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Focus on Business and Community

Respondents to our survey provided useful information for planning and delivering educational programming. When comparing the public's interest to learn about business and community with their level of interest to learn about other topics, the cumulative interest in business and community is relatively low (Fig. 1-6, p. 5). The data also showed that the population expressing interest to take a class or workshop in business and community compares favorably with the other topics, but there are fewer respondents who express informal interest (to read or to watch a video or TV program about the topic) compared to other topic areas. This small and specialized audience dictates an opportunity to target education more specifically than is possible for many topic areas.

Level of interest in business and community was not significantly different among county types (Fig. 3-1). Topics with the largest number of respondents with sufficient interest to attend classes or workshops were: Start a business, Leadership skills, and Home-based business (Fig. 3-2).

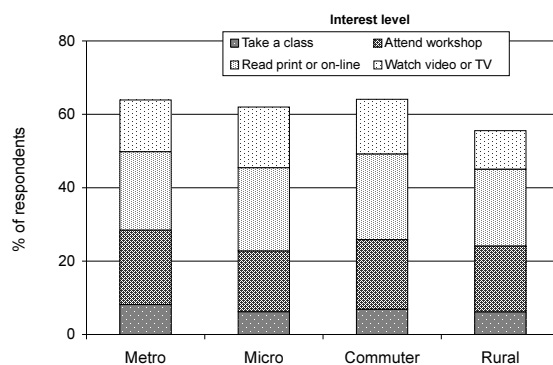


Fig. 3-1. Interest in learning about business and community by county type.

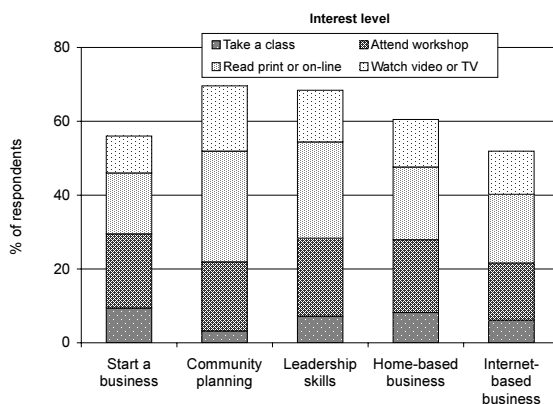


Fig. 3-2. Interest in various business and community topics.

Based on the sample, we estimate that nearly 30 percent of respondents from metro counties had formal interest, translating to a potential audience of approximately 85,000 Idahoans. This compares to an estimated potential audience of 26,000 in micro counties, 18,000 in rural counties, and only 8,000 commuter county residents. Although the total number of residents in rural and commuter counties who indicate this high level of interest is small, it still represents more than 25 percent of the respondents. In metro counties, the high percentage translates to a large potential audience for on-site training about these topics (Figs. 3-3a-c).

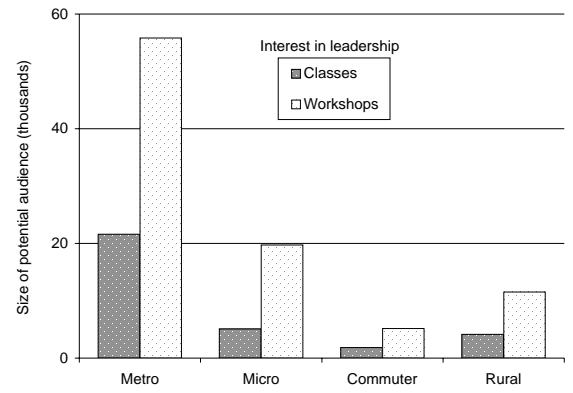


Fig. 3-3a. Size of potential audience for leadership education for each county type.

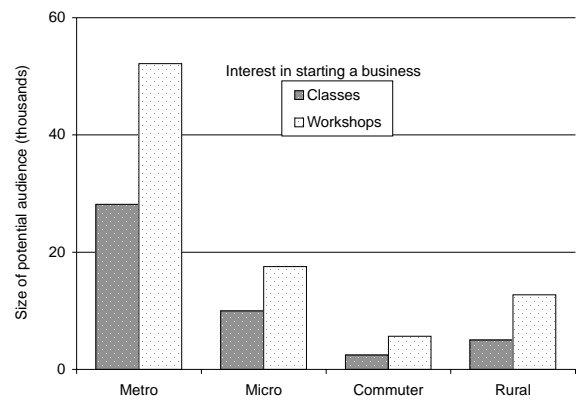


Fig. 3-3b. Size of potential audience for starting a business for each county type.

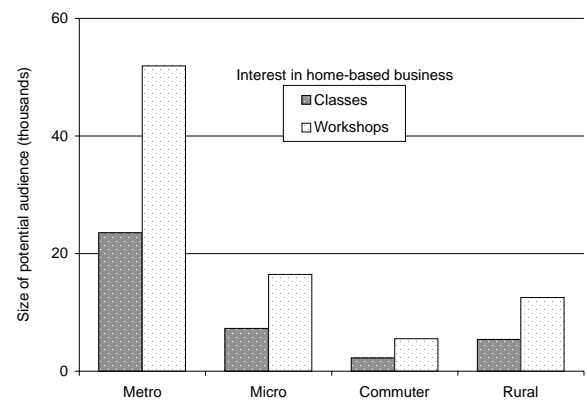


Fig. 3-3c. Size of potential audience for a home-based business for each county type.

County commissioners reported a particularly high interest in learning about community planning and leadership, relative to the level of interest expressed by other respondents (Fig. 3-4). However, the proportion of commissioners with sufficient interest to take a course or workshop about starting a business, Internet-based business, and home-based business was not different from other residents.

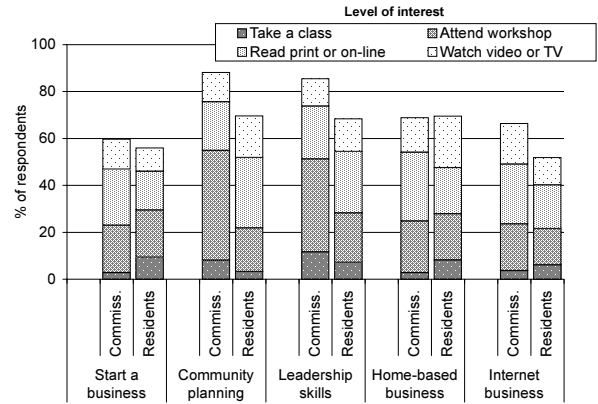


Fig. 3-4. Resident and county commissioner interest in business and community topics.

Interest in learning about business and community was marginally related to the age of the respondent ($P < 0.07$). For all levels of interest (low to very high), the percentage of respondents who indicated interest declined with each advancing age class (Fig. 3-5). As a consequence, the likelihood that someone age 19-30 would participate in face-to-face learning about business and community was twice as great as someone age 56-67 and nearly five-times as great as someone older than 67 years.



Fig. 3-5. Relationship between age and interest in learning about business.

Interest in business and community was also strongly affected by annual household income ($P < 0.01$). This relationship gradually increases from very low incomes up to about \$50,000 per year (Fig. 3-6). As income exceeds \$50,000 there tends to be no more change in interest in business and community.

Given that interest in business and community decreased with age but increased with income, it appears that young adults with average or higher incomes would be a significantly motivated audience for educational programming in this topic area.

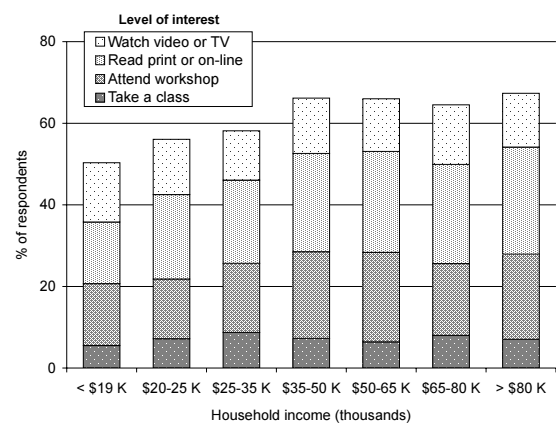


Fig. 3-6. Relationship between income and interest in learning about business.

The presence of children in the home appeared to influence whether adults had an interest to learn about business and community (Fig. 3-7). This demographic was also related to the age of responding adults and may help to target the most promising audiences for programs in this topic area.

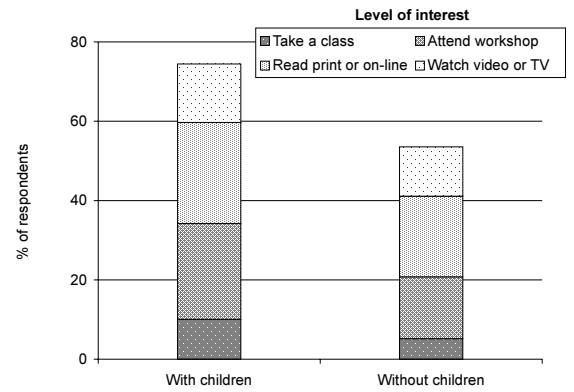


Fig. 3-7. Effect of children on interest in learning about business and community.

There was a significant relationship between the level of interest the respondents expressed in business and community topics and the frequency with which they had contact with UI Extension ($P>0.09$) (Fig. 3-8). However, unlike “Focus on Agriculture,” that relationship failed to demonstrate that UI Extension is a provider of choice for those motivated to learn about business and community. It appears that those with greatest interest either: (1) choose to access information and education through other sources or providers, or (2) are unaware of educational programs and resources that may be available through UI Extension.

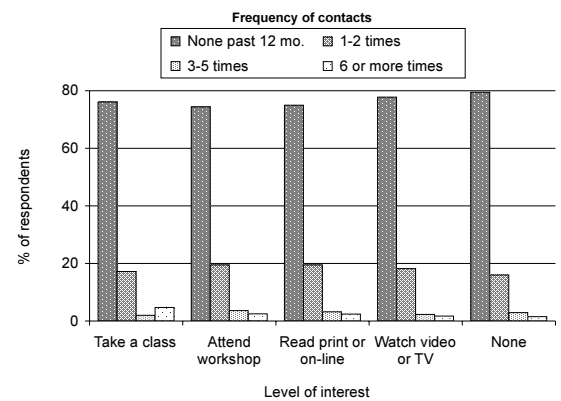


Fig. 3-8. Frequency of contact with UI Extension during past 12 months compared to interest in business and community.

Conclusions

Educational programs about business and community have great promise to attract residents to classes and workshops.

Printed, electronic, or video-type products do not appear to be the method of choice for most residents interested in learning about business and community but may be more acceptable to those with higher incomes.

County commissioners express strong interest in programs about community planning and leadership.

A large percentage of those expressing formal interest in business and community are young adults, living in metro areas, with access to above-average annual household incomes.

Even though relatively few people expressed high interest in business and community, and also lived in rural and commuter counties, face-to-face learning would be preferred to more casual methods of delivery.

UI Extension does not appear to be a primary source where residents seek information and education about business and community topics.