

Excerpt from HOW DO I . . . ?

A GUIDE FOR NONPOINT SOURCE OUTREACH EFFORT

Community-Based Marketing

Community-based marketing is the application of commercial marketing techniques to the design and implementation of programs in an effort to influence the voluntary behavior of a target audience in order to improve the quality of water.

Community-based marketing builds on the tools developed by commercial marketing. It is designed to meet the needs of the target audience(s) identified by your research. All marketing puts the customer first. For a water quality effort, the customer is a person or group that for which changing some behavior will help accomplish the long-term objective of improving water quality.

How your “customer” views the problem and what he or she knows about it is key. Additionally, what the customer needs to know and what incentives will help create change are critical. All of these needs may be different from your need to “tell,” inform or educate. The values and belief system of our target audience must be incorporated into a program focusing on sustainable change.



See the short article describing community-based marketing appended to this manual. There are also a number of web-based articles and information sources cited in the list of marketing resources in Section 7.

Basic Steps

- ▶ **Define the Issue.** Begin your plan by broadly defining the overall issue or problem your program will address. Seek input from anyone who might have the knowledge you need. Ask anyone who offers input for more contacts. Keep questioning until you can bring the broad list of issues to a more specific focus for your program.

► **Learn all about your project and audience.** Use all available means—the community-based marketing planning process is the same as for other marketing. It starts and finishes with research, and research is conducted throughout to inform the development of the strategy or to modify it during the project. You must learn all you can about the objective and how the consumer views the objective. This assists in targeting those who are most likely to take action. These may include:

- Literature reviews.
- Surveys.
- Personal interviews.
- Discussions.
- Focus groups.

► **Listen.**

- Listen to the needs and desires of the target audience and build the program from the customer needs.
- Listening to focus on the "consumer" involves in-depth
- research and constant re-evaluation of every aspect of the program.
- Listen without judgment to find the common ground between the customer need to know and your need to inform.

► **Design informational materials.**

- Use your research to create materials that address the needs of your audience.
- You can use all the normal avenues for outreach—brochures, newsletter, posters, displays, and others.

► **Conduct an information and education program.**

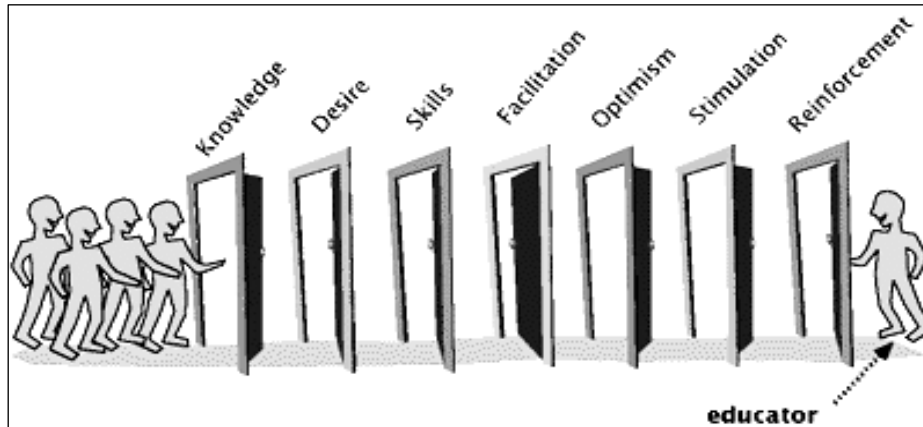
- Pretest your materials to make sure they accomplish your goal.
- Be willing to adapt to changing circumstances. *This is very important!*

► **Nurture change.**

- Provide the information.
- Help build a desire for action.
- Offer any needed skills.

- Be positive and supportive.
- Your role is to open the doors for needed action.

Holding the Doors Open to Behavioral Change



Australian Association of Environmental Education Conference, in Sydney, January 1999

More Steps in a Community-Based Marketing Strategy

- ▶ **Define Your Customer (Audience).** Community-based marketing models have the consumer (target audience) as the central focus for planning and conducting a program. The focus can be on the four Ps:
 - Price--what will it cost the consumer to change a behavior or pattern to reduce or stop nonpoint source water pollution?
 - Product--what are you trying to get the target audience to do?
 - Promotion—how do you get the information out?
 - Place—how are you going to reach the target audience?
- ▶ **Identify the Barriers.** To change behavior you must first identify what might stop your target audience from changing the ways they do things that impact nonpoint source pollution. Barriers are not necessarily economic. They may be value-based, a belief system or part of a community norm. They could be ignorance or time-constraints.
- ▶ **Establish Objectives and Goals.** Since marketing to change behavior is an evolving process, your objectives and goals may evolve as the project develops. The constant listening, evaluation and assessment function of community-based marketing allows you to both adjust the program and add or delete elements.

- Your objectives should be specific and measurable if possible.
- Your objectives are the intermediate steps needed to achieve the goal.
- Your goals include:

- √ Increasing awareness or knowledge.
- √ Changing attitudes.
- √ Improving skills.
- √ Reducing barriers.
- √ Adoption of changed behavior.

► **Select Communications Channels.** The research that helped define your target audience and the message also should have discovered the best methods to reach them—advertisement, brochures, personal contact, etc.

► **Involve the Community.** Nonpoint Source Water Pollution is so complex an issue that one agency can't make a dent by itself. You need to team up with other organizations in the community to be effective. You need to figure out which organizations have similar or complementary goals to yours--not necessarily the same goals--and identify ways you can work together.

- There are other reasons to partner. Community-based marketing programs can do well in motivating individual behavior change, but that is difficult to sustain unless the environment they're in supports that change for the long run.
- Working with other organizations and individuals who care about nonpoint source pollution is a cost-effective and smart way to extend the reach and credibility of your program and messages.
- Identify possible roles for your partners such as providing in-kind services, donating free airtime or distributing program materials.
- Plan how to approach partners to seek their involvement and continued support for your project.
- Point out what your partners will receive from the partnership. Make it a win-win arrangement.
- Nonpoint source issues are complex. You may need some assistance from community organizations to gain citizen support, to obtain access to the target audience or to head off potential adversaries.

► **Determine Evaluation Plan.** Evaluation is more than a contract requirement. Evaluation is a tool that helps you design better and more effective projects—both in outreach and in projects that move dirt. Performing an assessment is not an easy task in many nonpoint source pollution projects. Outreach projects can measure how many contacts were made or brochures were handed out. However, measuring changes in attitudes, beliefs, or behavior is both difficult and expensive. It may be appropriate to prepare a narrative that records observed or reported audience responses to your program.

Barriers, values, belief systems, community standards, even ways to solve a problem, evolve over the course of a project. Your program must also evolve.

- Evaluation measures success. You need to assess your effectiveness to determine whether your program has met its goals and to make any needed changes.
- Evaluation is part of the on-going learning in designing a program for sustainable behavior change. Programs should be flexible and able to evolve to meet changing audience beliefs or needs.
- Evaluation helps prove you have a credible program and is a fundamental tool in obtaining further funding. It can serve as a model to help others do the same type of program elsewhere.
- Evaluation provides documentation of the process as well as the results. Not only does this provide a history of your work, it offers the opportunity to find what worked and what did not work.
- Evaluation is essential to community-based marketing. Without knowledge of what is working and not working, you cannot adjust your program to meet your overall goal. And a major goal of community-based marketing is achieving community buy-in so that the program will continue after your program is completed.