



## Receive up to \$600 Toward a Healthier You

### Strategic Plan for the BENEFIT Campaign

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I presented this strategic plan to the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) after launching a province-wide campaign for the Alberta Cancer Board, now rolled into Alberta Health Services. My goal was to enroll thousands of Albertans in a major cancer study. Thanks to the strength of the plan and ensuing integrated campaign, I passed the portfolio-presentation portion of IABC's rigorous examination and accreditation process to become an Accredited Business Communicator (ABC). This document describes how I planned to enroll Albertans in a province-wide cancer study.

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## 1. The Alberta Cancer Board and the Communication Function

In 2008 the Alberta Cancer Board employed 2,200 employees, managers, and doctors. The nonprofit organization was self-managed. A year later, the Alberta Cancer Board merged with Alberta Health Services, which was operated by the provincial government.

Before the merger, the Alberta Cancer Board operated the hospital-size Tom Baker Centre in Calgary and the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton, along with 15 small cancer-care centers around the province. In addition to providing cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment, the Board conducted cancer research and educated Albertans on ways to prevent cancer by wearing sunblock, avoiding tobacco-related lung cancer, and maintaining a healthy diet.

Sue Blanchard joined the Cancer Board in 2008 as a management-level marketing and communication consultant working for the Cancer Prevention Department. She was recruited to create province-wide public awareness of a major cancer study, and tasked to enroll 2,600 males and females in weight-loss programs. At the time, doctors found that obesity can influence cancer rates.

## 2. Alberta Cancer Board's Research Study

The study goal was to act on what the Alberta Cancer Board viewed as its ethical obligation to prevent cancer in Albertans whose cancer risks are higher than average because of their body weight. In parts of Alberta, 10 percent of the population weighed more than the national average in 2007, and studies show that physical inactivity contributed to the problem.

Motivated to promote positive lifestyle choices and weight control to prevent cancer, the Alberta Cancer Board developed the prevention weight-loss study and called for Albertans to **BENEFIT** (be fit and benefit) by: (1) joining a weight-loss center, (2) achieving a lean weight, (3) lowering their risk of developing cancer, and (4) receiving up to \$600 as a cancer-study participant who reached and maintained his or her goal weight.

As part of the study, the participants were asked to join one of five weight-loss centers, check their weight regularly, and meet one-on-one or in groups with a dietician or health counselor who advised them on weight-control, low-fat cooking, nutrition, exercise, and losing weight with friends.

The Alberta Cancer Board partnered with the weight-loss centers in Alberta to enforce “healthy eating,” rather than crash weight-loss through milkshakes, injections, and diet pills.

### 3. Blanchard’s Role

The Marketing Manager of the Prevention Department hired Blanchard for a temporary position as a marketing and communications management consultant and tasked her to:

- Write a strategic plan for an integrated campaign to enroll Albertans in the cancer study.
- Oversee qualitative market research to test advertising messages and determine the likelihood of enrollment.
- Manage an advertising agency’s work to create campaign messages and advertisements.
- Plan, write, and organize paid-media advertising, earned media, a podcast or webinar, a direct-email campaign, and a telephone hotline.
- Write articles for the internet.
- Develop and launch a website and assess page views
- Write for radio, print, and social media
- Plan and write communication collateral to create awareness of the research study across Alberta
- Encourage medical sales agents to deliver public-awareness literature to physicians
- Entice up to 2,600 Albertans from three health regions to enroll in the study
- Deploy a welcome kit to welcome Albertans to the study and tell them how to participate in the program by visiting a weight-loss center

The Cancer Prevention Department of the Alberta Cancer Board assigned an overall budget of \$100,000 for the integrated campaign. Blanchard initially recommended an additional budget for media buys and contingency (backup) should there be an unacceptable decline in Albertans enrolling in the weight-loss study, or a high drop-out rate after they began to lose weight. The drop-out rate could become a huge problem since weight-loss is inherently difficult.

Blanchard explained that the additional budget or contingency would boost awareness of the campaign should she need to increase advertising occasions, media buys, or modify key messages. The

contingency would be deployed only if the first awareness launch were less successful than anticipated. However, “reach” and “frequency” (GRPs), market research (focus-groups) and other measures predicted that the campaign would be effective without contingency.

The Prevention Department wanted to publicize the study for two years until 2,600 qualified Albertans enrolled, some from each of the three regions. But Blanchard developed a media plan and, according to reach and frequency, found she could entice 2,600 Albertans to enroll in one year rather than two. She learned that if a significant number of people dropped out of the study after enrolling, she would need to launch a second public-awareness campaign to enroll more Albertans.

#### **4. Identifying the Problem or Opportunity**

In 2007 the Alberta Cancer Board published two startling findings: One in two Albertans will develop cancer and one in four Albertans will die of cancer. To reduce cancer in the province, Alberta Cancer Board executives unveiled a vision focusing on three goals for the year 2009 to:

1. Reduce the incidence of cancers by 4,880
2. Reduce mortality (deaths) from cancer by 3,800
3. Eliminate suffering in every way possible for Albertans living with cancer

The Board set goals for three more years to generate even better odds of saving lives. The knowledge that roughly 10-20 percent of cancers may be prevented by losing excessive body weight prompted the Prevention Department to host the research study.

After the study, provincial legislators would receive the final results and establish a “healthy lifestyle” program for all Albertans. The Alberta Cancer Board thought that if the \$600 fee to slim down drove enrollment, resulted in weight-loss, and prevented cancer, then Alberta’s health-care system would save money. To do so, the provincial government would issue a tax credit to Albertans for joining a weight-loss and/or exercise facility.

In 2008 children were already enrolling in fitness programs leading to a provincial tax credit. The Alberta Cancer Board thought that a tax credit for all adult Albertans would entice them to join a

weight-loss centre, become lean, and lower their risk for certain cancers. The Alberta Cancer Board planned to track the 2,600 participants in its research study to see whether people who enrolled remained cancer free.

#### **4.1 Intended Audiences**

The primary audience consisted of adult male and female Albertans living in three health regions: Calgary, Chinook, and Peace Country. Physicians, hospital staff, weight-loss, and fitness counselors (called “influencers”) were a secondary audience that encouraged Albertans to enroll in the study. The tertiary audience consisted of study participants to whom Blanchard sent instructions to join a weight-loss centre and lose weight.

Internal employees were another audience, and Blanchard advised the Board to test the campaign internally (across the Alberta Cancer Board’s hospitals and clinics) before launching it externally. Blanchard developed an internal communication plan, but the internal launch was tackled by full-time communicators. Blanchard was a temporary employee, a management-level consultant, hired to plan the external launch.

#### **Primary Audience**

Awareness of the study would reach 1,480,000 Albertans living in the Calgary, Chinook, and Peace Country regions. Of those, 2,600 could enroll if they met this eligibility criteria:

- An age range of 20 to 65 years and fluent in English to read and complete questionnaires.
- A body-mass index of 25 to 39 percent. BMI is a specific range of weight in proportion to height.
- Agree to give informed consent, complete surveys, and share body weight and measurements.

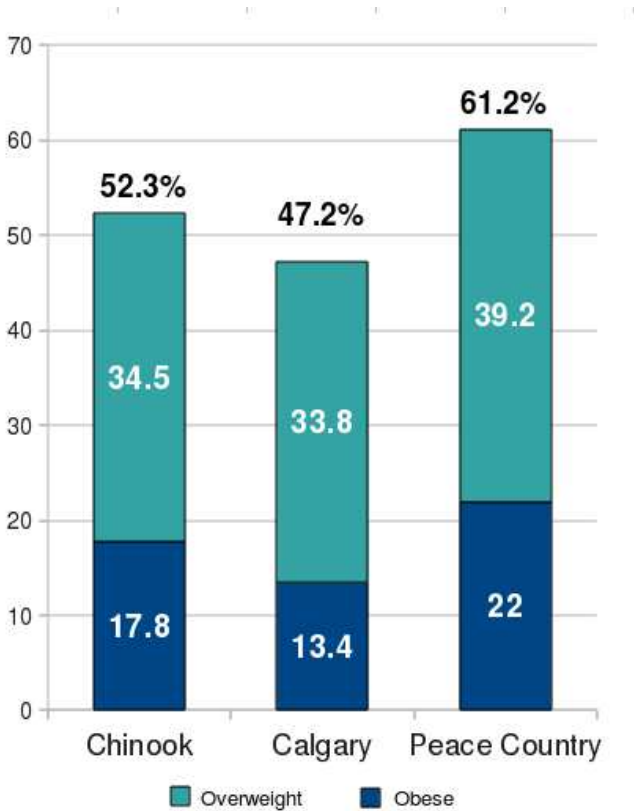
The study excluded:

- Women who were pregnant.
- Albertans who had participated in a weight-management study within the past year.
- Albertans who were not healthy enough to lose-weight physically or psychologically. This ruled out participants deemed to have eating disorders
- Candidate who said they were unwilling to check their health by visiting a doctor before enrolling

*Pertinent Demographics and Psychographics*

- Income levels of Albertans living in the health regions averaged \$79,000 per year
- Ninety percent were employed
- Eighty-one percent of the target audience lived in urban areas, and 19 percent lived in rural
- Calgary had 1.2 million Albertans, Chinook, 150,000, and Peace Country, 130,000

In Alberta being overweight or obese accounts for 10-20 percent of cancer deaths. Roughly 50.5 percent of Albertans were overweight or obese at the time of the study. This amount exceeded the Canadian national average by 1.6 percent. In Peace Country, most of the population were over-weight, whereas Albertans were a bit leaner in the Chinook and Calgary health regions, as graphed below.



People grow more concerned about their weight as they age, but it is children, youth, and the YE generation that face the greatest cancer risks based on a future of obesity. Because this is a growing concern among health-care providers, the study welcomed YE-generation members over 20 years, along with Albertans over 18, currently at risk of developing obesity-related cancer.

In terms of physical activity, 45 percent of Albertans are physically *inactive* during leisure time. The Chinook and Calgary regions had the most active Albertans, and Peace Country had the least. When buying media, Blanchard focused on both urban and rural markets.

According to one of the surveys conducted by the market-research firm (ResearchWorks), people lose weight for various reasons. To answer the question, “Which statement most reflects your approach to losing weight,” survey respondents said:

- They think about losing weight but feel the time and circumstances in their life must be right to do so.
- They are inclined to lose weight soon after they’ve gained a few pounds.
- They don’t believe they are overweight or obese.
- They avoid losing weight. Of this amount, 50 percent stated that they would not enter the study because they don’t diet.
- They do not believe these indicators reflect their weight-loss behavior.

\* Respondents answered questions listed in a brief confidential questionnaire during focus groups.

### **Secondary Audience**

The influencers included: (1) 539 physicians, (2) 28 weight-loss counselors, (3) 25 health and fitness club employees located in the three health regions, (4) 200 employees at Alberta cancer-care centres, and (5) 200 hospital employees and volunteers combined, located across the targeted health regions. These targets agreed to tell their clients about the study and hand out collateral to create awareness of it.

Interactive table-top posters created awareness of the study in YMCAs, YWCAs, World Health and Fitness, Gold’s Gym, Curves, Weight Watchers, and physician clinics.

Typically, primary audience members asked about the study through the Alberta Cancer Board’s **BENEFIT** hotline or website. If eligible to participate in the study, the Board invited them to join and then sent a kit that welcomed them to participate in the study. The kit explained the steps to move through the weight-loss program and reach a lean weight. If the target audience failed to enroll in the study after they agreed to, the call centre reached them to reiterate the benefits of the study.



## 5. Developing the Solution or Plan

After Albertans saw or heard one of the message through advertisements, radio announcements, and media relations, if motivated to act they contacted the call-center hotline and/or visited the website to enroll. Communications mediums explained the enrollment criteria. If Albertans met the criteria to enroll, listed on page 6, the board sent the welcome-to-the-study kit, a vital piece in convincing Albertans to sign up at a weight-loss center. To ensure the kit enticed them to do this, Blanchard asked a market research firm to test the enrollment kit thoroughly in focus groups.

When focus-group findings showed that too many enrollment steps were involved, Blanchard advised the researchers to find a way to reduce the amount of surveys to be completed before enrolling. She also suggested the Board: (1) e-mail or mail the welcome kit to Albertans, (2) call Albertans and politely explain the steps to enroll in the weight-loss program and study, and (3) email a podcast or webinar to outline the enrollment steps.

The six-minute webinar explained the steps to reach a lean weight, rekindled excitement about earning \$600 by slimming down, and enticed study participants to join a weight-loss center today. In some cases, a portion of the \$600 covered the cost of joining a weight-loss program, but many of the centers, such as Weight Watchers and Tops, were low-cost or cost-free.

By streamlining the podcast or webinar online, Albertans were able to see or hear the steps at their leisure by computer, MP3 player, or iPod. In six cases, Blanchard hosted stakeholder meetings to enroll study candidates immediately. She visited community halls in rural health regions to meet with Weight-Watchers participants, present details of the study, and answer questions.

### 5.1 Strategic Objectives

The objectives set for the campaign (below) were met. The communicators who evaluated the campaign when Blanchard's temporary position ended measured the campaign results. Blanchard was hired only to plan the campaign and enroll 2,600 Albertans from specific health regions in the cancer study. Her objectives were to:

1. Determine within a year if the weight-loss campaign and \$600 cash would be effective in enticing 2,600 Albertans in the Calgary, Chinook, and Peace River health regions to enroll in the cancer study.
2. Learn before the campaign through up-front research if the communications collateral would inform Albertans about how to join the cancer study and entice them to do so.
3. Within a year, prompt 100 physicians, dieticians, and other clinicians to refer patients or clients to enroll in the Alberta Cancer Board's weight-loss study.

Had Blanchard continued working for the Cancer Board after her two temporary contracts came to a close, she would have tried to meet another objective: to maintain enrollment in the cancer study until the study research results are in. However, this task was outside her scope of work and would call for a higher budget. Blanchard was hired to plan the campaign rather than measure it.

Communications collateral and channels included:

- Welcome-to-the-study kit
- Podcast and webinar emailed, uploaded to YouTube, and viewed on website
- Call-center and hotline to enroll candidates in the study
- Website with articles
- Email (direct-mail) campaign
- Radio and print advertisements
- Media relations with news releases and a media kit
- Sales calls by pharmaceutical representatives to deliver brochures to doctors
- Referrals from physicians, dieticians, and other clinicians
- Brochures

Media relations occurred before any collateral was deployed, and fulltime communicators in the Marketing Department met with news reporters.

## 5.2 Paid Media Advertising

Blanchard's campaign reached external audiences. Social media consisted largely of Facebook in 2008.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>
<b>Primary</b>	Newspaper advertising	An advertisement ran in high-readership weekly newspapers and in the <i>Calgary Sun</i> and the <i>Calgary Herald</i> .
	Magazine advertising	Advertisements appeared in regional and monthly magazines to leverage the long-lasting impact that magazines have.
	Posters with Post-it® tear sheets giving the toll-free phone no. and details	The table-top poster were placed in patient waiting rooms in medical clinics, weight-loss centers, and fitness facilities in high traffic, high-visibility locations. They were replaced periodically in hospitals and Alberta Cancer Board centers by volunteers. Fitness facilities were chosen because consumers concerned about their weight visit them in droves.
	Custom web site	By visiting this site, Albertans in the three regions saw a webinar or read an article to quickly determine if they were eligible to enroll in the study.
	Toll-free line	Albertan reached the call centers to ask about their eligibility, enroll, or ask questions.
	Internet advertising	This would target specific demographic groups of people who were overweight or obese in the three health regions.
	Radio advertising	Pre-recorded 30-second spots were slated during peak listening periods for the initial launch and then as-needed for the rest of the campaign.
<b>Secondary Audience</b>	Print brochures	The brochures reached not only the primary audience, above, but also the secondary audiences (Influencers) and internal staff and doctors.
<b>Tertiary Audience</b>	Welcome kit	Albertans invited to enroll in the study learned how to implement and manage the weight-loss program with information from the kit.
	Podcasts	These would be emailed to Albertans who were accepted into the study. The podcasts outlined all that participating in the study involved.
<b>Media</b>	News releases and kits	Media kits and news releases and pitch letter coincided with interviews with reporters and bloggers before the advertising (paid-media) campaign ensued.

### 5.3 Timeline and Campaign Tactics for Each Target Audience

<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Audience(s)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>January</b>	Identify the target audiences for both the study and the campaign. Write the strategic plan.	(1) Albertans within a specific age and body-mass index who live in six health regions. (2) health-care providers, hospitals, cancer centers, and weight-loss and fitness centers	Compare the audience against the required participants for the study. Ensure the study and campaign will be effective in reaching the right targets
	Create the social-networking site on Facebook.	For Albertans, where obesity is highest in Alberta	To reach the younger generation
	Hire an agency to design the collateral	All audiences	To flesh out an identity for the collateral
	Write the radio spot	Primary	To ensure the audience hears the message through another medium
	Ensure the cancer board is aware of the BENEFIT messages	Pitch the ad mockups to internal audiences before external groups	To determine the effectiveness of the messages from a health-care audience's point of view
	Develop a program to reach physicians	Physicians and their staff	Used to reach Albertans who have health concerns from being overweight or obese
<b>February</b>	Find pharmaceutical companies to take posters to clinics and to ask physicians to recommend the program to their patients	Physicians who can recommend the study to their patients	To stimulate the medical audience to refer the program to patients. To get their staff to use the table-top posters.
	List the audiences to receive the poster. Call them to see if they will refer clients and use posters	Hospitals, cancer centers, weight-loss and fitness counselors	To recruit study participants and encourage word-of-mouth publicity of the program in highly visible areas
<b>March</b>	Contract a market research firm to re-test the collateral	For primary and secondary audiences	To conduct advertising effectiveness studies and focus groups.
<b>April</b>	Write copy for the welcome kit	Target Albertans eligible to participate in study	Test the copy. Next, send the welcome kit to Albertans who call the toll-free hot line wanting to enroll
<b>May</b>	Help recruit participants for the focus group study and interviews	(1) Alberta residents in specific regions and (2) physicians	Prepare for the first round of testing with the Albertans. Conduct in-depth interviews with physicians
<b>June</b>	Monitor focus group testing	Primary audience	Assess feedback
<b>July</b>	Write an article on healthy eating for the website	For Albertans	Educate them about the power of dieting the healthy way
<b>August</b>	Refine messages in posters and advertisements as needed	For Prevention Department	Ensure buy-in
<b>September</b>	Revise the welcome kit to make it easier to understand		Prepare kit to reach the objectives set for it
<b>October</b>	Retest the collateral		Ensure it achieves all objectives
<b>November</b>	Write podcast and webinar		To support the welcome kit

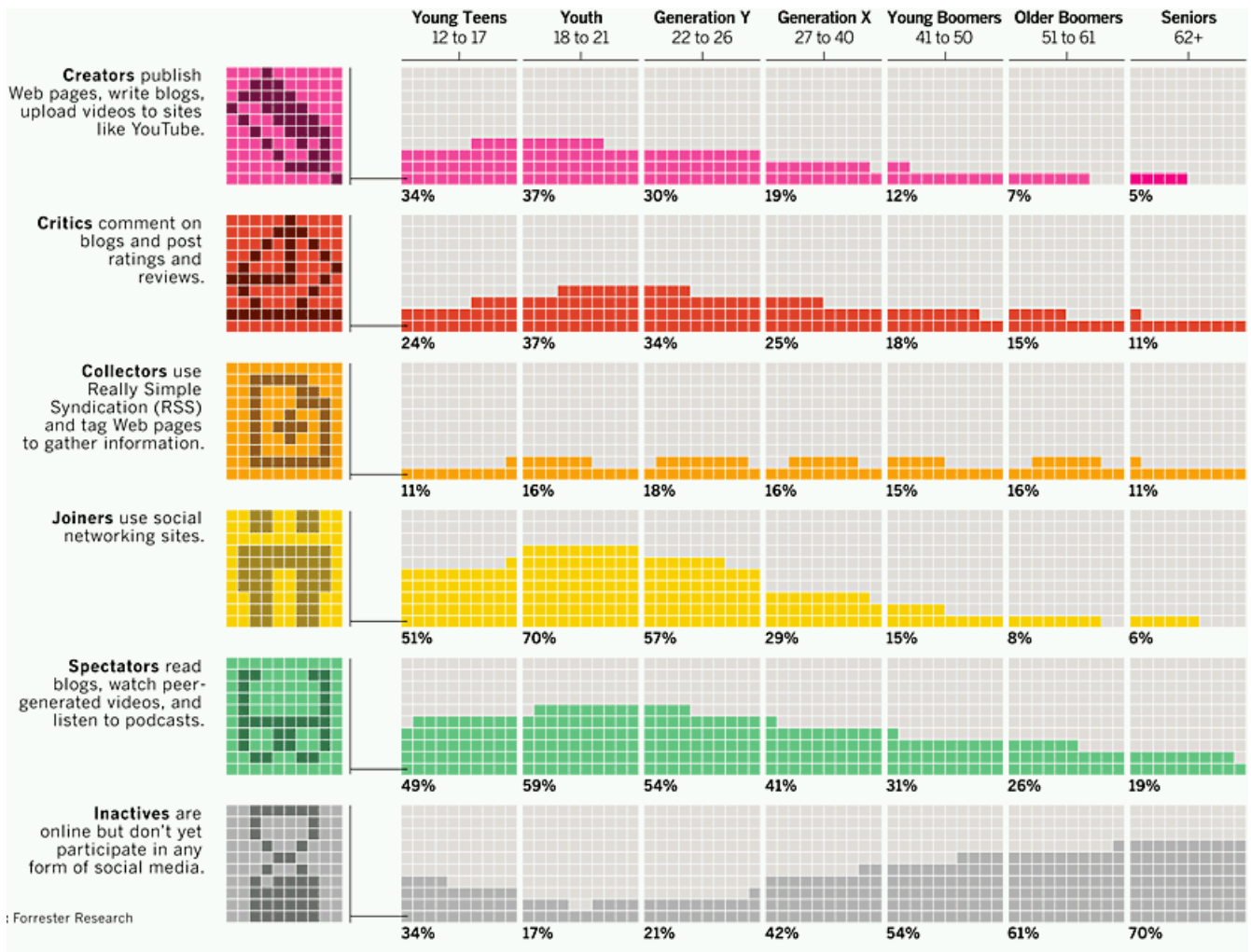
## 5.4 Budget

The \$100,000 budget covered the cost of hiring a market-research firm and an advertising agency. At the end of 2008, the program came in \$23,805 under budget.

<b>BUDGET</b>			
<i>Amount budgeted for collateral: \$100,000</i>	<b>Planned Costs</b>	<b>Actual Costs</b>	<b>Amount over/ under budget</b>
<i>Focus groups and interviews with target audiences</i>	\$30,000	\$30,000	0
<i>Focus group participants' fees</i>	\$1,000	\$1,050	(\$50)
<i>Meetings (snacks and handouts)</i>	\$1,000	\$1,131	(\$131)
<i>Tag Advertising's fees</i>	\$15,000	\$15,085	(\$85)
<i>Printing costs</i>	\$15,000	\$12,052	\$2,948
<i>Travel/hotel costs for rural focus groups</i>	\$18,000	16,877	1,123
<i>Contingency</i>	\$20,000	0	20,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$100,000 Budget</b>	<b>\$76,195 Actual cost</b>	<b>\$23,805 Under budget</b>

## 5.5 Social Media Considerations and Survey

Blanchard researched social-media metrics. At the time, Facebook was the most popular social-networking site by far, and teens, youth, Generation Y, Generation X, and Young Boomers were the social networkers. In 2008 and 2009, the largest group of users consisted of “Joiners” in the chart below:



Blanchard considered that a social-media campaign might accelerate the momentum of enrollment in the research study. However, she discovered early in the campaign that middle-age adults, rather than teens and youth, were the most eager study candidates. Called “Spectators” or “Inactives” in the chart above, they were not yet fans of Facebook. Regardless, Blanchard developed a Facebook account to interact with young “Collectors” or “Joiners” She decided against social-network advertising. Facebook was not the best medium and LinkedIn and Twitter were attracting far fewer followers in 2008.

Blanchard split the “People Talking About This” (PTAT) metric into separate elements: page likes, people engaged (the number of unique people who have clicked on, liked, commented on, or shared her posts), page tags and mentions, page check-ins, and other interactions on a page. She also examined the engagement rate to better gauge overall post quality. She aggregated the metrics for positive interactions (likes, comments, shares, and clicks) and negative interactions (hide post, hide all posts, report as spam,

unlike page) into a post-specific score card, so she could evaluate positive and negative metrics side-by-side for each post. Blanchard's Facebook posts drew a few responses from a very youthful target audience. However, Blanchard deemed that a FB advertisement would not cull from the target audiences deemed most likely to enroll in the campaign.

To consider the potential effectiveness of a social media campaign, Blanchard surveyed social networkers:

1. Do you currently have an account with a social networking site?
  - Yes, I do
  - No, I do not
  
2. Which of the following networking sites do you currently have an account with? Check all that apply:
  - LinkedIn
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Other; please specify
  
3. In a typical day which one of the following networking sites do you use most often?
  - LinkedIn
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Other; please specify
  
4. In a typical day, how likely are you to use a social networking site?
  - Extremely likely
  - Quite likely
  - Moderately likely
  - Slightly likely
  - Not at all likely
  
5. In a typical day, about how much time do you spend using a social networking site?

Hours

Minutes

6. When you're on a networking site, about how much of your time do you spend posting things about yourself?

- All of it
- Most or all of it
- About half of it
- Some of it
- None of it

7. When you're on a networking site, about how much of your time do you spend reading posts?

- All of it
- Most or all of it
- About half of it
- Some of it
- None of it

8. If you use Facebook, about how much time do you spend on the site?

Hours

Minutes

9. If you use Facebook, how many connections do you currently have on the site?

## 6. Selling the Plan to Management

Initially, Blanchard's strategy involved pitching her ideas to her communication colleagues in the Marketing Department where she worked. If she got the green light from her own "camp," she shared her ideas with the researchers who devised the research study.



Blanchard's manager asked the leader of Prevention to invite Blanchard to Prevention-Department meetings to learn how the research study was designed. This allowed Blanchard to net opportunities to describe her campaign.

Prevention agreed to allow Blanchard to join their management team. This role not only gave Blanchard the opportunity to communicate her ideas, but also provided ample support for getting Albertans to enroll in the campaign in a variety of ways. Blanchard was even able to recommend ways of designing the study to research Albertans who were losing weight.

For example, Blanchard suspected that an initial study incentive of \$300 would be too low to attract and keep participants to the study, especially if they paid to enroll in a weight-loss center. To provide evidence, Blanchard invited Prevention's research team to see how the target audience responded in focus groups. After they heard Albertans in focus groups say the Cancer Board's initial \$300 payment was too low to entice enrollment, the researchers were motivated to increase the payment from \$300 to \$600. The money had been donated from the foundation.

Blanchard expressed concern that participants had too much work to do to move through the weight-loss program. In focus groups, Albertans saw the research program as cumbersome. Try as she might to simplify the program, the researchers kept adding more surveys to it. However, by inviting the researchers to the focus groups, they heard from the horse's mouth that the program involved too much work.

As a solution, Blanchard suggested Albertans contacted at home. This communications tack added to the media mix so that participants learned about the study by: (1) reading the kit, (2) clicking on the podcast or webinar, and (3) hearing from the call-center staff who would call gently urge them to join a weight-loss center. This represented a good compromise for the researchers and Blanchard.

Blanchard also compromised when it came to a direct-mail piece she had proposed and wrote for a direct-mail campaign. Blanchard preferred the *online* direct-mail approach. When she showed researchers the postage costs involved in direct mail, they agreed to communicate by email. They also wanted posters, but posters are impossible to measure. The number of people who see them is deemed low.

As a compromise, Blanchard created a table-top poster or a stand-up poster and invited medical sales reps to deliver it along with medication samples to medical clinics and doctors. Ideally, the posters would sit on reception counters or lobby tables in the clinics. She made the posters interactive by adding a pad of paper with tear sheets. Readers took the tear-sheets to enroll in the study.

## 7. Implementing the Plan

### 7.1 Media Buy Rationale

Blanchard weighed the value of various types of communications to determine the mediums that would achieve the call to action, which was to enroll enough Albertans in the cancer research study.

Goals	Website/ Hot-line	Internet advnt.	Radio advnt.	News- paper advnt.	Sales- calls	Welcome kit	Posters	Pod- casts
To generate enrollment	•	•	•	•	•		•	
To increase advertising effectiveness					•		•	•
To track impressions, hits, reach, frequency, phone calls	•	•	•	•				
To gain exposure in physicians' offices, weight-loss centers, and fitness facilities					•		•	•
To speed acceptance of the weight-loss program					•	•		•
To provide a selling tool for the pharmaceutical sales agents							•	
To create excitement about losing weight and earning \$600	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
To reach large amounts of the target in each health region		•	•	•				
To efficiently reach narrowly defined segments in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s if enrolment is lacking in particular age groups		•	•	•				
Effectiveness of response can be easily measured	•	•			•	•		•
To increase enrollment when it drops	•	•	•	•	•		•	•

## 7.2 Summary of Media Buy

Blanchard developed a simple media plan to learn how long it would take to enroll 2,600 Albertans. The basic media buy on the following page is based on a \$100,000 budget. The campaign enticed Albertans to enroll by advertising the weight-loss study twice. She would buy a large advertisement on launch day and smaller advertisements for the rest of the year to maintain awareness of the opportunity to enroll in the study.

### Focus

Blanchard learned through post-secondary research that news spreads far by word-of-mouth. Albertans in towns tend to know one another well and are inclined to talk about what they hear on radio and read online or in print. Research, too, shows there is a stronger tendency for town locals to participate in activities together when word-of-mouth communications runs rampant.

### Recommendations

1. Avoid affluent markets since wealthier Albertans are slimmer and have the time and money for fitness. The \$600 cash would not be enough of an incentive for them
2. Try to enroll less financially successful people who need a lifestyle or “health” change
3. Target adults who have the most to gain in health and cash by enrolling in the study.

## 7.3 Research

During focus groups, the market-research firm (ResearchWorks) asked about the creative elements of the print advertisement, such as visual appeal, impact of the headline, copywriting elements, clarity, information value, credibility, and persuasiveness. Studies show that eighty percent of the readers who read the headline of an advertisement will avoid the body copy.

The first advertisements were dark blue and difficult to read. Without a second thought advertising experts and Albertans in focus groups vetoed them. During a second round of testing on orange executions, Albertans suggested only minor improvements.

The advertising agency applied the same headlines, body copy, and call-to-action to the stand-up poster, welcome-to-the-study kit, and other collateral publicizing the campaign.

The agency's most senior staff and Blanchard agreed to use one spectacular advertisement that would stand out from the clutter of advertisements crowding newspaper pages. They said they could create several ads to rotate and maintain awareness, but running the spectacular ad several times was better. Blanchard wrote radio ads and announcements for on-air DJs. Any chat about the campaign needed to air before the advertising campaign ensued.

The best ad showed a woman lifting a bowl of fruit and vegetables. Her head rose above the advertisement in some publications. The slice-of-life or lifestyle execution communicated moments of good health, physical activity, and eating right.

Below is a screen capture of the advertisement at [www.focused-on-solutions.com](http://www.focused-on-solutions.com)

RECEIVE UP TO \$600 TOWARDS A HEALTHIER YOU!

Would you like to become part of the **BENEFIT** Cancer Prevention research study?

**BENEFIT (Be Fit and Benefit)**

A few years ago, the Alberta Cancer Board responded to its ethical obligation to lower cancer rates in Albertans by launching the **BENEFIT** Cancer Study. The goal of the study was to help Albertans lower their cancer risks by becoming lean and fit. Fifty percent of cancers are preventable, so the hospital paid study participants \$600 to join a weight-loss centre, lose weight, and exercise to remain cancer free. My campaign involved enrolling Cancer Board employees and Albertans in the province-wide study. I planned an integrated public awareness campaign to reach specific external target groups. Double-click the icons below to view samples of my work, and please call (403) 240-3635 to ask for a copy of my strategic plan.

[BENEFIT Brochure.pdf](#)   [Radio\\_spots.pdf](#)   [Award-winning article..pdf](#)

The **BENEFIT** headline, backed by the invitation to join a research study, communicated “safe and responsible weight loss” rather than “crash diet” to Albertans who were focus-group tested. Plus, the news that the Alberta Cancer Board (a respectable organization) was hosting the study added credibility to the messages.

Albertans who participated in the focus groups said they would be motivated by the call-to-action to call the hot-line or visit the website to learn more about the study or enroll.

Blanchard asked the agency to conduct a custom recognition test to prove advertising effectiveness. During such tests researchers ask participants to recall the advertisement and its selling points right after flipping through a mock newspaper with the advertisement in it. The ad was positioned in the small-town newspapers for the highest visibility, usually inside the front cover of the newspaper on the right-hand side of the page.

On air, Blanchard planned to encourage enrollment in the study by inserting the advertising message into the audience's head through high numbers of reach, frequency, and continuity. For the campaign launch, Blanchard wanted to keep awareness high through repetitive exposure and "flighting," followed by hiatuses.

#### 7.4 Key Messages

The key messages for Albertans in the three health regions were:

1. **BENEFIT: Receive up to \$600 to reach your goal weight**
2. **BENEFIT: Fifty-percent of cancers are preventable. Lose weight and lower your risk of developing cancer**

The message for physicians asked to recommend the weight-loss program to their patients was: **Help Albertans lose weight and lower their risk of cancer. Fifty-percent of cancers are preventable.**

The message for Albertans invited to enroll in the study was: **Earn \$600 to reach your goal weight safely. Participate in a research study that may lower your cancer risk.**

#### 7.5 Welcome-to-the-Study Kit and Podcast/Webcast

When Blanchard began her work, the primary challenge involved the welcome kit. Blanchard believed that a large number of Albertans would drop out of the research study when they read the kit and saw the amount of work involved in signing up at a weight-loss center, answering research questions, filling out

forms, collecting expense receipts, and so on. Albertans who participated in the study would earn \$600, but only if they:

- Signed a consent form to participate in the study. This meant completing three short surveys.
- Visited one of the qualifying weight-loss centers regularly
- Reached an acceptably lean weight for their size, based on a body-mass-index chart
- Maintained the weight-loss for a year
- Kept the receipt to prove they enrolled in a weight-loss program
- Sent in a weight-loss passport with their measurements every four months

Call-center staff developed sales skills and began gently selling the program and its benefits to Albertans who agreed to enroll. This made it easier for Albertans to understand the steps, and if completing and sending in the weight-loss passport was a hassle, then the call center could gather the information by phone. If Albertans were still hesitant to enroll after receiving the Welcome-to-the-study kit, the call centre reached them again at intervals to tell them what to do every three months.

## **7.6 Communications to the Secondary Audiences**

Blanchard publicized the research study to physicians using direct-sales. Sales representatives who sell pharmaceuticals around the province and deliver samples to doctors would deliver the table-top poster. Working with the sales agents at two pharmaceutical firms, Blanchard ensured the table-top cancer-study poster would make its way into medical clinics around the province, thanks to the sales reps agreeing place it on reception desks or hand it to doctors. The stand-up posters were not “hidden” in an envelope, so physicians or receptionist could read about the study right away and ask questions. The sales approach involved reaching 539 physicians. When the sales representatives from big pharmaceuticals had time, they would also talk to physicians briefly about the study.

The evaluation component of the campaign indicated that the direct-sales program would have been more effective launched twice and spaced six months apart to maintain presence over a year. But this was not an option for the sales reps. So, to maintain awareness, communicators working for Alberta Health Services said they would mail the poster to the clinics six months if enrollment levels dropped. This would keep awareness high.

Eight employees at Alberta Health Services agreed to hang posters in each hospital, and 20 employees at the Alberta Cancer Board agreed to mount the posters in the patient waiting rooms of the Alberta Cancer Board centres in the Calgary, Chinook, and Peace Country regions. After the campaign, Blanchard planned to call the clinics to inform everyone that it was time to remove the posters from each location. However, her temporary contract at the Alberta Cancer Board was only for eight months and would end before the campaign concluded.

The poster campaign also involved placing the stand-up interactive posters in fitness clubs and weight-loss centers. Roughly 28 of targeted weight-loss centers and 25 of fitness clubs agreed to use the stand-up posters. Blanchard explained how the program worked by having a volunteer visit weight-loss counselors and health-and-fitness staff. Alternatively, the volunteer mailed the posters and made phone calls to them.

## **8. Measurement/Evaluation of Outcomes**

### **8.1 Objective 1**

Blanchard's first objective for her campaign: Determine within a year if the campaign is effective in prompting an initial 2,600 Albertans in the Calgary, Chinook, and Peace River health regions to enroll in the study.

The results were as follows:

- Feedback from the Alberta Cancer Board communicators who launched Blanchard's campaign plan said that the 2,600 Albertans had enrolled in one year rather than two. This saved roughly \$35,000 in unspent media buys from the \$100,000 campaign budget. As predicted, one-third dropped out, so candidates on the waiting list were enrolled.
- Focus-group research early in the program indicated that the advertisements and messages would encourage Albertans to enroll in the study. They also showed the study researchers that the steps to signing up were too numerous and cumbersome.
- Blanchard's basic media buy indicated that Albertans in the targeted health regions would learn about the Alberta Cancer Board's study, and that 2,600 Albertans would enroll and one-third more would be placed on a waiting list should a study participate drop out. This was the case.

- Alberta Cancer Board communicators who launched Blanchard’s campaign plan reported that word-of-mouth news spread quickly across the regions, especially in the towns. The communicators learned that 35 percent of the calls to the call center were from the regions.
- During the second year of the campaign, the Alberta Cancer Board’s Prevention department planned to reach Albertans in additional health regions.

The communicators who executed the launch that Blanchard planned hired a market-research firm to conduct on-line surveys to measure ad recall levels. Albertans who participated in the study asked whether they could remember hearing, seeing, or reading any of the radio and email advertisements about the study. As shown in the right-hand column of the table below, awareness levels were good:

<b>Advertising Message Recall for the Launch</b>		
<b>Question asked: Can you recall hearing or seeing any advertising that used the following messages</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Percentage who recalled message</b>
<b>January 2009</b>	<b>Join the Alberta Cancer Board’s Research Study.</b>	<b>68% Calgary Health Region 74% Chinook Health Region 72% Peace Country Health Region</b>
	<b>Benefit. Receive up to \$600 towards a healthier you.</b>	<b>64% Calgary Health Region 68% Chinook Health Region 78% Peace Country Health Region</b>
<b>February 2009</b>	<b>Join the Alberta Cancer Board’s Research Study</b>	<b>58% Calgary Health Region 72% Chinook Health Region 68% Peace Country Health Region</b>
	<b>Benefit. Receive up to \$600 towards a healthier you.</b>	<b>56% Calgary Health Region 69% Chinook Health Region 72% Peace Country Health Region</b>

## **8.2 Objective 2**

The second objective is: Learn through research if the welcome kit, podcast, and sales calls from the call center and other communications would be effective in convincing study participants by providing all the information they needed to join a weight-loss center and move through the program.



This objective brought these results:

- The previously complicated “Welcome-to-the-study” kit was improved. And in the second round of focus-group testing, Albertans said each medium communicated all the essential instructions to get Albertans to enroll in the study. All the mediums combined repeated the same messages to Albertans and were: radio commercials, email/direct-mail welcome kits, sales calls, table-top posters, print advertisements, podcasts/webinars, website messages, welcome-to-the-study kit, news releases and media kits).
- Although there was some effort in joining the weight-loss study, the communicators who launched the public awareness program did track the number of the Albertans who dropped out of the study. Blanchard had anticipated a significant drop-out rate and compensated for it by enrolling more than the required number of participants, as mentioned previously.

### **8.3 Objective 3**

The objective is: Within a year, prompt 100 Alberta physicians, dieticians, and other clinicians to refer the Cancer Board’s weight-loss study to their patients and clients. Objective 3 brought these results:

- The objective was reached.
- Feedback from the sales representatives indicated that doctors said they would ask their patients to enroll in the study. In addition, roughly 68 percent of receptionists agreed to display the stand-up posters in the patient waiting areas of their clinic.
- Weight-loss centers and fitness clubs encouraged their clients to enroll in the study
- Early in the program, in-depth interviews with physicians indicated they were eager to participate.

### **8.4 Lessons Learned**

What would Blanchard do differently? With the budget available, Blanchard would hire an agency to evaluate the campaign—to assess the results of each medium. Blanchard was hired to plan the campaign only; her contract at the Alberta Cancer Board was temporary.

Blanchard would also recommend that special event consultants be hired to coordinate all the logistics on launch day. The two communicators who launched the campaign were stretched to the limit even with volunteer help. Project-management techniques and software should be deployed.

## Work Samples

*Advertisement for newspapers and magazines.* Advertisements were full-color or black & white. The woman's head stood above the ads surrounded by white space.

*Interactive Stand-Up Poster with Tear Sheets.* Stand-up posters were placed in patient waiting areas in physicians' clinics, hospitals, cancer centers, weight-loss centers and fitness clubs. Dieticians and other clinicians were asked to refer their clients or patients

*Radio spot (30 seconds).* These aired on three radio stations across the targeted health regions.

*Website content.* This described how the program worked and included frequently asked questions.

*Magazine article.* An article on healthy eating ran in a local health-care magazine and on the website.

*Welcome-to-the-study kit.* This was sent to Albertans indicated on the website (feedback form) or hot-line that they wanted to enroll in the study.

*Focus group research.* This included research conducted on the welcome kit and the ads, message testing, and day-after recall.

*Brief interviews with physicians.* This study was conducted to determine whether physicians would recommend the study.