



m ontana Model

What is the Montana Social Norms Project?

The Montana Social Norms Project, part of the Department of Health and Human Development at Montana State University, strives to strategically promote health, social justice, and community development.

Our innovative approach is to turn social science into social action with measurable results. Applied social science research, marketing, and new technologies are the central tools used by our Project to cultivate social change.

OF SOCIAL NORMS MARKETING

What is Social Norms Marketing?

Social norms marketing is an innovative and science-based method of health promotion. It seeks to improve health and safety by exploding commonly held myths about unhealthy behavior in a target group and communicating positive normal behavior for that group.

Social norms theory, which forms the basis of the social norms marketing approach, states that much of people's behavior is influenced by their perception of how other members of their social group behave.

All too often, these perceptions are incorrect. If unhealthy behavior is perceived to be normal in a social group, the social urge to conform will negatively affect overall behavior in that group. Alternatively, by educating a target group about positive behavior that is in fact the normal practice among their peers, research shows that behavior will be affected in a positive manner.

To employ an effective strategy of social norms marketing, social norms theory is applied to **social marketing techniques**. Messages are designed for

delivery through media and promotional campaigns that specifically meet the needs of a target population and promote accurate health norms.

The 7 Steps of the Montana Model

The following is a brief overview of the Montana Model of Social Norms Marketing from which the MOST of Us® Campaigns are directed. Although the steps are presented in a linear manner, implementation is a very dynamic process that involves operating within and between each of the steps simultaneously. This model was developed in 1998 by Dr. Jeff Linkenbach, director of the Montana Social Norms Project at Montana State University.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

1

Step 1 consists of planning considerations and environmental advocacy, both of which stand to guide the scope and direction of the campaign. Environmental advocacy entails creating a political, economic, and social atmosphere conducive to change.

BASELINE DATA

2

In **Step 2**, current and available data is analyzed to establish a baseline of data related to health behaviors and perceived health norms. The disparity between perceived behaviors and actual norms drives the social norms process.

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

3

Message development, **Step 3**, is a rigorous process that involves deriving a statistic from baseline data. The scope of the message is determined by the target population's readiness for change, their current behavioral practices, and normative perceptions.

MARKET PLAN

4

The creation of a marketing plan, in **Step 4**, begins by seeing things through the eyes of the target population. Traditional and non-traditional media approaches are assessed for their potential to reach the target population. The results of these assessments are incorporated into the campaign-specific plan.

PILOT TEST AND REFINE MATERIALS

5

In **Step 5**, normative messages and pilot materials are tested with the target population for believability and appeal. Focus groups, in particular, are a key resource for gathering input from the target audience.

IMPLEMENT CAMPAIGN

6

Campaign implementation, **Step 6**, consists of all the fundamental elements necessary to run the campaign on a daily basis. These elements include campaign fundamentals such as locally developed activities promoting the social norms message, distributing promotional items, and placing print and broadcast media messages.

EVALUATION

7

Step 7 is a continual evaluation of campaign effectiveness that ultimately drives the social norms marketing process, with the end goal being changed behavior within the target population. Qualitative and quantitative data are gathered, analyzed, and fed back into the campaign to refine its process and implementation.

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