

# Marketing and Recreational Fishing Promotion

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*Abstract:* This paper has 3 major sections. The first is an overview of marketing. The second section focuses on some key finding on fishing participation and anglers' attitudes toward fishing, while the third section presents the implications of this research to marketing and promoting fishing. Marketing is a deliberate and orderly step-by-step process that begins with people (markets) and ends with products, services, programs, and strategies. Several major variables related to fishing participation are explored, including lack of time and competing interests, angler demographics, single-parent households and participation by gender. The paper concludes with specific recommendations to promote fishing and increase fishing participation.

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## Marketing Overview

One of the best lessons on marketing comes from a source that may surprise some of you: from the book *Walden*, written by Henry David Thoreau. In *Walden*, Thoreau describes a man who went to sell baskets to his well-to-do neighbor. Having seen the neighbor so well off by owning his own business, the man said to himself: "I will go into business; I will weave baskets; it is a thing which I can do." The man then went to the well-to-do neighbor and said, "Do you wish to buy any baskets?" "No, we don't want any" came the reply. "What!" exclaimed the man as he left, "do you mean to starve us?" Thoreau continues: "Thinking that when he had made baskets he would have done his part, it would be the neighbor's turn to buy them." Thoreau concludes: "the man had not discovered that it was necessary to make a product worth the neighbors' while to buy, or to make something else which would be worth his while to buy."

Thoreau was giving us an important lesson in marketing. The lesson is that it is necessary to make a product or offer a service worth another person's while to buy. Here is the difference: there are 2 ways a fishing business or governmental organization can develop a product, a program, or a service. The first is to develop them, and then look, and hope, people will buy the product or use the service. The second approach is to find out what different user groups want and need and then develop programs, products, and services based on those needs. The first is a selling approach while the second is a marketing approach. A marketing approach is infinitely more

effective than a selling approach and will ultimately save you time and money as well. And it is often the difference between success and failure.

Fishing tackle manufacturers and retailers interested in selling more tackle and keeping their businesses successful in a changing world, as well as fish and wildlife agencies and organizations interested in promoting fishing are quickly learning that it is wise to use a marketing approach to develop products and programs with Thoreau's philosophy in mind. This is because, in the end, it is the angler who decides what fishing pole or lure she will buy; it is the angler who decides who he will buy his tackle from, and it is the consumer who decides whether they will take the kids fishing on Saturday morning instead of to the video arcade.

If our programs, products, and services are not developed with the anglers' needs in mind, our products will be neglected by our customers and constituents, product and program support will decline, and we will soon sound like the man in Thoreau's story: "Do you mean to starve us?"

The term "marketing" is certainly one of the most misused and most misunderstood terms in the English language. Often equated to "hard selling," "cheap selling," "trickery," or promotion, some fishing retailers and manufacturers, as well as many fish and wildlife agencies and organizations shy away from learning what marketing really is and how utilizing a marketing approach can contribute to the health of their business or help them achieve their sport fishing promotion goals.

Marketing is not hard selling, as detractors think. It is not even selling. In fact it is the very opposite of selling. As marketing expert Phil Kotler (1980) notes, selling focuses on the needs and desires of the seller (us). Marketing, on the other hand, focuses on the needs and desires of the customer of constituent (them). As business manager Peter Drucker observes, "Marketing is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view" (Kotler 1980). And whether fishing tackle retailers, manufacturers and fish and wildlife agencies are attempting to increase their customer base, develop new product lines, enhance angler satisfaction, minimize angler conflicts, or increase the number of anglers, a marketing approach will make efforts toward these ends more effective.

Marketing is a deliberate and orderly step by step process that begins with people (markets) and ends with products, services, programs and strategies. Note that this is the opposite of what we are commonly guilty of—starting with a product or service and then looking for someone to buy or use them. Too many times we identify a problem and immediately identify a solution. But how do we know we are choosing the right solution? For every problem, there are hundreds of potential solutions. How do we choose the right one? The marketing process will help you make the right decisions because it will take you through a series of smaller decisions and information gathering to help you reach the bigger decisions. By following a marketing approach, the "what to do" part will fall out of the process. We don't have to "think up" solutions or problems. In other words, a marketing approach takes out the guesswork. It leads us to the best decision or the development of the most appropriate product or service.

Successful marketing begins with the development of a quality marketing plan. A marketing plan spells out the goals, strategies, and tactics that will be used to assist

you in reaching your objectives. The marketing process follows the standard format for good planning. It asks: 1. Where are we now? (This is a situation assessment), 2. Where do we want to be? (This means developing precise objectives), 3. How will we get there? (marketing strategies) and 4. Did we get there? (evaluation). Let us take a look at each.

## Situation Assessment

A situation assessment makes us take a careful look at where we are now. Here are the elements of the situation assessment:

*Mission Statement.*—Every agency and organization should have a mission statement. If it does not, it should. Mission statements let people know why your organization exists and what you are trying to achieve. Everyone in the organization should be familiar with the mission statement and it should be posted throughout the organization's building(s). Everything that follows in the marketing plan is based directly on the mission statement of the organization.

*Goals.*—Goals define the management philosophies within which objectives are pursued. Goals are broad and lofty statements about the desired program outcome. For example, the goal of an organization that wants to increase the number of anglers might be to "Increase the number of anglers nationwide." Don't worry about the specifics, yet. Specifics come in the objective-setting portion of the marketing plan. A goal of a fishing tackle manufacturer might be to "To increase the sales of product line XYZ." The important point is to write down your goals. Committing your goals to writing becomes more and more important as you get further and further into the marketing plan.

*Business Identification.*—What business are you in? It seems like such a basic question that it often gets overlooked. In the past, organizations that did not fully understand the business they were in were immediately out-competed by other businesses as the world changed around them. Theodore Levitt (1965), in a landmark article in *Harvard Business Review* ("Marketing Myopia") pointed out that market definitions of a business are superior to product definitions of a business. He stated that products and technologies are transient, while basic market needs generally endure forever (Kotler 1980). This is an incredibly important point. Define your business based on the market need, and not on the product that serves that need. Do not get hung up on products. Instead, focus on the market need. Think about the music business. People always have, and probably always will, love to listen to music. The desire to listen to music is a market need. A product is how that market need is filled, such as a record or a CD. Several years ago, record companies that focused in solely on how to make a better record were immediately out-competed by companies that developed compact discs. Are you focusing in on your records (products) or people's desire to listen to music (market need)? Focus on market needs, not on products.

*Identify Publics.*—There is no such thing as a general public. Research indicates that how people relate to fish and fishing is affected by a variety of factors—their age, race, gender, income, level of education, and a variety of other factors. In fact, when

you get right down to it, there is no such thing as a general angler. There are many distinct types of anglers: anglers who fish for the challenge, for relaxation, to be with friends and family, to catch fresh fish, or to catch large fish. There are senior citizens and youth. There are fly fishermen and bait fishermen. Research and trend data indicate that distinct groups of recreationists exist within the generic category of “angler.” They have different motivations for participating, and seek different experiences and rewards. In this part of the marketing plan, list out all of your publics.

*Choose Publics.*—A commonly heard phrase in marketing is that “you can’t be things to all people.” Marketing means making choices. At this juncture, you decide what groups (what publics) you will focus on. Once you decide on a public, it becomes a market. This is, of course, easier said than done. Here is why. In most cases, it is fairly easy to choose a market, until one realizes all of the other potential markets that are getting left behind. But we cannot be all things to all people, so we must choose our markets. And here is why the marketing process is so powerful. All the decisions that follow in your marketing plan are based on your selection of a market. *Let us take efforts to promote fishing. It is clear that efforts to promote fishing to America’s youth are different than efforts to promote fishing to senior citizens.*

*Current Conditions.*—Identifying current conditions gives you a good idea of where you are now, and allows you to get a handle on what your resources are and are not. The trend identification portion of your marketing plan allows you to become proactive rather than reactive. You assess current conditions by stating opportunities and threats; your organizations strengths and weaknesses and identifying trends as they relate to your business. For example, we know that last decade there was an increase in the percentage of women who fish. Is this something that might affect your fishing business?

## Setting Objectives

Now that you have identified where you are, where do you want to be? Objectives are directed toward the accomplishment of goals and are specific and measurable statements of what, when and how much will be achieved. Note where objective setting comes in during the marketing process—at the end of the situation assessment. This is because realistic objectives cannot be set until you have a thorough understanding of where you are. But since you have assessed your current conditions through the identification of opportunities and threats, your organization’s strengths and weaknesses, and trends, you are now in the position to set intelligent and realistic objectives. This portion of the marketing process is one of the most important dialogues an organization can engage in. Many programs and initiatives fail from the start because objectives are not agreed upon by those involved nor written down. Take a program that wants to increase the number of anglers. Though we all agree that this is an important goal, we all may have different concepts of what the objective of this really means. Does it mean we are going to recruit people who have never fished before or are we going to get back the people who dropped out? Does it mean we are going to start by retaining the number of anglers we have? All of these could

be objectives. But we only have limited resources, so we must choose the best strategy. By writing objectives down, one is forced to talk these issues out before the implementation phase, not after when everyone is going in a million different directions. Remember what the scarecrow said in the Wizard of Oz: "A point in every direction is no point at all." Taking the time to assess your own situation is quite valuable. After all, if you do not know where you are or where you want to be, how are you going to get there?

## Marketing Strategy

Now you know where you are and where you want to be. Now, how will you get there? The "marketing strategy" section helps you get there.

*Market Segmentation.*—First segment your market. You have already chosen your markets; this section of the marketing plan forces you to identify what you know about your market, exactly. Who are they? What are they demographics? What do they want, and what do they need? What are their attitudes and opinions about the product of program? Social science or market research is the key to better understanding these markets. There are a number of ways you can learn more about these markets, including focus group research and opinion and attitude surveys.

Once a market has been identified, a program, product, or service is tailored to the specific market. Marketing mix is the set of controllable variables that you can use to influence your target market. You have now defined exactly what you want to do and who you want to do it with. This is done through the manipulation of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion.

*Product.*—Product is the most important element in this mix. A product or service is what the business or agency offers the market—from lures to poles to fishing opportunities to information on fishing and habitats. It is important to recognize that we have many product lines. Your product line for avid anglers is different than your products for casual anglers. Fishing with a bobber in a city park is a completely different product than fishing with a fly rod on a remote wilderness stream. These are different product lines and should be managed as such. The key to success is matching your product to your market. It is also important to remember the difference between a product's features and benefits. A feature is the makeup of the product or service; a benefit is what the customer receives. Focus on the benefits of the product, not the features; sell the sizzle, not the steak. Most people do not care about drills. They care about the hole it makes. Figure out the most important benefit the product has to the market and you will be on the road to success with that product or program.

*Price.*—Price is another important factor in the marketing mix. Price can be manipulated in a variety of ways. The most obvious is the actual cost. What does your lure cost in relation to your competitors? Does it cost the same to fish on a lake or stream during the week as on the weekend? Maybe it should not. Price is an excellent way to tailor the overall product to a market and achieve an organization's objective. If we have a crowded lake on weekends and it is uncrowded during the week, price could be used to better balance crowding. This is an important point; marketing does

not always have to just mean selling more and more. Sometimes the marketing mix can be used to better balance demand. If you run a bait shop and everyone comes in on Saturday morning to buy bait, and the lines are long and you can't give them the service you want, consider giving discounts on Friday evening to better balance demand and your capacity to handle it by using "price" to meet your goal of selling bait while providing excellent customer service. Using price to manipulate demand is used by airlines, as we all know. Stay over on a Saturday night and you get a cheaper ticket. Why? Because most travel is business and peak business travel is between Monday and Friday. To offset this, airlines offer cheaper tickets with a Saturday night stay thereby promoting Saturday and Sunday travel. There are many other ways price can be manipulated. For example, can a product be purchased with a credit card or only with cash? Accepting or not accepting credit cards is another important manipulation of price variables. There are many others to consider as well, such as sales, discounts, and lay-a-ways.

*Place.*—Place refers to the physical location where the product or service is offered. Where is your product sold? Does it match your target market? Does this affect demand and sales? Are fishing areas located near large urban centers or are they located far from an individual's residence? Hours of operation is a "place" variable. For example, are places where tackle and licenses sold open only from 9 to 5? If they are, what market are they catering to? Senior citizens? People who work at night? A conscious decision regarding these variables are crucial to a product's or program's success.

*Promotion.*—The fourth "P," promotion, is the final aspect of the marketing mix. The promotion mix includes magazines, newspapers, brochures, direct contacts, and television coverage. Promotion options are nearly limitless and it is vital to keep in mind the target market. At this point in the marketing process, you know your market, what they want, and who they are. You have developed a product or program that precisely fits their needs and are focusing on the benefits of your product or program to that market. Because of this, you can more effectively select the medium most likely to reach your target market. Ads targeted for children are rarely seen on CNN.

When developing promotional materials, keep in mind the difference between the goals of promotion and the tools of promotion. Just because you develop a full-color advertisement or radio ad does not mean it has increased knowledge levels, changed attitudes, or increased participation in fishing. Real success should be measured in quantified attitude changes, total sales, increased awareness and knowledge levels and real increases in fishing participation. The objective is not to develop advertisements or brochures.

By developing a marketing plan, an amazing thing happens. Products and strategies; the "what should we do" part, emerges naturally from the process. This is because you have made important decisions during the process, such as what your goals and objectives are, and who your target markets include. By going through the process in an orderly step-by-step process, you have moved in the direction of making good decisions and agreeing on those decisions with your colleagues. You have thought out what it is you want to do and committed that to writing. Yes, developing a marketing plan takes a little bit of time, but it is well worth it. You do not have to make a big deal

out of it, but think through the marketing process as it relates to your own situation. Think about the time you spend making these decisions in the same manner financial planners talk about the cost of investing: "It's not what it costs; it's what it pays."

## Evaluation

As fundamental and basic as evaluation is, it is often overlooked or not given the importance it deserves. Evaluation, however, is one of the most important components of the marketing process because it will answer the fundamental question, "Did we get there?" Evaluation should be based on the goals and objectives initially set. You carefully thought about your objectives. Did you get there? Another important aspect of evaluation is how it is perceived by organization personnel. Evaluation should not be seen as threatening, and should not focus solely on whether it was a "success" or "failure," but how our efforts can be made better in order not to waste scarce resources. The marketing process is continuous; learn from your experience.

Some efforts will not work the first time around. Think of these the same way the best run companies in America think about them, as described in the book, *In Search of Excellence* (Peters and Waterman 1982). "A special attribute of the success-oriented, positive and innovative environment is a substantial tolerance for failure . . . You need the ability to fail. You cannot innovate unless you are willing to accept mistakes. Tolerance for failure is a very specific part of the excellent company culture—and that lesson comes directly from the top. [Companies] have to make lots of tries and consequently suffer some failures or the organization won't learn."

## Key Fishing Research Findings

Next, let us take a look at some important research findings regarding fishing. First, certain broad demographic trends are impacting the total number of people who fish. Some socio-demographic groups are more likely to fish than others. When there are fewer of these individuals within a population, a decline will occur.

Although fishing is declining, it appears the larger numbers mask a very important interaction by gender. Fishing participation by gender is an important variable to be aware of. In our last multiple regression analysis of National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation data, participation among American males was stable to decline while participation among American females was increasing (Duda et al. 1995).

There are 3 major demographic variables responsible for fewer male anglers: increasing age, fewer males growing up in rural areas, and a decreasing proportion of white males as a percentage of the population. In general, younger individuals are more likely to fish than older individuals, and America's population is aging. Males growing up in rural areas are more likely to fish than individuals growing up in urban areas, and there less men growing up in rural areas. Finally, white males are more likely to fish than non-white males and the proportion of white males as a percentage of the population is decreasing (Duda et al. 1995).

Among females, age is an important factor negatively impacting fishing participation. Older females are less likely to fish than younger females. Education is an important variable for women. Less educated women are more likely to fish than more educated women, and the proportion of educated women is increasing. Finally, a female living in an urban environment is less likely to fish than a female living in a rural environment—and more females are now living in urban environments (Duda et al. 1995).

Another factor that we have identified over the years as having a negative impact on fishing participation is a more transient society. Simply put, someone who has lived in the same state for their entire life is much more likely to fish than someone who has just moved to that state. In Florida, people who have lived in Florida all of their lives were much more likely to fish than new residents. There are 2 reasons for this. First, fishing is an activity that takes place with family and friends. If any active angler in one state moves to another state he is less likely to fish because he no longer has someone to fish with. An American Sportfishing Association survey question (Harrington Market Res. 1992) a few years ago asked ex-anglers nationwide: “What would it take to get you back fishing?” About 33% of ex-anglers said someone to go with, 27% said more time, 10% said better accessibility, 6% said better health, 5% said better weather, 5% said if they caught more fish and 3% said if they had a cheaper license, and the rest did not know or had other answers. Another reason is the lack of information on where to go. People moving to a new area often do not have the necessary social support to find out where and when to go fishing. We have also seen this in other states (Duda 1993).

Let us talk for a minute about single-parent households. You have seen the figures—single-parent households have increased at dramatic rates. In 1970, 11% of all U.S. households with children were single-parent households. By 1995, 26% of all households with children were single-parent households (Bur. Census, pers. commun. 1997). Couple these demographic changes with research that indicates the extreme importance of the family in teaching children how to fish, especially with research showing that most anglers were introduced to fishing by their father, and it is not hard to come to the conclusion that single-female headed households are a big cause for the decline in fishing participation. There is only one problem. It is not true. It is an assumption, and to this point research indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between fishing participation among those who grew up in a single-parent household and fishing participation among those who grew up in a dual-parent household.

In a major nationwide survey on American’s fishing participation, we asked the American public questions about their fishing participation—if they had ever fished, if they have been fishing in the past 2 years, how often they fish, etc. We also asked these scientifically-selected Americans what kind of household they grew up in—a single-parent household, a household with a mother and a father, or if they were raised by someone other than a parent. From these data we were able to compare fishing participation among individuals who grew up in a single-parent household and those that were raised in a dual-parent household. Statistical analysis showed there was no difference in fishing participation among these 2 groups (Duda et al. 1995).



The single-parent household issue is interesting because it makes certain assumptions. 1) The first assumption is that women do not take their kids fishing. But research shows otherwise. Females do take their children fishing. Furthermore, more and more women are fishing these days, not less. While fishing participation among the U.S. male population has remained stable over past decade, participation in fishing among the female population has increased. 2) The second assumption is that the increase in single-parent households is occurring at equal rates across demographic groups. However, U.S. Bureau of the Census unpublished data shows that children growing up in the city are more likely to grow up in a single-parent household than those growing up in suburban or rural areas. For example, in the city in 1995, 39% of all households with children were single-parent households. But in the more rural areas, 23% of all households with children were single-parent households. Couple this with the fact that rural residents are much more likely to fish than people from large cities and it can be seen that the increase in single-parent households is occurring among a segment of the population that is much less likely to fish anyway. 3) The third assumption is that children in single-parent female headed households never see their dad and lack a social support system to take them fishing. Of course, there are those children that are unfortunate never to see their father. But in many cases, although dad may not live in the same house, he certainly is not out of the picture. In many divorced households, dad picks up the kids on Saturday morning and goes off to the soccer field or the lake to fish. And finally, in other female-headed households, grandfathers, uncles, and neighbors often step into the role of taking the kids fishing.

It is true that certain broad demographic changes are impacting fishing participation. But at this point in time, research has not shown that single-parent households is one of them.

Fishing satisfaction is high among U.S. anglers. Almost all active anglers are either very or somewhat satisfied with their fishing experiences (Duda et al. 1995). Anglers are satisfied with their state fish and wildlife agency's efforts to provide fishing opportunities (Duda et al. 1995).

Anglers fish for a variety of reasons. About 33% fish primarily for relaxation, 25% to be with friends and family, 18% for the sport, 13% to catch free fish, 7% to be close to nature and 3% to catch large fish (Duda et al. 1995). Consider these different market segments. For many anglers, fishing motivations change throughout their career.

Neither the number of fish caught nor the size of fish caught are significant factors for a majority of anglers in fishing satisfaction.

The 3 issues that take away most from fishing satisfaction among active anglers are pollution or litter, work obligations, and interference from people doing other recreational activities where they fish (Duda et al. 1995).

The top 5 issues that strongly influenced ex-anglers not to fish were among free time, lost interest, family obligations, and not having anyone to go with (Duda et al. 1995).

Literally every survey (and there have been dozens) that has ever been conducted with ex-anglers has asked the question, "Why did you stop fishing?" The

major response is, "Not enough time." In most surveys up to three-quarters of the ex-anglers respond this way. How do we interpret the "not enough time" answer? For starters, it is important to note what they are not saying. Seventy-five percent of ex-anglers are not saying, "There's not enough trophy fish." Seventy-five percent of ex-anglers are not saying, "licenses are too expensive." Seventy-five percent of anglers are not saying "Equipment is too expensive." Seventy-five percent are saying, "I don't have enough time."

The time issue is related to competing interests. There are still 24 hours in a day, and people still have some free time, even if it is less than what they had 20 years ago. Although we are not detecting any inherent negatives to fishing, other recreational interests are out-competing fishing because many are not as time intensive, are easier to do, or they are at the "top of the mind."

There are many things competing for a person's time. Since there are no inherent negatives to fishing, promotion becomes of utmost importance. Fishing, and the benefits of fishing, need to be kept in the public eye.

### **Implications to Marketing and Promoting Fishing**

Finally, what does all this mean? Let us take a brief look at the implications of research to marketing and promoting recreational fishing.

It is clear there are no simple solutions to the complex issues of declining fishing participation. We are only beginning to understand the complex reasons for a fluctuating fishing population.

However, given the economic, conservation, and familial justifications for enhancing fishing participation, there are some things that need to happen.

Industry, private conservation organizations and state fish and wildlife agencies must work in tandem to address the decline in fishing participation. Cooperation among the groups is essential to reach the common goal of increasing angler recruitment and retention.

Promotional plans must be developed based on a solid foundation of facts. We would never manage a fisheries resource without the management plan based on a solid foundation of biological research. Neither should our efforts to enhance fishing participation be based on conjecture and speculation. There are too many programs and too much money spent on programs that are based on speculation. In your own efforts, consider if your plans are based on a solid foundation of fact and not on speculation. This attitude will save you thousands of dollars in the end and will mean the difference between successful and unsuccessful promotion efforts.

We must manage for a fishing experience that includes familiar and naturalistic qualities. Most people fish to relax, to enjoy the outdoors and to be with friends and family.

We must put the "big fish" syndrome into perspective. Only 3% of anglers nationwide fish for the primary purpose of catching big fish (Duda et al. 1995). Advertising that promotes catching big fish misses the mark for most anglers. Advertisements that promote family, friends, relaxation, and being in the out-of-doors will appeal to more anglers and potential anglers.

Increases in license fees must be coordinated with outreach programs explaining why the money is needed and how the additional money is spent. Most anglers do not know that license fees help support their state fish and wildlife agency. Anglers must be made aware that license fees help agencies provide additional fishing opportunities. Many anglers think that license fees simply go into general state funds.

We must sell licenses that consider the family. Family fishing licenses should be seriously considered. People fish with their families and their friends, not by themselves. Why should not the cost of licenses take into account these social units?

We must meet the challenge of user conflicts on the water, and we must confront this issue immediately. Jet skis, additional boats, and water skiing will continue to drive anglers away from certain waters. Relaxation is an important aspect of the fishing experience. If a jet skier is constantly running back and forth near someone who is trying to get a little peace and quiet, something is going to give. Not dealing with the jet ski issue until it affects even more anglers is a serious mistake.

Programs designed to interest children in fishing should include catching fish, or at least have an extremely high chance of catching fish. Children need to catch fish at first to get them "hooked." Once the interest is there, interest in other aspects of the fishing experience develop.

It is clear that individuals who have fished for a long time and those that belong to sportsmen's clubs have different preferences than more general, less avid anglers. More advanced anglers and members of sportsmen's clubs tend to be more involved in setting fisheries policy and voicing their opinions. It is important to keep guard of only hearing the more advanced, avid anglers opinions on angling preferences.

Fishing in non-polluted waters is extremely important to all anglers. Continued efforts at communicating to the fishing public on the cleanliness of certain bodies of waters (and the pollution of others) as well as the health risks of eating fish from certain bodies of water is essential.

The social aspects of fishing are also important when developing programs to bring ex-anglers back into the fishing ranks. "Someone to go fishing with" is the most important aspect of what an ex-angler needs to begin fishing again (not more fish or bigger fish). Mentor programs, programs by rod and gun clubs to take ex-anglers fishing, and developing "buddy" programs could go a long way to bringing back ex-anglers. Mentor programs should be considered carefully in light of child safety and comfort. For children, mentors need to be someone known and trusted by parents. Mentor programs for children that consist of strangers will fail.

We must experiment and see what works and what does not work in retaining and recruiting anglers. Market research can only go so far, and at some point we must begin to see what happens as we institute programs and promotional efforts to retain and recruit anglers. We must collectively share our knowledge with each other and learn from each other in some type of systematic way.

We must spend the necessary time and resources to promote fishing to the American public. Promotional efforts must be developed based upon a solid foundation of market research. Many Americans' best childhood memories involve fishing.

Fishing with dad. Fishing with Uncle Buck. Fishing is the embodiment of family values. The social aspects of fishing, especially the bonding of children with parents or grandparents, are important to angling satisfaction. It is not a cliché, but fishing brings families together. Fishing offers quality time with youngsters and other loved ones far away from a ringing phone, a blaring TV and hypnotic computer games. Effective promotional messages must include these familial benefits, as well as the relaxation aspect and naturalistic values of fishing.

It will not be easy to turn the tide, but we should start in a systematic way as soon as possible.

The future of fishing depends on it.

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