

Saving Water Partnership – Market Research Nov-Dec '02

Background

The Saving Water Partnership conducted a telephone survey and two focus groups in the Winter of 2002 to understand homeowners' awareness of and attitudes toward replacement of toilet flappers. The Partnership also wanted to understand what it would take to get homeowners to test for leaks, and replace worn and leaking toilet flappers.

This baseline data will be used for planning programs and educational initiatives designed to increase the replacement of toilet flappers by homeowners in the City of Seattle and in purveyor areas of King and Snohomish Counties.

More specifically, the survey and focus groups were designed to explore and understand the following issues:

- Current knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding toilet leaks
- Barriers to toilet repair
- Toilet leak diagnosis and parts purchasing attitudes and behaviors
- Motivators to repair toilets
- Attitudes toward three messages regarding testing for leaks and toilet repair
- The experience of replacing a toilet flapper

Key Findings from Telephone Survey (n=401)

- Most have had the problem of a "running toilet"
- Most have replaced or repaired some parts in the tank (67%)
- Almost a quarter report replacing the flapper (23%)
- The major motivator is the "noise" (38%) or "could see it was leaking" (41%)
- 43 percent report replacing the flapper in the last two years
- 76 percent report being aware that the flapper wears out and needs to be replaced.
- More than half (57%) report that they are "definitely willing" to do repairs or replacements in the toilet tank.

Key Findings from Focus Groups (2 groups)

- Use the term "running"
- Most have a rudimentary understanding of toilet parts

- If it's not making noise they assume it's working
- Not confident in packaged instructions
- Need guidance on selecting replacement flapper (bring old part)
- No concept of how much water can be wasted by a leak
- Won't go out of their way for dye tabs even if free
- The problem has to have an impact. Otherwise it is "not broke"
- Message can't focus on "if you have a leak"
- Message should indicate, what, why and how
- Tank is NOT considered "Yucky"
- Women will do it as will men