

Marketing Plan for Public Health

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Introduction

Public health currently faces unprecedented challenges. It is no longer enough to protect the health of the public. The public health community must work to increase public awareness of the role it plays in our society and to garner support for this role. In 1999, the Kentucky Health Department Association (KHDA) established a marketing committee to address concerns about the image of local health departments and to develop a unified promotion campaign for public health services in Kentucky. Local health departments are thought to be a service only for the limited-resource segment of the community rather than an organization to protect the health of the entire community.

KHDA solicited a proposal from a public relations and marketing firm for the development of a marketing campaign to promote the public health services provided to Kentuckians through local health departments. The cost for this concept development (\$25,000) exceeded the KHDA resources available to the marketing committee. In 2001, KHDA approached the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute with a proposal for a Change Master Group of scholars to devote time and apply knowledge to the development of a marketing campaign. In April 2001, our group began work on this project.

Project Description

The project goal is to develop a marketing plan for use by local health departments to promote Kentucky Public Health. The primary purpose of the marketing plan is to raise public awareness about the services provided by public health organizations and professionals. Further, the plan should encourage public support for

funding to continue and expand public health efforts. Finally, the marketing campaign will educate and motivate Kentucky residents to adopt healthy behaviors.

Objectives/Methodology

The project objectives are:

- (1) to raise public awareness about the services provided by public health organizations and professionals
- (2) to encourage public support for funding to continue and expand public health efforts
- (3) to educate and motivate Kentucky residents to adopt healthy behaviors.

We conducted a survey of local health department directors to collect information about currently available marketing materials (i.e. brochures, pamphlets, posters, strategies, etc.). We conducted an Internet search of online marketing resources from other public health organizations in the United States. One campaign from Colorado served as a guide for identifying various public health marketing ideas and devising a format for key messages. A slogan and logo, “Working for You, Kentucky Public Health”, was then developed and made available for review by key stakeholders. Several different designs using this theme were posted to the KDHA Web site and emailed to all local health department directors for review and feedback. Based on this input, the Change Master group members reached a unanimous consensus on one design. This design and a presentation of the project were presented to the KHDA/Kentucky Public Health Association business meeting in late March 2002.

Project Timeline:

- September 2001: survey of local health department directors
- October 2001: review survey results and identify slogan & logo

- November 2001: develop materials for review by stakeholders
- December 2001: solicit input from stakeholders on design options
obtain estimates on cost of marketing items
- January 2002: applied for Good Samaritan Foundation Grant
summarize stakeholder input
survey KPHLI scholars
- February 2002: finalize slogan & logo
develop marketing sample kits
- March 2002: present proposed marketing plan to KHDA
- April 2002: distribute sample marketing kits
present Change Master project to KPHLI

In addition to the resources of time, knowledge and experience, and creativity provided by the Change Master group members and mentors, this project required funding to purchase sample marketing kits (i.e. notebooks with public service announcements, logos, buttons, bumper stickers, pens, and ordering information). Local health department directors, as members of KHDA, agreed to reimburse one mentor \$25 for each sample marketing kit. In addition, a proposal for funding was submitted to the Good Samaritan Foundation to provide additional support in the future for radio and television communications, billboards, and additional marketing materials.

This project clearly relates most directly to essential public health service number three, to inform, educate, and empower people about health issues. This service involves social marketing and targeted media public communication; providing accessible health information resources at community levels; active collaboration with personal health care

providers to reinforce health promotion messages and programs; and joint health education programs with schools, churches, and worksites.

Results/Limitations

The most striking limitations encountered in the completion of this project were the limited time available for group members to devote to the project and the necessity for in-person meetings to review marketing materials. However, the most critical limitation currently facing the project is budgetary constraints at local health departments. In order for this marketing campaign to be implemented throughout Kentucky, local health departments must now factor into their annual budget the necessary resources to purchase materials and access to channels of public communication. Without this final step, the project will not reach its full potential to impact Kentucky communities.

Conclusion

The public health community must work to increase public awareness of the role it plays in our society and to garner support for this role. The project goal was to develop a marketing plan for use by local health departments to promote Kentucky Public Health. A slogan and logo, “Working for You, Kentucky Public Health”, was developed and made available for review by key stakeholders. Sample marketing kits were developed and presented to the key stakeholder organization for review. This design and a presentation of the project were presented to the KHDA/Kentucky Public Health Association business meeting in late March 2002. Sample marketing materials and the final project report were presented at the April 2002 KPHLI graduation summit.

Leadership Development Opportunities

Lisa Pollock: “Being new to the health field, this whole experience became a learning tool for me. Attending the summits allowed me to enhance my training on leadership, learn the components of public health and to network with other individuals that I can use as resources. Before accepting my position of Finance Director, I had no prior experience with health departments except for getting immunized. I brought the perspective of the outsider to our project’s group. Did you know that at least 57% of the population cannot define public health and believe that it is for the lower income? I, too, had that idea. But that has changed. With this project, I want to help educate the public that public health is about protecting the population from disease and promoting healthy living conditions for everyone through policies and programs.”

Genie Prewitt: “This team project has provided numerous opportunities for growth as a student, employee, and scholar. It has been an energizing challenge to complete this project, meet deadlines, and attend the committee meetings as well as the uplifting summits. My goals included gaining more self-confidence when speaking to groups; gaining knowledge about public health infrastructure; and improving my computer skills. The Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute has provided improvement in all three, and has allowed me to gain a greater appreciation of the importance of networking, collaboration, and partnerships to improve the health of our communities.”

Janet Tietyen: “As I embarked on the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Forum Curriculum, my primary goals were to learn more about public health and the evaluation of public health programs. While I did not learn much during the year about program evaluation, I certainly learned some other things of great importance. My fellow 2001-2002 scholars have acquainted me with the wealth of services and expertise available through local, district, and state public health departments. This project has allowed me to learn more about social marketing and strategies to promote improved public health practices. This newfound knowledge and the development of relationships with other public health professionals will enhance my ability to serve as an effective public health partner.”

Judy McCrackin: “The change master project provided me with further opportunities to learn about what goes on in local health departments. I have come to appreciate the enormous mission of Kentucky Public Health and the wide number of programs that health departments provide. I have expanded my knowledge in the area of marketing and have grown from the entire experience by learning more about myself.”

Gracia Pruitt: “I have truly enjoyed this past year with the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute. The summits, homework assignments, and fellow scholars have all been enriching experiences. I have been able to determine what type of leader I am and have used this knowledge to improve my work performance, team building skills, and interpersonal skills. Special thanks goes to the people in my change masters group. You all are great people to work with, and I am glad I got to know you.”

References

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