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Promote Conservation Through an Effective Campaign

Changing human behavior is not easy! But, with the right tools, you can effect change over time. Whether you are designing an education and outreach campaign to get people to protect an endangered species, save energy, reduce waste, or conserve water, one thing remains the same: you have to be vigilant about your campaign.

Using two previously developed campaigns as examples, this publication walks you through **four steps** to help you create an effective campaign to change people's behavior. One campaign takes a comprehensive approach to protecting a group of endangered species and the other a less extensive approach to promoting rain barrel adoption. These two examples demonstrate different levels of complexity

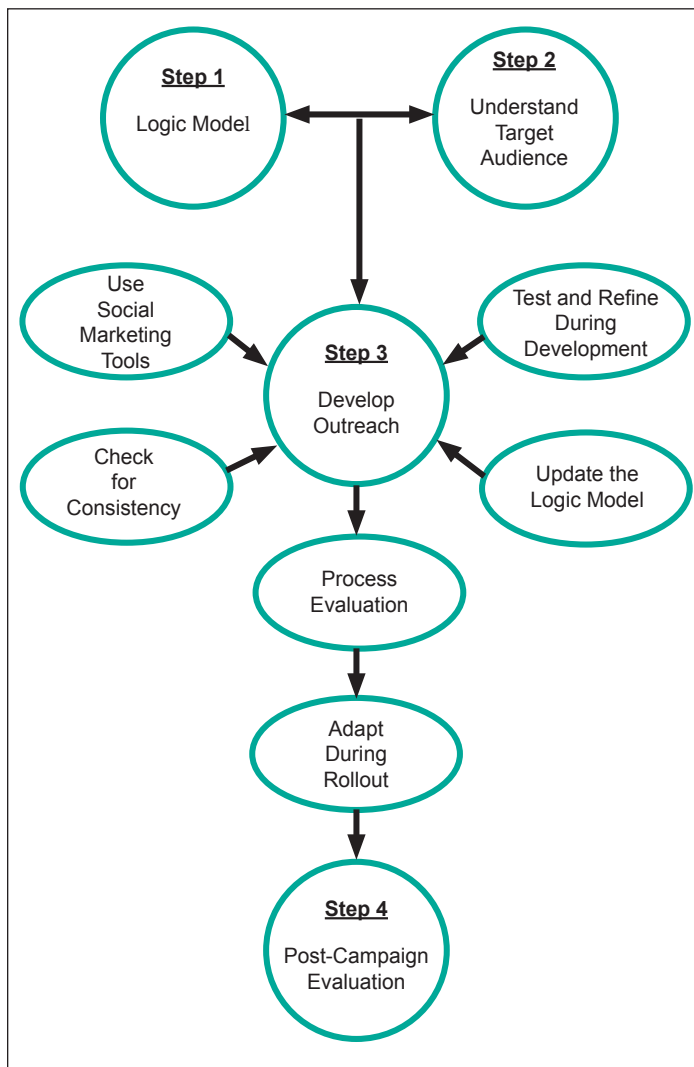that you can refer to as you create your own effective education and outreach campaign.

What is an education and outreach campaign, and how do I create one?

An education and outreach campaign is a program to inform the public about a given issue and to help motivate them to change their behaviors. Campaigns can take many forms. Their media platforms can be singular (e.g., online only) or multiple (e.g., online, print, mail, and in-person); they can target completely different audiences (e.g., school-aged children to the elderly); they can promote one or many behaviors; and they can address virtually any topic of interest or concern.

To create an effective campaign, we recommend the following four iterative steps and offer resources and examples to help guide you through the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating a campaign. These steps are:

1. Create a draft logic model.
2. Understand your target audience.
3. Develop and implement the outreach campaign.
4. Evaluate after the campaign.

Step 1 Logic Model

Step 2 Understand Target Audience

Use Social Marketing Tools

Test and Refine During Development

Step 3 Develop Outreach

Check for Consistency

Update the Logic Model

Process Evaluation

Adapt During Rollout

Step 4 Post-Campaign Evaluation

Step 1. Create a Draft Logic Model. Logic models provide a way to work through a problem and are commonly used by Extension specialists, business managers, and other professionals to ensure effectiveness of a project. By creating a logic model, you walk yourself and your collaborators through the development of the project with a focus on what the desired outcomes will be.

Expert Tip: Working with a few people to draw a logic model on a white board can be a helpful way to draft project steps and goals.

Building an effective campaign is just like creating any other project. The first step is knowing where you want to go. With direction in mind, logic models are frequently written from right to left. Before you create a catchy slogan or design dazzling logos, you must first think about what you want to accomplish. Ask yourself first, "Is an outreach and education campaign appropriate for addressing the problem at hand?" If yes, then ask yourself, "What is the purpose of my campaign? What are my goals and objectives?"

There are three types of outcomes in a logic model: short-term, medium-term, and long-term. In the first year of your campaign, you hope to accomplish your short term outcomes. Short-term outcomes involve changing the target audience's awareness and attitudes. It is unrealistic to expect your target audience to change their behaviors in the first year of a campaign. The medium-term (2–5 years) is when you expect to see changes in people's behaviors and practices. Long-term outcomes (greater than 5 years) include changes in environmental conditions.

Included on the next page is a typical logic model. Keep in mind, however, that not all logic models have to look like the provided example. While the one pictured here is useful, do not feel constrained to use only this or other published templates. The main purpose of a logic model is to ensure that the activities you plan will actually lead to long-term, desirable outcomes.

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	*Participation*	*Short*	*Medium*	*Long*

Assumptions	External Factors

Ccredit: UWisc-Extension

Once you have determined your outcomes, you should identify your target audience (you can have multiple audiences!). Who interacts with and impacts the environmental resource that is your focus? After, and only after, you have developed your outcomes and identified your target audience, do you develop activities.

Keep in mind that different materials, messages, and programs are required for different audiences. Always think about activities and materials in relation to your desired outcomes. Every single activity and material you develop should first lead to a short-term change in awareness and attitudes. Then, think about how your short-term activities and materials lead into medium-term changes in behaviors and practices. Finally, connect your medium-term activities and materials to your long-term outcome of improving environmental conditions.

Expert Tip: If you are unable to identify the relationship between activities and outcomes at any point in your logic model, your campaign will lose its effectiveness.

The great thing about using a logic model is that it allows for adaptive management throughout the entire campaign. By referencing your logic model, you can assess your campaign midstream and ask, "Is it working? Are we changing people's awareness and attitudes?" If not, you won't change behaviors, and you won't improve environmental conditions.

Expert Tip: Be sure to consult with project partners who are not directly involved with the campaign's development and ask for feedback on the campaign's accuracy and efficacy. It is easy for those developing to the campaign to miss areas of ineffectiveness due to their closeness with the project.

Always maintain the logical progression of activities and outcomes.

Step 2. Understand Your Target Audience. Once you have drafted your logic model and have identified your outcomes, but before you fully develop your activities, you need to understand your target audience(s). Ask yourself:

• Who are they?

• What are their issues and concerns?

• How entrenched and tightly held are their current beliefs and attitudes?

• What are their current behaviors?

• What costs do they perceive with changing their behavior?

• What do they know?

You have to know what your audience knows before you tell them what they don't know. Depending on your audience's current beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, change may be a slow-going process and the effort to effect change may be great. Taking the time to understand your audience helps you improve your logic model and, therefore, improve your campaign.

So how do you find out more about your target audience and what they know? There are formal ways to investigate your audience: randomly sampled surveys sent through the mail, focus groups, and interviews. There are also more informal ways, such as just going out and talking to people. A third party is not required to collect data about your audience and you can use informal methods of data collection.

> **Expert-Tip:** Feed people! If you're hosting a focus group or a small town hall meeting and you have the budget to feed people, do it. It's a great way to get people in the door and keep them engaged.

You don't have to be a trained facilitator to organize a meeting. It is better to be untrained and to meet informally with members of your target audience than to not do any investigating at all. You'll be amazed at the things you learn. After you learn about your target audience, you will want to revisit your logic model to ensure that your planned activities will be effective at accomplishing your desired outcomes.

Step 3. Develop and Implement the Education and Outreach Campaign. When you created your logic model, you started to formulate ideas for activities and materials. This step involves further development of these activities and materials. As noted in the previous step, your logic model should be updated accordingly.

There is no end to the creativity you can apply in developing your education and outreach campaign. Campaigns can include:

• A mascot to draw people to your table or booth at community festivals.

• Signs with your campaign message placed in yards throughout a neighborhood to promote social norms.

• Community meetings where you talk about the importance of your campaign and ask people to sign pledges.

Be sure to carefully consider finances and resource availability before ordering materials. All materials and activities should relate to your target audience. Whether your campaign is targeted toward one or multiple audiences, you want to make sure your materials and activities are appropriate. You want members of your target audience to know exactly what to do, and also when, where, and how to do it. Because Step 3 is the heart of your campaign, we divided it into five sub-steps to make it easier to get everything done.

Update logic model: Remember that every message and every promoted behavior should match an outcome in your logic model. To achieve the best match between specific messages and desired outcomes, meet and consult with your campaign collaborators, give your audience specific "calls to action," and make it is easy for them to engage in those actions. For example, the message "don't waste energy" is too vague, but if you tell people "turn off lights when you leave a room" or "don't idle your car," your message is much clearer. As you develop activities, make sure to update your logic model.

Use social marketing tools: The same types of marketing tools that are used to sell commercial goods can be used to sell conservation. We recommend using community-based social marketing (CBSM) as a toolkit when designing your campaign. Dr. McKenzie-Mohr, a leading expert in conservation psychology, hosts workshops and has written various books on how to use the principles of CBSM for conservation campaigns. A free, online version of McKenzie-Mohr's book, *Fostering Sustainable Behavior*, is available at http:www.cbsm.com. McKenzie-Mohr suggests prompts, social norms, and commitments as tools to help people engage in the positive behaviors promoted by your campaign.

Test and refine during development: Get feedback on all of your campaign materials and activities. Make sure initial ideas, sketches, and designs are reviewed by members of your target audience. Engaging with members of your target audience not only helps with the development of your materials, but also helps with the distribution of campaign materials and the success of planned activities. If the target audience feels included in the early stages of a campaign, then they are more likely to help you distribute your final materials and participate in campaign activities.

Check for consistency: To create an effective education and outreach campaign, your target audiences need to hear and see the same messages over and over. If you maintain consistency throughout your campaign, people are much more likely to remember what you told them. As campaigns get developed, it is common for inconsistencies to emerge in language, designs, web addresses, and recommendations. It is important to double- and triple-check everything before finalizing!

Adapt during rollout: Whether called process evaluation or adaptive management, the work of evaluating the effectiveness of what you are doing is frequently overlooked. But **evaluation during the lifecycle of your project**, is critical to your campaign's effectiveness. Along the way, ask yourself "Is this working?" and if you find some things aren't working, ask "Why not?" It is easy to get caught up in the fun parts of designing and implementing a campaign and to lose sight of what you were originally trying to accomplish. As you assess your messages and materials, keep referring to your logic model. Always ask yourself, "Is this activity/message helping us accomplish our short term outcomes?" Be ready to adapt to changing circumstances.

> **Expert Tip:** Sometimes you have to do things you didn't originally plan to do. Situations may arise that require additional information or different actions to be included in your campaign.

Step 4. Evaluate After the Campaign. There is an additional type of evaluation you can do, and although it is not required, it is recommended if you wish to quantifiably measure the effectiveness of your campaign and improve similar efforts in the future. To reliably evaluate your campaign after its completion, you have to conduct pre-campaign research when you're investigating your target audience. When you're researching your target audience, create metrics by which to measure their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. After your campaign has ended, you can use those same metrics to compare any changes that occurred as a result of your efforts.

Examples of Effective Education and Outreach Campaigns

Example A. Heart of the Tippy

The Heart of the Tippy campaign was designed by a team at Purdue along with partners at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources: Division of Fish and Wildlife to raise awareness about the imperilment of native freshwater mussels in the Tippecanoe River located in northcentral Indiana.

Step 1. Create a Draft Logic Model. The first step was to create the logic model and identify all of the campaign's goals. The short-term goals were to raise awareness about the existence of six federally listed species of mussels in the Tippecanoe River and to increase positive public attitudes toward the mussels and their conservation. The medium-term goal was to promote behaviors that are beneficial to mussels. The long-term goal was to reduce negative human impacts related to the mussels in the Tippecanoe River so that populations of the six species no longer need to be listed as federally endangered or threatened.

Step 2. Understand Your Target Audience. Before any campaign materials were developed, the team of researchers at Purdue designed and mailed surveys to over 1,000 residents living along the Tippecanoe River. The team also spoke with nearly 400 people who visited the river at public access sites, parks, and canoe rental locations.

Data from these in-person surveys and mailed questionnaires revealed that most people had no idea that the Tippecanoe River supports federally listed species of freshwater mussels. Survey data also showed that despite a lack of awareness, public attitudes toward the mussels and their conservation were generally very positive. Therefore, campaign materials needed to focus on raising awareness about the existence of the mussels and what to do when one is found. The campaign did not need to focus on mitigating negative attitudes toward the mussels. Four main audiences were identified through this baseline data collection: landowners, anglers, children, and visitors to the river.

Step 3. Develop and Implement the Education and Outreach Campaign. The development of the Heart of the Tippy campaign was guided by the principles of CBSM. A class of four Purdue undergraduate students created designs for the campaign logo, mascot, superhero mussel characters, brochures, and other promotional items. These designs were presented at a stakeholder meeting at the Pulaski County Public Library in Winamac, Indiana. Landowners, employees from IDNR and USFWS, local business owners, and other stakeholders were invited. Those who attended provided critical feedback on the campaign materials and messages.

Further testing took place at Purdue's Spring Fest (an annual university festival) to gauge how well some of the materials and ideas worked with children and parents. Pilot testing for a lesson plan based on the campaign to be used in local elementary schools occurred at a local church to make sure the lesson plan met objectives. Using all of this feedback, the team at Purdue hired a graphic design artist to finalize the materials. Staff members in the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources also created and cleaned up campaign components. Below is a final list of all materials designed for the Heart of the Tippy campaign audiences:

Anglers
  • Informational brochures
  • Prizes (floating keychains and bobbers)
Kids
  • Mighty Mussel Mania seek-and-find game
  • Placemats for local restaurants, lesson plan
Recreators and visitors
  • Interpretive signs for parks and public access sites
River residents
  • Yard signs
  • Postcards

All
  • Website (http://www.HeartoftheTippy.org)
  • Messages (Don't Pick Me Up, Don't Litter, Babies Go Back, Forget the Fertilizer, and Carry Your Canoe/Kayak)
  • Stickers (logo, Mighty Mussels, "Carry Your Canoe/Kayak")
  • Mascot/mussel costume
  • Informational brochures for general public

Throughout the process of developing all of these materials, the team at Purdue was very careful to keep all logos, messages, and colors consistent, especially as new items were created.

During the summer of 2015, the team at Purdue took their materials to various community events and festivals. Visitors to the campaign booth were excited about the information, but one issue kept surfacing. In the summer of 2014, there was controversy when water levels in a lake on the Tippecanoe River dropped after outflow from a dam was increased to raise river levels for mussels. The Purdue team was advised by project partners to not engage with this issue, but it quickly became clear that the public needed more information. The campaign team decided to adapt to these changing circumstances and an FAQs sheet was created and made available on the website and as a paper flyer at events. Instead of ignoring the issue that interested so many people, the campaign team realized they needed to address the conflict so that people asking about the lake/dam situation could interact with the campaign.

Step 4. Evaluate After the Campaign. Extensive evaluation of the Heart of the Tippy campaign will be conducted through mailed questionnaires and in-person surveys to replicate the baseline data. These surveys will assess which, if any, materials and events respondents saw and/or attended. Changes in attitudes and behaviors will also be assessed. The relationship between attitudinal and behavioral changes and campaign materials and events will be statistically analyzed to see whether or not the campaign impacted public perceptions of and behaviors related to the federally listed mussels. The evaluation of this campaign will be used to improve future campaigns involving wildlife conservation.

Learning from Help the Hellbender

Researchers hope the evaluation of the Heart of the Tippy campaign will show similar results as a previously developed conservation campaign for the eastern hellbender, a rare and endangered species of giant salamander. Evaluation of the Help the Hellbender campaign showed that the more outreach and education activities and materials people were exposed to, the more likely they were to have positive attitudes toward hellbenders. Evaluation also showed a statistically significant increase in awareness, as more people reported hearing about hellbenders after the campaign than before. Additionally, after outreach and education efforts, significantly more people reported that they would release a hellbender if they caught one.

Example B. Wabash River Enhancement Corporation's Rain Barrel Campaign

The goal of this project was to promote rain barrel adoption and maintenance of rain barrels over time in the Greater Lafayette, Indiana, area. Rain barrels are an urban best management practice (BMP) for reducing stormwater runoff. Having a rain barrel is one way urban and suburban residents can positively impact water quality in their local watershed. This project was developed by the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation (WREC) with assistance from Purdue University.

Step 1. Create a Draft Logic Model. The short-term goal of this project was to raise awareness about what rain barrels are and why residents should use them. The medium-term goal of this project was to advocate for the installation and maintenance of rain barrels in the watershed. Long-term goals focused on widespread adoption of rain barrels and improved water quality in this watershed.

Step 2. Understand Your Target Audience. An extensive survey of urban residents was conducted in 2010 to determine residents' awareness and interest in water quality and a variety of BMPs including rain barrels. The results showed positive attitudes towards water quality and a high awareness of rain barrels. There were, however, low adoption rates. Survey results indicated that people did not know other people who used rain barrels, had never seen a demonstration, had little or no information about the practice, and resisted the personal out-of-pocket expenses. Therefore, the campaign also needed to make rain barrel use more visible and help with expenses.

Step 3. Develop and Implement the Education and Outreach Campaign. The education and outreach subcommittee at WREC launched a campaign in 2012 based on survey data. WREC's education committee decided to design signs to accompany rain barrels. The goal of the signs was to create a social norm in the community that rain barrels are a good thing to have. WREC provided rain barrel demonstrations and workshops, and created informational postcards that were distributed throughout the local community to raise awareness about how to get rain barrels. WREC also developed a program that helped homeowners purchase rain barrel packages for only $25. WREC's website also included resources on building your own rain barrel, installing your rain barrel, and winterizing your rain barrel. In conjunction with the Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District, WREC offered free consultation services for technical assistance with rain barrels and other targeted BMPs. It was clear early-on that this campaign was working, because many people were buying rain barrels and installing signs. There was no need to adapt the program during roll-out.

Step 4. Evaluate After the Campaign. From 2014 to 2015, a team from Purdue evaluated the adoption and maintenance of rain barrels in the community. WREC's Watershed Management Plan (2011) set a goal of installing 500 rain barrels by 2016. Evaluation showed that as of 2015, 629 rain barrels have been installed. Assessment of maintenance revealed that residents in the Lafayette-West Lafayette area who installed both the rain barrel and the sign had significantly higher scores than those who only installed the rain barrel and not the sign. The difference between those who installed signs and those who did not suggests that installing signs may improve rain barrel maintenance. Initially WREC, with assistance from graduate students, installed signs at properties for homeowners. In 2013, WREC shifted to handing out signs with rain barrel purchases, but not everyone purchasing a rain barrel took a sign. The evaluation suggests that it is a worthwhile investment to install signs for homeowners. Evaluation of this campaign was also used to understand why residents initially installed rain barrels and what motivated them to maintain the rain barrels over time. These insights can be used to increase efficacy of current and future campaigns aimed at promoting the usage of rain barrels and other urban best management practices.

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Summary

Effectively communicating information and changing people's behaviors is a complex task. The steps, resources, and examples we've outlined in this publication are meant to help you during the development of your campaign. Your outreach and education plan can be simple—or very complex. The Heart of the Tippy example demonstrates how to rigorously build and extensively evaluate a large-scale outreach campaign. WREC's rain barrel campaign illustrates how to design an outreach and education campaign following all four steps, but at a smaller scale. Please visit the websites listed in the References section for more information about the programs and resources discussed here and to read more about the evaluation of WREC's rain barrel initiative and of the hellbender campaign.

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