

8 P's of Social Marketing

Social marketing is very similar to regular marketing, except instead of focusing on selling a product to a consumer it focuses on selling ideas, behaviors, and attitudes. Instead of benefiting the producer, as general marketing does, social marketing benefits the target audience through a change in behavior. In order to ensure that your program is successful and reaches its target audience, it is helpful to keep the following 8 P's in mind.

1. **Product** – The social marketing “product” is not necessarily a physical item. In the case of conservation districts, the product could be improved soil health or a more efficient irrigation system. In order to have a viable product, the people you are targeting must acknowledge an actual problem, and view the product as a way to help solve that problem. It is important for the conservation districts to assess their stakeholders’ needs and determine the best motivators to inspire the stakeholders to initiate change to remedy the problem.
2. **Price** – Since most social marketing products are not an actual physical item, some “prices” associated with the product are not monetary in nature. The price could be an actual monetary price such as cost-share or an application fee. It could also be a change in behavior, such as changing from till to no-till practices. It is important that the benefits outweigh the “price” of the product. Otherwise, the new behavior might not be easily adopted.
3. **Place** – Place describes the way the product reaches the consumer. With tangible objects, it would be the distribution centers and shipping channels that allow the product to reach consumers. For intangible products, “place” is a bit convoluted. It encompasses the channels through which the message reaches the consumers. For conservation districts, this could be workshops, experimental projects, or even word-of-mouth. Place is usually more than just one channel, but a combination of channels to effectively reach the stakeholder.
4. **Promotion** – Promotion ties closely into place with regards to social marketing. Promotion consists of a cohesive use of advertising, public relations, promotions, etc. The purpose of promotion is to create and sustain demand for the identified product. Conservation districts could use place in article in the paper while simultaneously posting on Facebook and running an ad on the radio.
5. **Publics** – Publics refer to the different groups your message will be addressing, and the need to tailor your message to fit the needs of each public. For a conservation district publics could

include large landowners/producers, small-acreage owners, county commissioners, and concerned citizens.

6. **Partnership** – Partnerships are important in social marketing because many issues being addressed are complex and could benefit from collaboration. It is important to partner with groups that are similar to the conservation districts. This could include local land trusts, NRCS, or FSA.

7. **Policy** – Social marketing campaigns usually aim to change the behavior of specific individuals which is important, but what is also important is ensuring that the changes initiated are sustainable through supporting policies. On a conservation district level, this can be done by working with county commissioners or submitting a resolution through CACD.

8. **Purse Strings** – Identifying a source of funds to initiate and sustain (at least for a time) the social marketing campaign is important. The continuity that funding helps ensure increases the success of the campaign.