

The Best Laid Schemes of Mice and Men...

ParticipACTION's Legacy and the Future of Physical Activity Promotion in Canada

Irving Rootman
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*The best laid schemes of mice and men,
Go oft astray,
And leave us naught but grief and pain,
To rend our day. ...*

Robert Burns in "To a Mouse"¹

Robert Burns wrote "To a Mouse" after he had inadvertently destroyed the mouse's home while plowing in his field. But unlike the experience of the field mouse, ParticipACTION's closing leaves us far more than grief and pain. The agency leaves a rich legacy to build on in the future promotion of physical activity in Canada.

It is clear from the other articles in this supplement that ParticipACTION was indeed a "mouse that roared". But now the mouse is silent. Should we try to revive the mouse, find another mouse that roars, or teach others to roar? What do we take from the legacy of ParticipACTION and what future do we create for the promotion of physical activity in Canada, and for health communications and social marketing in general? To help us address these questions, the authors of this paper canvassed several experts in physical activity promotion and health communications. (See Acknowledgements in this article.) Specifically, we asked them: 1) What legacy does ParticipACTION leave the field? 2) What is the future of promoting active living in Canada? and 3) What is the future of health communications and social marketing as health promotion strategies? This paper will reflect their views as well as our own.

ParticipACTION's legacy

What legacy does ParticipACTION leave? First, it leaves us with a compelling model and story – a uniquely Canadian adventure of which we can be proud. Gerry Glassford, a distinguished scholar in the field of active living, says: "ParticipACTION left Canada with a very positive reputation among other countries that are seeking ways to countervail the high costs of an inactive population."

Second, ParticipACTION remains in the minds of several generations as a force encouraging us to be active. Cora Lynn Craig, President and CEO of the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, says: "ParticipACTION developed a brand that permeated Canadians' consciousness, making 'participating' synonymous with 'participATING'. It had a major impact that regretfully is difficult to measure. In 1981, virtually every Canadian knew of ParticipACTION and by 1995, Canadians were aware of and held positive beliefs about the health benefits of physical activity. Much of this can be attributed to the work of ParticipACTION during the 1970s and '80s."

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Third, while the growth of the fitness movement was mainly due to the hard work of organizations, service providers, educators and leaders across Canada, there is little doubt that ParticipACTION's high profile helped set the stage. "Thirty years ago it was rare to see bicycle paths, fitness trails, fitness clubs in shopping centres and exercise facilities in office buildings and workplaces," says Glassford. "The awareness programs generated by ParticipACTION helped to make these commonplace. And while ParticipACTION cannot be given full credit for gaining the support of key opinion leaders, it certainly was a major player in enhancing the readiness to support the field. ParticipACTION's President was so highly regarded and the ParticipACTION messages so frequently heard that he could 'gain the ear' of senior officials across the nation. This made it easier for others to follow in his path."

Jim Struthers, a former media executive from Saskatoon who chaired the ParticipACTION Board in the early 1980s, believes that ParticipACTION's greatest legacy is community mobilization. "Saskatoon was the ParticipACTION pilot site for all kinds of community activities. In the process, the community learned how to mobilize and use its power. We are a living legacy of the empowered community that was forged in partnership with ParticipACTION." Other board members and staff concur. "Nobody else could mobilize the community from the ground up like ParticipACTION did," says Dick Oland, a marketing expert from Saint John who chaired ParticipACTION from 1986 to 1993. "Events like the CrownLife ParticipACTION Challenge and the 1988 Olympic Torch Relay galvanized communities all across Canada. It was fitness for all, not elitism. The number of volunteers who helped with these events was extraordinary. In fact, part of the organization's legacy is its role modeling of the power of voluntarism and not-for-profit organizations to engage ordinary people."

Last, ParticipACTION leaves us with some specific lessons, which are captured throughout this supplement. A brief summary and some discussion of the main observations follow.

Bauman, Madill, Craig and Salmon² point to the importance of investing in evaluation with an emphasis on proximal measures for media campaigns in the short

term, and influence on social climate in the long term. Their exploration of the use of "social marketing" versus "health communications" suggests that how we do it is more important than what we call it. It is well known that health promotion efforts need a comprehensive and balanced approach that addresses the environments around people as well as personal behaviour change. What is less clear is the role of social marketing or health communications agencies in this effort. Some critics claim that ParticipACTION crossed boundaries and the mandates of other agencies by becoming involved in direct program delivery (e.g., workplace programs or the Ambassadors program) in their efforts to create positive environments for physical activity. Others say the opposite: that ParticipACTION did not get involved enough in advocacy efforts designed to influence policies and environments. Defenders of this stance suggest that an agency that relies on the good will of the media must remain neutral and be associated with a broad positive message.

It is likely that confusion about roles and perceived boundaries contributed to the organization's demise. Therefore, it is essential in the future to be clear about the various partners' mandates in a comprehensive strategy to promote physical activity, and to ensure ongoing communication about who does what. Whether or not a communications agency engages in active advocacy, there is a need to consciously frame the physical activity message as more than an individual decision, and to use deliberate strategies for social change that create supportive environments for Canadians who are inactive.

Rob Peteh, Creative Director of Cormana Group, believes that the enthusiastic acceptance of ParticipACTION in Quebec was a key factor in their success. François Lagarde suggests that agencies working in bi- or multilingual and bi- or multicultural settings need to make a clear commitment to working in this capacity from start to finish, and retain staff and creative agencies that have the interpersonal skills to convey nuances within diverse cultures.

In his article, "The Mouse Under the Microscope: Keys to ParticipACTION's Success",³ Lagarde describes success factors related to ways of working and the princi-

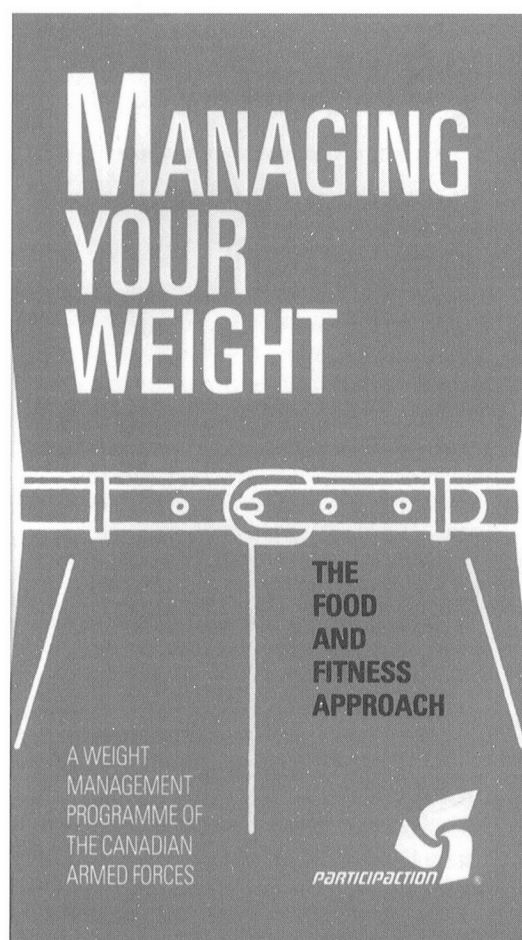
ples of good messaging. He also suggests some of ParticipACTION's weaknesses. One relates to the agency's limitations in addressing segments of the population who were not ready to take action. Glassford supports this view: "We still do not know what it will take to shift the inactive group to a health-enhancing lifestyle. Clearly, there is no single social marketing strategy that will positively influence every Canadian." This dilemma suggests that understanding the barriers faced by inactive Canadians (who are most likely to have low incomes) is key to messaging for these audiences and the institutions that can help reduce disparities.

The other weakness raised by Lagarde relates to the agency's slowness in later years to adapt to a new media landscape, especially at a time when they were experiencing inadequate funding. Mark Sarner, President of Manifest Communications Inc., believes that ParticipACTION had two major strengths in terms of leveraging public service advertising: innovative marketing combined with an obsession for creativity, and a proven approach to building

personal relationships with the media. "ParticipACTION had engaging people on the road all the time, visiting individual media outlets and giving them top quality creative. They recognized that the media, not the public, was their primary audience. At a certain point, they lost this focus. The quality of creative productions dropped and staff were not constantly visiting the media. They lost their edge just at the time that competition for public service advertising was dramatically increasing."

In "Spreading the Message Through Community Mobilization, Education and Leadership: A Magnanimouse Task",⁴ Christa Costas-Bradstreet suggests a number of key learnings related to community mobilization and educational information as complementary strategies to mass media campaigns. They include listening well, valuing volunteerism, respecting grassroots leaders, using a community-driven approach, and providing high quality support materials and access to media coverage.

In "The Mouseketeers[®]: People Make the Difference",⁵ Peggy Edwards draws several conclusions from the





ParticipACTION experience. To be successful, non-profit agencies need to: pick a leader who is committed, tenacious, visionary and likeable; choose board members who are personally committed and professionally connected in a variety of influential areas; surround themselves with bilingual staff who are passionate about the cause; hire committed and creative suppliers who work for more than money; and find ways to involve and build loyalty among private sector sponsors, media representatives, senior officials in governments, and leaders in the community. This article also contains suggestions from the experts for organizations wanting to replicate the ParticipACTION experience.

Sustainability, branding and leverage

Three key concepts – sustainability, branding and leverage – ran through the analyses and opinions expressed by all of the authors, as well as the experts we interviewed. Mark Sarnier says: “Capturing the kind of impact that ParticipACTION achieved in today’s environment will require substantial resources in the short term and serious commitment over the long term.” Thus, the crucial task for those working in the field of physical activity promotion – including governments at all levels, non-governmental organizations, researchers, educators, service providers, local groups and citizens – is to find creative ways to work together in support of a sustained physical activity promotion effort for three to five decades to come.

In the first article in this issue, “No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective

Marketing and Health Communications”,⁶ Edwards describes how identity building and branding were key elements of ParticipACTION’s success. This can only be achieved over the long term. Insiders suggest that while ParticipACTION’s branding was a success from an awareness point of view, the agency could have been stronger in articulating what the brand meant. Unless an organization maintains a consistent and insistent brand stewardship, it is vulnerable to misinterpretation by multiple suppliers and piece-meal projects. This might have been part of the problem in later years when some people observed a decline in focus and creativity.

“No Country Mouse” gives practical examples of the effective leveraging that was key to ParticipACTION’s strength. Larry Hershfield, Manager of the Health Communication Unit (THCU) at the University of Toronto, suggests that ParticipACTION provides a model of how to nurture, leverage and appreciate in-kind contributions from both the corporate and non-profit sectors. Nancy Dubois, a consultant with THCU, reminds us that building these kinds of partnerships takes a lot more time and energy than one would suspect.

Promoting active living: The future

At present, there is considerable activity in Canada bearing on the promotion of physical activity, spurred on in many cases by concerns about increasing rates of overweight and obesity. Key coalitions at the national level include the Coalition for Active Living, the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada and the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy (which includes the federal, provincial and territorial governments). Several provinces already have full-scale promotion campaigns for physical activity on its own or as part of a broader healthy living campaign. Traditional service providers such as municipal recreation departments, sport associations and the YMCA and YWCA continue to promote and support physical activity among Canadians. Finally, organizations at the provincial level such as the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, as well as at local levels such as the Saskatoon Health District, have increased their efforts to promote physical

activity recently, as part of a focus on improved health.

In contrast to previous campaigns, many of these efforts are tied to the prevention of chronic diseases. Cora Craig says: “If the current trend persists, physical activity promotion will be transformed into the promotion of non-communicable disease risk factors. This appears to be the direction of the federal government with its focus on a healthy living strategy (an umbrella for physical activity, nutrition, tobacco and other risk factors), and its support for the creation of the Chronic Disease Alliance. Although warranted, this was matched by a decrease in focus on physical activity promotion, and a decrease in funding for its physical activity unit (roughly 25% of what it was a decade ago).”

There are limitations to absorbing physical activity promotion within chronic disease promotion. Craig says: “The risk-factor specific approach is still necessary because the messaging across risk factors may not lead to clear messaging for any one risk factor, the target groups for specific risk factors (e.g., nutrition and physical activity) are not identical, and the sectors that need to be engaged in developing solutions are not the same.” This view is supported by the analysis presented in this supplement and from literature⁷ suggesting that it is more effective to “promote a single, doable behaviour, explained in simple and clear terms.”³ Adding negative risk factors, such as smoking in particular, may muddy the waters. Moreover, focussing on other risk factors at the same time may undermine the positive motivational potential of physical activity to build self-esteem, socialize and have fun.

Ebbe Marquardsen, who worked with ParticipACTION in the early years, believes that a clear focussed mission was key to their success. “Early on, it was a tough sell. People looked at us with blank expressions on their faces when we described who we were. But I had a clear mission – to promote personal fitness. I knew what that meant and I knew how to sell that idea. People responded.”

On the other hand, combining forces is not necessarily incompatible. There is a particularly strong synergy between physical activity and healthy eating, and Canada and other countries can build upon the current World Health Organization work

on a Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.⁸ While physical activity and healthy eating still require separate campaign efforts, combining the efforts of these two networks makes a lot of sense. In this regard, it is encouraging to note that physical activity is being taken seriously in at least some of the current chronic disease work in Canada. Nancy Dubois, who represents the Coalition for Active Living in the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance meetings, says: "Physical activity is really coming into its own – as a true partner at the table."

Having said this, the authors of this article are concerned that the current emphasis on risk factors and disease medicalizes physical activity and represents a throwback to the days before the birth of the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*.⁹ In so doing, it loses the focus on personal and community empowerment that is the essence of health promotion. It also threatens to push away important partners in the recreation and sport communities. Millions of children play basketball, soccer and hockey, not because it prevents diabetes but because it is fun, challenging and rewarding. Most Canadians who camp, hike and swim do so for the enjoyment of recreating in nature, not because it helps control their blood pressure. Municipal recreation departments provide programs for seniors and Canadians with disabilities, not in the interest of improving health (although this is recognized as an important by-product), but because they believe that all citizens have the right to enjoy the holistic benefits of active recreation in their community.

Currently, there are many organizations and several coalitions that are well placed to improve access and provide leadership in the field of physical activity. The Coalition for Active Living is ideally suited to provide the leadership we need to achieve the six-point plan the Coalition promotes.¹⁰ The recent focus on developing physical activity guidelines and supporting national organizations that are trying to influence the environment for physical activity is laudable and essential. But there is a gaping hole in the strategy. There is no long-term commitment to support a program dedicated to the use of social marketing/health communications to increase awareness, knowledge, motivation and networks among the broad population and

subgroups, and to reinforce a social climate that makes active living the norm in Canada.

Art Salmon, an ex-staff member who currently works with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, says: "While there is a lot going on in physical activity at the professional level, the average Canadian is missing a viable icon for physical activity. Canadians saw ParticipACTION as the national consciousness for fitness. There is a sense that we have lost a beacon at the street level."

Many Canadians are incredulous that support for ParticipACTION or a replacement program is not in place at the very time that levels of obesity and chronic disease are rising. There is particular concern that Canadian children, who live increasingly sedentary lives, are growing up without the ParticipACTION message. Charlie Caty, a financial expert and former chair of the ParticipACTION Board, is also concerned about the cost to our health care system. "Research has increasingly shown that keeping Canadians active will save money, as well as increasing personal well-being."

Social marketing can make an important contribution to the effectiveness of community-based interventions when combined with multiple strategies, such as those that are recommended by the CDC Task Force on Community Preventive Services.¹¹ The ParticipACTION experience suggests that social marketing programs are best sustained outside of government through an organization that can draw on the good will of the media and private sponsors without political encumbrances. "An association with government is important for credibility and an enhanced image with corporate supporters," says Rob Petch, "but it is not possible for governments to get the kind of leverage ParticipACTION garnered. Media expect governments to pay for their advertising."

Marilyn Knox, who served on the ParticipACTION Board for 10 years, says: "Without political will and the support of government managers, you lose the balance between public and private funding and are forced to work in survival mode, as we were at the end of ParticipACTION's time. The funding for this cannot come from the already under-funded Physical Activity Unit in Health Canada, or from the monies that flow to other groups working in physical



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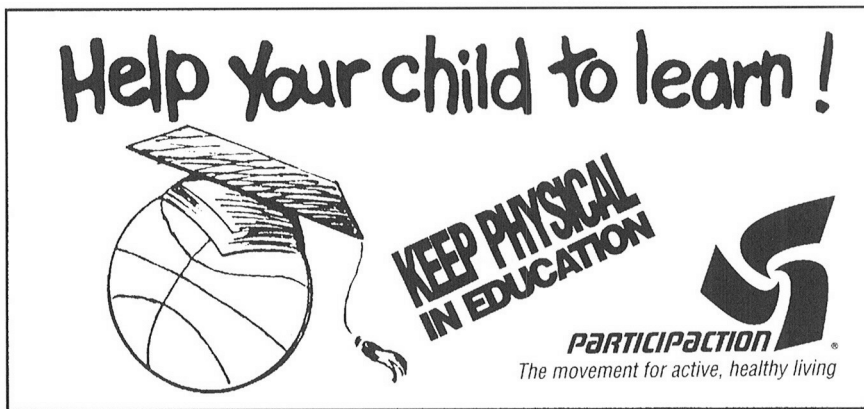


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activity. It must come from a commitment at the political level to support a comprehensive national social marketing effort that promotes and enables physical activity."

A wise sage once said that "an elephant is a mouse built to government specifications", and it makes sense to have an arms-length, small organization that is able to move quickly and even make fun of political correctness, as ParticipACTION did in their early days. In the face of competing and shifting priorities, it is difficult for governments to sustain a specific social marketing program over many years (the exception in Canada is tobacco). It is also challenging for governments to fund an outside agency over the long term unless they have support, cooperation and pressure from six essential groups: elected officials at the highest levels, key opinion leaders in the media and corporate sectors, government bureaucrats, and leaders in provincial/territorial and local governments, the non-governmental sector and grassroots organizations. Elected officials and senior bureaucrats in a variety of departments want clear evidence of the benefits of investing in the promotion of physical activity from economic, environmental and social perspectives as well as health. They need to know that the lessons learned from ParticipACTION and others will be well applied. Managers within government need assurance that their own mandates and programs are valued, and to become comfortable with being a hands-off partner that does not feel in competition with a dynamic organization such as ParticipACTION. They also need to be touched personally by the cause. Sometimes, stories are far more effective than statistics.

Bob Duck, who worked with ParticipACTION and the Y for many years, sug-

gests that future efforts to promote physical activity in Canada will need to pay more attention to the diversity of Canada's population. "Different cultures look at physical activity in different ways and promotional efforts will need to explicitly address cultural values, beliefs and practices."

Medhat Mahdy, Senior Vice-President, YMCA Canada, suggests that future efforts to promote physical activity will need to pay more attention to the family unit. "The field tends to promote active living for children and adults separately and to forget the importance of the family unit being active together. At the Y, we see how children take their cues from their parents." Mahdy also believes that we need to put more emphasis on 'staying' with physical activity, as well as on starting. "Recidivism rates are always high. You need different strategies and messages to keep people active."

Michael Weil, President and CEO, YMCA Canada, says: "We are spending a lot of time talking theory and organizing coalitions. Meanwhile, our young people are not developing the habit of physical activity. Grassroots organizations like the YMCA are working hard to increase access for everyone. Community action is key, but we need policy incentives and organizations like ParticipACTION to support the grassroots."

Finally, it is important to note the growing interest in health promotion in an ecological approach building on concepts from social ecology and urban studies.^{12,13} This approach, which attempts to integrate theoretical perspectives that allow an analysis of the relationships between personal-level and broader-level environmental factors has in fact recently been applied to the promotion of physical activity.¹⁴ It is likely

that as it gains strength through further research, it will strongly influence the future of physical activity promotion.

The future of health communications and social marketing

It is increasingly apparent that health communications and social marketing efforts need to be viewed as a component of comprehensive strategies to promote personal and social change rather than the only, or even the primary approach. It is also important to recognize that the field is changing rapidly, largely as a result of technological and commercial developments. "It is a different world today and ParticipACTION set the bar high," says Jeannette Hanna, Vice-President of Brand Strategy at Spencer Francey Peters. "It is more difficult to get noticed, there is more skepticism and more competition for donor dollars."

Rob Petch, who worked as a producer at CBC television, says: "In the '70s, you had a chance of reaching almost 50% of Canadians if you got on one of only two television networks. An audience of 2.5 million was considered big. Now with multiple networks and hundreds of channels, it's considered a success if you reach 700,000 to 800,000 viewers. We also do TV differently. Every three months, there is a new technology to plug into. We've moved from broadcasting to narrow-casting to micro-casting."

Tom MacMillan, Senior Vice-President of a public relations firm, agrees that the communications environment of 2004 is far more complex than it was during the time he worked with ParticipACTION. "On the other hand, there has never been more media available. Convergence also means that it is now possible to be really efficient, for example to engage many newspapers across the country through one corporate owner. Organizations who are willing to learn and adapt have a good chance of being successful."

Some social marketers are starting to question the effectiveness of public service advertising (PSAs). A new study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that in the US, broadcast and cable stations provide an average of 15 seconds every hour to PSAs (just under one half of 1% of all television airtime). The study also found that Partners for a Drug-Free America was buy-

ing about 9 seconds an hour for their “public service messages” because most networks were showing their messages at 3:00 a.m. or could only give the agency 10-second spots. On the positive side, new style PSAs that feature a network’s own stars – and therefore promote the network at the same time as the social cause – were getting prime-time exposure.¹⁵

Petch believes that non-governmental agencies need not abandon PSAs nor television. “It does mean that they need to be realistic about what a PSA can do, and make television one of several delivery mechanisms. For example, reduce your costs per unit and make your creative suitable for delivery on the web as well as on TV.”

It may also be time to revisit the rules about how much time broadcasters in Canada are required and encouraged to donate to public service advertising, and whether or not there should be stipulations on how much of that space should be in prime time.

Larry Hershfield suggests that “more participatory, personal approaches such as ‘blogging’ and ‘chats’ now dominate the information environment, particularly among the young.” In addition, “there are more commercial intrusions into the overall health information environment, including nutraceuticals, advertising, medicalization and the invention of syndromes.” These developments provide both challenges and opportunities for health communications and social marketing efforts to promote personal and social change.

On the challenges side, serious health communications and social marketing efforts will have to compete with well-funded commercial efforts and each other in an increasingly chaotic information environment. This will require ongoing research with an increased emphasis on the use of psychographics to segment audiences, focussed strategic and operational planning, the creative use of resources, effective partnerships, and the use of event marketing and new media approaches in addition to (or instead of) advertising. The goal must be to create and sustain support for social movements such as the one that ParticipACTION spearheaded.

On the opportunities side, the specificity of the increased number of media channels allows for more targeted messages to spe-

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- Michael Weil, President and CEO, YMCA Canada.

cific audiences. New information technologies and increasing access to the world wide web create unprecedented opportunities for ordinary people to access health information that is specific to their needs. Health communications and social marketing efforts can exploit these opportunities to spread the word more efficiently than has been the case in the past. Moreover, according to François Lagarde, “social marketing could be optimized if social marketers go the whole way in addressing product, price and place issues and consider taking the lead on advocating changes to the physical, social and economic environments that are conducive to the adoption of physical activity.”

Thus, on balance, the future of health communications and social marketing is secure, at least in part, because of the pioneering efforts of ParticipACTION – the “mouse that roared”.

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Appendix

Historical Milestones for ParticipACTION

ParticipACTION's First Decade: Creating Awareness and Changing Attitudes

1971

- Sport Participation Canada (later renamed ParticipACTION), a not-for-profit private company is formed on July 12. Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson is Chairman and Mr. Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien is President.

1972

- "ParticipACTION" is selected as the bilingual brand name and a logo is designed.
- A communication strategy is developed and initial TV and radio PSAs are launched in both official languages.
- ParticipACTION Saskatoon begins as the first pilot community.

1973

- The 60-year-old Swede television ad shakes up the country.

1974

- ParticipACTION launches newspaper (daily and weekly) PSA messages.

1976

- Sun Life Assurance Company and the Kinsmen Clubs of Canada work with ParticipACTION to build activity trails called "ParticiParks" in over 100 communities across Canada.

1979

- ParticipACTION and the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER) publish *What's the Matter With Kids Today*, an engaging booklet about children's lack of fitness and growing problems with overweight.

1980-81

- ParticipACTION reaches 100,000 employees and their families with FITNESS: THE FACTS, a comprehensive information campaign on employee fitness.
- Media support for ParticipACTION campaigns (not including in-kind) valued at \$8M.

ParticipACTION's Second Decade: Building Involvement and Motivation

1982

- ParticipACTION Saskatoon conducts "Great Canadian ParticipACTION Challenge," involving 50 communities across Canada.

1983

- The CrownLife ParticipACTION Challenge begins and continues annually for 11 years. For many years, the Challenge involves an annual "community donation" of some 800 paid personnel, more than 22,000 volunteer leaders and over 4,000,000 registered participants.

1984

- ParticipACTION, Fitness Ontario and the Ontario Milk Marketing Board create APEX (Action Program on Eating and Exercise) for use in Ontario elementary schools.

1984-86

- The ParticipACTION Network is created in partnership with Fitness Canada, including a membership-based information magazine with sections targeting fitness/health leaders and the public.

1985

- ParticipACTION begins work with the Department of National Defence to develop training, exercise prescription and promotional materials for military staff and physical education instructors.
- The "Health Saver" educational pamphlets program is launched in cooperation with the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the financial support of the H. J. Heinz Company of Canada. Eventually, 2.5 million information pieces are distributed by family physicians.
- ParticipACTION adapts health education booklets produced by Krames Communications for sale to workplaces in Canada under the ParticipACTION brand. This continues into the mid-1990s.

1988

- Through the *Olympic Torch Relay* and *Celebration 88*, ParticipACTION mobilizes 1,730 communities in partnership with Petro-Canada and the Canadian government.
- ParticipACTION publishes *Expres: The Exercise Prescription*, an adaptation for the public of the exercise program developed for the Department of National Defence.

1989

- ParticipACTION designs and implements the Vitality awareness campaign in partnership with Health Canada and Fitness Canada, in response to the healthy weights initiative.
- ParticipACTION hosts the TRIM and Fitness International Sport for All conference (TAFISA) with 48 participating countries.
- The CrownLife ParticipACTION Challenge program is adopted internationally by TAFISA as "Challenge Day", eventually attracting 25 million participants annually.
- The television campaign "Body Break With ParticipACTION" is launched and Canadians meet Hal and Joanne.

1990

- Fitness Ontario supports the development of "InformACTION", a computer-based health communication resource for workplaces.

1991

- The Canadian Public Health Association presents ParticipACTION with the Ortho Award for "outstanding contribution to health in Canada".
- Media support for ongoing campaigns and Vitality calculated to be \$15M.

ParticipACTION's Third Decade: Enhancing Partnerships and Community Mobilization

1992

- ParticipACTION develops and distributes to 20,000 leaders of older adult programs, health information kits called *Live It Up!* in partnership with Merck Frosst Canada Inc. and six major health organizations, including CPHA. Over one million information pieces are hand-delivered to the target audience.
- Through a team of 50 community animation specialists and over one million local volunteer leaders, ParticipACTION stimulates over 20,000 community active living initiatives and extensive coverage for the Canada 125 campaign.
- ParticipACTION, with the support of many organizations and in collaboration with Fitness Canada, is contracted to expand and promote Summer Active and Winter Active campaigns.
- With the support of the Ontario government, ParticipACTION launches the Ontario Community Active Living Programme (OCALP). Four community animators mobilize individuals and organizations to build active living coalitions, and support physical activity in communities across Ontario.

1993

- In partnership with Crown Life Insurance Company, ParticipACTION develops and distributes a quarterly, bilingual, health newsletter called *Quality of Life* that goes to some 80,000 employees in some 1,000 small businesses and institutions across the country. This continues until 1997.

1994

- Nielsen media report shows that between February 1993 and January 1994, ParticipACTION gained a median monthly media exposure valued at \$230,000 (ranging from \$167,000 to \$538,000).

1995

- The Canadian Cardiovascular Society awards ParticipACTION the Doctor Harold N. Segall Award of Merit "in recognition of notable contributions to the prevention of cardiovascular diseases and the promotion of cardiovascular health in Canadians."
- In partnership with Health Alliance (Astra Pharma Inc., now AstraZeneca) and the Government of New Brunswick, ParticipACTION works with a seniors group called Aîné(e)s en marche—Go Ahead Seniors! to develop and promote a bilingual, peer-assisted health information program for seniors.

1998

- ParticipACTION builds and launches an ambitious interactive website in both official languages.
- ParticipACTION promotes *Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* developed by Health Canada.

1999

- ParticipACTION is one of the founding members of the Coalition for Active Living. It is made up of hundreds of groups, organizations and individuals committed to "making sure that the environments where we live, learn, work and play support regular physical activity."
- ParticipACTION stops producing new national public service announcement campaign material.

2000

- ParticipACTION mobilizes over 800 communities to support Canada's largest millennium project, "The Trans Canada Trail Relay 2000".
- ParticipACTION works with the Department of National Defence (DND) to produce training resources for Land Force Command and special programs for DND firefighters, special forces and pregnant soldiers.
- The ParticipACTION Board decides to cease operations.

2001

- ParticipACTION officially closes in January.