# Social Marketing Resource Manual: A Guide for State Nutrition Education Networks

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# CHAPTER I

# Background and Overview

## A.    Background

Food assistance programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Consumer Service (FCS) have long been the cornerstone of this country's effort to ensure adequate nutrition for the disadvantaged.  In recognition of its responsibility to provide a safety net to this country's most needy populations and to ensure that resources committed to providing adequate nutrition are used in a cost-effective manner, FCS has worked to make quality nutrition education available to the largest possible number of participants and potential participants in food assistance programs.  In an effort to increase access to nutrition education for participants in the Food Stamp Program (FSP), FCS encouraged States to utilize the optional nutrition education funding provision contained in the FSP regulations.

Toward this end, FCS awarded two rounds of Cooperative Agreements to 22 States to develop Statewide nutrition education initiatives targeted to low-income populations in each State. These agreements are meant to foster the development of innovative, large-scale, and sustainable approaches to providing nutrition education to low-income families that participate or are eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program.  Twelve states entered into agreements with FCS in 1995 and an additional ten States signed Cooperative Agreements in 1996.

These agreements fund the development of State-level nutrition education networks composed of representatives from State and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private industry.  The purpose of the networks is to coordinate the delivery of nutrition education messages for the low-income population eligible for food stamps.  In the past, a limited number of food stamp recipients received nutrition education through individual

counseling or classes.  FCS is now promoting a new approach using social marketing, which is designed to reach many more food stamp participants and to bring about positive changes in behavior more effectively.  The Cooperative Agreements provide States with resources to recruit nutrition education network members, develop organizational structures, and create Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plans (NEP) that include a social marketing initiative.

## B.  Purpose of This Guide

While Cooperators are committed to using a social marketing approach to nutrition education, many are not entirely familiar with the approach.  Some State networks have had to spend time educating their members about social marketing, its application to nutrition education, and its strengths and weaknesses.  Often, the term "social marketing" is erroneously used to mean advertising or mass media campaigns designed to change behavior.  While media can be an important aspect of social marketing, other components, including rigorous planning and consumer research, channel-specific strategy development, and formative evaluation are equally important.  Likewise, other types of interventions, such as training programs, community activities, and materials development, are equally as valuable as media campaigns, if not more.

The purpose of this guide is to provide State nutrition education network members with background on the tasks associated with social marketing and with specific suggestions for conducting each task, so that interventions to promote positive changes in nutritional practices among low-income individuals will be successful.

The guide is not designed to present an exhaustive discussion of the discipline of social marketing.  Rather, it is tailored to serve the needs of nutrition networks.  Time, staff, and funding limitations are taken into account.  The guide focuses on practical methods that can be used, activities that can be conducted, and goals that can be accomplished by State nutrition education networks.  The guide contains a list of references that may be of use when networks arrive at the various stages of strategy development, pretesting, and implementing a social marketing initiative.

## C.    Organization

The major tasks associated with social marketing include initial planning, formative research, strategy formation, materials development, program implementation, and tracking and evaluation.  The first part of the social marketing process, which can be referred to as needs assessment, involves initial planning, formative research, and some initial steps of strategy development.  These topics are addressed in a companion document, the *Needs Assessment Resource Manual*.

This manual presents an overview of social marketing and outlines the steps involved in translating research findings into effective social marketing interventions.

- ■    **Chapter II** provides background information about social marketing, including a definition and basic principles, discusses social science disciplines that social marketing draws upon, highlights important processes and concepts of social marketing, and elaborates on the unique challenges that confront social marketers.

- ■    **Chapter III** picks up where the *Needs Assessment Resource Manual* leaves off and delves into the strategy formation and planning process in greater detail. Issues such as planning a strategy session, identifying the target audience, and setting communication goals and objectives are presented.  This chapter also reviews issues related to message development, such as consideration of the target audience's position in the Stage of Change model and tailoring nutrition education messages, and discusses different types of communication channels and their advantages and disadvantages.  Finally, the chapter identifies characteristics of effective communication campaigns that synthesize the many ideas presented in this chapter.

- ■    **Chapter IV** emphasizes the importance of involving the target audience in the review of nutrition education materials created by the advertising agency or creative team, and uses examples from nutrition networks to illustrate how to select and work with an advertising agency or creative team.  This chapter presents the materials development and pretesting process in a step-by-step fashion, from concept development to the production of final materials. Concrete information on how to plan and conduct pretests complements the previous conceptual discussion.

- ■    **Chapter V** provides information about implementing social marketing campaigns. In particular, this chapter urges networks to involve their partners up to, and throughout, the implementation period, and provides instructions concerning the

necessary steps that must be taken to successfully launch a social marketing campaign.  This chapter also offers suggestions for how to involve network partners in the campaign monitoring process—a segue into the final chapter.

■ **Chapter VI** outlines the importance of monitoring and refining the social marketing efforts of the nutrition networks.  Finally, this chapter lists specific benchmarks to help the networks plan and design their monitoring systems.

A bibliography organized by tasks in the social marketing process is included at the end of the manual.

# CHAPTER II

# Overview of Social Marketing

This chapter provides an overview of social marketing and its relevant applications to nutrition education networks. The chapter begins with a brief history of the application of social marketing to public health problems, offers a popular definition of the practice, and then describes the disciplines that social marketing is founded upon, as well as the "Four Ps" of marketing. This chapter also introduces some central tenets of social marketing, followed by the unique challenges that networks will most likely confront in their endeavor to utilize social marketing to change behavior with respect to diet and nutrition. The bibliography at the end of this manual is replete with helpful references for those who are interested in a more detailed discussion of the principles of social marketing.

## A.    Definition of Social Marketing

While there are many different definitions of social marketing, the one that is most useful for the purposes of this manual is that of Alan Andreasen:

> 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 their society (1995).

Although this definition uses the word "programs," other words such as campaigns, interventions, or initiatives will be used interchangeably in this manual to describe networks' social marketing efforts to change the nutrition habits of low-income populations in their States.

For some, social marketing in an unfamiliar approach to nutrition education and other public health issues. It is not surprising that many public health advocates in the United States are not well versed in the processes and benefits of social marketing, as it was started just over 20 years ago (Andreasen, 1995) and was used in developing countries before being introduced to the United States.

Social marketing was first applied in third world countries during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the international development effort. Various public health initiatives, such as immunization, family planning, and nutrition were implemented in Africa, Asia, and South America (Chapman et al., 1993).

During the 1970s and 1980s, health education programs in the United States designed to reduce cardiovascular disease risk, such as the Pawtucket Heart Health Program and the National High Blood Pressure Education Program, began to apply the principles of social marketing (Andreasen, 1995). Over the last 20 years, many U.S. government agencies, such as the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the National Cancer Institute's Office of Cancer Communication have used social marketing to further the mission of their organizations (Chapman et al., 1993). More recently, State-level and national public/private partnerships have created campaigns such as "5-A-Day—for Better Health!" and "Project LEAN."

## B.     Relevant Disciplines

Social marketers draw from a number of social science disciplines, theories, and practices to achieve results with their target audience. Elements from social anthropology, the behavioral sciences, health education, mass communication, and commercial marketing contribute to the interdisciplinary approach of social marketing. These contributory elements are discussed below.

### 1.    Social Anthropology

Social anthropology is the study of the customs, norms, and values of particular societies. The concepts and tools of social anthropology are helpful to the social marketer, because they can point out the most formidable barriers to behavior change and help the marketer determine how to tailor the product or message to the target audience in a way that will facilitate adoption (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996).

### 2.    Behavioral Analysis

Formative research allows social marketers a glimpse into the world of the target audience they are trying to influence.  In order to affect change, social marketers must understand what motivates and discourages their audience from adopting the desired behavior change.   Only after social marketers have conducted a preliminary assessment of the audience's attitudes, can they attempt to change behavior by reinforcing the benefits of adopting the behavior or reducing the barriers to change (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996).  For example, Prochaska and DiClemente's work on the stages of change and decisionmaking has shown that individuals progress through stages when contemplating a specific behavior change, including precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance (Prochaska, et al., 1994; 1992; Prochaska and DiClemente, 1983).  The research conducted to devise the Stages of Change model, for example, confirmed that audiences that are in the precontemplation and contemplation stage have very distinct wants and needs than those audience members in the maintenance stage (Prochaska, et al., 1994). While those in the early stages of change need to be informed and educated, self-efficacy is important for those in the preparation and action stages.  Messages directed at these audience members should be encouraging, so they believe they can master whatever behavior is being marketed, such as exercising on a regular basis. Some social marketers have used the Stages of Change model to understand and segment their audience and tailor their nutrition education message (Kramish et al., 1994).  The Stages of Change model, and its implications for social marketing, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

### 3. Health Education

Health education models are useful in social marketing, because they explore factors that positively and negatively influence individuals to change their behaviors. Two models in particular are often cited in the literature for contributing to the applied practice of social marketing: The PRECEDE model and the Health Belief Model. The PRECEDE model examines predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing factors that contribute to behavior change. Predisposing factors refer to an individual's knowledge, behavior, and beliefs before the intervention that affects their willingness to change. Enabling factors include an individual's community or environment, which can impede or facilitate behavior change. Reinforcing factors are the positive and negative consequences of adopting the behavior, which will affect whether or not an individual will maintain the behavior change. Most importantly, perhaps, this model implores health educators to consider these factors in the context of the target audience's social structures (NIH, 1992).

The Health Belief Model suggests that behavior is affected by four beliefs: "Perceived susceptibility to a given health problem, perceived severity of the problem, perceived benefits from acting, and perceived barriers to taking the action." (Andreasen, 1995) When designing interventions, social marketers can take a few different approaches, such as changing these beliefs, emphasizing the benefits to adopting the behavior, or decreasing the perceived barriers to behavior change.

### 4. Mass Communication

Mass communication strategies can help the target audience identify the network's message, understand it, decide it is relevant for their lives, and persuade them to adopt the desired behavior change. William McGuire's model of communication, which describes the 12 steps that a target audience must go through in order to adopt a behavior (McGuire, 1989), and Everett Rogers' book, *Diffusion of Innovations* (1983), in particular, have guided social marketers in the creation of effective messages (NIH, 1992).

Although similar to the Stages of Change model and the diffusion of innovations theory, McGuire's model breaks decisionmaking and the behavior change process into more steps. The first four steps in McGuire's model include exposure, attention to, interest in, and comprehension of the message. Next, he believes that people personalize the behavior to their lifestyle and eventually accept the change. Many of the 12 steps involve maintaining the behavior, such as remembering and continuing to agree with the message and making decisions based on the message. Finally, his model suggests that people receive positive reinforcement for the behavior and accept it as part of their routine. In order for an individual to pass through these 12 steps, the target audience and the desired behavior must be carefully chosen, the source of the message must be seen as credible by the target audience, and the message design and delivery channel must be appropriate for the target audience (NIH, 1992).

In his book, Rogers describes how new products or ideas are introduced or "diffused" to an audience. Referred to as the "innovation-decision process," Rogers' model consists of five sequential stages (knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation) that individuals or organizations proceed through when deciding whether or not to incorporate or adopt a new idea or behavior into their normal routine. His research reveals that there are both early and late adopters. Most importantly though, for social marketers, his research suggests that different communication channels are effective at different stages in the model. Specifically, Rogers concludes that "mass media channels are relatively more important at the knowledge stage and interpersonal channels are relatively more important at the persuasion stage in the innovation-decision process." (1983) For example, mass media channels, such as radio, television, and newspapers, can reach a large audience, create knowledge and spread information, and "lead to changes in weakly held attitudes." Rogers also believes that mass media channels are more important for earlier adopters than for late adopters. However, interpersonal channels that "involve a face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals" (described in this manual as individual, group, or community channels) are more effective in dealing with resistance or apathy on the part of the audience. Because interpersonal channels can provide a two-way exchange of information, individuals can obtain clarification or additional information from their peers or the person delivering the information (Rogers, 1983).

Rogers' ideas are also discussed in Chapter III as part of a discussion about communication channels.

### 5. Commercial Marketing

Traditional marketing acts as the connective tissue that ties these various bodies of knowledge together. Social anthropology and behavioral analysis provide the background information for social marketing campaigns, while health education models and mass communication strategies help shape the intended message into a credible, persuasive, and effective campaign. Marketing principles provide researchers and program planners with the necessary tools to formulate and implement the most effective marketing mix. For example, the Four Ps, which are described in the next section, help social marketers to position the new product or behavior in the marketplace, as an automobile manufacturer might market a new car to a specific niche, such as single women or rugged outdoorsmen.

## C. The Four Ps

Social marketing is built on the cornerstones of the four Ps: product, place, price, and promotion. Borrowed from commercial marketing, the four Ps should guide the conceptualization of all social marketing interventions. The four Ps include the following categories:

- **Product**. For the purposes of this project, the product is likely a nutritious diet and an increased level of physical activity, which lead to a healthier family. Although this may be a network's basic offer, there are many possible variations of the product. The product could be the extra energy that results from a healthier diet, the reduced risks of chronic disease, the benefits of losing weight, and the pleasure of exercise.

- **Place**. This category refers to the message delivery channels or the communication vehicles that will be used to reach the target audience (e.g., print materials, electronic media, and community activities), as well as the specific locations where the target audience is receptive to information about food selection and nutrition (e.g., schools, supermarkets, restaurants).

- **Price**.  Price represents what individuals must give up in order to receive the product.  In the case of nutrition education for low-income populations, the price will never be measured in terms of money, because services are provided for free, but in other forms of perceived "costs."  For example, in a network's effort to encourage low-income families to eat a healthy diet, the network is  asking families to incur various costs, such as increased effort and time, and the anxiety resulting from change. In order to eat a better diet, parents may have to struggle with their children when shopping in the grocery store or at the dinner table; spend time learning new, healthier cooking methods; learn how to plan menus; spend time and energy exercising; and give up some of their favorite foods.  In social marketing terms, this is the price the target audience must pay for the benefits of eating a healthy diet.

- **Promotion**.  This "P" refers to how the networks are going to communicate their offer to exchange the product for an acceptable price.  Promotion encompasses the marketing strategies and appeals that will be used to convey the desired message to the target population.  Promotion can include advertising, the production of brochures and public service announcements, contests, incentives, and coupons, as well as the more personal types of message delivery. Unfortunately, many social marketing efforts are guilty of concentrating only on promotion, to the detriment of the other essential components of social marketing: product, price, and place (Andreasen, 1994). "Too many people think that social marketing is advertising." (Andreasen, 1995b)  Specifically, networks should avoid the tendency to rely heavily on media to bring about behavior change.  Media campaigns are only one aspect of social marketing. This idea is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

## D.    Some Additional Ps

In a presentation delivered in June 1996 at the "Social Marketing in Public Health Conference" in Clearwater, Florida, Rebecca Brookes and Linda Weiner enumerated six additional Ps: policy, proof, politics, public relations, partnership, and program planning (1995). These elements complement the original four Ps and take into consideration the environment in which public health social marketing campaigns are created.

- **Policy** is a necessary component of social marketing, because while campaign materials may bring about individual change, the greatest challenge lies in maintaining that behavior change.  Policy can affect broader changes that can facilitate long-term behavior change.

- **Proof** refers to the ability to measure success—not just in exposure to messages, but in terms of mobilizing community support for an issue.

- **Politics** often come into play when designing social marketing interventions and building bridges between organizations for the first time.

- **Public Relations** is an important component of social marketing campaigns, because it can serve to set the agenda for what is considered important. Not only is public relations cost effective, but "news" information is most likely viewed as a credible source by your target audience.

- **Partnership** is a strong foundation for public health social marketing initiatives. The nutrition education networks are well equipped to develop sound partnerships throughout the State and in local areas. Mobilizing support for a social marketing initiative will be more easily achieved if several individuals and agencies are working together. Since the networks may be promoting certain healthy foods, there are a number of partners in the food industry that should be considered, such as agriculture marketing boards and commissions, regional supermarket chains, and district offices of major manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and brokers.

- **Program Planning** is key to the success of all social marketing initiatives. Efforts to coordinate existing nutrition education efforts with new intervention activities; to involve members of the target audience in message development; to recruit private industry, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and policy makers in implementing the campaign; and to deliver a consistent, coordinated, targeted nutrition education message will require intensive planning.

Public relations, partnership, and program planning are especially relevant for the nutrition education networks and will be covered later in this manual.

## E. Important Processes and Concepts of Social Marketing

In the most recent edition of their book, *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations,* Kotler and Andreasen present some tenets that are central to social marketing (1996). Some of these are relevant for networks as they design their nutrition education interventions.

### 1. Importance of Formative Research

In order to effectively design the nutrition education intervention around the target audience's wants and needs, networks should rely on formative research. This customer-oriented approach requires that research be conducted with the target audience and other important intermediaries

throughout the social marketing process.  Research, of course, begins with the needs assessment process, continues throughout the development and pretesting of campaign materials, and is used after implementation to track the progress of the social marketing intervention and refine it.  Returning to the target audience for feedback periodically will help ensure that the campaign does not stray from its intended objectives.

### 2. Exchange Plays a Central Role

As discussed, social marketers ask the target audience to exchange costs for benefits—exchanges which are "complex, personal, and anticipatory." (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996)  The needs assessment process should reveal the perceived benefits of the product being offered and the price the target audience is willing to pay in exchange for these benefits. Formative research will also help the network translate these costs and benefits into an effective promotion strategy.

### 3. Segmenting the Target Audience

More than most commercial marketing efforts, the nutrition networks face the challenge of trying to appeal to a very diverse population.  Not only does the low-income population consist of both men and women, young and old, but this group speaks several languages and adheres to various ethnic and cultural practices.  The more the networks know about each of their major audience segments, the better equipped they will be to design appropriate and effective messages that will appeal to their respective audiences.  As discussed later in Chapter III, networks may opt to target only one subgroup of the larger food stamp eligible audience in order to maximize their limited resources.

### 4. Commitment to Planning

Chances are that by the time nutrition networks are ready to plan their social marketing interventions, they have already undergone intensive planning efforts to establish their networks' organizational structure, design and complete their needs assessment, and submit their Food Stamp NEP.  However, the planning must continue, especially during the critical

juncture of translating research findings into a communication strategy. Having established an organizational structure and a diverse membership will help networks plan and facilitate a social marketing initiative that involves the audience, the community, policymakers, and experts in nutrition, creative design, and media. The creation of planning documents (e.g., a strategic plan, a health communication plan) is especially helpful when a large number of people are involved in the planning process. These documents can act as a "blueprint" for the network as it develops and pretests campaign materials.

### 5.    Importance of Involving All Partners

Involving network partners in the design, development, and implementation of the nutrition education campaign is of paramount importance. Working in partnership is fundamental to the successful implementation and institutionalization of a campaign.

Like the Statewide nutrition education networks, the "Project LEAN" (Low-Fat Eating for America Now) campaign sought the support and assistance of a broad coalition of organizations and agencies, known as the Partners for Better Health. The campaign operated at the national, State, and community levels, with ten State and local health departments conducting parallel campaigns. The purpose of this initiative was to reduce dietary fat intake through "public service advertising, publicity, and point-of-purchase programs in restaurants, supermarkets, and school and work site cafeterias" (Samuels, 1993).

Reflecting on the development and implementation of the "Project LEAN" campaign, Samuels describes eight "lessons learned" in her article. Three of those lessons address the importance of building partnerships:

- **Build a Network of State and Local Programs**. The leaders of this campaign believe the creative State-level and community programs enriched the national campaign and met the needs of the target audience to a greater degree than the national campaign. Leaders also believe that by linking national and local efforts, they were better equipped to develop a model intervention that could bring about and sustain change.

■ **Form Partnerships with Other Organizations**. Samuels recommends that government agencies and voluntary and professional associations participate early on in the development of the initiative in order to generate support, credibility, and involvement for the campaign. Not only was the campaign's message strengthened by the consensus and cooperation developed through the coalition, but "Project LEAN" benefitted from the expertise of its broad membership.

■ **Collaborate with the Private Sector**. Collaboration and co-sponsorship of events with the private sector, including the food media, restauranteurs, grocers, institutional food service, and commodity and food industry associations brought additional credibility to "Project LEAN's" message (Samuels, 1993).

In addition to involving local, private, and food industry partners, nutrition networks should include representatives from programs that provide nutrition education to the target audience, such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Staff of these programs are in a position to continually and consistently reinforce the network's message. In order to capitalize on the ability of these programs to buttress the message, networks must spend a considerable amount of time in planning and coordination before the messages and materials are ready to be distributed.

## F.    Challenges for Social Marketers

In this section, the most significant differences between commercial marketing and social marketing are discussed (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996; Andreasen, 1995). These differences lead to unique challenges as the nutrition education networks plan and implement their social marketing intervention. Promoting a healthy diet, which does not often bring about remarkable changes in one's life in the short run, is difficult enough without the extra challenges of a target audience who may not be aware of the need to change their diet or may not want to change their diet, and/or an audience that may have limited information sources and reading skills. To these obstacles, add a limited budget and accountability to the public, and the networks have a pretty good idea of the obstacles that lay before them. The job of the nutrition education networks is to overcome these challenges with sound research, meticulous planning, doggedness, and a talented creative team.

## 1. Nonexistent or Negative Demand

Unlike commercial marketers, who may be promoting the latest fad in athletic wear, social marketers are often asked to influence behavior in an area where the audience has not considered changing or does not want to change. These behaviors, such as quitting smoking, eating a low-fat diet, or exercising have many associated costs in the eyes of the target audience, which make it more difficult to present them in a positive light.

However, programs such as the Washington Heights-Inwood "Healthy Heart Program" have managed to overcome the problem of nonexistent and negative demand. This program promoted the consumption of low-fat milk in a low-income, urban, Latino neighborhood in New York City. The campaign's objective was to motivate consumers to switch from whole to low-fat milk, thereby diminishing fat consumption, particularly among children (Weschler and Wernick, 1992). However, this was a change that the target audience did not think of making on their own, or necessarily want to make. First, because of some of the dairy practices in their native countries, the audience believed that low-fat milk was a poor quality, watered-down, substitute for whole milk. Second, low-fat milk was not widely available in neighborhood stores, making it less likely that audience members would consider switching (Weschler et al., 1995).

In light of these challenges, the intervention planners took a two-pronged approach by influencing consumer demand and increasing the availability of low-fat milk in the community. Towards this end, the program produced an easy-to-read flyer and a poster in Spanish and English, which explained that low-fat milk was made by taking the fat out of whole milk, not by adding water. These educational materials also explained that low-fat milk was healthier than whole milk, because it contained less fat, but still had all the vitamins and nutrients found in whole milk. In addition to distributing print materials, the intervention included taste tests on the street and contests among community organizations to collect the most low-fat milk labels. The second phase of the campaign focused on increasing the availability of low-fat milk, by persuading local institutions, such as schools and child care centers, to offer low-fat milk (Weschler and Wernick, 1992).

2.    Invisible Benefits and Intangible Products

Social marketers are often asked to promote behaviors for which there are no immediate signs of success. Unlike marketing vacation packages to Hawaii, for which the benefits are self evident, trying to convince low-income families that they should exercise more often is difficult, partly due to the fact that there are no immediate tangible results of their behavior change. Only long-term behavior change will lead to weight loss, lower blood pressure, or a reduced risk of colon cancer.

The National High Blood Pressure Education Program (NHBPEP), begun in 1972, has been extremely successful in increasing the number of Americans who are aware of the link between high blood pressure and stroke and heart disease and the number of individuals who have their blood pressure checked. After successfully increasing awareness of the problem, the intervention sought to obtain behavior change among those individuals with high blood pressure. Over the years, much of the hypertensive population, armed with a knowledge of the dangers of high blood pressure, sought treatment to control their blood pressure. However, even though the NHBPEP has proven to be an effective program, it has witnessed setbacks over the years for some hypertensives who have difficulty maintaining their new behaviors. Again, compliance with taking pills or cutting sodium from one's diet is difficult, because it does not produce immediate, tangible results. Yet, the NHBPEP managed to surmount this obstacle by shifting its focus to emphasize the importance of maintaining the new behavior change (Andreasen, 1995).

3.    Low-literate Audiences

A greater proportion of the audience targeted by nutrition education networks has a low literacy level compared to the middle- and upper-income populations that private industry often appeals to. Trying to appeal to a low-literate audience may require an emphasis on communication channels that do not rely heavily on print. If, however, networks elect to incorporate print materials into their campaign, they should anticipate and plan for intensive pretesting of these

materials to ensure their copy (e.g., billboards and brochures) is understandable, motivational, *and* interesting.

### 4. Limited Budgets

Traditional marketers operate on much larger budgets that most social marketers. In the case of nutrition networks, this means that Network Coordinators and representatives of core agencies must expend a great deal of effort developing the network and soliciting in-kind and cash donations to increase their budget. Smaller budgets will demand that networks develop creative low-cost communication channels through which to deliver their message.

### 5. Public Scrutiny

Because social marketers are often spending Federal or State monies, they are accountable to the public in general, and their funding source, in particular. The bright lights that often shine on social marketing campaigns can bring out the "P" of politics (Brookes and Weiner, 1995). This scrutiny can "up the ante" when deciding how much of a risk the networks can afford to take and underscores the importance of public relations in the social marketing process.

## G. Summary

This chapter is meant to provide networks with a social marketing context for designing their nutrition education interventions. Having been apprised of the social science disciplines and behavior change theories involved in social marketing, networks may be better prepared to recruit local social scientists to participate in the network and advise them in network endeavors. Understanding the Ps of traditional marketing, the various behavior change models, and communication theories will reinforce the network's strategic planning process. Networks should concentrate on what their research results communicate, carefully segment their audience, and strive to effectively communicate the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity. Cognizant of the challenges they will face in the design and conduct of a social marketing campaign, networks can develop tactics to overcome these obstacles by working together and thoroughly planning the intervention.

# CHAPTER III

## Strategy Formation and Planning

In the companion document for nutrition education networks, the *Needs Assessment Resource Manual,* the subject of strategy formation as the end-point for needs assessment activities and the beginning of intervention planning and development is introduced.  This chapter will walk readers through a structured process that can be used to translate research findings into a social marketing plan.  This chapter includes information on the following topics:

- Identifying a campaign committee or work group,

- Planning a strategy session,

- Presenting the research findings from the needs assessment,

- Identifying the target audience for the intervention,

- Setting communication goals and objectives,

- Designing messages,

- Selecting communication channels,

- Identifying message components, and

- Writing planning documents.

## A.    Identifying a Campaign Committee or Work Group

Before any planning activities are conducted, the nutrition networks must identify a group of people within the network who will be responsible for translating the research findings from the needs assessment into the network's communication strategy.  It would be ideal if this group included those members that were most involved in collecting secondary and primary data, as

they will be familiar with the needs and wants of the target audience. This knowledge will be essential in the planning process, because it will keep the goals and objectives of the campaign grounded in the research. Additionally, the network will find it helpful to have partners who are well versed in marketing, communications, and/or public relations involved in developing the network's communication strategy.

## B.    Planning a Strategy Session

Developing the foundations for a strategy to reach the target audience with effective messages is a critical component of the social marketing process. In order to assure the network's educational and promotional tactics are based on the needs assessment and to keep network members on task, it is wise to plan a strategy session. Some networks may not have the resources to plan and carry out a strategy development session on their own and may elect to hire an outside consultant to facilitate and organize this session. The extent to which the network handles this internally may also depend on the structure and size of the network. If a network decides to assume responsibility for this task, it would be useful to include individuals who are familiar with media, food marketing, health education, and creative execution in the strategy development session, as well as those involved in the formative research. Even though the creative work will be completed by the advertising agency or creative team, experienced members should contribute to the planning process.

Strategy sessions can take the better part of a day, and possibly two, depending on the amount of agreement among network members on principal issues, such as the target audience and goals and objectives of the campaign. The bulk of the day will consist of brainstorming sessions followed by sessions to set priorities for ideas and strategies. In order to make the most efficient use of time, the network should clearly understand what is feasible and what is not feasible, given its budget and time line. If, for example, the network has a small budget for the coming year and has ruled out paid television spots, there is no sense in spending a large part of the day discussing various television PSA presentation styles.

This chapter outlines many decisions that should be discussed during the course of the strategy session.  Given the enormity of this task, it is quite possible that the day will come to a close with many details yet to be pinned down.  In this case, a smaller group, such as a campaign committee, should review the notes from the day and distill the ideas and strategies, which can then be presented to the working group at a follow-up meeting for further discussion.  Once the main decisions have been made—audience, goals, message, and possible channels—the network should begin to prepare the social marketing plan.  The contents of this plan are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

## C.  Presenting the Research Findings from the Needs Assessment

It is a good idea to begin the strategy session with a presentation of findings from the formative research.  Even if network members have been given a copy of the research report, a network member should present the findings at the opening of the meeting to refresh everyone's memories and to ensure that all present are beginning the day with the same conception of the audience and their wants and needs.

## D.  Identifying the Target Audience for the Intervention

Perhaps the most basic and most consequential decision that networks have to make is, "Who is our target audience?"  Every other decision, including messages, communication channels, placement, and spokespersons, depends on the composition of the target audience.  Target audiences are generally thought to encompass both primary and secondary audiences.  These are described below.

### 1.  Primary Audience

One of the most important tasks that networks must accomplish during the strategy session is defining the primary, or target, audience.  Target audience refers to the people the network wants to reach and influence with its message.  As discussed in the *Needs Assessment Resource Manual,* some preliminary decisions about the target audience should already have been made

when the network is planning to collect primary data.  As more information is collected from the audience, the network may revise the original conception of the target audience.

For example, based on a review of secondary data, Network A determined that the elderly and families with children under six represent the largest proportion of the overall low-income population in its State.  As a result, this network planned and conducted interviews and focus groups with the elderly in rural and urban areas and with mothers of young children in rural and urban areas.

Having collected these data and reported the findings, Network A must now select the target audience(s) that will be the focus of the social marketing intervention.  If, for example, Network A's focus groups showed little difference between young families living in rural and urban areas, the network should consider young families (regardless of geographic location) to be one audience.  Yet, if the focus groups yield important distinctions in the way rural and urban families prepare and cook their food, then Network A should continue to treat these groups as separate audience segments.

Networks can either define their audience broadly or concentrate on very specific subgroups.  This decision should be based on findings from the primary data collection effort.  There are roughly three different options the networks can pursue for selecting a target audience:  1) focusing on the entire food stamp-eligible population; 2) focusing on more than one of the audience segments that comprise this larger, low-income target audience; or 3) focusing on only one segment of the food stamp-eligible population.

In order to make better use of limited dollars, social marketers often segment their target audience into smaller, distinct groups, such as individuals, households, health workers, and communities.  The marketer then develops separate strategies for reaching the different segments and may give one segment greater precedence over another in terms of the amount of resources allocated for the intervention.  Another reason that segmenting is important is that different subgroups within a target audience attend to different kinds of media and rely on different sources of information.  Breaking the target audience into smaller groups helps to

determine which communication channels will be the most effective with each group

(Andreasen, 1995).  Networks' options for selecting a target audience are presented below.

- **Target Food Stamp Recipients, Eligibles, and/or the Broader Low-income Population as a Whole.**  Sometimes referred to as "undifferentiated target marketing," this approach considers the target audience to be relatively homogeneous with respect to nutrition and physical activity (Andreasen, 1995). Networks selecting this approach should choose a campaign theme that would appeal to everyone in the audience.  Consider the possibility that the primary data findings for Network A reveal little difference between the nutrition needs of the elderly and young families.  As a result, the network opts to concentrate on the similarities of these two audiences and the others that make up the low-income population.  However, an effort to target one message or strategy to the entire low-income population could result in a compromised or diluted message that does not effectively appeal to everyone in this group.

- **Target Different Segments Within the Food Stamp-Eligible Population**.  As opposed to the approach discussed above, which seeks to find the commonalities among the low-income population, this approach strives to meet the different needs of the subgroups that comprise the food stamp population.  Some nutrition networks are targeting different segments of their target audience, such as children, mothers, families, and the elderly.  Sometimes called "segmented marketing," this approach involves developing different communication strategies for different subgroups.

  Several factors, such as the size of the audience segment, the prevalence and severity of the problem, cost, and responsiveness of the segment, should be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to segment your audience (Andreasen, 1995).

  If a network elects to target one or more audience segments in the food stamp-eligible population, it should give some thought to which are the most important. Assigning priorities to the audience segments will help networks stay focused on their primary objectives and utilize their resources in the most effective manner.

- **Target Only One of the Segments Within the Food Stamp-Eligible Population**.  Some networks may focus their efforts on only one segment of the food stamp population. This approach is sometimes referred to as "concentrated marketing" (Andreasen, 1995).  For example, the Nutrition Education Network of Washington is targeting the person in the household who is responsible for food purchase and preparation in homes where there are children between ages 4-17.

  Another possibility is for networks to address the needs of different audience segments at different times.  Consider that Network A discovered that the elderly

prefer one-on-one and group nutrition education to other methods that might be employed in a social marketing intervention; therefore, the network may initially concentrate their efforts entirely on young families.  Network A may revisit the needs of the elderly during a later phase of the social marketing initiative or provide programs that currently deliver nutrition education in an individual or group format with recommendations for improvement based on the focus group results.

Due to the limited budgets of many social marketing programs, it is common for interventions to utilize a concentrated marketing strategy.  As a result, some audience segments are not included in the initiative.  Reasons for excluding some segments from the intervention vary: a low problem incidence, a low severity of the problem, or the ability of this segment to defend itself against this particular problem.  On the other hand, some segments may be too difficult to reach through available communication channels or may not be responsive to the goals of the campaign (Andreasen, 1995).

### 2.    Secondary Audiences

In addition to the low-income population, some States may want to consider addressing audiences that influence the behavior of the primary or target audience.  Sometimes, these peripheral groups are referred to as the "secondary audience."  For example, Iowa and Maine chose staff of programs that serve low-income families as one of their target audiences.  Also, the "Prenatal Weight Gain Intervention Program" plans to include the mothers, boyfriends, or husbands of low-income pregnant women in the intervention, because pregnant women consider these individuals to be sources of information and support (Brown et al., 1992).

## E.    Setting Communication Goals and Objectives

Once the network has identified its target audience and has chosen its audience segments, it is important to set clear communication goals and objectives.  At this juncture, network members should brainstorm, and later prioritize, the purpose of the social marketing intervention.  Again, the goals of the intervention should be based on the information gathered during the formative research effort.  Some sample goals for nutrition networks include the following:

- ■    Increase the number of low-income elderly women who get some form of regular exercise.

- Increase the awareness among low-income families of the benefits to a low-fat diet.

- Decrease the number of low-income children who do not eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

- Increase awareness among low-income mothers that nutritious meals can be affordable and easy to prepare.

Objectives serve to quantify the overall goal of the social marketing intervention and focus on measurable outcomes. For example, a major strategy of the "Project LEAN" campaign is to heighten public awareness about dietary fat. Specifically, the campaign sought "to accelerate the trend to reduce dietary fat consumption from current levels, 37 percent of calories from fat, to less than 30 percent" (Samuels, 1993).

## F.    Designing Messages

Once networks have identified their audience(s), and have decided what information they plan to communicate to each group, it is time to start generating possible messages that can be used in the campaign. While goals and objectives broadly outline the information that should be communicated to each target audience, this information needs to be shaped so that the target audience knows exactly what the network wants them to do, think, or feel.

Some networks have felt pressured to come up with a message for their target audience early in the social marketing process in order to have something concrete with which to recruit potential network members. Granted, it is critical for the network to involve a broad range of partners; however, it is better to hold off on designing the exact message until network members are familiar with the target audience and can clearly articulate the network's communication goals and objectives.

When designing the network's message, there are several things to consider. Prochaska and DiClemente's transtheoretical model of the Stages of Change can help inform the network as to which strategies to adopt when designing messages. Networks should also remember the

incredible number of competing messages that battle for the attention of their target audience. Tailoring of the network's message will help that message gain footing among the deluge of nutrition information currently available.  These ideas are discussed in more detail below.

### 1.    Stages of Change Model

Most likely, networks' goals will be to try to change the behaviors of their target audience with respect to diet and exercise.  It is well known how difficult it is to change behavior and sustain that change.  Social scientists and marketing experts have presented different models that describe various stages that consumers go through before purchasing a product or adopting a new behavior.  The model that is believed to be the most applicable to social marketing is that proposed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983; Prochaska et al., 1992; 1994).  Their most recent work shows similar patterns in the stages of change and decisionmaking across 12 problem behaviors, including weight control and high-fat diets (1994).  Andreasen places the Stages of Change model in a social marketing context (1995):

- ■ **Precontemplation**.  At this stage, the target audience does not anticipate changing their behavior nor do they believe the desired behavior is relevant or appropriate for them.  Individuals who are not thinking about making the desired behavior change in the next six months are assigned to this stage.

- ■ **Contemplation**.  At this stage, people are aware that a problem exists, and they are seriously thinking about making the behavior change during the next six months. However, they have not yet committed to making a change.

- ■ **Preparation**.  The target audience has decided to change their behavior and is preparing to make the change.  Individuals in the preparation stage have tried to adopt the new behavior in the past year and are seriously thinking about trying again in the next month.

- ■ **Action**.  At this stage, the target audience is in the initial period of adopting the desired behavior.  More specifically, the action period includes the first six months after individuals have made the behavior change.

- ■ **Maintenance**.  When the target audience reaches this stage, they are committed to the new behavior and have no intention of returning to their previous behavior.  This stage begins six months after the behavior is adopted and continues until the previous behavior is no longer a problem (Prochaska et al. 1992; 1994).

The authors originally conceived of the Stages of Change model as a linear progression. However, given the fact that most people experience relapses when trying to adopt new behaviors, the authors have revised their model to a spiral configuration. The spiral pattern reflects the fact that most "relapsers" return to the precontemplation or contemplation stage. Evidence also suggests that people learn from their mistakes and continue to strive to achieve and maintain the desired behavior change (Prochaska et al., 1992).

This model is particularly salient for social marketers, because consumers' current stage of change calls for different communication strategies and nutrition education interventions. To move consumers forward in the model, it is important for networks to correctly identify what stage of change their target audience currently occupies so networks can design stage-specific interventions. For example, it is more important to emphasize the benefits of a desired behavior during the precontemplation and contemplation stages. Conversely, it is more effective to communicate the costs or negative aspects of the earlier behavior or other competing behaviors in the later stages of behavior change. For those audience members in the precontemplation and contemplation stages, it is important to create awareness and interest in the new behavior and to eventually change people's attitudes towards these behaviors. Individuals who are in the preparation and action stages need support, training, and reinforcement in order to try the new behavior or continue to carry it out (Andreasen, 1995).

Perhaps most importantly, the Stages of Change model helps marketers understand that a single intervention cannot move those audience members at the precontemplation stage all the way through to the confirmation stage. Rather, a more achievable and appropriate goal is to move the target audience to the next stage: from precontemplation to contemplation or from contemplation to preparation (Andreasen, 1995). This idea will be discussed in greater detail in the section on characteristics of effective communication campaigns.

### 2. Competing Messages

One of the most formidable barriers that networks will have to overcome when planning their nutrition education interventions is competing with numerous other messages. Some

researchers estimate that consumers are exposed to about 1,400 messages a day; however, people perceive only those messages that they believe are relevant to their lives (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996). Even though consumers may be exposed to fewer messages about nutrition, they may still feel overloaded with information about food products and health choices.  For example, focus group findings from the Virginia Smart Food Choices Network reveal that low-income consumers are sometimes confused by the overwhelming amount of nutrition information that they are bombarded with day in and day out and have come to mistrust some of these sources, which provide conflicting information (Midkiff, 1997).

In order to stand out among these competing messages, the network must strive to hone its message for the target audience based on the information collecting during the needs assessment.  When members of the target audience see the network's posters, pick up its brochures, or hear its radio PSA, they must know the network is talking to them and must understand what it is the network is asking them to do.  To overcome the problem of selective attention, networks should carefully choose information channels that are appropriate for the audience and tailor their nutrition education messages.

### 3.    Tailoring Messages

Tailoring messages involves creating messages and materials that are relevant and persuasive to the target audience.  One of the basic tenets of social marketing is that it is audience centered, meaning that the marketer is constantly asking the opinions and attitudes of the audience and then responding to their input.  This iterative process between the creators of the campaign and the audience was conceived to ensure that the marketer designs messages and materials in accord with the interests and preferences of the audience.  Only if the audience recognizes the desired behavior as relevant and achievable, will the campaign be able to meet its communication goals and objectives.  If an audience does not attend to the network's message, there is no reason to believe they will change their behavior.   Networks that focus on more than one audience segment may have to produce different messages and materials for their respective audiences.

Nutrition educators have found that tailoring messages results in a higher rate of adoption. For instance, the "Partners in Prevention-Nutrition" program provided a one-time, mailed nutrition information package containing individually computer-tailored messages and suggested strategies for change to adult patients in four family practice groups in North Carolina. Messages were tailored based on stage of change, psychosocial factors that influence dietary behavior change, and dietary intake information gleaned from a survey filled out by participants. Results showed that the tailored intervention resulted in decreased intake of total fat and saturated fat compared to the control group (Kramish et al., 1994).

## G.    Selecting Communication Channels

At this stage, the network should have decided what they would like the target audience to do, think, or feel with respect to diet and exercise. Before further details of message development can be ironed out, the network must select the communication channels they will use to deliver its message. Once the creative team knows if the end result will be a television PSA or a puppet show, they can begin creating draft versions of the messages and materials.

### 1.    Different Types of Communication Channels

There are various types of communication channels, including individual and group formats, organizational and community events, and media channels. Each of these channels is discussed below.

#### a.    Individual or Group Delivery

Individual and group delivery channels are probably very familiar to most network partners. Programs like EFNEP and WIC utilize these channels to deliver information about nutrition. While networks have been charged with designing a social marketing intervention, that charge does not mean they must abandon these traditional forms of nutrition education. Rather, networks may discover, through their needs assessment process, that they can improve some of these current nutrition education methods, and/or that they can establish new, effective individual or group delivery activities to

promote their nutrition education message. If, however, a network intends to pursue this type of intervention, they should ensure their efforts do not duplicate existing initiatives in their State's Nutrition Education Plan.

For example, The Virginia Smart Food Choices Network conducted four focus groups with the elderly at congregate meal sites in urban and rural areas. Their findings suggest that the elderly are interested in learning more about nutrition, but only how it relates to their current health conditions. That is, they are interested in learning how to mitigate the symptoms of their chronic health problems through diet and physical activity. They are not, however, interested in learning about basic nutrition and cooking methods, because they feel they already know this information. Another finding from the focus groups is that elderly participants prefer to receive information about nutrition through personal, and particularly, group contact. While they believe written information is helpful, they explicitly state that they are not interested in information conveyed through video, television, or radio. Based on their research findings, this network plans to utilize individual and group communication channels when developing a nutrition education intervention targeted to the elderly.

### b. Organizational and Community Channels

Having formed a network consisting of public and private organizations invested in nutrition education and food access issues, the networks are well prepared to mobilize their membership to sponsor, coordinate, and participate in organizational and community-level programs and activities. For example, interventions involving grocery stores and restaurants have proven to be productive means of reaching target audience members in their community (Contento et al., 1995). Community channels can reinforce and expand upon messages delivered in the media. These channels allow for dialog, questions, demonstration, and personal interaction (NIH, 1992).

There are several examples of Round 1 States that plan to utilize organizational and community channels:

■　　　The Nutrition Education Network of Washington is planning a conference for nutrition educators on effective nutrition education methods and materials.

■　　　Both the Iowa and Maine networks are writing manuals for professionals serving low-income populations.

■　　　The California Nutrition Promotion Network established a committee to review the literature and develop new multi-channel, integrated approaches to community interventions that incorporate techniques for community empowerment.

■　　　The Arizona Nutrition Network is planning a puppet show for children ages 5 to 8 focusing on the 5-A-Day message. Performances will be delivered in high-risk schools, community centers, and churches. The script will be translated and culturally adapted for Spanish-speaking children.

c.　　Media

The various media are an effective means of raising awareness about a particular nutrition issue, which is significant, given much of the network's target audience is likely to occupy the precontemplation or contemplation stage in the Stages of Change model. Rogers also credits media with being able to change "weakly held attitudes" and create and spread information and knowledge (1983). Although, as discussed, networks should be wary of relying too heavily on media to deliver their message. Too many social marketing campaigns focus excessively on the 4th P—promotion (Andreasen, 1994).

There are basically two types of media, electronic and print. Both have advantages and disadvantages, which are presented below.

■　　　**Electronic** media refers to television and radio.

　　-　　*Television* has the largest range of audiences and may include those members of the target audience who are not seeking health-related information elsewhere. The visual nature of television makes it an ideal way to demonstrate or model a behavior. For

the same reason, television can be used to appeal to the audience on an emotional level (NIH, 1992).

Though television has a wide reach, the short nature of the ads, usually 30 or 60 seconds, severely limits the amount of information that can be delivered. Detailed information is best delivered through another medium. In addition, producing television spots is relatively expensive, as is the cost of air time. If a network elects to use public service announcements, which are less expensive than purchasing paid time, they may not be able to control placement.

- *Radio* spots are a good way to target audience segments, as radio stations have extensive demographic information about their listener groups. In comparison with television, radio is much less expensive. Another benefit of radio is that the length of the announcements can vary, offering a little more time to convey information (Brookes and Weiner, 1995). Also, radio allows for audience call-in, live remote broadcasting, and promotional contests (NIH, 1992).

   Unlike television, radio spots are limited to those subjects that can be described or discussed without visual aids. Also, the focus groups conducted by the Washington Nutrition Education Network suggest that some low-income individuals do not attend to radio commercials, but "tune it out." (Lee, 1996)

■ **Print** materials allow for more explanation, education, and presentation of facts compared to electronic public service announcements. Members of the target audience can read the information immediately, read it later, or save it and refer to it as a resource. There are several different types of print media. Some of the more common ones are discussed below.

- *Magazines* allows marketers to target specific audiences, because, like radio, magazines have accurate information about their readership. Nutrition networks may want to investigate community magazines as opposed to those with national readership, which may not be the best channel for low-income groups. For example, some independent grocers associations print shopper's guides with coupons and short articles about health issues. These are sometimes mailed to homes or distributed in stores.

- *Newspapers* have a large audience, but daily publication means fewer people will save the information to read at a later time, as they might with brochures. Large-circulation newspapers, such

as *The Washington Post* would not facilitate targeting of an audience segment, as a magazine might. However, community newspapers and foreign language newspapers would be an ideal way to reach members of some target audiences.

- *Posters, billboards, and transit advertising* are often designed to be identical to reinforce the theme of the campaign. These are effective channels, because the ads can be placed strategically to reach the target audience. However, less information can be included in posters and billboards than some other forms of print materials (Brookes and Weiner 1995; NIH, 1992).

Table 3.1 lists various types of communication channels.

| Table 3.1 Examples of Communication Channels | |
| --- | --- |
| Individual or Group Delivery | speeches, presentations, classes, nutrition counseling, demonstrations, health professionals, employers, word of mouth, peers, friends and family |
| Organizational or Community | trade exhibits, special events, health fairs, promotional giveaways, toll-free hot lines, informational kiosks, puppet shows, forums, conferences |
| Mass Media | broadcast television, cable television, radio, magazines, foreign language magazines, newspapers, newsletters, brochures, posters, billboards, bus and bus stop placards, videotapes, web pages, comic books, point-of-sale displays |
| (Brookes and Weiner, 1995; Kotler and Andreasen, 1996; Andreasen, 1995; NIH, 1992) | |

Once networks have selected the type of media they plan to use, they have to choose the specific media vehicles (e.g. location of billboards, appropriate magazines, cable stations, etc.), sometimes referred to as "placement." For example, a network may elect to develop and distribute a brochure and matching poster. This information could be disseminated in supermarkets, libraries, video arcades, barber shops, drug stores, Laundromats, malls, churches, schools, day care facilities, etc. The same network may want to utilize Spanish language radio

stations.  In its attempt to effectively place its Spanish radio spots, the network should contact all the Spanish language radio stations in its State to determine which stations have a listener group that most closely matches the demographics of the network's target audience.

Most likely, networks will hire media consultants or advertising agencies to decide on the size, format, and location of print ads and to buy media time.  In addition to placement, media planners will have expertise in organizing the timing of the campaign to achieve the greatest impact.

### 2. Characteristics of Effective Communication Campaigns

Having presented behavior change models, message development, and information channels as separate issues, this section will integrate these components of social marketing and give networks some guidance in planning their nutrition education intervention.  Backer, Rogers, and Sopory recently reviewed health communication campaigns and offered 26 generalizations about these campaigns (1992).  Five of these relate to the effective use of many different campaign strategies (Andreasen, 1995).  In keeping with these recommendations, networks should use these guidelines:

- Utilize a number of channels to reinforce one another and to increase the target audience's chance of exposure;

- Combine mass media with individual, group, and community channels and activities;

- Communicate a single message or a few messages that are variations of a common theme;

- Do not rely on public service announcements alone to bring about behavior change;

- Employ public relations and news media to increase the visibility of the social marketing intervention (Backer et al., 1992); and

- Consider where the target audience is with respect to the Stage of Change model (Andreasen, 1995).

Each of these points will be discussed in further detail below.

### a.  Utilize Multiple Channels

Whenever possible, networks should employ multiple channels to reinforce one another and to increase the target audience's chance of exposure. This idea harkens back to the old adage, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Networks should consider the four factors below when selecting their communication channels.

- **Reach** refers to the number of members of the target audience that will be exposed to the message at least once.

- **Frequency** is the number of times a member of the target audience will encounter the message.

- **Impact** refers to the relative effectiveness of messages delivered through this channel.

- **Cost** is the expense incurred for each "unit of communication," whether it be a radio spot, a nutrition class, or an appearance at a health fair (Andreasen, 1995). A network's campaign budget will stretch a lot further using print material and radio than it will producing television PSAs. However, if networks have reasonably large budgets, they should consider using television, as it is an effective means of reaching large numbers of the target audience, especially those in the precontemplation stage (Andreasen, 1995).

Remember, it may be appropriate to use a different combination of channels for each audience segment, as audience members will likely use different sources of media and believe certain sources to be credible over others.

### b.  Combine Mass Media with Individual, Group, and Community Activities

A point that has been made in different parts of this manual is that networks should avoid overdependence on the mass media. While it may be tempting to launch a highly visible media campaign, networks must remember that the media are not the panacea they are thought to be. If a network chooses to employ a media approach in its intervention, that should not be the only effort. California's "5-A-Day—for Better

Health!" and the "Stanford Five-City Project," two successful social marketing campaigns, are good examples of how to utilize various types of information channels to strengthen the nutrition education message.

California's "5-A-Day—for Better Health!" used different strategies to achieve its objectives. Five campaign "waves" were conducted during a one-and-half-year period. Each wave included mass media activities that were complemented by point-of-purchase information delivered by retailers who were approved partners in the campaign. The waves were intended to "create a barrage of consumer messages about the health benefits of eating five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, delivered first by television and radio, reinforced in newspaper and magazine articles, and repeated finally as behavioral cues at point-of-sale." In addition to these campaign waves, the California Department of Health Services periodically put out press releases; developed materials such as brochures, low-fat fruit and vegetable recipes, posters, and food photography; and made presentations to more than 4,000 health and industry professionals during the course of the campaign (Foerster et al., 1995).

The "Stanford Five-City Project" also used a variety of channels in an effort to reduce stroke and coronary heart disease. The project used television and radio, newspapers, other mass-distributed print material and direct education methods, including "face-to-face and mediated education" in classes, contests, and correspondence courses. The staff developed Spanish language radio spots and print materials and also sponsored a number of school-based programs for grades 4, 5, 7, and 10, including educational sessions of nutrition, exercise, and smoking. Finally, project staff distributed smoking cessation brochures, held classes for teachers and administrators, and provided materials for parents on exercise and nutrition (Farquhar et al., 1990).

c.      Repeat a Single Message or Variations on a Theme

Networks must be careful not to send too many messages, to avoid adding to the overwhelming din of appeals in the media today about nutrition and exercise. Experts

advise that keeping the number of messages to a minimum and repeating them over and over again will result in more effective campaigns (Backer et al., 1992). If a network should choose more than one message for its campaign, it should link these messages together with the campaign's logo and slogan so the target audience recognizes the message as part of the overall intervention.

To date, it appears that the nutrition networks are taking different strategies when it comes to the number of messages they plan to deliver. The Nutrition Education Network of Washington decided to focus on two related messages: Eating together as a family and eating healthy dinners. The Georgia Coalition for Nutrition Education has opted to focus only on healthy snacking. The Iowa Nutrition Education Network plans to send several messages to its target audience: Eat a variety of foods; eat a greater number of fruits, vegetables, and grains; eat less fat; and increase physical activity. As the activities of the different nutrition education networks unfold, the pros and cons of single versus multiple messages will become more apparent.

### d. Do Not Rely Exclusively on Public Service Announcements

Unfortunately, the instinct of many newcomers to social marketing is to produce several public service announcements without understanding how they fit into the overall intervention strategy. In a lecture delivered at the University of South Florida's "Social Marketing in Public Health Conference," Brookes and Weiner warn against this response:

> Program planning specifically for your social marketing campaign should include various communication interventions besides the standard public service announcement or news release. The reason I mention this is because often people will ask how to begin a campaign—the first thing they want to do is produce a public service announcement and my questions is, "Why? Does your audience watch PSAs? How do you plan to disseminate them? And where do they fit in your communication plan?" (1995)

Those networks that can afford to produce television and radio PSAs should heed some of the limitations of PSAs observed by those who have implemented social marketing

campaigns.  Knowing these drawbacks ahead of time can help the network plan for contingencies and better coordinate PSAs with the rest of the campaign elements.

After implementing the national "Project LEAN" campaign, Samuels noted the limitations of unpaid public service announcements broadcast on network and cable television, and radio, and distributed as print ads appearing in newspapers, magazines, and transit ads.

- The placement of PSAs was unpredictable, and delays in their release made coordination with the other campaign components difficult.

- PSAs communicate very limited messages and therefore required the inclusion of information of how to call a hotline and order more information.

- Adapting the PSAs to community programs was expensive and time consuming to plan and organize.

- Finally, the project's PSAs were time limited, and therefore required the production of new ads, which was too expensive for the project to pursue (Samuels, 1993).

Because the nutrition networks will be conducting their campaigns at the State and local level, they may not experience these problems to the same extent that  "Project LEAN" did when planning and coordinating a campaign at the national level.

e.    Utilize Public Relations and News Media

Public relations and news media are central components of traditional marketing and are beneficial to use in social marketing interventions, because news enjoys a "built-in" element of credibility and is cost effective (Brookes and Weiner, 1995).  For that reason, networks should try to include  public relations in their overall campaign strategy.  When looking for a public relations agency, nutrition networks should ask partners for suggestions of effective and affordable firms that their organizations have worked with in the past.

In addition to producing public service announcements, "Project LEAN" hired a public relations firm to provide news and information on the campaign to newspapers, magazines, television and radio news, and entertainment media.   Over a period of 9 months, 291 articles referred to the "Project LEAN" campaign, which represented a circulation of more than 35 million readers.  In addition, 27 million viewers and listeners were exposed to publicity appearances on television and radio during this same period (Samuels, 1993).

## f.	Consider the Audience's Stage of Change

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is very important to factor in the audience's readiness to change.  While the mass media are quick and effective methods of introducing new ideas and messages to the intended audience, Rogers suggests that, when the audience actually progresses to the stage of "adopting" or trying out the new behavior, interpersonal contact is more influential in bringing about long-term change.  This would suggest that communication strategies are best begun with mass media to introduce ideas and influence attitudes and should then be followed by community or interpersonal interventions to teach and encourage the adoption of the behavior. This is thought to be especially important for groups that do not adopt new behaviors quickly (1983).

It is likely that many networks will determine that their target audience is in either the precontemplation or contemplation stage.  While mass media can increase awareness and may establish the network's campaign message as relevant for the target audience, print and electronic materials are fairly limited in the amount of information they can convey.  This is where coordination of network partners and existing nutrition education programs is essential.  By including a "tag line" or a toll-free phone number on public service announcements and brochures stating how to get in contact with the local WIC, EFNEP, or food stamp nutrition education program, the campaign may be able to help the audience "prepare" to take action.  These hotlines can provide practical information, disseminate brochures, or put individuals in contact with their local nutrition education

programs, that will, in turn, provide them information about eligibility and available services.  Assuming some members of the target audience later enroll in these existing programs, staff can reinforce the campaign's message, while providing more in-depth knowledge about nutrition education, skills in meal preparation, or whatever it is the network chooses to focus on.  Not only does coordination with existing programs help to usher eligible families into the "system," but it also serves to reinforce the network's message to those families currently enrolled in nutrition education programs.  This type of coordinated effort can increase awareness for those in the precontemplation stage, while providing information about how to change for those in the preparation stage.

## H.    Identifying Message Components

Once the networks have selected the communication channels they plan to use, the creative team can begin to shape the image and content of the messages.  In order to successfully compete with other messages aimed at your target audience, the creative team must select presentation styles, tones, and spokespersons that appeal to the audience.

While networks should provide guidance to the creative team and exclude tones and styles that may be inappropriate for their target audience, they must take care not to reign in the creative forces of those that are hired to design logos, slogans, music, and other materials for the intervention.

### 1.    Presentation Style

There are a number of presentation styles that your creative team can consider.  Suppose your network wants to encourage families to eat together more often and is developing a 30-second television PSA.  Below are some examples of style:

- **Slice-of-life**.  A couple discuss their opposing work schedules and lament the fact that they don't get to spend enough time together as a family.  They agree to try to eat dinner together more often.  The next frame shows the husband and wife and two children eating and laughing together.

- **Mood**. The camera focuses on a nicely lit, modest dinner table with some hand-picked wild flowers in the center. The family converses in an animated fashion and the parents appear very pleased to have the family gathered together.

- **Technical Expertise**. Several cooks and mothers are shown discussing tips for how to make eating together as a family a priority and how to get the family to cooperate.

- **Scientific Evidence**. A nutritionist talks about a study that reports that families who eat together have better communication patterns and better diets than families that do not eat together.

- **Testimonial**. The PSA shows different members of the family, the father, mother, and child, explaining why they like eating together (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996; NIH 1992).

### 2. Tone

In addition to different presentation styles the creative team can choose from, it must also select a tone for the message. Tones can vary from humorous to emotional to extremely serious. Again, the network does not want to stint the creative power of the ad agency by telling it exactly what kind of style and tone to use, but the network can suggest which tones would not be appropriate for the target audience and the message.

### 3. Spokespersons

Finally, the network should identify the types of spokespersons that will appeal to the target audience. If a network wants to select a spokesperson to deliver its message, it must be certain that the target audience will view the spokespersons as credible and trustworthy. Spokespersons can be peers of the audience; a cartoon character; experts, such as nutritionists or physicians; or celebrities. Smokey the Bear, the spokesperson for the forest fire prevention campaign in the 1970s is well known, as are the numerous milk-mustachioed spokespersons for the milk campaign: Gloria Steinem, Spike Lee, Kate Moss, and Patrick Ewing. Unfortunately, most people probably also remember "Izzy," the unpopular spokesperson for the Atlanta Olympics. Like other elements, it is important to pretest potential spokespersons with the target audience.

For example, the Nutrition Education Network of Washington conducted four focus groups with parents receiving food stamps. Among the issues explored in the groups were the types of media the participants thought the campaign should use. Participants "had strong feelings that the characters in the television spots, or those used in print, should be 'regular people.'" One woman commented, "Make sure the people look like real people...no little girl in a white pinafore." (Lee, 1996)

Similar findings were reported in the "Prenatal Weight Gain Intervention Program" research with low-income pregnant women, who viewed their mothers, grandmothers, and sisters as credible sources of information, because they had babies themselves. These women felt that male physicians "don't know what it's like." Based on this information, the intervention will utilize women who have had children to present information on diet and weight gain (Brown et al., 1992).

A recent study conducted by researchers at Columbia University shows the potential effectiveness of creating a spokesperson for campaigns that target children (Weschler et al., in press). An elementary school-based intervention in northern Manhattan featured "Low-Fat Lucy the Cow." The project's "spokes-cow," a volunteer dressed in a cow costume, appeared at educational assemblies on low-fat foods in each of the intervention schools. For two weeks before each assembly, Lucy was featured on posters and other materials as a "mystery guest." After a dramatic entry at each assembly, Lucy told students about the importance of a low-fat diet, how low-fat milk can help keep children's diets low in fat, and how great low-fat milk tastes. Following Lucy's presentation, children participated in a taste test (Weschler et al., in press; NHLBI, 1996).

## I.  Writing Planning Documents

The culmination of the strategy session is the groundwork for developing a social marketing plan. This document does not have to be lengthy but should include enough information to provide guidance for the creative team, who may not be as familiar with the target audience as network members. In addition to assisting the creative team, this planning document will help

keep the network on task as it proceeds through the later stages of social marketing: campaign development, pretesting, implementation, and monitoring and revising the intervention.

### 1. Strategy Statement

After the network has defined and possibly segmented its target audience and articulated the communication objectives, it is useful to draft a strategy statement that describes the direction of the campaign. A strategy statement should include the following:

- The overall goals and objectives of the network and its campaign;
- A description of the primary and secondary target audiences;
- The information to be communicated to each audience, i.e., what the network would like the audience to do, think, or feel;
- Perceived benefits to each audience of taking this particular action;
- What motivates the target audience to take this action; and
- Barriers to changing their behavior or thinking or feeling this way.

The result is a short document that will serve to keep all network members on target as they begin to draft specific messages for each target audience. For example, if a network decides to concentrate on reducing sodium intake, any suggested messages aimed at eliminating alcohol is not in line with the strategy statement and should not be further considered (NIH, 1992).

### 2. Social Marketing Plan

Using the strategy statement as a starting point, networks should begin to create a planning document to act as the "blueprint" they will use to proceed with campaign development. After the network determines the messages for each audience and selects communication channels, the information, as well as possible tones, styles, and spokespersons, should be incorporated into the social marketing plan. This step-by-step plan should also include a time line, measurable objectives if possible, and a budget for each element of the campaign. Some networks have written their social marketing plan in conjunction with their ad agency or marketing communication firm.

# CHAPTER IV

## Developing and Pretesting Campaign Materials

While not all networks will use an extensive amount of media as part of their nutrition education intervention, most networks will probably use electronic or print media in some form. Material development for a campaign could consist of a logo and slogan, training curriculum, a prepared lecture, educational pamphlets, billboards, or a television public service announcement. This chapter provides an overview of the materials development process. Unfortunately, unlike other areas of social marketing, there is little published information about pretesting strategies and techniques for low-income populations.

### A. Selecting an Advertising Agency or Creative Team

Armed with a social marketing plan, it is now time for networks to work with the creative experts mentioned in Chapter III. Some networks may have resources available to hire an advertising agency, a marketing communication firm, or a public relations firm. Other networks may elect to capitalize on the graphic and production capabilities of the Extension Office or the Department of Public Health. Still others may involve representatives from some or all of these types of organizations in the network to capitalize on their professional expertise.

There are many issues to explore when selecting an ad agency. For example, the network should consider the agency's experience in working with health and food promotion issues as well as with low-income populations. Successful advertising agencies may be experienced in advertising products to middle or upper-class target audiences, but may know very little about promoting health behaviors to low-income groups.

In addition, networks should discuss pretesting when interviewing potential agencies. In particular, the network should establish that it is going to pretest messages and materials produced by the agency's creative team. Most experienced advertising agencies will be familiar with pretesting. The advertising agency and the network must coordinate the creative and production schedule with pretesting activities at different stages of development. This will be discussed further in Section C.

Other issues that should be addressed when meeting with interested agencies include budget, and in particular, the materials and services that will be provided for the quoted price; how the network will be billed and how often; time lines; and the staff that will be assigned to your account and their level of experience and expertise.

Finally, networks should ask to see examples of the agency's work, and if possible, these examples should come from campaigns that target a similar audience or that address health and nutrition issues.

The Nutrition Education Network of Washington used a multi-step process to select an advertising agency. The Washington network's Program Manager asked members of the Campaign Committee, which is composed of representatives of the food industry, to recommend quality public relations and advertising agencies they had worked with in the past. The committee recommended ten agencies. The Program Manager sent letters to all ten agencies, which described the goals of the campaign and the scope of work. Nine of the ten agencies responded to the letter. Interested agencies were then sent the network's focus group report. Before meeting with the agencies, members of the Campaign Committee, having worked with advertising agencies before, helped the Program Manager draft a list of questions to ask the interested agencies. The Program Manager met with each of the nine agencies and got samples of their work to show to the Campaign Committee. Next, the Campaign Committee met to select the three best advertising agencies under consideration. The Program Manager presented information to the committee members about each agency she interviewed and the committee members reviewed samples of their work including television and radio PSAs, educational kits, posters, newsletters, bus placards, and magazine and newspaper

advertisements.  Together, members discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each agency and selected three for further review.  The Program Manager and the network's social marketing consultant conducted a second round of interviews with these three agencies, during which certain issues, such as the budget, were discussed in more detail.  During these interviews, the Program Manager and consultant met with a number of staff from the agency, including account executives, members of the creative team, partners, and others responsible for administrative matters.  After these interviews, the Campaign Committee chose an ad agency that had expertise in foods and consumer campaigns, and had exhibited empathy for the audience and interest in the account (The Nutrition Education Network of Washington, 1996).

## B.    Working with an Advertising Agency or Creative Team

Once the network has selected an advertising agency or creative team, the network should give the agency or creative team a copy of the social marketing plan.  Generally, the more information these individuals have at their disposal the better, although the network shouldn't bog them down with superfluous information that will not be useful in their effort to create campaign materials.

The network should work very closely with the agency, particularly in the beginning, to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the target audience and the nutrition problem at hand. At this stage, the role of the network is to coach the agency, in order to make sure the network and agency are working toward the same objectives.  The network should have regular meetings with the agency to keep abreast of their progress and help them adjust their work if they get off course.  However, just as the network's area of expertise is nutrition and knowledge of the target audience, it is important to remember that the agency's area of expertise lies in the creative process and planning and executing campaigns.  In order to facilitate the development process, the network should trust the agency's creative skill. If a difference of opinion arises, remember that the target audience is the ultimate authority.

The network should decide who will work most closely with the agency and who in the network will make decisions regarding the campaign.  The Steering Committee of the Nutrition

Education Network of Washington gave the Campaign Committee the authority to oversee the development and approval of the campaign. The committee further decided that in order to streamline the campaign development process, the Program Manager and the Chair of the Campaign Committee would make some decisions on their own. Decisions regarding the campaign are reported at Steering Committee meetings (The Nutrition Education Network of Washington, 1997).

## C. Materials Development and Pretesting

The language and presentation styles most familiar to health and nutrition professionals are often very different from those preferred by members of low-income groups that those professionals are trying to reach (Nitzke, 1989). Consequently, some of the campaign strategies endorsed by State nutrition network members may not have the same appeal to low-income individuals or those who come from different cultural backgrounds and/or may have limited ability to understand, read and/or speak English. Furthermore, strategies that influence the behavior of young mothers may be very different from messages that capture the attention of elderly men. In order to determine if the nutrition messages marketed by the networks capture the attention of and are easily understood by members of their target audience, the networks will need to pretest their message concepts and materials.

Pretesting is an integral part of the social marketing process. Taking concepts and draft materials created by design professionals to the target audience for review will increase the likelihood that the network's intervention will be effective. While pretesting cannot predict the exact influence of the message or material in the real world, it can give an indication of whether materials clearly communicate the intended message and will ultimately motivate the target audience to change their food choice and eating behaviors (Salazar et al., in press).

Pretesting and revision of materials should be conducted during the development phase, before funds are committed and materials are produced. Pretesting is an iterative process that should occur more than once during the materials development process. Pretesting is useful at the concept stage, after materials have been drafted, and before final production. Though responses

elicited from a small number of people during pretesting are not representative of public opinion, they may provide valuable insights into the target audience's preferences thereby increasing the value and effect of the network's campaign.

The network must remember that it is ultimately the target audience's impression and interpretation of the nutrition education messages and materials that will lead to the success or failure of the campaign. Like social marketing in general, pretesting is a client-centered process. It is essential to remember that when it comes to developing materials that appeal to the audience, members of the target audience are the experts, not the members of the nutrition network.

Pretesting is time consuming and can be costly. However, investing time and money in the pretesting process will help guide the network and creative team in their effort to produce materials that are clear, attractive, attention getting, and effective.

### 1.    Developing Message Concepts

As discussed in Chapter III, information gathered about the target audience during the needs assessment should form the basis for developing the network's message concepts. A message concept is basically a "rough draft" of the message. The strategy session should yield two to three nutrition education messages with a variety of possible styles, formats, spokespersons, and tones (NIH, 1992). Even if the network thinks it has chosen message concepts most suited to the target audience, it should pretest them to be sure. Pretesting messages at this stage will prevent the network from wasting money in the future on production costs for ineffective messages. Testing alternative concepts with the target audience will help identify which concepts have the strongest appeal and potential for effect and which concepts may miss the mark or fail to clearly communicate to the audience (Nitzke, 1989). In addition, pretesting message concepts may help identify new concepts, pinpoint confusing terms or ideas, and incorporate language used by the target audience (NIH, 1992).

## 2.    Pretesting Message Concepts

Focus groups of eight to ten people are most commonly used for pretesting at this stage, because group interaction promotes open and extended discussion about concepts and ideas. Because focus groups encourage participants to think creatively and talk spontaneously, they are an effective means by which the networks can gather insights from the target audience as to their beliefs about nutrition issues and concepts.

The Nutrition Education Network of Washington explored two different message concepts in 2 focus groups of mothers with children ages 4 to 12 and 2 groups of mothers with children ages 13 to 17. The primary purpose of the groups was to solicit input for developing campaign messages and selecting media channels appropriate for the target audience. Specifically, the network wanted to gauge participants reactions to two potential messages: Eating meals as a family and eating healthy foods. According to the researcher who conducted the groups, "the vast majority of respondents... recommended that the campaign should take on both purposes...Their reasons all seemed to reflect their belief...that meals together tended to be healthier and that they would strengthen the family." (Lee, 1996) As a result, the Washington network is including both messages in its intervention.

## 3.    Developing Draft Materials

At this time, the network will delegate the task of materials production to its ad agency or creative team. Based on the findings from pretesting various message concepts, the creative team will pursue the most promising approaches and produce materials in a rough draft form (NIH, 1992). These draft materials should resemble the final product as closely as possible, without incurring the expensive production costs. For example, a television announcement may be pretested with a storyboard, and print materials, such as a pamphlet, can be pretested using draft copy and rough illustrations or stock photographs (NIH, 1992).

## 4. Adopting and Modifying Existing Materials

Because material development is a costly process, networks may want to identify existing messages and materials that may be appropriate for their use before creating new materials. It is likely that networks discovered educational materials (e.g., brochures, posters, instructional videos) when conducting the needs assessment, which may be relevant to their campaign. Some materials may be appropriate in the current form, while others may require modification in order for them to appeal to and be useful for low-income audiences. When reviewing existing materials, networks should consider these questions:

- Do they offer accurate, complete, and relevant messages?
- Is the format, style, and literacy level appropriate for the target audience?
- Are they available and affordable?
- Could they be modified to be appropriate for the target audience?
- Have these materials been pretested with the target audience? (NIH, 1992)

## 5. Pretesting Draft Materials

Whether networks are creating new materials or revising existing ones, the target audience should be given the opportunity to review them. While pretesting at the concept stage helps to choose the strongest message(s) from among a few potential messages, materials pretesting is used to ensure that the chosen marketing approach will work, before production funds are spent. Specifically, pretesting at this stage should be used by the networks to verify that the materials produced by the ad agency are understandable, relevant, provocative, attractive, and credible to the target audience (Salazar et al., in press; NIH, 1992).

Pretesting is most effective when members of the target audience are shown alternate versions of materials, so they can compare versions and comment on what they like and do not like about each one. For example, a network can pretest several logos and slogans, different photographs for a brochure, different storyboards for television PSAs, and even different size fonts and lettering styles for posters, billboards, and other print materials.

Reactions to various aspects of the developed materials must be interpreted by the network and translated into clear-cut recommendations for the ad agency or creative team (NIH, 1992). The network should share the target audience's responses to the materials format and design with the ad agency, who should then revise the materials accordingly.

In a study conducted to pretest educational materials for Florida's prenatal "Healthy Start Program," researchers concluded that reminder postcards "should not stress that a woman is 'at risk,' but rather that she/her child is 'eligible' for services." Respondents indicated that telling a woman that either she or her child is at risk could be anxiety-producing (Salazar et al., in press).

In another instance, the Public Health Service developed a series of booklets on nutrition, smoking, and other health subjects for low-income women. Draft versions of the booklets were pretested for comprehension. Results showed that the information was easy to understand, but that respondents found the format "long and dull." As a result, the creative team abandoned the booklet format. Instead, they redesigned and repackaged the information as a more colorful series of fact sheets (NIH, 1992).

### 6.    Limitations of Pretesting

It is important for the network to recognize the limitations of a qualitative methodology like pretesting. Pretesting cannot totally predict or guarantee that the target audience will learn as a result of the message, be persuaded by it, or change their behavior as a result of it. Another danger with pretesting is the temptation to structure the test and interpret the results to support or justify the network's preconceived point of view. It is natural for the network to want the materials it has developed to test well, but the network must be willing to admit that the material has flaws, or the pretest will be useless (Salazar et al., in press; NIH, 1992). Finally, if the ad agency or creative team is not receptive to the idea of revising the materials in accord with the feedback of the target audience, pretesting efforts will be wasted.

## 7. Pretesting Methods

A variety of strategies may be used to pretest messages and materials, including individual interviews, focus group testing, and gatekeeper review. Which method is best to use will depend on the network's budget and time frame, the type of materials to be pretested, and the target audience (NIH, 1992; Salazar et al., in press). A number of variables influence the outcome of the pretest and its usefulness, "including the order of the questions posed, the way the materials are shown to the audience, the selection of the individuals to be tested, and the settings for the pretest." (Salazar et al., in press) Sometimes using several methods of pretesting in combination will help overcome the limitations of any individual pretesting procedure. For example, focus groups may be used to explore the issues and concerns of a particular audience, and individual interviews conducted at a later time can be used to discuss these concerns in greater depth (NIH, 1992). The following are summaries of the advantages and disadvantages of using various pretesting strategies. (For more information about these research methods, consult the *Needs Assessment Resource Manual.*)

### a. Individual Interviews

A combination of in-depth and intercept interviews is the best strategy for pretesting with the target audience. It is efficient to station interviewers at locations, such as food stamp or WIC offices or community centers in low-income areas where the target audience can be readily found. (Networks should request permission to interview clients of these programs well in advance.) Interviewers should approach individuals who are experiencing a natural waiting period in their food stamp or WIC services to ask them if they would like to participate in the interview. If the individual agrees to participate, he or she should be taken to quiet place where the interviewer can ask several open-ended questions about his or her perception and comprehension of the draft materials. Pretesting interviews generally last about 20 minutes. If an interviewer has several materials to pretest, he or she should only pretest one or two with each respondent to limit the length of the interview and maintain respondent's attention. These types of interviews are an inexpensive way to administer a large number of interviews in a short

period of time; however, keep in mind that the results will have to be reviewed and interpreted, an activity that is fairly time consuming.

### b.     Gatekeeper Review

Gatekeepers are intermediaries between the target audience and the network, such as private partners or representatives from the Food Stamp Program, local food banks, or the WIC program, who may participate in the distribution of materials to the target audience.  Their approval or disapproval of developed materials may be a critical factor in the success of the intervention (NIH, 1992).  If the gatekeeper does not like the messages developed or the resulting materials, the information may never reach the target audience.

Similar to key informants interviewed during formative research, gatekeepers may be able to provide valuable suggestions to the networks, because they are often in close contact with the target audience and can provide sound advice about whether they will respond to the materials and be influenced by their messages. While gatekeepers should review the draft materials as part of the pretesting process and may provide valuable feedback for your materials, these interviews should not replace those with the target audience.

### c.     Focus Group Testing

As discussed in the *Needs Assessment Resource Manual,* focus groups can be a useful method of pretesting, as they tend to facilitate interaction and discussion.  However, focus groups can be expensive and time consuming to set up and to conduct.  Another disadvantage of using focus groups may be the threat of creating a situation of "group think," in which more vocal focus group members who assert strong opinions may influence the way other group members respond to the materials being pretested.

While focus groups were discussed previously as being valuable at the stage of concept pretesting, they are also often used to pretest draft materials.  For example, program

planners for a county health initiative conducted focus groups to pretest the audience's perceptions of ten possible logos and program names. "Preferences were expressed for program names that specified the name of the county, while names that contained abbreviations were rejected as confusing. For logo designs, respondents preferred visual symbols such as a heart or shape of the county. These findings gave program planners direction for selecting a program name and logo design that incorporated both of these symbols." (NIH, 1992)

### 8. Producing Materials for Low-literate Populations

Most health information is written for people who can read above the 9th- or 10th-grade level (Nitzke, 1989; Plimpton and Root, 1994). Unfortunately, some members of the target audience cannot read at this level and are therefore unable to understand important information that could improve their health. When developing nutrition messages and materials, networks must be aware of the reading level of their audience and design materials accordingly.

Pretesting for readability is a way to assess if the materials are appropriate for the network's target audience. A variety of readability formulas are available to aid network members in evaluating their materials (NIH, 1992). For example, for Florida's "Healthy Start" program, Cloze and circle readability tests were used to assess the reading skills required to understand print materials distributed in Florida's public health clinics. While results from the circle test showed few problems, the median score of respondents who completed the Cloze test indicated that the target audience may need assistance in order to fully understand the materials (Salazar et al., in press).

## D. How to Plan and Conduct Pretests

### 1. Designing the Protocol

The first step in designing the pretest protocol is to define the objective of the pretest. Most pretests will be used to measure attention, comprehension, believability and personal relevance of the materials (NIH, 1992). Questions should be short and to the point in order to avoid

interviewer bias or misinterpretation of the meaning of the questions by the respondent. Samples of previously used protocols that have proven to be reliable are good resources to draw from, even if they were not used specifically to pretest nutrition education materials. (See Salazar et al. and NIH for examples of protocols.) After interviewers have conducted a few pretests, they may find it necessary to revise the protocol before using it with other members of the target audience.

When designing pretesting protocols, include questions that probe the audience's responses to the following elements:

- **Print**. Size of ad, colors used, font style, capitalization, word choice, reading level, white space, line spacing, types of people depicted in illustrations or photographs.

- **Radio**. Gender of announcer, tone of voice, speed at which the information is read.

- **Television**. Dress, ethnicity, family composition, props, gender, and appearance of actors.

Interviewers should be sure to tell respondents that they did not design the materials and will not be offended if the respondents don't like the materials.

### 2. Identifying Interviewers

In order for interviews and focus groups to draw useful information from participants, the network needs to hire experienced interviewers or moderators who know how to elicit the opinions and recommendations of the target audience. Interviewers should not appear to be "experts," or respondents may shy away from offering their opinions, for fear they will answer the interviewers' questions incorrectly.

### 3. Extent of Pretesting

The network may need to pretest multiple versions of the draft materials before they are ready for final production. In other words, interviewers may pretest the first draft of materials, make

recommendations to the creative team, who in turn produces a revised set of materials for another cycle of pretesting. There is no predetermined sample size guaranteed to produce results. The number of participants interviewed in each cycle could range from 5 to 20. A general rule of thumb is to continue pretesting until interviewers are not learning any new information from the target audience. The sample size only needs to be large enough to attain clear direction from respondents on how to improve the materials (NIH, 1992).

### 4. Interpreting Pretesting Results

While this manual attempts to present information about pretesting in an organized and logical manner, networks will soon discover that pretesting is closer to an art than a science. It is not always clear how to interpret the reactions of the audience members to the draft materials, nor is it necessarily clear how to revise the materials. Because most pretesting results are qualitative in nature, researchers cannot and should not resort to counting participants' opinions as votes for one design option over another. Instead, networks should rely on their knowledge of nutrition and their familiarity of the target audience, and the creative team should draw on their experience in design and campaign planning when trying to make tough decisions.

# CHAPTER V

# Implementation

The implementation phase refers to the execution of the social marketing plan and the actual launching of the intervention. During this phase, networks should involve partners in the campaign, negotiate their roles, and enlist their support. It will be necessary to train all partners and the staff of organizations involved in promoting the network's messages or delivering services about how to effectively reinforce the goals of the initiative. Once the key players have been educated and organized, the campaign is ready to be activated. It is best to begin with an organized launch that includes media, public relations, and community events to magnify the exposure of the message and its impact on the target audience (Chapman et al., 1993).

## A. Involving Partners During the Implementation Period

Having spent a lot of time building the network and strengthening relationships among partners, the networks should continue to involve partners during the implementation period. It may also be important to invite new partners into the network as the campaign proceeds and gathers momentum and attention. While everyone would agree that involving partners is key to the success of the initiative, the fact is, it is also time consuming and can result in a loss of control over the process. For example, more time may be required or different methods of dissemination may be suggested (NIH, 1992). Nevertheless, the benefits of including partners in the intervention planning and implementation process far outweigh the costs. In fact, community-based cardiovascular disease prevention programs have found that creating a sense of local ownership of the campaign is crucial for its success (Chapman et al., 1993).

When preparing for the implementation phase and during implementation, there are a number of ways to involve network partners in the process that will foster good will and lay the

groundwork for a smooth implementation. Networks must give other organizations an idea of the implementation time line early in the process, so they can adjust their program and internal systems to meet the needs of the campaign. In some cases, organizations and their staff may need training in order to complement and reinforce the goals of the initiative. Representatives from the network should meet with these organizations and discuss the kinds of information they will need to participate in the intervention. Finally, networks should make sure that all the partners have relevant campaign materials and planning documents. This will help them understand the rationale for the campaign and see how their organization fits into the larger scheme of things.

## B.    Preparing to Introduce the Intervention

After several meetings and months of planning, the time will come to launch the network's social marketing intervention. Much of the planning effort will culminate with the initial thrust of the campaign, although more planning will be required to guide a successful implementation. When organizing the activities involved in the campaign kick-off, the basic factors of when, where, who, and how come into play (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996).

### 1.    When

In thinking about when to launch the network's intervention, consider other campaigns that might complement or compromise the efforts at getting a good start and plan accordingly (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996). It is also very important that all components of the plan be in place at the launch, so that implementation can proceed in an organized fashion. For example, should a network decide to print the telephone numbers of local food banks on flyers that are to be distributed at a kick-off community event, make sure the food banks have arranged for enough staff to field the calls and can respond to the increased demand the campaign will create for their organizations.

## 2.    Where

The next question to be addressed is "Where?"  Will the network implement the campaign Statewide or choose to pilot or roll-out the program to a few select areas first?  As Kotler points out, there are advantages to both approaches.  A full Statewide campaign has the benefit of buying media and print space in large quantities for a reduced price (depending on the media market) and having a potentially larger affect through advertising and public relations.  The advantage of a network starting its intervention in a smaller area is that it allows for testing and fine tuning of the program and its components before going Statewide.  While this approach may not have the same impact or be as cost effective, the network will spend less money up front compared to a Statewide implementation that won't have the benefit of a trial period (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996).

## 3.    Who

Whom to direct the campaign launch to is another important question that should already have been decided.  However, before the intervention is initiated, it is possible that some networks will refine this decision even further.  For example, as discussed in Chapter III, some networks may choose to target more than one audience segment within the larger population of food stamp eligibles.  Some networks may decide to deliver their respective messages to different audiences at the same time, while others may opt to target one group and then concentrate on the others at a later time (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996).  In making this decision, networks should consider the size of their different audience segments, the ease or difficulty of reaching these subgroups through various communication channels, and the budget for the campaign.

## 4.    How

Finally, the logistics come into play—the "how-to" piece of the campaign launch.  At this juncture, networks must define their strategies. For example, they must determine the amount and types of media and public relations coverage and identify the sponsors and locations for community events.  Perhaps the two most important administrative facets are determining who is responsible for these events and what schedule will be followed to ensure a timely and

organized launch. There are a number of things that should be in place by the time the network launches the campaign:

- Specific media vehicles have been contacted and scheduled;

- All involved organizations and network partners have been briefed about the campaign, its goals and components, and their role in following up the introduction of the campaign and reinforcing the message;

- Staff involved in hotlines or other nutrition education activities have been trained how to respond to inquires about the campaign;

- Enough materials have been produced for the campaign;

- Distribution channels have been selected; and

- A mechanism has been established to track the progress of the campaign (NIH, 1992).

## C. Soliciting Feedback

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a successful social marketing intervention mobilizes the support of partner organizations and community stakeholders before and during the implementation of the campaign. An important activity for these groups is to provide feedback about how the campaign is proceeding. After the initiative is underway, networks should communicate frequently with participating partners and take the time to solicit their feedback so the network can make appropriate adjustments to the intervention that will keep it on track, while also meeting the needs of the participating agencies and organizations (NIH, 1992). Partners may have valuable information regarding the audience's response to messages and materials. Additionally, partners will be aware of glitches in the system, such as problems with dissemination or coordination among the various interventions or media channels.

California's "5-A-Day—for Better Health!" campaign utilized observation and surveys early in the implementation period to identify problems. Observation in the partner supermarkets revealed that retail signs and consumer materials were not always positioned for maximum impact, and on occasion, were not displayed at all. Surveys of the corporate partners "indicated

that they needed to have a greater variety of collateral materials, more ongoing contact with the Nutrition and Cancer Prevention Program marketing staff, regular feedback about other campaign activities, and training materials to use with store-level produce department personnel." (Foerster et al., 1995)

Feedback from partner organizations is just one element of a larger tracking system that should be created to improve the effectiveness of the network's initiative. Monitoring and revising the intervention are discussed in Chapter VI.

# CHAPTER VI

# Monitoring and Refining the Intervention

Despite copious amounts of planning, networks are going to encounter unforeseen circumstances when implementing their campaign. For this reason, it is important to have the ability to track and monitor the progress of the social marketing intervention. A monitoring program can be used to make adjustments in many aspects of the intervention, such as the message, the method of distribution, or the coordination of various campaign components to name a few.

Monitoring the progress of the intervention is a type of process evaluation, and should not be confused with an outcome evaluation. Unfortunately, many social marketing programs have emphasized the outcome evaluation more than piloting the campaign and monitoring and refining the intervention in progress. Outcome evaluations cannot replace monitoring efforts, because they are conducted at the end of a project, when it is too late to change the social marketing intervention that may have gone astray of its original goals (Andreasen, 1995).

As with pretesting, monitoring requires the social marketer to return to audience members to solicit their input about the intervention. Monitoring activities can consist of short questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups. It is not necessary that the survey instrument or interview protocol used to assess the audience's opinion of the campaign be methodologically perfect (Andreasen, 1995). Instead, networks should strive to develop a tool that can be used at different points in time to evaluate various facets of the intervention. The first measurement is called the "baseline measure" and is taken before the intervention is initiated. Once the campaign is up and running, the same measures should be taken periodically throughout the life of the intervention.

As part of the effort to track their progress and refine their intervention, networks should take the following steps:

- Check to see if the intervention is meeting their goals and objectives,

- Determine if the intervention is reaching the target audience,

- Identify effective intervention activities and strategies,

- Compare costs and results of different activities,

- Ascertain the extent to which the intervention has remained on schedule, and

- Determine areas that need additional effort (NIH, 1992).

Results of these measures should be used to fine tune the intervention. There is little sense in tracking the intervention, if the results are not used to improve the initiative.

The social marketing process has been described as an oscillating spiral, with monitoring being the last step in the spiral (Andreasen, 1995). Good social marketing interventions oscillate between listening to the audience and returning to the organization (the network in this case) for more client-centered planning. Formative research and pretesting are also processes in which the social marketers listen to the audience. Monitoring, the last step, brings the social marketing process full circle—back to the first step of listening to the audience. Making revisions to the intervention will require planning, the second task in the social marketing process. And thus, the process begins again. As Andreasen reminds us, social marketing interventions are always "works in progress." (1995)

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