



I. 5. Marketing Strategy to Secure Applications from Priority Market Segments

While the AQMD has in recent years been successful in attracting and securing valuable projects that result in real, quantifiable, surplus emission reduction benefits, newly proposed and adopted ARB regulations have changed the landscape of the Carl Moyer Program, impacting AQMD's ability to implement cost-effective CMP projects. New marketing strategies must be expanded and employed to fully capitalize on the current climate of these specific cost-effective priority markets.

A. Develop Tactical Resources for Priority Markets

AQMD will develop additional tactical resources customized to each priority market in order to deliver a simpler, more attractive message. One-sheets containing a description and photo of the available emission reduction technology available along with engine MY information and qualifying criteria will be created in a simple format customized for each market sector. The one-sheets will serve to clarify confusion and diminish misconceptions about CMP. These outreach pieces will be available on the AQMD website and links will be created on web sites of related trade associations.

During the time period that the PA is open, the most critical efforts must be implemented for soliciting CMP applicants. In order to expand current advertising efforts, AQMD will produce a digital banner graphic with CMP application information that links back to the AQMD website. Cost-efficient and effective, these digital banners will be placed on web sites of various trade associations, truck dealers, and related trade shows. The use of web banners is not only efficient, but they allow AQMD to track the traffic through the links and thus allowing AQMD to analyze the effectiveness of this strategy.

B. AQMD Website Upgrades

Along with developing new tactical resources for AQMD, certain upgrades to the AQMD site are necessary in order to appeal to more users. Over the last few years, fleet operators have become increasingly computer savvy and rely on the Internet as a tool to find new information. Fleet operators also find online information convenient because most do not work regular business hours and can access information online around the clock. To capitalize on these trends, the AQMD will create an online message board on the AQMD website where fleet operators can post questions, discuss concerns, experiences, and gather



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information. Included in this message board will be a Knowledge Base Search tool so that fleet operators can ask questions and the search tool will find similar questions and provide answers. AQMD staff can also use the message board as a barometer to gauge interest in low-emission technology, analyze problems, answer questions, and communicate with a wide base of fleet operators directly. The message board will also show staff which areas need more explanation or emphasis for increased marketing and outreach efforts.

From previous years, AQMD has concluded that one of the barriers for fleet managers to apply for the CMP funding is their ability to determine whether or not they are a qualified applicant. Because calculating the qualifying criteria seems complicated and cumbersome to a fleet manager, many avoid the application process simply because they do not have the time or the resources to learn how to calculate a qualifying vehicle. To eradicate this barrier, ARB will be implementing a qualifying and emission calculator tool which will be available on the AQMD website. Once a fleet operator enters the appropriate data, the tool will calculate if he or she qualifies for the program. Then the fleet operator can download a one-sheet specific to the market that describes what emission reduction technology options and funding is available. Having this tool available online allows the fleet operator autonomy and time on his schedule to research the program components without a heavy sales pitch. These particular advantages are the reasons behind the Internet-driven retail industry. Of course, the real challenge is driving traffic to the AQMD website which is why there are other key marketing components that must be fully utilized to make the online tools on the AQMD website effective.

One cost-effective, highly efficient tool to gather information about fleet operators interested in alternative fuel technology is to ask the site visitors to sign up for a Listserve component that will provide market-specific information via email on a regular basis. With the addition of a Listserve, AQMD can cost-effectively stay connected to fleet managers that want to know more information about the CMP and maintain current email distribution lists.

C. Hotline Implementation

A Hotline can be an invaluable resource during the peak Carl Moyer Application Period. During the peak time period, this line should be live and fully manned so that fleet operators can ask questions directly and immediately to AQMD staff. The hotline number will be posted on all collateral material so that even if a fleet owner/operator does not have Internet access, they have an opportunity to obtain assistance therefore increasing the likelihood of applying for funding. During off peak hours, an outgoing message would inform the fleet manager that he has in



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fact, reached the CMP Hotline, and staff will return his call shortly. The message will also direct callers to the AQMD website where he can find further information.

D. Webinars for Qualified Fleet Operators

Online marketing, outreach and educational efforts have recently replaced everything from college classes to tradeshow. Given the low cost of implementing an online workshop as compared to the expenses of facilitating an in-person workshop, the concept of a “webinar” has grown in popularity as it not only provides a lower initial event cost but allows attendees to participate via the archive download option for months after the event. While AQMD has always found CMP seminars to be an important marketing resource, hosting one during convenient locations and times for many fleet owner/operators has been a challenge that often impacted attendance levels. For those that were able to attend, the experience was critical in their decision to participate in the Program. Webinars will maintain all the benefits of a seminar setting while bringing the experience to those fleet managers that cannot attend, but are interested in the invaluable information discussed by AQMD staff. Many fleet managers share the same concerns and have many similar questions. By archiving these Webinars on the AQMD site, fleet operators can reap the benefits of AQMD seminars anytime and from anywhere. Staging a Webinar that would cover all of the frequently asked questions would become an invaluable tool in assisting fleet managers to participate in CMP.

E. Print Advertising

Print advertising is generally a staple in any marketing campaign as it is a physical means of displaying a message to the target audience. However, ad space is also very expensive, so any allocated funds must be used with precise execution in the most proficient manner possible. A standard CMP ad promoting funding opportunities for fleet operators unfamiliar with AQMD or the CMP, may be too broad of a message to really grab the attention of those fleet managers in key market areas. However, seeing a photo of a fleet manager standing next to a new vehicle or piece of equipment praising the support of the CMP sends just the message that a fleet operator wants to see (i.e. “if this guy can get a grant for a new piece of equipment, so can I”). Thus, the ad space would be used to tell a success story or a testimonial from a CMP participant who has had a beneficial and easy experience. Testimonials from fleet manager to fleet manager have proven more credible than AQMD staff encouraging applicants to participate in the program. In fact, in researching fleet managers’ hesitance to participate in the CMP, many negative opinions about the program were based on ill perceptions voiced from other fleet managers whether substantiated or not. The



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advantage to paying for advertising is control over the copy and distribution. If the AQMD is going to pay for getting the message across, it should be with the intent of changing attitudes and overall perception of the CMP, not simply announcing the Program's existence.

F. Flyer Distribution at Terminals and Other Hubs of Activity

Distribution of CMP materials directly to the hands of potential applicants remains an important and instrumental aspect of the CMP outreach efforts. To specifically target outreach efforts, the AQMD will focus efforts on four distinct locales for maximum effectiveness. The four areas include: trade shows, truck dealerships, via trade associations, and ARB compliance workshops.

There are roughly nine trade shows that occur within the District that showcase the latest heavy-duty truck technology. Truck manufacturers, heavily influenced by their commission on new truck sales have been historically enthusiastic in promoting CMP materials as it serves as an extra incentive for those purchasing equipment. AQMD will coordinate with OEMs to distribute CMP materials in their booths at trades shows throughout the year.

Truck dealerships have been instrumental in promoting CMP participation in the past years and should remain a key component for both promoting the CMP and accessing feedback from fleet operators about their attitudes and perceptions. There are several key primary dealerships with which the AQMD has developed excellent relations. These dealers will receive information from the AQMD about web site improvements, email list-serves, hotline information, etc. so that they can pass this information on to potential applicants to provide new ways of accessing information about the program (in addition to the information provided by the dealer).

Trade associations are a cornerstone resource for the targeted Market Sectors. Their participation and involvement not only has a strong influence on the purchasing trends of the target Market Sectors, but establishes a strong endorsement for the Program principles and benefits. The AQMD will schedule individual meetings with Trade Association presidents in order to create strong relations for each of the target Market Sectors. In doing so, the AQMD will request that CMP materials be available for distribution at all of their events, offices, and inside monthly mailings.

The fleet operators are required to attend ARB compliance workshops and the AQMD is able to take advantage of reaching out to the target audience.



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G. Generating Press Coverage

Much like print advertising, generating press coverage is an effective way to reach a large audience but at a fraction of the cost. AQMD will produce press releases prior to and during the peak Moyer Application period targeting trade magazines and industry publications in both English and Spanish. To garner media attention so that all or a portion of the press release will be published, AQMD is going to focus on success stories of the CMP with direct quotes from past participants. Much like the print advertising, the press releases will be another tool to positively influence fleet managers' perceptions about the CMP. Unfortunately one of the drawbacks to relying on press releases to generate coverage is that there is no control over where, when, or if the copy is published. However, in light of newly adopted ARB regulations, low-emission compliance information has become an increasingly important topic for fleet operators and industry publications that report on such activity. Over the next couple of years, AQMD anticipates a sharp rise in funding opportunity interest and therefore an increase in CMP news-related stories within the priority Market Sectors.

AQMD will also employ the use of advertorials, which is an advertisement written in the form of an opinion editorial, and presented in a printed publication usually designed to look like an independent news story. In this particular form of media, AQMD will print interviews with CMP participating fleet operators, again to reinforce positive perceptions about CMP to other fleet operators from their peers.

H. Applicant Outreach Efforts

AQMD will continue to expand and update the inventory of fleet operator contacts and conduct applicant outreach efforts to promote the CMP to ultimately increase the number of applications for funding. The three main outreach components include: phone calls, workshops, and email marketing. While these have been important staples in outreach efforts in the last several years, continued efforts will include the incorporation of newly implemented AQMD resources. Each applicant outreach effort component will direct fleet operators to the AQMD website, the CMP hotline, and the archive of CMP webinars online.

As in previous years, AQMD will directly contact fleet operators via telephone to gather updated fleet information, monitor interest in the CMP, and distribute CMP materials and applications. Telephone outreach remains an effective method to build relationships with fleet operators, answer questions, update contact information, and expand the contact database and direct fleet operators to additional AQMD resources such as workshops, webinars, CMP Hotline, and the online calculator. A critical component of the AQMD Marketing Plan is the ability



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to maintain communication flow between AQMD and targets fleets within the District. Conversations with fleet managers is also essential in gathering feedback about Program perceptions and concerns in order to modify existing or create new collateral materials and track successful implementation of strategies.

Public workshops and seminars will be conducted on a regular basis during peak CMP application intervals. As in past years, public workshops are ideal settings for fleet operators to learn about Program criteria and components, voice concerns, and seek application assistance. In continued efforts, AQMD will also have these workshops recorded as to be viewed online via the webinar format. These public workshops will also be archived so those fleet operators that logistically cannot attend the public workshops are still able to benefit from the workshop experience. These public workshops can then serve many more attendees than those who are in attendance, making the workshop a more cost-efficient resource.

AQMD will continue to utilize email marketing as a way to promote CMP materials and resources as well as to distribute applications. Email marketing is an inexpensive means to reach a mass number of fleet managers with minimal expended labor or costs. AQMD will use email marketing to advertise public workshops, the CMP Hotline, the AQMD website and online resources and program literature. Responses to email outreach efforts will be tracked and updates to the fleet operator inventory will be processed.

I. Partnership Building

The success of the CMP relies in part on the participation and endorsement of the trade associations, financial institutions, and equipment vendors for each priority market sector. By building these partnerships, AQMD will enrich CMP resources and exponentially increase applications for the District.

AQMD already has well developed relationships with key trade associations and professional organizations, however, AQMD will continue to maintain these partnerships and develop new ones that support any of the identified Priority Markets. AQMD will meet with trade association and professional organization representatives to discuss program components and modifications to CMP. AQMD will also discuss program strategies for the most effective outreach to association members. Trade associations can post ads in association newsletters or mailings, post a CMP link on their website, and distribute materials at meetings and public events. AQMD will also facilitate an interview with a fleet manager who has had a positive experience with the CMP to be printed in the trade association newsletter just prior to peak CMP application period.



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In the past years, AQMD has developed strong relationships with equipment vendors and dealers whose participation has been instrumental in providing fleet operators with CMP application assistance, promoting the program, and directing traffic to AQMD website. AQMD will continue to provide dealer and vendor training on CMP components and modifications. Vendors will also be stocked with CMP materials so that they are able to distribute them to customers.

This next year, AQMD plans to forge new partnerships with financial institutions that assist fleet operators with loans for new equipment. With cooperation from loan officers and brokers, more fleet operators will consider applying for funding if they need more available funds than their credit allows. AQMD will identify several leading financial institutions with which to partner and provide training and collateral materials.

J. Methodology for Ongoing Monitoring of Outreach Effectiveness

AQMD could implement the best marketing strategies, develop effective messages, conduct the most aggressive outreach, but if the results are not measurable, the end result not quantifiable, there can be no basis for calculated modifications to marketing strategies. The ability to attract potential projects and increase the number of applications from Priority Market Sectors is tangible when outreach efforts can be modified and further developed. In order to make the Program the most cost-efficient while acquiring the highest amount of surplus emission reductions possible, tracking responses and gathering feedback from all the CMP marketing components is critical to future success.

Once the CMP Hotline is implemented and the Discussion Board is created, AQMD will log fleet operator responses and follow-up on potential projects, gauge program interests and perceptions, and monitor fleet operator objections or concerns. As marketing plan components drive traffic to the AQMD website, web site traffic reporting software will be used to track from where hits originate, who is downloading applications, and what materials are most requested. In doing so, AQMD can observe developing trends, evaluate effectiveness of marketing strategies, and gather information to further develop effective outreach tools for each of the Priority Market Sectors.

Dealers and equipment vendors are invaluable sources of fleet operator information. In building partnerships with various dealers, AQMD will track fleet operator interest in CMP by asking dealers, vendors, and loan officers to record information regarding interest in the Program. AQMD will on a bimonthly basis, check in with established dealers and vendors and gather feedback.



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Workshops and seminars provide tremendous opportunity for gathering information from fleet operators. Tracking not only contact information, but levels of attendance and the means by which attendees learned of the workshop, gives AQMD necessary feedback to modify workshop times, locations and advertisement to more effectively promote CMP.

Efforts put forth to promote the CMP through direct mail, email, and flyer distribution is critical to assess cost-effectiveness of these outreach strategies. Program interest generated from flyer distribution at ports and other hubs of activity will be monitored and tracked in order to more accurately determine the most effective outreach methods. Direct mail and email will also be monitored in terms of responses generated after a mass direct mail or email effort. AQMD will conduct an annual cost analysis to determine the allocation of funds earmarked for these strategies.

A simple yet highly important method for tracking effective marketing of the CMP is by adding a source question on the CMP application. When applicants answer this question, whether they become a funded project or not, AQMD will track the frequency of indicated marketing sources. The information gathered will assist AQMD in determine which efforts result in more submitted applications.

The basis of these assessments will be an accumulation of information gathered from all components of CMP outreach. Determining the source from which CMP information was acquired is useful in auditing the effectiveness of particular outreach strategies for each market sector. In many cases, fleet operators may learn about the CMP from a variety of sources, and with each additional exposure be more inclined to complete an application. Tracking known sources of information in the AQMD database of fleet operators will be used later to assess correlations between the number of marketing source exposures, availability of information, and the number of received applications. Because each component in the CMP marketing plan is invariably linked to the others, it is difficult to precisely determine that, for example, mass mailing is not cost-effective. However, tracking responses and recording sources of information will allow AQMD to better allocate funding, refine messages, and discover patterns in responses to new outreach methods. By examining responses both in volume and in content, AQMD will determine marketing strategy modifications that will result in an evolution of cost-effective outreach efforts.



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