ANALYSIS, INTERPETATION, APPLICATION

MissionInsite Data and How to Get It!

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Data from MissionInsite, a demographic tool provided to our parishes at no cost, helps create a picture of our communities and parishes – where they've been, where they are, and where they're going. Application of this data can give your parish team direction in your data-informed mission-driven planning process.

We use data in planning, not to provide the answer or solution, but as a tool to begin conversations. Data can help guide your missionary planning decisions. When we use data in planning, we use a simple 3-step process: Analyze, Interpret and Apply.

Analyzing your data critically examines what you've collected, sorting it into key indicators that can affect your planning and vision. Interpreting those key indicators identifies relationships between data variables, comparing them and recognizing differences to form conclusions and begin telling a story. Lastly, we apply what we've learned to our planning and vision for our ministries, outreach and parish growth.

Features in MissionInsite, one source of data to use in planning, give you customized data reports to begin the process of analyzing, interpreting and applying data by plotting your parish members on its map and defining the planning area for your parish.

Plotting Parish Members

Every fall, the Office of Missionary Planning and Leadership uploads into MissionInsite the latest census lists of all parish members, or congregants, provided to our Development Department, so parish members can be plotted. Plotting your parish members instantly provides a visual reality of where your members live across the community to discover the "reach" of your parish. The MissionInsite legend on the map shows how far your members travel to your church. This map can be downloaded, with or without the legend showing distances traveled to church.

Defining Your Planning Area

Before generating any reports, a study area must be defined. Only the ComparativeInsite report requires you to plot your membership prior to running the report. There are multiple ways you

ANALYSIS, INTERPETATION, APPLICATION

can define your study area to research demographics, including county or city boundaries, or even census tracts or block group. Or if you plan on doing a mailing to neighborhoods surrounding your parish, you may want to research the profile of zip codes near you.

Two other ways to define your parish study area are to identify a mile radius or draw a polygon around your parish. Although you don't need to plot your parish members to run demographic reports for all households and individuals in your community, it can help you better define the area to study. In fact, when we run reports to compare our parish members to the community at large, you should target to include at least 75% of your members in your study area.

Generating Reports
MissionInsite reports can give you insight into profiles and trends, such as:
- What type of households live in your area?
- Which neighborhoods are growing?
- What is the diversity in your community?
- Do your parish members and your mission reflect and serve your community?

Once you have your study area defined, you can generate multiple pre-defined reports. FullInsite is the most comprehensive report, with more than 30 pages of charts and graphs. Although it's a big report, I start with this one since it delivers the most data to choose from when developing a parish or community story. QuickInsite and ExecutiveInsite provide some of the same data, sometimes in different chart or graph format, and are considerably shorter in length.

When you begin to explore the data, review the various reports to see which data elements are most critical for your planning purposes. The reports are very visual in their presentation of data. Many data elements offer five or 10-year trend estimates. Four useful data sets are population growth rates by age category, family structure data, economic status and poverty levels, and race and ethnicity trends.

The ComparativeInsite report, generated after parish members are plotted, compares some key demographic indicators, like age and income, among total households and individuals in your study area to those who are parish members. The last section of the report, as with the FullInsite report, lists Mosaic segments to help better describe your community and your parish members. Experian Marketing Services has compiled more than 300 data points to develop these Mosaic segments, and classifies consumers across the country into one of 71

ANALYSIS, INTERPETATION, APPLICATION

demographic and lifestyle types and 19 groups. You can learn more about the Mosaic segments in the Help section of MissionInsite, or by calling our office.

The Office of Missionary Planning and Leadership is available to help you, not only with generating these reports, but also with understanding them better, and how you can interpret and apply them to your missionary planning. We will walk with you through any portion of your planning, when you are ready, and at a rate you are comfortable with. And, if you are not already registered to use MissionInsite at your parish, we can help with that, too.

I invite you to contact me with any questions regarding MissionInsite at engell@archmil.org.

February 2021