



# **Primary Research Report: Interview Data**

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## Executive Summary

There were ten informational interviews conducted among Waco residents. Findings included that families and children attending are more interested in the fair aspect and those post-college and pre-children are more interested in the concert aspect of the fair. In addition, knowledge about the HOT Fair is extensive when participants have personal experience, but limited and somewhat incorrect without experience, even exposure to advertisements and other people who attend. Those who had not directly experienced the HOT Fair became aware primarily through TV advertisements, ads near the center and social media. Numerous methods of advertising for the fair were consumed by participants with none significantly outperforming the others.



## Main Findings and Recommendations

Two Waco residents who have lived in the area for all, if not most of their lives, did not even know about the HOT Fair. One interviewee stated, “I would have gone if I knew it was happening.” Through interviewing these participants, it was also discovered that their local, social circles didn’t know about the fair either. Both participants described being well plugged-in to the community. This community includes friends, co-workers and local business owners. Through these dialogues, it was discovered that several Waco locals don’t have any ties to the HOT Fair, even through their broad social circles. Thus, information on the HOT Fair isn’t being spread through word-of-mouth. However, this gap in communication poses an opportunity and is among one of the main recommendations. To begin tackling this issue, it is recommended to focus on marketing to long-time Waco locals and residents. It is also recommended to target local businesses and establishments that Waco locals frequent. By effectively using social avenues, such as fitness companies and small restaurants, the HOT Fair can better target residents and their social circles, therefore increasing word-of-mouth advertising.



Another aspect of the findings revealed that family composition and age became a deterrent when interviewees felt they had aged-out of the target audience. A white female, age 51, said “I don’t think there was a reason, I think I’m just getting too old.” Another white female, age 52, said she wouldn’t attend the fair “unless [her] small nieces wanted to go, they’re 8 and 4 right now. Then [she] would go.” She explained her family wanting to attend the fair would be the only thing that would bring her to the fair. Her reasoning: she is an older adult with no children meaning she is uninterested in the carnival and her husband does not like the rodeo. She stated she would be willing to pay \$100 - \$120 per ticket to see an artist she likes but doesn’t like the style of concert at fairs because it’s shortened and “not really a concert experience.” As a result, recommendations include identifying whether the HOT Fair marketing team wants to make all ages and family constructs welcome, or if they are going after a target audience with a specific age. By solidifying this goal further, they can either more effectively target a narrow age range and increase the number of attendants by marketing specific activities that those ages enjoy, or more effectively target a broad age range to get a more diverse

group and marketing the HOT Fair as a place for all people and all ages. It is recommended to choose one, and in so doing more effectively market toward a single group rather than somewhat marketing to two groups.

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# “I would have gone if I knew it was happening.”

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## Detailed Research Findings

There were three primary drivers for participants coming to Waco: they were born or raised in Waco, came for career purposes, or came for academic purposes.

Some participants had little knowledge concerning the fair, and those who did have extensive knowledge of the fair had previous experiences attending. Two participants did not know anything about the HOT Fair, however, increased knowledge about it was stated to persuade them to attend the following year.

- **Sebastian:** *“I would have gone if I knew it was happening.”*
- **Cannon:** *“If I’m honest, I really didn’t know about it.”*

Little knowledge of the HOT Fair was derived from knowing other people who attended and viewing advertisements. In addition, previous experience at other fairs, even in the Texas area, did not increase knowledge on the HOT Fair. Those who had had prior experience at fairs typically were unaware of the concert component of the HOT Fair and expressed a willingness to attend if they had known about the concert. The fair aspect of the event attracted participants with families, and this perception led to some opting out of identifying themselves as the target market. However, future recommendations should be to advertise the concert aspect greater than the fair to those in Waco without younger families in order to shift



their viewpoint that the fair is only rides and games intended for a younger audience.

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***“I felt like I was not their target audience. I don’t feel like there is anything super interesting to me.”***

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Advertisement mediums that were recalled by participants included: TV ads, Social Media, ads near the event center, radio ads, and bumper stickers. One to two participants recalled each medium, with no one having a significant dominance. However, those who could recall multiple sightings of ads had significantly increased knowledge about the HOT Fair. In addition, social media posts prior to the attendance was a method seen to increase awareness when there was none before. Promoting social media engagement while the fair is taking place, either by contests or incentives at the fair, could increase attendance for the following year.

- **Sebastian:** *“I saw a video of that after it happened.”*



All participants who were interviewed did not attend the HOT Fair. Some reasons for not attending the fair as addressed by the participants include time, health, lack of interest, no knowledge of the fair, out of town/busy, and age. One respondent

mentioned wanting to know more about the fair, because they had heard only about the country artists that were performing.

- **Sebastian:** *"It's beyond just music."*
- **Floyd:** *"I don't think there was a reason I think I'm just getting too old."*

One driver for participants to attend the fair was the family friendly environment. Participants either attended the HOT Fair with their families, new of other families attending, or were interested in the fair due to its environment that offered entertainment for all ages. One participant even mentioned that she quit going to the fair once her children and grandchildren were old enough to go without her.

- **Cusick:** *"I quit going when my children and grandchildren didn't need me to take them anymore."; "When my kids were old enough to go on their own, we quit going as much."*



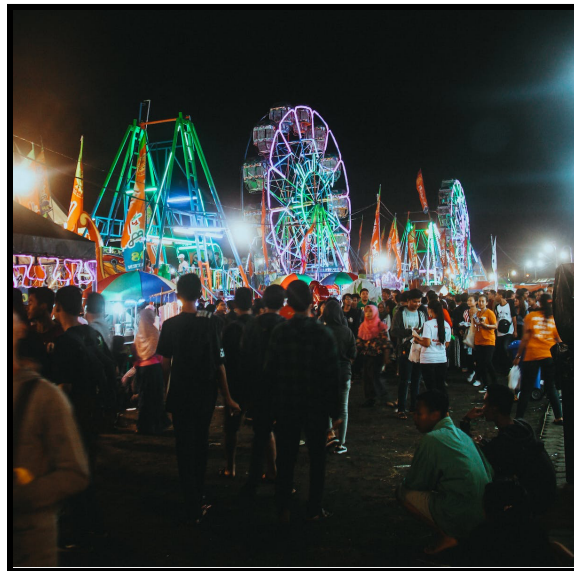
Most of the families that attended the fair had multiple kids with them. A participant mentioned why the fair brought so many families together. Overall, the individual enjoys the atmosphere of fairs and spending time with friends.

- **Song:** *"Just the environment for friends to hang out and join together."; "It's kind of like that home feel."*
- **Decker:** *"(A family) they had kids so they brought them and did more of the fair stuff. They enjoyed the food, little rides, and walking around."*

Participants who had younger family members expressed interest in attending if their younger family members wished to go. These participants also were willing to pay more for the experience, predicting spending around \$100 per child.

- **Berry:** *“Nothing, unless my small nieces wanted to go, they’re eight and four right now. Then I would go, but other than that I wouldn’t really go.”*
- **Cusick:** *“Well, if my grandchildren asked me to take them and there wasn’t anyone else to take them then we would take them.”*

The second main driver for attendance of the HOT Fair were concerts. For some attendees the concerts were the primary reason they would attend the fair, while, for others the lineup, time, and genres deterred them from attending. Even though half of the participants were aware of at least one artist on the line up, respondents expressed a desire for more big name artists in the lineup.



- **Decker:** *“I would say maybe more big name artists, specifically country. That was the reason I was considering this year, but the time aspect didn’t work out.”*

Country music was a popular genre mentioned, however, some individuals mentioned they were unfamiliar with the artists. Despite this, many of the participants expressed enjoying country music and would be open to attending a concert. Artists that were recalled included Midland and Aaron Watson. Those who did recall reading the lineup remarked that the majority were of the country music genre. In addition, there was a lack of different genres represented in the lineup.

- **Berry:** “I saw the list of names, I did know some of them, but I can't remember what they are 'cause we're not country music people either. They seem to all be country.”

The format of the concert within the fair was another topic brought up in the interviews. Individuals were less likely to pay normal prices for a concert if it was at the fair, they explained that it did not feel like a full concert experience. In addition, the time at night the concerts deterred families from attending. It was difficult with children to go to a concert either on a school night, or past their children's bed-times.

- **Berry:** “I would be willing to pay 100 or 120 bucks a ticket to go to see an artist that I like, but not in a fair format, because to me that's a shortened concert. And it's not really a concert experience.”
- **Rush:** “I didn't even look to see who was performing. I aged out of that. We have a kid and you know like we go after school when it opens and we stay for a while early enough to leave in time to get home before it's not too late for bedtime.”



The venue of the Extraco Center was familiar to most participants who had prior experience attending events such as concerts in the past. Those who had not attended the center before could recall driving past it and seeing advertisements for the fair near the center. Having advertisements near the center near times of prominent concerts and events could drive attendance for the fair in the future. Those who had previous experiences generally had positive comments about the venue itself especially in relation to being easy to navigate and easy to park at.

Thus, because the concert experience is typically enjoyed by those who attend the center, marketing future concerts in the fair would be effective.

- **Decker:** *"I went to the Cody Johnson concert there and it was really fun because there were a lot of people but it wasn't chaotic. It was easy to get in and park."*



## Research Method

To conduct research, Baylor University students interviewed 10 Waco locals in one-on-one settings. No incentives for participation were offered, but it was stated that the research would benefit both the academic community and the HOT Fair itself. All interviewers followed the interview guide, included in the appendix, and offered a statement to the research participant. The statement included information about duration of the interview – that it would last around 30 minutes, benefits of the research, consent to record audio, protection of privacy and anonymity, and that all parts of the interview were voluntary and the participant had the right to not answer questions or leave the session altogether. The research questions were followed by four demographic questions that included age, ethnicity, gender and zip code. Interviewers choose participants who have lived in Waco for a long time or were born in the area. The method for choosing participants involved random sampling and using social connections to find Waco locals to interview. Research was conducted over a one-week span from Oct. 31 through Nov. 4. Recruitment methods included reaching out through text messages, emails, phone calls and group chats to known Waco locals. Several interviews were conducted over the phone. In-person interviews were conducted on Baylor's campus or at neutral locations in the community. At the end of every session, the interviewer read a statement that thanked the participant for their time and directed them to either the interviewer themselves or the class instructor for questions and/or concerns.

## Appendix: Interview Guide

- *What brought you to Waco?*
- *Tell me what you know about the HOT Fair.*
- *Did you see any ads for the HOT Fair? Describe the ads you saw and where you saw them?*
- *Have you been to any other entertainment events in Waco? At the extraco center? Describe your experience at these events.*
- *Why did you decide to not attend the HOT Fair this year?*
- *Do you know anyone who attended the HOT Fair? If so, what did they think?*
- *Were you familiar with any of the musical acts? If so, what were your opinions about them? If not, what would you like to see if you did attend the HOT fair?*
- *What do you like most about fairs?*
- *What was your experience in the past with any fair?*
- *How much are you willing to pay for an experience? Would you mind expanding on that?*
- *What would convince you to go to the HOT Fair next year? Why?*
- *How old are you?*
- *What is your ethnicity?*
- *What gender do you identify as?*
- *What is your zip code?*



## **Appendix: Interview Summaries**

### **Grant**

- This individual came to Waco for career purposes, is 30, male, and caucasian. Prior knowledge about the Hot Fair is limited to what it stands for, and exposure has been through TV ads. The participant has been to the Extraco center and the only takeaway from it was that parking was easy. Participant did not go to the fair because he did not feel like he was the target audience and it wasn't interesting to him. He does not enjoy fairs in general, he has been to other fairs around Texas, but he does appreciate live music. He said that a good concert would persuade him to attend next year. To pay for this experience he would estimate it to cost \$30. In addition, he adds that he knows a family that went who had a good time at the fair.

### **Cusick**

- This individual is a 61 year old Waco-native Caucasian female. Prior knowledge about the fair had been derived from past experience with her family, relationships with employees of the fair, billboards, bumper stickers, and TV advertisements. She enjoyed the fair, ride aspects, and rodeo aspects of the fair in the past as entertainment for her children. She has an interest in the heart of Texas sweethearts and the community aspect of the fair. She appreciates the scholarship fund for McLennan County students and says that it is great entertainment for people. She is aware of Aaron watson as one of the musical artists but did not attend the concert or the fair due to health reasons. She believes that the fair is accessible, but is afraid of the large crowd. In general, for a fair experience she is willing to spend \$100 for each child that attends so they are able to play games, go on rides, and eat.

### **Sebastian**

- Female, age 28, who came to Waco because of a job offer and it was best for her and her family and they just never left. This person didn't know Waco had a fair. When the interviewer mentioned talking about a fair, they thought of the Texas State Fair. They said it's great to know there's a fair in Waco. They didn't see any ads but remembered friends posting about a concert. She saw a video of a concert after it happened but didn't see any marketing. She had no idea it was going on and people in her sphere – co-workers and friends and businesses she goes to never

mentioned it. They said they are plugged into places in Waco but still didn't know about it. Knew one of the musical acts and really liked them (it was a country band). She likes country music and would have gone because of that. She also mentioned for younger audiences having a folk artist. This person will go now just because they know about it now. She would also want to know what to expect and what more they have to offer other than music.

## Majors

- This participant is a 29-year-old white female who was born in Waco and has lived here for 24 years. She's aware of what goes on at the HOT Fair (food trucks, concerts, games, rides, rodeo, livestock show, art exhibits). When asked if she had seen ads, she said she heard radio advertising for it and lives near the Extraco center. Additional entertainment attendance includes Baylor games. Attends them even though sometimes the team's schedule doesn't work with her own. Loves sports. Was out of town one weekend and was busy the other weekend of the HOT Fair. Some of her students went to the fair but she did not. Students were surprised at the prices at the fair. Recognized some names of the musicians performing, but was never enticed to see any of them. Would like to see the Harlem GlobeTrotters or Savannah Bananas at the fair. Dislikes the "rickety" rides and fried food, but is a fan of the lemonade. Hasn't attended a fair since they were little. Went to the fair when they were younger since it was free. Prefers to go to sporting events rather than concerts, but would go one night next year if friends attended.

## Decker

- This individual came to Waco to attend Baylor and decided to stay because of personal relationships and job opportunities. She had limited knowledge of the fair including that it was a rodeo, smaller than the State Fair, and that it took place in October. She saw rodeo and concert ads through social media, and some ads near the actual location of the fair. The individual has been to a Cody Johnson event in Waco where she experienced a laid back environment with seats. She went with her friends and enjoyed the concert. She did not go to the HOT fair this year because she was busy with work. She did know people who went to the HOT fair and took their kids. The people enjoyed the rides and food. She knew of Midland and that is the concert she was considering attending. She likes fairs because of the food and fun. She has been to the Texas State Fair and the Arizona State Fair. The

respondent enjoyed the Texas fair as it was much larger. For an all day experience to the fair the respondent would spend \$45-50 on tickets. She could be persuaded to go to the fair next year if they continue to have big name country artists to see. The individual is a female, 22 years old, Caucasian, and lives in the 76706 zip code.

### **Cannon**

- The individual lives in Waco because her parents grew up here and she never left after college. She knows that the HOT fair happens for a few weeks once a year, involves concerts, games, and a rodeo, and is really fun. She saw no ads. The individual has been to other concerts at the ExtraCo events center, and she enjoyed them. She did not attend the HOT fair because she did not know about it. She did know a lot of people who went to the fair and they had fun. Her favorite part about fairs are the rides. She has been to the Texas State fair and enjoyed it. She is willing to pay \$15 for an admission ticket, and then pay for food and rides once inside. The performers would convince her to attend the fair next year. She is 24 years old, white, and lives in the 76657 zip code.

### **Song**

- This individual attends college in Waco and has heard that the HOT Fair is local and is comparable to the Dallas State Fair. They had seen advertisements for the fair outside of Waco High. The reason for the interviewee not attending the HOT Fair was because of a conflicting time schedule, although they knew people who went. For the people who went it is like a tradition for them to go every year. The interviewee was not familiar with any of the musical acts this year. Overall, the individual enjoys the atmosphere of fairs and spending time with friends. They believe that \$15 is a good amount to pay for the HOT Fair experience. The individual is 30 years old, male, Asian and their zip code is 76707.

### **Floyd**

- This individual came to Waco because her son went to Baylor. The advertisements she most frequently saw were television ads that showed the games, rides, food, and animals. She has attended other entertainment events in Waco over the years. This individual did not attend the fair this year, they cited being too old to go. They

knew of other people who attended the fair. In regard to the musical acts, she would want to see country concerts. The food and exhibits were their favorite things about fairs. They would be willing to pay around \$30 for the fair experience. This individual was a 51 year old white female, their zip code is 76657.

## Rush

- This individual came to Waco for Baylor University as an undergrad student, she decided to stay in Waco and has been a resident for the past 22 years. Her family tries to attend the fair every year. This individual has been to other events at the Extraco center including concerts and the library book sale. She also attends other entertainment events in Waco, specifically the Waco Wonderland event and various Baylor events. She found the Waco Hot Fair to be a more manageable size and less overwhelming compared to the state fair. The parking, walkability and size make the Waco Hot Fair easier and more accessible for her family. She did attend the Hot fair this year on Thursday of the second week. She noted the news coverage about the sea lion attraction made her want to attend the fair. She mentioned bumper stickers were the main form of advertisement she had seen. Many of the same attractions and vendors that are at the fair every year made her want to go back. She mentioned not knowing the music acts because the time of concerts is not compatible with her children's schedule. She typically expects to pay around \$200 in total for entry, food, and entertainment. It has become a tradition in her family to attend the hot fair so she anticipates that she will be back. The individual is a 40 year old, white female and their zip code is 76654.

## Berry

- This individual came to Waco for her husband's job at Baylor. She has seen advertisements for the Hot Fair, including bumper stickers, TV and print advertisements. She does not go to other events at the Extraco Center and decided not to attend the Hot Fair. The individual noted that being an older adult without children made her uninterested in the carnival, and her husband does not like the rodeo. The safety of the fair rides was also a concern of this individual. The aspect of fairs she enjoys the most is the food. This individual was not aware of anyone she knew attending the fair. She had seen a list of the musical acts before the event, however, they appeared to all be country. She prefers pop, 80's and classical music. She explained that she is willing to pay \$100 to \$120 for a concert, however, she

would not want to see a concert at a fair. The only thing that would bring her to the fair would be her young nieces wanting to attend. This individual is a 52 year old white female and their zip code is 76643.

## **References**

- Stock photos from Pexels.com
- Photos from the Baylor Lariat