

Social Marketing and Behaviour Change: Working with Landowners Towards Sustainable Land Management



Sustainable Management Fund, Project Number: 2238

Addressing Land/Water Issues Through partnerships in Rotorua

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April 2008



Acknowledgement

Financial support has been received from the Minister for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund, which is administered by the Ministry for the Environment.

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Introduction to Social Marketing

Social Marketing was first used as a concept in 1971. Since then it has changed and developed over the last 37 years going through a stage of mostly referring to cause-related marketing. In the 1980s it was very popular in the health promotion field in the US before starting to move into the environmental arena.

Community-based social marketing is an attractive alternative to information intensive campaigns. In contrast to conventional approaches, community-based social marketing has been shown to be very effective at bringing about behaviour change. Its effectiveness is due to its pragmatic approach. This approach is designed to go beyond a one-way strategy of expecting people to change their actions solely on the basis of information about negative consequences of their behaviour (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999). Social marketing begins with seeking to understand why people behave as they do and to identify what might support more sustainable behaviour. The method assesses what people already know and believe, typically through surveys and focus groups, and then works with communities to redesign and provide appropriate tools to remove or circumnavigate barriers and to support new action.

By using the Social Marketing approach for disseminating information and encouraging landowners to adopt best management practices (BMPs) and on-farm nutrient mitigation options there will be potentially a better uptake of the new practices than if the less effective one-way strategies are used.

In the following sections key strategies following Social Marketing theories for disseminating information and encouraging the adoption of BMP's are outlined.

1.

A Strategy for disseminating information to farmers.

In order for landowners to gain a better knowledge of what nutrient mitigation options are available for them to adopt there needs to be a robust way of disseminating information. According to Edgar, Nimmo and Ross (2005) the following points are knowledge sharing issues which need to be considered in order to be able to disseminate information effectively:

1.1 Regular communication

There needs to be regular communication between researchers and community in order to build trust and understanding. Regular face to face meetings are important.

1.2 Negotiating entry to the community

Researchers should not assume that they will have automatic entry into a community or catchment just because they think their research is important. Entry should be negotiated with key individuals and usually involves a process of education and learning for all stakeholders involved.

1.3 The need for pragmatic outcomes

Researchers who insist that their approach to a problem or the proposed management tool is the correct and only approach will lose farmer support very quickly. If they focus solely on investigating the high level theory which underpins a research project at the expense of producing good advice and practical solutions, they will also lose community support. Most land managers prefer to see pragmatic outcomes from most research projects.

1.4 Understanding people

Researchers who have good personal networks and contacts within local communities, local government and different industry sectors can be very effective when troubleshooting problems or managing relationships. Scientists who have an astute understanding of the personalities involved in a project, and how local communities operate are also especially effective.

1.5 Communicating science

Not all good research scientists are effective at communicating their ideas, goals or research findings to 'lay people'. If this is the case, it is important to integrate into the research process 'translators' who can explain the principles which underlie the research and the management tools to stakeholders using appropriate concepts and teaching styles.

A third party can play a vital role working between and with scientists and communities. Facilitators help to integrate the different kinds of knowledge held by different

stakeholders and support those stakeholders to work together to implement a successful research programme.

1.6 Taking a 'whole farm' approach

Research and proposed new management tools need to take into account a 'whole farm' approach. Farmers need to know:

- The economic costs and benefits of using the management tool or taking part in the research
- Implications for changes to daily farming practices – (e.g. how it might impact on a farmer's work load)

In line with the social marketing theory, Edgar et al. (2005) point out that there must be some recognition within the farming community that a problem exists in the first place. In essence researchers need to be able to convince end users that there is a land management issue such as excessive nutrient loss at their location that needs to be addressed. It may be appropriate at this early stage to undertake a public meeting or organise a workshop in the area so that the issue can first be debated by affected parties.

Ultimately the local community needs to learn about the local land management issue and come to some level of consensus that a problem exists before they can reasonably consider ways that they can contribute to managing the problem.

Before the community accepts there is a problem, the problem needs to be put into the local context to illustrate the immediacy of the issue to local communities. Once the community recognises there is a local problem, it is at that point that discussion can occur on ways to address the problem. It is important that the community feel their local knowledge can be considered alongside other more scientific or technical knowledge.

2. Ways to encourage adoption of technologies to minimise impact of intensive land management

According to the social marketing strategy concept, people are more likely to adopt new behaviours if the information they receive has been tailored to their specific circumstances. In order to do this it is important to determine what farmers already know and then identify what barriers they may have to adopting a certain mitigation technique. In a study carried out by AgResearch (Roth & Botha, 2007) Dairy farmers within the Lake Rotorua catchment were interviewed to find out their views on some of the current technologies and land use practices for controlling nutrient loss. This study can be used to determine what the farmers thought of the different technologies and therefore will give an indication of what type of information farmers still need and what may need to be done to encourage the adoption of these technologies.

This study showed that the majority of dairy farmers in the Rotorua catchment reported to have at least a reasonable understanding of each nutrient mitigation technology put

forward. However, as to the likelihood of their adoption, much centred around their on-farm financial implications rather than their environmental efficiency in the sense of nutrient loss control.

Gretchen Robertson (2005) describes a number of initiatives which generated a positive approach from farmers. These are described below and can be used as examples of how farmers can be encouraged to adopt technologies to minimise the impact of intensive land management.

1.7 Participatory research

Research to establish best management practices actively involving the farming community at all stages of the project (design, implementation and review of results). Goodwill and ownership can only be achieved by including the rural community from day one.

1.8 Community led initiatives

Projects that are initiated by the local community to address local issues are very successful. The community can invite whichever stakeholders and agencies it desires to work alongside, thereby promoting a sense of ownership and goodwill amongst participants.

1.9 Working in groups

Although farmers are generally quite solitary in their approach to day to day farm management, like all people, they enjoy coming together from time to time to address widespread issues with the support of like minded people. Landcare groups are one way for this to occur. Other initiatives include focus groups, Integrated Catchment Management projects, farming associations, etc. These groups provide an opportunity for farmers to voice concerns as a collective.

1.10 Speaking as experts

Conferences and other gatherings involving presentations from sustainable management experts too often forget to include the major players in the field – the farmers themselves. If conference/workshop organisers want to attract the attention of the farming community they must firstly give them the kudos they deserve. Resource management conferences need presentations from farmers who are seeing real economic returns and other benefits from implementing sustainable practices. Talks from those who have actually implemented change in the paddock will undoubtedly be more powerful than a scientist talking about their laboratory research. Yet far too often farmers are left out of proceedings.

1.11 Involvement of industry leaders

Following on from the power of involving farmers as experts, the influence of industry leaders should not be overlooked. Farmers will come to an event if there is involvement from a prominent farming figure to represent their interests. Similarly they will come to an event to represent their own interests should a controversial or opposing leader be present. If we are looking to engage farmers in information sharing events the program

must be of interest. Appropriate participation and endorsement greatly assists in drawing a crowd.

1.12 *Articles on the local farming community*

As discussed above, leaders from the rural community reach farmers with much more success than technocrats or bureaucrats. Newsletters and articles on positive progress for sustainable management targeting the rural community should therefore utilise the farmers involved as spokespeople wherever possible. At times this may mean that the researchers or agencies involved will need to take a backspace. When considering the best outcomes for sustainable management in New Zealand egos are of little importance!

1.13 *Known examples with positive outcomes*

There are many inspiring examples of successful instances of sustainable management approaches to farming in New Zealand. Utilising these examples as both promotion and learning tools is vital to widening the uptake.

1.14 *Farm Environment Awards*

As noted above, recognition of existing achievement is a very important step in promoting sustainable management. Farm environment awards such as the Balance Farm Environment Awards, NZ Deer Farmers Environmental Awards, Sharemilker of the Year awards etc, are becoming increasingly prestigious events. Field days to the winning farms attract hundreds of interested farmers.

1.15 *Working with school pupils*

It is important to remember that a rural community includes a wide sector of people. Field days on sustainable management issues often attract the involvement of the middle-aged farming male, but what about the wider community?

Working with school children reaches the next generation of land managers but it also attracts the attention of parents. Field days to local waterways or landscapes will attract a wide sector of the community's adults as interested parents, both mothers and farming dads taking an interest in their kids' learning. For the child, environmental education can be very important as memorable events as a child shape an individual's life long perceptions.

1.16 *One on one contact*

Nothing beats the value of face to face contact. Getting a chance to really interact with somebody in a two way manner is the best way to resolve issues. Both parties can learn and alter views in the process, thus devising effective ways to move forward. Farmers appreciate the chance to speak face to face as many are bombarded with printed material. However there are also more and more people arriving at the farm gate with advice; working around the busy lifestyles of farmers is important.

3. Strategies for engaging iwi landowners in sustainable land management initiatives

Te Arawa is the major iwi and is the original settler in the Rotorua Lakes area and a number of hapu have made a large contribution to the history of Rotorua and its surrounding districts. As a tribe Te Arawa and its constituents hapu, including Maori land corporations, collectively form a major land owner in the district. (Morrison, D. 2006).

Understanding the Maori world view based on traditional values is highly relevant in modern day Maori society and fundamental for forming principles and guiding philosophy for culturally based sustainable development. Therefore it is important that researchers understand this if they are to engage successfully with iwi.

When working or dealing with tangata whenua a degree of empathy needs to be clearly shown towards cultural values, protocols and sensitivities of tangata whenua. Relationships and partnerships can be un-done by not following protocols or the right procedures, by not understanding tikanga Maori, tangata whenua concerns and issues, or by not talking to the right people from the start.

It is very important to build relationships with iwi from the start to provide a solid foundation to work from. Some important elements that make a meaningful relationship are; common interest, mutual respect for each others' philosophies, and the ability to cooperate and communicate, share work loads for the benefit of others as well as each other. The intent when working with tangata whenua is to create opportunities that are beneficial to both partners and to give effect to the principles of partnership.

Based on key factors from international studies (Borden & Perkins 1999), learning and experience in other and previous New Zealand projects (Harmsworth 2001; Kilvington & Allen 2001), and from the FRST programme, integrated land and water resource management in complex catchments, the following key factors are given for successful engagement with iwi and hapu (indigenous) groups. They include:

1.17 Capacity

A certain level of human and social capacity is required, and is related to the type of collaboration or engagement being proposed.

1.18 Belief and commitment

A belief and commitment in a project or a kaupapa to achieve agreed, often value-based, objectives, goals, aspirations, and outcomes.

1.19 Understanding Issues

An understanding of the issues which a group has identified as important, needs to be responsive to, and often exists because of these issues.

1.20 Leadership

To have a key individual(s) to lead a group, provide organisational strength, direction, delegate responsibility, mobilise and organise work, provide a purpose, a mission, support others, make decisions, and determine actions.

1.21 People

To be people oriented and willing to work and listen to others, understand, follow other agendas, for the benefit of the group (outside those of the individual).

1.22 Organisation

The group needs to be organised in some way, especially if project planning and funding is involved. An ability to plan, organise, set objectives and actions and use performance measures.

1.23 Group structure

To have a coherent group or key individual(s), around which individuals can develop, engage, and network as a group.

1.24 Resources

The group should have some resourcing to maintain itself.

1.25 Networking – Communication

The ability and belief to network effectively, communicate, and share information.

1.26 Skills and knowledge

The group should have some skill capacity and an interest in acquiring and sharing knowledge, and increasing skills and capacity.

1.27 Policies and legislation

An understanding of the policies and legislative frameworks within which a group operates.

1.28 Tikanga

An understanding and acknowledgement of tikanga, kawa, values, culture and custom, in which to work and engage.

1.29 Values

An ability to understand and comprehend other peoples' cultural values, an ability to learn, recognise and be sensitive to issues related to other values and beliefs.

1.30 History – sustainability

Knowledge of the history, or length of time a group has been together, often indicates stability, permanence, and endurance that can help the collaborative process. It is also good to know about the origins of a group and previous relationships. Sustainability will help a group develop institutional knowledge and capacity.

1.31 Politics

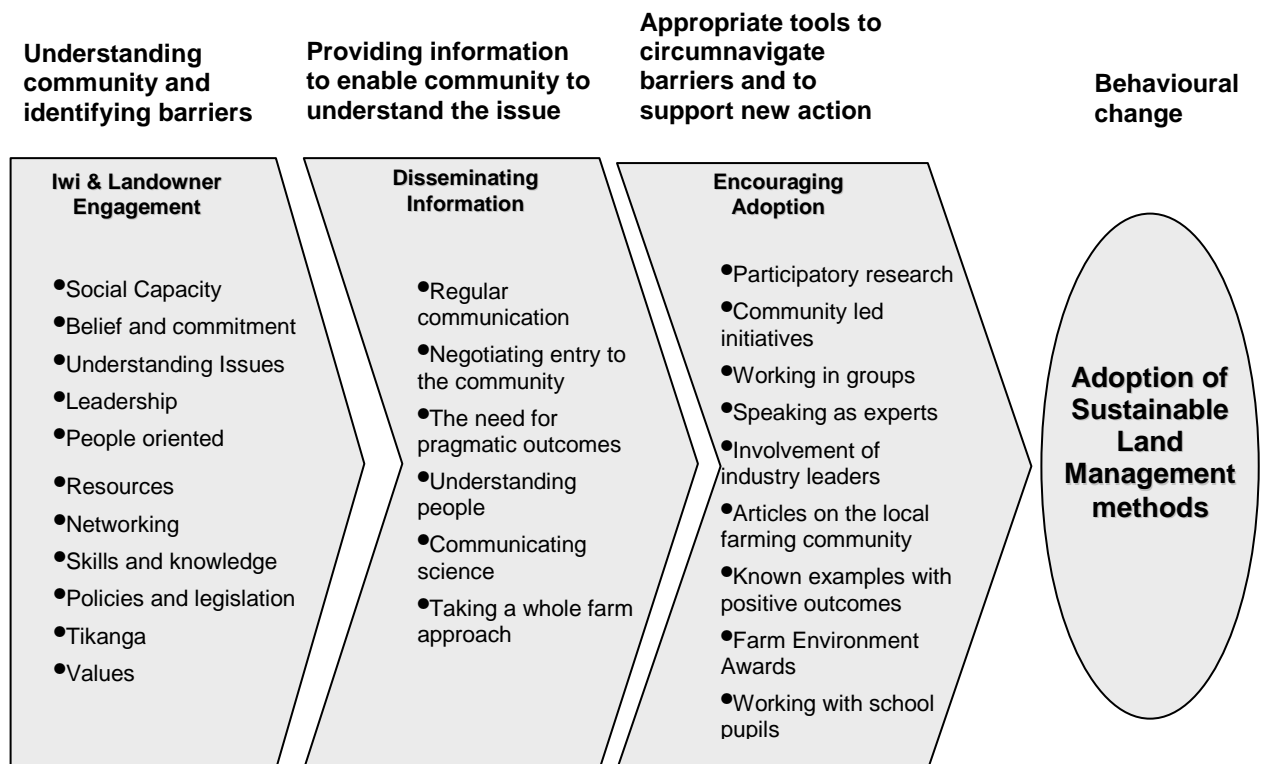
An understanding of the politics and dynamics within which a group operates. Also an understanding of the external relationships with other organisations, and other iwi and hapu.

These factors in combination are often seen as essential ingredients or building blocks for achieving relationships and partnerships. They influence the collaborative process and are instrumental in helping and shaping engagement with iwi and hapu.

Although these points are specifically directed at iwi engagement the majority of them are also important in the engagement of all land owners.

4. Summary

The diagram below provides a summary of the three main stages needed for a social marketing strategy to be effective i.e. to lead to the adoption of sustainable land management techniques.



6 Conclusions

Using Social Marketing theories to disseminate information and encourage the adoption of BMPs is complex and relies heavily on understanding why people behave as they do, and to identify what might support more sustainable behaviour. In order to do this it is vital that the researcher uses participatory methods of research and take their lead from what the farmers already understand about the issue. Edgar et al. (2005) describes knowledge sharing issues which should be considered in order to be able to disseminate information effectively.

In the AgResearch survey (Roth & Botha, 2007) data collected from farmers in the Rotorua catchment included both current nutrient mitigation technologies already adopted and perceived barriers for the different technologies. These data could be used as a basis for an in depth social marketing strategy in the future especially if the information gained is then combined with the tried and tested ways which generate a positive approach from farmers when encouraging the adoption of BMPs as described by G. Robertson (2005).

For social marketing to be effective there must also be a focus on the whole community, therefore the researcher must take into account the ethnic diversity of the Rotorua area and ensure that they have an understanding of the Maori worldview if they are to engage with iwi successfully.

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