



The Youth Alert! Experience

**Using Social Marketing Principles to
Build a Credible “Brand” to Promote
Behavior Change Among Young People
In Malawi**

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Hello, my name is Andrew Miller, Director of Communications at Population Services International/Malawi. The co-author of this presentation is Jessica Greene, who is based at our Washington D.C headquarters. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable input of fellow PSI colleagues, including Dvora Joseph, James Ayers and John Justino.

We will be presenting on how PSI/Malawi has used social marketing principles to build the Youth Alert! brand to promote behavior change among young people in Malawi. We will also be presenting some research findings attributable to the Youth Alert! program and finally identify some lessons learned. We hope you enjoy our presentation.



Youth Alert! Goal and Strategy

Goal

- ✓ Reduce HIV and STI transmission and unplanned pregnancies among in and out-of-school youth 10-24

Strategy

- ✓ Equip young people with evidence based, balanced, relevant, age appropriate life skills and correct HIV/AIDS prevention info
- ✓ Delay sex for as long as possible until they are ready to make an informed choice about becoming sexually active

So, before I begin, I felt it was prudent to explain exactly what Youth Alert! is, who funds it, our goal, and our strategy to reach that goal.

Youth Alert! is a youth targeted behavior change communications program in Malawi and has been operated nationwide since 2001 by PSI/Malawi with USAID core funding support, since 2004 with Johns Hopkins University support and since 2005, with leveraged KfW funding. It has four integrated components as follows:

The Youth Alert! Schools Program delivers a life skills presentation to secondary school going and out-of-school youth. Youth Alert! Mix, a thrice weekly national radio program. 200 Youth Alert! Mix Listeners Clubs, and Youth Alert! Peer Education.

The goal of the Youth Alert! program is to reduce HIV and STI transmission, as well as the number of unplanned teenage pregnancies, among in school and out-of-school youth, aged 10-24 in Malawi. In order to achieve this goal, the strategy of the Youth Alert! program is to equip young people with relevant, age-appropriate life skills AND correct, balanced HIV/AIDS prevention information in order for them to delay their sexual debut for as long as possible until they are ready to make an informed choice about becoming sexually active.

Branding BCC?



- A brand is a set of attributes that a consumer has for a product, service, or in Youth Alert!'s case, a set of behaviors (*Evans, Price and Blahut, March 2005: Evaluating the Truth Brand*)
- Brands enhances the value of a set of behaviors and are used for establishing a relationship between product and consumer
- Youth Alert! is a continually expanding and evolving 'brand family' of BCC (think Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Money, Virgin Mobile etc)



- ✓ **Personality**
- ✓ **Equity**
- ✓ **Reach**
- ✓ **Targeting**



So why brand behavior change communications? To help answer this question, our presentation draws on various bodies of published evidence, particularly the Evaluation of the branded TRUTH anti-smoking campaign published in March 2005 by Evans, Price and Blahut. This evidence clearly shows the importance and benefit of branding a product, service, or in TRUTH and Youth Alert!'s case, a set of behaviors. The **truth**® campaign is the largest, branded national youth-focused anti-tobacco education campaign ever undertaken in the US. It is designed to engage teenagers by exposing Big Tobacco's marketing and manufacturing practices, as well as highlighting the toll of tobacco in relevant and innovative ways.

PSI/Malawi believes there are four key elements to branding behavior change communications programs, all with distinct advantages. These are Brand Personality, Brand Equity, Branded Reach and Branded Targeting of health messages and over the next few slides I will be going into some detail on these and how they relate to Youth Alert!



- ✓ **Balanced**
- ✓ **Trusted**
- ✓ **Accurate**
- ✓ **Youth Friendly and Accessible**

- Distinguishes Youth Alert! in a crowded and cluttered BCC market place
- **Positioning Statement:** Delayed Sexual Debut is positioned as follows "For youth 10-14, delaying your sexual debut and avoiding HIV allows you to concentrate on your goals and earn respect from your peers"

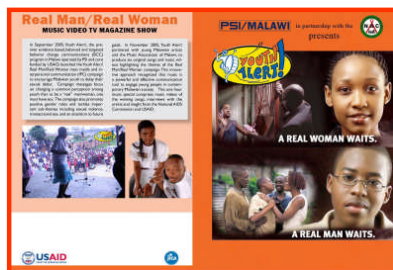
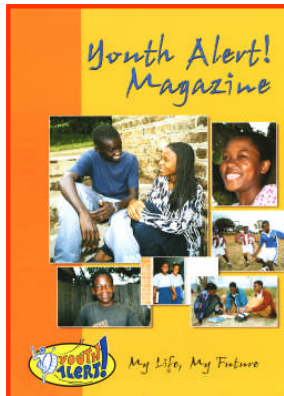


The first element is Brand Personality

Since 2001, significant time and financial resources have been devoted to defining the Youth Alert! Brand Personality in terms of the information that it delivers, the results of this investment is a Brand Personality that is Balanced, Trusted, Accurate and Youth Friendly. There are two main advantages for this investment.

Firstly, it helps differentiate Youth Alert! from a plethora of other youth targeted behavior change communications programs operating in the country. Since some of these programs are unbranded and small scale, they offer limited scope and impact. Youth Alert! is heavily branded and operates nationwide, therefore offering greater depth and reach. Secondly, by investing in the Brand Personality, Youth Alert! helps the target groups be reminded of the brand's behaviors and the main functional and emotional benefits associated with adopting these behaviors. For example, let's take delayed sexual debut as one of the behaviors Youth Alert! promotes. Referring to the last point on this slide and the positioning statement for delayed sexual debut. The functional benefit that Youth Alert! promotes if one delays their sexual debut is 'avoiding HIV' and the emotional benefits are 'concentration on future goals' and 'being respected in the community'. Positioning statements are an important part of Brand Personality and how behaviors and the benefits associated with these behaviors are packaged is also a key element to Brand Personality. Turning now to the next slide

Brand Equity



- Brand equity establishes a distinct, clear image that matters to customers and differentiates the brand from the competition and results in positive opinions about the product, service or behavior (Aaker, 1996: *Building Strong Brands*)
- Gradually builds up Brand Equity “piggy bank”
- Over time, this investment in equity will form a clear and definite picture of the brand in the mind of the target audience

The second element is Brand Equity. But what does Brand Equity mean?

To answer this, I would like to quote from the Evaluation of the TRUTH anti-smoking campaign. “Brand Equity is a measure of the added value of a brand to the persuasive appeal of the product, service or behavior”. But why bother invest in Brand Equity? Another study helps us answer this question. “Brand Equity establishes a distinct, clear image that matters to customers and differentiates the brand from the competition and results in positive opinions about the product, service or behavior” (Aaker, 1996: *Building Strong Brands*))

In Youth Alert!'s case, this means what EXTRA does the Youth Alert! brand bring to the table, other than the benefits of the behaviors that Youth Alert! promotes. Brand Equity is gradually built up by establishing a distinct and clear image in the consumers' eyes. If every Youth Alert! radio and TV commercial that is aired, every Youth Alert! brochure that is distributed, every Youth Alert! Mix radio program, every Youth Alert! billboard that is erected speaks consistently toward the Youth Alert! brand, then the amount of Youth Alert! brand Equity in the Brand Equity piggy bank will grow.

Turning now to the third element

Branded Reach



- Translating mass media into effective, community lead IPC for sustained behavior change
- In 2004, Youth Alert! Mix voted Number 1 youth magazine show
- Youth Alert! Mix cited as favorite radio magazine show among males and females aged 15-24



Here I would like to share with you how Youth Alert! has leveraged the Youth Alert! brand, and therefore enhanced the reach of the Youth Alert! brand

In Malawi, radio is by far the best mass media channel, reaching large numbers of people at a relatively low cost. This is one of the reasons why Youth Alert! has invested in Youth Alert! Mix, the thrice weekly radio show operated by Youth Alert!.

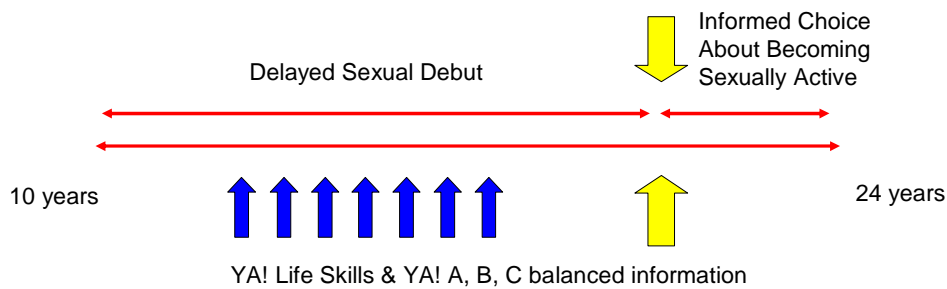
However, Youth Alert! has gone a step further and used the power and reach of Youth Alert! Mix and translated this into grassroots, community lead and owned interpersonal communications in the form of the Youth Alert! Mix Listeners Clubs. By initially investing in all elements of the Youth Alert! Mix brand in 2003 and making it the most popular youth magazine show in the country, we ensured un-branded existing clubs and youth clubs were motivated to re-brand themselves and become one of the 200 Youth Alert! Mix Listeners Clubs when these were established in 2004. In addition, we recently have also been approached by a Malawian NGO seeking our permission if they could brand their 700 unbranded clubs as Youth Alert! Mix Listeners Clubs, this further demonstrates the power and reach of the Youth Alert! brand in Malawi

As you can see from the slide, Youth Alert! Mix has proved popular, and a trusted source of information, among young people in Malawi.

Finally, lets look at the forth element



Youth Alert! Schools Program and Youth Alert! Mix allow us to target branded health messages at our target groups as follows:

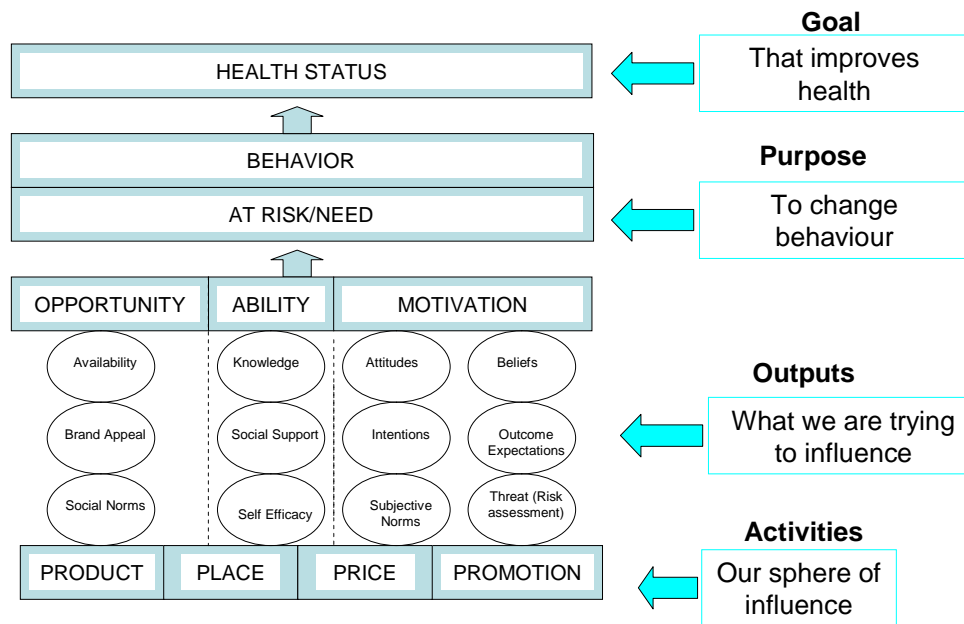


To remind you, the target groups of Youth Alert! are in and out-of-school youth in Malawi aged 10-24. By investing heavily in the Youth Alert! brand in the early days of the program, especially around the Youth Alert! Schools Program and Youth Alert! Mix, this has allowed us to use the trusted Youth Alert! brand as a portal for delivering our health messages to these target groups. By associating these messages with the Youth Alert! brand, young people trust them more. For example, we know that a certain demographic listens to Youth Alert! Mix and have voted the program the No. 1 young magazine show in Malawi, this allows us to air additional branded Youth Alert! delayed sexual debut messages during the regular Youth Alert! Mix programming.

In addition, and in order to target messages to the younger demographic, we are considering the introduction of a Youth Alert! Mix Kids show and are already training young, aspiring 10-14 year olds, with an interest in journalism to present these shows.



PSI PERFORM Framework



At this point I would like to pause and describe PSI’s approach to behavior change, which is derived from accepted behavior change theory and the private sector, but adapted for PSI’s own real-world experience. We call this the PERFORM framework. Some of you familiar with logframes, will recognize the structure of this framework

Starting at the bottom of the slide and the Activities level, you can see the four Ps of marketing listed: Product, Place, Price and Promotion. This is what we call PSI’s sphere of influence.

At the Output Level, you will see names of what we call key behavioral determinants or ‘bubbles’ that PSI seeks to influence with its Activities grouped under Opportunity, Ability and Motivation headings.

At the Purpose level, if we perform well at the 4 Ps and positively influence the key behavioral determinants identified by our new research methodology called TRaC (I will talk more about this in the next slide), then we can change a particular behavior

And finally, if we are successful in changing behavior then we improve health.

Let me now explain the TRaC research methodology



How Youth Alert! Uses the PERFORM Framework

- TRaC (Tracking Results Continuously) baseline indicators of important behaviors and factors
- **Segmentation – What Should we do?** Dividing the at-risk population into those that perform the desired behaviors, and those who do not. The differences between these groups of 'behavers' and 'non-behavers' are then analyzed, enabling us to identify the key behavioral determinants that influence or correlate with the desired behaviors.
- **Monitoring – How are we doing?** Is behavior changing/are the determinants affecting behavior changing due to our interventions?
- **Evaluation – How did we do?** Are we changing behaviors?
- TRaC also provides a means for evaluation of the impact of the branded Youth Alert! communication activities

TRaC means Tracking Results Continuously and is a new research methodology that all PSI platforms have adopted around the world. The TRaC survey establishes baseline indicators of behavior, and through the use of additional survey rounds, can track behavior change over a given period of time. In Malawi, we conducted our HIV/AIDS baseline TRaC survey with 2800 young people 15-24 across the country in November 2005.

There are three stages to the TraC survey. Firstly, Segmentation. This answers the question: What should we do? The second stage is called the Monitoring round and helps us answer the question, How are we doing? The final stage of the TraC survey is the Evaluation round where we can establish if we have indeed changed behaviors.

Finally, the TraC survey also informs us, at every stage of the TRaC process, if as a result of having high, medium or low exposure to our activities, our target groups have changed their behavior. This helps us distinguish ourselves from other actors in the same field and measure the effectiveness of our communications interventions.



Youth Alert! Health Impact

- High exposure to Youth Alert! activities, and therefore the Youth Alert! brand, correlates positively with **greater self-efficacy** for and more **positive attitudes** – key behavioral determinants identified by PSI research to effect youth sexual behavior - towards abstinence and condom use
- Those with high exposure to Youth Alert! activities, and therefore the Youth Alert! brand, and who have chosen by themselves to become sexually active, are 40% more likely to report **condom use** with a non-regular partner than those with low or no exposure to YA! activities

Let me share some of the findings from the HIV/AIDS baseline TRaC survey.

This survey found that Youth Alert! is positively impacting on the levels of self efficacy and attitudes for abstinence and condom use, key determinants for these behaviors, among young people aged 15-24 in Malawi. For example, if you think abstinence is ‘cool’, then you are more likely to practice this behavior than if you think its boring. In addition, Youth Alert! is also positively impacting on actual condom use as a protective behavior with youth.



How We Use the PERFORM Framework cont...

- Youth Alert! has prioritized the following key behavioural determinants:-

1. Social Norms

2. Beliefs

3. Self Efficacy and Attitudes

Going forward, and based on the results of the Segmentation round of the 2005 HIV/AIDS baseline TRaC survey I just mentioned, we have identified four key behavioral determinants, which Youth Alert! should invest in to influence the adoption of healthy behaviors that Youth Alert! promotes.

Firstly, **Social Norms** around pressure to have sex (e.g. seeking to change the social norm that its acceptable to engage in transactional and cross generational sex)

Secondly, **Beliefs** on HIV transmission (e.g. HIV is passed by unprotected sex with an infected partner)

Thirdly, **Self Efficacy** for A, B and C (e.g. equipping young people with the confidence to say no to a partner who wants sex without a condom)

And finally, **Attitudes** for A, B, C (e.g. making delayed sexual debut 'cool' and changing the attitude that girls who carry condoms are prostitutes, instead they are being responsible, caring for themselves, their sexual partners and their futures)

A Monitoring TRaC survey is scheduled for June 2008 and we hope to report significant changes in all the behaviors that Youth Alert! promotes among youth after the results of this survey are available.



- Attention to branding and brand management can improve program impact
- By investing in the Youth Alert! brand, the program is recognized as a trusted source of information by youth AND the Government of Malawi
- Youth Alert! ensures the greatest reach and depth of its interventions by offering a diverse 'family' of BCC in order to reach its target groups
- Investment in the Youth Alert! brand allows it to be used as a 'message portal'
- Its hard work, but worth the investment!

And finally, let me try and draw out some lessons learned from the Youth Alert! branding experience?

By paying close attention to the Brand Personality, Brand Equity, Branded Reach and Branded Targeting of health messages, the impact of any behavior change communications program can be enhanced and improved

By investing in the brand, both the target groups and other important stakeholders, such as national governments, feel ownership of the program.

Using many different branded communications components, for example mass media, large scale interactive and interpersonal communication, ensures an integrated approach and therefore the greatest reach and depth

By investing in the Youth Alert! brand and thus ensuring its popularity, we can be sure additional 'bolt on' branded health messages can be targeted efficiently through this 'message portal'

Its time consuming, but we believe worth the investment in time and money!



Thank You from the Warm
Heart of Africa!

Any Questions?



For more information, contact:

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- Jessica Greene, Research and IPC Program Manager AIDSMark (jgreene@psi.org)

Thank you from the Warm Heart of Africa! We hope you have found this presentation useful and we would welcome any questions you have or you can contact me or Jessica via the email addresses shown. Thank you for your attention.