

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) & Market Segmentation

Market segmentation and GIS allow child welfare agencies to better understand and visualize the spatial distribution of consumer driven data in maps. This is accomplished by utilizing geospatial methods within a GIS and established marketing techniques. Market segmentation to determine the characteristics of a community can be a powerful tool for agencies to use when recruiting foster parents since it has been shown that prospective foster and adoptive parents within a community are likely to share values, characteristics, and interests.

"Everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things."

-Tobler's First Law of Geography

Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is used to accurately predict the needs of "customers," or in the case of child welfare, adoptive or foster parents, to improve our understanding of the community and where prospective adoptive or foster parents reside.

Combining geospatial methods with conventional marketing techniques enables the users to visualize the spatial distribution of data within maps as well as statistical graphs and diagrams. This provides the user a tool to identify people living within the same geographic area who will often share similar characteristics and tendencies, i.e., "birds of a feather flock together."

Variables Used in Market Segmentation:

- Demographics – Age, gender, education, income, and home ownership
- Geography – State, county, city, and zip
- Psychographics – Lifestyle, attitude, beliefs, personality, and buying motives
- Brand Loyalty

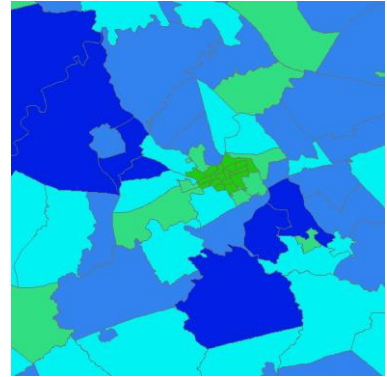
GIS and Market Segmentation

By examining the marketing data in a GIS, a mapping software program, it creates a new understanding of the demographics and psychographics that allow the user to examine the geographic limitations of an area. Segmenting markets based on geographical boundaries can lead to

more specialized and focused marketing approaches that will allow the similarities in demographic and psychographic characteristics of residents to be shown.

Questions that market segmentation can answer are:

- Who are the target audiences?
- What are they like?
- Where are they?
- How can they be reached?



The maps that are developed with consumer driven marketing data show the geographic location and the population density where potential foster or adoptive parents are located based on similar buying and consumption patterns. This information can then be used to identify the locations of businesses or organizations that are located within a geographic proximity to where the potential foster or adoptive parents reside and likely to shop. Once these businesses are identified, the child welfare agencies can perform outreach and marketing to help with recruitment efforts.

Along with understanding where prospective foster and adoptive parents could be located, it is important to have accurate information about the address where the child was removed, in order to foster connections and promote educational stability. Child welfare agencies can focus recruitment efforts in areas in geographic proximity to the child's location of origin so that the child can remain in their own school and maintain relationships with family and friends.

Market segmentation techniques and GIS can be cost effective tools for a more efficient use of agency and family time and resources. It will also determine more viable family and placement resources.

Technical Assistance

This document is part of the Tips, Tools, & Trends series provided by the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT) developed in partnership with the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids (NRCDR). Readers may obtain technical assistance from this Children's Bureau's Resource Centers by emailing nrccwdt@cwla.org or donna@adoptex.org. More information can be found on www.nrccwdt.org and www.adoptuskids.org. If you wish to request onsite technical assistance from the NRC-CWDT or NRCDR, contact your ACF Regional Office.

