Creating Champions for Sustainability Through Social Marketing and Communications

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Part One

SOCIAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS FOR SCHOOL CLIMATE

Social Marketing Defined

"Social marketing is the use of commercial marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole."

—Kotler, Roberto, & Lee, *Social Marketing, 2002*

Social Marketing…

- Builds on the concepts of commercial marketing.
- Measures success around *behavior change*:
    - Strengthening school connectedness
    - Strengthening parental engagement with school
    - Preventing bullying
    - Reducing truancy
    - Improving academic achievement.

If a tree falls in the forest…

…but no one's there to hear it

Our Audiences Need to Know

- How improved school climate positively impacts:
  - Physical and emotional safety for all
  - Academic outcomes
    - Students' ability to learn
    - Teachers' ability to teach
  - Human relationships
  - School connectedness

**First, they need to *know* (raise awareness)…
Then, they need to *act* (change)!**

The "Typical" Approach to Communications

- "Experts":
  - Tell others what to do because they "know what's best."
  - Become baffled when people:
    - Don't support their programs
    - Throw away their information
    - Ignore their advice.
  - Ask *"What's WRONG with those people?!"*

Better Approach:
The "Marketing Mindset"

- Instead of blaming our audience, we ask:
  - What's wrong with our message?
  - Are we connecting to audience values?
  - Are we solving a problem for our audience?
  - Are we delivering the message poorly?

**It's not what we want them to hear…
It's what they're able to hear.**

Research… Respect… Respond

Today's audiences for marketing are tomorrow's champions for school climate.

The Exchange Theory

What are you going to give me?

Does this solve a problem for me?

What will I have to give up?

Is it worth the effort to me?

Think Strategically: As Easy As 1-2-3-4

1. **GOAL:** What do we want our audience to do?

2. **AUDIENCES**: Who must we reach to help us meet our goals?

3. **MESSAGES**: What do audiences need to hear to persuade them to change?

4. **DELIVERY:** How (and how often) do they need to hear our message?

What Do We Want Audiences to Do?

- Do we need support for specific programs, services, data collection, more?

- Are we asking people to change the way they live or work?

It's not enough to "raise awareness." Our goals should promote behavior change, systems change.
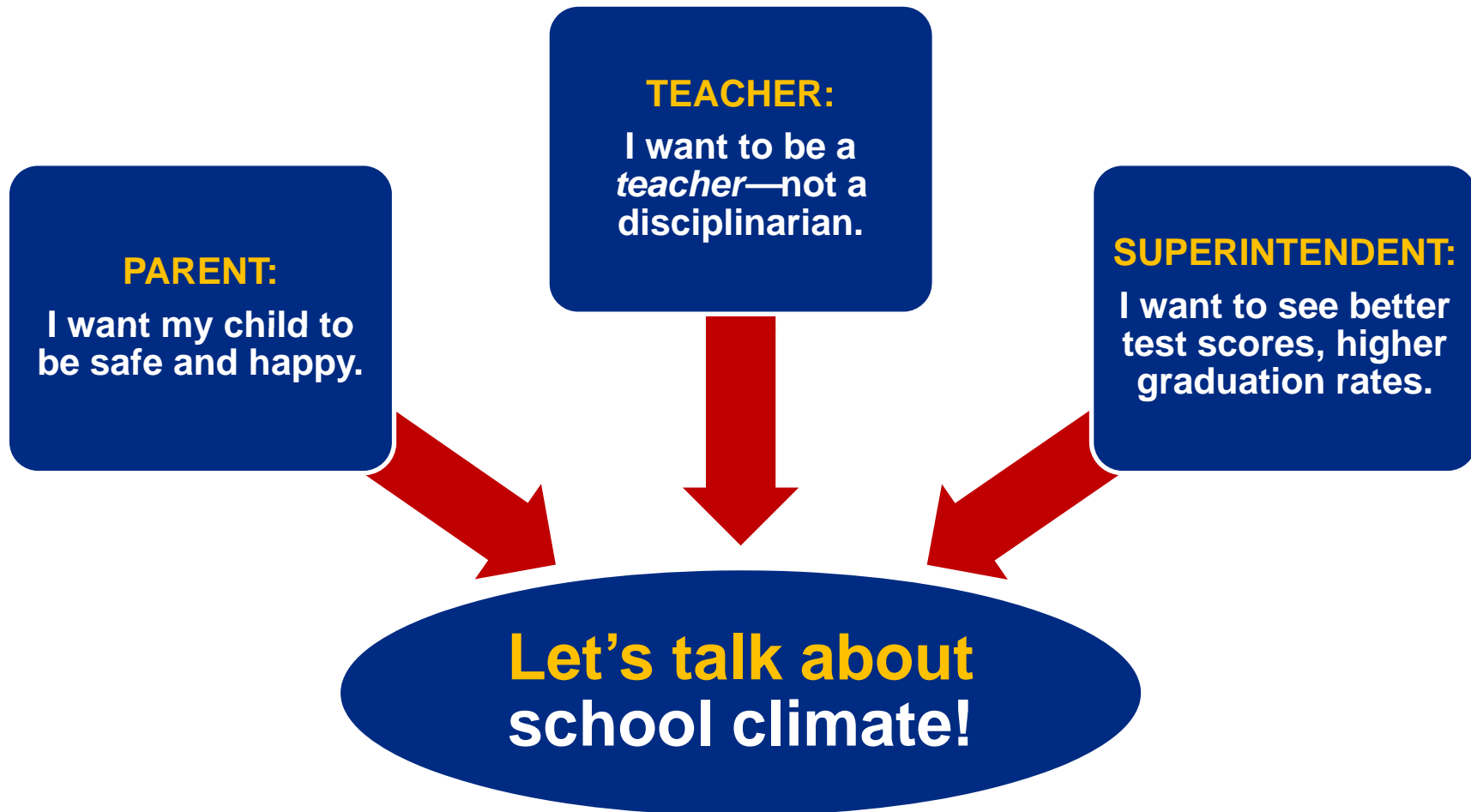
Whom Do We Need to Reach?

- We learn about our **target audiences** before we reach out to them. What are their:
  - Values and beliefs?
  - Challenges or problems?
  - Trusted sources of information?
  - Data needs?

Remember:
"I am not my target audience."

Example: Don't Mess With Texas

Target audience: males under 25

Expert values: tax dollars, environment

Audience values: cultural pride

What Messages Lead to Change?

- Align with our audience's values.

- Solve a problem for our audience.

- Are delivered by a source that our audience trusts.

- Are culturally competent.

- Motivate our audiences to action.

**The common word? *Audience.*
As communicators, we are in service to *their* needs.**

How Do We Deliver the Message?

- Where does our audience live/work/play?

- Whom/what does our audience trust?

- How does our audience prefer to receive information?

- How often/in what ways will our audience need to hear our message?

Where, when, and how will our audience be most *receptive* to our message?

How Many Ways? How Often?

- Channels:
  - Interpersonal
  - Community based
  - Mass media
- Activities/Events
- Materials

Measure Your Marketing Efforts

- Audience research for message development and delivery.

- Pre-test messages and materials to determine efficacy.

- Evaluate outcomes and modify strategy as needed.

FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS DO DRUGS

We skip pretesting at our own peril!

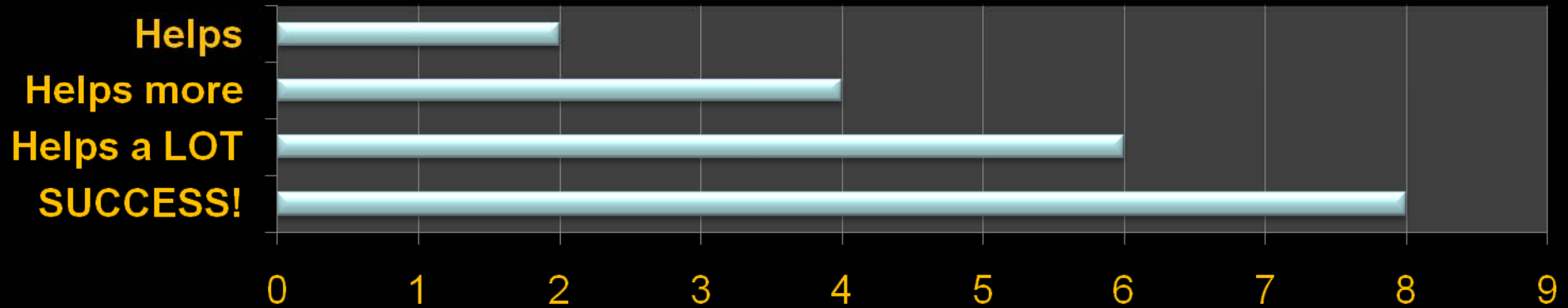**FRIENDS DO DRUGS**

Appealing to Hearts and Minds

The Mind Reasons

- Quantitative data
- Indisputable evidence
- Logically links their problem to our solution
- "Points the way" to action

The Heart is Moved

- Humanizes data
- Relies on stories, images
- Uses techniques like social math
- "Inspires" audiences to action

School Climate Results

Getting our audiences to say "WOW"

PRESENT COMPELLING DATA

Same Data, Multiple Representations

- The programmatic goal:
  - Increase students' sense of school connectedness.
- The communication goal and target audience:
  - Persuade overburdened teachers to fully engage in specific supportive teaching practices.
- The data*:

  - 46.7% report no aspirations for their lives beyond high school.
  - 38.7% of students don't feel an adult cares about them.
  - 30.3% report experiencing hopelessness.

Sample data of high school district student climate survey, used for illustration only.

Sharing the Data: Traditional Methods
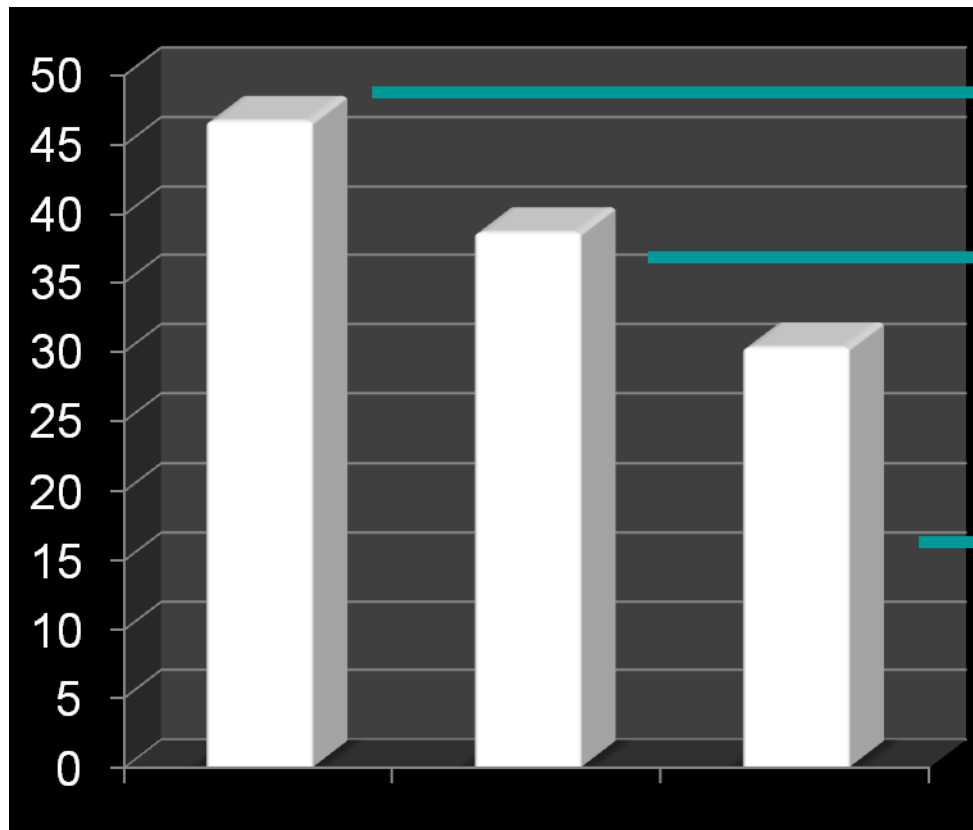
46.7% report no aspirations for their lives beyond high school.

38.7% don't believe an adult at school cares about them.

30.3% regularly experience hopelessness.

How Our Students See Their World
Key Findings from 2010 Survey of District High School Students

Almost one-half of students have no vision for their future beyond high school.

Almost one in three students regularly feel hopeless.

And more than one-third of our children don't believe that any of us care.
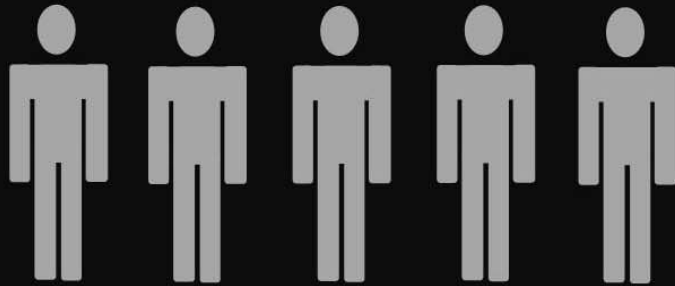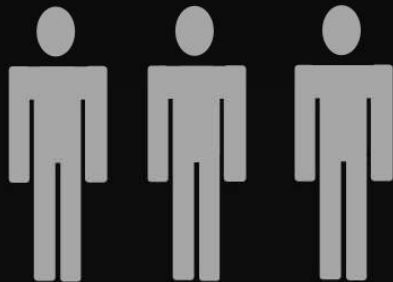
Connecting With Social Math

- Conveys data so audiences "get it."

- Creates dramatic comparisons to easily understood references.

- Is a jargon-free way to share research with wider audiences.

- **Requires numbers—not percentages— to create the "equation."**

Data + Audience's Reality = WOW!!

Example: Social Math and the Uninsured

More than 50 million Americans are uninsured.

That's more than the equivalent of every child born in the U.S. *since 2000.*

"I know it's a problem, but is it really that big?"

"WOW. This really feels wrong."

Example: Social Math and Student Safety

In 2007, 5.8 percent of students ages 12-18 reported avoiding school activities or one or more places in school because they thought someone might attack or harm them.

"Six percent doesn't seem like a lot."

Those scared children could fill the seats in more than *450,000 school buses.*

"That's just unacceptable to me."

Applying Social Math

- If … there are 180 days in the school year, a school day is 7 hours long, and our state's teachers report spending an average of 1.5 hours a day keeping order in their classroom …

- Then … how can we use social math to represent the time lost to discipline issues?

Hint: 180 days x 1.5 hrs/day = 270 hours
270 hrs x 7 hrs/day = 39 days lost/year!

What's the fiscal impact of this lost time?

Once More

- If … we have 300,000 middle school students in our state, and 13 percent (39,000 students) report feeling bullied, harassed or unsafe at school in the past year…

- Then … how might we use social math to create a powerful illustration of these numbers?

How many school buses would you need for 39,000 students? How many auditoriums? Cafeterias? Football stadiums?

Putting it All Together

- Communication/social marketing supports school climate.

- Audiences are at the heart of all of communication efforts.

- Audiences will always ask "What's in it for me?"

- It's not what we want them to hear—it's what they're able to hear. Build upon shared values first.

- Connect our audiences' problems to our solution (school climate).

- Deliver our message more than once and in the many ways that will resonate with our audiences.

- Appeal to minds (quantitative data) and hearts (qualitative data, stories, images).

- Present data based on audience's ability to understand it.

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QUESTIONS?