



KEY TIPS FROM SOCIAL MARKETING

Social marketing is a term for the new field in marketing that applies marketing principles and techniques to create, communicate, and deliver value in order to influence target audience behaviours that benefit society and the target audience.

Before starting any social marketing campaign, it is normal to develop a plan that emerges from a systematic process of thinking through all relevant aspects. Here are some tips from one of the 'It's My Life' judges, Dr Ravi Balasubramanian, about some processes that can help you plan your entry strategy.

The steps in a systematic social marketing process are:

1. State the main purpose and focus of this planning process. (Here it is about 'Smokefree New Zealand'. Explain clearly what this is about in terms of desired change in behaviour. Why is this worthwhile?)

2. What is the situation today in terms of what has been done in the past, what worked or did not work, what lessons should be kept in mind when developing this plan. (Google relevant topics such as 'reducing youth smoking' to be informed about this, both in New Zealand and overseas.)

3. Target audience-Which group of people will be the main focus of your entry. Why? It is probably not possible to target every single 12-24 year old with a single entry, so perhaps you want to narrow it down. Can your group be described in terms of age, activities they are likely to engage in and how they behave in social interactions that may be an influencer in their behaviour? Will they be ready to change?

4. Marketing objectives: What is the change aimed for in terms of behaviour, knowledge and beliefs?

5. Developing an understanding of the target market. What makes them want to smoke? Are there other things that can be an encouragement to smoke? Are there other things that lead them away from smoking? Will they be receptive to a message on stopping smoking? What will make them listen to such a message and do something about it? To develop your understanding in this regard your reading from an online search (item 2 above) and talking to people you know will be helpful.

6. Developing a positioning statement that is how you want the target audience to see the behaviour you want them to buy into. You may arrive at this based on step 5. This will be based on analysis of the facts you have gathered and a bit of creative thinking on what might work.

7. How will you communicate with the target audience? This can be broken into sub tasks such as the following:

a. What do you expect them to do? This should be stated in terms of the desired behaviour. To motivate them, what will be the benefits they will get by making this change? How can they overcome barriers to change if any?

b. How to go about persuading them? Here you have to think about the key messages (what you want to communicate), use of messengers if appropriate (e.g., sports persons, celebrities or others you have access to who have wide recognition and acceptance amongst the target audience as it may result in the target audience listening to the message without switching off), and message channels (which of the channels available in this competition best suits your goals – video, an app, or a poster?) Crafting the message you want to communicate is the opportunity for letting loose your creative energies. How will you get your message across? (Decisions on play of words, humour, serious or a combination thereof that will make the target audience sit up and pay attention; using images, sound and other aspects to aid the message getting through; and so on.)

8. Implementation - In this stage you need to think through how you will organise the rolling out of the ideas you have developed under section 7

9. Is it going according to plan? – Based on the steps you have drawn up under pts 7 and 8, you need to think about how you will check if your message is getting through and if members of the target audience are actually buying into the idea. You may want to do this before you send your entry in to 'It's My Life' – so run your ideas past members of the target group often and repeatedly, then adjust and refine your entry before you finalise it.

If you write up your thoughts as you go through the process described above, you would have developed a plan for initiating your own campaign entry for 'It's My Life'.

Some resources:

Social Marketing Institute: www.social-marketing.org/sm.html

Health promotion agency: HPA www.hpa.org.nz/