

# Best Practices

## for Behavior Change Marketers



**eTHOS<sup>®</sup>**

[www.ethos-marketing.com](http://www.ethos-marketing.com)

# Best Practices for Behavior Change Marketers

*Borrowing from the tenants of psychology, sociology and communications theory – behavior change marketing succeeds with an integrated approach that makes use of both traditional and digital marketing tactics. Learn more about behavior change marketing best practices with Ethos' social marketing checklist below.*

## TARGET AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

Before you can change anyone's mind, you need to know exactly who you're talking to. Different types of people are influenced in very different ways, which is why the most effective behavior change campaigns have HIGHLY segmented audiences. The following tactics can be used to segment your audience:

### ❑ **Persona Development**

*Use known or inferred characteristics about your target audience to determine the most effective outreach and messaging.*

PROS: Inexpensive, quick to deploy.

CONS: Groups audience members into segments based on inferences which may, or may not, accurately represent specific personal characteristics. Without expensive and comprehensive research, it is difficult to segment audiences with 100% accuracy.

### ❑ **Research (quantitative and qualitative)**

*Use data from IDIs (in depth interviews), focus groups, and quantitative studies (phone and internet surveys) to segment and understand target audiences fully, allowing for more specific and effective messaging and interventions.*

PROS: Useful in better understanding the barriers and motivations of the target audience. Research can also help to determine which messages and interventions could be most effective.

CONS: Relatively expensive and time-consuming. Typically requires an outside vendor.

# MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Before you can convince someone to change their behavior, you need to uncover what's in it for them. How do you make the desired behavior fun, easy and popular? What matters to the target audience enough to make them change the way they act? The following tactics can be used to identify the most effective messaging:

## ❑ Focus Groups

*Bring target audience members together to discuss various messaging strategies and provide feedback on which concepts resonate the most.*

PROS: Provides in-depth, qualitative feedback from pre-screened target audience members.

CONS: Expensive and time-consuming. Typically requires an outside vendor.

## ❑ A/B Testing

*Run identical campaigns with one variable (messaging) changed in each. Quantify and compare the results of campaign A and campaign B to determine message efficacy.*

PROS: Inexpensive, easy to deploy.

CONS: Can only test one variable at a time, feedback is quantitative (not qualitative), responses from outside the target audience can skew results.

# OUTREACH

If only behavior change were as easy as a clever tagline, copywriters would be rich! Unfortunately, it's not so simple. Coming up with the right message is a big part of behavior change marketing – but it's just a part. Creating meaningful behavior change requires developing messaging and interventions that offer the target audience the exchange needed to assist with adopting the desired behavior. The following tactics may be part of the integrated approach to reach your target audience:

## ❑ Social Media

*Publish relevant content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest and other platforms as appropriate to reach specific target audiences.*

PROS: Easy to use, excellent targeting, agile, inexpensive and interactive.

CONS: Organic reach is limited and competition for attention is fierce. May require paid promotion to increase visibility of content. Requires new, relevant and engaging visual content on a frequent and regular basis.

## ❑ **Print**

*Communicate with target audiences visually via printed publications such as newspapers, magazines, flyers and pamphlets, posters, handouts, etc.*

PROS: Visual in nature, easy to understand, high-visibility and good longevity.

CONS: Can be expensive, difficult to change, hard to measure efficacy.

## ❑ **Broadcast**

*Reach local target audiences via terrestrial radio and television ads.*

PROS: Expansive reach and market penetration.

CONS: Expensive, requires highly-produced content to be effective, and can be difficult to measure efficacy.

## ❑ **Display Advertising**

*Place digital ads on web pages within a specific network or through individual websites.*

PROS: Relatively inexpensive, ads available for purchase on CPC basis, easy to change creative.

CONS: Can be time-intensive to manage, typically has low click-through and conversion rates, not as targeted as other digital media opportunities.

## ❑ **Programmatic Advertising**

*Place digital ads (static and video) on websites that target audience members visit frequently.*

PROS: Highly-targeted, relatively low-cost, measurable and easy to change out creative.

CONS: Sold on a CPM basis, difficult to track specific placements, ads may be placed on websites with limited relevance to the message.

## ❑ **Public Relations**

*Pitch stories that highlight appropriate messaging to news media outlets in order to gain additional exposure (earned media) without placement fees.*

PROS: Expansive reach, low cost impressions (if story gets picked up), implied endorsement from media outlet.

CONS: Unpredictable, messaging can get distorted by reporters.

## ❑ Email

*Collect or purchase email addresses of target audience members and send them relevant content that introduces and reinforces messaging.*

PROS: Inexpensive, quick to deploy, effective.

CONS: Typically, only 20%-30% of your email recipients will look at your email so it should not be relied upon as the only means to reach your audience.

## ❑ Events

*Create an in-person event in order to provide hands-on support to the target audience in making the desired behavior change (make it easy, fun and popular).*

PROS: Highly-effective, memorable, newsworthy (possibility for earned media).

CONS: Expensive, time-consuming, limited exposure.

## ❑ Direct Mail

*Collect or purchase mailing addresses of target audience members and send them relevant content that introduces and reinforces messaging.*

PROS: Expansive reach, highly-visible.

CONS: Often gets discarded, mailing lists can be inaccurate and can miss low-income families without a permanent address.

# EVALUATION

In order to affect real behavior change, messaging needs to remain consistent over time and on every platform, encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviors. The following tactics can be used to optimize your message delivery and reach, and evaluate your progress toward behavior change:

## ❑ CRO (Conversion Rate Optimization)

*Optimize both landing pages and key pages of website for correct page elements such as headlines, copy, form, graphics, page layout, and call-to-action (CTA). Be sure to explore options for conversion types focusing on the difference between what works in a desktop space and what works in the rapidly-growing mobile space.*

PROS: Gets the most out of your marketing spend; without it, you spend too much for each lead.

CONS: Requires expertise to do well; should be an iterative improvement process.

## ❑ Remarketing

*Digital ads targeting previous website visitors that include calls-to-action (CTAs) to encourage them to return to and re-engage with the website.*

PROS: Highly-targeted, ability to customize messaging, strong conversion rates.

CONS: Use frequency caps to avoid making your audience feel “stalked.”

## ❑ Analytics

*Daily, weekly or monthly reviews of marketing performance used to inform future decisions to achieve optimum reach, engagement and cost efficiency.*

PROS: Measureable, informative and easy to track over time.

CONS: Time-consuming, can sometimes be difficult to understand and make sense of.

# About Ethos

Ethos is a multiplatform branding agency that develops and executes integrated marketing and behavior change campaigns across multiple channels for companies inside and outside of Maine.

At Ethos, we believe that the most effective way to set a company's marketing course is by finding its core truth – its ethos. We know that once we discover and communicate that core truth, we can truly make a difference for each client's unique marketing and business objectives.

With Ethos, you get more than a Maine marketing agency; you get a long-term partner whose goals are your goals.

For more information about Ethos' behavior change marketing practice, visit <https://www.ethos-marketing.com/behavior-change-marketing/>.