

Your **issue:**

Your **audience:**

Your **message:**

Your **plan:**



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Social marketing: How to promote change in your school

Social marketing is the planning and implementation of programs designed to bring about social change (e.g., change attitudes and behaviours) using commercial marketing concepts.

Social marketing uses marketing techniques to generate discussion, promote information, attitudes, values and behaviours. It plays a central role in topics like health, environment, etc.

Social marketing is different from *social networking*. Social marketing is the use of marketing techniques to promote the adoption of healthy or pro-social behaviours. Social networking is marketing using online tools and platforms people use to share information with each other such as blogs, podcasts, networking sites and shared media sites.

The target audience

A specified audience or demographic group for which an advertising message is designed (e.g., males, females, children, teens, adults, etc.).

The marketing mix: The 4P's

Product: The idea, the belief or habit you want your target audience to accept, adopt or change. This is not necessarily a physical product. It can be a service, a practice, or an idea.

Price: Do the benefits outweigh the costs? What must the target audience do/give up for the perceived value of changing their behaviour? For example; if I quit smoking I will look less cool (the cost), but I will be healthy and live longer (the benefit).

Place: The way the message reaches the audience. For a tangible product this would be the way you distribute the product; for example, where it is sold or given out for free. For an intangible product it means how you will reach your audience with your information and how you can make sure it is accessible. Think about the ways you want to reach your audience with your information (e.g., school PA system, electronic board, newsletters, word of mouth, blogs,t-shirts, the web, etc.).

Promotion: The method you will use to attract your audience to your product/message. How will you reach your audience and how will you keep them interested in your message (e.g., public service announcements, television ads, YouTube, podcasts, a media event)?



An extra P to consider: People

Any person coming into contact with the target audience can have an impact on how they perceive your message. People are particularly important because in the audience's eyes, they are generally inseparable from the message. This means it is important that you understand your message and believe in the message you are sharing with your target audience.

Each element of the marketing mix should be considered when you plan your program.

Emerging trends

Emerging trends are the forces that will help determine if your ideas or messages will be accepted by your target audience. For example, one of the top key teen consumer trends for 2007 was the impact of technology (e.g., iPods).

Good marketers listen to what the public is saying and doing, and they modify their messages accordingly.

Buzzwords

These are words and phrases full of hidden and symbolic meaning that can reflect the attitudes and priorities of the target audience. Buzzwords help you emphasize something your target audience cares about.

The task

How can you design a campaign for high school students?

Begin by thinking about these questions:

- Are you in “the target audience” and if yes, think about what would appeal to you, to your friends?
- How do you like to receive your information?
- Do you believe everything you see and hear in the media — if you answered no — why not? How will you overcome this challenge when you design your campaign?

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Steps to help you get started

1. Define your issue
2. Identify your target audience and your goals and objectives
3. Research your target audience and find out how they want to receive their information (check out social networks such as YouTube, MySpace and Facebook)
4. Develop your key message
5. Select your approach/activities using the information you discovered in #3
6. Write down your communications plan — how will you deliver your message (e.g., TV, print ads, podcasts, Twitter, texting, PA system, electronic board, newsletters, word of mouth)
7. Identify how you will know if your campaign was successful
8. Develop your materials
9. Implement your plan — launch your campaign
10. Evaluate your results/measure your success

What has been done in other schools?

Here's an example using substance abuse prevention:

- **Ideas for the classroom:** hold staff presentation(s) on substance awareness, share teaching resources and strategies to handle students under the influence of substance(s)
- **Ideas for a healthy school:** create PA announcements; display student-developed posters and/or resources from community agencies (e.g., stupid.ca)
- **Ideas for social support:** link with courses like drama or marketing to creatively present a topic (e.g., substance awareness video contest); partner with student council and tag on to other school-wide events
- **Ideas for working with your community:** invite guest speakers to discuss related issues (e.g., impaired driving — MADD Canada)

Adapted from: 1. *Social Marketing*. The Social Marketing Institute. Washington, 1999
2. *What is Social Marketing?* Health Canada, 2005
3. *Social Marketing for Organizations*. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural affairs, 1994

