

"Time To Quit"

By Elinor Wilson, R.N., B.A.

The increasing number of people expressing the desire to quit smoking and preferring to do it on their own makes it necessary to develop and pilot new methods of programme delivery able to impact on large populations (Evans et al, 1981). The pervasiveness of television and its ability to enter all strata of society lends itself to programme development in smoking cessation and maintenance of this behaviour.

Taking the above into consideration, Health & Welfare Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society undertook a joint project developing a multi-media, community-based programme to assist individuals, aged 25-45, to quit smoking and maintain their non-smoking behaviour.

This article will discuss the Manitoba Interagency Council on Smoking and Health's involvement in piloting this programme in Winnipeg, a city of 650,000 people. While little evidence exists to support the contention that television can produce behaviour change, numerous studies indicate that television is effective in reinforcing the existing beliefs, attitudes and intentions of the target audience (Lau et al, 1978).

Television can also provide support for desired behaviour change by showing the new behaviour as the social norm (Fishbein et al, 1975), as well as "crystallizing" and reinforcing "attitudes and intentions" (Comstock et al, 1978). In the "Time to Quit" programme, the T.V. medium is utilized to promote the belief that certain behavioural changes are possible to accomplish smoking cessation. The individual's ability to achieve this desired result is further reinforced by the "positive imagery, attractive modelling and representation of non-smoking as a desirable norm" (Evans et al, 1981).

The "Time to Quit" programme consists of three one-half hour television programmes, a behavioural self-management booklet and a component of community mobilization aimed at increasing the effectiveness of programming.

"Time to Quit" targets 24-45 year old smokers moderately or highly motivated to quit smoking. The underlying assumption is that with this motivation an individual would employ self-management and utilize behavioural tasks to aid and maintain quitting behaviour.

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Television Programmes

The television programmes were designed with several goals. In order to entertain, information on smoking cessation was provided by popular Canadian entertainers using a humorous approach. The content of the three programmes was designed to complement the three stages of quitting presented in the self-help booklet. The T.V. programmes did not attempt to educate or produce behaviour change but presented smoking cessation as a desirable behaviour and an attainable goal while empathizing with the smoker's difficulties surrounding cessation. Constant emphasis on success and support of an individual's ability to attain this goal would make it socially acceptable for individuals to attempt quitting and provide needed reassurance that this goal would eventually be achieved. The deliberately light approach taken to programming is a direct contrast to the usual "medical model". This approach could potentially impact a larger audience who might not tune in to hear another lecture on the evils of smoking.

The second objective of the television programmes was to direct people to the print material, that is, the behavioural self-management booklet which provided them with the actual tool to attempt smoking cessation. The content of the shows stressed throughout that these booklets were available and commercial messages at the end of each show indicated the pick-up point in the community.

We are already aware from advertising that T.V. has a powerful influence on individuals to "sell" them on what is important. A major purpose of the television programmes was to foster the attitude that smoking cessation is such a prominent and important issue that three one-half hour television programmes were devoted to it.

Self-Help Booklet

The "Time to Quit" self-help booklet, in contrast, provides detailed information on how to quit. The self-help management programme utilizes self-control, self-reinforcement, and self-evaluation. The approach for the smoker is the identification of reasons for smoking and based on these reasons, identification of strategies enabling him to quit smoking and maintain this behaviour. The smoker utilizes a record-keeping mechanism to detect high risk times and situations and finds methods of dealing with these areas. The smoker also chooses a quitting method for his quitting day and prepares himself through practise and rehearsal for that time. The third step after actual cessation is reinforcement for the

behaviour and exploration of the side effects experienced after smoking cessation. It also encourages self definition as a non-smoker. Failure is discussed only in the context of the smoker making the choice of a wrong strategy for smoking cessation and encouragement given to choose another strategy and try again.

Use of Mass Media

Mass media was used to "hype" the "Time to Quit" programme and as well provide the vital function of leading people to the self-help booklet. The three television programmes were broadcast by CBC during prime time hours (7:00-7:30 p.m.). They were aired on the same day and time on three consecutive weeks. As well, CBC designed three 30-second public service announcements encouraging people to watch the show and pick up their free "Time to Quit" booklet. One hundred and thirty-seven of these messages were shown over a three-week period prior to the first show. As well, a second commercial was produced, the focus message being a linkage to the self-help booklet. Through purchased air time, the three networks showed a total of 115 messages and, as well, gave free public service announcement time. If the public picked up their booklet first, the link to the television shows was accomplished by the use of a sticker on the booklet advising people to watch the T.V. programmes. This enabled one to either pick up a booklet as a result of seeing the T.V. commercial or see the T.V. programmes as a result of picking up a booklet.

Radio Ads

A letter was sent to all radio stations explaining the "Time to Quit" programme and asking for public service announcements around the central theme of smoking cessation. These announcements also provided direction to booklet availability. Three radio stations provided a total of 106 public service announcements. The announcements were enhanced by the bantering of the disc jockeys regarding the smoking cessation problem and constant references on air to newspaper articles dealing with smoking.

Newspapers

A series of three newspaper ads were developed utilizing a teaser-type of approach. Three ads, building on one another, were run consecutively in the same place in the newspaper for thirty issues. This enhanced the effect of the ad by having three ads per issue. This was done for both newspapers in the city utilizing staggered days so that for three weeks prior to the television programmes there was a daily newspaper ad. The

newspapers, as well, carried many other stories about smoking issues, which served to keep smoking in front of the public consciousness. These articles dealt with such issues as smoking and drug interaction, helpful eating habits while quitting, and smoking in the workplace.

Billboards

Billboard advertising was used for a period of six weeks identifying where individuals could pick up a "Time to Quit" booklet. Twelve panels throughout the city were utilized with fifty Gross Rating Points daily. This exposure is considered a moderate frequency and visibility campaign.

Readerboards

Businesses in the city that utilized readerboards or changeable neon signs for their advertising were approached and, as a public service, asked to run some kind of teaser ad for "Time to Quit". Such slogans as: "You learned to smoke, now learn to quit", "Have you thought about 'Time to Quit'", and "It's 'Time to Quit'" were utilized outside 109 different businesses.

Press Conference

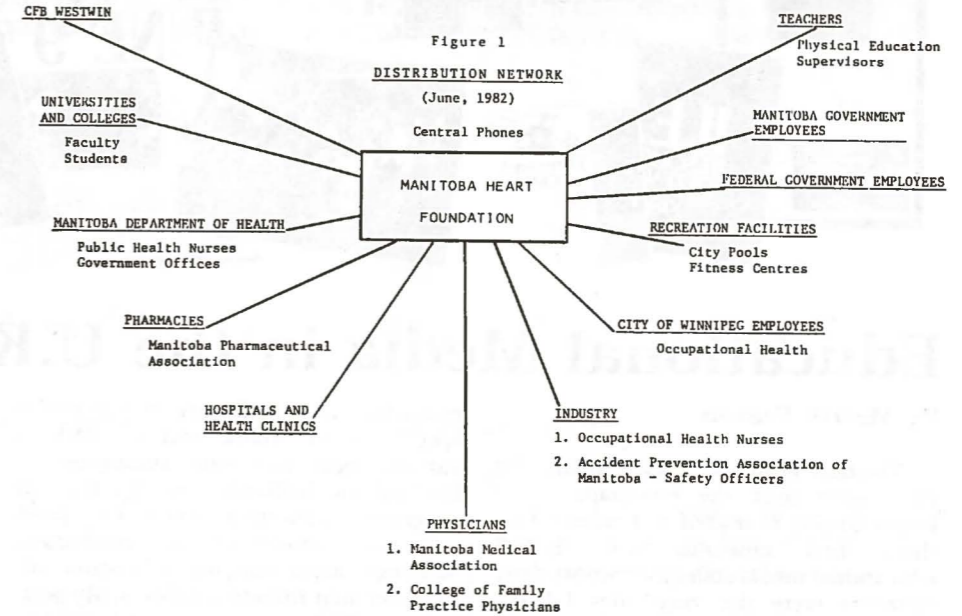
The beginning of this multi-faceted mass media push for the programme was staged to immediately follow a press conference held at the Legislative Building. The press conference had representation from Health & Welfare Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Manitoba Interagency Council on Smoking & Health, and the Manitoba Department of Health. This press conference, attended by the majority of television and radio stations in the city, provided major coverage for the programme and a highly visible launch.

All distribution areas for the "Time to Quit" booklet were asked to hold their internal publicity and distribution to coincide with this press conference.

This combination of mass media was designed to provide saturation of the population to "Time to Quit" and lead the public to the television programmes, the booklet and active participation in the programme.

Community Mobilization

Internal publicity and distribution of booklets were accomplished via a distribution network whose major task was to promote "Time to Quit" within their organizations and/or places of business. People involved in the distribution network were also responsible for internal promotion accomplished utilizing internal newsletters, posters and bulletin boards, displays, and contests among employees.



Results

Although the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement calculated a rather low audience rating of three percent of the extended market for the television programmes (approximately 20,000 people watched the shows), one should realize what the television shows and mass media were intended to do.

The television shows were important reinforcers but the promotion surrounding them led people to the self-help booklet which can be utilized at any time. In Winnipeg, 86,000 "Time to Quit" booklets were distributed throughout the community. The survey, following the "Time to Quit" programme, of booklet pick-up indicated that pick-up range from distribution areas was between 55-100 percent, with a mean of 88 percent. Health & Welfare Canada also indicates through their research that the "Time to Quit" programme was successful in reaching 84 percent of the target audience - i.e. 84 percent of the target population of 22-45 years of age were aware of the "Time to Quit" programme.

Success is often defined as "the degree or measure of succeeding or attaining one's desired end" or "favourable termination of a venture" (Webster's Dictionary). It is naive to base the success of the "Time to Quit" programme on smoking cessation. The actual number of individuals who stopped smoking as a result of the programme will presumably approximate other smoking cessation programmes, however, in our experience, the programme has been successful. To the author's knowledge, no other programme in Winnipeg has reached that percentage of the population with printed

material or succeeded in attracting 20,000 viewers to a television programme on such a health related issue.

Success was reflected in community sensitization to smoking as an issue. For an eight-week period, citizens of Winnipeg were barraged by information on smoking via print, television, radio, billboards, and booklets. There were few who did not recognize the name "Time to Quit" and, as a result, Winnipeg had an increased awareness to the smoking issue. This is reflected in demand for smoking cessation programmes, bylaws to restrict smoking in public places and for information on smoking. It has also created requests to run "Time to Quit" within organizations and institutions as an ongoing programme. "Time to Quit" also allowed access to many community groups who are continuing their involvement in the smoking cessation area. It has given us a "foot in the door" in smoking cessation to many previously uninterested areas.

The Manitoba Interagency Council on Smoking & Health recognizes that there is no finite end to smoking cessation programmes. If run well in a community, sensitization of the public to the smoking issue will provide impetus for programming and legislative efforts for many years to come. This programme has also shown how concerted, co-operative efforts between government and voluntary agencies and the community, utilizing all methods of mass media, can have a significant sensitization impact on an entire community.

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NEW PUBLICATION

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EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

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the Open University's new School of Education. These packages are of particularly high quality and must appeal to teachers, for they are expected to pay their own way through teacher purchases. My visits to the Open University were a pleasure: energy levels were high, and producers, subject specialists, and course managers seemed to be greatly enjoying a course-team method of working whereby colleagues with different roles and areas of expertise associate by invitation, and for which communication skills must be developed to a high degree.

It was an interesting time to be studying educational media in the U.K., because patterns of use were rapidly changing, and existing broadcast agencies were busy reaching out to explore the new-technology areas. Microcomputers, for instance: I talked to BBC Continuing Education department producers who were just finishing the "Making the Most of the Micro" computer literacy series, part of a project which led to the development and marketing of a special BBC Microcomputer System. The BBC was advertising its upcoming Telesoftware Service, which would broadcast computer programs to viewers with BBC Microcomputers. And people at the Open University were producing teacher in-service packages for the "Micros in the Schools" project.

My visit to the U.K. made me realize the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between developing our own "patch" (a common-garden British expression which I happily collected) and keeping in touch with what's going on in the field world wide. Back in my own patch now, I often make use of the documents, anecdotes, and ideas I picked up in the course of my study visit. And I look forward to sharing whatever information might be useful with the next Canadian to explore the other side of the educational-broadcasting mountain.

"TIME TO QUIT"

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2. The Award can be made to up to 5 recipients per year.
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 - c. A comprehensive description of the nominee's contribution including:
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 - ii. Implementation and timeline details.
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