Speak to me: Using Social Marketing to Enhance Involvement among 18-35 year olds in the Public Participation Process

by

NADIA VIVIAN CARVALHO

B.A., York University, 1995

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Department of School of Community & Regional Planning

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Public participation in the development of the Official Community Plan has become a commonplace concept. The techniques that we use have evolved over the last 25 years. Planners need to further develop these techniques to enhance their effectiveness. It is important that planners are effective at educating and engaging the public in the search for creative solutions for some of the challenges facing communities today. It is especially important that these techniques speak to those between the ages of 18-34 because they are the ones who will be buying homes and forming families, actions, when aggregated, have the power to shape and reshape our cities.

Both the health and environmental movements have successfully used social marketing for years. Social marketing attempts to influence behaviour for the common good. Social marketing has proven to be successful at changing behaviour and this can be partially attributed to its customer orientation. The primary tenet of social marketing is to understand and build a relationships with customers on their terms. This thesis argues that it is time for planners to understand and build relationships with residents on their terms using a social marketing framework. Case studies from environmental, health advocacy and political groups detail innovative campaigns which were designed to engage a younger audience and remove any barriers a participant might face when trying to take action. The characteristics that these campaigns share provide interesting lessons for planners wishing to do the same for their public participation strategies.
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I literally have a whole community to thank for their support in the development of my thesis and for that I am grateful. This thesis is dedicated to my communities: my family, my friends and classmates and the planners that I have worked with.
Cities, unlike villages and small towns, are plastic in nature. We would mold them in our images: they, in turn, shape us by the resistance they offer when we try to impose our own personal form on them. In this sense, it seems to me that living in a city is an art, and we need the vocabulary of art, of style, to describe the peculiar relation between man and material that exists in the continual creative play of urban living. The city as we imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs in urban sociology and demography and architecture.

- Johnathon Raban in Soft City
Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a long range planning tool which embodies the values of the community. Its objectives and policy statements guide land use decisions politicians and planners make about land uses. These cumulative decisions play a large role in giving the City its identity, its character, its shape. If this tool is so crucial to the development of the City, then why is it so difficult to convince residents of the importance of getting involved in the development of the OCP?

This is the question that I asked myself during the summer of 1997 when I co-ordinated the logistics for the public participation phase of the City of Richmond's OCP. I looked to marketing and communication theory for solutions. This thesis is meant to assess the relevance of current tools and evaluate marketing techniques used by other groups which are trying to promote social change, in order to understand the opportunities for their application to the public participation phase of Official Community Plan development.

1.2 Background

“As currently being practised and understood, citizen participation both during and between elections are disturbing. As currently practised and understood, citizen participation seems to be breaking down. Our conventional wisdom says that citizens have become apathetic, that they are “turned off” by the complexity of issues, or they are not “turned on” by issues that do not relate to them directly. For some individuals, this may well be true. There is sufficient evidence, however, that most citizens are concerned. They do wish to influence the quality of life in their communities, the state of our nation, and the treatment of our global environment. It may be that they don’t feel that they really can.” (Kubisiki, 1992, 2)
Public participation as a tool that allows the average citizen input into the planning decisions that affect everyday life has been a part of the community planning process in North America since the late 1960s. This study deals with public participation in a specific context: development of Official Community Plans at the city-wide level in British Columbia's Lower Mainland municipalities.

As a long range planning tool that guides land use decisions an OCP affects the social, economic and physical fabric of the city. To make decisions about present land use and development it is necessary for planners to understand what the City should look like in the future. To do this, planners turn in part to the community. Ideally, the OCP represents the shared values of the community and results in a common vision. However, because the development of an OCP necessitates making decisions about what the city should look like 15 to 20 years in the future, it is often difficult to get residents involved in the process.

This thesis focuses on the type of marketing strategies which would be used to engage those born between the early 1960s and late 1970s in the public participation process of the Official Community Plan. Social, economic and technological changes which occurred when this generation was in its developmental stages means that the methods of communication which may have worked for their parents' generation may no longer speak to their generation.

Why is this generation significant? There are an estimated 8 million people between the ages of 18 and 35 in Canada. According to David Baxter, Executive Director of The Urban Futures Institute, British Columbia's population is expected to increase by 50% between 1996 and 2021 (Baxter, 1996, 2). The population under 45 is projected to increase by 27% over that same period (Baxter, 1996, 2). The front end of this
generation are the ones presently buying houses and beginning families. At the same time, planning at the municipal level has become and will continue to become more crucial over the next twenty-five years, as we decide how to house these new households especially given our limited land supply. Planners are presently working with the public to encourage a sustainable future. Achieving a sustainable future will only be possible by changing present attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the applicability of social marketing techniques to increase public participation among 18-34 year olds, the "Nexus generation" in the public participation phase of the Official Community Plan.

The specific objectives are:

1. To understand the current use and effectiveness of public participation techniques and the internal and external barriers to involvement in the public participation process in suburban municipalities in the Greater Vancouver area.

2. To present the salient points of social marketing theory and examples of groups who are using innovative marketing techniques to increase their ability to create social change.

3. To assess, based on the analysis of the above, the appropriateness of social marketing as an effective tool for increasing public participation among 18-34 year olds.

1.4 Study Methods

Literature Review

Two literature reviews were conducted. The first looked at public participation theory, the second looked at marketing theory.
Participatory Research

My experience with the development of a public participation process for OCP review in Richmond during the summer of 1997 and the observations I made there, has provided a basis for this thesis.

Surveys

A survey was sent out to municipal planners in the Greater Vancouver Regional District and distributed through ScenarioPlus an email based newsletter for municipal planners and other associated professions and agencies involved in municipal development. Produced by the Association of Professional Community Planners of Saskatchewan (APCPS) and the Manitoba Professional Planning Institute (MPPI), ScenerioPlus is distributed to approximately 800 people. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about the strengths and weaknesses of the current techniques that planners use. Ten surveys were received. [see Appendix 2 for the survey instrument]

1.5 Thesis Structure

The second chapter of the thesis begins with a look at the history of public participation in planning and its significance. It then defines and contextualizes the Official Community Plan. The public participation process in the City of Richmond in 1986 and 1997 is defined and its strengths and weaknesses are assessed.

The third chapter describes the social, economic and technological forces which shaped those who are presently between the ages of 18-34. In this chapter social marketing is presented as a response to communicate with the young adult population who are different from their parents’ generation. The section on social marketing begins with a discussion of the basic principles of the social marketing paradigm. The chapter concludes by examining the strengths and weaknesses of the social marketing approach as it has been applied to similar settings in different disciplines. The fourth chapter
examines the barriers to using social marketing in a municipal planning environment and suggests an approach which would address the barriers. The final chapter concludes the thesis with my hopes that by adopting a social marketing mindset, planners will begin to view public participation as a relationship building exercise which should be undertaken on the target audience's terms.
Chapter 2 - Public Participation in Community Planning

2.1 Introduction

To understand public participation as it is carried out in community planning in North America today, it is necessary to understand its evolution as a managed practice. This chapter discusses the following:

- public participation in community planning;
- the role of the Official Community Plan in community planning;
- public participation in the development of an Official Community Plan;
- the benefits and challenges of public participation;
- the nexus generation – a segment of the population often not reached by the design of present public participation methods.

2.2 Public Participation in Community Planning

Introduction

This section provides an overview of public participation in community planning. A definition of public participation is presented followed by a brief overview of major events which have shaped the public participation process during the past forty years. The section concludes with a discussion of the advantages and challenges of public participation.

A Definition of Public Participation

Desmond Connor writes, “For us, public participation in planning a project is a systematic process which provides an opportunity for citizens, planners, elected representatives and members of relevant area agencies to share the experience, knowledge and goals, and to combine their energy to create a plan.” (Connor, 1972, 1-
1) Public participation in the planning process is important because if the opportunities to affect change are real then people will feel that they are part of the process of change and will have a vested interest in their community (Griffin, 1990, 3).

**An Overview of Public Participation in Community Planning**

The physical protests of the 1960s against government decisions has evolved into a managed process which includes a variety of mechanisms for the public to give their input: public hearings, commissions of inquiry, social surveys, community meetings, environmental impact assessments, advisory councils, and a multiplicity of mechanisms for appealing or objecting to decisions (Cullingsworth cited in Gauld, 1986, 11).

**1960s**

In the 1960s, input from the broader public in planning decisions was sought as a direct result of the negative impact that large scale urban renewal plans had on those most affected. Large scale planning projects were under the jurisdiction of the federal government and in the 1950s, the federal government was primarily concerned with: the shortage of affordable housing, revitalizing the inner cities, and the development of housing in the suburbs. However, the implementation process for these projects often left no room for those most affected to discuss alternative options (Hodge, 1986, 350).

The government's development of housing projects in Vancouver's downtown eastside during the 1950s provides a local example of the conflict which was experienced between the government and the public. Strathcona, a predominately Chinese community located in Vancouver's downtown eastside, was subjected to a massive urban renewal project whose ultimate goal was to clear all existing housing and rebuild the area with various forms of multi-family public housing stock (Kim and Lai, 1982, 72). Schemes I and II cleared 11 blocks, displaced 2000 people and was completed despite
protests from the community. Scheme III was put on hold by the Ministry of Housing after its task force toured Canada and concluded that urban renewal schemes had negative social and psychological effects upon the individuals and communities directly affected by the projects (Kim and Lai, 1982, 76).

When the Strathcona Property Owners’ and Tenants Association (SPOTA) surveyed the residents who would be affected by Phase III, they found that only 4/375 households surveyed were willing to move (Kim and Lai, 1982, 76). SPOTA fought against this redevelopment plan and prevented the further destruction of the Strathcona area. Similar opposition to urban renewal projects occurred across Canada and the United States. These experiences proved that a representative democracy was no longer enough, citizens wanted a participatory democracy – one which would allow them input into the decisions which affected their daily lives (Whittack, 1974, 850).

1970s and 1980s
In an attempt to address the shortcomings of the old urban renewal programs, the Canadian government introduced the National Improvement Program in 1973 to “emphasize the local role in selecting neighbourhoods and in developing programs achievable given the funds.” (Hulchanski, 1974, 64) In 1978, the National Improvement program ended. After that, there was a significant drop in neighborhood involvement in local planning initiatives (Kubiski, 1993, 7). This was followed by the recession of the early 1980s during which time planners were more focused on encouraging development and public participation initiatives developed into a managed practice by planners.
The 1990s

The largest, most ambitious public participation process in the Lower Mainland occurred during the early to mid 1990s with the launch of Vancouver’s CityPlan. CityPlan was designed to encourage the public to help make difficult decisions about the City’s future. Six thousand people wrote submissions, 20,000 came to events, 10,000 to the early ideas fair, and 15,000 came to the Futures Tour (Vancouver Sun, 1995, B5). Despite this widespread public participation, the resulting plan was criticized for being too vague and too general (Howard, 1995, A6).

Summary

In the 1960s citizens demanded a voice in the planning decisions which affected their lives. In reaction to these demands the federal government funded initiatives to foster the involvement of neighbourhoods in community planning. When funding was cut, community involvement declined. Over the course of those thirty years the situation has turned a full 180 degrees, and planners are now faced with the challenge of managing public involvement AND creating interest in the planning process.

The Benefits and Challenges of Public Participation

A well organized and representational public participation process can provide the following benefits:

1. Keeps politicians accountable to the people.

2. Allows for a more transparent decision making process.

3. Allows the opportunity for ownership of plans by those that are being planned for, which in turn will provide more support (and less resistance) for the plan upon its implementation (Connor, 1-1).
4. Helps planners to understand the different groups of people that comprise "the public" and identify the differences and similarities and work towards a common solution.

5. Citizens bring to the table something that professionals lack - experience of place. They can make the professionals aware of problems that are occurring in the neighbourhood and in their city. Increased participation by more than a few residents will help to give an accurate picture of the problems in the community.

6. Public participation can provide the opportunity to develop local leaders, who may become another resource as they may mobilize people in their community to work towards the common good (Gauld, 1986, 17).

However, there are challenges associated with such a process:

1. It is costly and time consuming.

2. A few well organized interest groups can dominate the agenda.

3. Citizens tend to react without being informed (Eplan, 45).

4. Participation in issues that are not a direct threat are more likely to occur among those in the higher socio-economic levels (Gil and Lucchesi, 554).

5. Outside of using scientific survey sampling methods, it is difficult to ensure that citizen participation processes are representative (Milbrath, 1981, 480).

6. It is difficult to keep people engaged in the process over a long period of time (Milbrath, 1981, 481).

**Mechanisms for Public Participation**

Public hearings, commissions of inquiry, social surveys, community meetings, advisory councils and development boards are just some of the many mechanisms which can operate at the municipal level to allow opportunities for public participation. Sherry R. Arnstein’s work developed in the late 1960s groups different types of participation processes according to the degree of control that they give the citizen. (Arstein, 1969,
The three ultimate approaches are processes which give citizens power: by giving citizens control; delegating power or working in partnership with citizens.

The second tiers of the ladder are described as token approaches. Informing is described as telling the public about decisions which have already been made. Consultation is described as conducting public hearings, placating is described as acts such as placing citizens on advisory bodies. The ladder of citizen participation Arnstein developed was based on her experience and research of federal social programs in the 1960s, which were largely administered in poor inner city neighbourhoods and hence the ladder doesn't address the different challenges which are faced by planners in suburban settings (Connor, 1999, I-17). Also, her model implies that if there is power sharing then there will be better decision making. “The have-nots” will not necessarily benefit from it: it depends upon which citizens exercise that control and in whose interests.” (Boaden in Catanese, 1978, 17)

**Figure 1. Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arstein, 1969, 217)**

![Ladder of Citizen Participation](image-url)
Her model has been cited endlessly in literature on public participation. Constant reference to this model has impinged on the development of a more holistic approach to public participation in planning, one which recognises the importance that the role of informing and engaging the public plays in the process.

**The Definition of a Community Plan**

A Community Plan is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan. (876(1))

Established under the authority of the Province of British Columbia’s Municipal Act, the Official Community Plan (OCP) provides direction for: future growth, transportation systems, community development, provision of city services and amenities, agricultural land use, environmental protection and practice, development guidelines, and enhanced social well-being (www.city.richmond.bc.ca/landuse/ocp). The OCP is important because, by expressing community goals and objectives, it serves as a guide for making decisions about present development decisions which will impact the future of the city. (Beal, Hollander, 1979, 166).

Community Plans at a City-wide level (Official Community Plans, or OCP's) address how the City will accommodate future population growth and the services issues that it generates. Community Plans can be for smaller areas within the municipality. These area plans address very specific land use issues which helps to smooth the way for new development. In British Columbia, the Municipal Act states that:

A community plan must include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the following: (subsec. 877(1))

(a) the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years,
(b) the approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses,
(c) the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction,
(d) restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development,
(e) the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems,
(f) the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites, and
(g) other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the minister

(2.1) A community plan must include housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.

The Municipal Act, also requires that the Council must hold a public hearing on the proposed plan after the first reading and before the third reading. (890(2)) However, often this is too late to constitute meaningful public participation. Thus many municipalities design their public processes to obtain community input before the first reading in the developmental stages of the plan.

Having now discussed the history of public participation and its importance and looked specifically at the scope of an Official Community Plan as defined by the Municipal Act, the next section will look at the types of mechanisms used to obtain public input during the development of the OCP in three lower mainland municipalities and will present in detail, the process of obtaining public input in the City of Richmond.
2.3 Participation Mechanisms used in the development of OCP’s in Richmond, Burnaby and New Westminster

The growth strategies act required municipalities to amend their OCP’s by February 8th, 1998, to comply with the GVRD’s Liveable Region Strategic Plan. Hence, all municipalities in the GVRD went through the process of updating their Official Community Plans within a year or two of each other.

I reviewed staff reports to council from each municipality which summarized the public participation process. Listed below are the techniques which three municipalities used to obtain input from the public.

Table 1 – Participation Techniques used in three lower mainland municipalities

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<tr>
<td>Survey (non scientific)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey (scientific)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Sheet Identifying the Issues and Providing Information on the Process</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Information Sheets</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Houses</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of Comments</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
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Lower mainland planners involved in designing public participation processes for various cities were surveyed to gain an understanding of the strengths and weakness of current practices. A discussion of these results provides direction for addressing the question of
the applicability of social marketing techniques to the public participation process and are summarized in section 2.6.

2.4 The Public Participation Process in Richmond

The Design of the Public Participation Phase

In May 1997, the City of Richmond began its review of the 1989 Official Community Plan. The first phase involved going out to the public to obtain its vision for Richmond for the next 25 years. The City of Richmond Planning Department, launched its "Vision Consensus" approach.

Elements of the program included the following:
1. The “Richmond 2021” newspaper insert, which included an OCP survey;
2. Public displays at the major shopping malls, at the community centres and libraries;
3. Information Sheets on various issues including jobs and business, housing and social issues;
4. The information sheets and the survey were placed on the City’s website;
5. Public Open houses;
6. A random sample OCP Survey conducted by a consulting firm;
7. OCP discussion groups

What did elements of the public participation program include in 1986, the last time it was undertaken?

1. Draft Plan, Community Profile and Summary Tabloid
2. Public Displays at major shopping malls, library and special functions
3. Open Houses and Public Information Meetings
4. Media Coverage
5. Letters and Briefs
6. Advisory Planning Commission
7. Feedback Report of Response

In 1997, copies of the main issues to be updated in the OCP were summarized in an information sheet and along with a survey were sent out as an insert in the Richmond Review. In 1986, summaries of the draft plan were sent out to every postal address in Richmond of which there were 43,000 (Gauld 1986, 5). Both processes took place between May and October. Static displays were rotated through the Malls, Library and at the 1986 Steveston Salmon Festival (a popular, well attended community event).
1997 instead of the Salmon Festival a booth was set up during the City Centre Celebration (a similar, well attended community event).

In 1986 and 1997 the display included:

1. A draft OCP map;
2. An outline of the OCP process;
3. The broad issues that the OCP would deal with and possible options on how to address the options;
4. Information sheets were located next to the display;
5. Information on how to get involved.

There was little difference between the outreach techniques used in 1986 and 1997. During those eleven years, society and the community had undergone great changes, but yet the means for outreach, the language and the presentation of the documents remained virtually the same.

Participation in the 1986 process participation in the process was documented as follows:

- Draft Plan Summary Tabloid: 43,000
- Displays: 1,000
- Open Houses: 293
- Community Groups Correspondence: 26
- Richmond Community Services Council Meeting: 23
- Community and Social Services Agencies Meeting: 15
- Letters and Briefs received: 30

Total: 44,387

Note: This makes an assumption that the 43,000 households who received the summary of the draft plan, read the information. In 1997, newspaper inserts were also used, but only those that responded to the survey which was part of the newspaper insert were counted as having participated in the process.

The 1997 Process participation was documented as follows:

- OCP Survey - newsprint responses: 471
- OCP Survey - random sample telephone: 544
- OCP Discussion Groups: 150
- Children: 32
- Written Submissions attached to the survey: 12
- Written Submissions - stand alones: 11
- Comments - Open Houses (included City Centre Celebration): 600
- Displays: 5000
- Total: 6,820
The difference between the two process was that in the 1997 process, a scientific survey tool was used, that of a random sample survey to ensure that the views which were received were representative of the residents of Richmond.

**Effectiveness of the participation mechanisms**

Between December 1999 and January 2000, I conducted a small survey of municipal planners to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the mechanisms that they use to obtain public input during the development of their OCP's. [A copy of the survey and a full analysis of the results can be found in Appendix 2] The numbers of respondents were too few to allow the survey results to be conclusive (as only nine surveys were completed). However, the survey results provide an indication of the types of advantages and disadvantages planners associate with the various methods used to disseminate information and obtain input. When listing the advantages and disadvantages associated with each method, respondents were allowed to give multiple answers.

*Newspapers*

Local newspapers were used by all respondents to get information out to the public. The majority of respondents agreed that the benefit of local newspapers is its wide distribution. Two of the eight respondents wrote that not everyone was interested in the news and not every one subscribes to the local paper.

*Display Booths*

Six of the nine respondents used this method to communicate information to the public. The majority of respondents set up these displays in community centres, libraries and shopping centres. Two indicated that displays were a non confrontational method of obtaining public input, two respondents also indicated that displays made the
information accessible to the public. There was no consensus on the disadvantages of using displays. Some of the disadvantages listed included: people at the locations listed above are not interested in the displays, these displays only attract people who are already interested in the process, and it is expensive and time consuming to staff the displays.

Open Houses

The majority of respondents (7/9) use open houses. Six listed: community centres, schools and local libraries as locations for open houses. All of the respondents who listed the advantages of this method liked it because it was informal and non-confrontational. Again, various disadvantages were given. Three of the five respondents noted that, in their experience, only those that were already interested in the process attended.

Surveys

Eight out of nine respondents used this method. Eight out of eight respondents made surveys available next to displays and at open houses. Half of those respondents indicated that it was important to use scientific survey techniques to ensure that the survey results were scientifically valid. Three out of seven felt that this method was beneficial because it allowed planners to take the pulse of the community.

Website

At the time their respective OCP's were conducted 5/9 indicated that their City's website was not operational. Three respondents provided a listing of the advantages and disadvantages associated with using a website. Two respondents indicated that placing information on the City's website allowed for information to be accessible and allowed for a two way information flow. Two respondents listed the disadvantages associated
with the method. One respondent indicated that it was very time consuming and it may reach the people who have already been reached through traditional methods.

_Constraints on the Process_

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of influence that five different variables had on the design of the process. One indicated a strong influence and five indicated a weak influence. The results are as follows:

- **Citizens’ Understanding of the Issues**: 2.22
- **Citizens’ Exposure to the Issues**: 2.22
- **Time**: 2.44
- **Budget**: 2.77
- **Political Objectives**: 3.25

These responses indicate that the Citizens’ Understanding and Exposure to the Issues were among the strongest determinants in how the process would be designed.

_Opportunities and Barriers to Participation_

Eight of the nine respondents answered this question, giving multiple answers. The most often cited answer was time, lack of interest, not a priority, followed by language.

Research commissioned by the League of American Voters entitled “Working Together: Community Involvement in America” (Vancouver Citizens Network, www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-hanbook/lwv/opportunities) found that in the United States efficacy was the strongest attitudinal predictor of participation followed by information about the groups and their activities, self-perception and self-esteem. Since time was a big barrier to participation, respondents want to know that the volunteer effort that they are involved in was making a difference (Vancouver Citizens Network, www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-hanbook/lwv/opportunities).
Nexus Generation Planner as Participant Observer

I was involved in the public participation phase of the Official Community Plan for the City of Richmond. I did not become involved in the process for the purpose of my thesis. However, it was because of this experience that I decided to focus on enhancing the present methods of communication that planners were using to reach people of my generation during this process. My involvement and reflections about the process are a form of participant observation.

Reflections

I found that there were planners who were extremely interesting in trying new methods to engage the public. The planning department was given little time to pull the whole public participation process together; there was little time available to develop new methods for attracting the public to the process.

In addition to a five panel display which described the basic issues that Richmond faced in the future as well as some possible solutions, a consultant was hired to develop what was termed the "interactive" component of the public participation process. The consultant, Arthur Orsini of Urban Thinkers, developed a board game, called 'Design Your Neighbourhood' which asked residents to consider the challenges of locating various types of land uses within the neighbourhood using games pieces consisting of shops, houses and services. Take home sheets which were available next to the displays and at the open houses, asked residents to 'Take a Look' at their neighbourhood by conducting simple walking tours to understand how their neighbourhood works. 'Can you Identify' Panels were designed to ask residents how the City could retain the character of single family neighbourhoods as residents' needs changed. The panel flaps had pictures of single family homes, when a flap was lifted up, underneath black and white line renderings of the homes were highlighted in two to three colours demonstrating how
allowing secondary suites or multiple units in a single family dwelling could densify the neighbourhood without changing the character of the house. Finally, there were display panels which illustrated the ingredients which made neighbourhoods such as Cabbagetown in Toronto and Freemont in Seattle, interesting. The board game and the ‘Can you Identify’ panel were extremely useful as a point for beginning discussions at open houses.

Short on time and money, the planners and the graphics department did not have the ability to try to test out any new, big ideas. The incremental approach was behind the idea of hiring a consultant to develop the interactive add-ons which were taken to the open houses. If we had the time to try out different methods, we would have had to spend time learning what is effective, what is not and what works when. In addition there was very little understanding of how people interact with information beyond the basics of making the message simple and easy to understand. However, since we get bombarded with hundreds of advertising messages a day, we needed more than a simple, easy to understand message; we needed to design a process which engaged people’s interest, raised awareness about the issues and made them want to get involved. We need to market our process to the public. According to my observations when staffing the mall displays and the open houses, the process didn’t speak to those of my generation.

2.5 Defining the Nexus Generation

How important are those between the ages of 18-34 in the city that I worked on the public participation phase of the OCP? The 1996 Census indicates that 25% of the population in Richmond are between the ages of 18-34. If we calculate the percentage that 18-34 year olds represent of the voting population that percentage rises to 32%. In addition to comprising a slightly more than a third of the voting population, it is
important to reach out to those 18-34 because it is during this time that people will be buying houses, and having kids – major life events that shape neighbourhoods and communities, once those decisions which are made by hundreds of households in Richmond each year are accumulated.

Those between the ages of 18-34 are known as the “Nexus Generation,” a phrase coined by the Toronto firm d-code, authors of the book, *Chips&Pop: decoding the nexus generation* (Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh, 1998). They define the Nexus generation as those born in the early 1960s and late 1970s because they were shaped by similar economic, social and political trends during their developmental years. The authors estimate that there are 8 million Canadians (Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh, 1998, 16) which belong to generation Nexus, thereby representing 25% of the Canadian population. The demographic information is not as important as how well the demographic information is coupled to the technological and social trends that affected the generation as it grew up.

**Factors that Influenced the Development of the Nexus Generation**

*Developments in Computing*

Personal computers became popular and accessible during the 1980s. (Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh, 1998, 36) The internet became widely available during the mid 1990s.

*Social*

In 1970, the average marrying age for Canadian women was 22.7 and for Canadian men was 25 years old. Twenty-five years later the average marrying age has risen to 27 years old for women and 29 years old for men (Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh, 1998, 63). The average Nexus parent is 29. In 1994, the average age of the first time home
buyer was 39 (Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh, 1998, 63). It would appear from these statistics that the Generation Nexus is delaying adulthood, or redefining it.

**Economic**

The Nexus generation has experienced two recessions. The first through their parents in the early 1980s and the second when they were ready to launch their careers (Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh, 1998, p53).

**Attitudes towards community**

The GVRD undertook a study about the attitudes that different segments of the population had towards recycling conducted in 1996 by the Angus Reid Group. This study found that 14% of the total population surveyed qualified as “Uninspired Twenty-Somethings.” The survey found that this group is more likely to feel in control of what is happening to them and more likely to speak up about things that bother them. They do not value being part of a group and are less likely to get involved in community activities. They are also least likely to believe in traditional values. This group is the youngest of all segments, the most educated, least likely to have children, tend to be English-speaking and renters (Angus Reid, 1996, xii). The study goes on to suggest that ways to encourage them to recycle would be to “generate enthusiasm”, showing how their contribution can make a difference (Angus Reid, 1996, xiii).

**Conclusion**

The Nexus generation is a new kind of consumer. They expect advertising not only to promote products, but to entertain as well. This is because advertising is part of our consumer culture. Advertising Age magazine found that the younger the consumer, the greater the expectation that advertising entertains (Gercey and Lin 1999, 15). Advertising Age hired Applied Research and Consulting to conduct a nationwide survey of 800 people in the United States in 1999 on their attitudes towards brands, shopping
habits, the Internet and technology (Gervey and Lin, 1999, 15). The survey noted that while some of the difference between age groups as to the importance of various brand attributes is a measure of life experience or maturity, the authors concluded that some of the differences were between a younger wired generation and the older baby boomers (Gervey and Lin, 1999, 16).
Chapter Three - Social Marketing

Introduction

Why use social marketing to enhance involvement in the public participation phase of OCP development? Social marketing is a holistic strategy which looks at the nature of the behavioural change being attempted and the internal and external barriers to achieving that change, and then addresses them in the design of the resulting promotional strategy.

Typically, social marketing involves long term behavioural change. It often means adopting a new behaviour permanently. Doug McKenzie-Mohr describes “one-shot behaviours” and sustained behaviours (Duffy, 1994, 24). Examples of sustained behaviours are recycling, examples of “one-shot” behaviours are installing low flow showerheads (Duffy, 1994, 24). This thesis looks at improving the number of people who are involved and committed to the public participation process in the development of official community plans. The process behind improving participation in the OCP process can be described as a “one-shot” behaviour, which can be easier to achieve than achieving sustained behavioural change (Duffy, 1994, 24).

3.1 Social Marketing: The Key Works

The birth of social marketing is credited to G.D. Wiebe (1952) who asked, “Why can’t we sell brotherhood like we sell soap?” (Salmon, 1989, 19) It has been half a century since that question was first raised. Since then social marketing has been used for a variety of social causes from the environment to health promotion. Social marketing presents far greater challenges than those faced by traditional marketers. Traditional marketing is often concerned with maintenance of the status quo (Salmon, 1989, 25). Convincing the populace to switch brands of toothpaste is nowhere near as challenging as
convincing the population to change its beliefs and values (Salmon 1989, 25). There are a multitude of reasons for this. Compared to traditional marketers, social marketing tend to be poorly funded and organized (Salmon, 1989, 25). Often social marketers tend to rely on “free” advertisement and in doing so lose control of the message. In addition they often can not afford advertising which would best reach the desired target audience (Salmon, 1989, 25).

By looking at the works of Philip Kotler and Eduardo L. Roberto, Alan A. Andreasen, Doug McKenzie-Mohr and William Smith, and Mark Sarner it is possible to understand the areas outside of the public sector where tools of marketing have been successfully applied.

Philip Kotler and Eduardo L. Roberto wrote Social Marketing: Strategies for Changing Public Behaviour, in 1989. Their book looks at the shortcomings of unsuccessful social change campaigns and the strengths of successful ones and then discusses the techniques and technologies to create successful social change campaigns.

"Philip Kotler coined the term (social marketing) and defined it as “the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and market research.” (Sarner, 1996, 1)

Doug McKenzie-Mohr and William Smith are the authors of Fostering Social Behaviour: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing (1999). Their goal is to encourage a change in consumption patterns in an attempt to foster sustainable behaviour. McKenzie-Mohr and Smith assert that to achieve this kind of change, it is most effective when programs are designed at the community level and involve direct contact with people.
Mark Sarner and Janice Nathanson have authored a book entitled *Social Marketing for Business* (1996). They assert that social marketing can be an effective tool for businesses wanting to include a social agenda in their business strategy. Their belief is that consumers now care about more than the price of a product. They also care about the company’s sense of social responsibility. This can be partially illustrated by the fact that in 1993, 5.5 million Canadians boycotted companies for poor corporate practices (Sarner, 1996, 3).

From the literature described above it is heartening to see the variety of directions from which social change is being attempted. However, they all have one thing in common - the use of marketing principles as a tool for change.

### 3.2 Misunderstanding Social Marketing

Andreasen (1995) writes that very often social marketing is misunderstood. In many instances, what people are actually practising is social advertising, believing that sending out the message will facilitate action or behavioral change. Social marketers argue that this is not enough, that attention must be paid to all components of the marketing mix for behavioural change to occur.

**What’s the difference?**

Social marketing is broader than social advertising and includes the various facets of the marketing mix: product, place, price, promotion. Kotler states that those that want to promote social change through the use of social marketing must understand the nature of the product being promoted. The ways and places in which people can obtain the product (the ways the product is distributed) and the costs (price) that people will have to pay to undertake it must be understood (Andreasen, 1995, ix). In the case of social
marketing, the price can be defined by the energy, the social, physical or psychological costs associated with adapting the socially desirable behaviour (Duffy, 1994, 19). Thus, the benefits associated with adapting the new behaviour must compensate for the costs.

**Promotion** includes advertising, public relations and informing the public.

### 3.3 A Healthy Scepticism of What Marketing can offer Planning

Initial forays into the exploration of what marketing could offer planning was met with scepticism by some and utter horror by others who felt that by using a marketing approach, the City would be trying to coerce the public into accepting their decisions. I, on the other hand, was working from within the system, and was faced with the challenge of raising interest in a process and a concept which was largely being met with apathy.

How can the distrust that people have of marketing be mitigated? There is a perception that with marketing "persuasion" is involved instead of choice, a concept which goes against the tenets of individualism, free choice and democracy Andreasen (1995, 11). calls this the persuasionist's approach, which occurs when the marketer is trying to get the public to adopt their view of the world.

To ensure that the process is not persuasion marketing Backstrom suggests the following:

- The objective is intended to ameliorate a recognized societal problem;
- The objective fits with public policy objectives and local values;
- The desirability of the social marketing objective has been clearly established through primary and secondary research;
- Research into the problem and the objective has involved and respected the input of people whose well-being the objective is intended to improve;
- A group of 'early adopters' of the desired behaviour has shown the social marketing objective to be promising (Backstrom 1997, 27).
3.4 The Challenges of Social Marketing

Marketing is sometimes seen as wasting the public's money (Kotler, 1991, 23), which could be better spent on public services. Marketing is also seen as manipulative (Kotler, 1991, 24). How are these challenges overcome? Marketing is being used more and more in the non-profit and public sector. Their successes are seen as beneficial to all: reducing drunk driving, promoting healthier eating habits. Thus, the perception of marketing as wasteful or manipulative is being slowly changed by work conducted outside the private sector. The following is a list of more challenges those wishing to employ the tools of social marketing face:

1. Data about the target market is very often not available (Kotler 1991, 28) or too costly;
2. Often the benefits of behaviour change by the individual are not self-evident to the individual;
3. Consumers are often asked to make 180 degree shifts in behaviour;
4. The benefits of the behaviour changes are often not experienced by the individual, but are experienced by others. For example, slowing down when driving in a residential area will benefit the neighbourhood, but not necessarily the individual.
5. It is difficult to measure the success of a program because of the marketing objectives' intangibility (Kotler, 1991, 26).

3.5 Understanding Behavioural Change

Since social marketing is all about behavioural change, it is important to understand how consumer behaviour changes and how that affects marketing tools associated with facilitating various types of change before designing the program. Some behavioural changes require a large commitment and some require little commitment or change on the part of the consumer. These are called high and low involvement decisions (cited Andreasen, 1995, 142). Deciding to change behaviour doesn’t happen at once. Andreasen modified a model based on work by Prochaska and DiClemente and linked each stage to its corresponding marketing task (Andreasen, 1995, 148). Developing an understanding of the marketing tasks as they relate to moving the audience along the stages a of behavioural change model are often overlooked in favour of creating a program for action because behavioural change is often not understood as a multi-stage
process. The first two stages of the behaviour change model which precede the action stage are discussed below.

**Table 1. Stages in Behavioural Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precontemplation</th>
<th>Creating Awareness and Interest Change Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contemplation</td>
<td>Persuade; motivate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Create Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Change</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**The Precontemplation Stage**

Initially, people aren’t aware or are not convinced that their behaviour requires changing or that the message applies to them. This stage in the behavioural change model is linked to the marketing task of creating awareness and interest on both the individual and the community scale. By creating awareness and interest, on a community scale, the campaign seeks to change what the community sees as the norm. It establishes a social setting where “everyone is doing it.”

Creating Interest and Changing Values

When trying to create interest in the project, there is a subtle but important difference between the approach a social marketer would take and the approach someone who feels that they are instead educating (rather than marketing to) the public.

Andreasen points out that the difference between educators and social marketers is that educators tend to tell the public what they want them to hear and how they should behave, while social marketers are customer centred. Social marketers try to speak the language of the target market, and to seek natural opportunities for the message to fit in with the consumer’s lifestyle. An example of this would be the Heart Smart series of
cookbooks. Produced by the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation they are a series of best-selling cookbooks with low fat, low sodium, but tasty recipes.

What did the Heart and Stroke Foundation do which was so successful? It found natural opportunities to fit its message in with the consumer’s lifestyle, investigated the barriers to adopting a healthier diet, including the perception that low fat food is not tasty, and addressed them through the creation of a cookbook. Does this mean that this product will change people’s behaviour permanently? No, but it is a vital part of the Heart and Stroke’s Strategy to encourage people to adopt a healthier lifestyle as a way of preventing strokes and heart attacks.

The Contemplation Stage- Persuade, motivate by first overcoming the internal and external barriers to involvement

When people contemplate decisions it is based on their beliefs and values. Trends are exactly that, trends, but they are anchored by values and beliefs which are slower and harder to change. Andreasen (1995, 151) points out that there are four sets of beliefs: beliefs about the positive aspects of changing behaviour, the negative consequences of the behaviour, the barriers to changing that behaviour and societal expectations. McKenzie-Mohr describes these four sets of beliefs about changing behaviours as the internal and external barriers and benefits (McKenzie-Mohr, 1999, xii). Internal barriers are the barriers that the individual faces and the external barriers are barriers in the environment that make it difficult to change the behaviour. For example, in the case of getting involved in the public participation process, an internal barrier could be the belief that a person holds that their involvement won’t make a difference. A external barrier could be that the process is held during a time when they are unable to attend, or at a location which is difficult to get to. Once the internal and external barriers are recognized, they can be overcome by the design of the process.
3.6 The Social Marketing Framework

As mentioned earlier, marketing is a comprehensive approach to achieving social change. To design an effective campaign, it is necessary to:

1. Identify the Goals and Objectives;
2. Research the current attitudes, behaviours, barriers and motivators towards the goal and objectives;
3. Design and Implement the Program;
4. Assess the Effectiveness of the Program;
5. Maintain the Program.

Identify the Goals and Objectives

One of the most important aspects of designing a campaign using social marketing techniques is to first identify the objectives. By identifying the objectives and establishing a baseline it is then possible to measure the impact of the campaign. For example, the GVRD’s goal was to reduce waste in the region by 50% by the year 2000 (GVRD, 1996, i). To reduce waste by 50%, the Solid Waste Department had to know how much waste was currently being generated.

Research the current attitudes, behaviours, barriers and motivators towards the goal and objectives

To be able to look for opportunities to fit the social change program into the consumer’s lifestyle it is necessary to understand your target market. The target market is the group of people that you are trying to change. As stated earlier, a social marketing approach is customer oriented. It is necessary to understand the present attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the target market in order to change it.
Geodemographics is a tool which can develop an understanding of the target market. It links census information, and consumer patterns to geographic areas. The underlying assumption is that people who live in the same area tend to consume/behave in the same way (Weiss, 1999, 4).

Such information is available from companies such as Compusearch in Canada. Their PSYTE cluster system has identified 60 lifestyles. They are grouped according to level of urbanization and socioeconomic ranks (1 equals most affluent; 6 equals least affluent) (Weiss, 1999, 103). An example of their cluster descriptions are as follows.

**Suburban 1**
Asian Heights (.71% of Canadian Households)
Upscale, very large families with middle-ages, well educated maintainers. Managerial and white collar occupations. Large proportion of Asian, especially Chinese, households. Large, newer, heavily mortgaged detached homes and townhouses, in expanding suburbs, especially Toronto and Vancouver. Commonly two wage earners.

If a client wanted to increase the rates of volunteerism among city residents, the addresses of all people who volunteer for various organizations in the city would be overlaid on top of Compusearch’s existing demographic information to get a picture of the types of clusters in the city which have the highest rates of volunteerism. The results would inform the advertising strategy by and enable the strategy to design different advertising strategies for different neighbourhoods.

Why planners could benefit from geodemographics
1. It would help planners understand a community that they are often not part of;
2. The power of unifying institutions like church and school has declined and there increasing ethnic diversity. "Social upheavals of the current generation-suburbanization, globalization, technologies that collapse time and space – continue to dilute the notion of community and shared concerns." (Weiss, 1999, 24)
3. It would assist in tailoring the message: those that are not aware of what planning is and what it does would be targeted with a message different from those that are familiar with planning.
4. It could help dispel myths about neighbours. For example, single family homeowners often believe that those living in townhouse developments are very different from them, so resist townhouse proposals.

5. Lifestyles are more fragmented and less stable than they once were.

Surveys or focus groups are other methods which can be used to measure attitudes and behaviours. A focus group is another method to use to gather in-depth qualitative information. The information gained from the focus group is then used to design a survey which will measure the behaviour and attitudes of the larger population. Scientific sampling will ensure that the results are representative of the population. Conducting a survey whose results are representative of the public is often time consuming and expensive. It is often not an option for smaller organizations who conduct social change campaigns. Instead smaller organizations with limited budgets often rely solely on focus groups.

Design and Implement the Program

How is a resident moved to action, once the barriers have been removed? The opportunities for action must give the person the belief that they have the knowledge and skills to carry out the behaviour and that their contribution will help make a difference (Andreasen, 1995, 161).

It is at this stage that the appropriate marketing mix is determined (product, price, place and promotion), based on the background research, the goals and objectives of the program and the understanding of the target market that was developed previously.

Assess the Effectiveness of the Program

Once the program is implemented it is necessary to conduct a survey, or several focus groups to assess the effectiveness of the program.
Maintain Change

Once a relationship has been developed between the social marketer and the consumer, the relationship must be maintained so that the behaviour doesn’t revert back to its old patterns. This can be done by prompts or reminders that the behaviour change is positive for the individual and society.

3.7 Communications

"It's about communication. There is no true marketplace where social marketing occurs. It's more of a virtual marketplace. You don’t go to the store, buy social marketing and give money, like you go buy a tire or some other commercial product. People don’t literally buy ideas, but they do buy into them. They internalize them. They internalize them, adapt them, start to act upon them." (Sarner, 1995, 11)

The preceding section gave an overview of the components of a social marketing strategy as well as the merits of each stage. The next section will explore in more detail the communications aspect of the marketing strategy because a good communications strategy is vital to increasing participation in the OCP public participation process since there is no tangible product. The message is the product. As Mark Sarner points out, "The product being delivered contains information and must be as communicative as possible" (Sarner, 1995, 13).

What do we have to be cognisant of when developing our communications strategy?

Phillip Kotler and Eduardo Roberto in Social Marketing: Strategies for Changing Public Behaviour found that there are several factors which contribute to the weakening of the message. Planners need to be cognisant of these factors so that they can overcome them when trying to communicate with the public. They are:

1. Audience factors, such as apathy, defensiveness, and cognitive ineptness.
2. Message factors, such as messages that do not convey real motivating benefits to citizens in an attention getting way.
3. Media factors, such as failure to use appropriate media vehicles at a proper time or in effective ways or to reach target adopters with the type of media they are most responsive to.
4. Response-mechanism factors, such as failure to provide receptive, motivated citizens with an easy and convenient way to respond positively to a campaign’s objectives and to carry out the campaign’s intentions (Kotler and Roberto, 1989, 8).

**How do we communicate effectively?**

Why do we need to pay attention to the way we market and advertise? “In a postmodern society, people manoeuvre through an information-rich environment in which their relationships with other people are increasingly being mediated by forces such as television, VCRs, computers and information highways.” (Hill, 1996, 3) Thus, there is increasing competition for people’s attention.

MacKenzie-Mohr (1999, 101) suggests that by employing the following principles, one can communicate more effectively with your audience:

- Use vivid information
- Use a credible Source
- Know your audience
- Carefully consider Fear Appeals
- One sided versus two sided appeals

**Vivid Information**

Vivid information is easier to relate to and recall. This is especially important because consumers have limited attention and only pay attention to a very small fraction of the marketing messages that they are exposed to (Kardes, 1999, 34). In fact a person can typically attend to seven to nine units (a units can equal a number, a word or idea, or a string of numbers, words or ideas) of information at one time (Kardes, 1999, 35). Also, the more background people have on the subject the larger the unit of information they can process (Kardes, 1999, 35). By presenting the information in a manner that reduces the amount and time a person has to spend processing, the information will help the consumer make better decisions (Kardes, 1999, 35).
MacKenzie-Mohr (1999, 16) cites Paul Stern and Elliot Aronson who reviewed pamphlets and brochures produced by governmental agencies and utilities on energy conservation and found that most materials did not communicate their information in a vivid manner.

*Credible Source*

By using a credible source the information will have more influence.

*Know you Audience*

As mentioned earlier it is important to know your audience in order to communicate effectively to them. Knowing your audience will affect the type of wording and images you use in your pamphlets. In other words it will help you to choose the right message and medium to effectively communicate with your target market. (Hazel, 1994, page 1)

*Fear Appeals*

Messages which use fear to encourage people to act should be used carefully. It has been proven that while fear appeals are effective, such appeals should not leave the audience with the feeling that they are powerless to make a difference. If the message has this effect, research shows that people will ignore the message (Sarner, 1996, 64).

*One sided vs. Two sided Appeals*

Two sided messages which present both sides of the issue are more effective to communicate to those who are more educated and to those who do not already agree with your message (Kotler and Roberto, 1989, 196).
Case Studies
3.8 Case Studies

Documented cases where social marketing has been used to improve public participation among generation nexus in the development of an official community plan, are not available, simply because it has not been a focus for planners. The following section represents the experiences of a few social advocacy groups which are trying to involve generation nexus in working towards social change. The causes that the groups promote include: sustainable behaviour, health promotion, alternative transportation and increasing voter turnout.

The first two examples centre on one innovative technique used to involve/engage the public. The first example is the COPE/Green party alliance’s recent efforts at getting young adults involved in the 1999 Vancouver municipal elections. Its street level campaign was targeted at the nexus generation. The interesting components of the campaign revolved around their attempts to go to where the young adults are.

The second example is provided by Translink’s pizza parties. Translink, like most public agencies wanted to do more than attract the people who “always get involved” and attract people who didn’t like to speak out at public meetings or didn’t have the time to come out to public meetings. Hence the idea of the pizza parties. Borrowed from a similar concept used in civic journalism, Translink encouraged people to get together and talk about transportation issues in their own home and Translink would provide the pizza.

The third and fourth examples discuss the campaign strategy in its entirety. The third example is provided by Adbusters Magazine, a Vancouver based magazine whose genius lies in its ability to turn around the familiar advertising images that we see on a daily basis and make us question the real values behind what we are being sold, using the
advertisers very own images. It has a large following, making it Canada’s number one magazine export.

The fourth example is the Breast Cancer Fund’s “Obsessed With Breasts.” This group, based in San Francisco designed a campaign which used the shock value of its advertisements to raise awareness about the issue. This approach garnered press coverage on both sides of the border.

The primary purpose of the case studies is to investigate the opportunities for promotion and communication strategies to strengthen public participation. While promotion means to publicise and sell (a product) it also means to help forward; encourage; support actively. Using more culturally relevant techniques to promote community involvement in the development of the official community plan would mean that planners would have to be more proactive in their approach to community involvement.
Cope/Green Party Alliance
"Get Out the Vote Campaign"
The Cope/Green Alliance - “Get out the Vote” Campaign

“If television advertising messages do not affect attitudes and behaviour, then our consumer culture has perpetuated a trillion-dollar hoax on corporations chasing brand identity and market share. While it may be difficult to establish a direct one-to-one relationship between individual commercials and specific consumer responses, there can be little doubt that pervasive advertising affects our culture.” (Bath, Schattenberg, www.icbc.com)

Background

The communication strategy employed by the COPE/Green alliance during the City of Vancouver’s municipal election held in the fall of 1999, provides an example of the challenges involved in trying to attract youth to participate in the election process at the municipal level. In 1999, the COPE party teamed up with the GREEN party to promote the issues involved in the recent Municipal election, held on November 20th, 1999.

Goal

The goal of the campaign was to make people aware of their party’s campaign. Those that vote for the COPE party tend to be young people, renters and women and tend not to turn out to vote in large numbers (Neil Moncton, interview).

Strategy

The COPE/GREEN party alliance did not have the type of funds which were accessible to the Non Partisan Alliance to advertise on television so they decided to “take it to the street”. They embarked on a postering campaign to raise awareness about the issues on the street. They also tied gold and green ribbon to utility polls. This method was used to raise people’s curiosity and establish a presence. The alliance wanted to get people out to vote. It was an event after all, where the future of the City was being decided. In the end, their communications tactics got people excited (Neil Moncton, interview).
Medium and Location

Street Level Campaign - They identified their voters and went to where they were. Certain neighbourhoods where the Cope/Green party alliance knew that support for their parties was traditionally the strongest were targeted. Once the areas were identified the posters were put up in high traffic areas and in the neighbourhoods where supporters lived.

Innovation – The Rave Card becomes appropriated for a social cause

Largely an urban phenomenon (Carmen Mills, Emerald City) Rave or clubs cards are traditionally used in urban centres to promote raves or events at clubs. Rave cards have techno visuals and they are printed in a postcard format and left at 150 selected stores and locations throughout the City. [see figure 2] The youth campaign organizers and Emerald city graphics “hacked into” (Carmen Mills, interview) or appropriated this cultural medium to use it as a promotional device to the municipal election.

In order to understand the issues which were most important to the target market of COPE/GREEN party alliance, they turned to representatives in key ridings and the youth of “Check Your Head” – a youth advocacy organization which educates youth about the issues surrounding the global economy. In this case, the main issues which were identified were housing, transportation and the environment.

The idea to use the rave card format was not taken lightly. It was decided that the format and the distribution methods gave them a greater assurance that they would reach the audience that they wanted to reach. Use a the club card format gave them control over the channels of distribution and the content of the message. They distributed the club card to 150 commercial outlet in key areas.
Figures 2.a. and 2.b.
The rave card used by the COPE/GREEN party to encourage participation in the 1999 Vancouver municipal election, enabled the party to take their message into venues would not display conventional election material. Clubs, bars, clothing, music and magazine stores, etc, venues which often play a central roll in the lives of a young urban crowd.
Conclusion

The COPE/Green party alliance learned several lessons from the process. Neil Moncton, communications director, found it was important to tailor their message for the various target audiences, from the positive response from people regarding the rave card he also noted that people need to be invigorated to vote. Finally, people needed to know what was at stake as it related to their life to give them a reason to vote. They did not have a large budget and could not afford to produce and broadcast television commercials. Instead they used more inexpensive materials such as postering and rave card flyers. The creation of the rave card generated coverage from the local newspaper and gave the party prominent coverage in the Vancouver Sun’s lifestyles section and brought attention to the alliance’s effort to reach young people. Due to limited resources, the COPE/Green party alliance was not able to conduct a survey to measure whether their campaign directly contributed to an increase in the number of voters that turned out to vote for their party.
TRANSLINK – PIZZA PARTIES

Background

In the beginning of 2000, Translink offered pizza to residents who gathered their friends together to talk about transportation issues in their home. These front room forums were designed by Ken Hardie, manager of communications for Translink, who based the idea on one used by the Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Washington in the early 1990s. The basic premise behind this idea is that there are several barriers which prevent people from attending public forums and they include the following: time, dominance of interest groups, fear of public speaking. These barriers can be overcome by the pizza parties, because they are held in the home, at the participant’s convenience, with a small group of friends.

The origins and early uses of the front room forums will be discussed in some detail here because they have been previously used as a vehicle to discuss growth issues, which are exactly the types of discussions that participants in an Official Community Plan Process would evaluate and discuss. In 1993, Spokane and Vancouver were facing similar growth pressures. Journalists at the Spokesman-Review wanted to know how growth and the changes that occurred because of growth were affecting residents. Entitled the “Pizza Papers” residents were offered free pizza in exchange for organizing a meeting in their home with their friends and neighbours to talk about the issues.

They were asked to discuss the following questions:

- What do you value most about where you live?
- Is there anything that you don’t like about where you live?
- If you have one wish for what you would like to see happen in the region in the next 10 years, what would that wish be?
- How would you make that wish come true?

This was followed up by larger community forums which were part of a larger project entitled "Values for a Growth Decade" during which a values statement was drafted which would guide growth into the 21st century. The Review brought political commentator, columnist and urban analyst, Neil Peirce to draft a report on the future of the area.

The Pizza Papers were used several times after that: the first was to ask citizens about the ways local government could be improved, the second in 1995 was to ask residents to share their views on preserving the environment. By now, Pizza must have been a slightly overused attraction, thus in the Fall of 1995, the Spokesman-Review organized the Ice Cream Conferences to get people involved in City Vote, a project aimed at involving city residents in national politics (Jefferson, 1997, 36). This exercise demonstrates how newspapers can get involved without compromising their impartiality. The participants got together to discuss the issues and report back to the newspaper. The newspaper in turn would report on the results of the Front Room.

Translink

Ken Hardie, communications manager for Translink, believed that the Front Room forums would be a useful vehicle for increasing the number of people that got involved in the public participation phase of the Translink Plan. He also believed that the public profile is increasingly being generated by a public involvement process which brings out people with specific agendas (Hardie, interview).
The front room forums are similar to a focus groups and they wanted to be seen as reaching those that were in the middle of the issue (Hardie, interview). They screened participants in order to get a good cross section of people living in different areas, and a good representation of car drivers. He estimates that approximately 150 people volunteered to host a front room forum. Each front room forum had an average size of 6-8 people. Eighty front room forums ran and Hardie estimates that a total of 560 people participated. Hardie believes that there was a latent interest in the issues, so they only had to create the opportunities for participation. Hardie also noted that Translink has a certain advantage as compared to the Spokesman-Review process. Translink is the body that will eventually carry out the policy. Thus there is a greater chance of getting the publics trust if you actually listen to what they have to say and are respectful of that in the implementation of the policy.

Conclusion

Translink didn’t go out of their way to advertise, or design their program so that it reached out to younger people, but they did advertise on Z95.3, a radio station which has a young audience. They did not track the age of the participants, anecdotally Hardie told me that there seemed to be more interest from young people in participating in the Pizza Parties. Finally, the Pizza Parties addressed the barriers of time, dominance of interest groups and fear of public speaking through the use of the pizza parties.
Welcome to CokeSpotlight, the official website of the Coke Challenge Campaign. This site is all about action; the action that individuals can take to demand environmental responsibility from one of the world's biggest corporations, The Coca-Cola Company.

In the time it takes you to read this sentence, another 100,000 people worldwide will reach for a Coca-Cola soft drink.

COLD DRINKS, HOT PLANET

To be Number One in the world: that's the goal of The Coca-Cola Company. That's why Coke is the longest running corporate sponsor of the Olympic Games. It's a partnership that has helped make Coke the world's best known brand, sold in nearly 200 countries.

But there's something different about the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. They will be the first Green Games, a global celebration of sport, culture, and the environment.

In the Green Games, Coca-Cola isn't winning the race. Coke keeps its

Adbusters
Adbusters takes the Coke Challenge
www.cokespotlight.org
Adbusters

Background

Adbusters magazine is a not-for-profit founded by Kalle Lasn. This magazine, whose headquarters are located in the South Granville was, in 1999, Canada's #1 magazine export with a circulation of 60,000 (2/3 of subscribers reside in the United States) (Adbusters, www.adbusters.org/information/foundation). In May 2000, Adbusters was presented a "Webby" Award by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Science. The award was for best site on activism – sites in this category included sites “facilitating political change, social movement, human rights, public education and reform, or revolution.”

Adbusters produces a magazine 4 times a year. The magazine is interested in “examining the relationship between human beings and their physical and mental environment.” (Adbusters, www.adbusters.org/information/foundation) The Adbusters website, www.adbusters.org, as mentioned earlier, recently won a Webby award. The internet is such a hotbed of creativity and influence that like its predecessors, film and television, it too has spawned its own set of awards, indicating that web sites should be entertaining and creative as well as informative, no regardless of the subject matter.

Campaign Goal

Adbusters creates several campaigns including Buy nothing day and Turn Off the TV week. The latest, the CokeSpotlight website, was unveiled on June 1, 2000 as a joint campaign between Greenpeace and Adbusters aimed at challenging Coke to live up to the environmental guidelines of the Sydney Olympics. Greenpeace charges that Coke is not following the environmental guidelines set forth by the Sydney Olympics. Of the 1800 machines on the Olympic site only 100 will use Greenfreeze coolers which comply with the environmental policies and the remaining 1700 will use HFC gases as a coolant,
which are said to contribute to global warming. The goal of the campaign is to encourage Coke to switch all of its pop machines at the Olympics to use Greenfreeze coolers.

Medium

The website, designed by a local firm Bento Box, employs the use of interactivity to get the user interested in learning more about the campaign. The website is designed to look like a Coke machine and contains a downloadable campaign kit which includes posters, stickers, ecards and posters. Using Adbusters' trademark creative style of using the corporation's images against itself, Coke's advertisement featuring animated polar bears drinking Coke was turned into a mother bear sitting on a piece of ice with her two children. The clip then shows the ice cracking and one of her children floating off. A message then appears which reads "Enjoy Climate Change: Coca-Cola's use of HFC's contributes to Climate Change. Ban HFC's."

Strategy

The website empowers individuals to take action and makes it easy for the user to do so. The design of the campaign recognize that people want to make a difference, but have limited time available and want to know that their contribution made a difference. Part of the Cokespotlight.com campaign is directed towards students attending postsecondary institutions where Coke is the sole soft drink distributor. Tools (i.e. posters, stickers) to promote the campaign are downloadable for free. Also included are pre-written letters to the campus administration which can be personalized and sent off as well as camera ready images which are suggested for publication in the campus newspaper.
SEND A LETTER TO YOUR CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION

Cut and paste this letter and send it to your campus administration, cafeteria caterer or student newspaper.

Dear [Head of Campus Administration],

The Coca-Cola brand that we see all over campus means different things to different people. To some, it represents a valuable corporate partner, to others, a cool break between classes. To me, it represents the serious problem of global warming - and an opportunity for a change to eco-friendly technology.

Right now, Coca-Cola’s worldwide sales network relies on cooling systems that use HFCs, some of the most potent global warming gases ever produced. With at least 16 million Coke machines worldwide, Coca-Cola is a leading HFC polluter.

A much better alternative exists: Greenfreeze, a safe and tested cooling technology that does not damage the ozone layer or contribute to global warming. With its international reach and resources, Coke has the power to help make Greenfreeze technology the global standard.

Students on this campus are launching a campaign to make sure the "real thing" does the right thing. That's the Coke Challenge!

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Summary

The design of the Cokespotlight campaign employs several techniques which overcome the barriers to getting involved in social change campaigns. First, the design of their website is engaging and interactive. They ensure that the people who are interested in their message will spread the word to their friends by making the design of the website engaging and by creating posters and stickers which people can print out and display. These posters and stickers also serve as environmental cues and serve as reminders to take action. The fact that Greenpeace and Adbusters have teamed up together lends credibility to the issue. They also chose an goal whose outcome would be measurable and achievable – not the conversion of all of Coke’s machines
(although this would be the preferable final outcome) but the conversion of the Coke machines at the Sydney Olympic games. By having predesigned and prewritten letters, emails, postcards and advertisements which are meant to be sent to the campus administration and the Coke CEO, along with a campaign which has an achievable goal, gives people a sense of personal efficacy. Finally, to maintain the relationship with people who have chosen to become involved in the campaign, it is possible to register for regular news updates as to the progress of the campaign.

Adbusters succeeds at providing a portal into the world of activism. One of the reasons that its style resonates with young people is that it uses the language of consumerism, against consumerism. Why do we now have a language of consumerism? It is because we have shifted from a production based society to a consumption based society. To facilitate this shift, we have the emergence of popular culture (Lind, 1975, 237). By using the language of consumerism, the Adbusters campaign reminds consumers that they have responsibilities. As citizens we realise that we have rights and responsibilities, but we forget about those responsibilities because as consumers we are taught that we have no duties larger than our own needs and desires (Kunstler, 1994, 38). Adbusters is determined to change that by using the language of consumerism to remind consumers of their role as citizens.
The Breast Cancer Fund’s “Obsessed with Breasts” Campaign
The Breast Cancer Foundation – “Obsessed With Breasts” Campaign

Background

In January of 2000, The Breast Cancer Fund (TBCF), an organization committed to fighting breast cancer, launched a provocative campaign, designed to raise awareness about breast cancer, because in part the Bay Area has one of the highest rates of breast cancer among women in the world. (The Breast Cancer Fund, www.breastcancerfund.org/campaign_press.html) The provocative campaign depicts cover models exposing their breasts which have been scarred by mastectomy surgery.

Goals

The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness about this disease that strikes one in eight American women (Gordon, A15).

The goals of the campaign are:
1. To increase awareness and involve the public in breast cancer issues;
2. To dispel fear, demystify the disease and motivate action;
3. To educate about the disease and provide ways for people to act;
4. To answer questions children have about breast cancer.

TBCF’s acknowledges that great strides have been made in the past decade in raising the awareness about breast cancer, and it is now the most commonly diagnosed cancer worldwide (The Breast Cancer Fund, www.breastcancerfund.org/campaign_goals). However, TBCF feels there is a need for people to keep on top of the changes in the field and that education and awareness are the first steps towards action.

Strategy

Advertising was used in this instance to promote social change. It is the key driver behind this campaign. The campaign, entitled “Obsessed With Breasts” uses the layout from popular magazines and superimposed the chest of a woman who has undergone two mastectomies onto the chests of models. Similar to Adbusters, it uses a format that we are used to: women’s magazines with beautiful, scantily clad models on the cover,
not to challenge us with society’s created obsession with a narrowly defined idea of beauty, but to make a statement that for 1 in 8 women, this is a reality that they too could face if they do not get checked for signs of breast cancer. From TBCF press release, “The bus shelter advertisements, whose creation and placement were donated to TBCF by BBDO West and Outdoor Services, were designed to capture the viewer’s attention and change the way we think and act about breast cancer. The ads challenge our obsession with the female breast as an object” (The Breast Cancer Fund, www.thebreastcancerfund.org). Each poster displays TBCF’s website address which is designed as a vehicle for discussion about the controversy that they created.

Location

This street level campaign, was to be posted in bus shelters and billboards in San Francisco and in the Bay area. The posters were designed with the intention to be placed in bus shelters and on billboards around San Francisco. Both the sign companies and transit agencies found them to be so “jarring” they did not display them. Eller Media, another billboard company, offered its billboard space for free (Gordon, 2000, A15). Space on the company’s billboards will not available until September 2000, eight months later than the original launch of the campaign. Outdoor Systems, the company that has a contract with the City of San Francisco to place advertisements in the bus shelters had originally agreed to donate space for the campaign changed their minds upon viewing the ads. It was originally intended that the posters would be displayed in 57 bus shelters. Now the poster is up in less than 20. Ironically, the ads have been put up in the more conservative suburbs surrounding San Francisco (The Breast Cancer Fund, www.thriveonline.com/health/pools/news/news.poll88.html).
Website

The designers of the campaign anticipated the controversy and were interested in hearing the thoughts of citizens.

"Obsessed With Breasts Ad Campaign"
We created these ads to guard against complacency in a society that so readily commodifies breasts for business and entertainment purposes. Click here to learn more.
(The Breast Cancer Fund, www.thebreastcancerfund.org)

Finally, the website has a section where people can post their opinions about the campaign. People had a variety of opinions, many of them supportive for the aggressive, "in your face" approach that the campaign took. However, the comments were not all positive.

I am a young survivor of breast cancer. Having been diagnosed when I was 21 years old, newly divorced, single mom. I was extremely devastated and cried when I seen (sic) your campaign. I believe that people should know and women should be informed about the risks of breast cancer but I HAVE to tell you that I am NOT happy with the pictures that you portray as 'art'. I have dealt with this disease for 5 years now and not one step of it has been easy. Your form of 'educating' the public has embarrassed me and has put my body on a billboard for all to see. Let me tell you this, the majority of us do NOT want the fact that we have a scar where a natural breast once was, plastered all over bus stops and billboards. Outraged
(The Breast Cancer Fund, www.breastcancerfund.org/campaign_saying.html)

Another writes in support of the campaign:

I am a breast cancer survivor and would like to commend you for the courage to present this campaign. I think obsession w/breasts and the whole "model" image that is presented in our media—television, magazines, movies, etc. needs an overhaul. Girls are taught from a young age that "breasts are beautiful" and boys learn to notice...why not teach them to value life, health – all that is really important!
(The Breast Cancer Fund, www.breastcancerfund.org/campaign_saying.html)

With the use of fear appeals and shocking imagery, the foundation runs the risk of alienating people and losing supporters who are against this type of approach. As much
as this type of approach is successful in engaging people in an issue, it can also turn people off an organization if they don’t agree with the marketing strategy.

Action

The Call to Action section allows users to submit a form supporting the Breast Cancer Fund’s National Action Agenda on the Environmental Causes of Breast Cancer. It also asks users if they would like to become an e-member, which means that future calls to action and other information about the disease would be sent to them via email.

- You’ll receive breast cancer research updates and breaking news;
- You’ll be able to influence our nation’s leaders and decision-makers on crucial health issues;
- You’ll have opportunities to support The Breast Cancer Fund’s efforts through purchases and contributions.

You are also able to make immediate contributions within this section. One important thing to note is that it tells people that “You’ll be able to influence our nation’s leaders and decision-makers on crucial health issues.” Thus it give people the feeling that their involvement will make a difference.

Further Participation

You Can Help - This section gathers together all of the different methods that TBCF has for people to get involved into one section. The section includes the following links:

- Call to Action: Make your Voice Heard;
- Join the Breast Cancer Fund’s New E-Membership;
- Special Ways to Give: Workplace Giving, Stock Gifts, Bequests;
- Vision 2000 Leadership Council: An annual contribution of $500 or more;
- Support the Businesses that Support TBCF;
- Shop TBCF: Our special selection of products to raise funds and awareness;
- Corporate Sponsorship Activities.
Lifestyle Opportunities

Support the Business that Support TBCF - TBCF recognizes that prevention of breast cancer comes about as part of eating a healthy diet and leading an active life. TBCF also looked for lifestyle opportunities to promote this message. Companies that sell health foods and will donate a portion of their sales to TBCF are advertised in the section entitled “Support the Business that Support TBCF.” The TBCF logo is displayed on these products, further reinforcing the connection between TBCF and the companies that support TBCF.

Challenges

The American Breast Cancer Society came out against the ads because they were concerned that the campaign would scare women away from getting mammograms (Michelle Holcenberg, Alternet, www.alternet.org/Public Archive/Holcenberg021100.html). Andrea Martin, the cancer survivor whose cancer scarred breasts were superimposed upon the models bodies stated that the intent of the campaign was not to encourage women to get mammograms instead it was to educate people about the disease and raise money to fight the disease.

Conclusion

The “Obsessed with Breasts” Campaign” used fear appeals to get their message across. The design of their advertisements were so shocking that they generated international press about their campaign. However, the majority of their work takes place through their comprehensive website. Once they have succeeded in drawing people to the website, the design of the website quickly goes about the business of educating the reader about the issues by listing articles about the controversy and providing a forum for discussion. TBCF builds relationships with people who get involved initially by

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allowing the opportunities to support TBCF to fit into their lifestyle through the use of time saving email updates and the purchase of food companies which support TBCF.

3.9 Characteristics of a Successful Campaign

The four case studies shared a few similar characteristics which make them different from the approach that planners use to involve people in the OCP process. These are as follows: cultural fit, "taking it to the street", supporters/participants as advertisers, interactivity and market segmentation.

1. To be successful at promoting change it will be necessary to design a cultural fit.

   "It can be suggested that certain 'postmodern' occupations have emerged which function to develop and promote postmodern popular culture. They are claimed to be both creating and manipulating or playing with cultural symbols and media images so as to encourage extended consumerism." (Botler and Grusin, 1999, 237).

   Adbusters, The Breast Cancer Fund and the COPE/Green Party Alliance all designed their visuals such that they reflected elements of popular culture.

2. Taking it to the street.

   Both the "Obsessed with Breasts" and the Cope/Green party alliance designed street level campaigns. The Cope/Green party alliance in particular concentrated its efforts on a street level campaign which took its message to where the people were. [figures 4 and 5 for other examples] The Vancouver Citizen's Handbook (Dobson, 2000, 6) notes that it is best to go where the people are instead of expecting them to come to you. And states that this is particularly important for ethnic groups, youth groups, seniors and other groups who may not come to you (Dobson, 2000, 6).
The BC Endangered Species Coalition launched its "www.extinctionsucks.org" campaign. This campaign used the cartoon strip format to get its message across in the Georgia Straight, a free, weekly arts and entertainment newspaper.
NEWLY THREATENED!

British Columbia has 70% of all the plant and animal species in Canada. More than half are found only in this province. But right now, 800 species in BC, like the Killer Whale, are at risk.

Act Now! You can fight for their future. Take 2 minutes. Visit our website. Send a free fax and help protect BC’s species at risk.

www.extinctionsucks.org

Figure 5. Interior Bus Advertisement
3. Participants/Supporters as Advertisers

Two of the groups put their message on postcards, posters and stickers. [Figures 6 and 7] If the message and the design of the message resonates with a younger audience, chances are that they will spread the word on behalf of the organization by displaying the stickers and postcards.

4. Interactivity

The “Cokespotlight” campaign and the “Obsessed with Breasts” campaign are both campaigns which allow the user to interact with the material that they are being presented. Many planners believe that by putting information on the web and allowing for input to be given via the web, it will make participation easier. It may make it easier, but unless the process is designed with a marketing approach it will not be any more interesting to the user. In fact, the process may become more difficult because the internet needs to “pull” the user towards it, whereas television “pushes” information on the user (Hoffert, 1998, 68). The internet is defined as a “pull” mechanism because the users “drive” the activity (Hoffert, 1998, 68). This means that it will be even more challenging to get people to the web and then keep them interested enough to read the material and then take action.

Both Adbusters and The Breast Cancer Fund are examples of advocacy groups which are turning to the web to organize their initiatives and provide a virtual headquarters where all of the information about the issue, facts and figures as well to provide opportunities to donate money, and provide information on how to get involved. [figure 8] The Breast Cancer Fund has a well designed web site which provides opportunities for the following: for people to get involved in their campaigns, to read information about the disease, to link to other websites which contain information about the disease and to buy products from companies which support TBCF.
Posters, stickers and interior and exterior transit advertisements provide reasonably priced methods for raising awareness about the campaign.

If the campaign message and accompanying image manages to resonate with its younger audience, chances are they will become walking advertisements for the campaign. It is evident that this is one of the hopes behind the Adbusters "Cokespotlight" campaign: the action page allows the user to download posters and stickers which promote the campaign.
On Saturday Nov. 20
VOTE in your city elections.
Need help? 873-7681

Figure 7 - Stickers by B.E.S.T.

These stickers created by Better Environmentally Sound Transportation served as environmental cues to remind young people in particular of the reasons why they should vote.
Getting involved in The Coke Challenge campaign is simple - everything you need is right here on the Action! pages.

Here’s one easy way to help launch the campaign:

Join our email list if you’d like to receive updates, fresh news about campaign strategy, and all campaign press releases.

email address:

Then you’ll never miss important updates, fresh news about campaign strategy, or the latest press release.

Ready for action? Check out the Campaign Toolkit and decide how you want to get involved. Click on the action you’ve chosen, then follow the instructions to download campaign resources. What you do

Figure 8. Website Page from Adbusters’ “Cokespotlight” campaign

Web Based Activism

Advocacy groups are turning to the web in increasing numbers. Web based activism makes sense for both the parties. Web based campaigns make it easy for people to get involved in the issue without leaving their homes and since many people cite time as a reason for not getting involved, the web, by its very nature has overcome the barrier of time. The challenge presented by the web is that all campaigns must be engaging in order to convince those not already interested in the issue to turn on the computer, go to the website, read the information and then take action.
5. Market Segmentation

Two of the four campaigns presented above are specifically targeting their campaigns to those in the 18-35 age group. None of the groups presented used geodemographics to understand their market because the cost of such data makes its use prohibitive. However, they do conduct formal and informal focus groups to test out their messages and to identify the issues that are important to their audience. The BC Endangered Species Coalition, which launched a web based campaign to encourage those between 18-34 to join their fight to save BC’s endangered species, like the COPE/GREEN party alliance, use the youth activists from Check Your Head as a focus group to test the presentation of their materials. It could be argued that since advocacy groups, such as the ones listed above are grass roots, or bottom up type organizations, they have a pretty good understanding about their support base. While, they could benefit from the understanding that the data would bring, the cost is prohibitive.
Chapter Four – Marketing the Public Participation Process

4.1 Recognizing the Barriers to Public Involvement

“The basic concept of public participation seems to be based on the desire to stimulate the involvement of the public in planning and development matters which concern the public.” (Oosthusuizen, 1984, 206) In order to establish a relationship with residents, the external and internal barriers to establishing the relationship must be considered in the design of the process.

There are several barriers which prevent people from getting involved, including:

A. Time
B. Transient Population
C. Lack of Confidence in the Local Government
D. The Process Isn’t Relevant to their lives

A. Time

People are increasingly time crunched. Families with two working parents are the norm. In the suburbs, especially, there are numerous young families trying to juggle the responsibilities of raising children, developing their careers, and maintaining and running a household. In fact, the average Canadian spends about 50 hours a week working (including commuting time) (Wood, 1999, 45). The average Canadian woman spends about 30 hours a week on housework, home maintenance, taking care of the children and volunteer work (Wood, 1999, 45). The time that is left over, people want to forget the pressures of their life and be entertained. The average Canadian also spent an average of 22.7 hours in front of the television (Wood, 1999, 106). Between 1986 and 1996 the market for entertainment services grew by almost 50% in real terms to reach $5.8 billion in 1996 (Earl, 1999, 3.1).
With so much time devoted to living the middle class life, it seems that there is very little time left to enjoy it, or step back and think or redefine it. The Vancouver Citizen Handbook estimates that participation rates for community activities are less than 5%.

**B. Transient Population**

Those between the ages of 18-34 are more likely to be renters and they tend to have few ties to the neighbourhood in which they live (Angus Reid, 1996, xii). They also place less value being part of a group. (Angus Reid, 1996, xii). This age group is more likely to define themselves by their lifestyle choices.

The typical approach used by many municipalities is to:

- contact people through community organizations,
- set up displays at community centres and the local libraries.

The material must demonstrate to residents that their involvement in the process is important because the process makes decisions about land uses which affect their lifestyle. Opportunities abound for the City to display its information in sports stores, climbing gyms and internet cafes, in an attempt to better reach the nexus generation.

**C. Lack of Confidence in the Local Government**

There may be a lack of confidence/awareness about the ability of government.

**D. The Process Isn't Relevant to their lives**

The process may not be relevant to their lives, or may not fit in with their lives, but the issues represented within the process are relevant to all residents.
4.1 Recognizing the Barriers to Using Marketing Techniques during the Public Participation Process

In addition to barriers that participants have to overcome to get involved in the process there are obstacles which those who want to employ marketing techniques must overcome, including:

A. Age of planners;
B. Attitudes of politicians;
C. Marketing as a culture specific to a certain segment of the population.

A. Age of Municipal Planners

Over time the average age of planners is getting younger as older planners retire. However, boomers will still be in positions of authority for some time. These senior planners must be convinced that it is necessary to make a special effort to reach those between the ages of 18-34. Approaches which combine new technologies will appeal to this age demographic and will appeal to both planners and politicians who view technology as progress.

B. Attitudes of the Politicians:

Politicians are typically concerned with the cost of advertising. This issue can be addressed by negotiated discounts for advertising, by getting advertising donated, or by finding methods to getting advertising for free. Politicians are also concerned about public participation at times. They like a well managed process and want assurances that the process will not get out of hand. The latter concern can be addressed by planners and a skilfully crafted consultation process that is focused, time limited and cost effective.
B. Marketing as a Culture Specific to a Certain Segment of the Population

Marketing campaigns are now expected to entertain as well as provide information about the product. This expectation is associated more strongly with young people. While the advertising messages produced by Adbusters and the COPE/Green party alliance were primarily designed to engage a younger audience, the design of the visuals will also interest those outside of the 18-34 demographic.

4.3 The Usefulness of Market Segmentation for the Public Participation Process

Often marketers of products practice market segmentation. Some will analyze the market and gear their marketing strategies to the market segment which will give them the biggest return for their advertising dollar. A municipality can not undertake the process of market segmentation in this form. It can however take advantage of information learned about the various segments of its population to design a process which takes into account the needs of the general population. This will often mean that a multi-dimensional approach must be used. For example to attract a younger audience it may be necessary to use more advertising and newer forms of communication to engage their interest. To ensure that the older population does not feel excluded by this process design, it may be necessary for more face to face contact and print information to be made available.

4.4 Recommendations for Changes to the Development of the Public Participation Process

Advertising Venues

Instead of relying solely on community television and community newspapers to deliver the message. Employing a street level campaign would achieve the objective of reaching a younger demographic but it wouldn't be limited to a younger demographic.
Adopting a marketing mindset ensure that the methods used from one process to another are not repeated because a marketing mindset states that the marketing strategy must be reflective of the population that it is targeting. What worked last year shouldn’t necessarily be tried this year. Carmen Mills of Emerald City Communication told me that after the success of their rave card there were other social groups asking her company to produce rave cards. The positive press coverage that they received from their election rave card from the press and the public signalled to other social advocacy groups that this was a successful medium to use to get their message out. One of the dangers is that once the “hook” gets old, it is no longer effective.

The Relationship
In the end it is about relationship building. Initiating a relationship with those of the “Nexus Generation” should be done on their terms, using their language and in their space. The COPE/GREEN party alliance gained entrance to clubs, haircutting salons, trendy clothing stores and other types of establishments which are important to the lifestyles of some of Vancouver’s young adult population. These are venues that would not have been as interested in carrying election material if it had been issued in its traditional form.

Once the relationship is initiated and developed it should be maintained. Planning departments usually do not have the money to spend in maintaining relationships. Yet, if planners "branded" the OCP and told people that certain changes they were witnessing in the cityscape were the result of the OCP, residents would have an easier time understanding the implications of the OCP.
4.5 Sample Process

The challenge of the thesis was to bring together social marketing techniques with the OCP process. Due to the nature of the OCP process, it was not possible to test out the application of social marketing techniques and assess their effectiveness. Instead, I have created a brief discussion of the merits of a hypothetical process which would include the characteristics which made the case studies successful.

*Street Level Campaign*

A street level campaign to get those between the ages of 18-34 involved. The primary sources of advertising would be exterior and interior transit advertisements and bus shelters.

*The Design of the Advertisements*

A series of advertisements: the first would be a blank with a question mark and the words “you decide”. Underneath would be a website address for the OCP participation process. The second advertisement in the series would be an advertisement for a virtual city hall meeting. Internet cafes, colleges, schools and people on their PC’s would be invited to discuss the issues. This method of meeting would be new, therefore it A. garner media attention B. create a culture around the process which speaks to young adults who are technologically literate. C. It would solve the problem of people not wanting to leave their homes to attend a meeting D. It would address those that feel uncomfortable attending public meetings and speaking up.

*Establishing the Relationship*

Because the method of the virtual town meeting would be a new idea in the lower mainland it would entail building relationships with the local schools, colleges, internet cafes and local libraries to get the program set up.
Educating the Public

To enter the virtual town meeting, each respondent must register, entering important demographic information. Then they will be led through a series of information sections which will educate and inform them of the issues. Once they have read this information they must answer a series of questions. If they don’t score higher than 50% they must go through the exercise one more time before being allowed in. The virtual town meeting will allow people to discuss issues online, or just simply observe.

Maintaining the Relationship

Out of the virtual town meetings a email discussion group could be generated using the email addresses of the participants. This would enable city staff to continue to develop the relationship between the original participants and planners. Email updates could be sent out quarterly letting people know how the OCP was shaping the City. These emails would not be text based, instead they would be combine text and photos to show people the before and after of the land use decision.
Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The adoption of a social marketing mindset will allow planners to break free from the mold which was created over the past 25 years. It will give planners permission to be creative in designing a process which is more responsive to the way people live today. For social marketers the key to creating an effective social marketing strategy is to understand the target market to achieve behavioural change. For planners the key to developing sustainable communities is to understand the communities that they are planning for. Hence, they both share a desire to relate to the public to achieve their goals.

To practice social marketing is to build relationships with your customers. It is about understanding the people that you are marketing to in order to build those relationships. It is about more than knowing basic demographic factors such as age, education and ethnicity. It is about understanding the attitudes which shape the way people live. The adoption of a social marketing mindset will help planners understand that behavioural change is a multi-stage process and that communication should be designed with that in mind. Right now, many planners believe what we do is important and serious and any reduction in the amount of information that we give the public will reduce complex issues to cute, virtually meaningless slogans. This attitude can be compared to the times when we were young and many of our parents forced us to eat our spinach because it is good for us. A social marketer would tell that parent to forget the spinach and find a vegetable with comparable nutritional value. Why not deliver the same amount of nutrients in a form which is more agreeable with the child? Is it not that the child is against nutritious food, but that the child doesn’t like the form those nutrients are delivered in. The same goes for planning. A social marketer working in planning would look for opportunities to entertain the public while educating them. This is exactly
the reason that traditional marketing has evolved into a form on entertainment while still serving as a source of information.

Planners are hesitant to adopt a marketing mindset because of time and budget restraints. Time is often lacking to develop new strategies. However, this thesis provides examples of four different campaigns, from which various parts of their strategies could be adapted and modified. Using the web as a virtual headquarters, is just one way that information related to the Official Community Plan process could cut down on the amount of time and resources needed to staff displays. The challenge in that case will be to draw people to the web and this will require turning the process into an event.

It is my hope that this thesis is inspirational to planners wanting to connect with a younger age demographic in a more meaningful way. Demand for the public’s attention is unrelenting and as planners I believe that we need to learn how to speak the language, or risk getting lost in the crowd.
Bibliography


Baxter, David. 1996. Hi-Cal Diets Required for Fit and Active Local Government. *Summary of a Presentation made to the 93rd Annual UBCM Convention.* Vancouver, BC.


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Interviews

Greg Buss  
Chief Librarian  
Richmond Public Library  
100-7700 Minoru Gate  
Richmond, BC  
Interviewed: February, 2000

Ken Hardie  
Communications Director  
Translink  
Interviewed: February, 2000

David Dunn  
Communications Manager  
ICBC  
Vancouver, BC  
Interviewed: March, 2000

Heather Griebin,  
Manager, Graphics Department  
Science World  
1455 Quebec Street  
Vancouver, BC  
Interviewed: January 2000

David Spira  
Director, Compusearch  
201-744 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC  
www.polk.ca  
Interviewed: January 2000

Marcel Labbe,  
Go Direct Marketing  
1600-1500 W. Georgia Street  
Vancouver, BC  
Interviewed: February 2000

Carmen Mills,  
Principal, Emerald City Communications  
Suite 205-425 Carrall Street  
Vancouver, BC  
Interviewed: January 2000

Michael Read, Pacific Rim Resources  
Seattle  
www.pacific-rim-resources.com  
Interviewed: January 2000
Bruce Rozenhart, Counterpoint Communications  
Suite 630 The Marine Building  
Vancouver, BC  
www.counterpointcom.com  
Interviewed: January 2000

Tom Moore, Proximity Designs  
David Laulainen, Proximity Designs  
Vancouver, BC  
www.proximity.com  
Interviewed: January 2000

Michael Rosen, Pacific Rim Resources  
Seattle, WA  
www.pacificrimresources.com  
Interviewed: January 2000

Neil Moncton  
Communications Manager  
Cope Party Election Campaign  
Chaos Consulting, Victoria  
Interviewed: March 2000
Appendix 1 Resource Directory

Adbusters
www.adbusters.org
powershift@adbusters.org a full service advocacy advertising agency which can facilitate the development of a social marketing campaign

The Ad Council
www.adcouncil.com

Emerald City Communications
604-688-4228

Proximity Design Group
www.proximity.bc.ca
604-684-8848

Impacs – Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society
www.impacs.org

Pacific Rim Resources
Social marketing and Planning Consultants
www.pacificrimresources.com

Health Canada
Literature on Health Promotion
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Market Segmentation Resources

Angus Reid Group
X-metrica: youth research division
www.angusreid.com

Compusearch: Micromarketing Data and Systems
744 West Hastings Street
Suite 201
Vancouver, BC
V6C 1A5
604-688-5355
www.comsearch.com
Appendix 2 Survey of Municipal Planners

Questionnaire for Municipal Planners

I am a student at the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia. I am currently working on my masters thesis, and this survey is part of my thesis work.

The purpose of administering this questionnaire is to learn about the strategies planning departments use to encourage public participation when developing an OFFICIAL COMMUNITY (OCP) for their city.

Please tell me about the process as it relates to the LAST Official Community Plan that you worked on.

1. Please describe the steps that you take to promote both the process and opportunities for participation to the public. Check all that apply.

   The local newspaper. Please describe methods used (i.e. informational insert, advertisements for open houses etc.)
   
   The advantages of this method are:
   
   The disadvantages of this method are:
   
Display Booths. Please list types of locations.
The advantages of this type of method are:

The disadvantages of this type of method are:

Open Houses. Please list types of locations.

The advantages of this method are:

The disadvantages of this method are:
Surveys. Please describe how they administered. Random Sample Surveys, Mail Out Surveys, etc.

The advantages of this method are:

The disadvantages of this method are:

Website. Please describe the type of information placed on the website and how the website is promoted.

The advantages of this method are:
The disadvantages of this method are:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Other than those listed above, please describe the methods that you use to promote the process:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. What were the constraints you experienced in designing the public process? Please check all that apply and circle the degree of influence it had on constraining the development of the public participation process. 1=Strong Influence, 5=Little Influence.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong Influence</th>
<th>Little Influence</th>
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<td>Budget</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Objectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens' Exposure to the Issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens' Understanding of the Issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In your opinion, does the average resident come to you already informed of the issues?

   No, not at all
   Somewhat informed
   Well informed
Please list some of the reasons for your answer:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. (a) In your opinion, what is the minimum percentage of informed residents which are required to be involved for a successful public participation process?

   0-25%
   26-50%
   51-74%
   75-100%

(b) What % of the population was involved in the last OCP process you worked on?

   ___%

(c) Has this increased or decreased over time? Why, or why not?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. If the process were designed differently, there would be more participation.

   True _____  False ______

   Please explain.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. In your opinion, what are the barriers which prevent people from being involved in the process?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
The surveys were sent out to planners in Surrey, Vancouver, Richmond, Coquitlam, Delta, Burnaby and New Westminster. The survey was also sent out planners via ScenerioPlus an electronic newsletter for planners, originating out of Manitoba.

Ten surveys were received. Five respondents were from inside the GVRD and the remaining four were from outside the lower mainland. One survey was answered by a policy analyst who reviews community plans for a provincial government to ensure that they are in compliance with the planning act and with provincial land use policies and has not worked directly on a process. Thus my reason for excluded that survey. The following is a list of comments made by the respondents.

1. Please describe the steps that you take to promote both the process and opportunities for participation to the public. Check all that apply.

The local newspaper. Please describe methods used (i.e. informational insert, advertisements for open houses etc.)

9/9 respondents used the newspaper as a means of communicating with the public.

Respondents used the newspaper to advertise events relating the to the OCP. 2/3 of respondents had informational articles or inserts.

Eight out of nine respondents listed some advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of this method are:
7/8 respondents stated that the advantage of using local newspapers is its wide distribution.

1/8 respondent stated that it was a dependable, regular source of information on municipal happenings.
2/8 respondents that cost of putting advertisements in the local paper was reasonable.

The disadvantages of this method are:
1/8 Newspapers are not delivered to apartments
2/8 Not everyone is interested in the news
2/8 Not everyone subscribes to the local paper
1/8 People often do not read advertisements
1/8 Costly, advertisements need to be repeated to be effective

Display Booths. Please list types of locations.
6/9 respondents used displays to communicate information to the public.
1/6 did not list locations used.
4/5 set up display in shopping malls, libraries and community centres.
1/5 set up displays at a home show and at a store front drop-in centre.
Advantages of Displays:
5/6 respondents answered this question
2/5 respondents noted that this method attracts people who might not normally attend public meetings
2/5 accessible locations
1/5 non confrontational

The disadvantages of this type of method are:
5/6 respondents answered this question
1/5 few people are interested in the displays
1/5 people at these locations aren’t interested in talking about land use planning
1/5 only attracts people who are already interested
1/5 expensive and time consuming to staff the displays (if they are staffed)

Open Houses. Please list types of locations.
7/9 respondents used open houses
1/7 did not list locations used
6/6 used community centres, schools and local libraries to host open houses
1/6 also used churches, union halls and theatre lobbies

The advantages of this method are:
5/6 respondents answered this question
5/5 respondents used this method because it was an informal, non confrontational method
2/5 respondent added that more learning on part of the resident and the planner occurred at open houses

The disadvantages of this method are:
5/6 respondents answered this question
1/5 respondents answered that it is difficult to convey all of the important issues
3/5 respondents stated that only the already interested attend
1/5 respondents answered that open houses are time consuming and costly
Surveys. Please describe how they are administered. Random Sample Surveys, Mail Out Surveys, etc.

8/9 respondents indicated that they use surveys during their OCP process

4/8 use scientific surveying techniques to ensure that their survey response is scientifically valid

8/8 make surveys available by leaving them next to displays and make them available during open houses

The advantages of this method are:

7/8 respondents answered this question

2/7 respondents stated that surveys were an easy method to obtain information

1/7 respondents stated that scientific surveys meant that a cross section of the public was heard from

3/7 respondents stated that surveys allowed planners to get a pulse on the issues in the community

1/7 respondents felt that the advantage of this method is that it allowed for anonymity

The disadvantages of this method are:

7/8 respondents answered this question

2/7 respondents stated that it is costly

1/7 respondents stated that it is time consuming

1/7 respondents stated that this method doesn’t allow for a learning approach

3/7 respondents stated that the response rate is often low

Website. Please describe the type of information placed on the website and how the website is promoted.

3/9 respondents used the City’s website during their public participation process as a source of information

1/9 did not use the website

5/9 stated that the website was not available at the time the OCP was being developed

The advantages of this method are:

2/3 respondents answered this question
2/3 stated that having a website allowed for information to be accessible and for a two way information flow.

1/2 respondents stated that this method takes advantage of increasing demand from the public for electronic access.

2/2 information can put accessed at any time, and the information can be updated regularly.

The disadvantages of this method are:

2/3 respondents answered this question.

1/2 stated that this method was very time consuming and may that the website may reach people that were already reached through traditional methods.

1/2 respondents stated that monthly updates were made available on the web.

What were the constraints you experienced in designing the public process? Please check all that apply and circle the degree of influence it had on constraining the development of the public participation process. 1=Strong Influence, 5=Little Influence.

Budget 2.77
Time 2.44
Political Objectives 3.25
Citizens' Exposure to the Issues 2.22
Citizens' Understanding of the Issues 2.22

3. In your opinion, does the average resident come to you already informed of the issues?

2/9 respondents did not answer this question

1/7 No, not at all
5/7 Somewhat informed
1/7 Well informed

Please list some of the reasons for your answer:

3/7 respondents did not answer this question.

The respondent who felt that the average citizen was not informed about the OCP process believed this to be the case because they used a area planning committee as their vehicle for public involvement outside of the public hearings.

2/4 respondents felt that the people who are informed are those who have first hand experience with the system.
1/4 those that get involved with the OCP process are those that have time to keep up with local issues, feel empowered to feel that their contribution is going to make a difference, and tend to be educated to enable them to become informed about the issues.

1/4 respondents felt that people are somewhat informed because the information that the city has been sending out about the process has been reaching them.

4. (a) In your opinion, what is the minimum percentage of informed residents which are required to be involved for a successful public participation process?
1/9 did not answer this question.
4/9 did not know the answer to this question
4/9 believed that the minimum percentage of informed residents for a successful participation process is between 0-25%
1/9 believed that the minimum percentage is between 51-74%
(b) What % of the population was involved in the last OCP process you worked on?
5/9 respondents did not answer this question
1/4 respondents answered 1%
1/4 respondents 10-15%
2/4 respondents answered 20%
(c) Has this increased or decreased over time? Why, or why not?
4/9 respondents did not answer this question
3/5 respondents that did answer this question believed that there was an increase in the number of people participating, because they went out of their way to get more people to participate
2/5 did not know.
5. If the process were designed differently, there would be more participation.
3/9 did not answer this question
1/9 did not know the answer to this question
Of the 5 respondents that answered this question,
3/5 believed this statement to be false
2/5 believed this statement to be true
Please explain.
One respondent stated that "throwing more money" at the process, would not get more people involved give the size of the community.

6. In your opinion, what are the barriers which prevent people from being involved in the process?
8/9 respondents answered this question. Respondents gave multiple answers. The most often cited answers were lack of time, lack of interest, not a priority, followed by language.