



# The value of Social Marketing

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## Healthier life, safer home, cleaner environment, more respect for each other...

... how do you get people to change their behavior? How do you reach out to them with your prevention program? When can you be sure you're targeting the right audience and how do you know they feel comfortable enough with your offer to put it into action?

**Social marketing is specially designed to help professionals find the answers to those kinds of questions. The method helps you to get your health-, environmental or safety message across and therefor support people to change their behavior.**

We are all experts in our own field and have relevant experience and knowledge to design professional interventions and programs. The essential expertise we might want to add is to become an expert in the lives of our target audiences as well. To really understand people, in order to help them change or adjust their behavior. To become such an expert, we need to be able to observe, pose the right questions and find ways to deepen our knowledge about them. And thereafter be well equipped to make the right choices. In co-production, consumer-based and with deep respect for their perspective on the matter.

Social Marketing offers a supplementary way of executing (prevention) projects and a new mindset in the public domain, using behavioural, social psychology and marketing theory together with project management. Social Marketing helps you understand your target audience; what moves and motivates them, prior to designing an intervention. As a method, social marketing enables you to set tangible and clear objectives. To develop a consumer-based result that is even fun, easy and appealing to your audience. With the outcome people do make use of what you're offering. Not only because they want to stay healthy, or safe, but above all because they like what you have to offer and feel this is actually doable. So that you can put your time, money and energy on projects people really and effectively act on.

As a Method Social marketing is like the mother of many behavioural methods. It's the first step in every behavior change project and the method that helps you gather the much-needed insights at the beginning of your project. Insights that'll help you understand your audience. Insights you'll need

to make decisions about segmentation, the behaviour you want to change, the benefits you need to offer and the barriers you need to overcome. It'll help you set up a realistic exchange, choose the most appropriate behavioural theory and create an attractive and tangible intervention mix. An intervention mix that is more likely to be put to action by your target audience because they'll perceived it as doable, attractive, and useful.

#### **Julie Huibregtsen about Social Marketing:**



*“Why apply social marketing? In my experience social marketing is a practical method, that fits within the daily work of professionals. It requires skills that most people already have, like true curiosity, which only needs to be recognised and put to use as a professional competence and supported by social marketing tools.*

*My main drive for the last years? To enlighten the daily work and challenges of professionals. Social marketing can do this, by helping you collect the insights you need to be truly effective.*

*My value? My experience in providing training, promoting and implementing social marketing and translating social marketing into practice, always aware of the implementation challenges.*

*I'm fond of metaphors and one I often use is the elephant trail: the small, often bumpy and sandy paths people walk or bicycle, perceiving it's a faster lane than the official sidewalk. As a metaphor elephant trails represent the heart of social marketing. They regard to being curious about how people 'walk' instinctively and why. Just like elephants always choose the straightest path into the wilderness, people do so in their daily life. This helps you realise that you need to know exactly why people behave the way they do, before (re)designing your program. So, you end up designing a path they will walk naturally...”*

Julie runs the Dutch company Huibregtsen Sociale Marketing. In 2008 she was one of the first to provide social marketing training and support to professionals in the Netherlands. She is founding and board member of the European Social Marketing Association who organises European Social Marketing Conferences (Lisbon, Rotterdam, Helsinki, Antwerp and Thessaloniki). She has helped professionals in various sectors. Like health and wellbeing (for instance lifestyle, solitude, overweight, prevention of infectious disease), safety (safety of workplaces like factories or fire safety at home) or sustainability (like the energy transition). She has been working internationally with professor Jeff French (University of Sussex, UK) and professor Suzanne Suggs (Lugano, Switzerland) and teaches at ministries, institutes and not-for-profit organisations in the Netherlands. Since 2018 she is also active for youth health care in the Netherlands.

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