Stop the Spread Campaign

Marian Faughnan
Outline

• Public health issue
• Approach
• Campaign overview
• Evaluation
  • Conversation
  • Quantitative
• Conclusion
The consequences of excess weight: 
... not healthy

- Heart Disease
- Cancers (breast, prostate, colorectal, gallbladder, ovary, cervical & uterus)
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Stroke
- Depression & Dementia
- Hypertension
- Lipid disorder
- Gallstones
- Infertility/hormone imbalances
- Arthritis, Gout
- Complications in pregnancy
- Sleep apnoea
- Asthma aggravation
Reality versus perception

Being Overweight is Normal

2 in 3 are overweight
(National Adult Nutrition Survey 2011
/Health Survey Northern Ireland 10/11)

Representative sample ~2000 adults – March 2011
Transtheoretical Model

- Pre-Contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance
- (Re)lapse
- Exit

STOP THE SPREAD
The goal: the change that we’re hoping to achieve

Primary

All adults determine whether they are in this overweight category

Secondary

✓ Encourage adults to start the process of losing weight
✓ Increasing awareness in relation to the long term issues e.g. diabetes & cancer
✓ Increasing awareness in relation the support systems available
The Creative idea: cutting through the inertia

benign, personal, cosmetic $\rightarrow$ dangerous, public health issue

On a population level –

✓ Overweight has steadily spread (last 20 years)
✓ Focus on overweight not just obesity
✓ Relevance to ‘me’ and ‘us’ > ‘them’

On a personal level –

✓ It probably includes me – 2 out of 3

New, simple tangible action to self-identify overweight
Waist Circumference

- Single measure

- Reflective of central obesity

- World Health Organisation cut offs for a healthy waist
  $\leq$ 37 inches for men
  $\leq$ 32 inches for women

Ahmina, 2006
Approaches to Behaviour Change:

E.g. All measures that support or incentivise individuals to make healthier choices:

- **Hug**: E.g. Positioning of healthy foods within a canteen

- **Nudge**: E.g. FSAI’s programme of voluntary industry salt reduction

E.g. Taxation on sugary drinks, closure of premises that fail to comply with food safety legislation:

- **Smack**: E.g. Taxation on sugary drinks, closure of premises that fail to comply with food safety legislation

- **Shove**: E.g. FSAI’s programme of voluntary industry salt reduction

**Active Decision**

*Conscious/Considered*

**Passive Decision**

*Automatic/unconscious*

**Incentive**

*Reward*

**Disincentive**

*Punish*
Integrated Mass media Campaign

TV Advertising

Radio Advertising

Public Relations

Digital and social media

May 2011
The TV ad:
The conversation
What the media said:

Sustained & Successful

- All Broadsheets, All Regionals
- Editors section in 3 papers
- Morning Ireland, Six One News, 9’OClock News, BBC Radio Ulster, Cool, Downtown, Citibeat, Q
- Dedicated health supplement
- Medical Publications
- 8 x weeks
- Overall circulation 3.9 million
Debate:

Shock obesity TV ad is slated by health experts

Debates are normally analytic discussions that enable opposing sides to present arguments, facts, and evidence to persuade others of their views. But the public's reaction to a shock health campaign ad that aired recently in Ireland provides a stark example of how poorly conceived advertising can generate a passionate debate with consequences.

The campaign, launched by the Health Promotion Board (HPB) to combat obesity, featured an advertisement that showed a woman's body with a tape measure highlighting her waist, and a voice-over explaining the dangers of being overweight. The footage was intended to raise awareness about the health risks associated with obesity, but it sparked an intense debate on social media and in the media.

Some health experts praised the campaign as a necessary warning against the dangers of obesity, while others criticized it for being tasteless and potentially harmful. The debate highlighted the need for careful consideration of public health messages to ensure they are effective and well-received.

The HPB decided to halt the campaign after receiving widespread backlash. This decision illustrates the importance of monitoring public reactions to health campaigns and adjusting strategies accordingly.

Jennifer O'Connell

Safefood's expensive, publicly funded ad campaign against obesity is crass, offensive and, worst of all, completely unrealistic

Safefood, the government body responsible for food safety, launched a controversial advertising campaign aimed at reducing obesity rates in Ireland. The campaign included a series of TV ads and billboard posters that were criticized for being insensitive and offensive.

The ads featured images of women with realistic body proportions, accompanied by messages encouraging people to lose weight. However, the campaign drew criticism from feminists and other groups, who argued that it reinforced harmful stereotypes about women's bodies.

The debate surrounding the campaign highlighted the challenges of creating public health messages that are effective and well-received by the public.
Website hits - 100000+
Facebook – 13000+ fans
Weigh2live – 30000+ sign ups
Dermot Bright  Safefood
May 22, 2011

A lot of people are upset with your add... But if it gets through to some people.. IT WILL save lives... ITS THAT SIMPLE...

Unlike · Comment · Share

12 1

Kerry Brady  Safefood
May 20, 2011

I have come to notice that your measuring tape appears to be grossly inaccurate. I feel that it would incite Anorexia Nervosa and Bullema in younger girls of teenage years. Young girls have enough pressure on them already to appear thin. I feel that this measuring tape could create an even bigger problem with our young adult society. We would politely and respectfully request the removal of these...See More

Like · Comment · Share

14 20 20

Safefood
May 19, 2011

Hi everyone, don’t forget to join us here on the Safefood Facebook page tonight at 8.30pm for a live chat with our nutritionists Aileen and Marian if you have any questions about starting your weight loss programme. Talk to you then!
How Did We Measure Up?
Face-to-Face interviews in the home

Benchmark April 2011
June & November 2011

Nationally representative sample
Adults aged 18+ on the Island of Ireland

- Evaluate public response to *Stop the Spread*
- Measure change in awareness and understanding of overweight
What percentage of population saw/heard ads?

**TV**
- 32%
- 68%

- TV Norm ROI 49%
- TV Norm UK 57%

**Radio**
- 50%

- Radio Norm ROI 38%
- Radio Norm UK 19%
Alert people to the prevalence of overweight

- 91% of those who saw ad agreed that more and more people and more people were becoming overweight on island of Ireland
- Correct estimation of the scale of the issue increased from 30-50% (April – Nov 2011)
Reflection on health issues & own weight

- 83% - new information about how to identify if you are overweight
- 73% - new information about the link between overweight and cancer
- 55% - The points made in the ad were relevant to me
- 35% correctly recalled 37 inches and 30% correctly recalled 32 inches for healthy waist for men and women
- 60% - It made me more likely to measure my waist
- 1 in 5 claimed to have measured their waist in previous 6 weeks
How did the public measure up?

**Strengths**
- 2 in 3 recall – (73% in ROI, 57% in NI)
- 1 in 5 measured their waists
- 91% agree that overweight is spreading on the island
- 63% knew 37” & 56% knew 32”
- 7 in 10 said that the link with cancer was new information

**Opportunities**
- 1 in 3 disagree with one size fits all
- 1 in 4 believe 32/37 is obese
- 3 in 10 disagree with the social contagion
Changes to phase 2:

- Focus on the common ‘excuses’ i.e. middle-aged spread, height and genetics
- Focus on men
- A more supportive tone
- Development of MLA programme in Northern Ireland
- Advertorial series in NI print media
- Extended briefing to wider stakeholder group
Some conclusions..

- Overall, the direct approach of the Stop the Spread campaign has been somewhat controversial.
- However, it has been publicly endorsed by key public health professionals and in key media editorials.
- The campaign has created much debate about the extent of overweight in our society.
- Stop the Spread has also raised significant awareness of the importance of weight around our waist.
Thank you

Website: www.safefood.eu

Facebook: facebook.com/safefood.eu

Twitter: safefood_eu