

COMMUNICATING MEN'S HEALTH MESSAGES





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MWC is a full service communication agency based in Prahran, Melbourne, that specialises in health education related communication campaigns. Whether it be on behalf of health initiatives, education boards or trusts, public private partnerships, school groups, charities, or private sector brands - we are adept at getting the message out – often to a range of multifarious audience groups where the brief requires.

Over the last 4 years we have delivered health and education campaigns for clients including the Prostate Cancer Foundation Australia, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand, The Cancer Council, the Australasian Men's Health Forum, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Australian General Practice Network, the Australian Wound Management Association, Blackmores, Bayer, Generic Health, and MBF Health to name but a few.

We are making a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Men's Health under the terms of reference of the enquiry in relation to the following:

- adequacy of existing education and awareness campaigns regarding men's health for both men and the wider community,
- prevailing attitudes of men towards their own health and sense of wellbeing and how these are affecting men's health in general, and

Given that we have been involved for a number of years in disseminating men's health messages to the general public, we have a developed understanding of the environment in Australia in relation to these aspects, and the common challenges that are likely to be experienced when communicating health messages. This document describes 3 campaigns that we have delivered: a Community Service Announcement campaign on

behalf of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia; Mens Health Week 2008 on behalf of the Australian General Practice Network and the Mens Health Forum; Blue September on behalf of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand, and one forthcoming campaign, Mens Health Week 2009 which we will deliver in June 2009.

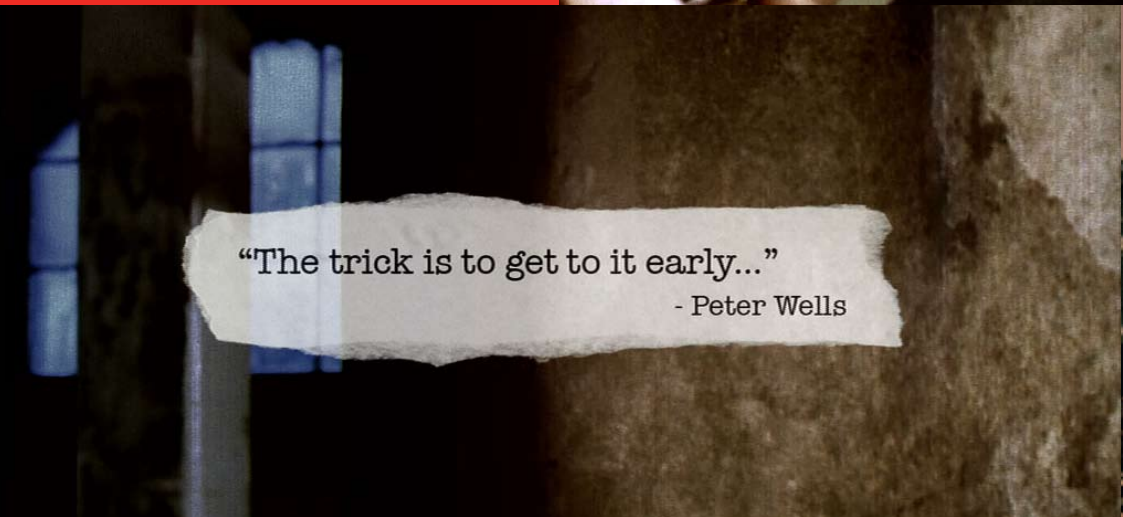
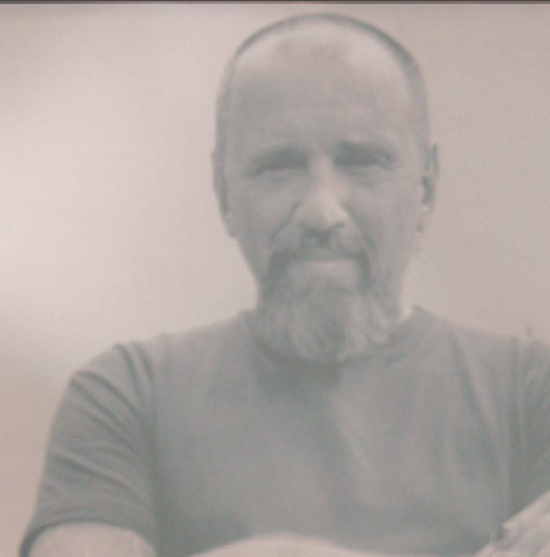
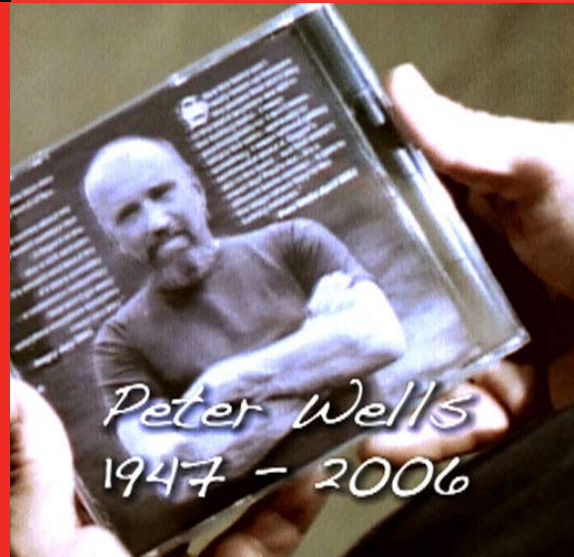
In this submission we describe the experiences we have found when delivering these campaigns, and themes which we believe are pertinent when delivering Mens Health messaging in Australia today. We have included details of a campaign that we have delivered in New Zealand on the basis that it may provide useful comparative information.

In this document we describe that when communicating health messages to men, it is important to recognize whether the call to action is realistic – they may understand what you are saying, but is it practical for them to do anything about it. We also feel that there is significant problems in resourcing a campaign – in relation to funding the activity and then judging if the activity has made a difference – and that a lot of Mens Health campaigns are too reliant on contributions from corporate sponsors. We contend that there should be a greater participation from Federal Government in providing leadership on a campaign, and also resourcing the means in which they are communicated.

We have deliberately not gone into a lot of detail about other mens health messaging in Australia – both current and past – at this stage as we are not aware of the direction that the Select Committee enquiry will take, but we would be prepared to make follow up statements or clarify anything in this submission if invited to do so.



"PETE ASKED ME
TO GET THE
WORD OUT"



"The trick is to get to it early..."
- Peter Wells



PROSTATE CANCER FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA AND BLUNDSTONE FOOTWEAR

JUNE 2007



In late 2006, MWC developed a relationship between the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and Blundstone Footwear to launch what was to become a highly successful national campaign in order to raise awareness of the dangers of prostate cancer.

Blundstone's brand ambassador, ex-Rose Tattoo lead singer, Angry Anderson appeared in 3 different Community Service Announcements (CSAs). Talking about the disease, Angry was extremely motivated about getting the word out about prostate cancer, having lost his best friend and band-mate, Pete Wells to the disease in March 2006.

The shocking fact is that more than 2,700 Australian men die from prostate cancer each year - around the same number of Australian women who die from breast cancer. The sad truth is, potentially half the men who lost their lives could have been saved through early detection. Prostate cancer is often treatable and curable if detected early. Instances of prostate cancer are highest among men based in regional areas – partly due to lack of access to primary healthcare facilities and also ongoing patient reluctance from patients to discuss prostate cancer with their doctor.

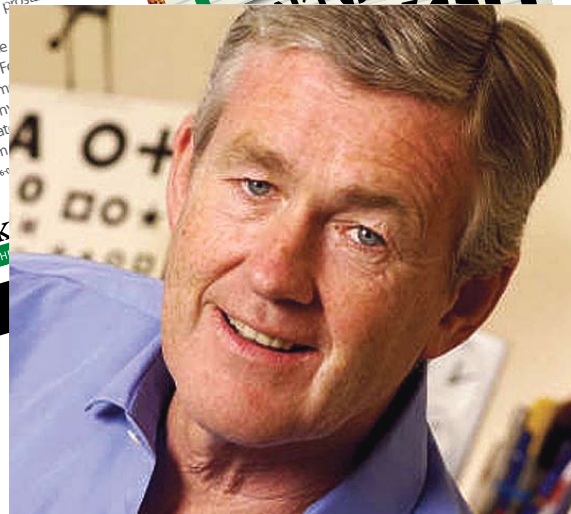
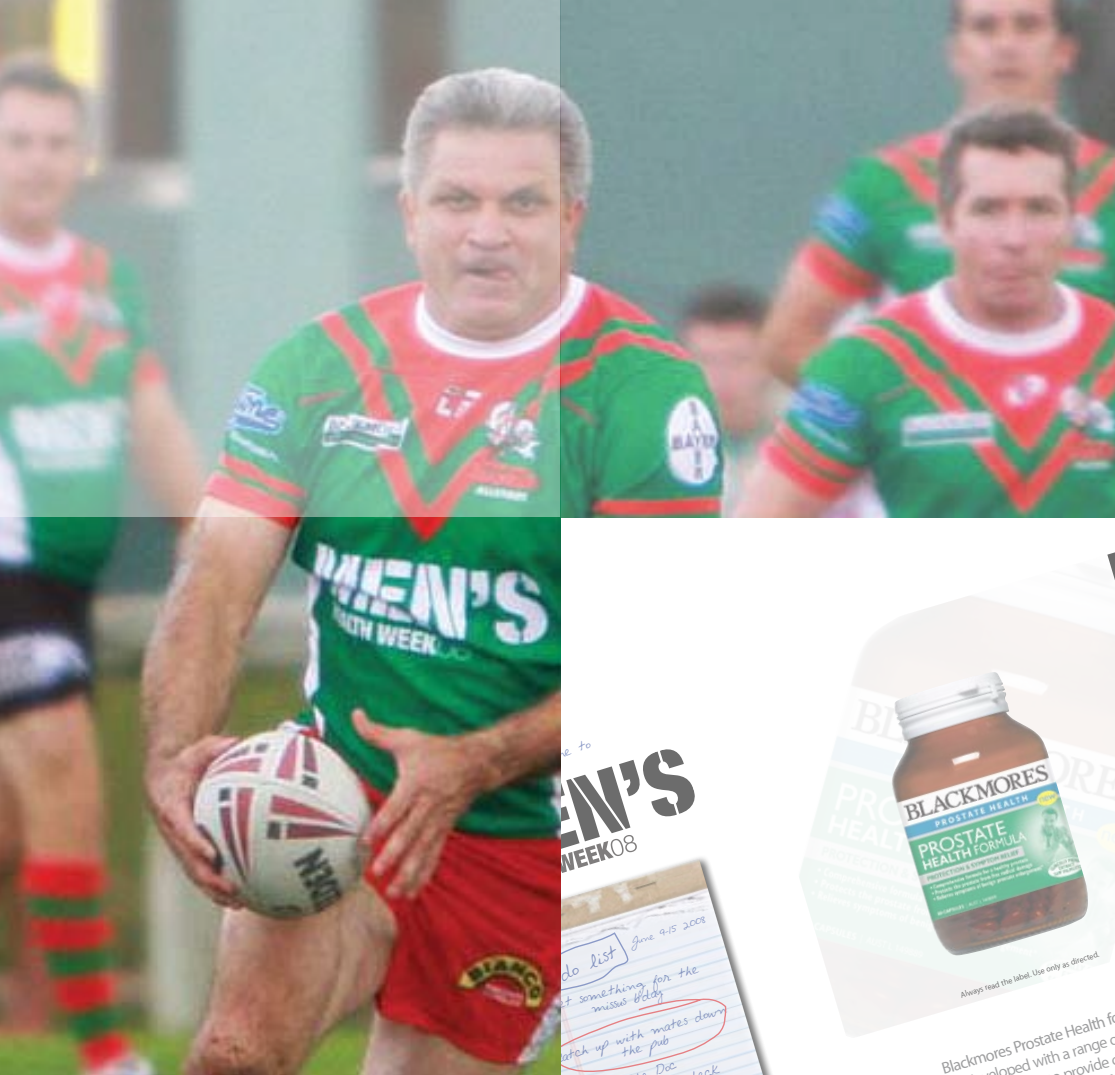
In 3 hard hitting television commercials, Angry tells it straight to men and their families of the sobering realities of this common disease. The TVC's featured high

production values and articulated a simple message with a clear call to action – which was imperative in order to get cut through among an audience that are notoriously complacent over looking after their own health.

Angry Anderson has been an invaluable talent in the campaign, having appeared on several television and radio interviews, speaking at numerous events and was one of the spokespeople for Men's Health Week 2008, generating substantial media coverage on a national level as a result.

The CSA's were launched in June 2007 at the Collingwood vs Melbourne game at the MCG on the Queen's birthday and at the start of Men's Health Week. A giant pair of underpants was carried onto the field by local kids and Prostate Cancer Foundation Chief Executive Andrew Giles to create a strong visual point, which consequently garnered great media coverage. In addition to being broadcast nationally and receiving approximately \$1million worth of free airplay over a 7 week period on pay per view and terrestrial TV, the CSA's were also played at the 2008 Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Melbourne.





WEEK08

do list June 9-15 2008

- Get something for the missus today
- catch up with mates down the pub
- Talk to the Doc about prostate check
- check the fences
- Return lookie to hire joint

BLACKMORES PROSTATE HEALTH FORMULA

Always read the label. Use only as directed.

Blackmores Prostate Health formula has been developed with a range of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals to provide comprehensive approach to the maintenance of prostate health.

Clinical research supports the use of Blackmores Prostate Health Formula in Blackmores Prostate Health Formula for relief from the symptoms of benign prostatic hypertrophy cause of an enlarged prostate to protect prostate cells from

ACTING TOUGH

WEEK08 June 9-15 2008

BLACKMORES PROSTATE HEALTH FORMULA

BLACKMORES PROSTATE HEALTH FORMULA

AMHF

Bayer HealthCare
Bayer Schering Pharma

Blundstone
Since 1970

QWAA

menshealthweek.com.au

MENS HEALTH WEEK 2008

JUNE 2008

Men's Health Week 2008 was a campaign developed by MWC on behalf of The Australasian Mens Health Forum and The Australian General Practice Network to put the spotlight on rural men's health in Australia.

The shocking facts are that men in rural areas have a significantly shorter life expectancy than men in metropolitan areas. Death rates can be as much as 70% higher and life expectancy lower by 19 years in very remote areas compared to their metropolitan peers. Certain groups of men face specific risks. Men in rural regions often have limited access to health services, recreational and support facilities. Suicide rates among male farm owners and managers are around twice the rate of the national average. Work for rural men is often physically demanding and potentially hazardous, particularly as they often work in isolated areas or on their own.

MWC developed a campaign to encourage men to adopt a positive approach to good physical and mental health. Maintaining one's health needed to be addressed as being more than just a visit to their local GP when they were sick, but to get a regular check-up to maintain a good quality of life, engage in good health practices in order to lower their risk of developing chronic disease, and also to build rewarding emotional relationships with their family and friends – mental health is just as important as physical health.

The target audience was a particularly hard to reach group – they often lived in remote regional areas; they are not prolific media consumers; the subject is very personal and involves issues that men do not often talk about – which was the whole point of the campaign!

MWC enlisted the talents of an elite line-up of Australian male celebrities to serve as passionate and media savvy advocates for men's health and rural issues. This line-up included Lee Kernaghan, award winning Australian country music singer and songwriter and 2008 Australian of the Year; Angry Anderson, Australian rock singer TV presenter

and actor; Charles Wooley, journalist and political commentator; and Across Australia radio host, and Dr Rob Walters, former Australian General Practice Network chair, and health commentator.

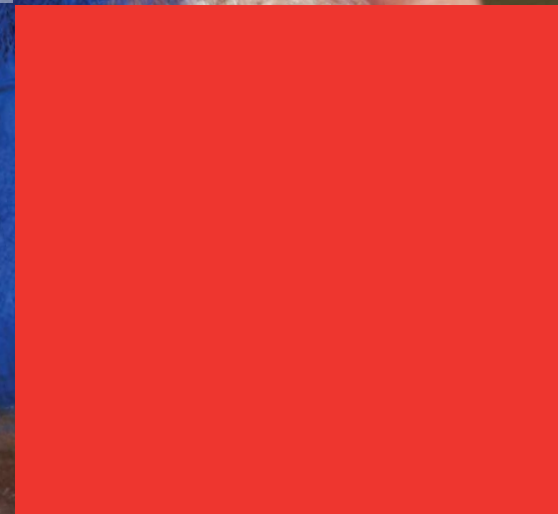
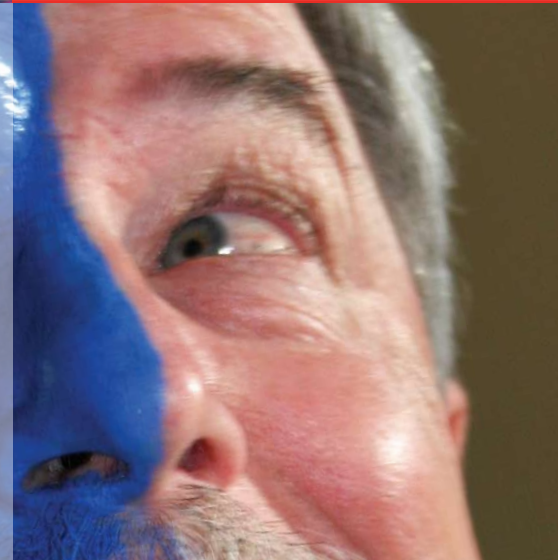


Men's Health Week served to increase the awareness of important male-specific health issues, which in 2008 included; prostate health and cancer awareness, and mental health issues such as depression, stress and isolation.

MWC developed, produced and subsequently launched a Community Service Announcement (CSA) during the week which specifically targeted rural men. The CSA starred Aussie music legends Lee Kernaghan, Angry Anderson and national broadcaster Charles Wooley – all of whom were campaign spokespeople. The CSA had excellent production values – shot in a rural setting on high quality film – whilst also remaining honest, emotive and pertinent to get the message through to a hard to reach audience who often don't want to hear about the realities of their personal health situation.

The week included a tranche of VFL games in regional Victoria, and country rugby league matches in New South Wales and Queensland to mark Mens Health Week and to provide discussion forums about mens' health issues. In addition MWC developed a Mens Health Week website (www.menshealthweek.com.au), print collateral, events across regional Australia in conjunction with the Country Women's Association of Australia.





PROSTATE CANCER FOUNDATION NZ & BLUE SEPTEMBER JUNE 2008



Each year, over 2,500 men in New Zealand are diagnosed with prostate cancer and about 600 die from the disease. Fathers, sons, brothers, grandfathers. Gone! This happens because men don't know how dangerous the disease is, they don't talk to their doctor about it, they simply don't do anything about it.

In June 2008 the Prostate Cancer Foundation appointed MWC to deliver a month long awareness and fund raising campaign. MWC developed the creative positioning 'Blue September' to publicise the dangers of the disease with a major promotional crusade. During September 2008 people were encouraged to paint their faces blue and through sponsorship help raise money to fight prostate cancer.

Blue September is led by high profile New Zealanders including broadcaster Paul Holmes, ex All Black rugby union players Wayne 'Buck' Shelford and Stu Wilson, former cricketer Sir Richard Hadlee who appear in a national TV commercial with their faces painted blue.

Throughout September New Zealanders were encouraged to go to www.blueseptember.co.nz to find out more. The outcome was that men and their families were reached by the Foundation about the importance of taking a pro-active stance to their health and identifying this disease while it is curable thus reducing the number of men likely to die and suffer from it.

The campaign was funded by contributions corporate sponsors including New Idea, Dermalogica, Watties, John Bull Footwear, Pacific Blue Airlines, Barkers and Bosch Power Tools.



MENS HEALTH WEEK 2009

JUNE 2009

MEN'S
HEALTH WEEK⁰⁹



Mens Health Week runs from June 15 - 21st June 2009. The purpose of Mens Health Week is to raise awareness of the need for men to take steps to be proactive about their physical and mental health. It is intended to encourage preventative activities being undertaken to encourage men to make healthier lifestyle choices.

The issues addressed during Mens Health Week include:

- Raising awareness of the range of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men.
- Addressing men's sexual and reproductive health issues.
- Tackling widespread reticence amongst men to seek treatment.

- Raising awareness of the need to reduce barriers that men experience in accessing health services.
- Emphasising the importance of including women in the discussion – acknowledging their role as key influencers and a means of helping facilitate mens health messaging.

Whereas Mens Health Week 2008 concentrated exclusively on a regional audience, Mens Health Week 2009 will target a metro audience and regional audience in addition.



KEY MESSAGES FOR MENS HEALTH WEEK 2009

The messages of the week are in line with the AGPN's Lifestyle Prescriptions (or Lifescripts) program and the Australian Better Health Initiative to promote good health and reduce the burden of chronic disease.

The week will promote messages around:

- SNAP (Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical activity) lifestyle risk factors
Lifescripts covers those risk factors and adds weight management as an additional risk factor.
- Drawing attention to the 45 – 49 (inclusive) year old health check.
- Mental health particularly in relation to depression.
- Sexual health and function – testosterone deficiency, vasectomy, prostate cancer – promoting greater awareness of issues surrounding the conditions and their implications for overall mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Discussing the links between certain conditions and their implications for health and wellbeing e.g. obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, erectile dysfunction, self esteem and relationship management etc.
- Indigenous health – the particular need to draw attention to indigenous health in relation to all of the above.



GET TOUGH ON PROSTATE CANCER

CHALLENGES WHEN DELIVERING MENS HEALTH MESSAGES - WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO SAY?

A major challenge of producing communication campaigns around mens health is that there is the potential to cover so much that there is a danger in practice nothing is said. A balanced and holistic approach to men's health reflects physical and mental health behaviour for the individual but also contains significant cultural and social aspects which are often just as important in terms of a man's health. It is crucial that there are clear calls to action about what a viewer should do and it is practical for him to do so.

In the Mens Health Week 2008 campaign the call to action was that men in aged 40+ should interact with their doctor at least once a year. There was a central focus on regional areas given that there is a particular priority to address men's health in rural areas. However seeing there are a shortage of GPs in regional areas, then even where a man is aware of the message he may not be able to act upon it.

In terms of mental health aspects as part of the campaign it was suggested to men that they should 'talk to their mates' about their problems. The difficulty is that they are not necessarily particularly likely to do this presently, and where men suffer from loneliness or isolation the prospect is even less likely.

There is not a culture of talking about health issues among men, there are fewer support networks, and there is less of a history of interacting with these networks. There are also a lot of misconceptions about how men should address their health. E.g, if they are not ill, why should they interact with a health professional? A lot of the reticence among men in terms of getting checked for prostate cancer is caught up with concerns about the digital rectal examination – this sort of concern is particularly surprising when compared with women's health where comparable inspections (in terms of personal invasion) occur more frequently. That women are now much more cooperative about presenting themselves for health inspections is largely due to decades worth of health campaigning that has meant these sorts of test are now part of a cultural psyche. In order to affect long term change with men, it will require similar scales of communications campaigns over many years. Women interact with health services on a regular basis from a younger age, and that there is the subsequent support network from friends and family, and that this has been the case over decades means that there is more of a culture of talking about physical health. This is not the case with men.

On other sensitive health subjects, particularly in relation to sexual health and function there is often reluctance from men to acknowledge that there could be a problem. Which reduces the chances of intervention and increases the risk of developing or dying of the

disease. Hence in both Australia and New Zealand we have used celebrity spokesmen for campaigns e.g, rock star Angry Anderson, or former international rugby players in New Zealand. That these macho tough guys are talking about serious, personal and sensitive health issues then men are more likely to respect the message and engage in a discourse with their peers about the subject.

It is important to recognize that men communicate in different ways to women and that the discourse of the messaging should reflect that. There is such a thing as gender specific communication campaigns –the style in which a low fat breakfast cereal is promoted is very different to the way in which a ute is advertised. Men eat low fat breakfast cereal and some women also buy utes, but generally speaking there is a communication style that is designed in order to appeal to the target market, and men's health communications campaign need to reflect this.

It is also important not to just think about men's behaviour and what men should or should not be doing more, but also the context in which this occurs. For instance it is one thing telling someone to do 30 minutes exercise a day and to eat healthy foods, but in many cases it may not be that simple to find time to do exercise, have access to facilities or where buying fresh fruit and vegetables requires a greater level of affluence than buying junk food etc.

When distributing mens health messages it is important to be realistic about how to reach men too – distributing health messages in pubs and service stations are arguably a more realistic way to engage with men than distributing messages via GP surgeries. In Mens Health Week 2008 MWC were involved in distributing messages at regional AFL and rugby league matches via the VFL, CRL and QRL. This approach is a means of reaching men where they regularly interact, capitalizing on spirits of family and community, and making what may be perceived to be a marginal issue, a mainstream concern. We will continue to build on this in Men's Health Week 2009.





THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TALKING ABOUT MENS HEALTH

‘While life expectancy is increasing in men, many of the risk factors that cause chronic diseases remain prevalent in men. Risk factors and health issues are often different for men and women but smoking, lack of exercise, poor nutrition and excessive alcohol consumption are still significant issues for both genders. Women play a key role in encouraging the men in their lives to improve their health behaviours and seek medical advice when they need to’

Dr Christine Bennett, Chair of the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission, writing on Men’s Health Matters on the MBF website, 19th January 2009

Men’s attitudes and actions towards their own health vary dramatically compared to women – hence the need for a Mens Health policy. MWC has been involved in health awareness campaigns in Australia and New Zealand in relation to Prostate Cancer where women have been shown to be an extremely important audience in order to distribute health messages and instigate a discussion in families.

For the Prostate Cancer awareness campaign ‘Blue September’ in New Zealand we sought a media partner to promote the campaign. Given that the health campaign featured former and current New Zealand rugby league and rugby union players (Wayne Shelford, Stuart Wilson, Rueben Wiki, Nathan Fien and Charlie McAlister) as spokesmen it might seem logical that we would partner with Rugby News for the campaign. However we chose New Idea magazine as the media partner as on balance it would be more effective in terms of a long term strategy of not only raising awareness of the dangers but also to instigate

action. Rugby News’s circulation is higher than New Idea (116,000 per week compared with 52,251 per week, ABC July-Dec 08). However New Idea’s editorial environment lent itself far better to covering health issues than a sports magazine- women are much better at discussing health matters in general – which is the whole reason for the campaign! The magazine reported on the campaign every week during the 4 weeks of Blue September, they also donated \$50,000 (NZ) to the campaign, as well as reporting the story of broadcaster Paul Holmes’ battle with prostate cancer 4 years previously. We know men do not respond well to men’s health messages, and it is indicative of the severity of the cultural obstacles in relation to mens health, that a short term communications campaign on a small promotional budget finds that the most likely way to affect immediate change is through targeting key influencers rather than the target group themselves.

By engaging women on the importance of men’s health messaging, the likelihood of men taking action in relation to their health is greatly increased. Whilst men are the key target audience for any men’s health messaging, women are almost as important – wives, partners, mothers, sisters, friends– it is important not to underestimate the importance of the ‘nag’ factor! A Mens Health policy communications campaign should contain a strategy that speaks directly to women in relation to men’s health.

OBSTACLES IN GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

FUNDING A CAMPAIGN

All the campaigns featured in this document were exclusively funded by contributions via corporate sponsorship. The difficulty with working with a not for profit organization is that by their very nature they seldom have the financial resources readily available to invest into a communications campaign.

In all cases MWC sought and secured funding from corporate sponsors prior to communication activity commencing, and the scale of the campaign has been dictated by the monies raised from the corporate sponsors.

For the campaigns addressed in this document the following brands were supporters of the campaign:

Prostate Cancer Community Service Announcement – Blundstone Footwear
Mens Health Week 2008 – Bayer Healthcare, Blackmores, Blundstones,
Wesfarmers Insurance

Blue September – Bosch Powertools, Dermalogica, John Bull Footwear, New Idea, Pacific Blue, Watties

Financial Contribution

Prostate Cancer Community Service Announcement	\$30,000
Mens Health Week	\$82,000
Blue September	\$115,000 (NZ)

Funding a campaign purely from the private sector represents a number of obstacles. In all the above campaigns there has been some fantastic results, yet delivering a campaign on such tight budgets obviously restricts the visibility of the messages. The production budgets shown above would widely be accepted by the communications industry as a minimum or even below the minimum level to conduct a substantive health campaign which has ambitious objectives. In all the cases we have been fortunate that the celebrity spokespeople in all of the campaigns charged no fees for their time, and only minimal expenses, and the sponsors have been generous in both supplying funds but also useful resources and infrastructure to help distribute messages. It is far from ideal to have to rely upon goodwill in order to release a communications campaign, but that has been an unavoidable fact in all of these projects.

By being reliant on private sector concerns to bankroll a health message that is clearly in the public interest can raise a question in terms of creditability of the message. MWC would like to reinforce that at no stage of any of the campaigns that we have been involved in has a corporate sponsor ever sought to influence the nature of the message that is being disseminated, and we have been consistently impressed by the professional and cooperative support of all our corporate partners. That is not to say that the same situation will necessary exist with other health campaigns undertaken by other organizations.

MWC has a significant experience of partnering good causes and charitable organisations with relevant and appropriate corporate brands. We are sensitive to both the integrity and core values of a charitable organization and never seek to partner them with a company that would in anyway compromise those values. We actively seek out corporate brands that share the enthusiasm for the charitable organisation's objectives, respect their operating methods and are eager to pursue ways in which by working together the common good cause is collectively enhanced. This process understandably requires a significant investment in time in order to secure corporate sponsor. MWC charges no fee to a not for profit organization for the time invested in seeking corporate supporters. The majority of communications agencies would quite understandably view this approach as commercially unsustainable. The alternative can be that the communications campaign simply does not go ahead.

Corporate brands financially contribute to these sorts of campaigns for a number of reasons, whether they be Cause Related Marketing or a very sincere benevolent interest in a particular issue. There is a risk that the visible involvement of a brand in a health awareness message could be perceived by the viewer as undermining the integrity of the message and that it is pandering to certain hidden agendas. Or where there is no acknowledgement at all there perception can even be worse – that the monies donated to the campaign are really intended as a means to gain some quid pro quo leverage. These are of course perceptions, and often completely unfounded, nonetheless when we are attempting to communicate with a viewer who is already known to be sceptical or reluctant to hear the message, then this can pose a further barrier.

If one is also to be reliant on corporate sponsors to fund a campaign, then one must be aware of the cause related marketing implications. There are very many opportunities for a corporate sponsor to attach their brand to a good cause whether it be about prostate cancer, health or guide dogs. The communications budget that sponsors would often invest into this activity would otherwise be spent upon marketing their brand in other ways, therefore consideration to the nature of the good cause and its subsequent audience will be closely scrutinized by marketers over which good cause they will support. Given the current economic climate, this will require even closer attention. Irrespective of a brand's sympathy for a 'good cause' and respect for what the subsequent communications activity

is looking to achieve, that alone is often not enough to justify investing in a campaign. Where a communications campaign is looking to speak directly to an audience that is less commercially attractive, then the likelihood of funding being secured and the communications activity going ahead may be jeopardized. Given that indigenous men's health and the health of men living in rural areas, are a particular priority for men's health messaging and that both of these groups are not viewed as the most attractive demographic by many marketers, then there are serious implications as to whether delivering a campaign in this way will be possible.

Of course what is the point of investing a lot of effort into communications campaigns if there is no way of knowing if it worked and if attitudes or behaviour have been changed from the messaging? In all the campaigns that are detailed in this document the means of gauging the impact of a campaign has been based upon the extent to which a CSA was played, an issue reported on, or indicative findings such as levels of traffic that have visited a campaign website etc. Whilst these are effective indicators they are not the same as definitive research into perceptions prior and post a campaign. The reason why this has not occurred, is simply because in none of the campaign budget was there the space funds of \$50,000 upwards in order to commission a market research company to produce substantive research into the impact that a campaign has had. Again the effectiveness of a message can be compromised due to the significant resource restrictions that are present in order to release a campaign at all. If there is a serious commitment to improving men's health then that needs to be reflected in the communications campaigning. There needs to be Federal Government leadership at the very least in relation to funding, and greater degrees of participation in determining the messaging may well be welcomed by a number of not for profit organizations as well.

There is a urgent need to communicate messages around mens health and whilst we believe all the campaigns we have been involved in are effective, it is far from ideal for legitimate health organizations to be reliant on this approach alone to get their message across.



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