Chapter 18
Marketing an Environmentally Sustainable Catering Model: A Case Study of Medley Hall Residential College in Victoria, Australia

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ABSTRACT
This chapter presents a novel case study of a diet sustainability model implemented at Medley Hall, an on-campus student accommodation facility at a university in Victoria, Australia. Diet sustainability refers to measures to minimise adverse environmental impacts attributable to food production. A qualitative evaluation of this initiative was conducted during 2016 including interviews with both residents and staff. The results depict a grass-roots initiative that evolved to become a deeply embedded component of organisational identity. Social marketing strategies were employed at multiple governance levels, including: (i) residents, (ii) staff and (iii) college. The evaluation data from this study provides indication of the key drivers of success in motivating consumers (residents) to engage with and embrace diet sustainability interventions and demonstrates the utility of community-based social marketing (CBSM) in informing such initiatives.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-4757-0.ch018
INTRODUCTION

In discussing a case study of an environmental sustainability intervention, this chapter demonstrates the utility of community-based social marketing (CBSM) in supporting reduced meat consumption policy implementation in localised, organisational contexts. Implementation of similar initiatives in a residential tertiary college has not been documented, nor evaluated, situating this case study as a novel insight into a nascent area. Sustainable dietary policy is an important component of broader environmental sustainability work.

This chapter presents a social marketing case study of a diet sustainability model at Medley Hall residential college, which included a central marketing message of reduced meat consumption as a more environmentally sustainable dietary behaviour. As this model emerged without pre-planned grounding in any social marketing theoretical perspective, retrospective consideration is given to its theoretical alignment. Based on this retrospective consideration, the social marketing model at Medley Hall (Medley model hereafter) is contextualised as an example of CBSM. The objectives of this chapter are to evaluate the Medley model against the CBSM evaluation framework of Lynes et al. (2014).

BACKGROUND

There are complex links between climate change, food systems and dietary choices, and with a rising world population it is anticipated that the global food system will experience a multitude of converging pressures over coming decades (Pearson et al., 2014). Food production and consumption require significant amounts of natural resources (land, water, minerals, energy) which in turn generate substantial greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Elferink et al., 2008). Spurred by large increases in global populations and more recently, rising affluence, food production more than doubled in the second half of the 20th century (Khan & Hanjra, 2009). This increased demand has placed unparalleled pressures on the environment, resulting in changes to climate systems, loss of biodiversity, land degradation and increased resource use (Ericksen et al., 2009).

Whether food is animal-based or plant-based has a large bearing on the amount of GHG emitted in its production life cycle. Livestock production has been shown to be especially GHG intensive, with the global livestock sector accounting for approximately 14.5% of all anthropogenic GHG emissions (Ripple et al., 2014). Globally the demand for meat is rising, with Steinfeld et al. (2006) predicting it to double by 2050 from the 1999/01 levels. This poses significant societal challenges given livestock production impacts on almost all elements of the environment, i.e. land, soil, water, air, biodiversity (de Vries & de Boer, 2010).

Sustainable Diets

Through its impact on the food system, climate change affects people’s diets and nutritional status. Conversely, dietary choices and food systems affect GHG emissions, and consequently climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions from food production have been shown to be on par with emissions from the transport sector (Garnett, 2009) and a regional European analysis showed food accounting for 31% of the EU-25s total GHG impact (Tukker et al., 2006). Recently there have been a number of studies
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