

PROMOTING COMMUNITY EDUCATION THROUGH A SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN TARGETING BOYS AND MEN FOR PREVENTION

Youth live in a “noisy” environment, rife with messages communicated constantly through newly emerging technology. How is community education about preventing gender-based violence effectively promoted in such a “busy” space? Launching a well-conceived and well-run social marketing campaign can be a useful means of breaking through the “noise.” Its success in helping to increase community responsibility will in part depend on how well it serves to support other components of your work. Ethel Klein (2000), in a study of communications campaigns conducted by domestic violence and sexual assault organizations, argues that the “biggest gaping hole in this review...is the lack of connection between the state-based coalition’s communications effort and their programming and policy work.” Applying social marketing principles across all levels of work can lead to more unified messaging, resulting in a more coherent environment.

Below are suggestions for how you can think about overall social marketing goals and how you can use the 5 Ps of social marketing - product, price, place, and promotion, and publics – to develop your campaign to engage men and boys.

A. Community Education: Goals

While over the years there has been debate about the meaning of social marketing, Alan Andreasen has developed a popular definition: “Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part” (2006, 91). Using social marketing should serve as one part of a larger effort to promote young men’s voluntary behavioral change and embrace of healthy masculinity. A social marketing campaign can assist in achieving the following goals:

SOCIAL MARKETING GOALS FOR AN ENGAGING MEN CAMPAIGN

Shifting Central Responsibility for Prevention of Sexual Violence from the Individual to the Larger Community. According to Klein (2000), “Research shows that attending to the social institutions that surround the individual – family, friends, coworkers, or other relevant social group[s] – increases a campaign’s ability to change attitudes and influence behaviors.”

Engaging Young Men through Means other than Information-Sharing. Klein (2000) observes that social marketing in part appeals to the emotions. One emotional strategy commercial marketing employs to sell merchandise is to associate a desirable consumer identity with a product. The same idea can work in connection with social marketing. An identity desirable to young men, for example, can be associated with behavior change.

Reaching Specific Audiences. Another commercial marketing strategy is to segment audiences: tailoring messaging to a particular group of people. This strategy works hand-in-hand with the goal of identity- and action-based messaging.

Saturating an Environment with Consistent and Sustained Messaging across Components of Your Work. Theories of social and behavioral change emphasize the need for intense interventions that saturate the community with prevention messages, lead to the creation of new community norms, and consequently result in individual behavior change.

B. Community Education: The Marketing Mix

Like commercial marketing, social marketing focuses on targeted audiences, taking into account during the planning process what is called the “marketing mix” or the “Four Ps” – product, price, place, and promotion. For social marketing purposes, we have added another, “publics.” Below are recommendations connected to each of the “Five Ps.”

Product Recommendations

In this instance the product is not a physical item but a solution to sexual assault based on role modeled behavior. The product consists of messages and the messengers.

<i>Positive Messaging.</i> Many past social marketing campaigns addressing sexual violence have used fear-arousing messaging directed to the potential perpetrator. A campaign focused on young men must use positive, solution-based messages.
<i>Consistent Messaging.</i> Messaging must be consistent and sustained through all levels of the environment.
<i>Action Recommendations.</i> Klein (2000) recommends that it is imperative for messaging to “inform people on <u>what to do</u> in order to break down their resistance to taking action. If action recommendations are absent, people will fall back to or stay in denial.
<i>Performable Actions.</i> The recommended actions must be recognized as performable by the target audience.
<i>Messaging with Cultural Identifiers.</i> Messaging must incorporate cultural “identifiers” – those key words that associate the campaign with targeted audiences.
<i>Healthy Masculinity.</i> Messaging should promote healthy masculinity as a means of challenging attitudes and behaviors that are part of rape culture.
<i>Renewed Messaging.</i> Messaging can be renewed by addressing behaviors that are not yet part of the campaign, such as drinking alcohol and sexual assault.
<i>Messaging in Different Languages.</i> Messaging should appear in a variety of languages tailored to specific audiences.
<i>Messengers Racially and Ethnically Mixed.</i> Messengers should represent an ethnic and racial mix appropriate to targeted audiences.

Price Recommendations

While in social marketing there is no monetary cost associated with the product, there can be a price to pay – embarrassment, disapproval, and isolation – for acting in ways that are not socially sanctioned. Thus, it is important to communicate how the benefits can outweigh the costs. Below are potential benefits.

Men's Discomfort when Women are Disrespected. Alan Berkowitz has claimed that a majority of men are uncomfortable with their male peers' endorsement of the negative treatment and sexual abuse of women, but also overestimate the pervasiveness of this endorsement. Interventions in line with the majority of men's discomfort "could a) help reduce the pressures men feel to be sexually active in ways that lead to sexual assault and b) encourage men to express their discomfort with other men's coercive behavior, thus potentially inhibiting such behavior" (2002, 165). Thus it is valuable to communicate as a benefit how healthy masculinity is in line with the majority of men's unspoken discomfort.

Feelings of Social Support. If the positive messaging for young men's behavior is present and pervasive across all components of work, then a benefit of taking action are feelings of social support and social reinforcement.

Higher Self-Esteem. If the campaign is positive, empowering, and appeals to young men's best selves, it can raise their estimation of themselves.

Publics Recommendations

“Publics” simply suggests targeted audiences; no one social marketing campaign can effectively reach all audiences. It is impossible to tailor a campaign that represents all cultural groups and their identifiers. Therefore, we should carefully consider communication with various specific audiences over time.

Men as Audience. Given that scholars have linked rape culture with an exaggerated stereotypical masculinity, men should be considered a segmented audience, and positive bystander messaging that particularly addresses them should be developed.

High School Age Men as Segmented Audience. Some messages are more age appropriate for young men in high schools and some high schools find some messaging more acceptable, so it is important to coordinate with the high schools to make certain they will support the messaging of your campaign.

College Age Men as Segmented Audience. Because college tends to be less restricted than the high school environment, it can be easier to address issues like alcohol and sexual assault.

Young Men and Geographical Region. Since the look of an urbanized youth culture is so pervasive, it is possible that that look is acceptable to young men no matter where they are located geographically. On the other hand, the young men may desire a look more representative of their region. Only they can answer that question.

Young Men and Race and Ethnicity. In our experience, it is important for young men to see a mix of races and ethnicities, as long as theirs is included. To have them see only their own race or ethnicity impedes their sense of support from men of other races and ethnicities.

Promotion Recommendations

Promotion is self-explanatory – what are the best ways to promote the product. The most traditional forms of promotion in social marketing campaigns are tied to public service ads, but thinking beyond the usual formats serves to better expand the messaging into all the levels of the work and environment. Below are some considerations.

<i>Multiple Communications Vehicles.</i> Social marketing campaigns using multiple communications vehicles are more likely to succeed.
<i>Audiences across Geographical Distances.</i> Use video, audio, and print PSAs to reach large audiences across geographical distances.
<i>Location Ownership of the Campaign.</i> Use billboards, banners, posters, postcards, and media channels specific to a location to increase their ownership of the social marketing campaign.
<i>Familiar Promotions.</i> Use media promotions familiar to the targeted audiences.
<i>Individual Ownership.</i> Use collateral items displaying the messaging – T-shirts, hats, pens, mugs, water bottles, etc. – to allow an individual to express ownership of the social marketing campaign.
<i>Nontraditional Outlets.</i> To increase the impact across work levels, consider using nontraditional outlets for social marketing messaging, such as special events, blogs, and social media like Facebook and Twitter.
<i>Presentations and Trainings as Social Marketing.</i> View presentations and trainings as promotional avenues for messaging, especially to convey the price or benefits of a campaign. Whereas traditional media channels only have a short time – often 10 to 60 seconds to communicate its meaning – outlets like presentations and trainings can devote more time to explaining more complicated aspects of the messaging and use more collaborative methods.
<i>Renewal by Varying Media Formats.</i> One way to keep a social marketing campaign fresh is to vary media formats as the campaign ages.

Place Recommendations

Place is related to outlets for distribution. In the social marketing world this means the outlets for reaching targeted audiences.

Media System. You can make use of TV and print media to place conventional ads – video, audio, and print PSAs, although fewer and fewer of these media outlets are donating time and space for PSAs (contrasting example: in South Carolina the State Broadcasters’ Association donates space in the statewide media system) paying to place them can be costly.

Areas with the Most Traffic. For media that is more location specific – posters, banners, etc. – place them where there is the most traffic in public spaces.

Training, Event, and Presentation Spaces. Also make sure to place location specific posters, etc. in training, event, and presentation spaces.

Work Space. Use more work spaces to visibly associate the messaging with personnel in authority (coaches, counselor, principle, etc.).

References

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