Using Social Marketing to Reach Women with The Heart Truth

Heart Disease is the #1 Killer of Women

The Facts about Heart Disease and Women

- Heart disease is the #1 killer of women in America.
- One in four women dies of heart disease.
- About one-third of women still underestimate their own personal risk of heart disease – they fail to make a connection between risk factors, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and their personal risk.
- Having just one risk factor doubles the risk of developing heart disease; risk skyrockets with each added risk factor.
- Fully 80% of midlife women have one or more of the risk factors for heart disease.

The Heart Truth Campaign in Brief

- Launched: September 2002 by NHLBI/NIH
- Objective: Increase awareness of heart disease as women's #1 killer; motivate women to take action to reduce their risk
- Audience: Women ages 40 – 60
- Overall approach: Social marketing campaign incorporating a strong branding strategy
- Implementation strategy: Partnership development, media, community action; focus on women of color
- Based on strong foundation of target audience research: Leverage women's interest in their outward appearance to focus on what's inside (heart); strong wake up call about personal risk; hard-hitting approach - a deliberate departure from campaign executions that existed at the time

Brand Power: The Red Dress

Creation of a women and heart disease brand – the Red Dress – as the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness

“Heart Disease Doesn't Care What You Wear – It's the #1 Killer of Women”

Strong appeal to wide diversity of women; materials use images of "real" women

Central driving force of the campaign - fashion industry partnership; unique platform for other partnerships, high profile events, media

Bringing the Brand to Life

Red Dress Collection – NY Fashion Week

- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
National Wear Red Day

Corporate Partnerships

- 40+ partnerships valued at $65 million
- Underwriting of major program activities
- In-kind—advertising, in-store promotions, events
- 9.4 billion product placements since 2003

Media Partnerships

- Glamour
- Woman’s Day/ELLE
- TimeInc. Women’s Group
- Newsweek
- Lifetime
- Essence

- Editorial coverage
- Public service advertising
- Events and promotions

News, Entertainment, Social Media Strategies

- Aggressive media relations for major events – print, broadcast, online; focus on style, fashion, women’s, entertainment media
- Promotion of campaign products, messages, events through social media channels and online marketing techniques
- Blogger outreach, e-mail marketing, PSA and paid banner ads, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia, Twitter, widgets, outreach to online mainstream news sites
- Steady increase in media impressions each year – about 3 billion since 2002; high-circulation news, lifestyle, women’s media
- 70% of reporting communicated at least 1 key campaign message

Community Action

- National nonprofit partners, many with local affiliate structure
- Single City Program – communities commission Red dress exhibit as focal point for local health fairs, etc.
- The Heart Truth Road Show – corporate sponsorship of traveling exhibit in shopping malls; 25 events since 2004; 16,000+ people screened for heart disease risk
- Community Champions – train the trainers for local health educators
- Women of Color Programs – national groups with local roots; NHLBI funded projects; FNIH mini-grants
- 350+ Heart Truth-sponsored local initiatives

Making a Impact

Awareness of #1 killer – In 2000, 34% of women aware that heart disease is their #1 killer; in 2009, increased to 68%.

Awareness of Red Dress Symbol – In 2009, 69% of women recognized the Red Dress as the symbol of women and heart disease awareness, up from 25% in 2005.

Heart Disease Deaths – decreased in American women each year from 1999 to 2006 (latest data); longest consecutive decline so far
  - In 2003, 1 in 3 women died of heart disease. In 2006, 1 in 4 deaths in women due to heart disease.
  - Major impact of improved prevention and treatment, but combined education efforts of many groups – with The Heart Truth as a catalyst – have surely played a role.

For more information:
Social Marketing Quarterly, Vol. XIV, No. 3, Fall 2008 – special section on The Heart Truth campaign
www.hearttruth.gov
Future Directions

- Sustain/build awareness via national programs and signature events
- Focus on behavior change
- Expand community action
- Continue outreach to women of color
- Nurture and expand partnerships
- Expand digital influence; adapt messages for new media
- Strengthen and promote Red Dress brand