Washington State
Litter Campaign- A
Case Study

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Why Social Marketing?
While increasing knowledge or concern about the environment are worthy goals, studies have shown that being knowledgeable and/or concerned about environmental issues does not necessarily lead to action.

Not everyone does what they know is best for themselves or the environment.
The need for Social Marketing

We are currently:

• Underestimating the difficulty of changing behavior
• Underestimating the time it takes to change behavior
• Using ineffective models
• Creating programs that lack evaluations
• Measuring outputs instead of outcomes

We should be asking ourselves:

• Are we changing behavior?
• Are we changing resource use?
• Are we changing resource quality?
• Pilot programs are too small to see resource use or quality changes on a measurable scale, so pilot programs should be focused on behavior change.
Social Marketing Steps

• Background and Focus
• Select Behaviors / ROI
• SWOT
• Formative Research- Identify Audience Barriers & Benefits
• Develop a Strategy (4 Ps)
• Pilot Strategy
• Implement Broadly
• Evaluate
Washington State Litter Prevention Campaign

A case study in the application of social marketing
Background, Purpose, and Focus

Background
• 16M pounds of litter accumulate on state roadways each yr. (interstates, county and state)
• $4 million spent to pick up for only 25% of the pop.

Purpose
• Reduce litter

Focus
• Roadways
Examples of Strengths to maximize (internal)

- Washington State imposes significant fines for littering
- Management priority on litter prevention on roadways
- Typical litterers are: 75% male, teens/early 20s
- About 60% of littering is deliberate
- Littering is more likely to be perceived as okay in places where trash has accumulated and where someone else will pick it up
Situation Analysis (SWOT)

Examples of Weaknesses to minimize (internal)

- State resources to sustain a major media campaign are limited
- Litter is a multi-jurisdictional problem
- Lack of enforcement
- Lack of adequate litter containers in public areas
- Illegal dumping wasn’t measured in the litter composition survey
Situation Analysis (SWOT)

Examples of Opportunities to take advantage of (external)

- Litterers are not aware of fines
- Terms litter and litterer have negative connotations
- Major corporations who are “part of the problem” are potential sponsors: fast food, alcohol, tobacco etc.
- Reporting provides a “good citizen” opp.
- General public not aware of magnitude and nature of problem
Examples of Threats to prepare for (external)

• Vast majority of citizens concerned about litter, but only a third consider it very important relative to other issues
• Significant amount of litter gets picked up and is therefore not seen
• Litterers are not motivated by environmental concerns
• Messages to litterers who have attitudes of self-entitlement, rebellion, and arrogance will need to be crafted in order to avoid an injunctive norm perception (increasing litter)
Target Audience

- **2 major audiences for the campaign**: those who litter (25% of pop.) and those who don’t.
- **Segments**: Motorists or passengers who litter and drivers of pickup trucks that don’t properly secure loads (tend to be males 18-34)
- **Attitudinal segmentation**: targeting litters “most ready to change”; i.e. “inconvenients” and “ignorants” vs. “willful arrogants”
- Campaign messages also aimed at those drivers and passengers who don’t litter.
Litter and It Will Hurt – Prevention Campaign

Three Key Objectives (based on formative research):

• A short-term objective - to create awareness that littering can lead to significant fines and that a toll-free number is available to report littering.

• A long-term objective - to make litterers believe their littering will be noticed and they could be caught.

• Long term objective - Influence litterers to dispose of litter properly, cover and secure pickup truck loads, and clean out the back of trucks before driving.
Review of past efforts
Field research and sampling of litter
Focus groups w/ admitted litterers (HS and college)
Telephone survey of the general population re- litter
A majority of citizens (85% indicated they would call an 800# to report littering)
Barrier and Benefit Research: What would prevent litter? Belief that I will get caught, knowing fines, having to pick up litter as a punishment, better free tarps, and having more trash receptacles and litterbags available
Formative Research to Strategies

**Product:** Toll free hotline and website

**Price and Place:** Fines (hotline and website are free)

- Roadway signage with 800#
- Piggy-back strategy- litter messages on lottery tickets, driver’s Ed. manuals etc.

![Hotline and Website](image)
Formative Research to Strategies

Interventions to make litterers believe that they will be caught

• Letters to litterers signed (based on litter hotline calls)
• Litter emphasis patrols conducted by law enforcement officials
• Publicity featuring stories of people who get caught
• Imposing and publicizing community service penalties for littering
• Window decals, signs and bumper stickers as frequent, constant reminders on the road
Environmentally positive messages, pleas that tried to instill guilt and messages that bolster a sense of civic pride fell flat. In fact, these messages risked hitting their rebellious "hot buttons", encouraging them to litter more.
Information requested to report a litterer via the hotline.
Summary of Outcomes and Evaluation

- Litter is reduced when motorists believe they may be caught and pay significant fines.
- People in Washington will report litterers, given the opportunity.
- Campaign measured a 24% reduction in litter rate after campaign interventions implemented (measured from baseline litter accumulation- Reduction 8000 to 6000 tons).
- Follow-up surveys of Washington State residents to measure: Awareness of the “Litter and It Will Hurt” campaign slogan, stiff fines associated with littering and the toll-free number to report littering.
**Litter Hotline Success**

Calls to the litter hotline increased steadily since its debut in April of 2002 - Spike in calls during warm months

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**21,621 Calls Total**
References

