

Chapter 2

10 STEPS IN THE STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANNING PROCESS

I find the social marketing process is a great way to mobilize groups and coalitions around a common goal. It is a logical, step-by-step process that makes sense. It provides a concise map for how the project will be conducted. It ensures that efforts will be measured. And it demands continuous monitoring that allows for midcourse corrections. Sometimes I get asked if it's okay to skip a step. My response: If you do, then it's not social marketing.

—Heidi Keller
Keller Consulting

Although most agree that having a formal, detailed plan for a social marketing effort “would be nice,” that practice doesn’t appear to be the norm. Those in positions of responsibility who could make this happen frequently voice perceptions and concerns such as these:

- We just don’t have the time to get this all down on paper. By the time we get the go-ahead, we just need to spend the money before the funding runs out.
- The train already left the station. I believe the team and my administrators already know what they want to do. The target audience and communication channels were chosen long ago. It seems disingenuous, and quite frankly a waste of resources, to prepare a document to justify these decisions.

We begin this chapter with an inspiring case story that demonstrates the positive potential return on your investment in the planning process. Ten steps to developing a compelling social marketing plan are then outlined—ones we hope will demonstrate that the process can be simple and efficient and that those who have taken the time to develop a formal plan realize numerous benefits. Readers of your plan will see evidence that recommended activities are based on strategic thinking. They will understand why specific target audiences have been recommended. They will see what anticipated costs are intended to produce in specific,

quantifiable terms that can be translated into an associated return on investment. They will certainly learn that marketing is more than advertising and will be delighted (even surprised) to see you have a system, method, timing, and budget to evaluate your efforts.

We conclude with comments on why a systematic, sequential planning process is important and where marketing research fits in the process. The Marketing Dialogue at the end of the chapter gives a glimpse at the ongoing, passionate debate over the first step in the planning process—deciding “what is good.”

MARKETING HIGHLIGHT

Scooping the Poop in Austin, Texas (2001–2009)

Background

The Humane Society of the United States estimates that 39% of U.S. households own at least one dog.¹ Austinites are no exception, with the current population of canine residents estimated at more than 120,000. Further, many consider Austin an especially dog-friendly city, evidenced by off-leash areas in 11 city parks as well as frequent sightings of dogs with their owners on excursions along neighborhood streets and local trails, lounging on restaurant patios, and attending public events in the parks.

The problem is that pet waste contains dangerous bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli* as well as harmful parasites such as *Giardia* and roundworms. When not properly disposed of and left in public places and as many as 120,000 backyards in the city, it poses a direct-contact health hazard for people and pets. And when washed into creeks and lakes, pet waste can make the water unsafe for recreation and cause aquatic weeds and algae to

flourish, eventually reducing levels of oxygen in the water and killing fish. With each dog producing an average of one half pound of waste daily, that adds up to 60,000 pounds deposited each day in Austin (a citywide total of nearly five dump truck loads)—approximately 22 million pounds per year.

Beginning in 1992, the City relied on an ordinance, carrying a potential fine of up to \$500, requiring that pet owners pick up after their pets. The code is a helpful deterrent, but hard to enforce as it requires a law officer to witness the offense, and it does nothing to engender public concern for the environmental and health impacts of pet waste. To increase this influence, in 2000 the City’s Watershed Protection and Parks and Recreation departments launched a new effort called Scoop the Poop. As you will read, the program continues to this day (2011), with new strategic components being added each year. Information for this case was provided by Kathy Shay, Environmental Program Manager, City of Austin, Texas.²

Target Audiences and Desired Behaviors

Initially, the primary target audience was dog owners taking their pets to public parks. Eventually, in response to citizens' complaints regarding neighborhood dogs' defecating on private property, the campaign expanded its outreach to include people walking their dogs in community neighborhoods.

Three behaviors for waste disposal were encouraged: (1) Scoop the poop, (2) bag it, and (3) place it in the trash.

Audience Insights

To identify perceived *barriers*, program managers interviewed professionals around the country and reviewed existing surveys, including some from the Center for Watershed Protection. Common barriers to poop scooping and proper disposal included (a) not having convenient access to disposable bags, (b) not having enough trash cans around for quick disposal, (c) finding the task messy and smelly, (d) not believing that “one little pile” is a problem, and (e) considering dog waste a good/natural fertilizer.

In one survey conducted by the City, potential *benefits* were quantified and ranked: 53% expressed that pressure from others would probably make them more likely to pick up after their pet; 46% indicated that more dispensers with plenty of bags would help; 40% said more trash cans were important; 35% wanted more information about why they should pick it up and what to do with it; and 35% “admitted” that enforcement of fines would make a difference.

Strategies

In 2000, 25 Mutt Mitt stations dispensing disposable bags were installed in city parks (see Figure 2.1). Mutt Mitt plastic bags are degradable and designed to “protect the hand like a glove,” easing some of the concerns about mess and smell. By 2010, there were more than 150 stations in 90 city parks (*product*).

In 2002, the program expanded to reach citizens walking their dogs in neighborhoods and other public places and began giving away reusable pet trash bag holders with a clasp to clip to a dog leash (see Figure 2.2).

As noted earlier, there is a preexisting \$500 fine. To make the law more visible and increase the perception of enforcement, citizens are now encouraged to report violators via the City's nonemergency telephone number (311), which is highlighted on signage and promotional materials (*disincentive*). The City also offers a Green Neighbor program that lists more than 100 actions citizens can do to improve the environment. Any neighborhood that distributes Green Neighbor guides to its residents, marks storm drains, adopts a

Figure 2.1 Mutt Mitt dispenser³



Figure 2.2 Bag holder giveaway⁴

Source: City of Austin

park, or performs other earth-wise actions qualifies as a Green Neighborhood and can receive a free Mutt Mitt dispenser (*incentive*).

To help ensure bags are always available at stations, there is a message on the dispenser with a number to call to let the City know when the dispenser is empty. Yard signs to prompt pet owners to pick up waste on private properties can be ordered online and are then mailed directly to the citizen. Additional trash cans have been added in many of the parks to make disposal more convenient (*place*).

Until 2008, primary strategies consisted of the pet waste dispensers with bags (*product*), signage regarding the City code and how to report violators (*price*), and placement of more trash receptacles along with provision of a phone number for letting the City know if there were no bags in the dispenser (*place*). In 2009, the program was enhanced with more

promotional elements to spread the word beyond the city parks. These included:

- *Broadcast media*: a 30-second animated television spot funded by the Watershed Protection Department
- *Public events*: creation of a temporary dirt pile sculpture next to a popular downtown lake; the pile represented one day's worth of poop (60,000 pounds) and was unveiled at a press conference hosted by the mayor and showcasing an original "Scoop the Poop" song performed by a local singer/songwriter
- *Outdoor and print media*: promotional advertisements placed in newspapers
- *Signage*: signage based on the Snohomish County, Washington, pet waste campaign, adapted by Austin, and placed in many off-leash areas
- *Brochures and flyers*: two small Austin Guide brochures, one on the Scoop the Poop program and one to describe issues specific to the off-leash pet areas
- *Enhanced Web site* for downloading program materials and ordering yard signs
- *Program mascot*: Scoop the Poop's mascot, Eco—Austin's #1 dog for the environment
- *Social media*: a Facebook page that encourages visitors to interact with Eco, the campaign mascot; the most popular feature asks pet owners to send photos of their dogs, who then become "friends" of Eco
- *Articles* for neighborhood newsletters
- *Face-to-face promotions*: staff talking to dog owners in off-leash areas about pet waste and attending

environment-, pet-, and park-themed city events

- *Direct mail:* educational postcards mailed to pet-related businesses and organizations to distribute to their clientele
- *Additional distribution channels for program materials:* veterinary clinics, animal shelters, libraries, recreation centers

Results

Program outcomes, impact, and cost/benefit are tracked and reported every year. As indicated in Table 2.1, outcomes are measured in terms of number of Mutt Mitts distributed; impact is stated in terms of estimated number of pounds of pet waste collected and disposed of properly; and cost per pound disposed of correctly is

calculated based on annual program budgets. Number of Mutt Mitts distributed reflects those taken from the City's dispensers. (It should be noted that this number of bags does not include those carried by dog owners, including the contents of the 2,000 clip-on bag containers distributed by the City.) Impact is based on an assumption of an average of one half pound per bag. In 2001, approximately \$10,000 was spent on the program. In 2009, \$72,000 was spent on Mutt Mitts and dispensers; an additional \$20,000 was spent on signs, brochures, giveaways, T-shirts, advertising, and staff time. Yard sign requests increased from 50 in 2007, to 140 in 2008, to 271 in 2009. Monthly Web hits to the Scoop the Poop Austin homepage, which numbered less than 400 before the campaign, increased to nearly 4,000 after the campaign began.

Table 2.1 Cost Per Pound to Properly Collect and Dispose of Pet Waste

Year	Annual Program Budget	Mutt Mitts Distributed	Pounds Collected and Disposed of Properly (@ 0.5 lb. per bag on average)	Estimated Cost Per Pound Properly Collected and Disposed Of
2001	\$10,000	75,000	37,500 lbs.	\$.27/lb.
2003	\$53,000	535,000	267,500 lbs.	\$.20/lb.
2006	\$72,500	967,000	483,500 lbs.	\$.15/lb.
2008	\$87,000*	2,000,000	1,000,000 lbs.	\$.09/lb.
2009	\$92,000	2,400,000	1,200,000 lbs.	\$.08/lb.

*Costs were reduced in 2008 by switching to less expensive bags

MARKETING PLANNING: PROCESS AND INFLUENCES

To set the stage for developing a tactical social marketing plan, we begin with a description of the traditional marketing planning process, the evolution of the marketing concept, and a few of the most recent shifts in marketing management philosophy.

The Marketing Planning Process

In theory, there is a logical process to follow when developing a marketing plan—whether for a commercial enterprise, nonprofit organization, or public sector agency. You begin by clarifying the purpose and focus of your plan; you move on to analyzing the current situation and environment, identifying target audiences, establishing marketing objectives and goals, conducting research to deepen your understanding of your target audiences, determining a desired positioning for the offer, and designing a strategic marketing mix (4Ps); and then you develop evaluation, budget, and implementation plans. Some conceptualize the process more easily with these broader headings: Why are you doing this? Where are you today? Where do you want to go? How are you going to get there? How will you keep on track?

Evolution of the Marketing Concept

The cornerstone of the marketing concept is a customer-centered mindset that sends marketers on a relentless pursuit to sense and satisfy target audiences' wants and needs and to solve their problems—better than the competition does. Marketers haven't always thought this way. Some still don't. This customer-centered focus didn't emerge as a strong marketing management philosophy until the 1980s and is contrasted with alternative philosophies in the following list provided by Kotler and Keller.⁵ We have added a few examples relevant to social marketing.

- The Production Concept is perhaps the oldest philosophy and holds that consumers will prefer products that are widely available and inexpensive, and therefore the organization's focus should be to keep costs down and access convenient. Early efforts to encourage condom use to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS may have had this philosophical orientation, unfortunately falling on deaf ears for those who did not see this behavior as a social norm and feared their partner's rejection.
- The Product Concept holds that consumers will favor products that offer the most quality, performance, or innovative features. The problem with this focus is that program and service managers often become caught up in a love affair with their product, neglecting to design and enhance their efforts based on customers' wants and needs. Otherwise known as the “build it and they will come” or “make it and it will sell” philosophy, this orientation may explain the challenges community transit agencies face as they attempt to increase ridership on buses.

- The Selling Concept holds that consumers and businesses, if left alone, will probably not buy enough of the organization's products to meet its goals, and as a result, the organization must undertake an aggressive selling and promotion effort. Communications encouraging adults to exercise and eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day do not begin to address the barriers perceived by many in the target audience—such as how to make time when holding down a full-time job or raising a family, or simply not liking vegetables.
- The Marketing Concept stands in sharp contrast to the product and selling concepts. Instead of a “make and sell” philosophy, it is a “sense and respond” orientation. Peter Drucker went so far as to proclaim, “The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself.”⁶ If a city utility's natural yard care workshop is exciting, and better yet those who attend are able to keep their lawn weed free without the use of harmful chemicals, they are bound to share their enthusiasm and this newfound resource with their neighbors—and go back for more!
- The Holistic Marketing Concept is a 21st-century approach, recognizing the need to have a more complete, cohesive philosophy that goes beyond traditional applications of the marketing concept. Three relevant components for social marketers include relationship marketing, integrated marketing, and internal marketing. The Farmers' Marketing Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages clients in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program to shop at farmers' markets for fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Keys to success include relationship building (e.g., counselors in WIC offices who work with clients to overcome barriers to shopping at the markets, such as transportation), integrated marketing (e.g., farmers' stands at the markets carry signage and messages regarding the program similar to those clients see in WIC offices), and internal marketing (e.g., counselors in WIC offices are encouraged to visit the markets themselves so they are more able to describe places to park and what clients are likely to find fresh that week).

Shifts in Marketing Management

Kotler and Keller also describe philosophical shifts in marketing management that they believe smart companies have been making in the 21st century.⁷ A few that are relevant to social marketers in the planning process include the following:

- From “marketing does the marketing” to “everyone does the marketing.” Programs encouraging young partygoers to pick a designated driver are certainly supported (even funded) by more than public information officers within departments of transportation. Schools, parents, police officers, law enforcement, judges, health care providers, advertising agencies, bars, and alcohol beverage companies help spread the word and reinforce the program.
- From organizing by product units to organizing by customer segments. Clearly, an effective drowning-prevention program plan would need to have separate strategies—even separate marketing plans—based on the differing ages of children. Focuses might

be toddlers wearing life vests on beaches, young children taking swimming lessons, and teens knowing where they can buy cool life vests that won't "ruin their tan."

- From building brands through advertising to building brands through performance and integrated communications. The "Makeover Mile," launched in the U.S. in 2011, is well on its way to building a brand that is a catalyst for positive change, one supported by communications that are both consistent and pervasive. Seeking to turn back the tide of obesity-related diseases that threaten nearly two thirds of Americans, on February 23, 2011, Dr. Ian Smith announced the launch of this grassroots initiative that stages a one-mile walk ending at a health fair in communities most adversely affected by weight-related illnesses and lack of access to health care.⁸ The walks are constructed with the intention of influencing participants to "seize the moment today in order to steer their lives towards a healthier tomorrow."⁹ At the end of the mile walk, participants participate in a sponsored health fair that provides free health screenings for adults, including eye exams, blood pressure checks, cholesterol screening, and bone density tests; healthy cooking and fitness demonstrations; and giveaways and activities for children. As of April 1, 2011, a total of 3,947 people had pledged, "I'm going to the Makeover Mile," in one of seven cities: Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, DC.¹⁰
- From focusing on profitable transactions to focusing on customers' lifetime value. We would consider the approach many city utilities take to increasing recycling among residential households to be one focused on building customer relationships and loyalty (to a cause). Many begin with offering a container for recycling paper and then eventually offer those same households a separate container for glass and plastic. Some then take the next relationship-building step as they add containers for yard waste and food waste to the mix. A few are now providing pickup of used cooking oils, which can then be used to produce biodiesel fuel, and some cities (San Francisco for one) are considering collecting pet waste and turning it into methane to use for heating homes and generating electricity. At least one state (Minnesota) also suggests to customers that they put unwanted clean clothing and rags in a plastic trash bag and set it out for pickup on regular curbside recycling days.
- From being local to being "glocal"—both global and local. Efforts by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to encourage households to use energy-saving appliances seems a great example, where communications regarding ENERGY STAR® appliances and fixtures stress the link between home energy use and air pollution and at the same time provide detailed information on how these options can both save taxpayer dollars and lower household utility bills.

10 STEPS TO DEVELOPING A SOCIAL MARKETING PLAN

Our first of several primers in this book is presented in Table 2.2, outlining the 10 distinct and important steps to developing a strategic social marketing plan. They are described briefly in this chapter. Chapters 5 through 17 provide more detailed information on each step, and worksheets are also presented in Appendix A.

Table 2.2 Social Marketing Planning Primer**Executive Summary**

Brief summary highlighting the plan's purpose, target audiences, major marketing objectives and goals, desired positioning, marketing mix strategies (4Ps), and evaluation, budget, and implementation plans.

1.0 Background, Purpose, and Focus

What social issue is this plan intended to impact (e.g., water quality)? On what population (e.g., single-family homes) and/or solution (e.g., natural yard care) will we focus? Why? Who is the sponsor?

2.0 Situation Analysis

- 2.1 SWOT: organizational Strengths and Weaknesses and environmental Opportunities and Threats
- 2.2 Key learnings from a review of similar prior efforts and additional exploratory market research

3.0 Target Audience(s)

- 3.1 Descriptions of priority target audience(s), including demographics, geographics, readiness to change, relevant behaviors, values and lifestyle, social networks, and community assets relative to the plan's purpose and focus
- 3.2 Market research findings providing a rationale for targeted audiences, including factors such as size, problem incidence, problem severity, defensiveness, reachability, potential responsiveness to marketing mix elements, incremental costs, and organizational match, relative to the plan's purpose and area of focus

4.0 Behavior Objectives and Goals

- 4.1 Behaviors that target audience(s) will be influenced to adopt (e.g., planting native plants), ones that are single and simple with lowest current penetration, highest willingness, and most potential impact
- 4.2 SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals quantifying desired behavior outcomes as well as changes in knowledge, beliefs, and behavior intent

5.0 Target Audience Barriers, Benefits, the Competition and Influential Others

- 5.1 Perceived barriers and costs associated with adopting the desired behavior
- 5.2 Potential unique and meaningful benefits that will help influence and sustain targeted behaviors
- 5.3 Competing behaviors/forces/choices
- 5.4 Influence of importance to others

6.0 Positioning Statement

How we want the target audience to see the targeted behavior, highlighting unique benefits and the value proposition

7.0 Marketing Mix Strategies (4Ps)

- 7.1 Product: *Benefits from performing behaviors and features of goods or services offered to assist adoption*
 - Core product: Audience-desired benefits promised in exchange for performing the behavior
 - Actual product: Features of any goods or services offered/promoted (e.g., 100 native plants to choose from)
 - Augmented product: Additional goods and services to help perform the behavior or increase appeal (e.g., workshops on how to design a native plant garden)

7.2 Price: *Costs that will be associated with adopting the behavior and price-related tactics to reduce costs*

Costs: money, time, physical effort, psychological, lack of pleasure

Price-related tactics:

Monetary incentives (e.g., discounts, rebates)

Nonmonetary incentives (e.g., pledges, recognition, appreciation)

Monetary disincentives (e.g., fines)

Nonmonetary disincentives (e.g., negative public visibility)

7.3 Place: *Convenient access*

Creating convenient opportunities for audience(s) to engage in the targeted behaviors and/or access products and services, including developing partnerships for distribution channels and reinforcing desired behaviors

7.4 Promotion: *Persuasive communications highlighting benefits, features, fair price, and ease of access*

Decisions regarding messages, messengers, creative strategies, and media channels

Consideration of incorporating prompts for sustainability

8.0 Plan for Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Purpose and audience for monitoring progress and evaluating final results

8.2 What will be measured: inputs, outputs, outcomes (from Step 4), and (potentially) impact and return on investment (ROI)

8.3 How and when measures will be taken

9.0 Budget

9.1 Costs of implementing the marketing plan, including additional research and monitoring/evaluation plan

9.2 Any anticipated incremental revenues, cost savings, or partner contributions

10.0 Plan for Implementation and Program Management

Who will do what, when—including partners and their roles

Note: This is an iterative, nonlinear process, with numerous feedback loops (e.g., barriers to a behavior may be determined to be so significant that a new behavior is chosen). Marketing research will be needed to develop most steps, especially exploratory research for Steps 1 and 2, formative research for Steps 3 through 6, and pretesting for finalizing Step 7.

Developed by Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee with input from Alan Andreasen, Carol Bryant, Craig Lefebvre, Bob Marshall, Mike Newton-Ward, Michael Rothschild, and Bill Smith in 2008.

Although this outline for the most part mirrors marketing plans developed by product managers in for-profit organizations, three aspects of the model stand out:

1. Target audiences are selected before objectives and goals are established. In social marketing, our objective is to influence the behavior of a target audience, making it important to identify the target (e.g., seniors) before determining the specific behavior the plan will promote (e.g., joining a walking group).

2. The competition isn't identified in the situation analysis. Because we haven't yet decided the specific behavior that will be encouraged, we wait until Step 4, when we conduct audience research related to the desired behavior.

3. Goals are the quantifiable measures of the plan (e.g., number of seniors you want to join a walking group) versus the broader purpose of the plan. In this model, the plan's purpose statement (e.g., increase physical activity among seniors) is included in Step 1. Certainly, labels for any part of the plan can and probably should be changed to fit the organization's culture and existing planning models. The important thing is that each step be taken and developed sequentially.

Steps in the plan are described briefly in the following sections and illustrated using excerpts from a marketing plan to reduce litter in Washington State.

Step 1: Describe the Background, Purpose, and Focus

Begin by noting the social issue the project will be addressing (e.g., carbon emissions) and then summarize factors that have led to the development of the plan. What's the problem? What happened? The problem statement may include epidemiological, scientific, or other research data related to a public health crisis (e.g., increases in obesity), a safety concern (e.g., increases in cell phone use while driving), an environmental threat (e.g., inadequate water supply), or need for community involvement (e.g., need for more blood donations). The problem may have been precipitated by an unusual event such as a tsunami or may simply be fulfilling an organization's mandate or mission (e.g., to promote sustainable seafood).

Next, develop a purpose statement that clarifies the benefit of a successful campaign (e.g., improved water quality). Then, from the vast number of factors that might contribute to this purpose, select one focus (e.g., reducing the use of pesticides).

Litter Plan Excerpt: Every year in Washington State, over 16 million pounds of "stuff" is tossed and blown onto interstate, state, and county roads. Another 6 million pounds is tossed into parks and recreation areas. Programs funded through the Department of Ecology (Ecology) spend over \$4 million each year, but staff estimate that only 25% to 35% gets picked up. Litter creates an eyesore, harms wildlife and their habitats, and is a potential hazard for motorists, who may be struck by anything from a lit cigarette to an empty bottle of beer, or even a bottle of "trucker's pee." In 2001, Ecology developed a three-year social marketing plan with the *purpose* of decreasing littering and a *focus* on intentional littering on roadways.

Step 2: Conduct a Situation Analysis

Now, relative to the purpose and focus of the plan, conduct a quick audit of factors and forces in the internal and external environments that are anticipated to have some impact

on or relevance in subsequent planning decisions. Often referred to as a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, this audit recognizes organizational *strengths* to maximize and *weaknesses* to minimize, including factors such as available resources, expertise, management support, current alliances and partners, delivery system capabilities, the agency's reputation, and priority of issues. Then make a similar list of environmental forces in the marketplace that represent either *opportunities* your plan should take advantage of or *threats* it should prepare for. These forces are typically not within the marketer's control but must be taken into account. Major categories include cultural, technological, natural, demographic, economic, political, and legal forces.¹¹

Time taken at this point to contact colleagues, query listservs, and conduct a literature—even Google—search for similar campaigns will be well spent. Lessons learned from others regarding what worked and what didn't should help guide plan development, as should reflection on prior similar campaigns conducted by the organization sponsoring this new effort.

Litter Plan Excerpt: The greatest organizational strengths going into the campaign included the state's significant fines for littering, social marketing expertise on the team, management support, and other state agency support, including critical involvement and buy-in from the state patrol and Department of Licensing. Weaknesses to minimize included limited financial resources, competing priorities faced by law enforcement (traffic safety issues such as drinking and driving and use of seatbelts), and lack of adequate litter containers in public areas.

Environmental opportunities to take advantage of included the fact that litterers were not always aware of the significant fines for littering (as indicated by formative research), the strong environmental ethic of many citizens, and many businesses that were "part of the problem" but also potential campaign sponsors (e.g., fast-food establishments, beverage companies, mini-marts). Threats to prepare for included the argument that litter was not a priority issue and that litterers were not motivated by environmental concerns.

Step 3: Select Target Audiences

In this critical step, select the bull's-eye for your marketing efforts. Provide a rich description of your target audience using characteristics such as stage of change (readiness to buy), demographics, geographics, related behaviors, psychographics, social networks, community assets, and size of the market. A marketing plan ideally focuses on a primary target audience, although additional secondary markets (e.g., strategic partners, target audience opinion leaders) are often identified and strategies included to influence them as well. As you will read further in Chapter 6, arriving at this decision is a three-step process that involves first segmenting the market (population) into similar groups, then evaluating segments based on a set of criteria, and finally choosing one or more as the focal point for positioning and marketing mix strategies.

Litter Plan Excerpt: Surveys indicate that some of us (about 25%) would never consider littering. Some of us (about 25%) litter most of the time. Almost half of us litter occasionally but can be persuaded not to.¹² There were two major audiences for the campaign: litterers and nonlitterers. Target audiences for littering include the five behavior-related segments creating the majority of intentional litter on roadways: (a) motorists or passengers who toss (1) cigarette butts, (2) alcoholic beverage containers, and (3) food wrappers and other beverage containers out the window, and (b) those who drive pickup trucks and are (1) not properly covering or securing their loads and (2) not cleaning out the backs of their pickup trucks before driving on roadways. Campaign strategies were also developed and aimed at nonlitterers traveling on Washington State roadways.

Step 4: Set Behavior Objectives and Goals

Social marketing plans always include a *behavior* objective—something we want to influence the target audience to do. It may be something we want our target audience to accept (e.g., start composting food waste), reject (e.g., purchasing a gas blower), modify (e.g., water deeply and less frequently), or abandon (e.g., using fertilizers with harmful herbicides). Often our research indicates that there may also be something the audience needs to know or believe in order to be motivated to act. *Knowledge objectives* include information or facts we want the market to be aware of (e.g., motor oil poured down the street drain goes directly to the lake)—including information that might make them more willing to perform the desired behavior (e.g., where they can properly dispose of motor oil). *Belief objectives* relate more to feelings and attitudes. Home gardeners may know the pesticide they are using is harmful, and even that it works its way into rivers and streams, but they may believe that using it once or twice a year won't make “that much difference.”

This is also the point in the marketing plan where we establish quantifiable measures (goals) relative to our objectives. Ideally, goals are established for behavior objectives, as well as any knowledge and belief objectives—ones that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time sensitive (SMART). You should recognize that what you determine here will guide your subsequent decisions regarding marketing mix strategies. It will also have significant implications for your budgets and will provide clear direction for evaluation measures later in the planning process.

Litter Plan Excerpt: Campaign strategies were developed to support three separate objectives: (a) a short-term objective to create *awareness* that there were significant fines associated with littering and that there was a (new) toll-free number to report littering, (b) a midterm objective to convince litterers to *believe* that their littering would be noticed and they could be caught, and (c) a long-term objective to influence litterers to *change their behaviors*: to dispose of litter properly, cover and secure pickup truck loads, and clean out the backs of their trucks before driving on roadways. Telephone surveys were conducted to establish a baseline of public awareness and beliefs about the littering, and field research was done to measure current quantities and types of litter.¹³

Step 5: Identify Target Audience Barriers, Benefits, the Competition, and Influential Others

At this point you know who you want to influence and what you want them to do. You (theoretically) even know how many, or what percentage, of your target audience you are hoping to persuade. Before rushing to develop a positioning and marketing mix for this audience, however, take the time, effort, and resources to understand what your target audience is currently doing or prefers to do (the competition) and what real and/or perceived barriers they have to this desired behavior and what would motivate them to “buy” it. In other words, what do *they* think of your idea? What are some of the reasons they are not currently doing this or don’t want to? What do they come up with when asked what it would take for them to do it? Do they think any of your potential strategies would work for them? Their answers should be treated like gold and considered a gift.

Litter Plan Excerpt: Focus groups with motorists who reported littering (yes, they came) indicated several perceived barriers to the desired behaviors of disposing of litter properly, covering pickup loads, and cleaning out backs of trucks: “I don’t want to keep the cigarette butt in the car. It stinks.” “If I get caught with an open container of beer in my car, I’ll get a hefty fine. I’d rather take the chance and toss it.” “I didn’t even know there was stuff in the back of my truck. Someone in the parking lot keeps using it as a garbage can!” “The cords I have found to secure my load are just not that effective.” “What’s the problem, anyway? Doesn’t this give prisoners a way to do community service?”

And what would motivate them? “You’d have to convince me that anyone notices my littering and that I could get caught.” “I had no idea the fine for littering a lit cigarette butt could be close to a thousand dollars!” (Notice their concerns were not about helping keep Washington green!)

Step 6: Develop a Positioning Statement

In brief, a positioning statement describes how you want your target audience to see the behavior you want them to buy, relative to competing behaviors. Branding is one strategy to help secure this desired position. Both the positioning statement and brand identity are inspired by your description of your target audience and its list of competitors, barriers, and motivators to action. The positioning statement will also guide the development of a strategic marketing mix. This theory was first popularized in the 1980s by advertising executives Al Ries and Jack Trout, who contended that positioning starts with a product, but not what you do to a product: “Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect.”¹⁴ We would add, “where you want it to be.”¹⁵

Litter Plan Excerpt: We want motorists to believe that they will be noticed and caught when littering and that fines are steeper than they thought. In the end, we want them to believe disposing of litter properly is a better, especially cheaper, option.

Step 7: Develop a Strategic Marketing Mix (4Ps)

This section of the plan describes your product, price, place, and promotional strategies.

It is the blend of these elements that constitutes your marketing mix, also thought of as the determinants (independent variables) used to influence behaviors (the dependent variable). Be sure to develop the marketing mix in the sequence that follows, beginning with the product and ending with a promotional strategy. After all, the promotional tool is the one you count on to ensure that target audiences know about your product, its price, and how to access it. These decisions obviously need to be made before promotional planning.

Product

Describe core, actual, and augmented product levels. The *core product* consists of benefits the target audience values that they believe they will experience as a result of acting and that you will highlight. Your list of motivators and positioning statement is a great resource for developing this component of the product platform. The *actual product* describes actual features of the desired behavior (e.g., how a pickup load should be secured) and any tangible goods and services that will support the desired behavior. The *augmented product* refers to any additional tangible objects and/or services that you will include in your offer or that will be promoted to the target audience (e.g., guaranteed anonymity when reporting litterers).

Litter Plan Excerpt: It was determined that a new service, a toll-free number, would be launched for motorists witnessing people throwing trash from vehicles or losing materials from unsecured loads. When they called the hotline, they would be asked to report the license number, a description of the vehicle, time of day, type of litter, whether it was thrown from the passenger or driver's side of the car, and approximate location. Within a couple of days, the registered owner of the car would receive a letter from the state patrol, alerting the owner, for example, that "a citizen noticed a lit cigarette butt being tossed out the driver's side of your car at 3 P.M. on Interstate 5, near the University District. This is to inform you that if we had seen you, we would have pulled you over and issued a ticket for \$1,025." All "Litter and it will hurt" campaign materials, from road signs (see Figure 2.3) to litterbags, stickers, and posters, would feature the campaign slogan and the litter hotline telephone number.

Price

Mention here any program-related *monetary costs* (fees) the target audience will pay (e.g., cost of a gun lockbox) and, if offered, any *monetary incentives* such as discount coupons or rebates that you will make available. Also note any *monetary disincentives* that will be emphasized (e.g., fines for not buckling up), *non-monetary incentives* such as public recognition (e.g., plaques for backyard sanctuaries), and *nonmonetary disincentives* such as negative public visibility (e.g., publication of names of elected officials owing back taxes). As you will read in Chapter 11 on pricing, arriving at these strategies begins with identifying major costs the target audience associates with adopting the behavior—both monetary (e.g., paying for a commercial car wash versus doing it at home) and nonmonetary (e.g., the time it takes to drive to the car wash).

Litter Plan Excerpt: Fines for littering would be highlighted in a variety of communication channels with an emphasis on targeted behaviors (lit cigarette butts \$1,025, food or beverage container \$103, unsecured load \$194, illegal dumping \$1,000 to \$5,000 plus jail time), with notes that fines would be subject to change and might vary locally. The image in Figure 2.4 was used on billboards, posters, and litterbags.

Place

In social marketing, place is primarily where and when the target audience will perform the desired behavior and/or acquire any campaign-related tangible goods (e.g., rain barrels offered by a city utility) or receive any services (e.g., tobacco quitline hours and days of the week) associated with the campaign. Place is often referred to as your delivery system or distribution channel, and you will include here any strategies related to managing these channels. Distribution channels are distinct from communication channels, through which promotional messages are delivered (e.g., billboards, outreach workers, Web sites).

Figure 2.3 Road sign for reporting littering.¹⁶



Figure 2.4 Washington State's litter campaign focused on a hotline and stiff fines.¹⁷



Litter Plan Excerpt: The hotline would be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as would a Web site where littering could be reported (www.litter.wa.gov/c_hotline.html). Litterbags (printed with fines for littering) were to be distributed at a variety of locations, including fast-food restaurant windows, car rental agencies, and vehicle licensing offices. A litterbag was also enclosed with each letter sent in response to a litter hotline report.

Promotion

In this section, describe persuasive communication strategies, covering decisions related to *key messages* (what you want to communicate), *messengers* (any spokespersons, sponsors, partners, actors, or influential others you use to deliver messages), and *communication channels* (where promotional messages will appear). Include decisions regarding slogans and taglines as well. Information and decisions to this point will guide your development of the promotional plan—one that will ensure your target audiences know about the offer (product, price, place), believe they will experience the benefits you promise, and are inspired to act.

Figure 2.5 Washington State's litter poster at truck weigh stations.¹⁸



Litter Plan Excerpt: Communication channels selected to spread the “Litter and it will hurt” message included roadway signs, television, radio, publicity, videos, special events, Web sites, and messages on state collateral pieces, including litterbags, posters, stickers, and decals. There were even special signs to be placed at truck weigh stations targeting one of the state’s “most disgusting” forms of litter—an estimated 25,000 jugs of urine found on the roadsides each year (see Figure 2.5).

Step 8: Develop a Plan for Monitoring and Evaluation

Your evaluation plan outlines what measures will be used to evaluate the success of your effort and how and when these measurements will be taken. It is derived after first clarifying the purpose and audience for the evaluation and referring back to goals that have been established for the campaign—the desired levels of changes in behavior, knowledge, and beliefs established in Step 4. This plan is developed

before devising a budget plan, ensuring that funds for this activity are included. Measures typically fall into one of three categories: *output* measures (campaign activities), *outcome* measures (target audience responses and changes in knowledge, beliefs, and behavior), and *impact* measures (contributions to the effort's purpose, e.g., improved water quality).

Litter Plan Excerpt: A baseline survey of Washington State residents was planned to measure and then track (a) awareness of the stiff fines associated with littering and (b) awareness of the toll-free number for reporting littering. Internal records would be used to assess the number of calls to the hotline, and periodic litter composition surveys would be used to measure changes in the targeted categories of roadway litter.

Step 9: Establish Budgets and Find Funding Sources

On the basis of draft product benefits and features, price incentives, distribution channels, proposed promotions, and the evaluation plan, summarize funding requirements and compare them with available and potential funding sources. Outcomes at this step may necessitate revisions of strategies, the audience targeted, and goals, or the need to secure additional funding sources. Only a final budget is presented in this section, delineating secured funding sources and reflecting any contributions from partners.

Litter Plan Excerpt: Major costs would be associated with campaign advertising (television, radio, and billboards). Additional major costs would include signage at governmental facilities and operation of the toll-free litter hotline number. Funding for litterbag printing and distribution and retail signage was anticipated to be provided by media partners and corporate sponsors who would augment advertising media buys.

Step 10: Complete an Implementation Plan

The plan is wrapped up with a document that specifies *who* will do *what*, *when*, and for *how much*. It transforms the marketing strategies into specific actions. Some consider this section “the real marketing plan,” as it provides a clear picture of marketing activities (outputs), responsibilities, time frames, and budgets. Some even use this as a stand-alone piece they can then share with important internal groups. Typically, detailed activities are provided for the first year of a campaign along with broader references for subsequent years.

Litter Plan Excerpt: Three phases were identified for this three-year campaign. In summary, first-year efforts concentrated on awareness building. Years two and three would sustain this effort as well as add elements key to belief and behavior change.

A news release from the Department of Ecology in May 2005 regarding the results of Washington State's litter prevention campaign touted the headline “Ounce of Prevention Is Worth 4 Million Pounds of Litter.” The results from a litter survey in

2004 found a decline from 8,322 tons to 6,315 tons (24%) compared to a similar survey conducted in 1999. This reduction of more than 2,000 tons represented 4 million pounds less litter on Washington's roadways. And calls to the hotline were averaging 15,000 a year.

WHY IS A SYSTEMATIC, SEQUENTIAL PLANNING PROCESS IMPORTANT?

Only through the systematic process of clarifying your plan's *purpose and focus* and *analyzing the marketplace* are you able to select an appropriate target audience for your efforts. Only through taking the time to *understand your target audience* are you able to establish realistic *objectives and goals*. Only through developing an *integrated strategy* will you create real behavior change—an approach that recognizes that such change usually takes more than communications (promotion) and that you need to establish what product benefits you will be promising, what tangible goods and services are needed to support desired behaviors, what pricing incentives and disincentives it will take, and how to make access easy. Only by taking time up front to establish how you will measure your performance will you ensure that this critical step is budgeted for and implemented.

The temptation, and often the practice, is to go straight to advertising or promotional ideas and strategies. This brings up questions such as these:

- How can you know whether ads on the sides of buses (a communication channel) are a good idea if you don't know how long the message needs to be?
- How can you know your slogan (message) if you don't know what you are selling (product)?
- How can you know how to position your product if you don't know what your audience perceives as the benefits and costs of their current behavior compared with the behavior you are promoting?

Although planning is sequential, it might be more accurately described as spiral rather than linear. Each step should be considered a draft, and the planner needs to be flexible, recognizing that there may be a good reason to go back and adjust a prior step before completing the plan. For example:

- Research with target audiences may reveal that goals are too ambitious, or that one of the target audiences should be dropped because you may not be able to meet its unique needs or overcome its specific barriers to change with the resources you have.
- What looked like ideal communication channels might turn out to be cost prohibitive or not cost effective when more carefully examined while preparing the budget.

WHERE DOES MARKETING RESEARCH FIT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

You may have questions at this point regarding where marketing research fits into this process, other than at the step noted for conducting research to determine barriers and motivators. As you will read further in Chapter 4, and as is evident in Figure 2.6, research has a role to play in the development of each step. And properly focused marketing research can make the difference between a brilliant plan and a mediocre one. It is at the core of success at every phase of this planning process, providing critical insights into the target audience, the marketplace, and organizational realities. For those concerned (already) about the resources available for research, we will discuss in Chapter 4 Alan Andreasen's book *Marketing Research That Won't Break the Bank*.¹⁹

Figure 2.6 Summary of marketing planning steps and research input.



CHAPTER SUMMARY

Marketing planning is a systematic process, and a 10-step model is recommended for developing social marketing plans. You begin by clarifying the purpose and focus of your plan, then move on to analyzing the current situation and environment, identifying target audiences, establishing marketing objectives and goals, understanding your target audience's position, determining a desired positioning for the offer, designing a strategic marketing mix (4Ps), and then developing evaluation, budget, and implementation plans.

Although planning is sequential, the process is more accurately described as spiral rather than linear—a draft the first time around—as you may need to go back and adjust a prior step before completing the plan. Given the customer-centered nature of all great marketing programs, planning efforts will revolve around the target audience, and research—both external and internal—will be essential to your success.

MARKETING DIALOGUE

Social Marketing Contributes to Social Good ("Good" Defined by Whom?)

Most agree that social marketing is a technology used to promote behaviors that then benefit the individual and the society. What causes concern—even fury—is whether we should still call it social marketing if we (or even you) don't agree that the intended behaviors are good for the individual or society. Who gets to define good? Excerpts taken from the social marketing listserv in 2006 present varied perspectives.

Many think like social marketing consultant Craig Lefebvre, who said,

It is in the eye of the beholder. What I consider to be an absolute right and therefore worthy of extensive publicly funded social marketing campaigns, you may consider to be an

absolute wrong. Organ donation is an absolute wrong for those whose religious beliefs preclude the desecration of bodies yet it is considered an important cause worthy of social marketing dollars by those not constrained by the same belief structure.²⁰

Alan Andreasen's comments focused on the role of the social marketing consultant versus the client or funder:

We need to be clear that social marketers are "hired guns" (excuse the metaphor). That is, give us a behavior you want influenced and we have some very good ways of making it happen. Each of us is free to work on behavior-influence challenges with which we feel comfortable and

“comfort” is both a matter of personal ethics and a matter of expertise. The decision about which behaviors ought to be influenced is not ours to make. Clients, or even societies or governments, make those judgments.²¹

Others, such as Elisabeth Gleckler in Louisiana, expressed discomfort with the “neutral hammer tool of value-free hired guns.” She suggested, “A good check and

balance would be the inclusion of the ‘target adopter’ in the planning, implementation, and hopefully evaluation of the social marketing endeavor.”²² Additional ideas mentioned for deciding if the campaign is “for good,” and therefore should be considered and labeled social marketing, included using public consensus (e.g., reducing drunk driving) or the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a baseline (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>).

CHAPTER 2 NOTES

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