SOCIAL MARKETING

Introduction

Social Marketing

In the past, education and outreach regarding recycling n Ohio have primarily focused on making people aware of the need to recycle, the benefits of recycling, and available recycling infrastructure. While SWMDs should continue to provide these types of information, research has shown that education alone and programs that rely only on providing information have little to no impact on getting people to recycle. For example, simply educating residents about the benefits of recycling and where the nearest drop-off is located does not mean that residents will use that drop-off. Goal 4 of the *2009 State Solid Waste Management Plan* is designed to move Ohio's education and outreach efforts beyond creating awareness to actually changing people's behavior (i.e. getting the person who doesn't use the drop-off to start using it). To do this, the 2009 State Plan incorporates principles from social marketing into the education and outreach goals for SWMDs.

Social marketing is the process of using commercial marketing principles and tools to influence a target audience's behavior to benefit society. Social marketing involves making the socially-beneficial behavior appealing to the target audience (Monaghan). Examples of behaviors that benefit society include using seatbelts, recycling, vaccinating children, and not smoking (Monaghan, September, 2011). Social marketing focuses on convincing people who do not do the desired behavior to change so they do the desired behavior (e.g. convince people who don't recycle to start recycling or people who smoke to quit smoking).

The focus is on changing behavior, not changing attitudes or awareness. Members of the target audience must voluntarily choose to change their behavior. Therefore, any campaign to "market" the behavior must convince the target audience to do the behavior. This requires program developers to understand the target audience before attempting to market the desired behavior to that audience.

Understanding the audience involves learning:
- why the target audience does/doesn't do the desired behavior;
- what the target audience wants/needs to do the desired behavior;
- how the target audience receives information.
- what are the target audience's perceived barriers and benefits to doing the desired behavior;
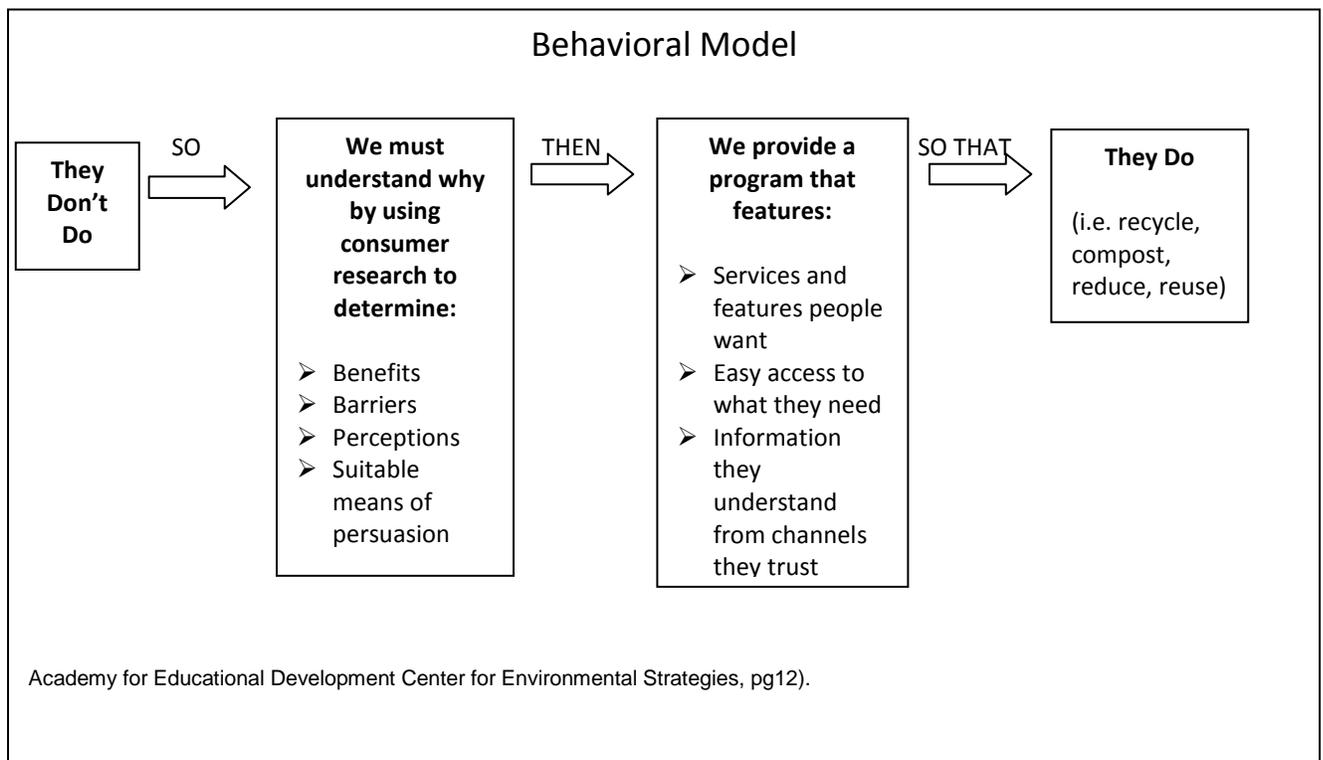- what are the real barriers and benefits to doing the desired behavior; and

The project developer also must understand the competing behavior – the opposite of the desired behavior. For example, if a community has a curbside recycling program, then the desired behavior is placing recyclables in the collection container. The competing, undesirable behavior is throwing recyclables in the trash. To get someone

who throws recyclables in the trash to recycle, social marketing requires understanding why that person continues to dispose of recyclables rather than place the recyclables in the recycling container. This involves understanding what prevents the person from recycling, the benefits to continuing to throw recyclables in the trash, and what would motivate that person to recycle.

A successful social marketing program changes the benefits and barriers so that the desired behavior becomes more attractive than the competing behavior. The program removes barriers to a specific behavior, while at the same time increases the benefits of that behavior. "There are four non-mutually exclusive ways that this can be done:

- Increase the benefits of the desired behavior
- Decrease the barriers of the desired behavior
- Decrease the benefits of the competing behavior
- Increase the barriers of the competing behavior" (McKenzie-Mohr, pg. 5.)

The following text box illustrates the social marketing process.

Behavioral Model

| They Don't Do | SO → | We must understand why by using consumer research to determine:

➢ Benefits
➢ Barriers
➢ Perceptions
➢ Suitable means of persuasion | THEN → | We provide a program that features:

➢ Services and features people want
➢ Easy access to what they need
➢ Information they understand from channels they trust | SO THAT → | They Do

(i.e. recycle, compost, reduce, reuse) |

Academy for Educational Development Center for Environmental Strategies, pg12).

There are two models that are often used interchangeably – social marketing and community-based social marketing (CBSM). Both models involve changing behavior. However there are subtle differences between the two models. The main difference is that CBSM applies the principles of social marketing to the local level. CBSM focuses on how to get people in a defined geographical area to change their behavior. CBSM strategies involve direct contact with members of the target audience in the selected community to develop the best outreach strategy for that community. (for purposes of

the solid waste management plan, this appendix does not differentiate between the two models. When developing a social marketing strategy specific to a community, however, the program developer needs to become familiar with the steps involved in addressing members of the target audience.

The Social Marketing Process

There are six basic steps for developing and implementing effective environmental outreach programs using social marketing principles:

1. Identify the problem, the desired behavior change, and the target audience(s) that needs to make the change.
2. Assess and Research the Audience;
3. Plan and Design;
4. Pilot and Revise;
5. Implement; and,
6. Monitor and Evaluate.

Steps 1 through 3 will be completed during the process of preparing a solid waste management plan. Steps 4 through 6 will likely be completed after the solid waste management plan has been approved.

1). INDENTIFY THE PROBLEM, THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR CHANGE, AND THE TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

The first step involves identifying:
- The problem to be addressed;
- The behavior change(s) needed to overcome the problem
- The target audience(s) that needs to change its behavior.

The behavior(s) to be changed will depend upon the available recycling opportunities (such as curbside recycling programs and drop-off locations). For recycling, there are two general behaviors that can be affected - getting people to establish new recycling opportunities and getting people to use existing recycling opportunities. Once the project developer identifies the behavior that needs to change, then the developer will determine which target audience(s) needs to adopt that behavior.

It is important to identify the desired behavior change and not the desired outcome. An example of an outcome is less recyclable material being disposed in landfills. An example of a behavior is putting more recyclable materials in a recycling bin.

2). ASSESS AND RESEARCH THE TARGET AUDIENCE

To influence a target audience's behavior, the project developer must first understand the target audience. The first place to start is by researching literature.

A great deal of information already exists about why people do or do not recycle given a specific situation and how to get more people to recycle in that situation. The project developer may be able to obtain much of the information that he/she needs about a target audience by researching secondary sources. Even so, however, the project developer may gain valuable information by gathering some primary information (see the section on primary information later in this appendix).

The project developer will need to learn about the target audience in terms of the following categories:
- Current behaviors (what the target audience currently is/is not doing);
- Barriers (what prevents the target audience from doing the desired behavior?);
- Benefits (What does the target audience want in exchange for doing the desired behavior/giving up undesired behavior?);

   [*NOTE*: *Both the desired behavior and the competing behavior have benefits and barriers. It is crucial to determine whether barriers and benefits are perceived or if they actually exist. People can have misconceptions and misinformation that cause them to believe that barriers that do not actually exist prevent them from doing the desired behavior or that there are more benefits to the undesired behavior than really exist.*]

- Perceptions and beliefs (what does the target audience think about recycling?);
- Obtaining information/best persuasion techniques (how does the target audience get information , where are the best places to reach the target audience, and what will get the target audience's attention?); and,
- Demographics.

Current behaviors: Understanding current behaviors involves knowing:
- What the target audience is doing instead of the preferred behavior.
- Why people who recycle choose to recycle.
- Why non-recyclers don't recycle.
- What actions program providers can take to make a difference

Understanding the differences in behaviors between recyclers and non-recyclers may help identify the key to changing the behavior of non-recyclers.

Barriers: The purpose of identifying barriers is to find ways to overcome them. To address existing barriers to recycling, the program developer must understand what prevents the target audience from recycling, what makes recycling easy and hard to do for the target audience, and what can be done to minimize or eliminate the barriers to recycling. Some common barriers include:
- Recycling options/infrastructure are not available;
- Knowledge/lack of knowledge

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  [**Note**: *Having knowledge/being aware of recycling may increase the target audience's willingness to recycling, but knowledge alone is not a motivator. Conversely, the lack of knowledge can be a barrier.*]

- Time constraints;
- Personal convenience/inconvenience (e.g. no space for bins, hard to move bins to the curb, bins too small, drop-off too far away);
- Established habits (can't remember to recycle);
- Cost;
- Beliefs and perceptions(recycling isn't important, recyclables get thrown into the trash, I have to pay to recycle but trash collection is free.);
- Misinformation; and
- Apathy (indifference to recycling).

As can be seen from the list above, some barriers can be addressed through outreach whereas others must be addressed through the design of the recycling program.

Benefits: The program developer needs to understand what motivates people to recycle, what benefits members of the target audience could realize if they began recycling, and the benefits of the competing behavior.

Some common benefits of recycling are:
- financial (earn money, decrease trash bill)
- social pressure, (friends and neighbors do it)
- recognition; and,
- sense of obligation ("it is expected of me" and "it is the right thing to do")

Perceptions and Beliefs: The program developer needs to understand what members of the target audience think about recycling. This includes understanding
- What the target audience sees as pros and cons of recycling;
- What the target audience sees as consequences of recycling/not recycling;
- How important recycling is to the target audience;
- How effective the target audience perceives recycling to be; and,
- How concerned the target audience is about recycling.

Obtaining information/best persuasion techniques – The program developer needs to understand what the best way is to market recycling to the target audience. This involves knowing:
- The best way to reach the target audience;
- The best time and place to reach the target audience;
- How the target audience receives information;
- Who or what the target audiences consider to be a credible source of information;
- The groups or individuals that most influence the target audience and how those

groups/individuals can be involved in an outreach strategy;
- The combination of mass media, interpersonal communication, and print materials that should be used

Demographics – The program developer needs to understand the characteristics of the population that makes up the target audience. Demographics to consider include:
- Age
- Income
- Education
- Children/no children
- Home ownership
- Gender

Primary Research

It is possible that the project developer will need to supplement available information with information obtained through primary research. There are a number of techniques the project developer can use to obtain primary information. Some techniques include:

- Observational Studies (direct observation of an activity or behavior can be a powerful tool for identifying barriers)
- Group Meetings
- Focus groups involving stakeholders
- Surveys (good at reaching a larger audience)
  - Intercept
  - In-depth reviews
  - Self-administered questionnaires
  - Phone surveys

3). PLAN AND DESIGN

During this step, the project developer will create the strategy for marketing recycling to the target audience. The project developer will:
- develop and/or select programs;
- create a marketing campaign including the message and the appropriate techniques and media for delivering the message;
- identify incentives;
- establish measurement tools; and
- determine criteria for success/failure.

The project developer will create a strategy using information gathered during the research phase and in the context of the best management practices identified in Appendix L. The strategy must address benefits, barriers, and messages that are relevant to the target audience. Thus, the strategy must identify the audience's stated

needs and wants, not what the project developer perceives as the audience's needs and wants.

Using assessment information, the project developer will identify:
- Specific actions people can take to begin recycling. Members of the target audience need to be able to do what they are being asked to do.
- Any subgroups within the target audience that should be the focus of initial outreach attempts. Examples include people who already recycle but do it only part of the time, people who are willing to voluntarily recycle, and influential or prominent members of the target audience,
- The benefits that the target audience will receive as a result of recycling. The target audience must want these benefits and must be able to obtain the benefits by recycling (from *The Manager's Guide to Social Marketing*, page 8).
- Barriers that need to be lowered/eliminated so the target audience can/will recycle. Overcoming these barriers is key to successfully changing behavior.
- The best media to reach and involve the target audience (the most important messages, most important times, most effective combination of mass (print and traditional media, such as newspapers, newsletters, radio and television ads, billboards, etc.) and electronic media (such as the Internet (a web page, e-mail, and social media [such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.]).
- Other groups and individuals who need to be included as partners.

Some common tools that can be incorporated into programs include:

[***NOTE***: *much of the information for the following discussion about social marketing tools was taken from **Social Marketing for Recycling in Ohio: A Guide to Understanding Planning and Conducting Social Marketing Projects**.*]

[***NOTE***: *as with barriers, some of these tools can be incorporated into the outreach strategy, but some address changes to recycling programs and infrastructure.*]

Commitment - Research shows that people are much more likely to do something when they have made a commitment to doing it. Furthermore, written commitments are much stronger than oral commitments. Thus, if someone isn't currently recycling, it may be possible to get them to recycle by getting them to commit in writing to recycle.

Commitment should be obtained for only behaviors people express an interest in doing. Commitment will work only if it is given voluntarily.

Prompts – Prompts are reminders and can be useful for members of a target audience that intermittently recycle, usually because they don't remember to recycle regularly. Prompts need to be provided frequently, be highly visible, and catch the audience's attention. Prompts will be successful with only people who are willing to engage in the desired behavior. The intermittent recycler is already inclined to recycle and, therefore, represents "low hanging fruit".

<u>Feedback</u> - People are more likely to begin recycling or to continue recycling if they know that their behavior will make/is making a difference. Providing information that ties their behavior to success is one way of encouraging additional recycling.

<u>Identify block leaders/recycling advocates</u> - People often look to others to guide behavior. If they see that people they trust or admire do the behavior, then they will be more apt to do the behavior as well.

Any member of a community that is willing to become active and set the example for neighbors can be a block leader. Block leaders can engage neighbors to address local environmental issues (such as recycling, composting, etc.) either passively by example or actively by interaction and persuasion.

<u>Norms/Motivation</u> (desire for social acceptance) the more people see recycling as something others do is a motivating factor

Making recycling a norm involves making it the typical behavior instead of the exception. This is done by making recycling more visible/noticeable. Making something a norm relies on peoples' desire to fit in. People are more likely to engage in a behavior if they see other people doing the behavior.

<u>Incentives</u> - Incentives can be used to entice people to participate in recycling programs by rewarding them for their participation. Incentives can be monetary (such as financial awards, coupons, or gifts) and non-monetary (such as public recognition). To be effective, the incentive offered has to be something the target audience wants.

Examples of incentive-based programs include RecycleBank, combined pay-as-you-throw trash collection and curbside recycling services, awards, and media announcements.

The danger with incentives is that once they are discontinued, the target audience may discontinue the desired behavior.

<u>Persuasive/effective Communication</u> - In order for a promotional campaign to be successful, the message of the campaign needs to:
- capture the attention of the target audience;
- be personalized to the target audience;
- come from a credible source;
- be appropriate based on the perceptions of the target audience;
- be easy to read and understand (e.g. based on reading level of target audience, not the creator); and,
- be easy to remember.

<u>Enhance Convenience</u> – Although not something that can be changed through outreach, improving the convenience of a recycling program sometimes is the easiest way to affect behavior. Some common convenience factors include:
- reducing sorting requirements,
- increasing the size of collection receptacles,
- upgrading subscription curbside service to non-subscription service,
- placing drop-off locations in high travel areas/convenient to normal destinations,
- maintaining consistent collection times,

<u>Measureable Outcomes</u>:

When developing programs, the project developer will define targets or standards that can be measured to evaluate whether the desired behavior is happening as a result of the outreach efforts. Measureable outcomes need to be achievable, specific, quantifiable, realistic, and time-based.

Defining measurable outcomes requires that the project developer determine what data will be collected and how to collect, manage, and analyze the data. In order to measure the relative success of a program on behavior, the project developer will also need pre-program data to use as baseline data. The program developer will likely gather the baseline data during the research and assessment phase.

Before establishing measureable outcomes, the project developer must first consider the types of data that can and cannot be collected. For example, it is very difficult to determine total waste generated by the population that can potentially use a specific drop-off location. Without total waste generation, it isn't possible to calculate a recycling rate for the drop-off. Therefore, determining the change in the weight of recyclables collected as a result of a marketing effort is a better measurement than the change in the recycling rate. (Dave Landis, pg. 25).

Examples of measureable outcomes include:
- Number of communities that establish new recycling programs;
- Number of new customers that sign up for a curbside recycling program;
- Number of customers that set-out containers for curbside recycling;
- Number of residents that use a drop-off location;
- Increase in the number of times a drop-off bin is emptied;
- Number of residents that use a special collection event;
- Number of schools that establish new in-school recycling programs;
- Increase in material collected for recycling;
- Decrease in waste disposed;
- Number of organizations requesting recycling containers for special events;
- Decrease in the number of times a company's trash container is pulled by the waste hauler.
- Decrease in contamination;

4). Pilot and Revise

Pilot:

Prior to implementing a program on a full-scale basis, it is a good idea for the project developer to pilot the program with the target audience. Piloting is usually associated with marketing campaigns, but may also be done for other types of programs. Piloting can help the project developer avoid wasting resources on ineffective programs. Piloting can help the project developer make sure that he/she truly understands the target audience's wants and needs, has developed a marketing strategy appropriate to the target audience, and can obtain the desired result. When piloting, the project developer should select a representative sample of the target audience.

Piloting can do all of the following:

- Involve the target audience in designing an outreach program and the marketing strategy.
- Make sure an outreach program is something the target audience is interested in.
- Make sure the target audience understands the message being conveyed.
- Make sure that the target audience doesn't interpret the message in unintended or unforeseen ways.
- Determine if the message is relevant to the target audience.
- Make sure the message is something that catches the target audience's attention and that the target audience finds persuasive enough to engage in the desired behavior.
- Determine if the target audience finds the message and the messenger/delivery vehicle credible.
- Result in additional ideas that can be incorporated into the program.
- Result in refining the program to make the message and overall program more appealing and effective.

Some potential piloting tools include:

- Limited implementation of a program to test its effectiveness on a representative sample of the target audience
- Focus Groups
- Individual Interviews
- Intercept Interviews
- Self-administered Questionnaires
- Readability Testing

Revise

Once the project developer has finished piloting, he/she will review the results and determine what changes to the program need to be made to address the target audience's recommendations. If the project developer makes significant revisions to the

program to address the target audience's input, then it may be a good idea to conduct a second round of piloting, provided the project developer has the time and resources to do so.

5). Implement

This is the step when the project developer implements the full behavior change strategy. This is the first time the entire target audience will be exposed to the strategy.

Some things to keep in mind during this step:
- Prior to implementing, make sure to have baseline data to compare the results of the strategy against
- Provide regular feedback to the target audience about the results of their changed behavior. This will help to reinforce the importance of their changes and motivate the target audience to continue with the desired behavior.

6). Monitor and Evaluate

This step is conducted in conjunction with the implementation phase.

Some things to keep in mind during this step:

- When evaluating the effectiveness of the social marketing strategy, measure the extent to which the strategy changed the targeted behavior. This will involve evaluating the measureable outcomes defined in Step 3.
- Take periodic measurements to ensure that the target audience continues to do the desired behavior. Regularly tracking progress allows the project developer to identify problems and take action to correct them.

  As an example, strategies to get more people to recycle often result in an initial increase in participation. As time passes, some of those new participants may quit recycling. Identifying that as a barrier early enough gives the project developer the ability to adjust the strategy to address those "sometimes" recyclers.

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