



A Catalyst for Community Health

Selling Change: Social Marketing

Tools nonprofits can use

At St. Luke's Health Initiatives we've come to believe that social marketing can help nonprofits achieve their goals, whether that is helping others avoid unhealthy behaviors or increasing immunizations for kids. This issue of Community Connect discusses social marketing— what it is, what you can and cannot expect from it, and how you might use social marketing techniques to promote your organization's goals.

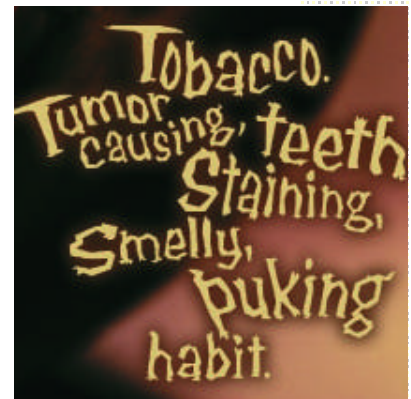
In the days when doctors were deities and patients did not dare question their expertise, the U.S. Surgeon General's announcement linking tobacco with health hazards caused a clamor. "It was front-page news and the lead story on every radio and television station in the United States, and many abroad," Surgeon General Luther Terry later recalled of his 1964 press conference.

The announcement generated headlines, but not behavior changes.

A lot has changed in nearly four decades. Today, everyone is talking about a new way of influencing behavior. They call it "social marketing." And, it is working.

Contrast, for example, the Surgeon General's announcement with the Arizona Department of Health Services' 1990s campaign to get teenagers to avoid tobacco.

Through a series of creative television and print advertisements, the DHS campaign made tobacco as appealing as acne. The ad campaign does not tell teens what to do. Rather, its designers at Reister-Robb found out what resonated with teens. Then, the ad agency created a message in the language of teens: "Tobacco: tumor-causing, teeth-staining, smelly, puking habit."



Courtesy of Arizona Department of Health Services, from its anti-tobacco marketing campaign.

So what happened in 1964 with the Surgeon General's announcement? Why didn't it work? Today's change messengers say that one problem is with the authoritarian approach. "It used to be that people would go out and say, 'I'm the expert and I'm going to tell you how to change your behavior,' says Sabina Kelly, an Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) social marketing consultant. "Yet behaviors weren't changing because the experts weren't listening to their target population and learning what motivates them to change their behavior."

Today, the messages that get results use sophisticated marketing strategies, says Bob Grossfeld, president of The Media Guys, a Tempe strategic communications firm. These strategies have been used in marketing and the corporate communications world for years. ■

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How Can Social Marketing Help You?

Social marketing maximizes your chances of getting the results you want.

Think of picking low-hanging fruit, Grossfeld suggests. You do not need a ladder or sophisticated equipment to pick it. And, you get the ripest, best fruit first without wearing yourself out.

— The same is true with social marketing. Your “low hanging fruit” becomes your “target audience.” That is, you identify the audience that’s going to be the most receptive to your message and your goals and has the ability to take action. Then, you go after them. You learn everything you can about them. You find out what it is that they want — not what you want. Then, you design a message that will make them respond to you.

For example, Grossfeld says, if a nonprofit wanted to get employers to help enroll employees in a public health insurance plan, the message to employers might be this: “Want to reduce absenteeism? We can help you do that.” That is because careful research will show that employers want to increase productivity by decreasing absenteeism.

“You’ll know your target audience will be open to hearing your message, and you’ll be speaking their language. As simple and basic as this may sound, it’s a new concept to a lot of nonprofits and government operations.”

How to Succeed

With today’s marketing smorgasbord, determining the best way to convey your message can be overwhelming.

For the uninitiated, Bob Belinoff, president of R. Belinoff & Partners, a New Mexico social marketing firm, suggests hiring a seasoned, well-connected marketing professional who can think and act strategically. Especially for nonprofits on limited budgets with limited resources, the risks of a do-it-yourself social marketing effort going awry are high, he says.

Belinoff, a veteran Madison Avenue advertising executive, moved from New York to New Mexico in 1988 to see how an advertising professional might apply the crafts of persuasion to make the world a better place. Among his projects is helping the World Health Organization public health outreach team in Brazil eliminate leprosy as a public health problem. Do not get swept away by the glitz and glamour of what advertising and marketing firms do, he and other experts say. Just about any agency can produce pretty pictures and commercials. But the ones with the discipline and skill to apply good market research to a marketing campaign are invaluable.

Think beyond just advertising and press releases, as well. In some cases that might require lavish ad campaigns. In most, it does not, Grossfeld says. Listen. Find out what your target audience wants, Nedra Kline Weinreich, of California-based Weinreich Communications says. “Rather than dictating the way information is to be conveyed from the top down, public health professionals are learning to listen to the needs and desires of their target audience, and building programs from there. This focus on the consumer involves in-depth research and constant re-evaluation of every aspect of the program.” Weinreich is author of “Hands-On Social Marketing: A Step-by-Step Guide,” (Sage Publications, 1999). ■

Social marketing maximizes
your chances of getting
the results you want.

Social Marketing's Roots

Social marketing formally debuted in the United States in 1971, with publication of the book "Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change."

It was almost immediately rejected.

But a few who believed in its promise persisted. One of those was Carol Bryant, who in the early 1970s developed the country's first social-marketing certification program through the University of Florida's College of Public Health's Prevention Research Center.

"When I first mentioned social marketing to my colleagues in the early '70s, they thought I meant manipulative advertising, so it was slow going at first," Bryant says. "The thinking was that advertising was evil, cost too much money and people viewed it as a big-budget national communication campaign."

Bryant still finds herself emphasizing that social marketing is just the opposite of all those things. But the difference now is that people are listening, she says.

University of Arizona marketing professor Sidney Levy was also ahead of his time, paving a social-marketing path 50 years ago as a principal with a Chicago social research organization. "We studied nonbusiness problems and issues for organizations," Levy says. In later years, much of the learning was applied to the for-profit corporate world. Levy never forgets, though, that the true power of marketing techniques emerged out of organizations concerned with social change.

"I'm marketing-obsessed," admits Levy. "I think marketing is co-existent with life. I offer something and you give me something back. Even in relationships, you are marketing yourself because you want the person to accept you. This is 'intimate marketing,' with people exchanging emotions."

Gaining ground

Still skeptical? Consider this: Social marketing is becoming more widely accepted. It is being used to leverage impact on a lengthening list of health and social behaviors, including: Reducing AIDS risk behaviors, preventing teens from smoking, fighting child abuse, increasing use of public

health services, combating chronic diseases, promoting breastfeeding, good nutrition, physical exercise, contraceptive use, childhood immunizations, oral rehydration therapy, increasing participation in job-training services, and much more.

Resources to help nonprofits also are becoming more available. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, a peer-reviewed journal, has been upgraded from a newsletter. The Washington, D.C.-

“ I think marketing is co-existent with life. I offer something and you give me something back. ”

**—Sidney Levy, University of Arizona
Marketing Professor**

based Social Marketing Institute offers technical support to nonprofits, as well. Meanwhile, a smattering of social marketing conferences, where nonprofits can share experiences and success stories, is surfacing.

What is behind today's social marketing interest? "The world is getting smaller and behaviors are having more of an impact on everyone," Belinoff theorizes. "Because health problems impact everyone through taxes, creating positive behavior changes that result in prevention of health problems is becoming increasingly important."

Social marketing's upswing is a matter of money, Grossfeld suggests. "Social marketing is becoming both more professional and more accepted as the stakes have increased. Thirty years ago, there was no money in social marketing. Over the years, the number of professionals and the amount of money invested in these operations has grown exponentially. With smoking, for example, there have been anti-smoking social marketing efforts for decades. But most were either not funded or under-funded. As soon as funding dramatically increased (mainly through tobacco tax money), the professionalism increased, as did the success."

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Mapping New Territory

While most social marketing targets consumers, Bob Grossfeld is piloting a project targeting businesses. The product is KidsCare, Arizona's version of a federally-funded program that provides health care to the otherwise uninsured children of working families.

"While considerable research has been done concerning direct outreach to the parents of eligible children, the area of organizational outreach and marketing has been ignored," says Grossfeld. "We wanted to look at how to utilize the existing organizational infrastructures to enroll more kids in this program. That meant marketing to businesses and other organizations which employed the parents of the children."

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On the Horizon

In the near future, look for social marketing to be used anywhere large-scale behavior change is called for. "Solving global warming and other environmental problems threatening our survival involves behavior changes," Bryant says. "These causes are high-priority topics that should attract considerable money and people from a variety of fields."

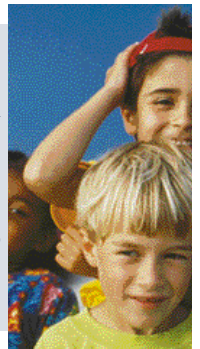
Belinoff fantasizes about fictional "agencies of change" that have the power to make sweeping improvements in society. The agencies would seek, through the most innovative forms of social marketing, to curb dangerous behaviors, such as drug abuse, teen sex, drinking while driving, teen pregnancy and any other social ill that comes to mind.

It can happen. The first step starts with nonprofits that harness the power of social marketing. ■

Grossfeld was contacted by St. Luke's Health Initiatives, which was interested in getting employers to help promote KidsCare to parents in the workplace. After an extensive marketing study conducted by Grossfeld, SLHI found that it needed to help outreach campaigns present a business benefit to employers in order to win their support. One of the key benefits was telling employers that KidsCare could help reduce absenteeism and thus improve productivity.

"This is about businesses making decisions about their business. What we found that works is telling companies how the program will impact their bottom line of increasing their value and profitability."

"Ultimately, someone participates in a social service or public health program because it serves their self-interest. Social marketing requires the same understanding."
—Bob Grossfeld



Grossfeld discovered a major, untapped market. "Employers are very open to KidsCare." Here's how businesses should be approached for a program like KidsCare, says Grossfeld: "You should ask them if they employ people with children, and if those kids are covered by health insurance." Next, discuss the program's benefits pointing out: "Children will be healthier, so not as sick as often," Grossfeld says. "If they're sick less, the parents will be out less and also get sick less. That's because children are the main source of illness for parents."

Grossfeld recently began phase two of marketing KidsCare, aimed at developing specific business-to-business (B2B) strategies, tactics and materials to market the program organizationally. ■

Social Marketing Basics

Bob Grossfeld, president of a Tempe strategic communications firm called The Media Guys, offers these suggestions:

- Don't guess. Do research.
- Don't focus on what you want to tell people, but rather on what they need to hear from you, based on your research.
- Don't allow your own boredom to force a change in marketing. If something is working – a slogan, commercial, direct mail pieces, flyers, etc. – keep using it until it doesn't work anymore – if ever.
- Don't change your products or services unless you can improve them from the customer/user perspective.
- Don't be afraid to drop a product or service that's not selling if customers/users just don't want or need it. Move on to something else.
- A rule of thumb for evaluating your marketing 'voice': If you sound like a parent speaking critically to a child, you're doing it wrong. If you sound like a grown-up speaking to a good friend, you're probably doing it right.

Shoestring Marketing

You don't need deep pockets for successful social marketing, says Debbie McCune Davis, who is delivering childhood immunization messages through The Arizona Partnership for Infant Immunizations (TAPII).

With a current budget of \$150,000, and a staff of a single assistant, Davis relates, "In the time I've been here, I've learned that we'll never have enough dollars to actively be in the media all the time with our message. Any of us in the nonprofit community would love to have millions of dollars handed to us to get our message out (like tobacco and other big-budget campaigns). It would be like finding a gold mine."

But, that usually doesn't happen. And, even a big-budget campaign may be ineffective if good market research isn't paired with good marketing tactics.

TAPII was launched in 1992 to achieve the immunization gold standard established by the federal government – vaccinating 90 percent of all 2-year-olds by the year 2000. It is a public and private partnership comprised of child advocacy organizations, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, health maintenance organizations, community health providers, county health departments, Arizona Department of Health Services, the Arizona Medical Association and pharmaceutical companies.

"I'm an absolute believer in partnerships," says Davis, TAPII program director. "You need to identify people in the community – organizations who believe in what you believe in and who want what you're doing to have a positive result. Invite them into your program. This may involve going to a church with a nursery, which means, they're very concerned about the well-being of those children. Ask them to hang your poster. Partnering, she notes, "is a very simple way to get your message out."

“Partnering is a
very simple way to get
your message out”
–Debbie McCune Davis



Evidence that big bucks aren't essential to effectiveness, TAPII has been cited by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Association of Health Plans as a model for other states to emulate. ■

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“We leverage tools that are available to us through our partners to get the message out,” Davis says, pointing to a 1998 campaign called KiddShots. Phoenix Suns basketball player and expectant father Jason Kidd was solicited as the official spokesman for the immunization campaign, designed to raise awareness about vaccinations. A series of television commercials urged parents to talk to their doctors to make sure their kids were up to date on shots. Partners in the campaign included CIGNA, Fox10, Maricopa County Childhood Immunization Partnership, and Sonic.

Drawing on 16 years in the Arizona Legislature, Davis came to TAPII five years ago seasoned at organizing messages, persuading people and listening to her audience.

“We leverage tools that are available to us through our partners to get the message out”

“I think that understanding the constituencies to whom you’re directing your message is key to social marketing. You have to have some sense of what’s important to them to design a message they’ll respond to.” ■

Social Marketing Hallmarks

According to university professor Carol Bryant, social marketing is distinguished from other program-development approaches by reliance on six principles:

- A steadfast focus on behavior change
- The use of marketing as a framework
- Reliance on research to understand consumers’ desires and needs
- Segmentation of populations and careful selection of target audiences
- Continuous monitoring and revision of program tactics
- The desire to promote socially beneficial change

On a Tight Budget? Ten Tips for First-Time Social Marketers

Social Marketing author Nedra Kline Weinreich says first-time social marketers often feel overwhelmed by the rigorous market research processes they see in large-scale programs. She offers these tips for social-marketing novices and those on a tight budget:

- Talk to your customers. See how they talk about experiences they have had with your issue and find what they need to help them use your services or perform the behavior you’re promoting.
- Segment your audience. Good marketers know there is no such thing as selling to the general public.
- In social marketing, products are often hard to promote because of their high “price.” Since products like behaviors and attitudes require long-term commitments and do not sell as easily as a bar of soap or a car, determine how your target audience thinks about your product as compared to the competition.
- Know your competition and adjust your plan accordingly.
- Go to where your audience is, limited only by your creativity.
- Utilize a variety of communications approaches, but try sticking to one main “look” and slogan or people may not realize all the pieces are from your organization.
- Use models that work by segmenting your target audience. For instance, a program could address people in each stage over a period of time, or select just those at a particular stage of adopting a new behavior.
- Test all products, promotional materials and services you develop for your program with your target audience to gauge their potential effectiveness.
- Build partnerships with key stakeholders working towards the same goal.
- Evaluate what you can improve the next time,

Arizona Gets Major Mental Health Resource Online

Sometimes, the right tool for the job is everything.

Arizona's mental and behavioral health professionals now have such a tool on the World Wide Web. This tool is believed to be the most comprehensive of its kind for health professionals in Arizona.

The Web site is the result of more than a year of work by the Mental Health Dissemination Network of Arizona (MHDNA), which is a collaborative group of health professionals in the behavioral health field organized under the auspices of St. Luke's Health Initiatives to improve behavioral health care for Arizonans. The Web site provides a powerful search feature that empowers health professionals with the ability to conduct full-scale online research about mental health issues, diseases and more. The initial goal was to create a place online where professionals could get everything they needed at their fingertips—from information about psychotropic medicines, to clinical tools, to the latest research findings, to the best and most promising practices.

Please visit the site and bookmark it for reference:

www.azmentalhealth.org. Tell your colleagues about the site as well.

If you have a mental health-related Web site, please contact us regarding providing a link to www.azmentalhealth.org from your site.

For more information, contact Elizabeth McNamee at SLHI, (602) 385-6500.

Social Marketing Web sites:

Bob Belinoff's website – <http://www.mkt4change.com>

Social Marketing Institute – <http://www.social-marketing.org>

Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development – <http://www.foundation.novartis.com/social-marketing.htm>

Weinreich Communications – <http://www.social-marketing.com/>

A list of social marketing links, courtesy of Weinreich Communications – <http://www.social-marketing.com/SMLinks.html>
Best Social Marketing/Social Marketing Quarterly
<http://www.kittle.siu.edu/ads/beststart.html>

Causemarketer.com – <http://www.causemarketer.com/>

Books & Publications

"Hands-On Social Marketing: A Step-by-Step Guide," by Nedra Kline Weinreich

Social Marketing Quarterly Online – <http://www.kittle.siu.edu/ads/beststart.html>

"The Art of Cause Marketing," by Richard Earl

N E W S

C U R R E N T S

Grants

SLHI has awarded more than \$2.1 million to Arizona nonprofits in its latest round of grant-making. For a complete list of grantees and more information, visit our Web site at www.slhi.org

Statewide Aging Summit, May 2002

SLHI explores the implications of an aging population in Arizona.

Without a Safety Net, a health policy forum sponsored by SLHI's ArizonaHealth Futures examining the state's trauma center system, November 29, 2001

Health care for the undocumented, a health policy forum sponsored by SLHI's Arizona Health Futures examining the impact of undocumented workers on the state's health care system, February 2002

Working without benefits, a health policy forum sponsored by SLHI's Arizona Health Futures examining workforce issues affecting access to health care, June 2002.

For more information about these events as it becomes available or to be placed on our mailing list, visit our Web site at www.slhi.org or call 602/385-6500.

Community Connect is St. Luke's Health Initiatives' revised publication to highlight SLHI's new grants, programs, and stories from the field.

Its predecessor, *Connections*, focused on both community grants and health policy topics. When we changed our name earlier this year, we decided to split *Connections* into two newsletters, one focused on our community grants program and the other on health policy issues. *Arizona Health Futures* premiered in October 2000 on the subject of employer-based health insurance, and will alternate with *Community Connect* to reflect the full dimension of our work.

And what is that work? To improve the health of people and communities in Arizona, with a special emphasis on vulnerable populations and building the capacity of communities to help themselves. Our community grants

program is specifically focused on building the capacities of organizations to more effectively meet this shared goal, whether it's through attention to infrastructure, forming partnerships with other groups, testing new ideas or any number of other approaches.

In addition to hearing about our shared work through this and other publications, please check out our Web site at www.slhi.org. Changes there are usually more timely and current, and more specific information is provided about all of our programs.

We encourage your comments, suggestions and ideas. Please call or e-mail us anytime at info@slhi.org

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