

SUMMARY

The market research sought to **identify consumer characteristics within the target market of environmentally conscious individuals aged 25-50 residing in Santa Barbara, Montecito, and Hope Ranch.**

The research aimed to uncover the target market's incentives and pain points when purchasing compost, as well as gain insight into how consumers interacted with small, sustainable businesses. Furthermore, the research sought to understand the competitive landscape surrounding compost, while determining what product line and aspects of visual brand identity would allow IVCC to most effectively capture a share of the local compost market. 60 survey responses were collected, and 10 follow-up interviews were conducted, providing testimonials from individuals interested in environmental sustainability and composting.

Distribution efforts included in-person tabling at local farmers' markets, an online outreach campaign, and flyer distribution at various business locations throughout the area. Santa Barbara recorded the highest participation, followed by Montecito and Hope Ranch.

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC

The target demographic for this research were **individuals residing in the greater Santa Barbara area.** More specifically, individuals who are environmentally conscious homeowners or gardeners who value sustainability and seek high-quality, locally sourced compost to enrich their garden and support community-based environmental initiatives. This group was selected because they represent a significant market segment for IVCC, holding considerable potential for expansion as the organization plans to increase its compost product sales to an older demographic in the greater Santa Barbara area.

By understanding the values, satisfaction levels, and purchasing behaviors of Santa Barbara County residents in regards to compost, IVCC can tailor their marketing strategies to fit the target demographic accordingly. Additionally, by examining the attitudes and purchasing trends of those who do not currently buy compost, IVCC can gain insights into barriers and potential motivators for this group. This understanding of the target audience will help IVCC make informed decisions on how to effectively market their product to interested consumers.



SURVEY OVERVIEW



GOALS

The primary goal of the survey was to identify consumers' current behaviors and attitudes toward purchasing compost within the Santa Barbara, Montecito, and Hope Ranch regions, as well as consumers' awareness of IVCC and other competitors. To determine consumers' identities, survey data collection centered around behaviors and attitudes toward purchasing compost, information about consumers' demographics, barriers to purchasing compost, personal values, and motivators for purchasing compost.

In addition, their preferred methods of purchasing compost, as well as their familiarity with the current competitive market were analyzed. With this data, commonalities between similar consumers, gaps in the market, and key values that consumers consider when decision-making were identified. Ultimately, the survey allowed us to observe and analyze trends in the data, as well as develop informative insights to guide the development of branding and marketing strategies that align with Isla Vista Compost Collective's consumer base. The aforementioned insights can be found in Section 4 of this report.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The market research survey was designed to be efficient and insightful in order to yield the most fruitful results from respondents. The survey was hosted on Qualtrics XM, a tool that helped draw out extensive data-based analytics and insights. The survey collected both nominal and ordinal data to gauge insights on different aspects of awareness, motivators, and barriers to compost purchasing habits and sustainability campaigns in the greater Santa Barbara area. To accomplish this, the survey was divided into five categories:

- 1 **Demographics** — To perceive a target consumer persona.
- 2 **Demand** — To identify consumers' habits and practices.
- 3 **Competitive Analysis** — To examine the local competitive landscape.
- 4 **Engagement** — To understand consumers' motivators and obstacles.
- 5 **Customer Alignment** — To find consumer compatibility with IVCC's values, mission, branding, and aesthetic.

The survey also employed conditional question threads, displaying later questions based on their responses to initial questions. This ensured that the survey experience was tailored to the individual taking it and their indicated current habits. For example, if a respondent answered that they have not purchased compost before, they would not receive subsequent questions about their preferred location to purchase, preferred brand, or preferred quantity of purchase.

It would be counterproductive to ask these questions to someone who has no experience to draw from, and would likely deter them from completing the survey. Instead, this type of participant would receive prompts about their current barriers to participation, as well as situational questions.

SURVEY MARKETING

In order to successfully market the survey to prospective respondents, both online and in-person strategies were implemented to reach the target audience. Internet channels were utilized in order to distribute the survey link. Facebook groups of local sustainable communities were targeted in addition to the email inboxes of UCSB Environmental Science professors and local nursery/plant business communities. Social media posts featuring flyers and QR codes outlining the survey's incentives and utility were also promoted.



Strategy Consultants incentivized survey completion by offering a raffle prize of a \$25 gift card to any local Santa Barbara business of their choice. This prize was chosen intentionally because individuals who are interested in sustainability would also be excited to support a local business. Respondents were promised gift baskets with samples of compost and gifts from local businesses in addition to the opportunity to be entered in a raffle for a gift card if they opted to participate in an interview. Additionally, Strategy Consultants took up further approaches to increase survey awareness and engagement. This was done both by tabling at farmers' markets with information on sustainability initiatives, as well as by visiting local nurseries to better understand the local gardening community and to build rapport.

The goal was to push the survey to a 25-50 year-old audience based in Santa Barbara. In summary, Strategy Consultants leveraged both digital platforms and face-to-face interactions to promote the survey among a diverse, sustainability-focused audience.