberly Garcia Associates, Inc. to conduct a customer survey and a nonuser survey. Dr. George D'Elia was the principal consultant, assisted by June Garcia.

The customer survey was conducted during the week of October 11 through October 17, 2003. The survey population was defined as all customers, 12 years of age and older, who visited any of Lincoln City Libraries during the week the survey was conducted. A total of 4,148 customers were systematically sampled from whom 2,212 completed questionnaires were obtained. The survey had a response rate of 53.3%

The objectives of the customer survey were to:

- Ascertain the needs of the customers
- Solicit customers' evaluations of the service characteristics of the library in which they were surveyed
- Measure customers' overall satisfaction with the library in which they were surveyed
- Investigate the role that access to the Internet plays in the use and evaluation of the library
- Measure the frequency with which customers visit the library and to investigate the relationship between frequency of visits, their reasons for use, and their satisfaction with the library
- Solicit customers' opinions about the importance of Lincoln City Libraries to the quality of life in Lincoln
- Describe the demographic characteristics of the customers.

The nonuser survey was conducted from September 29 through October 12, 2003. Using telephone numbers generated by a random-digit dialing sample, interviewers spoke to 3,496 residents of Lincoln and Lancaster County, of those, 1248 residents (35.7% of those spoken to by an interviewer) participated in the survey. During the course of the interview, 848 were identified as users of the Lincoln City Libraries and 400 were identified as nonusers

The objectives of the nonuser survey were to:

- Estimate the percentage of adult residents (18 years of age and older) of the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County who use and who do not use Lincoln City Libraries; who have access to the Internet in their home; and to measure the residents' opinions about the importance of Lincoln City Libraries to the quality of life in Lincoln
- Identify reasons why residents do not use Lincoln City Libraries
- Access nonuser residents' opinions about the likelihood that they would use new or improved services that might be offered by Lincoln City Libraries
- Describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents to the survey.

The responses of both surveys were analyzed by Dr. George D'Elia, who prepared a detailed report on each survey for Lincoln City Libraries. Whenever possible, survey results were reported for the Bennett Martin Public Library, each branch library, and the bookmobile. The consultants identified seven key findings:

KEY FINDING # 1

A substantial majority of adults in the community use Lincoln City Libraries.

- 67.9% of the respondents reported that they had used, by any means, Lincoln City Libraries in the past year.
- 32.1% of the respondents reported that they had not used Lincoln City Libraries in the past year.
- This is the fourth highest percentage of use in 12 similar surveys conducted by the consultants.

KEY FINDING # 2

A substantial majority (83.6%) of the respondents to the telephone survey indicated that Lincoln City Libraries are “very” or “extremely important” to the quality of life in Lincoln.

- Entire sample: 83.6% of survey respondents to the telephone survey indicated that Lincoln City Libraries are “very” or “extremely important” to the quality of life in Lincoln.
- Library users: 92.6% of library users participating in the telephone survey indicated that Lincoln City Libraries are “very” or “extremely important” to the quality of life in Lincoln.
- Library nonusers: 72.8% of the library nonusers participating in the telephone survey indicated that Lincoln City Libraries are “very” or “extremely important” to the quality of life in Lincoln.

KEY FINDING # 3

Customers are very satisfied with Lincoln City Libraries.

- 85.6% indicated they were either “very” or “extremely satisfied” with the library.
- This is the second highest customer satisfaction level in 21 libraries surveyed by the consultants. The other library systems ranged from a low of 52.9% to a high of 86.0%.

KEY FINDING # 4

The service characteristics that have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction are those dealing with the availability of materials and access.

KEY FINDING # 5

The majority of survey respondents had access to the Internet at home.

- Entire sample: 71.6% of the survey respondents indicated that they had access to the Internet at home.
- By residence: 71.1% of survey respondents who live in Lincoln and 75.4% of the Lancaster County respondents indicated that they had Internet access at home.
- By user/nonuser: 74.7% of library users and 65.0% of library nonusers indicated that they had Internet access at home.
- Use of the Internet at home and use of the public library are not competing behaviors but rather appear to be mutually supportive behaviors.
- Internet stations available at Lincoln City Libraries are being used primarily by customers who do not have Internet access at home. Of the customers who do not have Internet access at home, 51.7% come to the library to use the Internet.

KEY FINDING # 6

Nonusers fall into one of three categories: lifestyle nonusers, access nonusers, or service issues nonusers.

- Lifestyle nonusers (74.2%) includes those who indicated they “don’t have time to go to the library” or the “library doesn’t offer anything I need.”
- Access nonusers (17.0%) includes those who indicated that they are “physically disabled” or the “library is so far away it’s not convenient.”
- Service issues nonusers (5.7%) includes those who indicated that the “library is better at serving kids” or “library is too confusing to use.”

KEY FINDING # 7

It is unlikely that most nonusers will become library users.

- 47.9% of the nonusers exhibited very little likelihood of using any of the possible new services.
- 40.3% of the nonusers exhibited a moderate likelihood of using some of the possible new services.
- 11.7% of the nonusers exhibited a high likelihood of using some of the possible new services.