

What is social marketing?

Written by Prof Sharyn Rundle-Thiele



Do you know the difference between social marketing and social media?

In 2017, a consensus definition of social marketing was reached. The [consensus definition of Social Marketing](#) states that:

"Social Marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviour that benefits individuals and communities for the greater social good. Social Marketing practice is guided by ethical principles. It seeks to integrate research, best practice, theory, audience and partnership insight to inform the delivery of competition-sensitive and segmented social change programmes that are effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable."

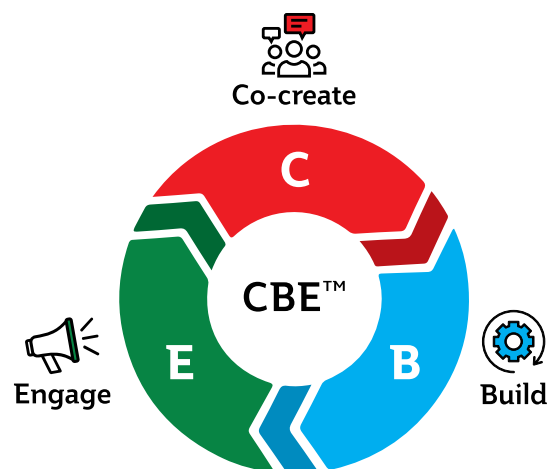
Many of the issues we tackle are complex. Recently, the Social Marketing @ Griffith team has been tackling:

- University student retention
- Threatened and endangered species
- Social inclusion
- Water quality
- Violence prevention

Our marketing work, proven to deliver intended outcomes and lasting impact, follows the CBE™ process.

CBE™ is a continual improvement process, and in practice, activities described in each phase occur at the same time.

To understand how marketing is applied strategically and tactically, it is easier to see how a behaviour change program was built for the first time using the CBE™ process.



Co-create is the first phase. The work completed during the co-creation phase delivers insights. Co-creation identifies a full list of actions that people want and need that are also supported by stakeholders. The insights arising from mixed methods research applied during the co-create phase delivers a list of actions, ideas or tested prototypes to guide the build phase.

The co-creation phase might indicate you need to **build** an intervention, redesign a system or write a new policy. Once built, you and your team must **engage** with community members and stakeholders. If people don't know about your new program or the changes made, they won't use what's been built. And that would be a waste of time, effort, and money.

The engage phase is where you make sure people have heard about what you've got to offer and that once they've heard, they are taking action. [Take a look at the CBE™ process here.](#)

To understand how the CBE™ process was applied to increase healthy eating, [click here](#) to follow the step-by-step approach taken by the team who co-created, built and engaged people to increase rates of healthy eating. Start by clicking co-create and follow the social marketing process.



Full detail on how the Go Food program was co-created, what was built and who was engaged during the trial program is also available in scientific papers. You can read about:

1. The [food outlet scoring study](#),
2. The [evidence review](#) taught us that behaviour change is more likely when approaches move beyond communication only,
3. The range of tools used during the [co-creation phase](#)
4. [Go Food program outcomes](#)
5. The [CBE™ process](#).

If you can't access the scientific papers, email Julia Carins j.carins@griffith.edu.au or Sharyn Rundle-Thiele s.rundle-thiele@griffith.edu.au to request a copy. We're happy to help.

Social marketing and social media

So, after you've investigated all of this, I've got one question for you. Where did you read about social media in this description of how marketing was applied to increase healthy eating?

Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Be Real, RedIt, YouTube and more are **NOT** social marketing.

Social marketing is a strategic process. Good social marketers know how to learn what people want; they test, test and test, improve and do it all again.

While a social marketer might use social media when the time comes to raise awareness of the product, service, program, person or idea they are trying to motivate people to try, they know that social media is one mere tool in their kit.

Don't confuse social marketing with social media. They are very different things.



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Sharyn loves to make change happen. Her science work focuses on how we can improve rates of change, and her practice is focused on creating and, where possible, maintaining partnerships with stakeholders and community to achieve intended outcomes.