



CUSTOMER OPINION SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR
SCV WATER



MAY 2023



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INTRODUCTION

Formed in 2018 by the merger of three water agencies in the Santa Clarita Valley, the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (SCV Water) provides safe, clean drinking water to more than 278,000 residents and commercial customers throughout its service area. The agency relies on a diverse portfolio of water supplies including two sources of imported water, two sources of local groundwater, recycled water, and banked water to provide responsible water stewardship and ensure that Santa Clarita Valley has reliable supplies of high-quality water at a reasonable cost.

As part of its commitment to provide high quality water services that meet the needs of its customers, SCV Water regularly engages customers through community outreach, social media, and other communications activities and receives periodic feedback regarding its performance. Although these informal feedback mechanisms are a valuable source of information for the agency in that they provide timely and accurate information about the opinions of *specific* customers, they do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of customers as a whole. Informal feedback mechanisms typically rely on the customer to initiate the feedback, which creates a self-selection bias—SCV Water receives feedback from only those customers motivated enough to initiate the feedback process. Because these individuals tend to be either *very* pleased or *very* displeased with their service, their collective opinions are not necessarily representative of customers in SCV Water’s service area as a whole.

PURPOSE OF STUDY The motivation for the current study was to design and employ a methodology that would avoid the self-selection bias noted above and thereby provide *statistically reliable* measures of residential customers’ perceptions, opinions, and satisfaction as they relate to SCV Water and the services it provides. Ultimately, the survey results and analyses presented in this report provide the agency with information that can be used to make sound, strategic decisions in a variety of areas including measuring and tracking internal performance, planning, program development, community outreach, and budgeting. To assist in this effort, SCV Water selected True North Research to design the research plan and conduct the study. Broadly defined, the study was designed to:

- Measure residential customers’ overall satisfaction with SCV Water’s efforts to provide water services, and their satisfaction with a variety of specific services;
- Profile customer interactions with the agency and views of SCV Water’s customer service;
- Identify whether customers view their water service as a good value;
- Determine satisfaction with SCV Water’s communication with customers, as well as preferred methods of communication; *and*
- Gather relevant background and demographic information.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY A full description of the methodology used for this study is included later in this report (see *Methodology* on page 35). In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 780 residential customers who receive water services from SCV Water. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and phone) and multiple data collection methods (phone and online). Administered in English and Spanish between April 25 and May 1, 2023, the average interview was 15 minutes in length.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview, the section titled *Key Findings* is for you. It provides a summary of the most important findings and a discussion of their implications. This section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), and a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. For the truly ambitious reader, the full questionnaire is included at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 38) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS True North thanks the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency for the opportunity to conduct the study and for contributing valuable input during the design stage of this study. The collective experience, insight, and local knowledge provided by agency representatives and staff improved the overall quality of the research presented here.

DISCLAIMER The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of SCV Water. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT TRUE NORTH True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities, and concerns of their residents and customers. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews, as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, establishing fiscal priorities, passing revenue measures, and developing effective public information campaigns. During their careers, Dr. McLarney (President) and Mr. Sarles (Principal Researcher) have designed and conducted over 1,200 survey research studies for public agencies—including more than 500 studies for California municipalities, utilities, special districts.



KEY FINDINGS

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide SCV Water with a statistically reliable understanding of customers' perceptions, opinions, and satisfaction as they relate to the agency and the services it provides. Whereas subsequent sections of this report are devoted to conveying the detailed results of the survey, in this section we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer some of the key questions that motivated the research.

How well is SCV Water performing in meeting the needs of customers?

Residential customers are generally quite satisfied with SCV Water's efforts to provide water services to their households. More than eight-in-ten respondents (84%) indicated they were satisfied with the agency's overall performance in providing water services to their household, with 48% stating they were *very* satisfied. The high level of satisfaction expressed by respondents as a whole was also echoed across customer subgroups based on length of residence, home ownership status, home type, age, gender, ethnicity, and raw billed water usage. Across *all* subgroups, overall satisfaction with SCV Water's performance ranged from a low of 71% to a high of 89%.

The high level of satisfaction expressed with SCV Water's performance *in general* was also mirrored in respondents' assessments of the agency's performance in providing *specific* services. For all services tested, at least 73% of respondents were satisfied with SCV Water's efforts—and for many service areas more than 85% were satisfied. Among the 15 services tested, respondents were most satisfied with SCV Water's efforts to provide reliable water service (95% very or somewhat satisfied), provide accurate billing statements (92%), educate customers about ways to conserve water (90%), provide good customer service (90%), communicate with customers about scheduled repairs, service disruptions, and other water-related issues (89%), keep the water system in good condition (89%), and provide sufficient water pressure (87%).

How do customers rate SCV Water's customer service?

One of the objectives of this study was to profile the opinions of customers who had reason to contact SCV Water during the six months prior to taking the survey—focusing in particular on how they assess the customer service they received.

Approximately one-in-five customers surveyed (17%) reported that they had contacted SCV Water during the six months prior to taking the survey regarding their water service, with the most common reasons being billing/payment questions and water-related service issues such as a leak, water pressure problem, or water quality issue. Among this subgroup, half (51%) of customers were able to resolve their issue with a single contact and two-thirds (68%) indicated that the reason for contacting SCV Water was ultimately resolved to their satisfaction. Additionally, more than seven-in-ten customers indicated that they were satisfied with

their ability to reach a service representative (77%), the courtesy of the service representative (76%), and the knowledge and expertise of the service representative (72%).

Among the small subgroup of customers with a water service issue that required a field representative be sent to their property (3% of all residential customers surveyed), most customers in this segment indicated that the field representative arrived in a timely manner (63%), accurately assessed the problem (74%), and clearly explained the nature of the problem and how it could be fixed (51%).

Where should SCV Water focus its efforts in the future?

Perhaps the most important recommendation, one often overlooked in customer satisfaction research, is for SCV Water to recognize the things it does well and to focus on continuing to perform at a high level in these areas. As noted throughout this report, the vast majority of customers were generally pleased with the water services their households receive. The top priority for the agency should thus be to do what it takes to maintain the quality of services it currently provides.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of constant improvement, the results of the study suggest several opportunities to increase customer satisfaction further. Based on the survey findings, some residential customers saw room for improvement in offering good *value for the cost* of water services, providing *rebate programs* that encourage customers to purchase water-efficient appliances, providing *high quality water*, and for *field representatives to clearly explain the nature of the problem and how it could be fixed* when sent to their property. Although a majority of respondents who provided an opinion were satisfied with each of these service aspects, the rates of satisfaction were somewhat lower when compared to the other service areas tested.

There is also an opportunity to increase customers' knowledge regarding the per-gallon cost of the water their household receives. As noted in the survey, 56% of customers felt that their monthly water bill is too high for the quality of water services their household receives, yet two-thirds (66%) of customers could not estimate the cost of water per gallon, and nearly all remaining customers *overestimated* the cost of water. Overall, just 4% of customers correctly understood that the water their household receives costs less than 1 cent per gallon.

Clarifying the true cost of water had a striking effect on the perceived value of SCV Water's services. Once customers understood that water is priced at less than 1 cent per gallon, 53% rated water an excellent or good value, and an additional 26% felt water is a fair value. In fact, many who had previously complained that their water bill is too high switched to viewing water as an excellent or good value when informed about the true cost of water per gallon.

How well is SCV Water communicating with customers?

Keeping up with the challenge of communicating with customers has been difficult for many public agencies in recent years. As the number of information sources and channels available to the public have dramatically increased, so too has the diversity in where customers regularly turn for their information. Not only have entirely new channels arisen to become mainstream and nearly ubiquitous (e.g., social media), within these channels there exists a proliferation of alternative services. To add to the challenge, public preferences for information sources are also dynamic—subject to change as new services are made available while others may fade in popularity—making thorough, effective communication a *moving* target for public agencies.

Against this backdrop of challenges, the survey reveals that SCV Water has been doing an admirable job communicating with residential customers, with 79% of customers stating that they were satisfied with the agency's efforts to communicate with them through newsletters, its website, social media, and other means. Looking forward, customers were also clear about which methods would be the most effective for SCV Water to communicate with them in the future, with email, electronic newsletters, direct mail postcards or information, bill inserts, and text messages widely perceived to be the most effective approaches.

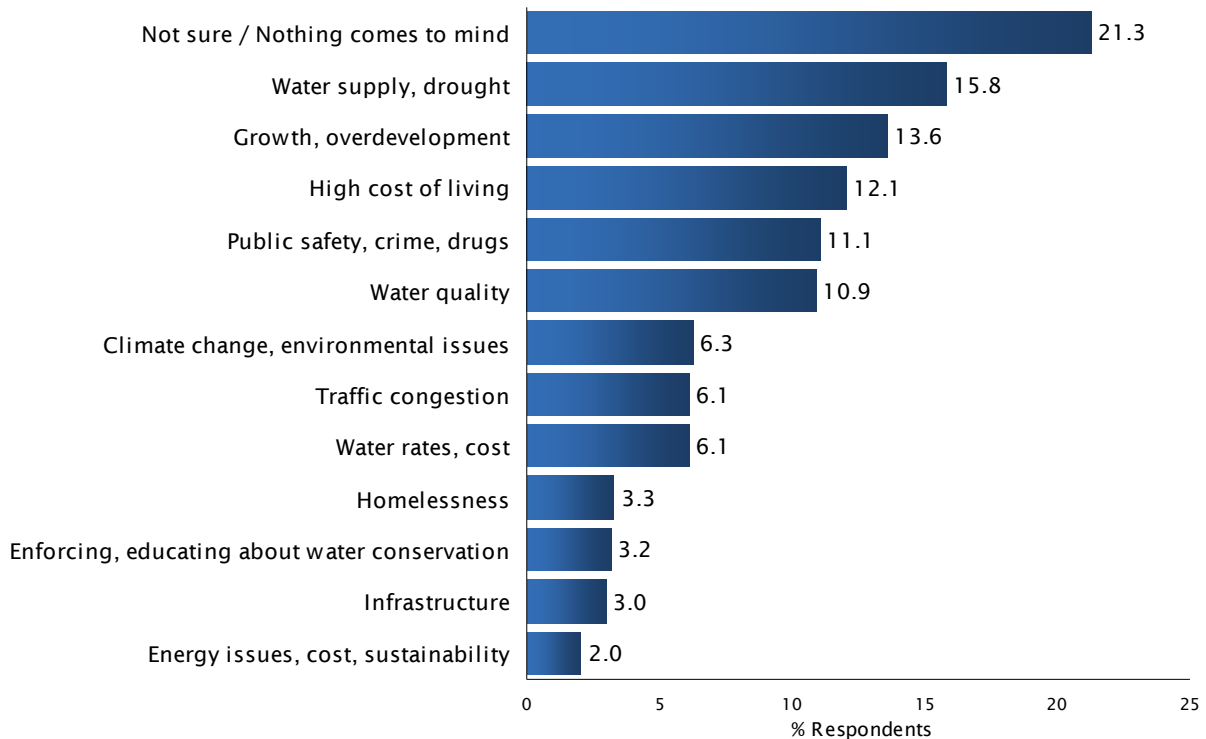
IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

The first substantive question of the survey asked residential customers to identify what they feel is currently the most important issue facing residents in their area. This question was posed in an open-ended manner, thereby allowing respondents to mention any issue that came to mind without being prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 1. Because respondents were free to mention more than one issue, the percentages in the figure total more than 100%. Issues that were mentioned by fewer than 2% of respondents are not shown.

Approximately one-in-five respondents (21%) were unsure or unable to offer a specific issue facing residents in their area. Among the specific issues that were mentioned, water supply/drought was the most common (16%), followed by growth/overdevelopment (14%), the high cost of living (12%), public safety, crime and/or drugs (11%), and water quality (11%). Other issues mentioned by at least 5% of respondents included climate change/environmental issues (6%), traffic congestion (6%), and water rates/costs (6%).

Question 2 *What do you feel is the most important issue facing residents in your area today?*

FIGURE 1 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE



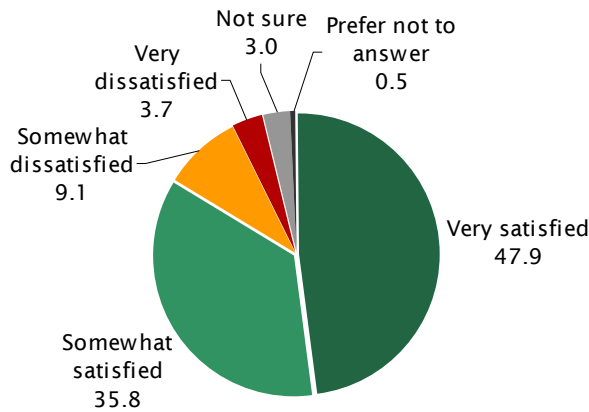
SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES

After measuring respondents' views regarding issues of importance in their community, the survey transitioned to assessing customers' opinions about SCV Water's performance in providing water services.

OVERALL SATISFACTION The first question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, generally speaking, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the SCV Water is doing to provide water services to their household. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested that the respondent consider the agency's performance in general, the findings of this question may be regarded as an *overall performance rating* for SCV Water.

Question 3 *Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job SCV Water is doing to provide water services to your household?*

FIGURE 2 OVERALL SATISFACTION



As shown in Figure 2, more than eight-in-ten respondents indicated they were either very (48%) or somewhat (36%) satisfied with SCV Water's efforts to provide water services. Approximately 13% were dissatisfied, and 4% were unsure or unwilling to share their opinion.

Figures 3 and 4 display how customers' opinions about SCV Water's overall performance in providing water services varied by a host of demographic traits. The high levels of satisfaction exhibited by respondents as a whole were generally echoed across all customer sub-groups, with satisfaction ranging from a low of 71% to a high of 89%.

FIGURE 3 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY AGE, RAW BILLED USAGE, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & HOME TYPE

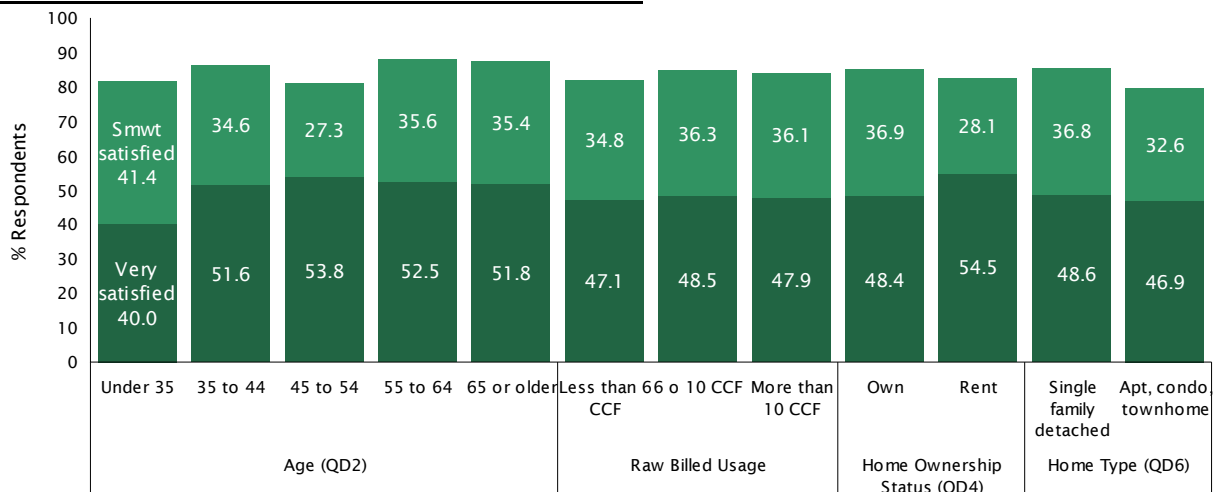
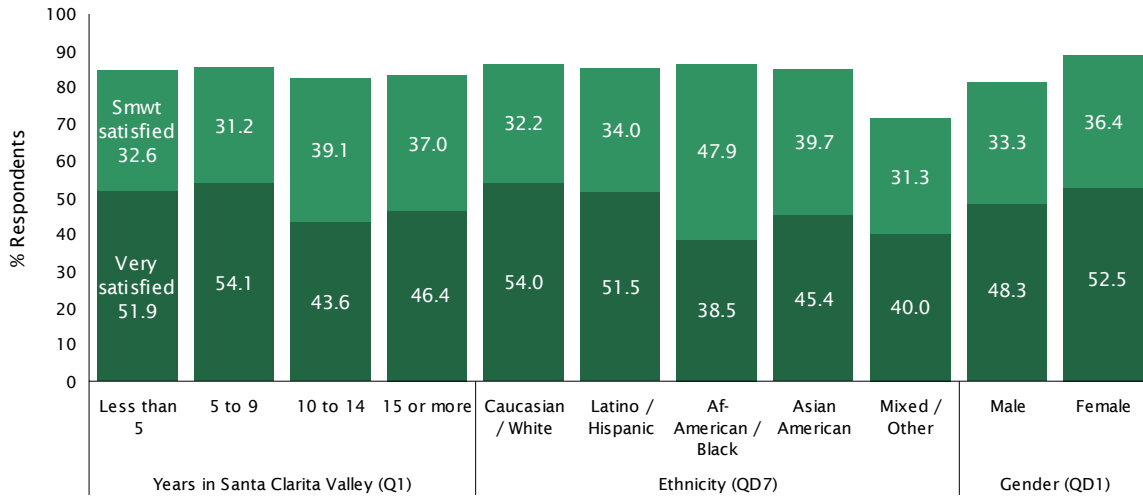


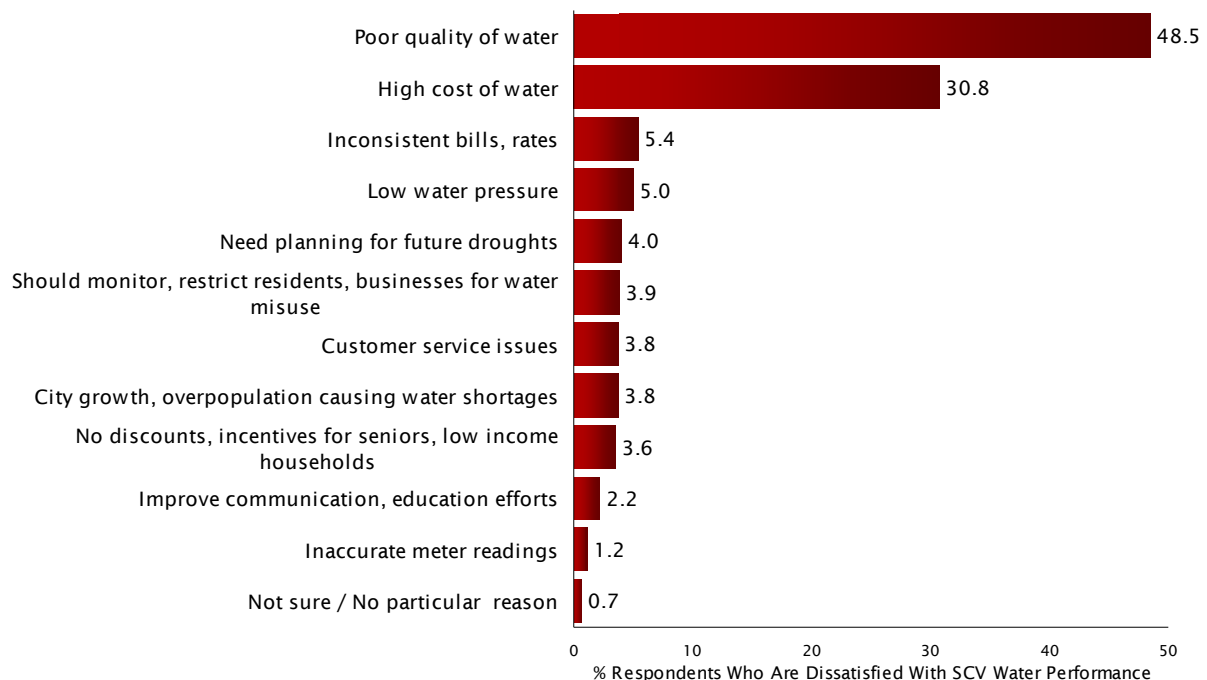
FIGURE 4 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY, ETHNICITY & AGE



REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION The minority of customers (13%) who indicated that they were generally dissatisfied with SCV Water’s performance in providing water services to their household were subsequently asked to identify the particular reason for their dissatisfaction. Question 4 was presented in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being constrained to a particular list. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 6.

Question 4 *Is there a particular reason why you are dissatisfied with SCV Water's performance?*

FIGURE 5 REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH SCV WATER’S PERFORMANCE



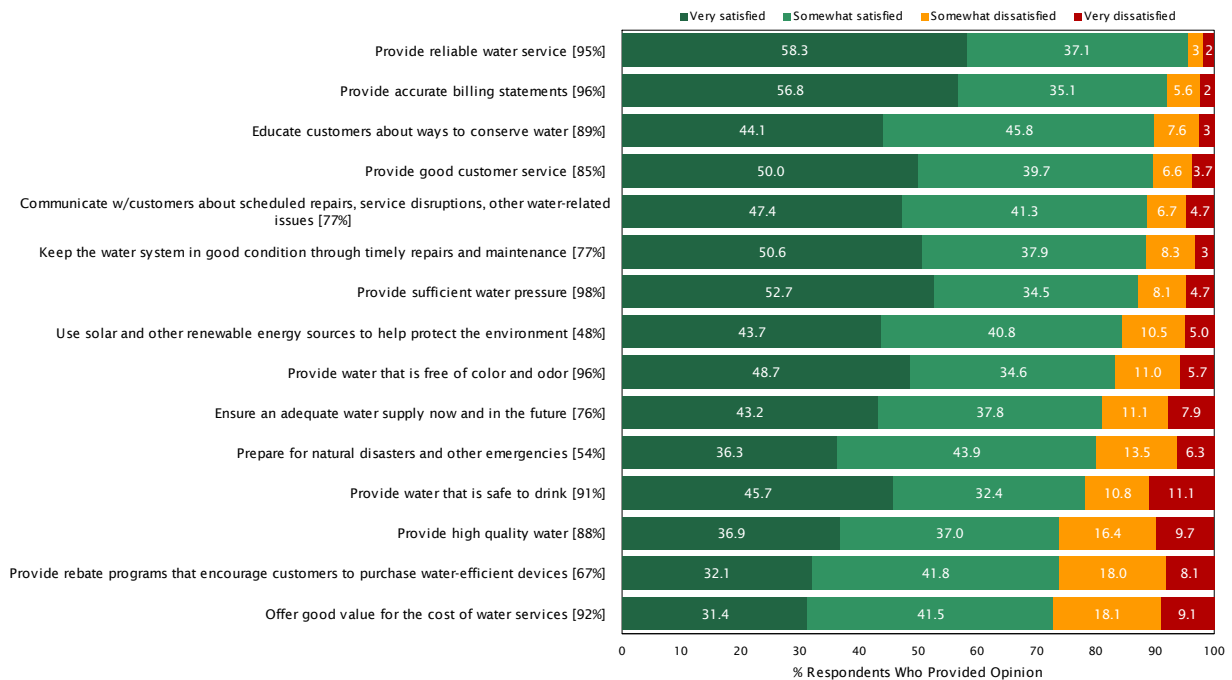
As shown in the figure, approximately half (49%) of customers who were dissatisfied with the water services they receive mentioned poor quality water as the reason. Others referenced the high cost of water (31%), inconsistent billing/rates (5%), and low water pressure (5%).

SPECIFIC SERVICES Whereas Question 3 addressed SCV Water’s overall performance, Question 5 asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with the agency’s efforts to provide specific services. The order of the items was randomized for each respondent to avoid a systematic position bias.

Figure 6 presents the services sorted by the percentage of respondents who were either very or somewhat satisfied with SCV Water’s efforts to provide the service. For comparison purposes between the services, only respondents who held an opinion (satisfied or dissatisfied) are included in the figure. Those who did not have an opinion were removed from this analysis. The percentage of respondents who provided an opinion (satisfied or dissatisfied) is shown in brackets beside the service label in the figure, while the bars represent the answers of those with an opinion.

Question 5 Next, I'm going to read a list of specific services provided by SCV Water. For each of the services I read, please tell me whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the agency's efforts to provide the service. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SCV Water's efforts to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?

FIGURE 6 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES



At the top of the list, respondents were most satisfied with SCV Water’s efforts to provide reliable water service (95% very or somewhat satisfied), provide accurate billing statements (92%), educate customers about ways to conserve water (90%), and provide good customer service (90%). When compared to the other services tested, respondents were somewhat less satisfied

with SCV Water’s efforts to offer good value for the cost of water services (73%), provide rebate programs that encourage customers to purchase water-efficient appliances (74%), and provide high quality water (74%). Even for these services, however, is it noteworthy that more than seven-in-ten respondents indicated they were satisfied.

DIFFERENTIATORS OF OPINION For the interested reader, Table 1 displays how the level of satisfaction with each specific service tested in Question 5 varied according to customers’ overall performance ratings for SCV Water (see *Overall Satisfaction* on page 7). The table divides customers who were satisfied with the agency’s *overall performance* into one group and those dissatisfied into a second group. Shown in the far right column is the difference between the two groups in terms of the percentage who indicated they were satisfied with the provision of each service tested in Question 5. The services are sorted by that difference, with the greatest differentiators of opinion near the top of the table.

When compared with their counterparts, those satisfied with SCV Water’s performance in providing water services *overall* were also more likely to express satisfaction with the agency’s efforts to provide each of the individual services tested in Question 5. With that said, the greatest specific differentiators of opinion between satisfied and dissatisfied customers were found with respect to SCV Water’s efforts to offer good value for the cost of water services, provide high quality water, and ensure an adequate water supply now and in the future. In other words, these are the service areas that appear to be the primary drivers of dissatisfaction for certain customers.

TABLE 1 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES BY OVERALL SATISFACTION

		SCV Water's Overall Services (Q3)		Difference Between Groups For Each Service
		Very or somewhat satisfied	Very or somewhat dissatisfied	
% Respondents Satisfied With Each Service	Offer good value for the cost of water services	80.9	23.8	57.1
	Provide high quality water	80.5	34.5	46.0
	Ensure an adequate water supply now and in the future	86.5	40.9	45.6
	Keep the water system in good condition through timely repairs and maintenance	93.3	55.5	37.7
	Provide water that is safe to drink	83.4	48.4	35.0
	Provide water that is free of color and odor	88.0	53.5	34.6
	Prepare for natural disasters and other emergencies	84.9	53.1	31.7
	Provide rebate programs that encourage customers to purchase water-efficient devices	77.8	46.4	31.3
	Use solar and other renewable energy sources to help protect the environment	87.4	61.4	26.0
	Provide good customer service	93.2	67.8	25.4
	Communicate w/customers about scheduled repairs, service disruptions, other water-related issues	91.6	70.8	20.8
	Provide sufficient water pressure	89.7	71.3	18.4
	Educate customers about ways to conserve water	92.0	74.7	17.3
	Provide reliable water service	97.4	82.2	15.2
	Provide accurate billing statements	94.1	80.0	14.1

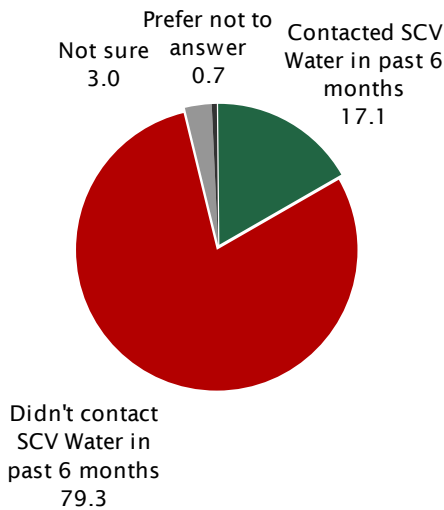
CUSTOMER SERVICE

The next section of the survey included questions to gauge whether residential customers had contacted SCV Water in the past six months, the reason for their most recent contact, if the reason that prompted contact was resolved to their satisfaction, and ratings for field and customer service representatives.

SCV WATER CONTACT Respondents were first asked if they had contacted SCV Water for any reason during the six months prior to the interview. Figure 7 shows that approximately one-in-five respondents (17%) indicated that they had contacted the agency in the six months prior to the interview.

Question 6 *During the past six months, have you or anyone else in your household contacted SCV Water for any reason?*

FIGURE 7 CONTACTED SCV WATER IN PAST 6 MONTHS



When compared with their respective counterparts, customers over the age of 54, those with more than 10 CCF billed usage per month, renters, those who had lived in Santa Clarita Valley less than five years, African Americans, females, and those dissatisfied with SCV Water’s overall performance were the most likely to report having contacted the agency during the six months preceding the interview (see figures 8 & 9).

FIGURE 8 CONTACTED SCV WATER IN PAST 6 MONTHS BY AGE, RAW BILLED USAGE, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & HOME TYPE

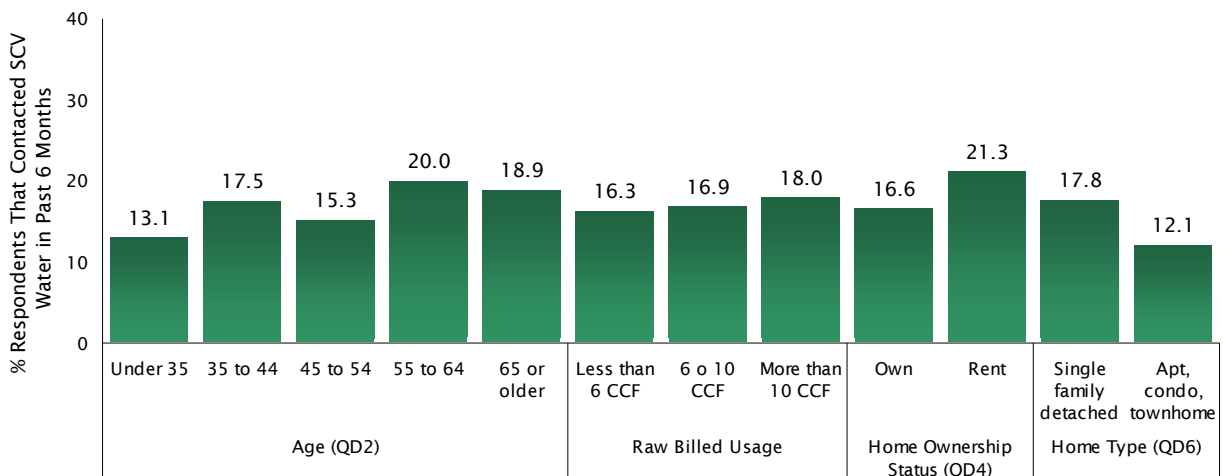
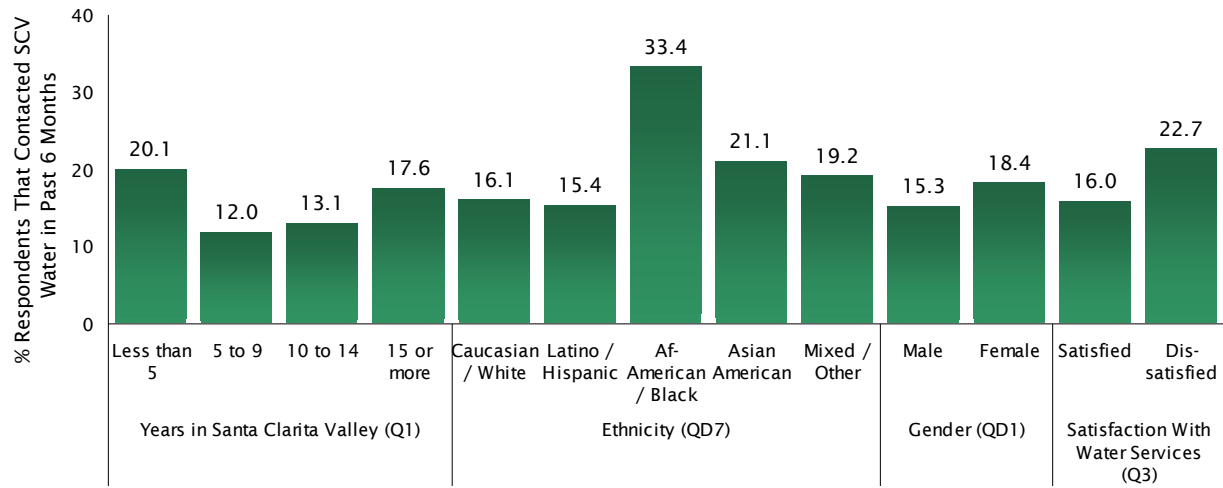


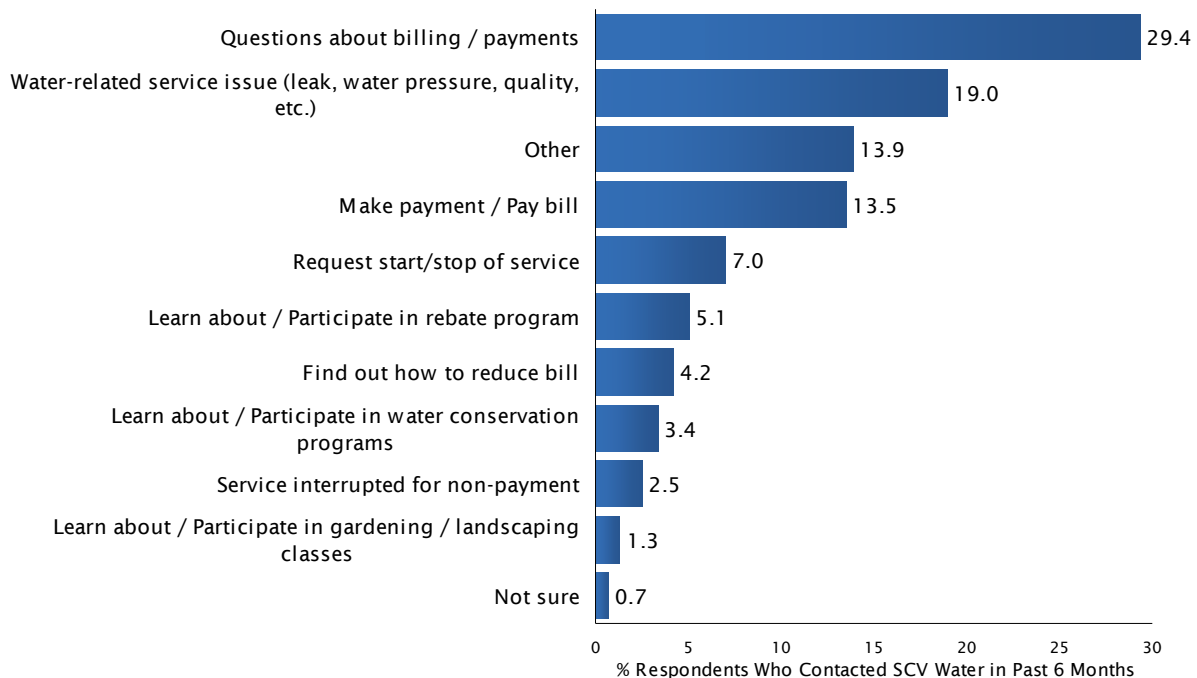
FIGURE 9 CONTACTED SCV WATER IN PAST 6 MONTHS BY YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY, ETHNICITY, GENDER & SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES



REASON FOR CONTACT Respondents who indicated that they or someone in their household had contacted SCV Water within the past six months were asked a series of follow-up questions about their contact. The first question in this series asked respondents to recall the main reason or issue that prompted their most recent contact with the agency. Question 7 was asked in an open-ended manner to avoid respondents being prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 10.

Question 7 *Thinking of your most recent contact, what was the main reason or issue that prompted you to contact SCV Water?*

FIGURE 10 REASON FOR CONTACTING SCV WATER



Overall, respondents were most likely to have contacted SCV Water with billing or payment questions (29%), followed by water-related service issues such as a leak, water pressure problem, or water quality issue (19%), a collection of 'other' issues (14%), and to make a payment (14%). When customers who specifically mentioned having a problem with their *water service* were subsequently asked to describe the problem (Question 8), most responses centered on water leaks, broken pipes/sprinklers, or concerns about water quality (see verbatim responses below).

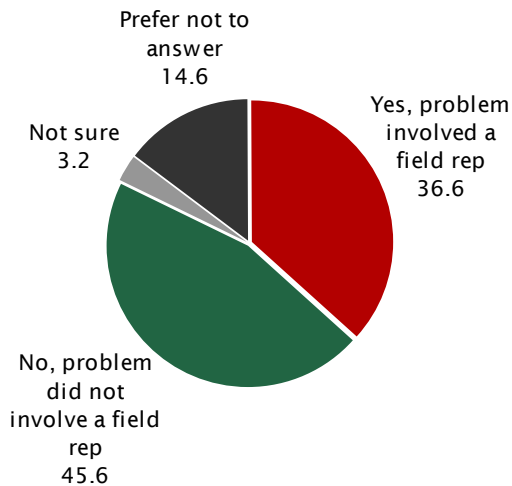
Question 8 *Can you describe the specific problem you were having with your water service?*

- *A pipe broke when I hill came down during the storm and we did know until 8 hour later.*
- *As an agency employee, I reached out directly to operations on a neighborhood water quality issue. The neighborhood was not pre-warned that work being done may create an issue. The issue alarmed the neighborhood, as to whether the water was safe.*
- *Broken sprinkler line so called to update on any leak and possible higher water usage.*
- *Brown water.*
- *Burst pipe in sprinkler system. Called to alert water company to the reason for higher water use.*
- *Had a leak in the front yard. Service person came out and looked it and told me it was on our property and couldn't do anything about it.*
- *Had a undisclosed leak for an extended period of time. Found the leak and repaired it immediately. Worked with SCV Water for bill relief.*
- *I had water shooting into the air from a broken sprinkler.*
- *It was related to water softening and filtering. No help was provided by the SCV water.*
- *Leak by the main water meters underground.*
- *Leak near the main water valve.*
- *Locating a water leak.*
- *No one has been stayed last three months due to yellow tag but my bill has been higher than before.*
- *The water comes out bubbly and foggy because the water supply has been changed.*
- *There is a business that has a water leak in third driveway, we reported it. Nothing been done.*
- *There was a water main break on the street.*
- *Water leak.*
- *Water leak at neighbors adjoining curb water meter leaking water into my meter and down the street for over a week before anyone repaired it. What a waste of water on your part doing a drought!*
- *Water pressure wasn't there.*
- *Water service was turned off without notice for 15 hours.*
- *Water was leaking from the water hydrant.*
- *Water/ sprinkler head leak in green space area.*
- *We've had leaks and pressure issue in the past and getting help was not resolves. We have done repairs around the house but the water pressure remains the same.*

FIELD REPRESENTATIVES The small customer segment (3% of all customers) who had contacted SCV Water about a water-related service issue during the prior six months were also asked whether their problem involved the agency sending a field representative to their property. As shown in Figure 11, just over one-third (37%) of all customers in this subgroup had a field representative sent to their property.

Question 9 *Did your problem involve SCV Water sending a field representative to your property?*

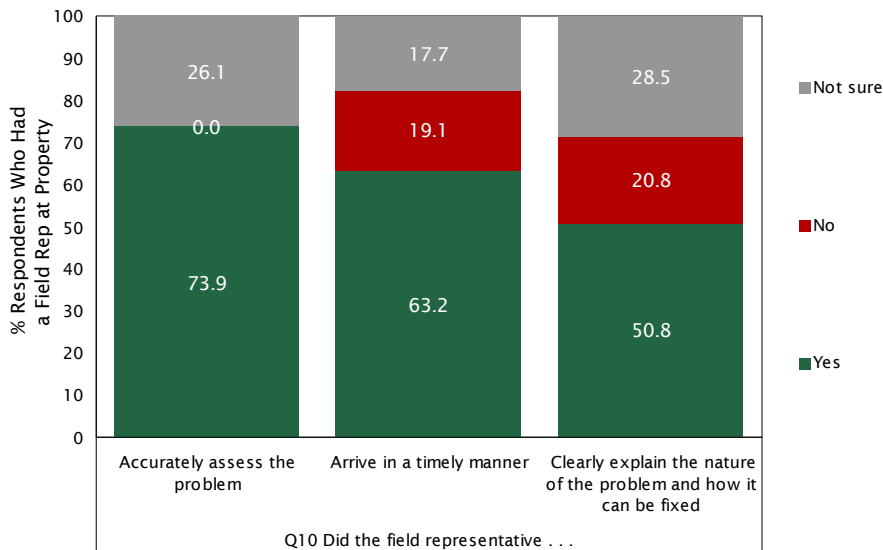
FIGURE 11 PROBLEM INVOLVED SCV WATER FIELD REPRESENTATIVE



The next question in this section (Question 10) asked respondents who had a field representative sent to their property for a water-related service problem to rate the field representative on three dimensions. Presented in Figure 12 below, most customers in this segment indicated that the field representative arrived in a timely manner (63%), accurately assessed the problem (74%), and clearly explained the nature of the problem and how it could be fixed (51%).

Question 10 *Did the field representative: _____?*

FIGURE 12 FIELD REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCE



NUMBER OF CONTACTS NEEDED TO RESOLVE ISSUE Turning back to the larger segment of customers whose household had contacted SCV Water within the past six months, Question 11 asked if they were able to resolve their issue with a single contact, or whether multiple calls/contacts were required. As displayed in Figure 13, just over half of customers who had contacted the agency were able to resolve their issue with a single contact (51%). Twenty-seven percent (27%) required multiple contacts, 16% indicated that the issue was not resolved, and 6% were unsure or unwilling to state.

Question 11 *Were you able to resolve the issue with a single contact, or were multiple calls/contacts required to resolve the issue?*

FIGURE 13 ISSUE RESOLVED WITH SINGLE CONTACT OR MULTIPLE CALLS/CONTACTS

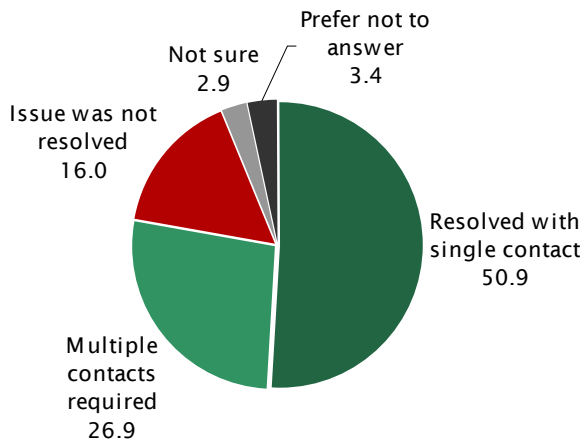
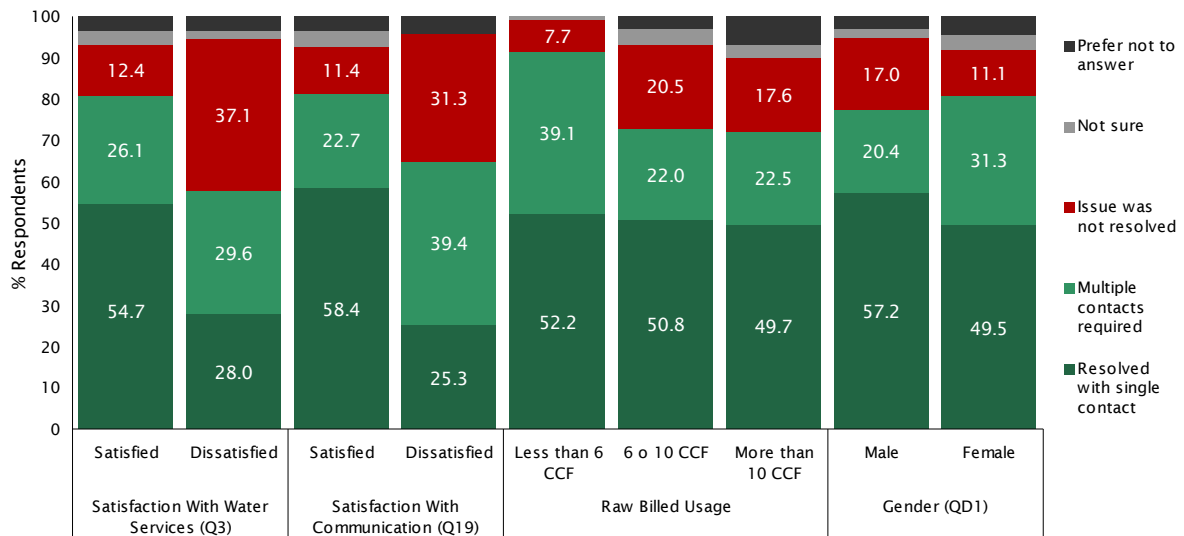


Figure 14 shows how the responses to Question 11 varied across key customer subgroups. As shown in the figure, customers who reported being satisfied with SCV Water’s performance in general and the agency’s efforts to communicate with customers were also much more likely to report that SCV Water was able to resolve their issue with a single contact. Conversely, being dissatisfied with SCV Water on these dimensions was correlated with having an issue that either wasn’t resolved or took multiple contacts.

FIGURE 14 ISSUE RESOLVED WITH SINGLE CONTACT OR MULTIPLE CALLS/CONTACTS BY SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES, SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION, RAW BILLED USAGE & GENDER



ISSUE RESOLVED TO SATISFACTION When asked if the reason for contacting SCV Water was ultimately resolved to their satisfaction, two-thirds (68%) of the customers who had contacted the agency answered in the affirmative, whereas 23% stated the issue was not resolved to their satisfaction and 9% were unsure or unwilling to answer the question (see Figure 15). Here again, we see a strong correlation among customers who had a water-service issue between how that specific issue was resolved and how they view SCV Water’s performance overall and the agency’s communication efforts (see Figure 16).

Question 12 *Was the reason you contacted them ultimately resolved to your satisfaction?*

FIGURE 15 ISSUE RESOLVED TO SATISFACTION

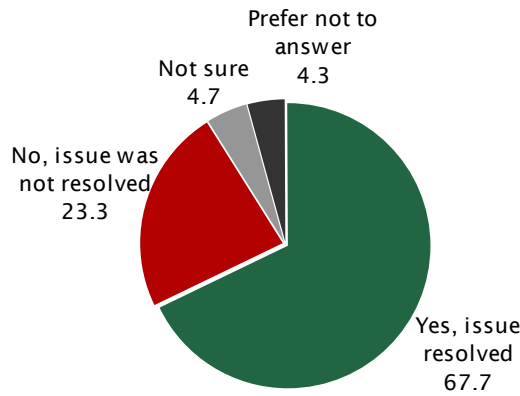
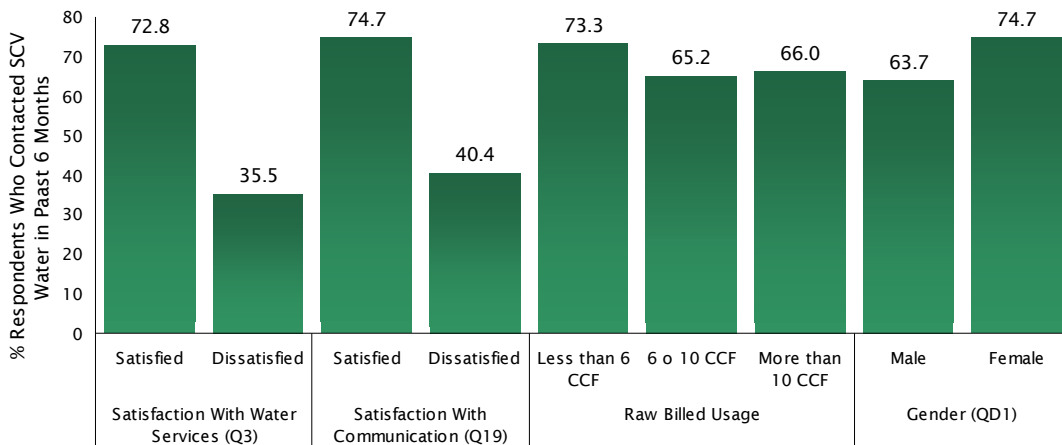


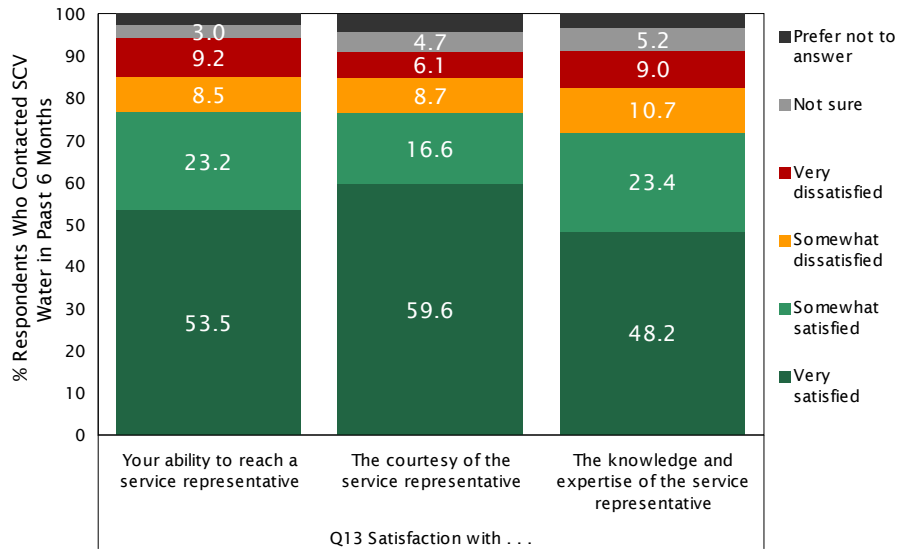
FIGURE 16 ISSUE RESOLVED TO SATISFACTION BY SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES, SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION, RAW BILLED USAGE & GENDER



SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES The final question in this series asked customers who had been in contact with SCV Water to provide their level of satisfaction with the service representatives’ accessibility, courtesy, and knowledge/expertise. As displayed in Figure 17 on the next page, respondents provided high ratings for all three dimensions tested, with more than seven-in-ten respondents in this segment indicating they were very or somewhat satisfied with their ability to reach a service representative (77%), the courtesy of the service representative (76%), and the knowledge and expertise of the service representative (72%).

Question 13 When contacting SCV Water, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with _____, or do you not have an opinion?

FIGURE 17 SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCE



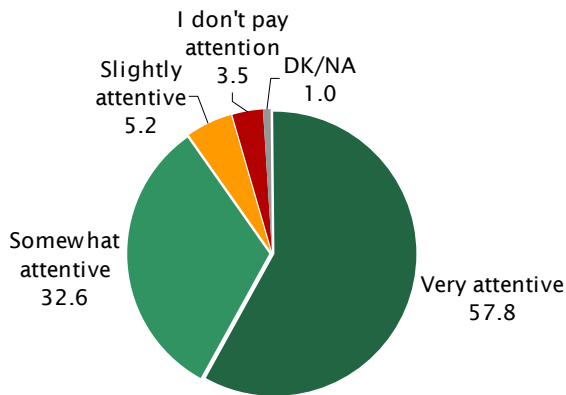
ATTENTION & VALUE

Having taken a pulse on the most important issues facing their community and customers' satisfaction with various aspects of the water services their household receives from SCV Water, the survey transitioned to respondents' attentiveness to the amount of water their household uses and the perceived value of their water services.

ATTENTION PAID TO HOUSEHOLD WATER USE The first question in this series asked respondents to rate how attentive they are to the amount of water their household uses. Overall, 58% of respondents reported that they are very attentive to their household's water use, 33% somewhat attentive, and 5% slightly attentive. Approximately 4% of respondents confided they do not pay any attention to how much water their household uses and 1% were unsure or declined to state (Figure 18).

Question 14 *In general, how much attention do you pay to the amount of water your household uses? Would you say you are very attentive, somewhat attentive, slightly attentive, or do you not pay attention to your water use?*

FIGURE 18 ATTENTIVENESS TO WATER USAGE



Figures 19 and 20 display attentiveness to water use across a host of customer characteristics. The figures reveal that customers are reasonably consistent in the amount of attention they pay to their household's water use, with the percentage reporting that they were *at least* somewhat attentive ranging between 86% (under 35) and 96% (mixed/other ethnicity).

FIGURE 19 ATTENTIVENESS TO WATER USAGE BY AGE, RAW BILLED USAGE & HOME TYPE

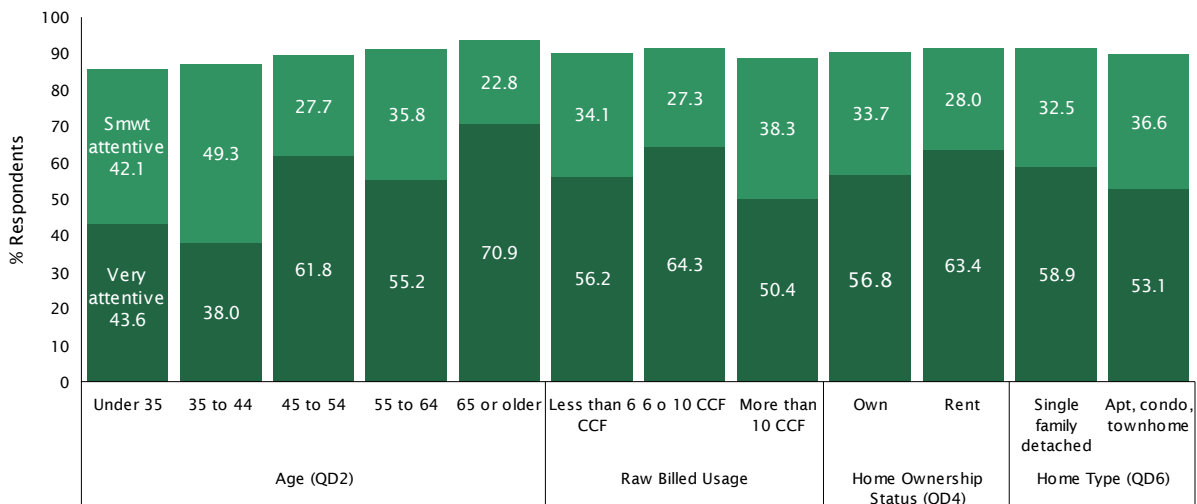
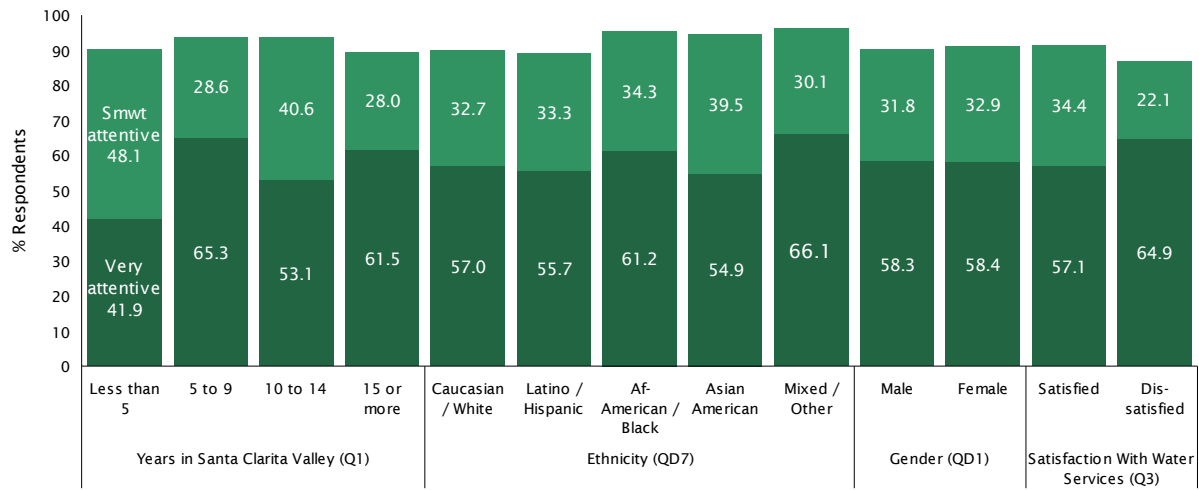


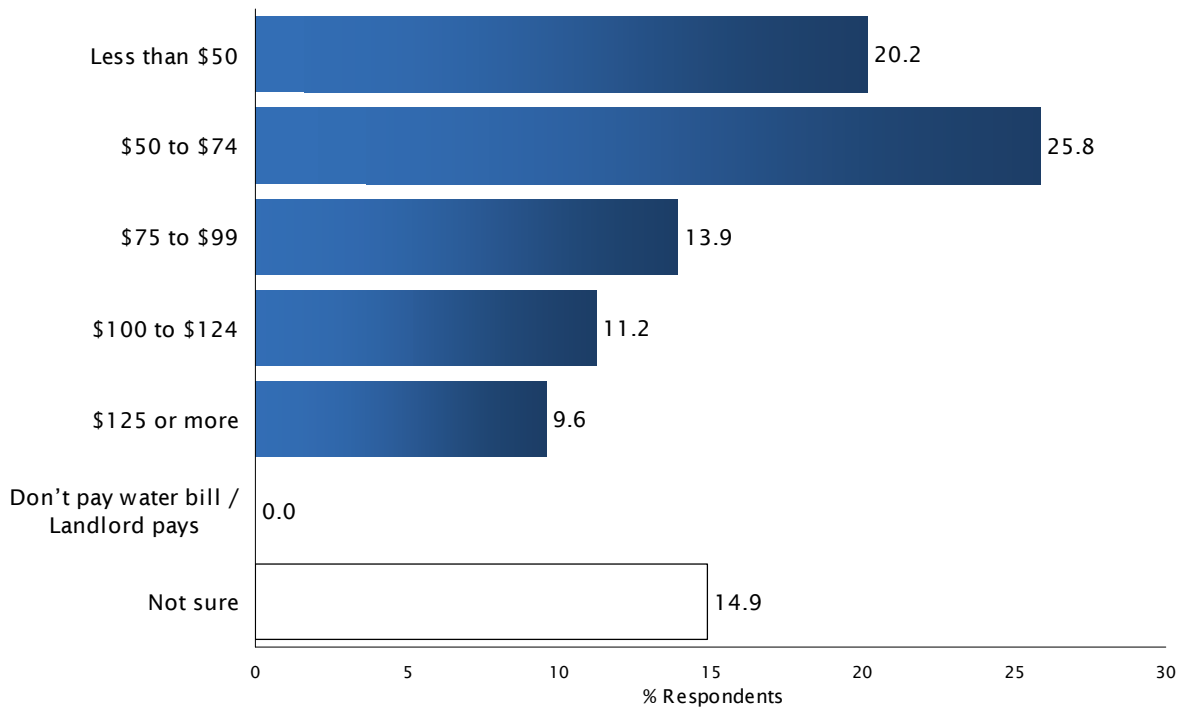
FIGURE 20 ATTENTIVENESS TO WATER USAGE BY YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY, ETHNICITY, GENDER & SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION



TYPICAL SUMMER BILL AMOUNT All respondents were next asked to estimate how much they pay for their water bill in a typical summer month. As shown in Figure 21, most respondents reported paying less than \$50 (20%), between \$50 to \$74 (26%), or between \$75 to \$99 (14%) in a typical summer month. Approximately one-in-five customers (21%) reported a typical summer bill of \$100 or more, while 15% were unsure.

Question 15 *In a typical summer month, how much is your household's water bill?*

FIGURE 21 TYPICAL SUMMER MONTH WATER BILL



For the interested reader, figures 22-24 show how the typical summertime monthly water bill reported by respondents ranged across customer subgroups. Figure 22 also shows that there is a strong correlation between the amount of raw water used by a customers per month based on SCV Water’s internal records and the typical summertime bill reported by customers in the survey.

FIGURE 22 TYPICAL SUMMER MONTH WATER BILL BY AGE & RAW BILLED USAGE

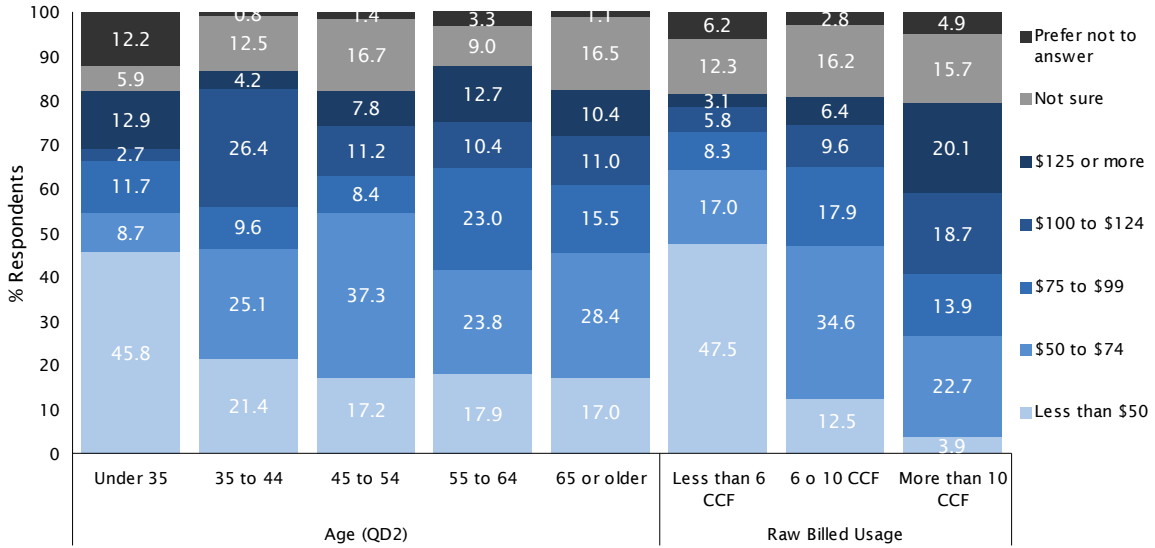


FIGURE 23 TYPICAL SUMMER MONTH WATER BILL BY YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY & ETHNICITY

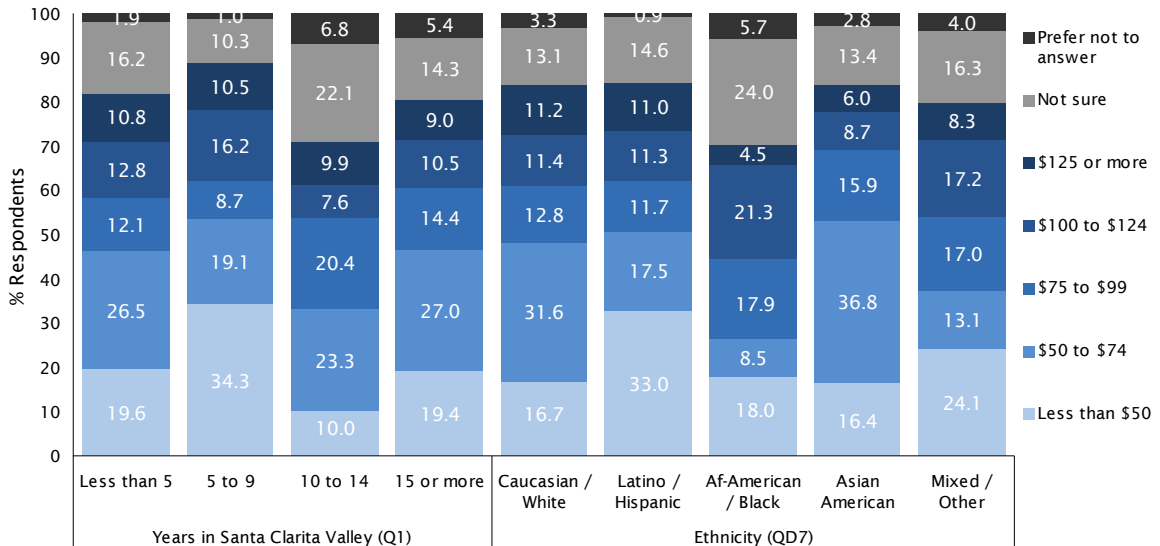
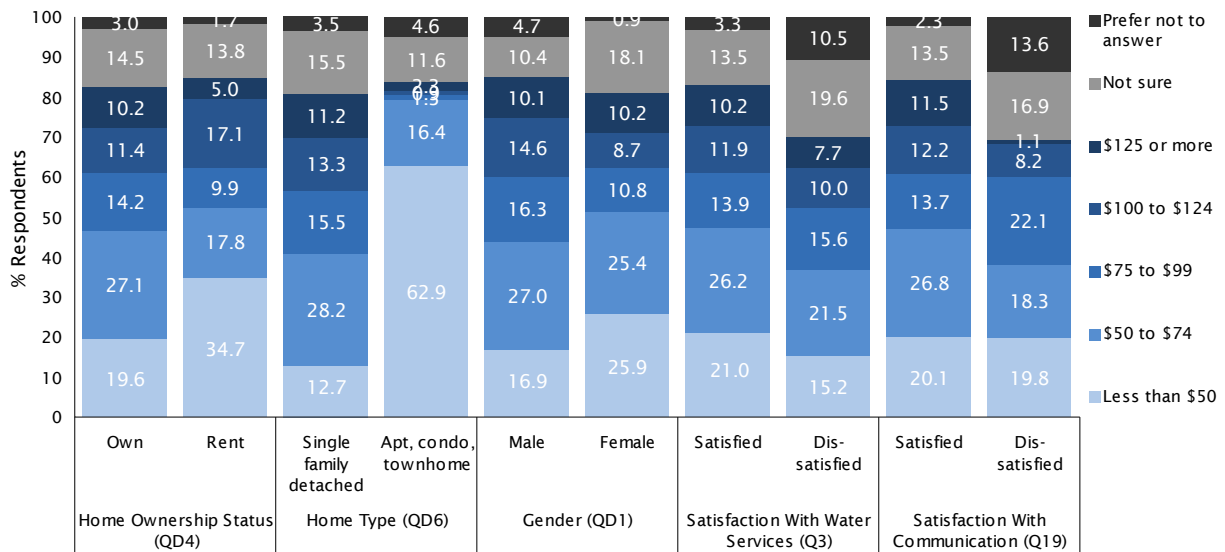


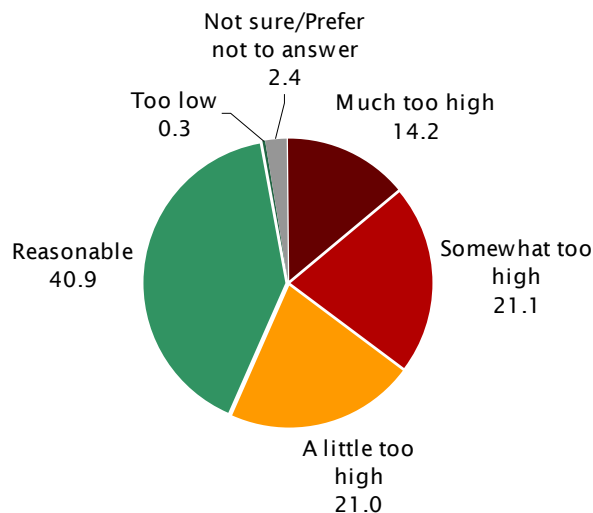
FIGURE 24 TYPICAL SUMMER MONTH WATER BILL BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, HOME TYPE, GENDER, SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES & SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION



REASONABLENESS OF COST Respondents were next asked whether they perceived that the amount their household pays for water service is reasonable, too high, or too low given the quality of the water service they receive. Overall, 56% of respondents felt the cost of water is too high relative to the quality, with 14% indicating that the price is much too high, 21% rating it as somewhat too high, and 21% saying the price is a little too high. Forty-one percent (41%) of customers rated the amount they pay for water service as reasonable, while less than 1% felt they pay too little given the quality of the water service their household receives. Approximately 2% of respondents were either unsure or unwilling to provide a response (see Figure 25).

Question 16 *Considering the quality of the water service your household receives, would you say that the amount your household pays for water service is reasonable, too high, or too low?*

FIGURE 25 OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST



Figures 26-29 show how the perceived cost of the water services their household receives varied by age, monthly water usage, years living in Santa Clarita Valley, ethnicity, home ownership, home type, gender, satisfaction with SCV Water’s overall performance, estimated typical summer water bill, and satisfaction with SCV Water’s efforts to communicate with customers. When compared to their respective counterparts, the tendency to view the cost of their water service as too high was greatest among those who were generally dissatisfied with their water services, those dissatisfied with SCV Water’s communication efforts, and customers who *estimated* that their typical summer water bill exceeds \$124 per month. Interestingly, the relationship between raw billed usage (drawn from SCV Water’s records) and the responses to this question were not as strong.

FIGURE 26 OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST BY AGE & RAW BILLED USAGE

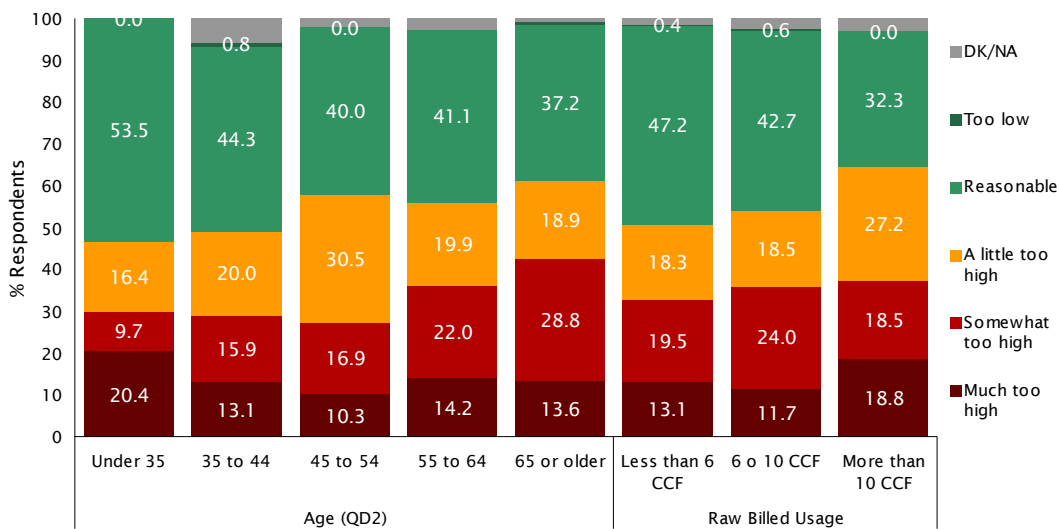


FIGURE 27 OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST BY YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY & ETHNICITY

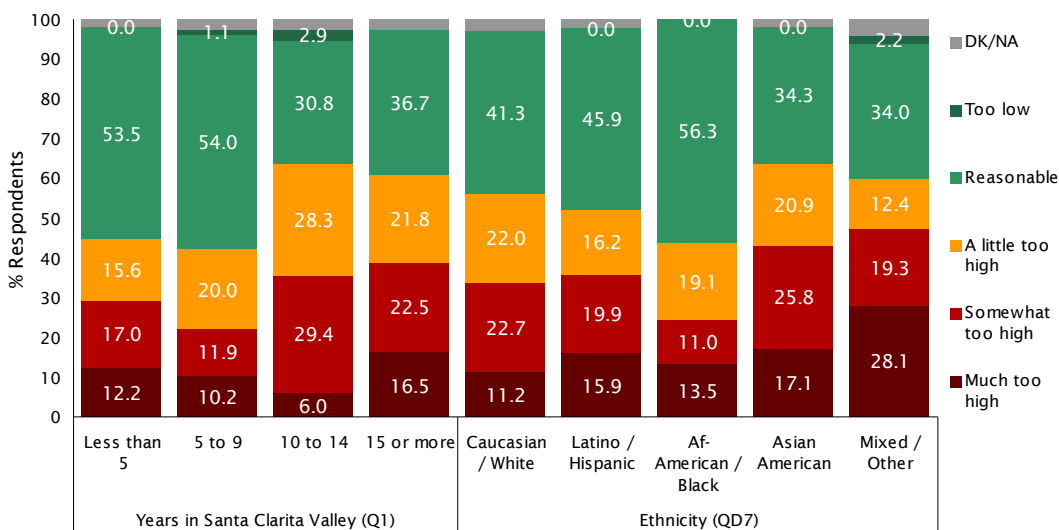


FIGURE 28 OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, HOME TYPE, GENDER & SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES

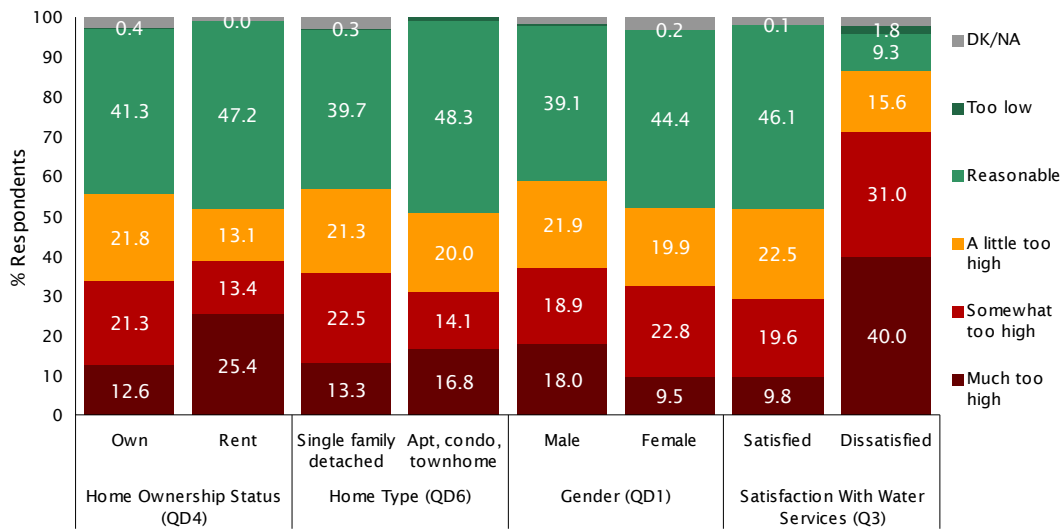
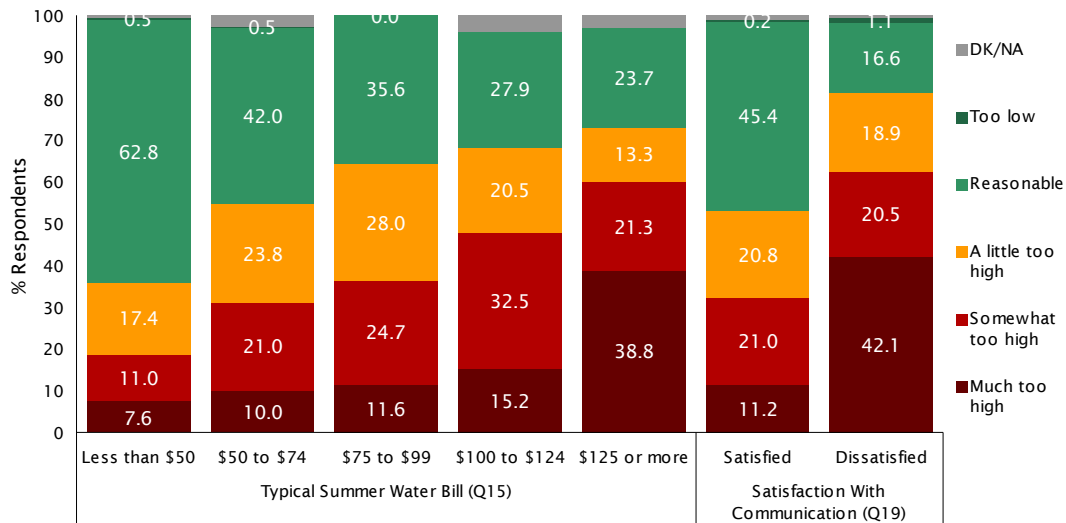


FIGURE 29 OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST BY TYPICAL SUMMER WATER BILL & SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION



COST PER GALLON Having measured respondents' opinions of their monthly water bill, Question 17 followed-up by asking customers how much they thought the water their household receives costs per gallon. As shown in Figure 30 on the next page, seven-in-ten respondents (70%) could not or would not provide an estimate, whereas the vast majority of remaining respondents overestimated the actual cost of water. Among all respondents, just 4% correctly identified the cost of water as less than 1 cent per gallon. Figures 31-34 show that although customer subgroups varied in their ability to estimate the true cost of water their household receives, it is striking that less than one-in-ten customers in *every* subgroup understood the actual cost of water.

Question 17 *If you had to guess, how much do you think the water your household receives costs per gallon?*

FIGURE 30 ESTIMATED COST OF WATER PER GALLON

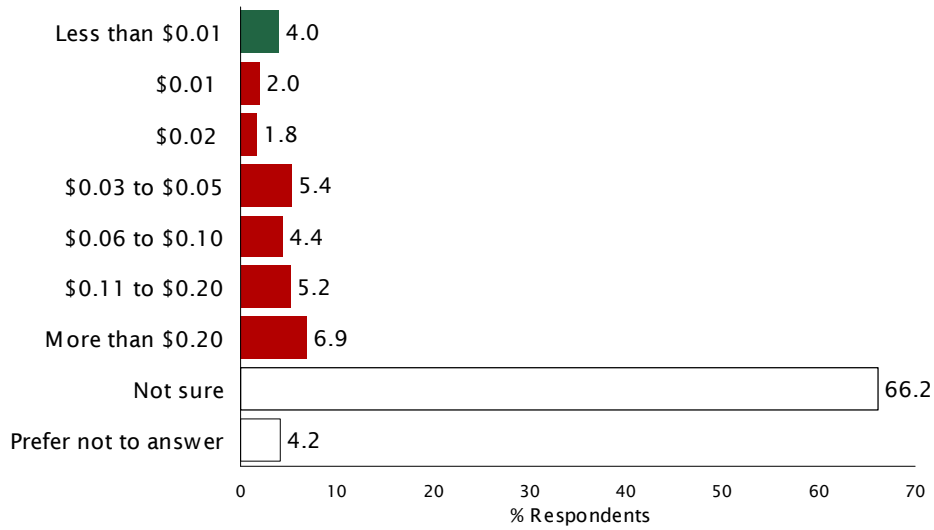


FIGURE 31 CORRECTLY ESTIMATED COST OF WATER PER GALLON BY AGE, ATTENTIVENESS TO WATER USAGE & YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

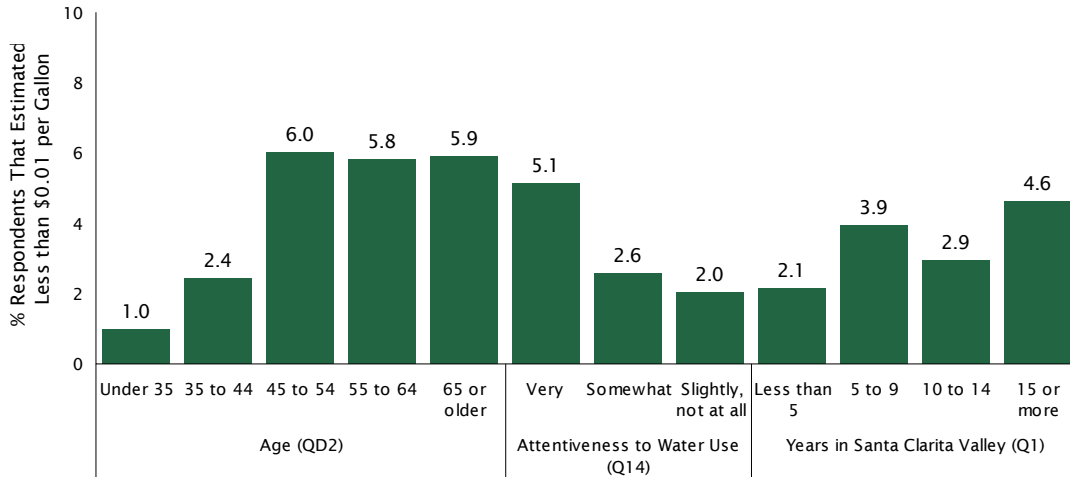


FIGURE 32 CORRECTLY ESTIMATED COST OF WATER PER GALLON BY OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST & ETHNICITY

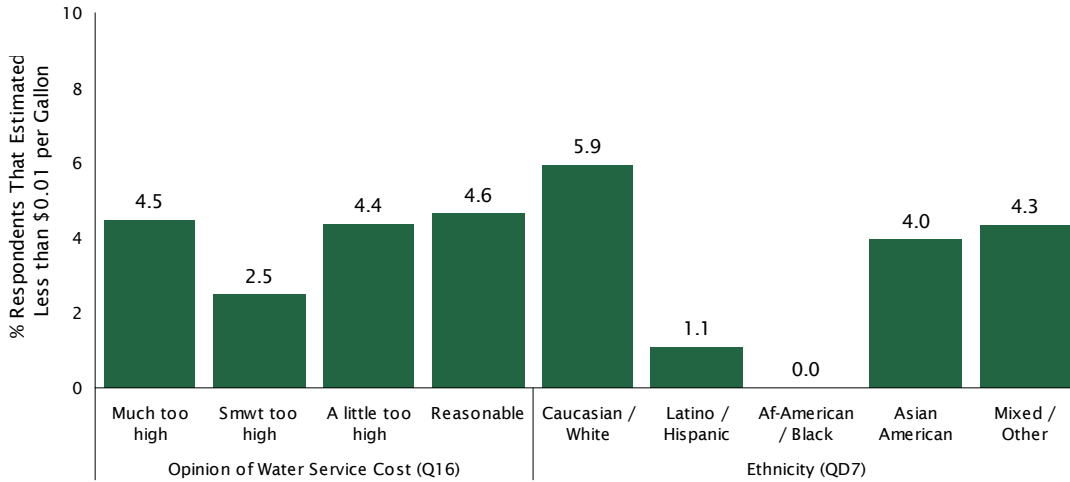


FIGURE 33 CORRECTLY ESTIMATED COST OF WATER PER GALLON BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, GENDER, RAW BILLED USAGE & HOME TYPE

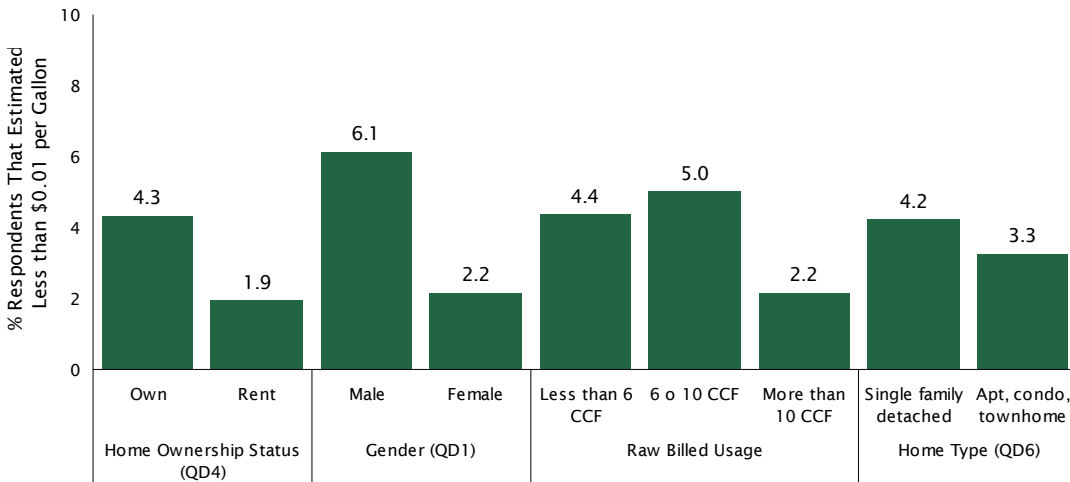
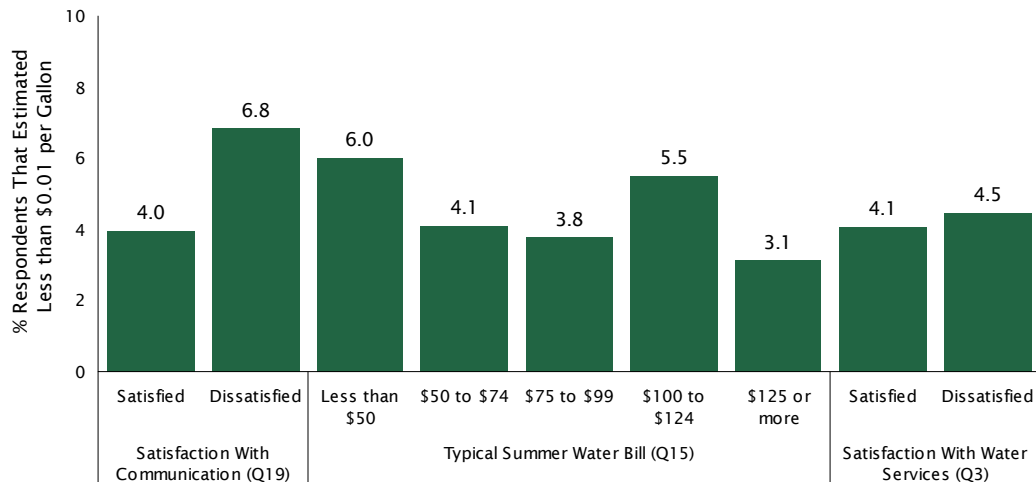


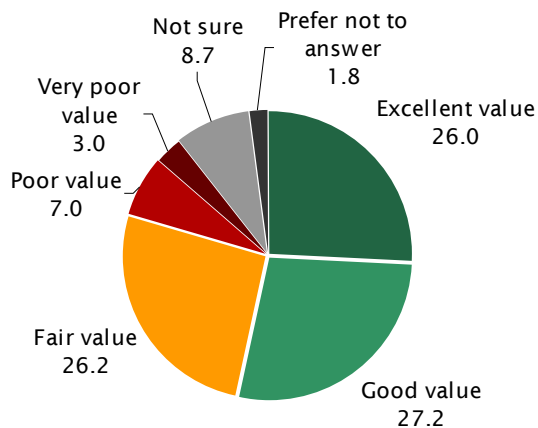
FIGURE 34 CORRECTLY ESTIMATED COST OF WATER PER GALLON BY SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION, TYPICAL SUMMER WATER BILL & SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES



VALUE FOR COST After clarifying for respondents that the actual cost of the tap water their household receives is less than 1 cent (one penny) per gallon, respondents were asked whether they thought that water is an excellent value, a good value, a fair value, a poor value, or a very poor value. As shown in Figure 35, more than half of customers rated the value of water as excellent (26%) or good (27%) after learning that the cost of water is less than 1 cent per gallon, 26% offered that the value is fair, whereas about 10% rated it as poor (7%) or very poor (3%). The remaining 11% of customers surveyed were unsure or unwilling to offer an opinion.

Question 18 To clarify, the cost of the tap water your household receives is less than 1 cent per gallon. Knowing this, would you say that water is an excellent value, a good value, a fair value, a poor value, or a very poor value?

FIGURE 35 OPINION OF WATER VALUE



Once respondents understood the true cost of water (less than 1 cent per gallon), many who had previously complained that their water bill was too high switched to viewing water as an excellent or good value (see Figure 37). A willingness to see water as an excellent or good value at this point was also reasonably consistent across customers. Even among those with estimated summertime water bills of \$125 or more per month, 45% now viewed water as an excellent or good value, while nine-in-ten viewed their water service as at least a fair deal (see Figure 39).

FIGURE 36 OPINION OF WATER VALUE BY AGE, ATTENTIVENESS TO WATER USE & YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

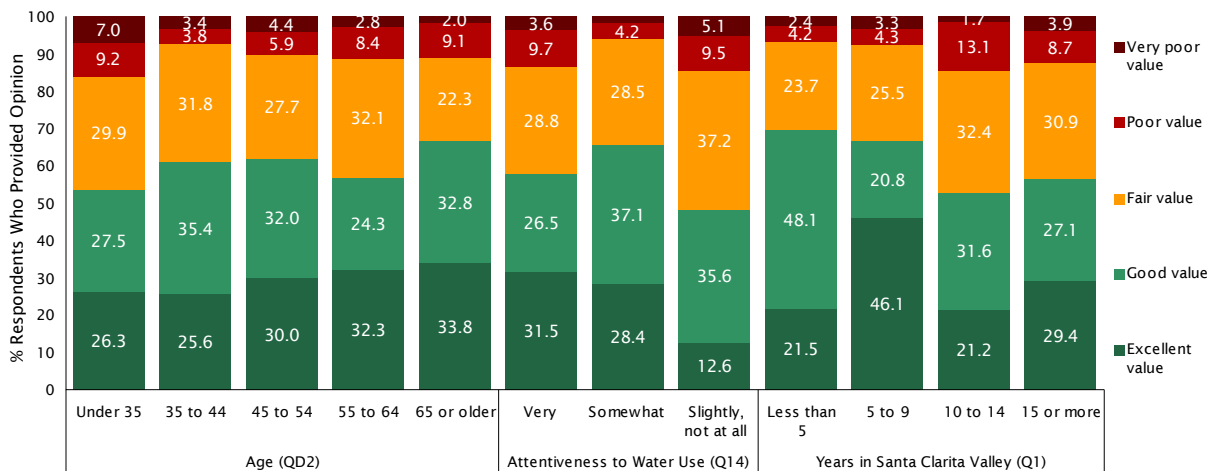


FIGURE 37 OPINION OF WATER VALUE BY OPINION OF WATER SERVICE COST & ETHNICITY

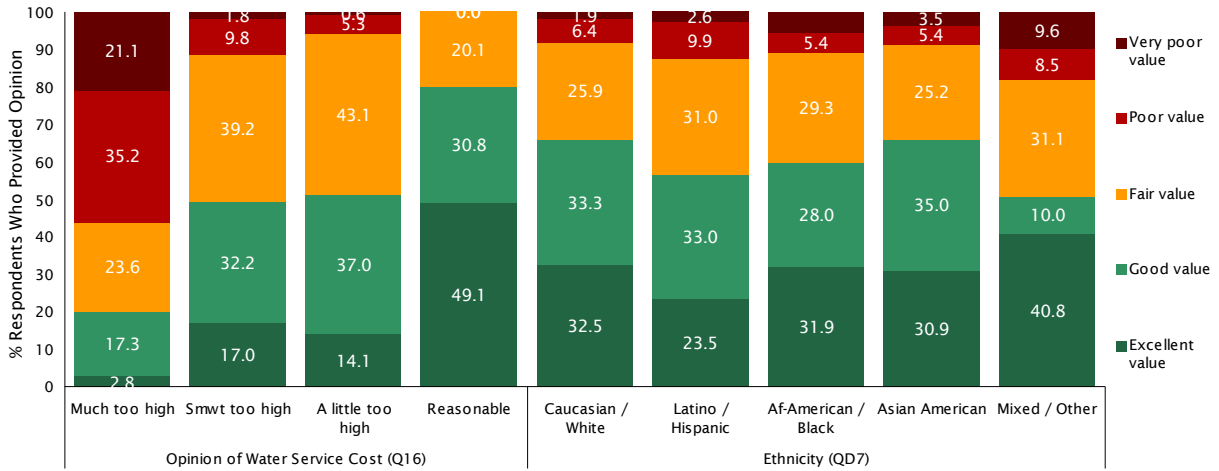


FIGURE 38 OPINION OF WATER VALUE BY SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES, GENDER & RAW BILLED USAGE

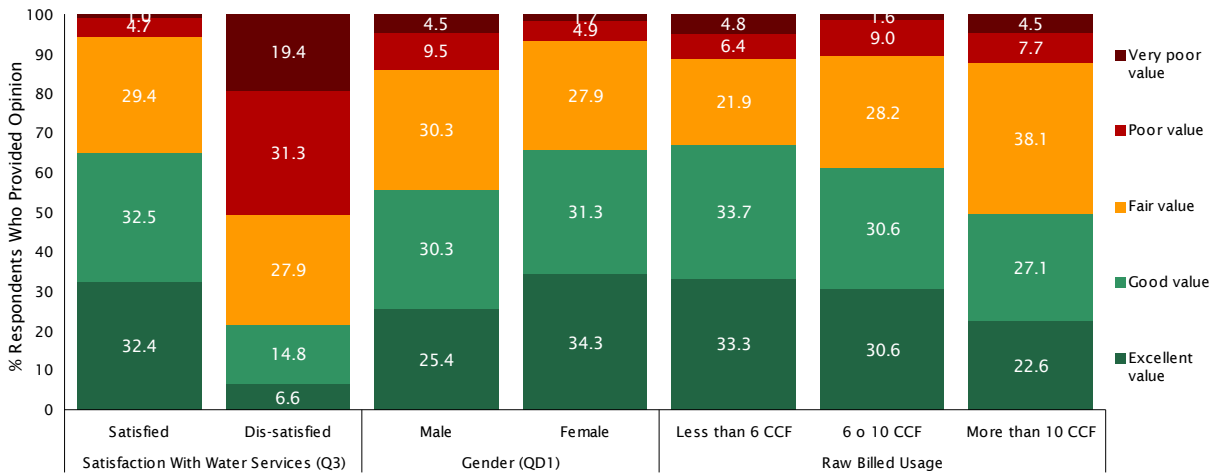
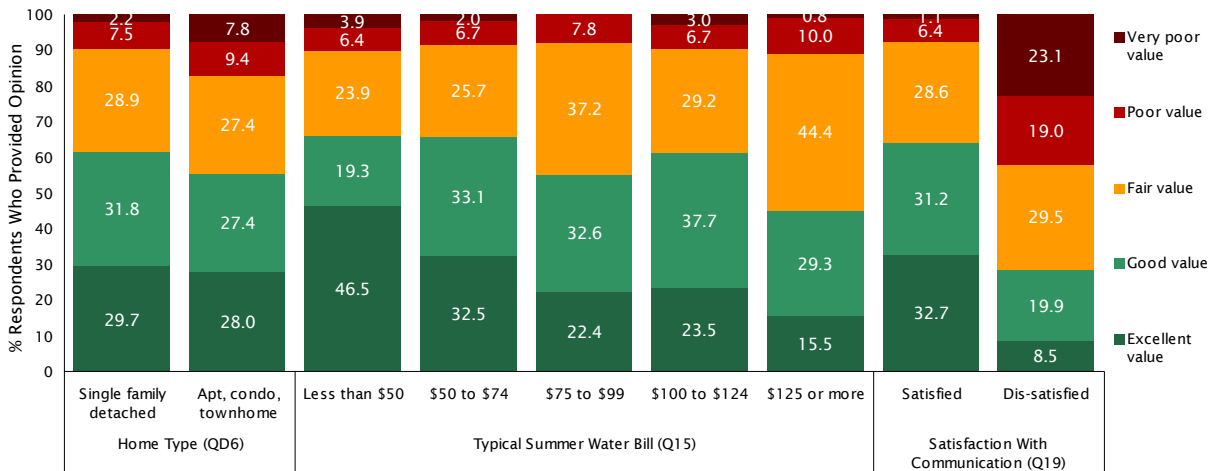


FIGURE 39 OPINION OF WATER VALUE BY HOME TYPE, TYPICAL SUMMER WATER BILL & SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION



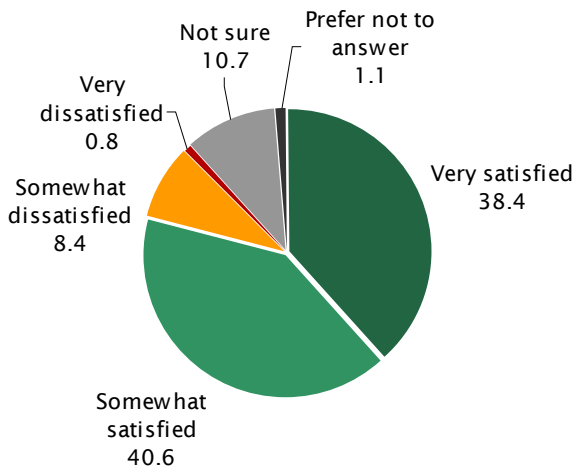
COMMUNICATION

The final substantive section of the survey was designed to measure respondents' satisfaction with SCV Water's efforts to communicate with customers, as well as identify the most effective ways for the agency to communicate with residential customers.

OVERALL SATISFACTION Question 19 asked respondents to report their overall satisfaction with SCV Water's efforts to communicate with customers through newsletters, its website, social media, and other means. Overall, 79% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the agency's efforts in this regard, with 38% indicating that they were *very* satisfied and 41% *somewhat* satisfied (Figure 40). The remaining respondents were either dissatisfied with the SCV Water's communication efforts (9%) or unsure or unwilling to provide an opinion (12%).

Question 19 *In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SCV Water's efforts to communicate with customers through newsletters, its website, social media, and other means?*

FIGURE 40 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION



The next three figures display how satisfaction with SCV Water's efforts to communicate with customers varied across a series of key sub-groups among those who provided an opinion. Satisfaction with the agency's communication efforts was widespread. With the exception of those who were dissatisfied with their water services in general, at least three-quarters of respondents in *every* subgroup reported they were either very or somewhat satisfied with SCV Water's efforts to communicate with customers.

FIGURE 41 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY AGE & YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

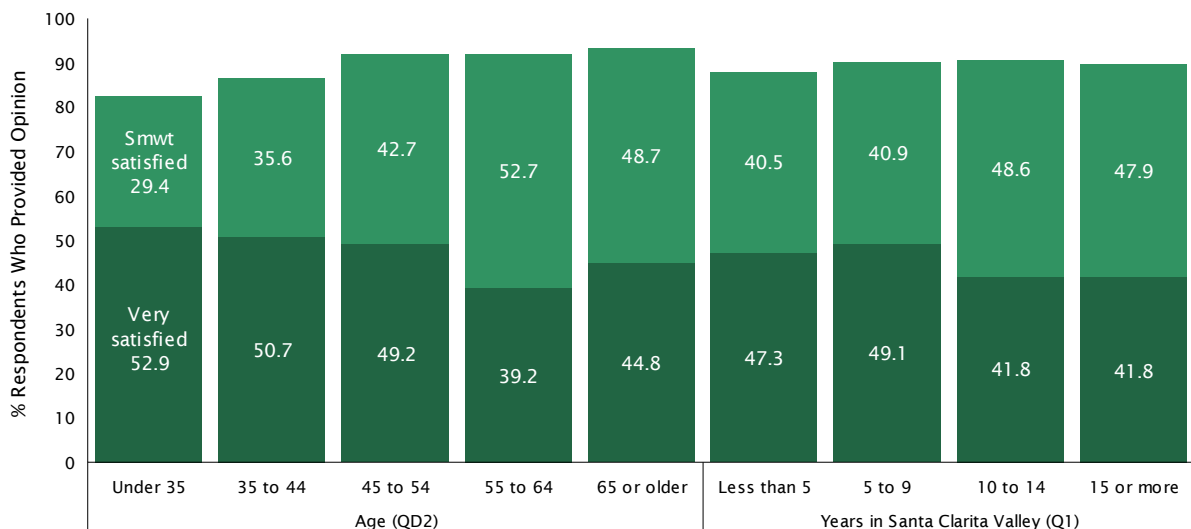


FIGURE 42 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, HOME TYPE, SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES & CONTACTED SCV WATER IN PAST 6 MONTHS

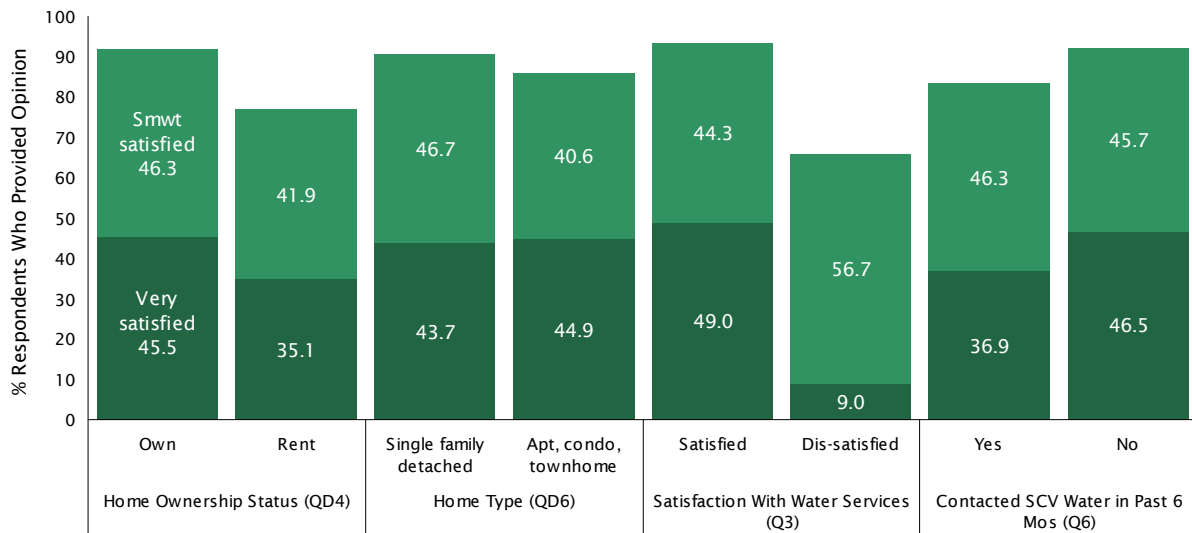
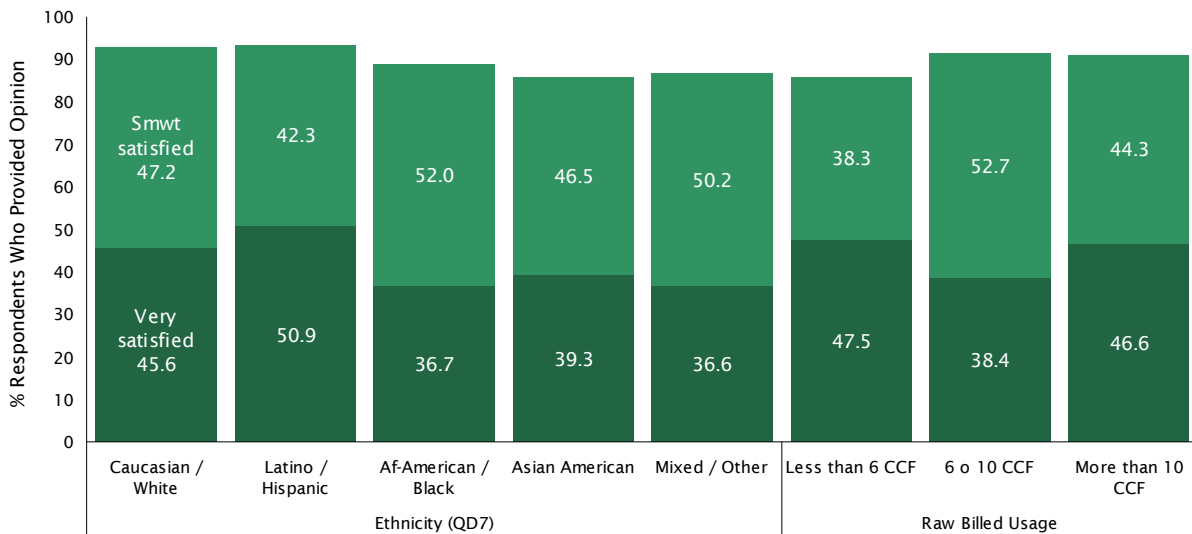


FIGURE 43 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY ETHNICITY & RAW BILLED USAGE



COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES The next question in this series presented respondents with each of the methods shown to the left of Figure 44 on the next page and simply asked, for each, whether it would be an effective way for SCV Water to communicate with them. Overall, respondents indicated that email was the most effective method (86% very or somewhat effective), followed by electronic newsletters/*Water Currents* (76%), postcards or information mailed to the home (74%), and bill inserts (74%). At the other end of the spectrum, local radio (28%), advertisements in local papers (30%), and local TV (36%) were perceived to be the least effective ways for SCV Water to communicate with residential customers. For the interested reader, tables 2-5 display the percentage of respondents who perceived each proposed communication method as *very effective* across subgroups, with the top three most effective methods within each subgroup highlighted in green to ease comparisons.

Question 20 *As I read the following ways that SCV Water can communicate with customers, I'd like to know if you think they would be a very effective, somewhat effective, or not at all effective way for the agency to communicate with you.*

FIGURE 44 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS

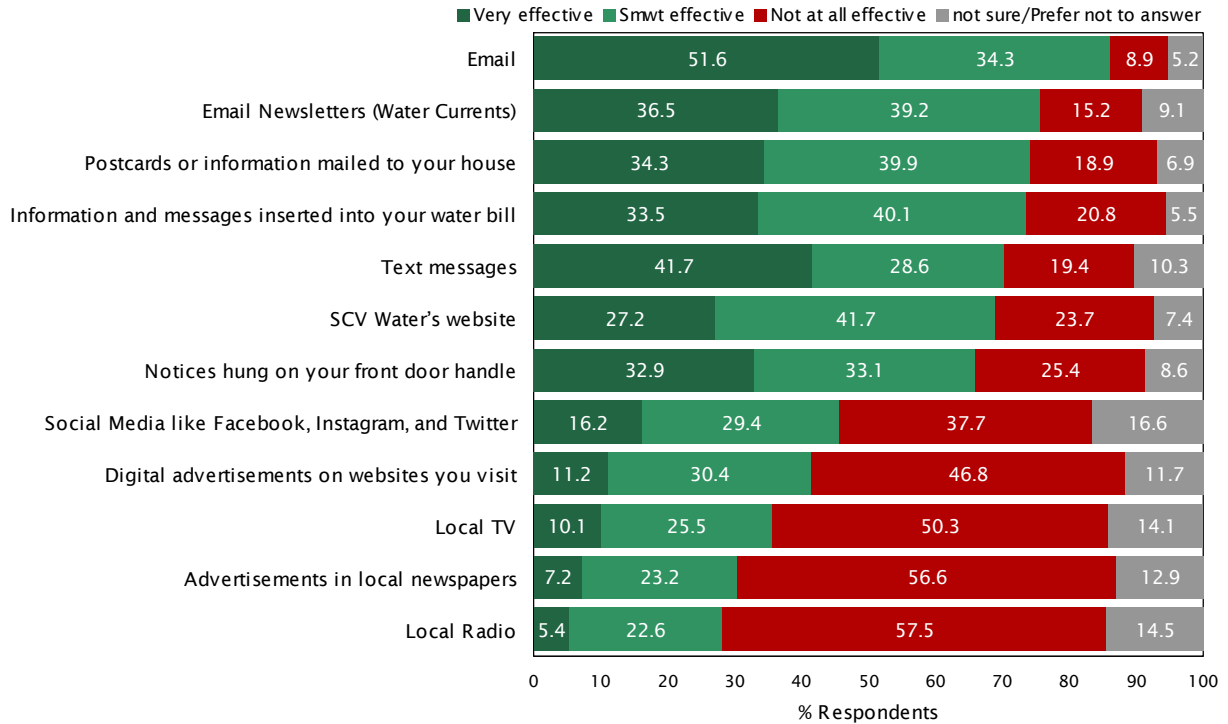


TABLE 2 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY AGE & OVERALL SATISFACTION (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Age (QD2)					Overall Satisfaction (Q3)	
	Under 35	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 or older	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Email	61.0	50.7	44.0	55.2	53.2	55.5	31.7
Text messages	67.2	50.1	38.3	40.6	38.4	43.9	31.9
Email Newsletters (Water Currents)	39.7	29.2	37.8	38.7	41.2	40.4	17.2
Postcards or information mailed to your house	17.0	35.6	42.6	37.8	39.1	36.2	26.7
Information and messages inserted into your water bill	26.5	36.8	38.8	34.8	34.4	36.7	19.2
Notices hung on your front door handle	48.4	36.7	37.1	33.5	29.2	33.9	25.2
SCV Water's website	26.9	34.3	32.9	29.8	23.2	30.5	9.2
Social Media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter	31.1	25.0	22.6	12.8	8.6	17.2	13.0
Digital advertisements on websites you visit	9.3	14.1	18.1	8.5	7.6	12.3	6.1
Local TV	5.4	14.5	10.8	8.0	9.3	11.4	2.8
Advertisements in local newspapers	12.1	7.8	8.3	3.1	6.1	8.4	1.3
Local Radio	2.6	2.5	8.0	6.7	5.1	5.9	1.7

TABLE 3 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY ETHNICITY & HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Ethnicity (QD7)					Home Ownership Status (QD4)	
	Caucasian / White	Latino / Hispanic	Af-American / Black	Asian American	Mixed / Other	Own	Rent
Email	47.3	63.3	55.1	49.4	45.0	52.7	42.9
Email Newsletters (Water Currents)	36.2	47.4	23.6	34.0	30.2	37.8	26.1
Text messages	37.2	59.0	55.9	34.4	42.1	41.9	44.6
Social Media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter	10.5	30.1	22.3	22.5	24.9	16.2	22.2
SCV Water's website	24.1	39.1	19.9	34.5	22.3	28.0	24.5
Postcards or information mailed to your house	32.4	43.6	37.1	30.3	41.6	35.0	37.9
Information and messages inserted into your water bill	31.9	48.6	22.2	27.0	28.8	33.9	35.2
Notices hung on your front door handle	29.8	45.1	31.1	28.1	31.1	33.2	31.7
Advertisements in local newspapers	5.2	13.4	6.4	8.7	8.0	7.3	7.6
Local Radio	5.0	4.2	9.4	5.1	17.2	5.5	3.9
Local TV	6.3	15.4	13.1	17.9	14.4	10.1	8.8
Digital advertisements on websites you visit	6.7	20.2	6.4	22.6	11.9	11.0	15.3

TABLE 4 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY RAW BILLED USAGE & YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Raw Billed Usage			Years in Santa Clarita Valley (Q1)			
	Less than 6 CCF	6 to 10 CCF	More than 10 CCF	Less than 5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 or more
Email	55.4	51.8	47.7	55.1	52.1	45.6	51.4
Text messages	45.7	35.7	46.1	49.8	47.6	46.1	38.0
Email Newsletters (Water Currents)	36.1	35.3	38.4	35.6	39.2	39.5	35.9
Postcards or information mailed to your house	28.3	38.8	34.2	35.1	25.7	36.4	35.2
Information and messages inserted into your water bill	34.7	36.1	28.9	44.5	37.3	16.9	32.1
Notices hung on your front door handle	29.0	28.0	43.4	43.6	36.2	42.3	28.3
SCV Water's website	30.5	23.3	29.3	33.0	31.1	33.4	24.3
Social Media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter	18.1	14.4	16.7	20.8	24.5	19.7	13.2
Digital advertisements on websites you visit	10.6	10.6	12.6	15.1	17.9	12.1	8.9
Local TV	7.6	8.0	15.4	19.8	11.6	8.4	7.4
Advertisements in local newspapers	9.3	5.0	8.3	9.8	10.5	4.5	6.4
Local Radio	4.2	5.6	6.4	5.9	7.7	6.4	4.8

TABLE 5 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY TYPICAL SUMMER WATER BILL & SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Typical Summer Water Bill (Q15)					Satisfaction With Communication (Q19)	
	Less than \$50	\$50 to \$74	\$75 to \$99	\$100 to \$124	\$125 or more	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Email	70.8	49.7	49.0	42.9	49.7	55.6	33.7
Text messages	54.4	35.9	43.4	45.6	43.4	45.1	23.4
Email Newsletters (Water Currents)	46.3	40.1	40.1	28.7	37.6	42.0	17.2
Postcards or information mailed to your house	33.1	34.8	36.6	36.9	31.1	36.3	33.3
Information and messages inserted into your water bill	43.8	36.9	20.7	26.2	31.8	36.9	25.8
Notices hung on your front door handle	36.6	31.3	29.7	47.6	34.5	34.9	21.2
SCV Water's website	40.8	29.0	19.7	22.4	21.3	31.4	12.5
Social Media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter	31.5	14.0	14.3	8.7	6.8	18.7	5.7
Digital advertisements on websites you visit	16.7	9.7	11.6	11.8	9.5	12.2	9.8
Local TV	11.6	12.9	7.0	6.0	12.4	11.7	3.2
Advertisements in local newspapers	10.9	7.8	3.1	5.5	8.4	8.0	0.7
Local Radio	4.9	6.1	5.1	5.2	5.6	6.6	2.5

VISITS TO SCV WATER'S WEBSITE Continuing with the communication theme, the final substantive question of the survey asked respondents whether they had visited SCV Water's website during the 12 months preceding the interview (Figure 45). Overall, 64% reported that they had visited the website, with the remainder indicating they had not (33%) or were unsure (3%). When compared to their respective counterparts, customers under the age of 45, those whose raw billed usage is less than 6 CCF monthly, newer residents (less than 5 years), African American and Asian customers, and those dissatisfied with the agency's communication efforts were more likely to have visited SCV Water's website during this period (see figures 46-48).

Question 21 *In the past 12 months, have you visited SCV Water's website?*

FIGURE 45 VISITED SCV WATER WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS

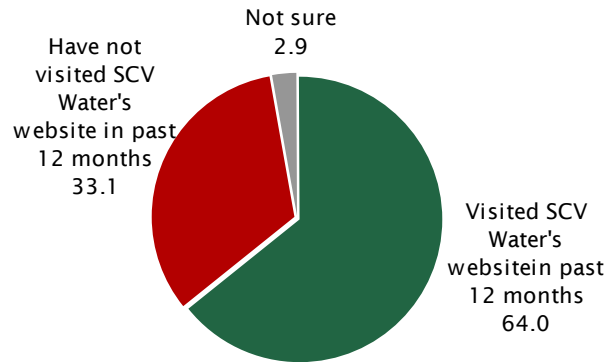


FIGURE 46 VISITED SCV WATER WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY AGE, RAW BILLED USAGE & HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS

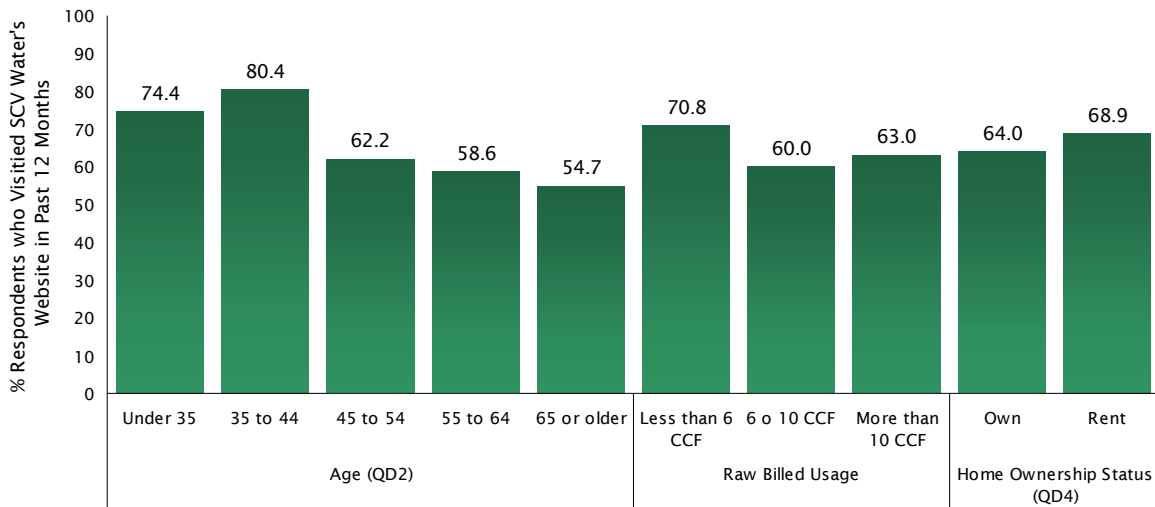


FIGURE 47 VISITED SCV WATER WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY YEARS IN SANTA CLARITA VALLEY, ETHNICITY & GENDER

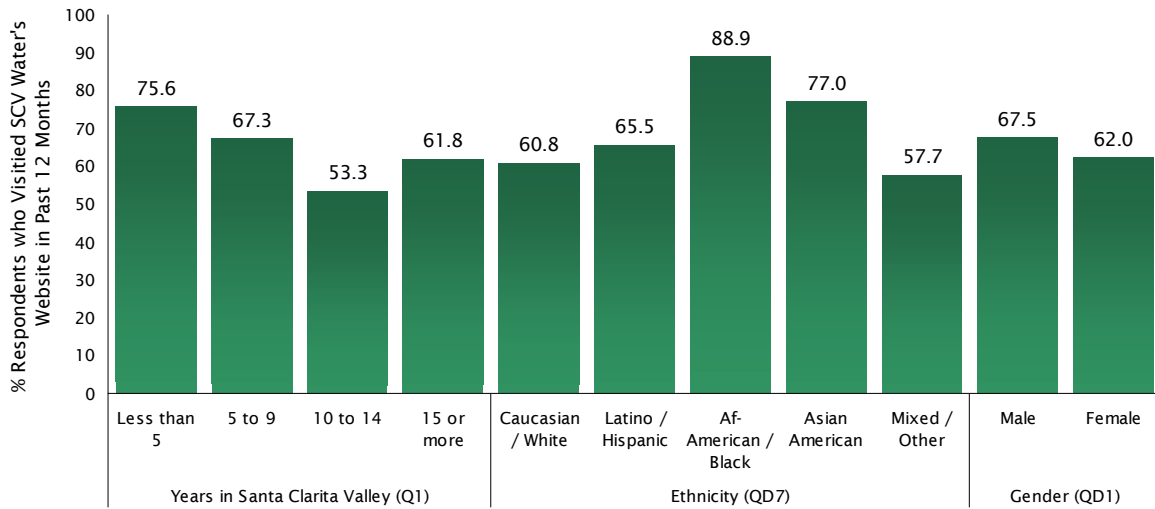
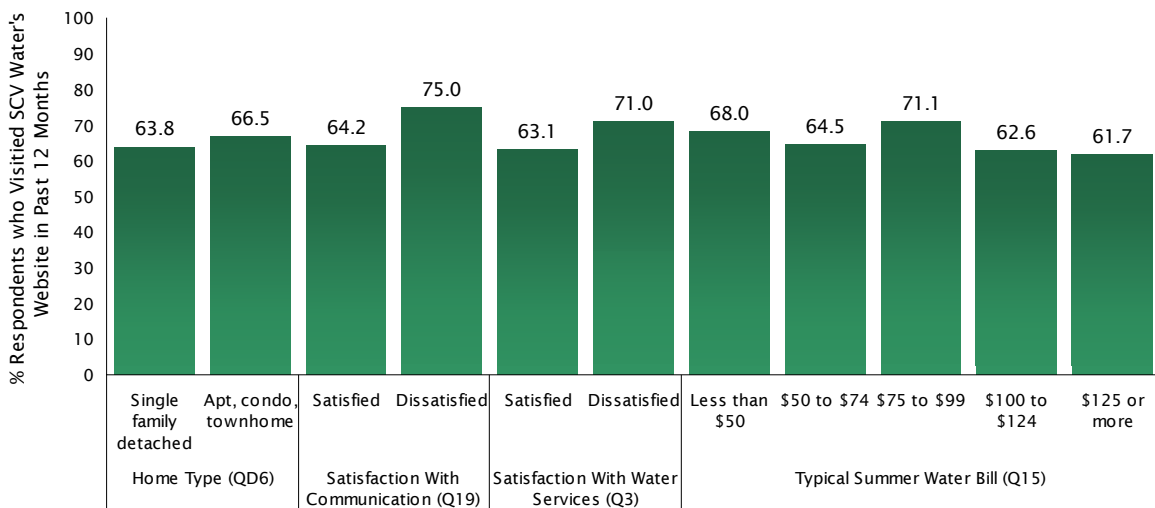


FIGURE 48 VISITED SCV WATER WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY HOME TYPE, SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION, SATISFACTION WITH WATER SERVICES & TYPICAL SUMMER WATER BILL





DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 6 DEMOGRAPHICS OF CUSTOMER SAMPLE

<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>780</i>
Years in Santa Clarita Valley (Q1)	
Less than 5	17.5
5 to 9	10.1
10 to 14	8.1
15 or more	64.3
Gender (QD1)	
Male	46.2
Female	45.3
Non-binary	<1.0
Prefer not to answer	8.5
Age (QD2)	
Under 35	10.8
35 to 44	12.7
45 to 54	18.0
55 to 64	16.8
65 or older	20.6
Prefer not to answer	21.1
Hsld Members (QD3)	
1	6.9
2	27.6
3	19.9
4	18.2
5 or more	15.7
Prefer not to answer	11.6
Home Ownership Status (QD4)	
Own	89.1
Rent	5.4
Prefer not to answer	5.5
Water bill responsibility (QD5)	
Hsld pays bill directly	97.3
Someone else pays bill	0.3
Prefer not to answer	2.4
Home Type (QD6)	
Single family detached home	82.3
Apartment	0.8
Condominium or townhome	14.5
Mobile home	0.0
Prefer not to answer	2.4
Ethnicity (QD7)	
Caucasian / White	45.1
Latino / Hispanic	24.1
Af-American / Black	3.2
Asian American	7.9
Mixed / Other	4.9
Prefer not to answer	14.8
Raw Billed Usage	
Less than 6 CCF	29.3
6 o 10 CCF	40.7
More than 10 CCF	30.0

Table 6 presents the key demographic information collected during the survey. The primary motivation for collecting the background and demographic information was to provide a better insight into how the results of the substantive questions of the survey vary by demographic characteristics. Because this study randomly sampled customer accounts, the demographics match those of individuals who are direct SCV Water customers and not necessarily the general population. This is particularly notable when it comes to home ownership and housing type, as those who rent a property or live in an apartment or mobile home are typically not the individual listed on the account for water services.



M E T H O D O L O G Y

The following sections outline the methodology used in the study, as well as the motivation for using certain techniques.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with SCV Water to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided many possible sources of systematic measurement error, including position-order effects, wording effects, response-category effects, scaling effects, and priming. Several questions included multiple individual items. Because asking items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order for each respondent.

Some questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only respondents who indicated that had contacted SCV Water in the six months prior to the survey (Question 6) were asked to describe the reason for contacting the agency (Question 7) and their experiences (Questions 8-13). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 38) identifies the skip patterns used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

PROGRAMMING, PRE-TEST & TRANSLATION Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting the phone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates the skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts interviewers to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they happen during the interview. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled residents. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into random homes in the SCV Water's service area prior to formally beginning the survey. The final questionnaire was also professionally translated into Spanish to allow for data collection in English and Spanish.

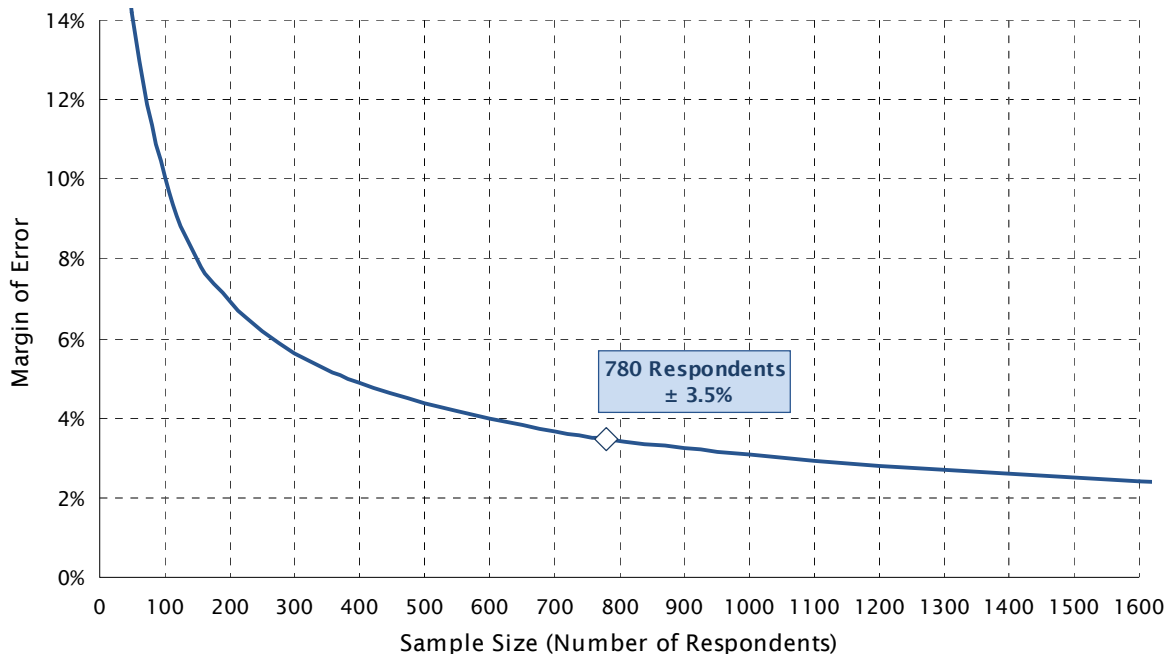
SAMPLE, RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION Using SCV Water's customer database as a starting point, customers were first stratified by geographic subarea and water usage, then randomly selected for inclusion in the sample. This ensured that all customers had an equal probability of being included in the study, while also maintaining the proper balance of customers by geography and how much water they typically use. Once selected, customers were recruited to participate in the survey through multiple recruiting methods. Customers were initially invited to participate in the survey online at a secure, passcode-protected website designed and hosted by True North. Individuals were recruited using email invitations and text invitations, and each was assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only SCV Water customers who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that the survey could be completed only one time per passcode. Email reminder notices were also sent to encourage participation among those who had yet to take the survey. Following a period of online data collection, True North placed telephone calls to land lines and cell phone numbers of SCV Water customers who had yet to participate in the online survey or for whom only telephone contact information was available.

Telephone interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is standard practice not to call during the day on weekdays because most working adults are unavailable and thus calling during those hours would bias the sample. A total of 780 completed surveys were gathered between April 25 and May 1, 2023.

MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING The results of the survey can be used to estimate the opinions of all customer households within SCV Water’s service area. Because not every customer in the service area participated in the survey, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 780 customers for a particular question and what would have been found if all 64,982 residential accounts had been interviewed.¹

Figure 49 provides a plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is $\pm 3.5\%$ for questions answered by all 780 respondents.

FIGURE 49 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR



Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by respondent characteristics such as water usage, age, and home type. Figure 49 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

1. This figure is estimated based on the number of residential customer accounts in SCV Water’s customer database, which is a proxy for households.

DATA PROCESSING Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, categorizing verbatim responses, and preparing frequency analyses and crosstabulations.

ROUNDING Numbers that end in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole number, whereas numbers that end in 0.4 or lower are rounded down to the nearest whole number. These same rounding rules are also applied, when needed, to arrive at numbers that include a decimal place in constructing figures and tables. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and charts for a given question. Due to rounding, some figures and narrative include numbers that add to more than or less than 100%.

QUESTIONNAIRE & TOPLINES



*Santa Clarita Valley Water
Customer Survey
Final Toplines (n=780)
July 2022*

Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak with _____? Hi, name is _____ and I'm calling from TNR on behalf of your water provider – Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency, commonly known as SCV Water. We're conducting a short survey of customers and we would like to get your opinions.

If needed: This is a survey about your water services – I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation. Your answers will be confidential.

If needed: The survey should take about 12 minutes to complete.

If needed: If now is not a convenient time, can you let me know a better time so I can call back?

Section 2: Screener

Q1	To begin, how long have you lived in the Santa Clarita Valley?	
1	Less than 1 year	3%
2	1 to 4 years	15%
3	5 to 9 years	10%
4	10 to 14 years	8%
5	15 years or longer	64%
99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Section 3: Importance of Issues

Q2	What do you feel is the most important issue facing residents in your area today? Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.	
	Not sure / Nothing comes to mind	21%
	Water supply, drought	16%
	Growth, overdevelopment	14%
	High cost of living	12%
	Water quality	11%
	Public safety, crime, drugs	11%
	Water rates, cost	6%
	Traffic congestion	6%
	Climate change, environmental issues	6%
	Homelessness	3%
	Infrastructure	3%
	Enforcing, educating about water conservation	3%
	Energy issues, cost, sustainability	2%

Section 4: Satisfaction with Water Services								
Q3	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job SCV Water is doing to provide water services to your household? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?</i>							
	1	Very satisfied	48%	Skip to Q5				
	2	Somewhat satisfied	36%	Skip to Q5				
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	9%	Ask Q4				
	4	Very dissatisfied	4%	Ask Q4				
	98	Not Sure	3%	Skip to Q5				
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%	Skip to Q5				
Q4	Is there a particular reason why you are dissatisfied with SCV Water's performance? <i>Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i>							
	Poor quality of water		49%					
	High cost of water		31%					
	Low water pressure		5%					
	Inconsistent bills, rates		5%					
	No discounts, incentives for seniors, low income households		4%					
	Customer service issues		4%					
	Need planning for future droughts		4%					
	City growth, overpopulation causing water shortages		4%					
	Should monitor, restrict residents, businesses for water misuse		4%					
	Improve communication, education efforts		2%					
	Inaccurate meter readings		1%					
Q5	Next, I'm going to read a list of specific services provided by SCV Water. For each of the services I read, please tell me whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the agency's efforts to provide the service. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SCV Water's efforts to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer. If 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied', then ask: Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?</i>							
	<i>Randomize</i>		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure	Prefer not to Answer
	High Quality							
	A	Provide high quality water	33%	33%	14%	9%	10%	1%
	B	Provide water that is free of color and odor	47%	33%	11%	5%	3%	1%
	Reliability							
	C	Ensure an adequate water supply now and in the future	33%	29%	8%	6%	22%	2%

D	Keep the water system in good condition through timely repairs and maintenance	39%	29%	6%	2%	21%	2%
E	Provide reliable water service	56%	35%	3%	2%	4%	1%
F	Provide sufficient water pressure	52%	34%	8%	5%	1%	1%
Safety							
G	Prepare for natural disasters and other emergencies	20%	24%	7%	3%	43%	2%
H	Provide water that is safe to drink	41%	29%	10%	10%	8%	1%
Cost-Effective							
I	Offer good value for the cost of water services	29%	38%	17%	8%	7%	1%
J	Provide rebate programs that encourage customers to purchase water-efficient devices	22%	28%	12%	5%	31%	2%
Customer Service							
K	Communicate with customers about scheduled repairs, service disruptions and other water-related issues	36%	32%	5%	4%	22%	2%
L	Provide good customer service	43%	34%	6%	3%	13%	2%
M	Provide accurate billing statements	54%	34%	5%	2%	4%	1%
Environment & Sustainability							
N	Educate customers about ways to conserve water	39%	41%	7%	2%	10%	1%
O	Use solar and other renewable energy sources to help protect the environment	21%	20%	5%	2%	46%	5%

Section 5: Customer Service

Q6	During the past six months, have you or anyone else in your household contacted SCV Water for any reason?			
	1	Yes	17%	Ask Q7
	2	No	79%	Skip to Q14
	98	Not sure	3%	Skip to Q14
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%	Skip to Q14
Q7	Thinking of your most <i>recent</i> contact, what was the main reason or issue that prompted you to contact SCV Water? <i>Do Not Read List.</i>			
	1	Water-related service issue (leak, water pressure, quality, etc.)	19%	Ask Q8
	2	Request start/stop of service	7%	Skip to Q11
	3	Questions about billing /payments	29%	Skip to Q11
	4	Make payment/ Pay bill	14%	Skip to Q11
	5	Request a payment extension or arrangement	0%	Skip to Q11
	6	Service interrupted for non-payment	3%	Skip to Q11

7	Find out how to reduce bill	4%	Skip to Q11
8	Learn about/Participate in rebate program	5%	Skip to Q11
9	Learn about/Participate in water conservation programs	3%	Skip to Q11
10	Learn about/Participate in gardening /landscaping classes	1%	Skip to Q11
11	Learn how to read your meter	0%	Skip to Q11
12	Board meeting information	0%	Skip to Q11
13	Other	14%	Skip to Q11
98	Not sure	1%	Skip to Q11
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	Skip to Q11
Q8	Can you describe the specific problem you were having with your water service? Verbatim responses provided below.		
	<i>A pipe broke when I hill came down during the storm and we did know until 8 hour later.</i>		
	<i>As an agency employee, I reached out directly to operations on a neighborhood water quality issue. The neighborhood was not pre-warned that work being done may create an issue. The issue alarmed the neighborhood, as to whether the water was safe.</i>		
	<i>Broken sprinkler line so called to update on any leak and possible higher water usage.</i>		
	<i>Brown water.</i>		
	<i>Burst pipe in sprinkler system. Called to alert water company to the reason for higher water use.</i>		
	<i>Had a leak in the front yard. service person came out and looked at it and told me it was on our property and couldn't do anything about it.</i>		
	<i>Had a undisclosed leak for an extended period of time. Found the leak and repaired it immediately. Worked with SCV Water for bill relief.</i>		
	<i>I had water shooting into the air from a broken sprinkler.</i>		
	<i>It was related to water softening and filtering. No help was provided by the SCV water.</i>		
	<i>Leak by the main water meters underground.</i>		
	<i>Leak near the main water valve.</i>		
	<i>Locating a water leak.</i>		
	<i>No one has been staying for the last three months due to the yellow tag, but my bill has been higher than before.</i>		
	<i>The water comes out bubbly and foggy because the water supply has been changed.</i>		
	<i>There is a business that has a water leak in their driveway, we reported it. Nothing has been done.</i>		
	<i>There was a water main break on the street.</i>		
	<i>Water leak.</i>		
	<i>Water leak at neighbors adjoining curb water meter leaking water into my meter and down the street for over a week before anyone repaired it. What a waste of water on your part doing a drought!</i>		
	<i>Water pressure wasn't there.</i>		
	<i>Water service was turned off without notice for 15 hours.</i>		

	<i>Water was leaking from the water hydrant.</i>					
	<i>Water, sprinkler head leak in greenspace area.</i>					
	<i>We've had leaks and pressure issue in the past and getting help was not resolves. We have done repairs around the house, but the water pressure remains the same.</i>					
Q9	Did your problem involve SCV Water sending a field representative to your property?					
	1	Yes	37%	Ask Q10		
	2	No	46%	Skip to Q11		
	98	Not sure	3%	Skip to Q11		
	99	Prefer not to answer	15%	Skip to Q11		
Q10	Did the field representative: _____?					
		<i>Read in Order</i>	Yes	No	Not Sure	Doesn't Apply
A	Arrive in a timely manner		63%	19%	18%	0%
B	Accurately assess the problem		74%	0%	26%	0%
C	Clearly explain the nature of the problem and how it can be fixed		51%	21%	28%	0%
Q11	Were you able to resolve the issue with a single contact, or were multiple calls/contacts required to resolve the issue?					
	1	Resolved with single contact	51%			
	2	Multiple contacts required	27%			
	3	Issue was not resolved	16%			
	98	Not sure	3%			
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%			
Q12	Was the reason you contacted them ultimately resolved to your satisfaction?					
	1	Yes	68%			
	2	No	23%			
	98	Not sure	5%			
	99	Prefer not to answer	4%			

Q13		When contacting SCV Water, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer. If 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied', then ask: Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?</i>					
<i>Randomize</i>		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure	Prefer not to Answer
A	Your ability to reach a service representative	53%	23%	8%	9%	3%	3%
B	The courtesy of the service representative	60%	17%	9%	6%	5%	4%
C	The knowledge and expertise of the service representative	48%	23%	11%	9%	5%	3%

Section 6: Attention & Value

Q14		In general, how much attention do you pay to the amount of water your household uses? Would you say you are very attentive, somewhat attentive, slightly attentive, or do you not pay attention to your water use?	
	1	Very attentive	58%
	2	Somewhat attentive	33%
	3	Slightly attentive	5%
	4	I don't pay attention	3%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%
Q15		In a typical summer month, how much is your household's water bill? <i>If unsure, ask if they can estimate.</i>	
		Less than \$50	20%
		\$50 to \$74	26%
		\$75 to \$99	14%
		\$100 to \$124	11%
		\$125 or more	10%
		Don't pay water bill / Landlord pays	0%
		Not sure	15%
		Prefer not to answer	4%

Q16	Considering the quality of the water service your household receives, would you say that the amount your household pays for water service is reasonable, too high, or too low? <i>If says too high, ask: Would that be much too high, somewhat too high, or a little too high?</i>		
	1	Much too high	14%
	2	Somewhat too high	21%
	3	A little too high	21%
	4	Reasonable	41%
	5	Too low	0%
	98	Not sure	2%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q17	If you had to guess, how much do you think the water your household receives costs per gallon?		
	Less than \$0.01		4%
	\$0.01		2%
	\$0.02		2%
	\$0.03 to \$0.05		5%
	\$0.06 to \$0.10		4%
	\$0.11 to \$0.20		5%
	More than \$0.20		7%
	Not sure		66%
	Prefer not to answer		4%
Q18	To clarify, the cost of the tap water your household receives is <i>less than 1 cent</i> (1 penny) per gallon. Knowing this, would you say that water is an excellent value, a good value, a fair value, a poor value, or a very poor value?		
	1	Excellent value	26%
	2	Good value	27%
	3	Fair value	26%
	4	Poor value	7%
	5	Very poor value	3%
	98	Not sure	9%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%

Section 7: Communication						
Q19	In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SCV Water’s efforts to communicate with customers through newsletters, its website, social media, and other means? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?					
	1	Very satisfied	38%			
	2	Somewhat satisfied	41%			
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	8%			
	4	Very dissatisfied	1%			
	98	Not Sure	11%			
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%			
Q20	As I read the following ways that SCV Water can communicate with customers, I'd like to know if you think they would be a very effective, somewhat effective, or not at all effective way for the agency to communicate with <u>you</u> . Here is the (first/next) one: _____ Would this be a very effective, somewhat effective, or not at all effective way for SCV Water to communicate with you?					
		<i>Randomize</i>	Very	Somewhat	Not at all	Not sure / Prefer not to answer
A	Email		52%	34%	9%	5%
B	Email Newsletters (<i>Water Currents</i>)		36%	39%	15%	9%
C	Text messages		42%	29%	19%	10%
D	Social Media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter		16%	29%	38%	17%
E	SCV Water’s website		27%	42%	24%	7%
F	Postcards or information mailed to your house		34%	40%	19%	7%
G	Information and messages inserted into your water bill		34%	40%	21%	6%
H	Notices hung on your front door handle		33%	33%	25%	9%
I	Advertisements in local newspapers		7%	23%	57%	13%
J	Local Radio		5%	23%	57%	14%
K	Local TV		10%	26%	50%	14%
L	Digital advertisements on websites you visit		11%	30%	47%	12%
Q21	In the past 12 months, have you visited SCV Water’s website?					
	1	Yes	64%			
	2	No	33%			
	98	Not sure	3%			
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%			

Section 8: Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation. I have just a few background questions for statistical purposes.

D1	What is your gender?	
	1	Male 46%
	2	Female 45%
	3	Non-binary <1%
	99	Prefer not to answer 8%
D2	In what year were you born? Year recoded into age groups shown below.	
	18 to 24	3%
	25 to 34	8%
	35 to 44	13%
	45 to 54	18%
	55 to 64	17%
	65 or older	21%
	Prefer not to answer	21%
D3	How many people, including you, live in your household?	
	1	7%
	2	28%
	3	20%
	4	18%
	5	11%
	More than 5	5%
	Prefer not to answer	12%
D4	Do you own or rent your current residence?	
	1	Own 89%
	2	Rent 5%
	3	Live with family / friends and don't pay rent 0%
	99	Prefer not to answer 5%

D5	Does your household pay the water bill directly, or is it paid for by someone else like a landlord or Home Owner's Association?		
	1	Household pays bill directly	97%
	2	Someone else pays bill	<1%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%
D6	Which of the following best describes your current home?		
	1	Single family detached home	82%
	2	Apartment	1%
	3	Condominium or townhome	15%
	4	Mobile home	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%
D7	What ethnic group do you consider yourself a part of or feel closest to? <i>Read list if respondent hesitates</i>		
	1	Caucasian/White	45%
	2	Latino/Hispanic	24%
	3	African-American/Black	3%
	4	American Indian or Alaskan Native	<1%
	5	Asian -- Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Indian, or other Asian	8%
	6	Pacific Islander	0%
	7	Mixed Heritage	3%
	98	Other	2%
	99	Prefer not to answer	15%
Those are all of the questions that I have for you! Thanks so much for participating in this important survey!			

Post-Interview & Sample Items

S1	Raw Bill Usage	
	Less than 6 CCF	29%
	6 o 10 CCF	41%
	More than 10 CCF	30%