

SOCIAL MARKETING: TAKING US BEYOND 'AWARENESS RAISING' ON ALCOHOL HARMS

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Introduction: Social marketing is a behaviour change methodology used by public health to change or maintain people's behaviours. The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education has undertaken a project to determine how to design an evidence-based social marketing campaign to address risky alcohol consumption.

Approach: An audit of recent Australian health promotion social marketing campaigns, a review of established behavioural and social sciences theories, and analysis of national surveys of demographic, lifestyle, and harm data was undertaken. This was supported by semi-structured interviews with a range of subject matter experts.

Key Findings: This work and insights can be condensed into three key lessons for implementation. Firstly, it's clear that effective social marketing is a long term task, as it takes time to change behaviour. Secondly, it is vital to ensure that creative outputs and campaign messaging are aligned with the evidence. And finally, there's a need to incorporate multiple activities and levels of interventions within a social marketing campaign.

Discussions and Conclusions: A common mistake for public health organisations or governments is to skip straight to a campaign's creative development stage, or let marketing and design agencies dictate the approach with little or no recourse to the evidence-base. This project has determined key steps that should be followed by public health organisations, governments and policymakers when designing a social marketing campaign.

Implications for Practice or Policy: This project provides governments, advocates and health promotion officials with a review of social marketing methodology research, evidence-based advice about what works and what doesn't, and offers an alternative to traditional fear-based awareness raising campaigns.

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