
Encouraging SNAP Shopper Participation at Utah Farmers Markets

A Best Practices Guide

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Preface

This document is a best practice guide on how to create a social marketing campaign that advertises health-related programs to populations with low incomes, specifically participants of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



This guide's steps were compiled during background research for advertising acceptance of SNAP benefits using Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards and the Double Up Food Bucks (Double Up) program offered at farmers markets throughout Utah. Information in this guide will

expand marketing campaigns across Utah to promote farmers markets already accepting SNAP benefits, especially to minority and low-income populations. The information, however, may be generalized to other health/food programs and to populations with low incomes in other states.

Typically, empirical evidence published in scientific journals from social marketing campaigns focuses on behavioral or knowledge-based outcomes to rate effectiveness rather than studying marketing elements and practices of the campaign. Discussion of the marketing elements exist most often in other publications, including annual reports, results of previous campaigns, and best practice guides published in other states. Freedman et al. confirmed limited published data on social media campaign practices in a 2016 literature review. This best practice guide seeks to add to the literature by compiling evidence-based information on how to use marketing elements and practices to build a social marketing campaign for farmers markets targeted to individuals with low incomes.

Social Marketing Defined

Social marketing is a type of marketing that focuses on influencing behavior to “improve public health, prevent injuries, protect the environment, contribute to communities, and... enhance financial wellbeing” (Lee & Kotler, 2020, p. 6). It focuses on rewarding good behavior instead of punishing bad behaviors or using coercive tactics to change behavior (Lee & Kotler, 2020). In order to change a specific behavior, social marketers might need to change knowledge or beliefs about the behavior (Lee & Kotler, 2020). In simpler terms, social marketing focuses on making a desired behavior seem fun, easy, and popular to the target audience (Smith & Strand, n.d.).



Farmers markets could use social marketing campaigns to encourage individuals who are SNAP-eligible to shop at farmers markets for fruits and vegetables (Childers et al., 2017; Leone et al., 2012; Skizim et al., 2017). Farmers market managers can work with volunteers or staff, including the person who oversees advertising for the market, to create a marketing team of one to three people. The size of the team may vary depending on the communication needs of that particular market. The Double Up program is an example of a reward for the healthy behavior of buying

more fresh produce and contributing to the local farming community. Using appropriate marketing materials may address further barriers to shopping frequently at farmers markets.

Develop a social marketing plan using the following 10 steps:

1. Describe the desired behavior in the context of the promoted program.
2. Conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis.
3. Learn about the target audience.
4. Set objectives and goals.
5. Identify barriers, motivators, and competition to the desired behavior.
6. Craft a desired positioning statement.
7. Develop a strategic marketing mix.
8. Outline a plan for monitoring and evaluation.
9. Establish a budget and find funding sources.
10. Complete an implementation plan.

These steps are outlined in detail throughout this best practices guide.

Step One Describe the desired behavior in the context of the promoted program

The first thing to do when designing a social marketing program is to **understand the social issue** (behavior) and **identify the company or program to address it**. Once identified, ensure all marketing efforts addressing the social issue align with the company's/program's mission statement. A mission statement communicates an organization's purpose. It should be written using everyday language and include the objectives and values of the organization (Lee & Kotler, 2020). **Ensuring the new marketing efforts are in line with the location's purpose creates a mutually beneficial relationship between the social marketing team and its sponsoring location.**



In promoting farmers markets to populations with low incomes, the ultimate behavioral objective is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption while also encouraging community involvement. The farmers markets are the avenue used to aid in the behavior change. Thus, the social marketing should align with the mission statement of the farmers market. The mission statement of the Cache Valley Gardeners Market provides an example: "The mission of Cache Valley Gardeners Market is to educate consumers about sustainable agriculture and healthy foods, provide a source of revenue for local farmers and artisans, and create a vital community gathering place for all ages" (Mission

of Cache, 2019). The social marketing goal of increasing consumption of produce and community involvement resonates with the mission statement of Cache Valley Gardeners Market.

As an additional note for context of the farmers markets, it is important to know if programs are in place to offer financial assistance for individuals with low incomes such as accepting SNAP benefits and incentive programs like Double Up. If these are not yet available, refer to resources such as farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap for help setting up a system to accept EBT benefits like SNAP.

Step Two Conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

A situation analysis identifies the factors and forces in the internal and external environment that would impact the marketing goal (Lee & Kotler, 2020). This can be done through conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that can be controlled by the organization implementing the social marketing strategy. They should consider available resources, expertise, management support, current alliances and partners, and reputation (Lee & Kotler, 2020). The opportunities and threats are external factors beyond the control of the company and marketing team. Some categories of external factors include cultural, technological, natural, demographic, economic, political, and legal opportunities and threats (Lee & Kotler, 2020).

For farmers markets, the marketing goal is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and community participation using the Double Up program and SNAP benefits. A brief example of SWOT analysis is listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis for Patrons with Low Income Purchasing Produce at Farmers Markets

SWOT	Example for SNAP and Double Up purchasing at farmers markets
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market staff, including employees of local business, are trained in accepting Double Up tokens (Freedman et al., 2016; Hauges, Childers et al., 2016).• Market has information booth with friendly staff to direct customers (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).• Farmers markets are both accessible by bus route and have convenient parking available.• Market itself is comfortable for public: restrooms, handwashing facilities, trash bins, shade available (Hall & McMurray, 2015).• Entertainment and events available at farmers markets but not at many other food shopping locations (Snow & Benedict, 2003).• Maps and signage can make it easy to locate booths to exchange EBT benefits for market tokens (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).

Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ability to serve diverse customers due to language barriers (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Local Food Research Center, 2012b). • Additional bookkeeping required by market staff to track program. • Lack of interest from some vendors. • Must renew funding for matching dollars at end of each grant period. • Limited hours of operation. • Farmers markets in some communities are very small. • Limited booth space designated for accepting SNAP benefits. This can take up wanted space in a small market and could also make some shoppers using SNAP feel singled out as low-income. • Location of farmers market may have inconsistent access to electricity or telephone service to operate the EBT card machine (Hall & McMurray, 2015).
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local agencies, nonprofits, and education centers may be willing community partners, if not currently involved (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). • The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) program is a potential partner that already knows and serves the low-income audience. • Grant money is available to support funds matching for Double Up program. • Customers may be interested in healthy behaviors (Garrity et al., 2018). • The general public accepts farmers markets.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers may not want to change current eating and/or shopping habits (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018). • Recipients of SNAP benefits may lack awareness of Double Up program at farmers markets (Savoie Roskos et al., 2017). • Perception of easier and less expensive shopping at a grocery store (Savoie Roskos et al., 2017; Skizim et al., 2017; Local Food Research Center, 2012b). • High calorie foods with longer shelf lives (compared to fruits and vegetables) are more conveniently available (Hampson et al., 2009; Wakefield et al., 2010).

Step Three Learn about the target audience

A description of the primary target audience's characteristics is needed in the social marketing plan. Characteristics that can be included are demographics and size of the target audience, geographic location, related behaviors, and psychographics (classifying people by their attitudes) (Lee & Kotler, 2020). For the readers of this best practices guide, this target audience will most likely be a local population with low income.



To begin, research the demographics of the target population to know what kind of people will be reached. Generally, race, ethnicity, and relative age are easily found as part of census records. If available, income status, education level, employment status, and family size are other useful demographic characteristics to understand while designing a marketing plan (Lee & Kotler, 2020). Using QuickFacts from the U.S. Census (see URL) allows easily searched demographics by county. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218>. For a population with low income, there are fact sheets published specifically on recipients of SNAP benefits. Find information by state among resources published by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (see URL). <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-state-by-state-data-fact-sheets-and-resources>. The United States Department of Agriculture publishes similar statistics as well.

For Utah in 2017, 206,299 (7%) residents used SNAP benefits (Nchacko & Lexin, 2013; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019). The demographic averaged across congressional districts 1-4 are reported in Table 2.



Table 2: Demographic Profile of SNAP Households, Utah Congressional Districts 1-4, 2017 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019)

Characteristic	Percentage of SNAP households
Race: White	81.2%
Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino	19.8%
Households with children (≥1 member(s) under age 18)	65.8%
Households with elders (≥1 member(s) age 60+)	26.6%
Unemployed in past 12 months	13.0%
One employed individual in household	45.2%
More than one employed individual in household	41.8%

From this Utah population data, effective marketing strategies would ideally reach families, seniors, and the working class, and be accessible to the Latino/Hispanic population.

Step Four Set objectives and goals

Before setting goals, evaluate the behavior addressed by the social marketing campaign. The goal can be to accept, reject, modify or abandon a given behavior (Lee & Kotler, 2020). Then, set knowledge and belief objectives that will lead toward the chosen behavior. Knowledge objectives include information or facts you want your primary, target audience to be aware of (Lee & Kotler, 2020). Belief objectives relate to your primary, target audience's attitudes or feelings about your topic (Lee & Kotler, 2020).

It may take additional research to develop appropriate knowledge and belief objectives. In the farmers market promotion, several studies were reviewed to evaluate the current knowledge and beliefs about farmers markets accepting SNAP benefits. Figure 1 lists statistics identified from reviewing research related to SNAP awareness.

Figure 1: Farmers Market Awareness by Individuals Eligible for SNAP

Overall, studies reported low awareness of local farmers markets and their incentive programs.

- 73% of respondents did not know SNAP benefits were accepted (Skizim et al., 2017).¹
- 77% of respondents did not know about the incentive discounts that coupled with SNAP benefits (Skizim et al., 2017).
- 63% of respondents with low incomes had never attended a farmers market (compared to 27% of those with mid to high incomes) (Skizim et al., 2017).
- 22% of respondents (both those who had and had not attended before) reported a higher difficulty shopping at a farmer's market than a grocery store (Skizim et al., 2017).
- 59.2% of participants did not know there was a farmers market in town even though they each lived within a 1-mile radius of the farmers market (Freedman et al., 2017).²

¹Skizim et al, 2018. This research was conducted in New Orleans, Louisiana. Participants filled out a 23-item questionnaire that asked about farmers market awareness and internet/media access. Fifty surveys were returned and analyzed.

²Freedman et al, 2019. Trained recruits in Ohio performed one-on-one outreach with personal connections and at social services booths and community centers within one mile of any of three intervention farmers markets. From nine recruits, 1138 coupons were distributed through the trained mentors, and 158 were redeemed.



In addition to the studies in Figure 1, interviews held among Utah participants eligible for SNAP identified awareness and convenience as the most influential factors for easy use of farmers markets (Savoie-Roskos, 2016). The behavioral target is to increase fruit and vegetable sales and consumption and increase involvement in community markets. Using the data, an appropriate knowledge objective would be to increase awareness of the Double Up program among individuals in Utah receiving SNAP benefits. Similarly, an appropriate beliefs objective may be for individuals using SNAP to change their current belief that produce at the farmers market is more expensive than at a grocery store (Local Food Research Center, 2012b). These goals would both lead to the chosen behavioral target.

Next, write quantifiable, measurable goals relevant to the objectives. The goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time sensitive (SMART). These goals

will impact budget and determine the evaluation measures included later in the social marketing plan (Lee & Kotler, 2020).

An example of a SMART goal addressing the knowledge objective above would be to reach 1,000 individuals across Utah with marketing materials promoting the Double Up over the summer of 2019. This is specific (which materials and where), measurable (1,000 individuals), attainable (1,000 individuals is realistic and reachable), relevant (it addresses the objective), and time sensitive (over the summer of 2019). The evaluation plan would revisit this goal to determine if 1,000 individuals were reached through tracking views on internet marketing materials and confirming effect on a sample through surveys.

Step Five Identify barriers, motivators, and competition to the desired behavior

Before expecting a target audience to stand up and change a behavior, it is important to understand what stands in their way. Barriers can either be real or perceived but both prevent the target audience from committing to the target behavior. Brainstorm and research the motivators and barriers of the target audience related to the chosen behavioral objective (Lee & Kotler, 2020).

It is important to remember that barriers can extend far beyond cost in a population with low income. Research has found that even in a free community market, proportionately less customers with low income attended than other income classes (Lawrence et al., 2018). Some of the possible barriers between individuals receiving SNAP benefits and purchasing fresh produce for consumption at farmers markets are listed below.

- Times of the market and/or literal location (Garrity et al., 2018; Baxter, 2017).
- Time to reach the market (Bryant et al., 2001; Hauges et al., 2016).
- Transportation issues (Lawrence et al., 2018; Local Food Research Center, 2012a; Snyder et al., 2004).
- Time to shop at the market (Freedman et al., 2016).
- Energy navigating a new situation (Freedman et al., 2016).
- Concerns about quality of food (Garrity et al., 2018; Hampson et al., 2009).
- Effort making food decisions (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018).
- Long-standing food habits (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018).
- Effort learning about unfamiliar foods (Hauges et al., 2016).

- Forms of payment accepted (is the market cash only?) (Freedman et al., 2016).
- Lack of information on how to use benefits at the market (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Concerns about overdependence on outside sources or other stigmas (Bryant et al., 2001).
- Language/cultural barriers (Bryant et al., 2001; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Social perceptions (too expensive, for the wealthy, only specialty items) (Local Food Research Center, 2012b).
- Concerns about unfriendly staff (Bryant et al., 2001).
- Fear of discriminatory attitudes from market staff and other customers (Colasanti et al., 2010; Freedman et al., 2016).
- General inconvenience (Bryant et al., 2001; Garrity et al., 2018; Hauges et al., 2016).

There are many possible reasons the target audience may have to avoid the behavior. It is important to understand barriers so they may be addressed and potentially overcome through the social marketing campaign.

Step Six Craft a desired positioning statement

A desired positioning statement summarizes the intent of the marketing team in a succinct way. Kotler and Lee (2008) suggest writing a desired positioning statement by completing the phrase in Figure 2. This is not the message shared with the target audience but the message used in developing the marketing strategy.



Figure 2: Positioning Statement Template

"We want [primary target audience] to see [desired behavior] as [descriptive phrase] and as more important and beneficial than [competition]."

(Kotler & Lee, 2008)

Here is an example from the farmers market promotion:

We want individuals receiving SNAP benefits in Utah to see fruit and vegetable purchasing at community farmers markets as wholesome, easy, and affordable, and as more important and beneficial than buying calorie-dense packaged food at a convenience store.

Step Seven Develop a strategic marketing mix

This next step synthesizes many of the steps above by focusing on **the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place, promotion**, also known as a strategic marketing mix. It identifies which products will be offered and which will be additionally emphasized, what price can be offered and what prices can be reduced, where the product can be offered, and how to raise awareness of the product. Once these four elements are understood, the marketer can move on to implementation (Snow & Benedict, 2003). Table 3 lists each of these P's, defines the term, and provides relevant examples to the farmers market initiative for each concept.

Table 3: The Four Ps of Marketing

The P	What it is	Examples related to farmers market promotion
Product	The item, behavior, or service that is exchanged for a price. It is important here to also identify what else is competing with the marketed product (Snow & Benedict, 2003).	<p>Products for marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goods for sale at the market.• Awareness of farmers markets.• Attendance at farmers markets.• Acceptance of the Food Stamps.• Awareness of the Double Up Food Bucks program.• Increased fruit and vegetable consumption. <p>Competitors to the products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perception that it is easier to go to a grocery store (Savoie Roskos et al., n.d.; Skizim et al., 2017).• Lack of information about the markets and SNAP acceptance.• More conveniently available high calorie foods with longer shelf lives (Hampson et al., 2009; Wakefield et al., 2010).

Price	<p>Any cost involved in obtaining the product: money, time, energy, or attitude. The population must believe the price to be fair for the offered product. Reduce prices if possible in marketing (Snow & Benedict, 2003). For example, reduce the time and effort price by making obtaining the product sound easy.</p>	<p>The Double Up Food Bucks program helps reduce some costs, but it does not address all prices. Other prices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to reach market (Bryant et al., 2001; Hauges et al., 2016). • Time to shop at market (Freedman et al., 2016). • Perception of costs in addition to the actual cost of goods at market (Garrity et al., 2018; Lawrence et al., 2018; Local Food Research Center, 2012a). • Effort learning about unfamiliar foods (Hauges et al., 2016). • Energy navigating a new situation (Freedman et al., 2016). • Effort making food decisions (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018). • Giving up long-standing food habits (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018). • Fear of discriminatory attitudes from market staff and other customers (Colasanti et al., 2010; Freedman et al., 2016). • Concerns about unfriendly staff (Bryant et al., 2001). • Concerns about overdependence on outside sources or other stigmas (Bryant et al., 2001). • Concerns about quality of food (Hampson et al., 2009; Garrity et al., 2018). • General inconvenience (Bryant et al., 2001; Garrity et al., 2018; Hauges et al., 2016).
Place	<p>The locations and situations where the product is available. Consider how the population views the place and what barriers are present (Snow & Benedict, 2003).</p>	<p>Frequent barriers to the location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times of market and/or literal location (Garrity et al., 2018; Baxter, 2017) • Transportation issues (Lawrence et al., 2018; Local Food Research Center, 2012a; Snyder et al., 2004). • Social perceptions (too expensive, for the wealthy, only specialty items) (Local Food Research Center, 2012b). • Forms of payment accepted (is the market cash only?) (Freedman et al., 2016). • Language/cultural barriers (Bryant et al., 2001; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). • Lack of information on how to use benefits at the market (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
Promotion	<p>How the population is made aware of the product: advertising, media, events, personal connections and entertainment (Snow & Benedict, 2003).</p>	<p>Marketing (see step ten of this guide):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus advertisements or billboards. • Television or radio. • Direct mailers. • Signs, posters, or flyers. • Social media. • Mobile advertisements. • Connections with community partners. • Messages through schools. • Coupons. • Events.

Step Eight Outline a plan for monitoring and evaluation

An evaluation phase is essential when implementing any new program. A proper evaluation allows documentation of successes and identifies areas for improvement (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.b). It also ensures a program is meeting its mission statement and the expectations of customers and employees (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.b). For social marketing, the evaluation determines if behavioral changes occur and/or if knowledge and belief objectives are met (Lee & Kotler, 2020). Include which measures will be taken and a timeframe in the evaluation plan.

In general, for a well-rounded evaluation, consider using the following tools (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.):

- Customer counts
- Sales data.
- Customer surveys.
- Employee surveys.
- Informal management assessments on appearance, performance, customer service, etc.

To know what to evaluate, two places to begin are with the mission statement discussed in step one and with the SMART goals set during step four of the social marketing campaign.

For example, step one included the following mission statement from Cache Valley Gardeners' Market: "The mission of Cache Valley Gardeners' Market is to educate consumers about sustainable agriculture and healthy foods, provide a source of revenue for local farmers and artisans, and create a vital community gathering place for all ages" (Mission of Cache, 2019). Topics important for evaluation related to the statement may be about knowledge gained

by consumers, trends of revenue for local vendors, and customer satisfaction related to the atmosphere of the market.

SMART goals are a valuable toolset because they directly point to evaluation within the goals themselves. They are set to be measurable and timely, two important aspects of evaluation. The SMART goal example given in step four was to reach 1,000 individuals across Utah with marketing materials promoting the Double Up over the summer of 2019. This is a great springboard for an evaluation plan. Evaluation would need to occur at the end of summer 2019. Measures could include number of clicks from social media campaigns, reports from radio stations of number of listeners, intercept surveys asking the target audience if they have seen an advertisement from the campaign, and more.

Ultimately, the evaluation tools must match the project. No matter the choices, piloting/pretesting all evaluation tools and marketing efforts is essential (Bryant et al., 2001).

For details, the Center for Disease Control has published this evaluation workbook: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/cdc-evaluation-workbook-508.pdf>.

Step Nine Establish a budget and find funding sources

Programs are unable to run without adequate funding. Once set, stay on budget. Find information on preparing a grant proposal budget for a nonprofit organization at <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/the-basics-of-preparing-a-budget-for-a-grant-proposal-2501952>.



To find funding sources, collaborate with organizations with similar goals to the project. For ideas of community partner organizations, refer to Figure 3 on page 28.

There may be creative solutions available. For instance, Cache Valley Gardeners' Market has a fundraising outlet with AmazonSmile, allowing customers to donate a portion of their online shopping to their not-for-profit parent organization, Sustainable Agriculture Association of the Bear River Area (SAABRA) ("Mission of Cache," 2019).

Step Ten Complete an implementation plan

After understanding the market, setting goals, and preparing for evaluation, develop marketing materials as part of the implementation plan. The marketing team must carefully choose the content and mediums of the marketing materials.



Content in Marketing Materials

Ideally, marketing materials address the strategic marketing mix discussed in step seven by promoting the product, minimizing prices when possible, and improving perceptions of the place the product is offered. Although design plays into these elements as well, much of this effort is concentrated within the content of the messages. Focus groups and marketing guides identify the following as priority content for marketing messaging to populations with low incomes.

Items to consider including in marketing materials:

- **Location** of market (Leone et al., 2012; Local Food Research Center, 2012a).
- **Days and times** of market (Colasanti et al., 2010; Leone et al., 2012; Local Food Research Center, 2012a; The Food Trust, 2014).
- **Forms of payment** including SNAP acceptance. Inform people if only cash or checks are accepted, or if equipment receives cards, e-payments, and/or SNAP or WIC benefits (Leone et al., 2012; The Food Trust, 2014).
- **Short explanation of incentive programs** (like Double Up). Reference resources for details (Local Food Research Center, 2012a).
- **Transportation details** including public transportation options, transit maps, and parking information (Local Food Research Center, 2012a). Accessing the market's location is among the most cited barriers of farmers market attendance. (Bryant et al., 2001; Freedman et al., 2016; Garrity et al., 2018; Hauges et al., 2016; Lawrence et al., 2018; Local Food Research Center, 2012b; Baxter, 2017; Snyder et al., 2004).
- **Products available** inform future customers of which products are for sale, seasonal items, and even some nonfood items, like handmade goods (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2018). A focus group participant in Michigan commented that knowing what seasonal produce was available made her far more likely to stop by the market in passing (Colasanti et al., 2010).
- **Deals including prices and discount sales** can be included in more in-depth marketing materials (Leone et al., 2012; Local Food Research Center, 2012a).
- **Other benefits—key words to generate additional interest** like fresh, local, health, quality, taste, community, support, connect with farmers (Freedman et al., 2016; Leone et al., 2012; Local Food Research Center, 2012a; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Contact information** of someone who can answer questions. This can reduce barriers of perceived ignorance that can lead to indecision (The Food Trust, 2014). However, if the information source is unreliable or abrasive in any way, it can add a barrier (Bryant et al., 2001).

Other tips from best practice guides and marketing specialists:

- Overall, images should reflect food and farming (The Food Trust, 2014). Shoppers want to see fruits. More SNAP benefits are spent on fruits at farmers markets than any other category of foods (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). People have a more positive perception of a poster when they see fruits over vegetables, but also money over vegetables (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Be conscious of word choice and not alienating your target audience. Be more inclusive to shoppers with low incomes by posting “we welcome SNAP benefits” rather than “we accept SNAP benefits” (The Food Trust, 2014).

- Always include a statement of SNAP acceptance, but also consider including picture representation for clarity. This can reduce confusion and cross language barriers (Leone et al., 2012). As examples, images can be added of the Electronic Benefits Transaction (EBT) cards, WIC or similar checks, or the SNAP logo (The Food Trust, 2014; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). Find out what people in the area refer to the benefits as and use the colloquial term (EBT vs SNAP vs food stamps, etc.) (The Food Trust, 2014).
- Be consistent in language, images, and designs as part of branding (The Food Trust, 2014; Tripicchio, 2017). This means using similar designs, fonts, color schemes, etc. Branding sets a product aside from similar items or services and sets expectations of the experience with the product (The Food Trust, 2014).

Cultural Sensitivity

In marketing materials, it is important to represent the local populations, including “sub” populations (Hauges et al., 2016). For example, in Utah, although a majority of residents are white/Caucasian, in the four targeted counties, an average of 15.1% of the population identify as Latino or Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States, 2018). In some locations, perception of social barriers, including racism, prevent individuals from attending or returning to market locations (Colasanti et al., 2010; Freedman et al., 2016). As an example, a summary from one focus group included this statement, “Latina women often felt disrespected by vendors and thought vendors and other customers were distrustful of or openly annoyed with their children, especially compared to white kids” (Freedman et al., 2016). Negative perceptions such as these are worth addressing in marketing, whether preventative or retroactive. There are a few different ways to achieve representation.

A simple way to represent a sub-culture is to include the most common local languages in marketing materials and in signage (Local Food Research Center, 2012a, 2012b; Tripicchio, 2017). Another is to be aware of and include local cultural practices (Local Food Research Center, 2012a, 2012b; Tripicchio, 2017). In this case, local cultural practices include the food items used in ethnic cuisines. The low availability of cultural foods is an issue in some areas. Research concerning two farmers markets in Los Angeles reported that as many as 80% of respondents were unable to find and purchase the foods they eat at home (Stevenson, 2011). Highlighting cultural foods that are available at local

farmers markets and/or using images of foods in advertising could appeal to individuals of other ethnicities/cultures, potentially bringing new customers to farmers markets.

Incorporating cultural awareness in advertising is important to reach members of these sub-populations. When possible, use likenesses of people from diverse backgrounds (race, age, income level, family size) in marketing materials with images and videos (Hauges et al., 2016; Local Food Research Center, 2012a). This makes the messages more relatable to viewers (Hauges et al., 2016). It additionally presents a healthful lifestyle as obtainable and an unfamiliar place as welcoming for people from all backgrounds (Hauges et al., 2016). Focus group participants discussing improvements to advertising materials exclaim, “We want to see, us!” (Local Food Research Center, 2012b).

Finally, increase the exposure to marketing materials by promoting the farmers markets on media channels (radio, television, online groups, etc.) used by and popular in the subpopulations (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018). For example, in northern Utah, popular channels to advertise to the Latino population are 97.3 FM Cache Valley Media Group in Logan, 107.1 FM Salt Lake City radio station, and Univision 32 Salt Lake City TV station, and a Facebook group called la Pulguita de Logan (C. Wille, personal communication, July 22, 2019).

Geographical Location

Consider the geographical location of the target population. Marketing costs may be reduced and results may be more effective when efforts are honed in on a specific area (Childers et al., 2017). There is public data available for use on specific income areas. Try searching this resource by city for income maps by area: <http://www.city-data.com/income/income-Utah.html>. Local offices that assist individuals with low incomes, such as Extension offices and the health department, are another great resource. Epidemiologists are specialists that can be consulted as well (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). Target the identified areas with flyers, billboards, and other physical resources. For social media campaigns, use geotargeting.

Geotargeting limits access to a specific area using zip codes and/or GPS coordinates (Childers et al., 2017). For more information, on setting these limits, refer to this handout on geotargeting for Google and Facebook advertising: https://www.sneb.org/clientuploads/directory/Past_Webinars/Webinar_Handouts/20171114_UGA_SNAP-Ed_SNEB_ASNNA_Webinar.pdf.

When identifying the location for advertising, some experienced practitioners recommend focusing on the area within a 3-mile radius of a given farmers market. Most customers of farmers markets are found within this radius and many shoppers are unlikely to travel farther than 3 miles (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).

Advertising Avenues

There are many mediums available for advertising to the public. Discussed here are bus advertisements and billboards, television and radio, mailers, signage/posters/flyers, kids/school-related methods, social media and mobile apps, collaborating with community partners, capitalizing on events and application activities, and use of coupons. Choose the mediums used in a given social marketing campaign to suit the target population researched in step three and to suit the messages chosen to share in the advertisements. The remainder of this document discusses the effectiveness of some of these mediums and tips to keep in mind in their creation. Most of the recommendations come from best practice guides, reported experiences from other campaigns, or expert recommendations.

Many published articles and marketing campaigns report that multiple marketing methods, including both the use of traditional (radio, news, etc.) and internet mediums, led to the most success in increasing the visibility of a product (Tan et al., 2010; Wakefield et al., 2010). As an example, a study in Maryland reported that 23% of survey respondents at a program saw multiple forms of advertising before joining the project (Tan et al., 2010). Moreover, community partners assisting marketing projects are interested in sharing the information in multiple formats (i.e. brochures and posters) (Tripicchio, 2017). Various mediums will be discussed in more depth in the remaining pages. For all mediums, it is important to test campaign materials with the target audience to check for understanding of marketing tools and advertisement effectiveness. Two common methods for testing materials are pretesting, asking for feedback on the marketing materials before printing or running them, and piloting, trying out the campaign on a limited scale to see if it works as intended.

For visual examples of marketing materials used to promote other farmers markets, see <http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Farmers-Market-marketing-materials-HFR-Networking-call-Jun2015.pdf>.

Bus Advertisements and Billboards

One marketing strategy is targeting transportation systems. A marketing management team identified billboards and bus advertising as one of the most effective ways to advertise markets' acceptance of SNAP benefits (CitySeed, 2010).

EAT FRESH BUY LOCAL

Buy \$1 using your SNAP (Food Stamps) Horizon Card → **Get \$1** (Up to \$30) for free fruits and veggies at the farmers market

Find a participating market at DoubleUpUtah.org

EXTENSION UtahStateUniversity | CREATE BETTER HEALTH | DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS | UTAHNS AGAINST HUNGER | UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | UTAH FARMERS MARKET

Billboards may be useful for a general population and were recommended in focus groups and planning meetings (Childers et al., 2017; Glassen et al., 2012; Garrity et al., 2018; Hauges et al., 2016). Urban areas were more likely to recommend bus advertisements (Hauges et al., 2016). For buses, post advertisements both at transit centers and on the sides of buses (Local Food Research Center, 2012a, 2012b). This is useful because, as reported previously, many individuals with low incomes use public transportation. Bus stops are a natural place to stop and read a more detailed poster and brief advertisements on the sides of buses are seen by people across the city.



Television and Radio

Radio and television ads are a form of mass media advertisement that can yield high results (Childers et al., 2017; Colasanti et al., 2010; Garrity et al., 2018; Local Food Research Center, 2012a). One study from 2001 found that these campaigns increased attendance of an event by 25% or almost 200,000 (Bryant et al., 2001).³ In polls of market attendees, 47% remembered seeing a tv advertisement and 17% remembered hearing a radio advertisement (Bryant et al., 2001).³



A study from 2010 found paid radio advertisement to be the second most effective recruitment tool, second only to word of mouth (Tan et al., 2010).⁴ A three-month radio campaign in Columbia, Missouri combined with fundraising events found that general sales at a farmers market increased from \$400 a month to \$400 per market day. This was a 77% increase of redeeming SNAP benefits (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.a). Local radio is free to listen (appropriate for populations with low incomes) and it may be possible to air health-related advertisements as a public service announcement, as these are often aired free or at a discounted rate (Hauges et al., 2016). As for television, advertisements may reach individuals even with low disposable income in waiting areas or on free local channels (Hauges et al., 2016). These mass media forms (television and radio ads) can be played on multiple stations and channels to appeal to different audiences (Hauges et al.,

³ Bryant et al, 2001. A 28-item survey about WIC participation and barriers of enrollment was created in English and translated into Spanish. It was sent out by mail through Texas's Medicaid program with a letter from the Texas governor asking for survey participation, and 2,944 (20%) surveys were returned and analyzed.

⁴ Tan et al, 2010. This study was social marketing research in Baltimore, Maryland. Seniors (median age 69) were recruited to volunteer with children to encourage healthy behaviors to the seniors. The 155 participants recruited were and later surveyed about how they heard of the program and why they joined. Popular recruit measurements were word of mouth, paid radio announcements, direct mailings through retirement agencies, brochures, outreach talks, and notices in church bulletins.

Mailers

One of the most direct ways to advertise is through mailing flyers/inserts to a chosen population (Glasson et al., 2012). This is more targeted than many mass marketing campaigns (billboards, television ads, etc). (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). If the local SNAP or WIC office already sends mail to participants, this provides a low-cost and relatively easy way to manage mailers. (Local Food Research Center, 2012a). A campaign in North Carolina found direct mailers to identified SNAP households as their most effective marketing tool (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). Similarly, the postcards can be mailed to lower income neighborhoods where SNAP participants likely reside (Local Food Research Center, 2012b).

Be sure to check the regulations of the area. Often, if not always, companies and other organizations cannot legally share their mailing list, but it may be possible to provide a mailing insert for a willing company/organization to distribute. Campaign managers may need to be creative to find successful avenues. For example, one organization in Monterey, California was able to send farmers market flyers as an insert included with the local power bills (Local Food Research Center, 2012a).

Among distributed printed goods, newspapers are not an ideal publication to reach most target populations. In many areas, there is a fee to receive the local paper (Hauges et al., 2016). Newspapers are, however, more likely to reach older populations than younger ones (Hauges et al., 2016). If they are appropriate for the target population, find out if the local paper publishes earned media, a term for free advertising sources printed to fill space on local newsletters and papers (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).

Overall, the success of mailers will depend on the population and area. Some campaigns may find huge success with mailers, but due to rapidly advancing technology, in other campaigns, mailers may not have as strong of an effect as they once did due to the preference for social media and other online advertisements (Hauges et al., 2016).



Signage, Posters and Flyers

Signage is a basic and classic method of advertising that can take many forms. Signs can call attention to the existence or the actual location of the market. Without signage, people passing by may not notice the market (Glasson et al., 2013). Flags and banners are generally easy to set-up and take-down and are effective due to their size, color, and shape (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). They are often more prominent than posters or flyers.



Print flyers small (4 by 6 inches) as two-sided, handout documents (The Food Trust, 2014). These can hold more information than posters or signs and are easy to carry but may be misplaced or forgotten. Distribute flyers at farmers markets and many other locations (Warnock & Hamilton,

2017). Flyers and posters are most effective when posted/ given out through community partners (The Food Trust, 2014; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). The recommendation is distributing posters and flyers starting three weeks before the market begins (Lawrence et al., 2018). Pamphlets, newsletters, and window displays may also be effective advertising (Garrity et al., 2018).

At the farmers markets, it is essential to post signage about how and where to use SNAP benefits and any available incentive programs (Colasanti et al., 2010; Leone et al., 2012; Local Food Research Center, 2012a). Direct individuals to check-in locations (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). Often-times at these stations, SNAP benefits and some credit and debit cards, are converted to wooden or plastic tokens for use throughout the market (CitySeed, 2010). Use multiple languages and picture instructions for increased understanding (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Local Food Research Center, 2012b).

Social Media and Mobile Ads

Social media and other mobile ads appear to be the most common ways to increase range and reach consumers with low incomes. A business report stated that consumers with lower incomes spend more time online, streaming videos, and watching daytime television than individuals in other income groups (Marketing that Matters, 2012). The same report found that consumers with a net worth above \$100K are irritated by mobile ads while those making less than \$100K find them informative and/or entertaining (Marketing that Matters, 2012). Despite this finding, in other populations with low incomes, the opposite may be true where multiple jobs and other responsibilities may provide less time for social media and mobile ads.

KSL.com 76° Q P MENU

SALT LAKE CITY — Wondering how to trick-or-treat safely this Halloween in the midst of a pandemic?

Confectioner Hershey, which admittedly has a vested interest in selling candy, has you covered with a new website mapping out recommendations for a safe Halloween in every county in the US.

ADVERTISEMENT

EAT FRESH BUY LOCAL

Buy \$1 using your SNAP (Food Stamps) Horizon Card, Get \$1 (Up to \$30) for FREE fruits and veggies at participating farmers market. Learn more at DoubleUpUtah.org or call 1-800-453-3663

EXTENDING... CREATE... ITAIRE... HEALTH

Advertise with us Report ad

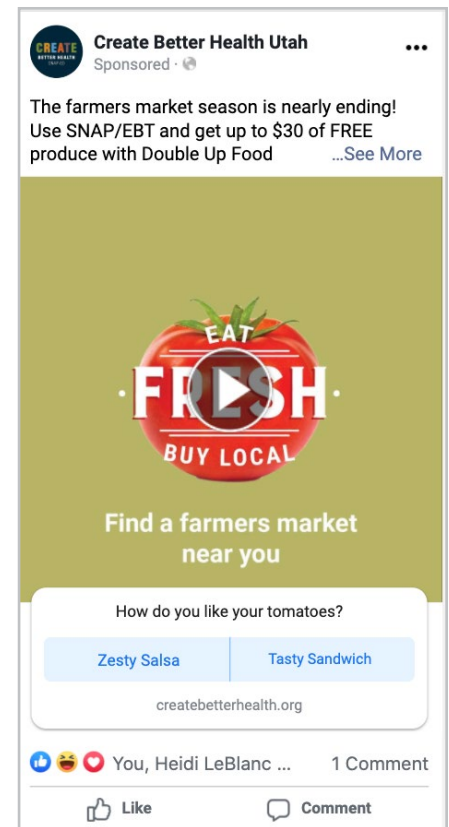
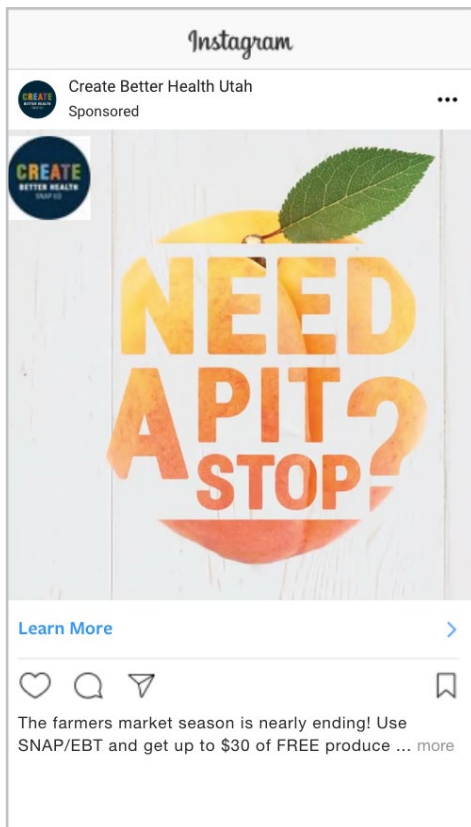
Disclaimer: The color map used by Hershey's is not the same as the [state's color-code restriction levels](#). Individuals should always practice social distancing and follow local, county and state guidelines.

Recommendations to trick-or-treat safely by color code

On their... Take back control of your media investment... IAS Integral Ad Science... OX

Advertise with us Report ad

Focus groups suggest that mobile devices are the method most individuals who are SNAP-eligible use to access the internet. As a result, any internet advertisements should be formatted for viewing on smartphones and other devices (Tripicchio, 2017). Even consumers in rural areas report having access to the internet at home or places like public libraries and fast food restaurants (Hauges et al., 2016; Skizim et al., 2017). Some of the more frequently listed platforms used by individuals with low incomes are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Twitter (Hauges et al., 2016; Skizim et al., 2017; Tripicchio, 2017). Many reported they turned to Google or Facebook articles shared by friends for nutrition information (Hauges et al., 2016, n.d.). These can be valuable platforms to give information to this population. Many nutrition educators in Utah believe they should spend more time on social media for education efforts (Garritty et al., 2018). On the other hand, social media and mobile ads may not prove effective in reaching older individuals (Hauges et al., 2016). One of the more useful aspects of social media marketing is that participants share media they enjoy with their social media friends (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).



On social media, try including the following for best results:

- Photos (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Quizzes/interactive media (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Links to informational pages (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Event listings, including Facebook events (The Food Trust, 2014; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Interesting articles (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- Videos and how-to videos (i.e., how to use SNAP) (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Garrity et al., 2018).
- Geotargeting (Childers et al., 2017; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).

Studies using some of these methods have found Facebook ads effective but expensive since charges are based on traffic (The Food Trust, 2014; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). Facebook does include a free training for advertisers to learn how to use their platform. Access the training at: <https://www.facebook.com/business/marketing/facebook>. Participants in an additional study reported high satisfaction with website and email marketing efforts (Skizim et al., 2017). Another study in support of using mobile technology found that more information forms were filled from online sources than in-person recruiting (Tripicchio, 2017).

Collaborate with Community Partners

Community partners consistently provide one of the most useful assets in marketing (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.; The Food Trust, 2014; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Lawrence et al., 2018).



Community organizations work so well because they provide a way to meet people where they already are. Especially if the organizations are already providing assistance or even just passing out flyers, it is natural to add in an advertisement for a farmers market. They can begin early—one group recommends starting advertising three weeks before the market begins (Lawrence et al., 2018). Under some regulations, nonprofit organizations may be required to give a portion of their profits to community health topics, including marketing for events like farmers markets

(Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). There is also more credibility with information given from many of these organizations because of previously established rapport with consumers (Tan et al., 2010).

A study found that coupons and flyers given through community partners are more effective than direct mailers. Specifically, libraries, WIC, paratransit, and food pantries were the community partners with the highest success in North Carolina (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). In Utah,

Utahns Against Hunger, the Utah Department of Health-EPICC program, and Utah SNAP-Ed all publicize the Double Up program (Just & Gabrielyan, 2018).

An additional way to incorporate community involvement is using web sites like taproot foundation (<https://taprootfoundation.org/nonprofits/>) or idealist (<https://www.idealists.org/>). These are databases built with the intention of connecting nonprofit organizations with able individuals who willingly offer their services (including marketing and technology skills) pro bono to help with projects providing community services.

Utah SNAP-Ed programs offer an invaluable resource for marketing but are often underused. A Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed), formally Food \$ense, report from 2017 recommended nutrition education assistants announce local farmers markets in direct education classes (Garrity et al., 2018). However, Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed) employees receive many requests and are often stretched thin. Speak to local SNAP directors or organizations to discuss promoting health initiatives in classes, with posters, with flyers, and/or online. See Figure 3 for examples of community partners.

Figure 3: Community Partners to Consider

- **SNAP and WIC** (Skizim et al., 2017; Durward et al., 2019; C. Wille, personal communication, July 22, 2019).
- **Health clinics/hospitals** (Wakefield et al., 2010; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Health department and health agencies** (Bryant et al., 2001; Lawrence et al., 2018; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Tan et al., 2010; Durward et al., 2019; U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States, 2018).
- **County extension offices** (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- **Government officials and agencies** (Snyder et al., 2004; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- **Transportation offices** (Skizim et al., 2017).
- **Economic revitalization groups** (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- **Human and social services agencies** (Wakefield et al., 2010; Lawrence et al., 2018; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- **Faith-based organizations** (Bryant et al., 2001; Snyder et al., 2004; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Nonprofit agencies** (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Food pantries** (Skizim et al., 2017; Lawrence et al., 2018; Durward et al., 2019).
- **Residential organizations** (Bryant et al., 2001; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Senior centers** (Lawrence et al., 2018).
- **Youth or childcare centers** (Lawrence et al., 2018; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Recreation centers** (Tan et al., 2010).
- **Local news** (Skizim et al., 2017).
- **Schools** (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).
- **Universities** (Skizim et al., 2017).
- **Public libraries** (Skizim et al., 2017; Bryant et al., 2001; Tan et al., 2010).
- **Local businesses** (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017).

Kids and School-Related Marketing

Another possible avenue to meet families where they already are is through schools and other kid-friendly activities.



Advertising at school open houses and in flyers sent home from school may increase the reach of marketing (Garrity et al., 2018; Hauges et al., 2016). Relevant activity books and promoting farmers markets as a family outing may also yield results (Garrity et al., 2018). A study published in 2013 found articles in school/other newsletters to be the most effective and homework activities to be the third most effective strategy of spreading a health message (Glasson et al., 2013).

Coupons

Coupons are an effective marketing tool. Coupons can include free produce items, free reusable grocery bags, and vouchers for value amounts (Local Food Research Center, 2012a). Distribute coupons at nutrition classes, in mailers, at community events, or by community partners (Local Food Research Center, 2012a).

In one research study, coupons were the most effective advertisement method. From surveys of 1,215 coupon redeemers, 80% were new customers who would not have attended otherwise. In the same study, coupons given through community partners were more effective than those attached to direct mailers (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). The most effective partners were public libraries,

WIC clinics, food banks, and paratransit hubs (Warnock & Hamilton, 2017). Studies also found that coupons could lead to retention of the new customers (Local Food Research Center, 2012b). Unfortunately, funding can be hard to achieve for coupons and other incentives. Some grants, even when obtained, do not allow funding to be used for incentive items.

Events and Activities

Finally, enhancing farmers markets by adding activities and events can serve both as a marketing tool and a retention tool. Individuals may enter a market for the first time to attend an event and regular customers may have their experience enriched by these events. Events should appeal to the community and some can target families with children (Freedman et al., 2016). Fairs are a commonly hosted event (Garrity et al., 2018). Other cities have used cooking demonstrations, social events, crafts, music/entertainment, and competitions (Farmers Market Coalition, n.d.a; Freedman et al., 2016; Glasson et al., 2012; Lawrence et al., 2018; Tripicchio, 2017). An interactive market can be a more appealing market. Food samples, and handouts of small items (pens, pencils, wallet cards, magnets, cups, calendars, recipe cards, activity books) may make the market more memorable (Freedman et al., 2016; Warnock & Hamilton, 2017; Garrity et al., 2018; Tripicchio, 2017). Raffles and prizes can further draw interest (Local Food Research Center, 2012b).



Great educational opportunities exist at farmers markets. Education on picking good produce, storing produce, and food preparation can be natural and engaging in this setting (Freedman et al., 2016). Education may want to focus on seasonal produce (Local Food Research Center, 2012b). Avoiding food spoilage may be a particular topic of interest for cost-conscious individuals with low incomes (Local Food Research Center, 2012a). Another topic may be making meals that appeal to picky family members using available products (Hampson et al., 2009). Teach using simple and convenient steps (Hampson et al., 2009). SNAP-Ed is an amazing resource already in place at many markets. These education opportunities can greatly influence consumers' lives. One study reported that after attending food preparation activities, 50% marked that they altered their food purchasing habits and 30-50% said they altered their cooking techniques (Walkinshaw et al., 2018).⁵

⁵ Walkinshaw et al, 2018. This research was performed in Washington state. Randomized telephone interviews were conducted among SNAP recipients. Participants responded about shopping at farmers markets and their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Researchers collected and analyzed responses from 400 participants (25% response rate).

Conclusion

Health-related programs can do a lot of good for communities, especially those including populations with low incomes and minority groups. To create positive change, awareness must increase for such programs. The purpose of social marketing is to alter a behavior in a way that will improve a community.

Create a cohesive social marketing campaign using the following steps:

1. Identify the target behavior for change and congruent organizations or locations for marketing the behavior change.
2. Consider internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) related to the behavior change through the chosen organizations or locations.
3. Determine and research the demographics of the target audience including race, ethnicity, age, income status, education level, employment status, and family size.
4. Set knowledge and belief objectives that lead to the desired behavior change and follow up by creating smaller SMART goals to track progress.
5. Determine the competition and barriers facing the target audience that prevent the desired behavior change and the target audience's motivations toward the behavior change. Address these in the promotional materials when possible.
6. Write a desired positioning statement to shape the marketing campaign.
7. Synthesize previous steps by outlining product, price, place, and promotion to focus the marketing campaign.
8. Develop a plan for monitoring and evaluation to keep the campaign on track and identify needed modifications in the future.
9. Establish a budget and find funding sources, beginning with local community partners.
10. Implement the marketing plan addressing the steps above, and also content needs, customer responses, branding, cultural sensitivity, location restraints, and mediums of advertisements.

These steps will result in a more comprehensive social marketing campaign ultimately leading to a higher likelihood for behavior change through increased awareness of a health program.

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