



The National Market Research Survey:

How to Use What We Learned

Nicole Darracq, California

Bruce Erickson, Minnesota

Amy Price, Michigan





National Survey Results: A Quick Summary

Child Support Should Focus on the CHILD

Despite years of messaging otherwise and our own belief, customers believe program involvement moves the focus AWAY from the child

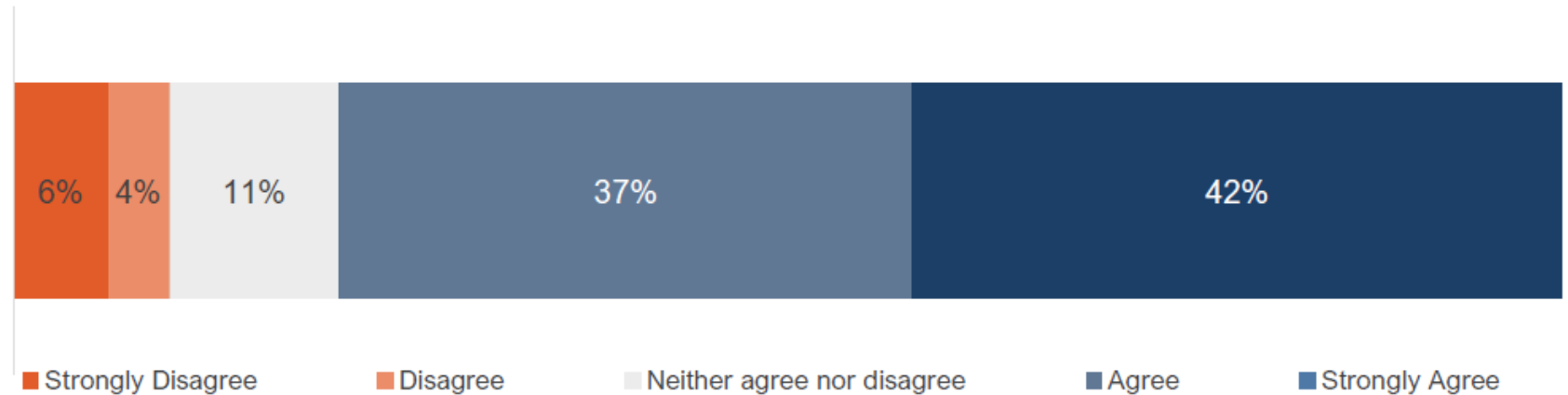
- Other findings:
 - **Negative stigma** – Both parents are stigmatized by having a child support case
 - **Weaponized** – Fear of this stigma is used as a weapon against the other parent
 - **Used as a threat** – by both parents in attempts to control the other's behavior



National Survey Results: A Quick Summary

- Most parents (79%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that they understand how the child support program works
- The vendor, however, conflated “having a court order” with “having a case” in analyzing the survey and responses, i.e. even THEY don’t understand how it works
- It’s safe to say people may understand the SYSTEM, but not necessarily the PROGRAM

I understand how the child support program works.





National Survey Results: A Quick Summary

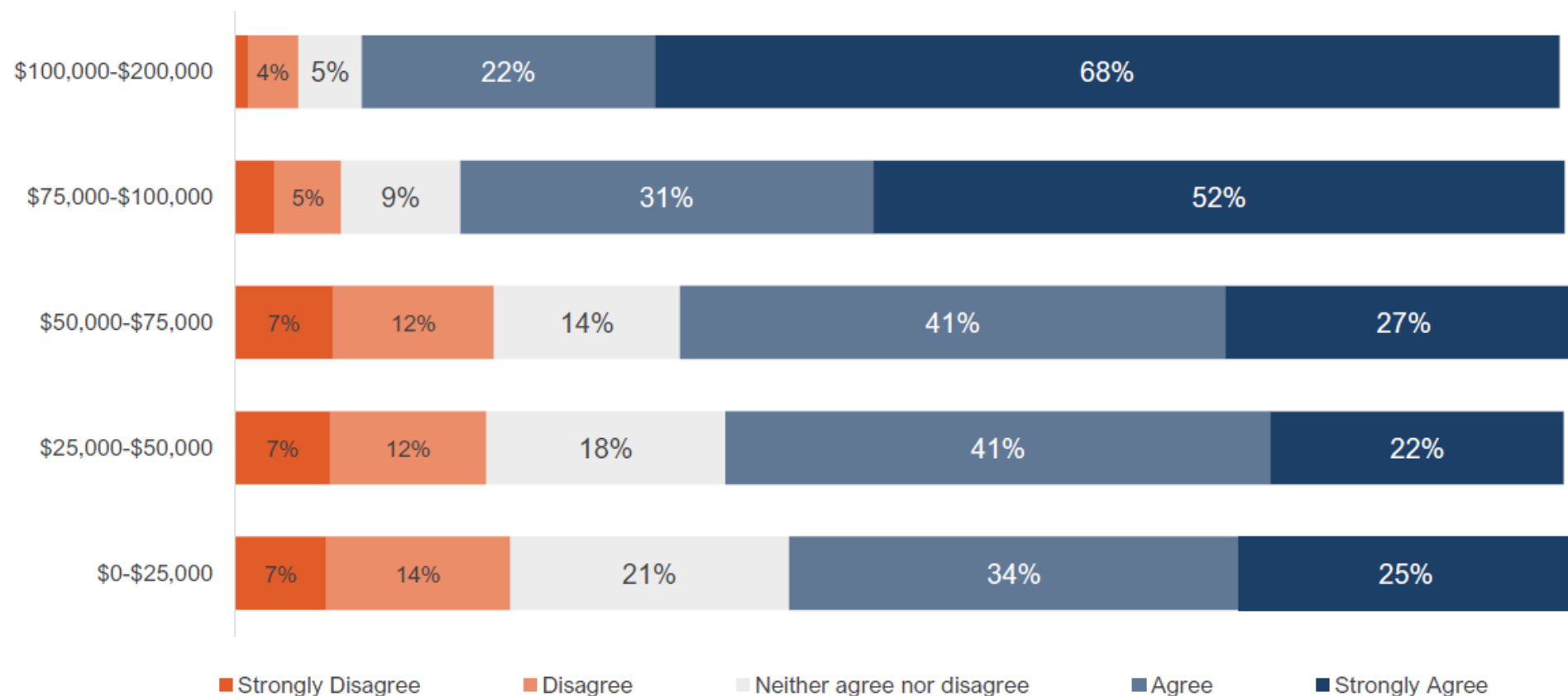
The results identifying negative associations can be grouped into four Core Barriers:

1. Past Trauma with the Program
2. Lack of Flexibility and/or Competence
3. Lack of Support for Successful Co-Parenting
4. Misconceptions about the Program



National Survey Results: A Quick Summary

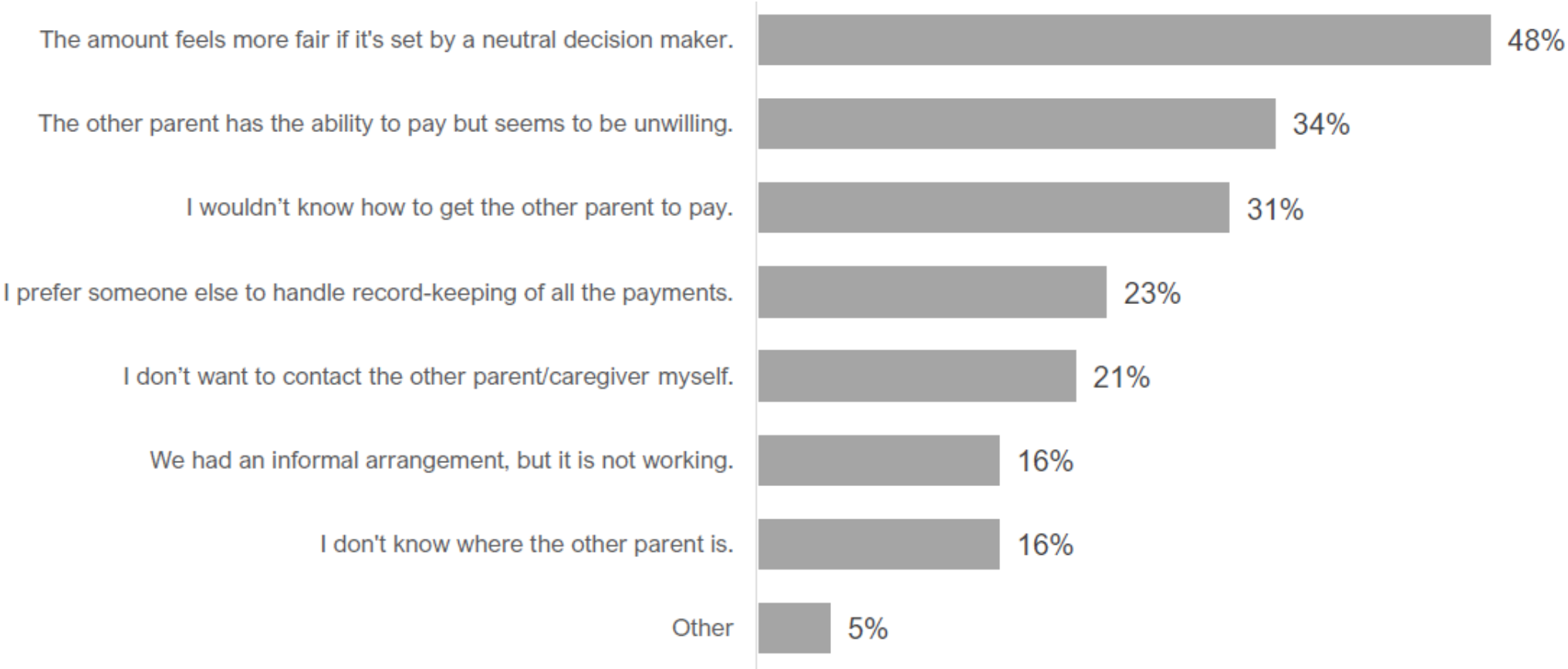
Whether or not services are perceived as “helpful” has everything to do with household income:





National Survey Results: A Quick Summary

WHAT DO PARENTS WANT?





WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR OUTREACH?



SITUATION ANALYSIS

We must overcome both lack of knowledge AND poor image:

- ★ People don't know the difference between an "order" and a "case"
- ★ People are uncomfortable asking for help due to stigma
- ★ Our enforcement history means we are NOT a trusted messenger

THE MOST VALUABLE INSIGHT:

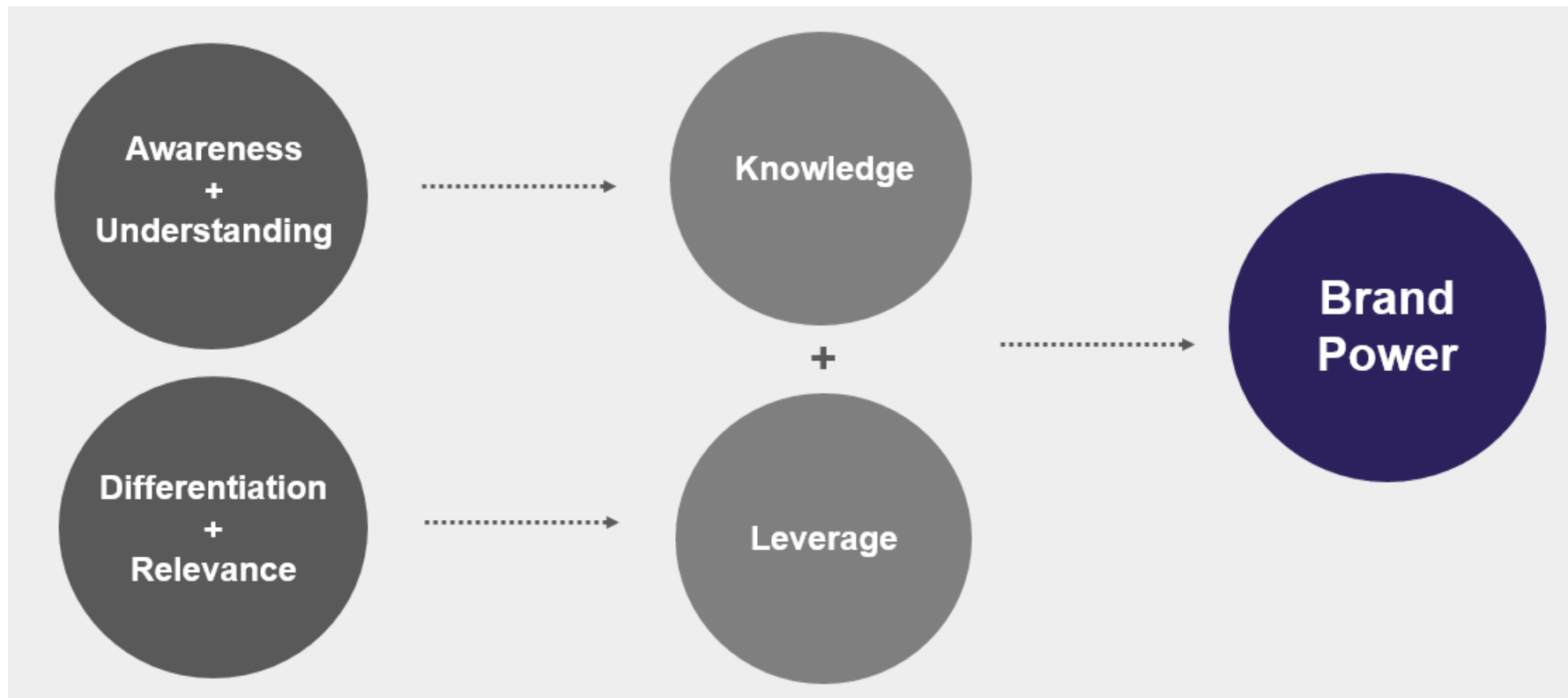
- ★ What motivates parents is not the same as what motivates us





HOW TO ADVERTISE OUR SERVICES

Start with the elements of brand power





HOW DO WE IMPROVE RELEVANCE?

Brand Equities

Deeply rooted positive associations with or expectations of the brand

Functional Equities

Perceptions of a brand's product or services

intellectual relevance

Emotional Equities

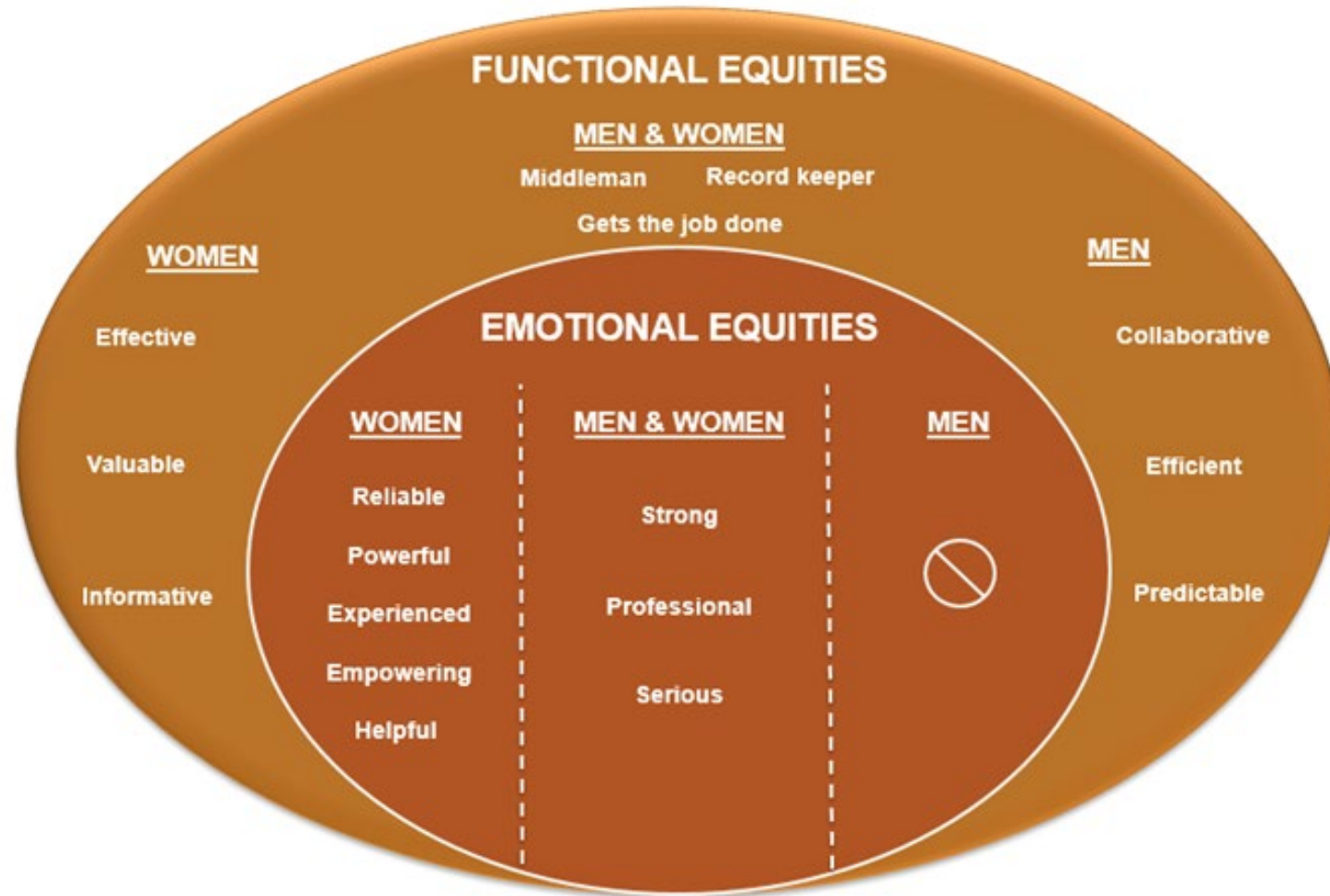
The positive feelings associated with the brand

emotional relevance

Brand Benefits



SO WHAT ARE THESE “BRAND EQUITIES?”





BRAND CONSTRAINTS

Our “brand constraints” are all about
PRODUCT and EXPERIENCE
- the “what” and “how”



- ✦ We are not a “product brand” but we need to improve the product
- ✦ We are not an “experience brand” but the negative experience deeply affects the brand





WE ARE A PROMISE BRAND – the “WHY”

*...but our “why” is not the same
as our customer’s*



AVOID “NANNY STATE” PITFALLS

We deal with adults who are navigating complicated family interactions, and our messaging needs to reflect real respect

1. Avoid Paternalism – We are not their mommy or daddy. They are grownups capable of making good choices on their own
2. Avoid Presumption – We have no idea about their hopes and dreams and can’t act like we know what’s best for their kids
3. Avoid Patronization – We must set aside personal bias about marriage, sex, and behavior to speak to them where they are



BUILDING TRUST

We must view our program through the customer's lens and acknowledge the reality of their experience:

- Be honest. We will still enforce
- Be genuinely fair. We should never take anybody's "side"
- "Empathic attunement" is the technique of beginning with statements that your audience already knows are true. As a result, your next statements are viewed as more credible

"Sick and tired of all the paperwork? Child Support just got easier."

"Want to have YOUR voice be heard? Contact us today."



AUTHENTICITY

Brand authenticity refers to the degree to which a brand's marketing and messaging align with the reality of its products, values, and actions.
It is **ESSENTIAL** for building trust

- Do your “selling points” reflect actual customer desires?
- Will you truly deliver in every transaction what your ads promise?
- **BE REAL.** Our process is slow, confusing, complicated, and often illogical. Owning that reality is the single most trust-building thing we can do

Transfer your loyalty from “the program” to your customers



Behavior Change Model - B.J. Fogg, Ph.D.

<https://coachingforleaders.com/podcast/change-your-behavior-bj-fogg/>

- Vague aspirational goals do not inspire changed behaviors
- Information about why changing is better for the customer does not inspire changed behaviors

DELIVERING POSITIVE EMOTIONAL BENEFITS CHANGES BEHAVIORS



MINNESOTA



Minnesota's Market Research

Know your audience:

- General public and potential participants - survey
- Participants
 - Interviews
 - Surveys – participant perception and texting
- Next steps
 - Actions and challenges to consider with national market research results



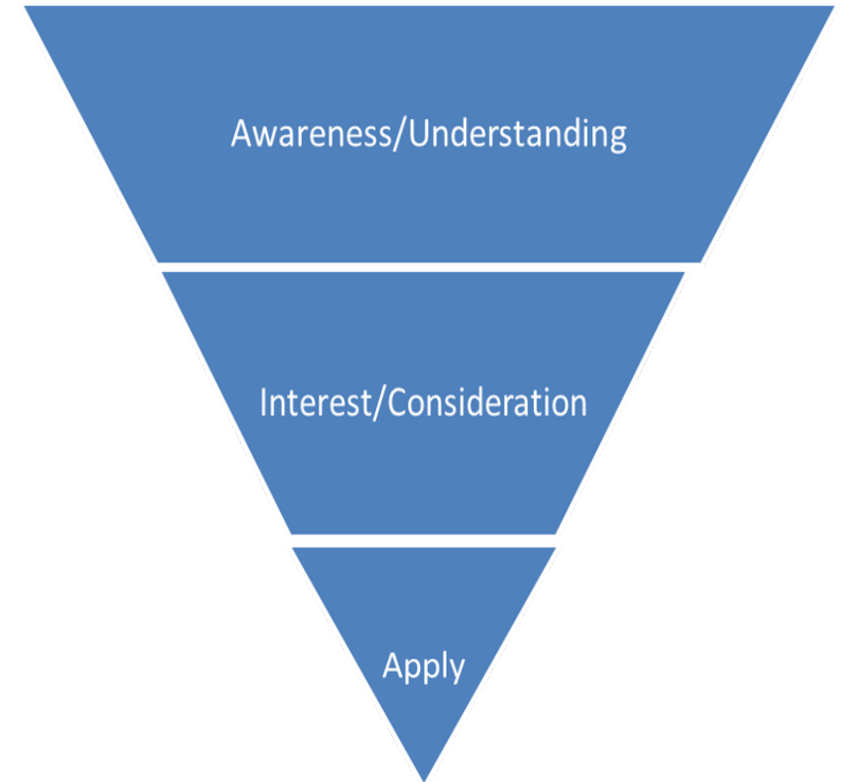


Why Conduct Market Research?

Market research helps us better understand our audiences' awareness, understanding, and interest in our services so we can respond more effectively.

Examples

- Retail – Target, Walmart
- Airlines – Delta, United
- Automobile – Toyota, Ford
- Public sector – DMV, Dept of Education (Child support is different)





General Public Survey Results

2018 Minnesota State Survey – with University of Minnesota Survey Center

Question 1: Are you aware that each Minnesota county has a government child support agency?

65% - Yes

34% - No

1% - Don't know

Question 2: As far as you know, are county government child support services available only to people who receive public assistance, or available to all county residents?

66% - All county residents

26% - Don't know

7% - Only people who receive public assistance



General Public Survey Results

Question 3a: Are you aware Minnesota's county government child support agencies establish paternity and court orders for child support?

60% - Yes

37% - No

3% - Don't know

Question 3b: Are you aware Minnesota's county government child support agencies collect and record the child support paid by one parent and send it to the other parent?

59% - Yes

38% - No

3% - Don't know

Question 3c: Are you aware Minnesota's county government child support agencies enforce court orders for child support?

74% - Yes

23% - No

3% - Don't know



General Public Survey Results

Question 4: If you were separated from the other parent of your child, how likely is it that you would apply for the county government child support services that I just asked about?

54% - Likely

46% - Unlikely

Question 5: Minnesota courts consider the number of children two parents have together when they determine the child support one parent pays to the other parent. They also consider income. As far as you know, is that the income of both parents, the income of the father, the mother, or the parent who makes the most money?

48% - Income of both

19% - Income of the parent who makes more

18% - Don't know

8% - Income of father

7% - Other



Participants - Interview and Survey Results

- Both parents appreciated having an independent entity automatically collect, record, and send payments
- Burdensome application process
- Lack of understanding of how courts determine child support amounts
- Most agreed child support is an important program to help meet the financial needs of their children while fewer said they trust the program to do what's in the best financial interest of their children
- Over half expressed interest in receiving email or text message communications

"When I go the [packet], I had to provide every document under the sun. All my utilities, all these paystubs."

"From the get-go, there needs to be a clearer process for explaining how they arrive at the figure that you pay."

"I understand the essence of child support and why it's needed...Although at times I feel the child support folks are more in-tune with the person receiving it versus the person that needs to pay it."



So What Did Minnesota Do About It?

- Created an electronic application:
 - From 16-page paper document to online
 - Mobile friendly
 - Equity statement and safety concerns
 - Average monthly non-public-assistance applications up 20%



DHS-1958-ENG 2-21

Application for child support services

1. Applicant information	1. Applicant information	
2. Applicant employment information	*Your name - Last	*First
3. Other parent information		
4. Other parent employment information	Middle	Maiden or other
5. Minor children		
6. Child(ren) health care coverage information	*Do you have a Social Security Number?	
7. Child care	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to respond	
	*Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)	Marital status
	Gender	





So What Did Minnesota Do About It?

- Created digital ads with messages and images of “stability” and “helpfulness”





So What Did Minnesota Do About It?

- Produced videos defining child support, empathizing with single parents, clarifying services, demonstrating how courts determine amounts, and showing how easy it is to “sign up”





Challenges and Issues To Consider

- Difficult to segment audiences and market services accordingly:
 - “Willing and able” vs. “Willing and unable”
 - **“Unwilling and able”** vs. “Unwilling and unable”
 - Not all services are because the paying parent is “unwilling”
- Raise awareness and understanding of services people want:
 - Calculating support - establishing orders
 - Taking payments directly from paycheck or other income
 - Tracking payments
- Culture shift:
 - From threats to engagement
 - Change tone of letters and documents
 - Reframe services when appropriate – e.g. court orders and income withholding



Challenges and Issues To Consider

- “Meet people where they are”
 - E-App (convenience and safety concerns)
 - Texting
- Tell more stories of parent experiences
 - Both parent’s perspectives
- Conduct market research regularly
 - Participants and non-participants



MICHIGAN



Digital Marketing Demonstration Project

September 2018-September 2021



Objectives:

- Increase online child support applications
- Test three messaging strategies for effectiveness

Activities:

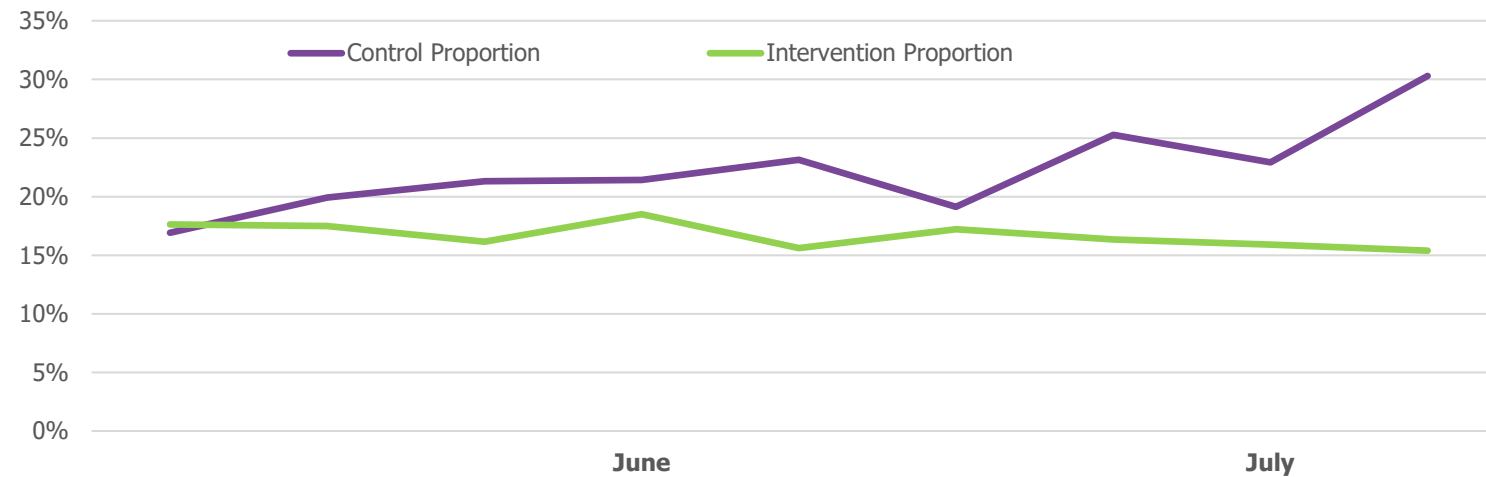
1. Mobile Ads
2. Facebook Ads
3. Google Paid Search



Digital Marketing Demonstration Project

Internal data on new applications

did not see an increase





Digital Marketing Demonstration Project

Messaging - No clear winner

CTR on mobile ads





Digital Marketing Demonstration Project

Channels

- Mobile ads
 - Lots of impressions but no conversions
- Facebook ads
 - Fewer impressions but more likely to continue to portal or download information
- Paid search
 - Lowest impressions but highest click-through rate



What did we learn?





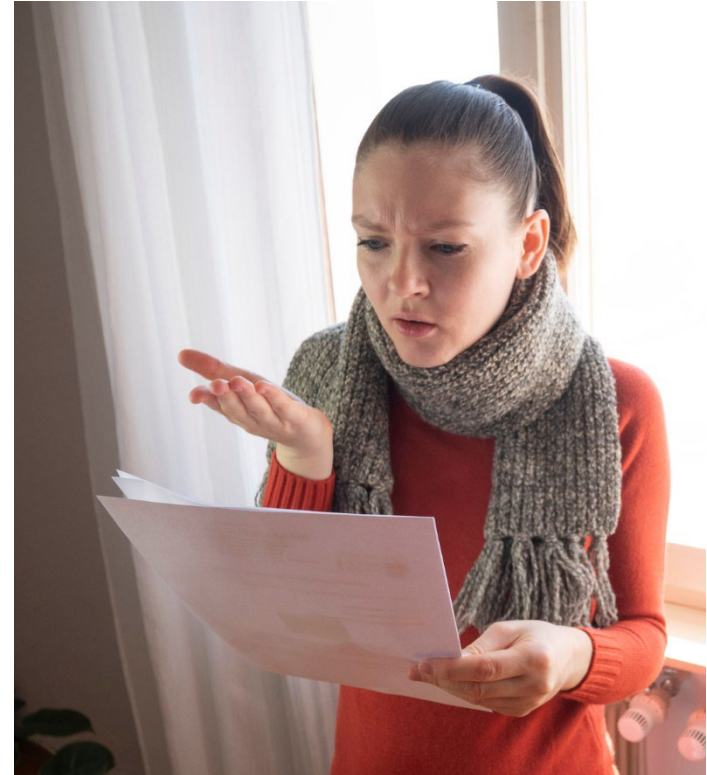
Main Action Items From Research

People value our services but not always how we deliver them

“The majority associate child support programs with positive attributes - important, necessary and helpful. Still,

40% describe the program as difficult and

31% as unfair and confusing.”





Main Action Items From Research

We need to listen more

How Michigan is learning and changing:

- Community Advisory Council
- Listening Sessions
- Navigator program
 - Recommendation from the Advisory Council and a grant-funded pilot soon
- New communication channels like text, chat, email
 - “No wrong door.” Soft launch this fall





Main Action Items From Research

But even if our service delivery improves, past experiences exist. Myth and word of mouth fill the void

How do we address that?

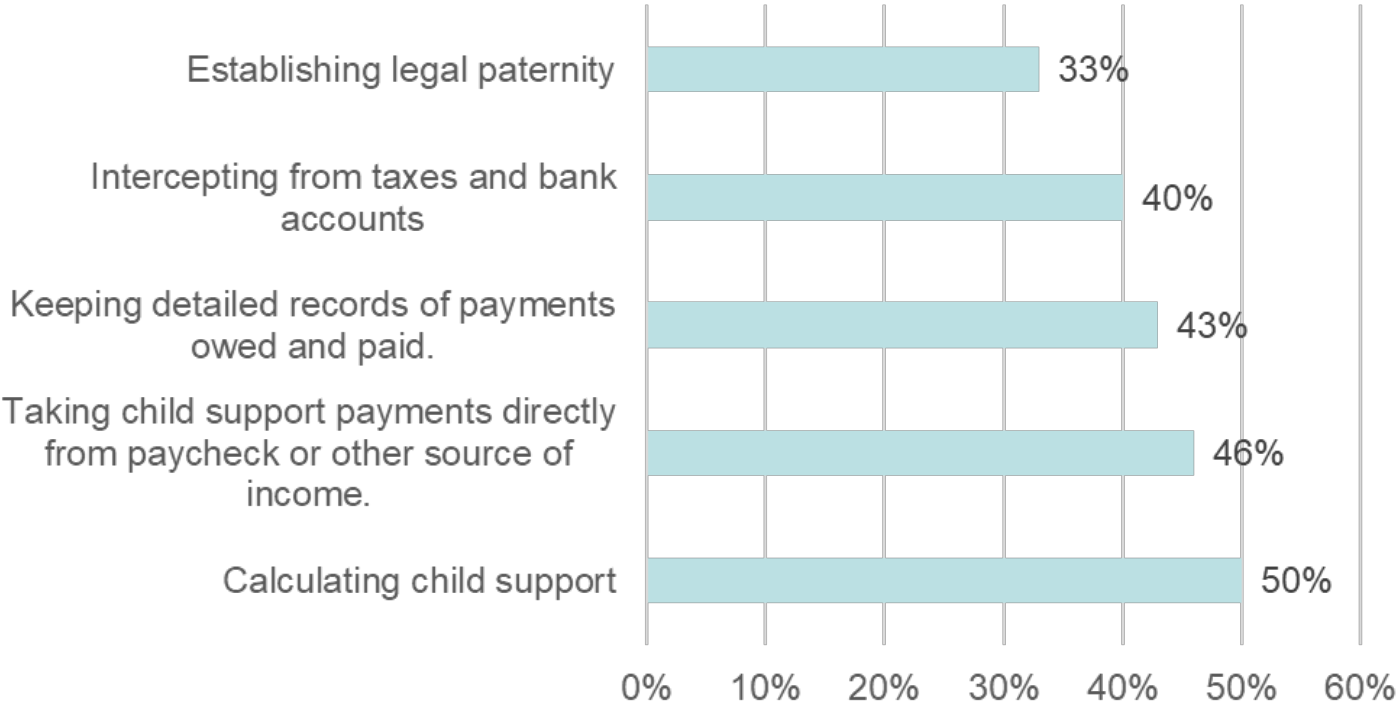
- Use the research to craft our messaging
- Acknowledge confusion or complexity
- Use testimonials/stories
- Share service improvements





What services are most valued?

Top five:





Talk about the “why”

Appeal to the parents that have an informal arrangement with both emotion and practicality

- Things change
- It is good to have an impartial intermediary
- You will need help if the payer stops paying



Michigan next steps:

We'll be working with our marketing partner to create a media campaign based on the research

- YouTube ads
- Streaming video ads
- Streaming audio ads
- Paid search

Stay tuned...



QUESTIONS?



Contact Information:

Nicole Darracq
Bruce Erickson
Amy Price

nicole.darracq@dcss.ca.gov
bruce.t.erickson@state.mn.us
pricea1@michigan.gov