

ShowCase

Activmob

Topic: Physical activity; Other public health

Organisation: Activmob CIC

Location: Kent (South East Coast)

Dates: 2005 to ongoing

Budget: £130,000 (plus £300,000 in-kind funding from the Design Council) up until 2007, no budget since Activmob transferred to a CIC

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activ.mob.

Overview

The development of Activmob has seen three distinct phases:

- 2005 to 2007 – Prototype work with KCC and Design Council
- 2008 to 2010 – Evaluation and development into a sustainable business model
- 2010 to now – Activmob transferred to a CIC (Community Interest Company) whose social conscience supports the Activmob principles

The initiative was designed to support people with shared interests. It helped link people up and get them to help each other in being active in their everyday lives, realising that they could still be active even if they were not comfortable with more formal activities, like going to the gym or to fitness or exercise classes. Activmob allowed community members to suggest an activity 'mob', and then supported them to run and organise it themselves.

Results

As of September 2010, there were approximately:

- 30 active mobs
- 300 active mobbers

Other benefits include more active citizenship, greater social cohesion and increased mental wellbeing in the communities where Activmob operates.

1. BEHAVIOUR

- Residents to get active and stay active
- Make physical activity part of everyday life
- Encourage residents to suggest or start a new 'mob'

2. CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

- User-centred design approach
- Review of health data and local area
- Research with 45 residents, including observed exercises, activity audits and interviews
- Workshops with local stakeholders
- Facilitated pilots prior to roll-out

3. THEORY

- **Social Capital Theory:** Uses the links and assets within social networks to enable collective action

4. INSIGHT

- Activity requires motivation and self-esteem
- Use motivational potential of small group interaction
- Use informal activity groups and support them through training
- Avoid 'official looking' promotional material
- Language is important – 'Mobs' is informal and related to 'fitness' or 'health'

5. EXCHANGE

Barriers:

- Lack motivation to fit exercise into their daily lives
- Lack confidence and self-esteem, need support
- Not interested in activity for activity's sake
- Feels safer to drive than to walk
- Equipment is expensive
- Friends are not physically active

Benefits:

- New friendships and busier social life
- Empowers users to run their own mobs, gaining confidence and skills; Residents encouraged to join with a friend
- Provides venues, trainers, contacts and publicity

6. COMPETITION

- Social deprivation – Individuals have more pressing concerns than exercise
- The pub as social hub
- Non-competitive structure, aiming to facilitate and join up existing activity opportunities

7. SEGMENTATION

Original segmentation:

- Inactive because of illness
- No time to exercise
- Already healthy and active

Revised segmentation:

- Mobs in small-scale communities
- Workplace interventions
- Mobs for the socially excluded

8. METHODS MIX

- **Enable** (make it easy) – Pilot website, trainer, train the trainer
- **Engage** (get people involved) – Mob 'motivators', word-of-mouth, direct mail, advertising
- **Exemplify** (lead by example) – Real-life testimonials, wellbeing cards
- **Encourage** (give the right signals) – Discount vouchers for facilities, childcare and travel