

EPA National Community Involvement Conference – June 27-30, 2006

“Marketing the Message in Libby”

Concurrent Session: 8:30-10am, Milwaukee Room; 6/28/06

Ted Linnert's Script:

[Note: This script was integrated into the presentation as Peggy Churchill, Libby RPM, scrolled through her PowerPoint slides.]

Goodmorning, I'm Ted Linnert, CIC for Libby – thanks for choosing our presentation, I hope you won't regret it....

As you all know RPM's and CIC's live in completely separate yet perversely parallel universes. Our presentation this morning is an experiment intended to be empirical proof of this phenomenon.....

Peggy, speaking as a project manager and engineer, will briefly describe the background of the Libby Asbestos Superfund Site and then go into detail about our Community Involvement activities at the Site.

I, on the other hand, or I should say, in the other universe, will be speaking solely as a marketer this morning, not as a CIC really, but as a private sector marketer.

I'd like to introduce a new concept to the community involvement mix: it's called "Social Marketing." Even within the marketing discipline, Social Marketing is a relatively new concept but since this is an EPA CI conference we're not going to dwell on explaining Social Marketing in depth. Very simply: Social marketing is a strategy for changing public behavior.

Examples of Social Marketing that we're all familiar with include the DARE program to keep kids off drugs, or anti-smoking campaigns, or Smokey the Bear saying that 'Only you can prevent forest fires,' or dare I say environmental education campaigns promoting various hygiene techniques to reduce lead exposure.

I'm not claiming that EPA deliberately set out to initiate a "Social Marketing" campaign *per se* at Libby, quite the contrary. As you'll see from Peggy's slides, the Site Team intended to take a marketing-based approach to their CI program at the Site, but I am going to try to make the case that they were unwittingly implementing a classic Social Marketing Campaign. I've only been working at

the site for about a year, but it's been my observation that the CI program put in place by my predecessor and the rest of the Site Management Team is indeed a Social Marketing campaign, whether they'd care to admit it or not.

I will interrupt Peggy at various intervals during her presentation to guide you, as my carefully recruited marketing focus group (I'll bet you thought you were exercising free will when you signed up for this presentation!), through a few simple exercises leading to the formation of a message. You are the perfect demographic to help us define and hone the message we need to convey to the public in Libby. So Peggy will give you the facts, I will sort of facilitate the focus group – two different universes, one presentation.....

I trust you all picked up a worksheet for this exercise as you came in – if not, raise your hand and we'll get one to you. Also, don't forget to pick up as you leave our handout on Social Marketing as a memento of this momentous event.

OK, without further ado, here's Peggy to give you an overview of what's going on at the Superfund Site in Libby, Montana.....

[Peggy: Slides 1-?, Ted interrupts before Peggy begins her "General Approach" section]

OK focus group, before Peggy bores you into a coma, let's get down to business.....

Social Marketing takes the classic "Four P's of the Marketing Mix" used to help sell a tangible product or service 1. Product, 2. Price, 3. Place (or distribution), and 4. Promotion and modifies them to market an intangible product offering, such as our message in Libby.

The 1st "P" (product) becomes the Problem. Social marketing, like traditional marketing, focuses on the consumer, in this case the residents in Libby. So in the first blank section on your worksheet, using the information Peggy has just given you, please answer: 'What is the problem in Libby?' What is it that the people want and need from the EPA in Libby?

[give attendees a few minutes to write]

In traditional marketing, the 2nd "P" (price) is pretty straightforward (professional marketers might not agree with this, because there's all sorts of research done to determine what a consumer will choose to spend for a certain product, but that's not our concern today). For our Social Marketing case study of Libby, I'm going

to call the 2nd “P” Perception. What do the folks in Libby perceive going along with EPA’s cleanup plan is going to cost them? What are they going to have to give up, how much emotional capital are they willing to spend to support our cleanup? Please think about this for a few seconds and fill in the second blank on your worksheet.

[give attendees a minute, Peggy begins again, then after “Step 1c – Identify Messengers, Ted begins again:]

I don’t think the “P” for Place needs to change in this case, it’s Libby, Montana, no changing that. But please give some thought about how our message should be distributed within Libby and then write these message distribution channels down in the third blank. As Peggy has mentioned, we’ve got a pretty comprehensive message distribution system already in place in Libby, but maybe you’ll think of something we missed.

[give them a few minutes, then before Peggy’s slide “Step 1e – Develop Measures of Success”, Ted prattles on]

As crass as it may seem to us socially-conscious environmentalists, let’s also leave the 4th “P” (promotion) alone too. In classical marketing, promotion consists of the integrated use of advertising, public relations, promotions, media advocacy, personal selling, and entertainment vehicles. Isn’t this really what we do at Superfund sites? Isn’t this what Peggy, project manager, has been describing in her very engineer-like way? Or is it? In your 4th blank on the worksheet, please let us know what else we could or should do more of, less of, or what you’d advise us not to do anymore at all.....

[After a minute or two, back to Peggy measuring success, then before the “Case History” slide]

At any Superfund Site and especially at Libby, there are certain aspects of a classical marketing campaign that normally require extensive research that are handed to us as a given when we show up to begin a removal action.

The Problem is already apparent in some form or another and our Baseline Risk Assessment defines it with prescribed scientific accuracy.

The Place is a no-brainer, but distributing the message effectively within it might take some thought.

I feel that the Social Marketing challenges in Libby fall under the “Ps” of Perception and Promotion.

Let’s deal with Perception by creating a few more “Ps” as subheadings under it, and I’m suggesting People and Partnerships. As Peggy mentioned, in classical marketing, targeting one’s audience is major component of any campaign. At a Superfund Site and in Libby in particular, this is done for us – the people affected by the contamination are our audience. Of course, the residents of Libby or any community are not an entirely homogenous population thus certain segments of the population may have to be targeted differently; but asbestosis or mesothelioma don’t discriminate, these diseases have targeted everyone in Libby – basically the entire population is at risk.

At the core of any Social Marketing campaign are those who are intended to be the consumers of the campaign’s products. Professional Social Marketeers call this audience “Target Adapters” because they are the specific people whose acceptance and adoption of the social product will fulfill the objectives of the campaign. This feature of Social Marketing couldn’t be more applicable to Libby. The residents of Libby must accept and then **adopt** the so-called products or messages of our campaign – be it the buy-in that there’s a problem, be it the acceptance of our cleanup plan, or be it the adoption of some behavior modification, for example adopting and acting in accordance with whatever Institutional Controls we leave in place after we’re gone.

People are drawn to adopt a social product on the basis of feeling, which in turn triggers attitudes. In the fifth blank on your worksheet, please tell us what you think we can do to further influence the feelings and attitudes of the people in Libby.

[they write, Peggy begins her “Case History”, then at slide “Step 1f –We Developed a Plan, Ted:]

The other “P” I’d like to throw in here under People is Partnerships. We CIC’s call it working with Stakeholders. I’m not going to tell you about working with stakeholders because you’re already the experts in this field. Peggy has described some of the many stakeholders we work with in Libby. But how does this fit into a Social Marketing campaign?

Many social causes, including environmental protection, take on the character of a public issue. Typically these social change campaigns in the eyes of a Social Marketeer require the assistance of a mediating institution and in the case of Libby that’s us, the EPA. We need to bring all these disparate community groups together, or least get them all on board to work individually or collectively to

achieve our goal. TAGs and certainly CAGs are examples of EPA's efforts to mobilize influence groups. As Peggy (may have) mentioned, sitting around the table at a CAG meeting in Libby is LAMP, CARD, Lincoln County, the hospital, Clinton, media, EPA, State, the audience etc. – all the usual suspects.

There are a couple more "Ps" I'd like to quickly throw in as subheadings under the last classical marketing "P" of Promotion. The first is Policy – Social Marketing programs can succeed in motivating individual behavior change, but that is difficult to sustain unless the environment they're in supports that change for the long run. If an existing policy or political environment needs to change or evolve, advocacy programs can be an effective complement to a Social Marketing program. I may be stretching this a bit, but I submit that some of our activities in Libby that Peggy is describing to you, such as our "Dream It, Do It" seminars, Contractor Workshops, and our O&M working group are attempting to change existing policies and conditions in Libby.

Can you think of or have you used in the past other methods of changing the policies or cultural environment at your Superfund Sites? If so, please write them down in the sixth blank on your worksheet. Suggest to us how you would mobilize these influence groups in Libby.....

[they write, after a minute or so Ted continues]

The last "P" I'd like to stick under Promotion is PurseStrings. In our world, funding looms large as a limiting factor of what we can do to Promote our message to say nothing of the amount of actual cleanup work we can do on the ground. We all know funding is a major factor in what we can do at a Superfund Site and Peggy has touched upon how funding has affected our work in Libby – I'm not going to belabor the point.

[Peggy finishes up her slide show, with the "Focus Group Exercise" slide in view, Ted sums up:]

It strikes me and I humbly submit to you this morning that our traditional Community Involvement Plan at a Superfund Site is almost a textbook example of a Social Marketing Plan. The CIP has all the Social Marketing elements strategies, tactics, action items, budgets, implementation, controlling, maintenance, and evaluation of results. But this is not a presentation on CIPs – I'm sure you could find another concurrent session on that topic somewhere in the schedule. I just wanted to get you folks to look at our CI program in Libby from a completely different angle. Perhaps it will help you at your Sites, perhaps

you will analyze your CIPs from a different perspective from now on, perhaps I haven't come close to making the case.

In any event, I'd really appreciate one last bit of help from this very able focus group. In the last blank on your worksheet, in 25 words or less, as they might say in a marketing promotion on a cereal box, please write down, based on what both Peggy and I have said this morning, what you think the overriding message to the Libby community should be.....These will be judged and we actually have some really cool prizes from Libby, Montana for the three best messages.....

[Give attendees at least five minutes time permitting, Ted speaks:]

When you're done, please pass your worksheets to Jeff and Karen, our independent judges from CDM.....

While Jeff and Karen are judging your messages, Peggy and I can take some questions.....

[Jeff and Karen are judging, when they're done they will give us a nod...Ted or Peggy:]

OK, our judges have made their decisions, let's bring them up here..... These are the people who do all the work and Peggy and I take all the credit. This is Karen Ekstrom and Jeff Montera from our contractors at Libby, CDM.

[turn mics over to Karen & Jeff, they do their thing.....]

That's all folks! Thanks for your help! We really appreciate it!! Best Focus Group ever!!!!

[Peggy, Ted, Karen, & Jeff bow in unison to the clamor of thunderous applause]