

Why a Case Studies Journal for the Field of Public Health Communication and Marketing?

Jennifer M. Colburn

Ellen Sowala

Jenna Williams-Bader

Imagine a world which supports people in their struggle to live healthfully; a world in which the physical environment is smoke-free, pollution-free, and encourages physical activity; a world in which the airwaves are not choked with advertisements for junk food and alcohol, and movies and television characters model healthy behaviors; a world in which everyone understands the value of public health. In this world, diseases (both chronic and infectious) claim fewer lives, and health disparities are rare. In this world, people not only see the benefit in making healthy choices, but it is actually easier for them to make healthy choices than unhealthy ones.

While it might be difficult to imagine such a world, it is perhaps closer than we realize. The public health literature that has accumulated over the past several decades makes it abundantly clear: we have many options available by which to encourage and enable people in their efforts to live healthfully, and many additional options by which to create places – or communities – that cultivate and support good health. Moreover, the still emerging disciplines of public health communication and social marketing hold much

promise in promoting healthy people and healthy places.

This journal was born out of a desire to bring together all of those working in the fields of public health communication and social marketing: students in public health schools and other educational settings, academicians, and practitioners who develop public health programs in a vast array of real-world communities. The case studies herein illuminate a handful of influential campaigns which will enable each group to advance the practice of public health communication and marketing. The emphasis on critical analysis and lessons learned in each case study allows readers to benefit from the mistakes and successes of others. We believe that this practice-oriented learning journal will add to the breadth of knowledge available to those in the field because it can go a step beyond what research-based learning can teach us.

While many academic journals are written primarily for researchers, we hope that the case studies in this journal will become discussion and learning tools for students, practitioners and researchers alike. We are

particularly pleased that this journal creates a unique learning opportunity for graduate students, the future leaders of our field, by involving them in each step of the process: graduate students edit the journal, they serve as lead authors, and they participate as peer reviewers (together with their faculty authors). What better way to teach the public health communication and social marketing experts of tomorrow than to involve them in this process today!

Cases in Public Health Communication & Marketing provides a platform to showcase

case studies that analyze cutting edge health communication and marketing programs, and simultaneously encourages collaboration between experienced professionals and students. We believe the journal has great potential to improve the practice of public health communication and marketing. We hope you find value in the case studies published herein, and that they inspire you to do your utmost to turn the healthy world in our imaginations into a reality.

Available at: http://www.casesjournal.org/volume1/editorial/cases_1_01.cfm