

Why can't we be friends? Bridging the academic/practitioner gap in social marketing

Liz Foote

Department of Marketing, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Phill Sherring

New Zealand Social Marketing Network, Wellington, New Zealand, and

Sharyn Rundle-Thiele

Department of Marketing, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Abstract

Purpose – In this paper we (a pracademic, a practitioner, and an academic) aim to explore the academic/practitioner gap in social marketing and offer recommendations to close it, while amplifying existing examples of best practice from within the field. We also propose a research agenda to spur dialog and guide further investigations in this area. Insights from prior research, coupled with the co-authors' experience and observations, indicate that a disconnect does exist between academia and practice within social marketing, though it is admittedly and unsurprisingly not uniform across contexts and disciplinary areas. Given social marketing's identity as a practice-oriented field, there are many existing examples of academic/practitioner collaboration and the successful linkage of theory and practice that deserve to be amplified. However, the challenges associated with the very different systems and structures affecting both worlds mean the disconnect is problematic enough to warrant systematic change to ensure the two worlds are more aligned.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper (a pracademic, a practitioner and an academic) explores the academic/practitioner gap in social marketing and offer recommendations to close it, while amplifying existing examples of best practice from within the field. The authors also propose a research agenda to spur dialog and guide further investigations in this area.

Findings – The authors suggest five key reasons that focus should be placed upon closing the academic/practitioner gap in social marketing: demonstrating societal value by contributing to practice; embedding and developing theories in practice; adding to the social marketing literature; contributing to social marketing teaching; and communicating the value and effectiveness of social marketing. To close the gap, the authors propose specific recommendations within four broad areas: marketing the academia and practitioner collaboration offer; building ongoing relationships; creating collaborative partnerships; and changing the

The authors thank the many individuals who answered their call to share examples and/or review early drafts: Erik Cateriano-Arévalo, Julie Colehour, Mel Dalley, Sameer Deshpande, Doug Evans, Giuseppe Fattori, Jay Kassirer, François Lagarde, Nancy Lee, Rick MacPherson, Gael O'Sullivan, Mahmooda Khaliq Pasha, Claudia Parvanta, Tom Staite, Jennifer Tabanico, Alan Tapp, Diogo Verissimo, Abigail Abrash Walton and Nedra Weinreich. Their contributions strengthened the manuscript and illustrate the range of inspirational collaborative social marketing work underway within the field. The authors would also like to thank Griffith University for creating the Executive in Residence program that gave Phill (the practitioner) the opportunity to embed amongst a bunch of incredibly welcoming and supportive academics at Social Marketing @ Griffith. This paper (and its broader research agenda) is a direct result of that experience. Also, the first two authors would like to make clear that for months they incessantly fought over authorship order for this paper and Liz only conceded accepting first authorship due to being an early career researcher and the "metrics" she's unsurprisingly not a fan of having to use.



publishing model ensuring communications are accessible to all. They also suggest ways for social marketing associations and peak bodies to play a role.

Originality/value – The concept of a disconnect between academia and practice is by no means new; it has been a pervasive issue across disciplines for decades. However, this issue has not been the subject of much discussion within the social marketing literature. Recommendations outlined in this paper serve as a starting point for discussion. The authors also acknowledge that due to long standing “bright spots” in the field, numerous examples currently exist. They place an emphasis upon highlighting these examples while illuminating a path forward.

Keywords Academic/practitioner gap, Academic/practitioner divide, Academic/practitioner disconnect, Theory/practice gap, Theory-to-practice, Partnerships, Collaboration

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

Academics and practitioners exist in inherently different worlds, characterised by vastly different systems, structures, procedures and policies. Academics situated within universities are primarily concerned with conducting theoretically driven research. Practitioners are from a variety of real-world settings – such as local and national government agencies, non-profit organisations and marketing companies – and are more concerned with achieving tangible outcomes.

To survive, individuals from each side must successfully adapt to the institutional structures surrounding their day-to-day practice. Academics find their success heavily tied to metrics based on the status and performance of peer-reviewed publications, while practitioners’ success and value is linked to project outcomes, deliverables and budgets. These differences result in different approaches to conceptualising, conducting, evaluating and communicating work. Unsurprisingly this has led to a disconnect (also referred to as a “gap” or “divide”) between academics and practitioners. As a result, practitioner work fails to be informed by formal theory, and most academic work fails to be grounded in daily practice. This in turn means that both the rigor and relevance of everyone’s work suffers, thus reducing our collective achievement of outcomes and impact.

This concept of a gap between academics and practitioners is by no means new and has been explored in the literature extensively across disciplines (Alpert *et al.*, 2022; Brodie, 2010; Tucker and Lowe, 2014). As Davidoff *et al.* (2015) note the question is not whether practitioners are using theory, it is whether practitioners seek out formal theory and make the reporting of one or more theories in their daily practice explicit, thereby more successfully ensuring transfer of knowledge and effective practices.

In this conceptual paper, we (a pracademic, a practitioner and an academic) aim to explore the academic/practitioner gap in social marketing and offer recommendations to close the gap, while amplifying existing examples of best practice from within the field. We also propose a research agenda to spur further dialog and provide a path forward aimed at closing the gap.

Examining the gap in social marketing

Much of the literature exploring the academic/practitioner gap has focussed on disciplines adjacent to and alongside social marketing (Alpert *et al.*, 2022; Conduit *et al.*, 2022; Han and Stenhouse, 2015; Katsikeas *et al.*, 2004; Parker *et al.*, 2022; Posner, 2009). Similar discussions specifically within the social marketing literature (i.e. the field’s flagship journals *Social Marketing Quarterly* and *Journal of Social Marketing*) seem to be largely absent. Our field is unique in that it is not commercial, not trying to increase profit and appease shareholders. Rather social marketing practice strives to create behaviour or systemic structural change

using marketing insights to address social, health and environmental issues, as described by our field's academic founder Philip Kotler (Dibb and Carrigan, 2013).

Recent research has shed some light on the interplay between academics and practitioners within the social marketing space. As part of research examining the institutionalisation of social marketing as an innovative practice within environmental contexts (Foote, 2022), a broad exploration of the challenges and opportunities facing the discipline was conducted through interviews with 90 social marketing academics, practitioners and pracademics around the world. A result was strong agreement that one of the major challenges threatening the discipline was "complicated academic/practitioner dynamics" (p. 140), as evidenced by the participant quotes compiled in Table 1.

These interviews show that many from within the field can identify a gap and this is considered to be problematic. Key issues include silos and tensions across the gap tied to a failure for academic work to be grounded in practice (and vice versa) and differences in knowledge sharing that affect theory-to-practice (and vice versa). The experiences and perceptions of the study's participants are reflective of broader issues and challenges identified within the literature as well as the author team's lived experiences.

Relationships and connectedness

Siloed practices are common and often keep academics and practitioners from interacting within their own groups, much less with each other. This can either be because many simply do not have the opportunities to encounter each other, whether within a work setting, at conferences or beyond; or (specifically in the case of practitioners) some may simply be unaware of what the other does (Tapp, 2004). Even if academics or practitioners know and understand what the other does and has to offer, weak relationships between the two have long been observed (Alpert *et al.*, 2022).

Perceived value

Weak relationships may come down to perceived low value on both sides of the divide. Practitioners do not see value in academics' work (Tucker and Lowe, 2014), citing that it's not applicable to practice, too slow due to prioritising rigour and technique (Alpert *et al.*, 2022), not focused on research topics based on the needs of practice (Chen *et al.*, 2013), and not relevant as they perceive practice to be ahead of theory (Tapp, 2004). In return, academics can see practitioners as a distraction (Tapp, 2004) and only one of a list of stakeholders including other educators, students, society and policy officials (Alpert *et al.*, 2022).

As we explore here, there are valid reasons and value propositions for closing the gap that resonate for both parties.

Knowledge sharing

The outputs and outcomes of academics' and practitioners' work are typically shared in different ways linked to the differing incentive structures tied to career advancement. Academics typically write articles in peer-reviewed journals aimed at (and often only accessible to) other academics (Hubbard and Norman, 2006), with prioritisation of highly ranked journals a common academic practice (Brennan *et al.*, 2014). This can create excess demand, high rejection rates and long review times, all adding to the perception of dated work.

As a result, practitioners do not read academic articles because they believe the content to be dated, too abstract, not relevant to their work (Brennan, 2004; Fraser *et al.*, 2020), or written using language and jargon that is difficult to understand (Knight, 2003). Accessibility (or lack thereof) is not limited to practitioners. Studies have demonstrated a

Focal area	Representative participant quotes
Degree of the disconnect	<p>"I would call it a chasm."</p> <p>"There are those that think and read and plan and talk, and there are those that do, and the two aren't intersecting enough."</p> <p>"The capacity such as we have in practice and academia is not as kind of joined up as it should be. I don't think that's anybody's fault. I think everybody's pressured in their own way."</p> <p>"I think there definitely are academics, there are practitioners, and then there's this fuzzy middle of a lot of people who do both. And I like that. I like that the people who are doing the research for the most part are really looking towards how do we use this information in the real world. They're creating campaigns and testing them and actually doing social marketing at the same time that they're doing their research. And practitioners I think could do more research. But I see a lot of intermingling of both sides of it and I think that's a good thing. I don't think that people stay in their little bubbles."</p>
Theory to practice	<p>"Sometimes the research that happens at universities just is not at all what's happening in the real world."</p> <p>"I'm afraid a lot of it is based in theory and very little is really experienced on the ground."</p> <p>[case studies in textbooks are] "like the romcom . . . it never actually happens that way."</p> <p>"The theory gets it, we all understand the basics but to actually turn that into application there's a gap there"</p> <p>"There's a certain point you have to stop the research and actually try it."</p> <p>"I'll listen to one of those 15-minute speed talks and I'm like, 'How do I use this?'"</p> <p>"I see this a lot, say, in planning theory—you read these papers on the theory of planning and they come up with these models or frameworks and this would never work in real life. If you gave this to your practitioner, they would not be able to do anything with it. That's a good thing about social marketing, there tends to be a close connection between the academics that are studying or doing research in an area and the practitioners."</p> <p>"You have to put in a lot of time working with humans to boost your game. You can't go from academia straight to research without doing a lot of face-to-face human time."</p>
Practitioner publishing	<p>[Practitioners are] "doing [work], but they're not necessarily going to be publishing about it . . . They just do it from a perspective of just running a project and then moving on."</p> <p>"I couldn't care less about publishing in the journals."</p>
Underlying tensions between the groups	<p>"The legitimacy of academics in a practitioner world, where practitioners, well, in a business school, industry views academics as ivory tower, they're good at theory but they don't do any real work, and they're behind, which is obviously the opposite of how we view ourselves . . . That perception that academics are not practical and can't do real work in the area. And so what we have to do as academics, I have to prove myself all the time. From an academic standpoint, that trust, that legitimacy, is the biggest challenge. . . . We have</p>

(continued)

Table 1.
Views of interview
participants on the
academic/
practitioner
disconnect in social
marketing (adapted
from XXX –
reference to be
replaced after
review)

Table 1.

Focal area	Representative participant quotes
	<p>reasonably negative views of one another as being essentially stupid, for whatever reason. And that's a massive challenge."</p> <p>"I think there are for sure a lot of researchers or people who are situated in academic settings that are more "amenable to the realities of practice. And then there are some that are just committed to the laboratory environment. And that's fine too. I think there are both. I think the idea that academics don't get it and just can't collaborate with practitioners is toxic and not true, but of course it's true in some scenarios."</p>
Opportunities	<p>"They should be so intimately tied to one another that you don't really see the distinction. And what I mean by that is that theory and research in the behavioural sciences and social marketing should hugely inform what practitioners are doing, and what practitioners are doing . . . should hugely inform what academics are doing. And those two should just be dancing back and forth with one another."</p> <p>"We need to create spaces and opportunities for people to come together."</p> <p>"Really being able to be the bridge between the academia and the practice . . . 'How can we teach and develop the capacity of our program managers to understand these things?' And no, they don't need to know the name of the theory and no, they don't need to know every predictive relationship. But if they know the flags and they know the topics, that's enough when it comes to design and implementation of a program."</p> <p>"They [academics] are quite keen to have practitioner case studies, because it gives them something to then teach back to their students to show real world examples, so I think it's beneficial for both of us."</p>

Source: Authors' own work (Foote, 2022, p. 139-140)]

decrease in readability of academic literature over time (Barkemeyer *et al.*, 2016; Graf-Vlachy, 2022; Hayes, 1992; Plavén-Sigra *et al.*, 2017) which should be of concern to practitioners and academics alike. Finally, many papers that explicitly highlight a practical application for their findings also happen to be behind a paywall, limiting the likelihood a practitioner will ever encounter the work, let alone apply it.

Theory to practice and vice versa

Taken together, these conditions unsurprisingly thwart theory-to-practice and practice-to-theory, as reinforced by participants in (Foote, 2022). Practitioners highlighted difficulties understanding and applying theory, while also noting the lack of practical relevance of much of the theory resulting from scholarly work. This is of concern as the application of theory has long been cited as a challenge within social marketing, with some noting that many social marketers fail to use theory altogether (Kubacki and Rundle-Thiele, 2013; Truong, 2014), or default to familiar theories that may not be appropriate for the particular context (Manikam and Russell-Bennett, 2016). Further, a recent review of 50 years of social marketing practice found that theory was the least reported principle in both practitioner work (19%) and academic studies (21%) (Dietrich *et al.*, 2022), which is concerning given that lack of theory use has been attributed to programme failure (Akbar *et al.*, 2021), and greater rates of behaviour change are evident in programmes reporting theory (Kim *et al.*, 2019).

Why bridge the gap?

So, do academia and practice need each other? Some believe that working with practice risks what makes academia unique (from the likes of commercial researchers and marketing agencies) and that is independence and critical objectivity (Tapp, 2004). Others argue that academics risk damaging their reputation by serving or aligning with practice and responding to political and economic pressures (Brennan, 2004; Deshpande, 2019).

Despite these warnings, we believe there is more to gain by both parties working together as we show in Table 2 and discuss below.

Demonstrating societal value by contributing to practice

Those against closing the gap do concede that academic research should be focussed on delivering outputs that have a wider value in society (Baines *et al.*, 2009; Brennan, 2004). This aligns to social marketing's definition of using marketing principles and tools to achieve social good (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971), which holds true with the objectives of most practitioners.

Contributing to social good is a common reason for those in social marketing to bridge the gap and work closer together. Universities and academics are increasingly asked to address global challenges such as climate change, environmental sustainability and human health (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2021). Conduit *et al.* (2022) go further with a call for academia to embed societal value at the core, apply a societal lens to research and teaching and engage more deeply with the broader community and stakeholders (including practice).

These calls are coming from outside bodies as well. Governments are ensuring that measures for societal value [i.e. both relevance and impact, per (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2021)] are included in academic funding grants, with multiple examples such as the UK's Research Excellence Framework (UK Research and Innovation, 2023), the Hong Kong Government's Research Grants Council (University Grants Committee, 2023), New Zealand's Performance-Based Research Fund (Tertiary Education Commission, 2023), Australia's Research Impact Principles and Framework (Australian Research Council, 2023) and the United States' Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (National Institutes of Health, 2023). Universities in turn have begun to brand themselves by their social value and partnership with practice

Table 2.
The case for closing
the academic/
practitioner gap

Reasons to close the gap	Outcomes and benefits to academics, practitioners and the discipline
Demonstrating societal value by contributing to practice	Improving outcomes via theory to practice Meeting societal outcomes as a measurement and benchmark (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals) Publications demonstrating impact
Embedding and developing theories in practice	Including core social marketing concepts, frameworks and benchmarks within practice Refining theories through work grounded in real situations and practitioner feedback
Adding to the social marketing literature	Database of practitioner and collaboration case studies for practitioners to learn from, improving practice Ensuring important practice and collaboration studies are seen
Contributing to social marketing teaching	Practitioners add to course materials with case studies Helps set up students for post-study life in practice
Communicating the value and effectiveness of social marketing	Clarify understanding of social marketing, change negative perceptions Guard against replacement of social marketing from other related disciplines and digitalisation/AI
Source: Authors' own work	

(Lindgreen *et al.*, 2021) and even considering social impact in hiring and promotion decisions (Woolston, 2021) as well as granting tenure (National Alliance for Broader Impacts, 2018).

Funders want the delivery of social impact to be applied to publishing too, to provide actual evidence of contribution to society and collaboration with practice, not just in the form of articles in highly-ranked journals (Davison and Bjørn-Andersen, 2019). So much so that the call to change publishing practices has led to the creation of alternatives to academia's h-index (used to rate academic authors by the number of citations by other academics). Specifically, the v-index has been proposed to measure societal value in published work (Davison and Bjørn-Andersen, 2019; Galletta *et al.*, 2019). This index measures the extent that:

- academics use public media to communicate to non-academics;
- results have been implemented by practice;
- the academic is part of non-academic networks;
- partnerships play a role with non-academics to address social issues; and
- research is funded by stakeholders in practice (Galletta *et al.*, 2019).

Equally encouraging is the emergence of a specific new format of journal article, the “impact article” adopted by *European Journal of Marketing*, “designed to facilitate knowledge exchange about impact, not underlying research conceptualization and methodologies, but the challenge of designing, developing, tracking and demonstrating impact” (Keeling and Marshall, 2022, p. 2509; Rundle-Thiele, 2022; Scott and Mende, 2022).

Embedding and developing theories in practice

Closing the gap will likely ensure social marketing practitioners use formal theories, concepts and benchmarks when programmes are devised and implemented. Recent studies show that formal theory application is often missing from programmes which reduces their

effectiveness (Kubacki *et al.*, 2015; Willmott and Rundle-Thiele, 2022). Through collaboration with academics, practitioners can be encouraged to make use of theories and frameworks. Formal theories provide “a roadmap of how to design interventions that are more likely to achieve the desired outcomes” (Willmott and Rundle-Thiele, 2021), a reality increasingly recognised by funders as evidenced by organisations such as Victoria’s Department of Health requiring foundational theory to be outlined in campaign plans.

Theories can be refined through collaboration and use in practice situations and increased formal theory use has long been called for (Rundle-Thiele *et al.*, 2019). Practitioners can be directly involved in academic testing, provide feedback and help in the development of finalised models that more closely align to practice. For example, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) was based on years of testing and feedback from the field of practice in a wide range of contexts including social marketing (Berkman and Wilson, 2021). However, it has also been critiqued as being too narrow in focus unfairly stigmatising the individuals targeted for change (Brennan *et al.*, 2016); while TPB may be “alive and well,” it has its limitations as a behaviour change theory (Ajzen, 2015). The need to develop theories that are fit for purpose remains a challenge that needs to be taken on by the social marketing research community.

Adding to the social marketing literature

Given the different ways that academics and practitioners share knowledge, coupled with the issues identified with academic publishing, bringing the two worlds together and jointly publishing the outcomes presents one opportunity to add to the social marketing literature. If examples of collaborations are seen, partnership models will be more likely – not just in publishing but wider working relationships that ensure academics can align their practice to achieve a broader range of performance metrics that demonstrate engagement and impact. This can create more examples of real-world practice studies that practitioners can learn from to further improve practice to achieve more and better outcomes (Sherring and Foote, 2023). Practitioners will see other case studies of programmes that have worked, and arguably even more important, ones that have failed (Akbar *et al.*, 2021; Cook *et al.*, 2020, 2021).

Contributions to social marketing teaching

Similarly, we believe partnerships and collaborations are likely to result in case studies for teaching, in particular with practitioners being invited for guest lectures and presentations to students (Alpert *et al.*, 2022), as currently seen within the curriculum of social marketing courses at the University of Bologna, Georgetown University, University of South Florida (Khaliq *et al.*, 2021), Victoria University in Wellington and the University of the West Indies (to name only a few). Examples such as these promote better alignment of social marketing education to current real-world problems. Furthermore, the more social marketing students are exposed directly to practice, the more they will be set up with the appropriate skills for future careers (Conduit *et al.*, 2022; Foote *et al.*, 2023; Kapetanaki and Spotswood, 2021; White, 2018). Having practitioners (ideally former students) present back to the next generation of social marketers will begin to embed an industry norm by encouraging and ingraining the behaviours and relationships needed to develop a stronger bridge to overcome the gap. Instructors should ask themselves “how beneficial is our teaching?” (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2004, p. 576). Then to assess this, they should evaluate student outcomes in terms of skills and competencies gained, which traditional assessment practices often fail to do.

Communicating the value and effectiveness of social marketing

Benchmarks and concepts developed by academia will assist social marketing practitioners to communicate to stakeholders (especially internally) what social marketing is (and is not) and what specific and unique value social marketers bring to the table. This all helps to differentiate social marketing from the likes of communications, social media marketing, commercial marketing, public health, environmental education and more. The last point on that list is a common misconception, with our field mistaken for not only communications and social media marketing, but particularly commercial marketing seen as manipulating people into sales-related behaviours. This makes it a risky proposition for practice especially for those in government settings (Deshpande, 2019; Dibb and Carrigan, 2013).

Conduit *et al.* (2022) argue the importance of keeping the field of marketing relevant. Influence from marketing departments within organisations has diminished and traditional marketing roles and functions are being lost to other units such as product and distribution teams and to new threats such as consumer science, service design, digitalisation and artificial intelligence (Conduit *et al.*, 2022). Behavioural economics has also been cited as a specific “threat” (Deshpande, 2019) to social marketing with corporations and governments often enlisting behavioural economists instead of social marketers to advise on behaviour change initiatives. This is not to say that social marketers cannot and should not work alongside behavioural economists where collaborations can result in creating behaviour change; rather, this should be part of the larger ongoing discussion around social marketing’s need to market itself better (Akbar *et al.*, 2021; Beall *et al.*, 2012; Wood, 2012).

Recommendations

In the previous section, we have shown that by closing the academic/practitioner gap, we can deliver better outcomes for societal good, develop theories in practice, dispel negative perceptions of what social marketing is, clarify social marketing’s value proposition to stakeholders, and demonstrate the relevance and strengths that effective social marketing offers. Failure to address this gap has the potential to harm our discipline and threaten progress towards academics’ and practitioners’ shared goals of solving social and environmental problems. Indeed, “increasing collaboration” was highlighted as one of several solutions to the challenges threatening the discipline’s further advancement (Foote, 2022, p. 173).

Table 3 presents our recommendations to close the gap, which were developed through a review of the literature as well as our own observations and experiences within social marketing from both academic and practice sides of the field.

Marketing the academia and practitioner offer

Here we apply a very straightforward marketing concept – defining the offer and the perceived value that both parties expect to gain (Walker *et al.*, 2008). What is it that academics can offer practitioners? And vice versa. This last point is important; while the issue is often framed as academics’ problem, practitioners should also be expected to contribute.

Academia should define what makes itself attractive to practice (over the likes of research companies, consulting firms and marketing agencies) (Alpert *et al.*, 2022). If academia wants to contribute to and/or collaborate with practice then it needs to pass practitioners’ “so what test” (Tucker and Lowe, 2014, p. 398). Is it voices that are expert, credible, independent and impartial? Work that is professionally conducted, and providing new perspectives (Baines *et al.*, 2009; Chen *et al.*, 2013; Tapp, 2004)? As a result of these qualities, academics can bring theory and rigour into practice and demonstrate how

Category	Academics	Specific actions and considerations	Practitioners
Marketing the academia and practitioner offer	<p>Define the value offer to practitioners</p> <p>Sell expert, credible and neutral advice</p> <p>Bring theory and rigor into practice</p> <p>Promote academics' contribution to real world issues</p> <p>Establish (or use existing) university "sales" channels that develop links to practice</p> <p>Update and align curriculum of social marketing courses</p>	<p>Demystify theory</p> <p>Recognise the value of academic rigour, independence and collaboration</p> <p>Agencies and professional associations encourage practitioners to publish in journals</p> <p>Adopt social marketing standards and benchmarks and publicise their use</p> <p>Document and promote successful collaborations</p>	
Building ongoing relationships	<p>Maintain ongoing relationships with practitioners</p> <p>Spend time in practice (e.g. sabbatical programmes)</p> <p>Develop "ambidextrous professors" (an academic that can tailor work to be understood by practitioners)</p> <p>Elevate the profile of "pracademics" who can work in either setting and translate between both worlds</p>	<p>Spend time in academia via Executive in Residence and/or Professor of Practice programmes</p> <p>Encourage staff to work closely with relevant academic partners</p> <p>Create internship and service-learning opportunities for students</p>	
Creating collaborative partnerships	<p>Incentivise collaboration – greater weight given to contributions to practice for tenure and promotions</p> <p>Be open to "eclectic theorizing" from practitioners</p> <p>Work as advisory experts or research partners to industry programmes</p> <p>Serve on industry association committees</p> <p>Long-term partnering on programmes – either as lead or equal partner with practice</p> <p>Provide post-training support and resources</p>	<p>Bring academics in to advise on applicable research, programmes and theories</p> <p>Use eclectic theorising strategies to mix and match theories</p> <p>Collaborate on a project-by-project basis</p> <p>Participate in academic conferences to hear about studies in progress</p> <p>Enlist academics to conduct research</p>	
Changing the publishing model and diversifying communications	<p>Publish in media channels other than journals</p> <p>Build social media presence ensuring links are made with practitioners and that published content can effectively engage practitioners</p> <p>Identify and publish in channels used by practitioners including preparation of short videos, podcasts, development of online tools, or other media</p>	<p>Share real world work in academic settings</p> <p>Provide pre-peer review consultation</p> <p>Build social media presence ensuring links are made with academics and that published content can effectively engage academics</p> <p>Provide incentives for practitioners to publish</p>	

(continued)

Table 3.
Recommendations

Table 3.

Category	Academics	Specific actions and considerations	Practitioners
Facilitation from associations and peak bodies	Review practitioners' project reports and collaborate to reformat as case study articles		
	Present at practitioner conferences		Publish in grey literature as well as peer-reviewed journals
	Publish in more accessible language for practitioners (and other academics!)		Present at academic conferences
	Improve structure and clarity of writing via narrative training		
	Adopt writing style using more tacit knowledge with increased insight		Adopt formal theory, to improve professional practice
	Support articles using eclectic theorising		For journals and editors:
	Identify and address the pressing 'issues of the day' for practice		
	Place expert practitioners on journal editorial boards		
	New article formats (eg. impact articles), special issues and sections in journals featuring academic and practitioner collaboration		
	Make articles accessible for practitioners, including more open access/less paywall articles and shorter article formats		
	Help academics create practitioner-friendly plain language summaries (eg. "cheat sheets" and infographics, etc.)		
	Promotion of articles/journals to practitioners via social media, podcasts, online tools, videos and more		
	Plan conference agendas to include both academic and practitioner interests and foster participation		
	Develop training for practitioners		
	Develop standards and benchmarks for social marketing best practice including research quality, integration of theory and guidelines for effective partnerships		
	Create databases of case studies		
	Create a database of practitioners and academics willing to collaborate in different ways		
	Create subcommittees and working groups devoted to increasing rates of academic-practitioner collaboration		
Source: Authors' own work			

“the ultimate validity of a theory is its usefulness in practice” (O’Driscoll and Murray, 1998, p. 409; [Biroscak et al., 2015](#); [Bryant et al., 2007](#); [Tovar-Aguilar et al., 2014](#)).

We have observed firsthand that when academics are given the opportunity to introduce theory and results of research to practitioners, practitioners are likely to listen and at least apply bits of the academic thinking and theories (sometimes multiple theories) into their programmes ([Hastings and Domegan, 2017](#)). For example, one of this paper’s authors instigated co-design practices into his work after discussions with academics (see [Sherring, 2021](#)), and recently has seen colleagues consider how emotional appeals work in social marketing campaigns after discussions with a social marketing academic (as per the work in [Dietrich et al., 2019](#)). Compiling a simplified list of top theories that are most applicable could go a long way in demystifying theory for practitioners and help them apply theories known to deliver behavioural change within their programmes.

Academia and universities then need to market and sell these benefits. Many practitioners either do not see the value in academic research and work, or do not know about it. This can start with academics promoting successful collaborations with practice; the Florida Prevention Research Center’s longstanding program ([Center for Disease Control, 2023](#)) provides examples. Universities can take this further by using marketing initiatives to target industries (for example government agencies) to collaborate.

In turn, practitioners who have partnered with academics should promote successful programmes to encourage more of their colleagues to engage, including presenting or co-presenting at conferences and publishing in journals (the latter to be discussed more in depth later).

Practitioners need to be more open to using academics and recognising the value that academics can bring in effective partnerships. It is important to acknowledge that academics choosing to engage with industry need to manage expectations associated with delivering high-quality research while also ensuring efficiency. In turn, practitioners can show value by co-authoring articles, assisting academics by supplying completed real world case studies to include in course materials for students and more ([Chen et al., 2013](#); [Buerck et al., 2023](#); [D’Agostino et al., 2022](#)).

Building ongoing relationships

Once accepting each other’s value offering, academics and practitioners should be encouraged by their respective employers to grow and maintain ongoing relationships, even during periods when both parties are not actively engaged in collaborative work. Practitioner agencies could play an important role in maintaining ongoing collaborative relationships.

Relationships can be fostered through programmes that focus on placing academics within practice or allow practitioners to spend time in university settings ([Lilien, 2010](#)). This could include academics using sabbatical time within agencies and executive-in-residence programmes where practitioners are placed in universities to bring a practice-to-theory view, guest lecture, and create practical content for course curriculum. Two of the co-authors have participated in such programmes, with one taking four months away from academia to work in a social marketing agency, and the other spending three weeks in a university social marketing centre. The co-authors confirm that these instances did not end when the sabbatical or residence concluded but have resulted in on-going relationships between all parties (this article is evidence of that).

Internships, service learning ([Domegan and Bringle, 2010](#)), or industry-funded academic research are examples of opportunities for students, academics and/or PhD students to work collaboratively in social marketing outside of university. This could be facilitated by either

side of the gap. For example, associations can offer internship programs (for example the New Zealand Social Marketing Network is currently managing an intern programme to place students in professional settings), encourage collaborations through awards, provision of funding and professional standards. Longer partnerships (not just a few weeks) are preferred to ensure more understanding of practice and stronger contributions (Baines *et al.*, 2009). As an example, University of South Florida's Masters in Public Health with a focus on social marketing requires students to complete a practicum with a social marketing agency or conduct a research project for a full semester. One co-author experienced invaluable service-learning firsthand by interning at a social marketing firm (as part of a doctoral program) for five weeks, supporting several projects with multiple clients.

A final point about relationships is who can foster these. Starting with "ambidextrous professors" (Markides, 2007), academics who can tailor work (and communication styles) to be understood more easily by practitioners. They could be the face of academic social marketing to practice.

The other and more widely recognised and suggested intermediary between the two worlds is pracademics – those who have held positions as both academics and practitioners and hold a great deal of respect across both communities (Posner, 2009). Pracademics naturally understand the academic theories behind social marketing and know how to implement these in practical settings. With these skills, they serve as "boundary spanners" (Bednarek *et al.*, 2018; Cook *et al.*, 2013; Lilien, 2010) acting as network brokers, communication channels, and translators, thereby bringing perspective from practice back to academia (Posner, 2009). There are numerous examples of social marketing work conducted with pracademics (C + C and Washington State Department of Health, 2022; Gadsby *et al.*, 2020; Khaliq *et al.*, 2021; Lee *et al.*, 2022; Merritt *et al.*, 2023; Tapp *et al.*, 2013; Skerlepoulos *et al.*, 2020; Yoshihama *et al.*, 2012).

Creating collaborative partnerships

Naturally leading on from forming relationships is creating more formalised collaboration together as equal partners (Chen *et al.*, 2013). This is the area we most believe will close the academic/practitioner gap. The biggest challenge here is how to incentivise collaboration on both sides. We know that many academics are happy not engaging with practice mainly because the promotion and tenure system typically does not reward contributions to industry and it's unlikely this will change overnight, but the academic world should put more focus not just on "what can we say to our peers?" but "how can managers make use of what we have found?" (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2004, p. 575).

In return, practitioners should make use of academics as advisory experts and partners on research and the development and delivery of social marketing programmes. Academics (or pracademics) can advise on relevant theory and research and how to incorporate formal theory into programmes (with support for evaluation at conclusion). Examples of partnering and theory advising exist in social marketing ranging from prevention of substance use, sexual risk and violence (Andrade *et al.*, 2018; Yoshihama *et al.*, 2012), energy conservation (Bator *et al.*, 2014, 2019), equity-oriented parenting (Pluye *et al.*, 2015, 2020), lead reduction (Khaliq *et al.*, 2021), childhood obesity (Gadsby *et al.*, 2020), policy development (Bryant *et al.*, 2014), to biodiversity conservation (Thomas-Walters *et al.*, 2020; Thomas-Walters and Verissimo, 2022).

However, the above comes with the caveat that practitioners may use a mix-and-match of social marketing theories or "eclectic methodologies" (Baum, 1995, p. 466). The authors refer to this more colloquially as "magpie-ing". This recognises that sometimes in practical applications, integrated social marketing frameworks may be more effective to produce

behaviour change than following one guiding theory (Hastings and Domegan, 2017). Further, practitioner magpies may use individual constructs or components of various theories independently (e.g. self-efficacy or different forms of social norms). While practitioners are more likely to adopt an eclectic approach (many already do, from the authors' practical experiences), academics may need to accept this way of working which acknowledges and addresses the tension between rigor and pragmatism alongside "the grey area between theory and practice" (Griseri, 2002, p. 10).

Changing the publishing model and diversifying communications

The seemingly most-discussed item surrounding the academic/practitioner gap is how research and work are communicated on either side of the divide. It's clear that academics must publish in journals (preferably highly ranked ones), but most practitioners do not read journals (Baines *et al.*, 2009; Brennan *et al.*, 2014; McKenzie *et al.*, 2002; Parsons *et al.*, 2017; Tapp, 2005).

Therefore, academics should look to diversify their publishing channels, using media that is not only free to access but that practitioners are more likely to read, including industry websites and professional magazines (Baines *et al.*, 2009; Gray *et al.*, 2011). We say "diversify" because we're not suggesting academics stop writing for journals and their peers, but consider how their research can be translated, adapted or re-purposed for practitioner audiences. There are also options that meet in the middle such as The Conversation website (<https://theconversation.com>), where academics still write for academics and with rigour, but also in an accessible way for practitioners (and the general public); see Yousef *et al.* (2023) for an example from The Conversation and Khaliq (2020) for an example from a similar publication.

When re-purposing for practitioners, academics need to consider their language. Journal articles are rarely written in plain language (Crosier, 2004), which is off-putting to practitioners who then end up deeming them irrelevant (McKenzie *et al.*, 2002). Note the authors have made a concerted effort to "practice what we preach" in writing this article, making it as plain language as we could and avoiding jargon where possible. Academics need to look at other ways to break down complex theories, models, and research including the likes of personal insights, metaphors, infographics, plain language summaries and "cheat sheets" (Alpert *et al.*, 2022; Dietrich *et al.*, 2022; Posner, 2009) such as the simple guide to the COM-B model available online (The Research Agency, 2023). Tapp (2004) goes as far to suggest storytelling to communicate to practitioners. This responsibility is shared with journals (and their editors) by implementing and encouraging these changes in writing and ways of communicating. Brief videos, podcasts, online tools, webinars, seminars, hosting conferences aimed at practitioners and delivering training offerings are further examples of formats and approaches that can be used to more broadly disseminate findings in an accessible manner.

The themes of relationships and collaboration can continue in publishing. On the one hand, academics can work with practitioners reviewing their project reports then writing reports up as potential case studies for either academic journals and/or practitioner channels. In return, practitioners can review academic work, reviewing and providing feedback about the applicability and accessibility of research and manuscripts, therefore helping to shape, improve and inform practice (Tucker and Lowe, 2014).

Alternatively, academics and practitioners can co-author articles together on collaborations – see (Askelson *et al.*, 2019; Bator *et al.*, 2014, 2019; Buerck *et al.*, 2023; Mulally *et al.*, 2020; Palmedo *et al.*, 2022; Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018; Salazar *et al.*, 2018, 2021) for several examples. This is currently happening in more general terms in Germany with 20% of

academics jointly publishing with practitioners (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2021). Academics being more experienced in writing for journals may need to take the lead here and assist practitioners (Sharma and Fischhoff, 2017).

One major block identified in practitioners' publishing was the lack of incentives and encouragement for practitioners (Sherring and Foote, 2023). We argue for organisations and peak bodies working in behaviour change to encourage and incentivise their social marketers to publish or at least co-author case studies with academics. As with our reasons for closing the gap, it will help build a literature base of successful and unsuccessful (Akbar *et al.*, 2021, 2023; Cook *et al.*, 2020, 2021; Deshpande, 2022) studies to learn from, while providing the opportunity for work to be critiqued (Sherring and Foote, 2023) and importantly providing an evidence base to inform future funding allocations. Publishing also increases the visibility of both the individual practitioner's and organisation's work, gaining credibility and demonstrating leadership in the field (i.e. a form of marketing themselves). See the "Dose of Truth" campaign (by Prevention First, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and Rescue Agency) published as a case study on Rescue's own practitioner website (Rescue, 2023) and social channels but also in academic journals (Fernandez *et al.*, 2023).

Journals and their editors also have a role in implementing the changes above. Editors need to recognise the practitioner market and create a willingness to publish and promote work that will appeal to practitioners. New article formats have emerged and these need to be more widely adopted to ensure journals and academic scholarship are read by social marketing practitioners. We have already seen this happening within social marketing publications (Kirby, 2019; McDivitt, 2020) and broader journal publication outlets accepting impact papers (Rundle-Thiele, 2022). Special issues or curated pages on journals' websites can be created to highlight current issues and practitioner/academic collaborations.

More articles should be open access, given that practitioners have long cited access as a barrier to engaging with journals (Tucker and Lowe, 2014). Social marketing (and marketing as a whole) journals could take the lead of the Latin America science community where 95% are open access thanks to non-commercial public funding (Ahmed *et al.*, 2023). The authors have engaged in much dialogue whilst writing this paper about the need for all articles to be open access (i.e. not just some involving practitioners and case studies) and to address principles such as Fair Open Access (Veríssimo *et al.*, 2020); we acknowledge this is a subject that needs addressing beyond the scope of this conceptual paper. Finally, ensuring practitioners are included on editorial boards (Deshpande *et al.*, 2022) should be widely adopted to ensure work presented by academics is practically useful and accessible.

All of the above is of no use if practitioners are not aware of the journals to begin with. So as with the value offer, journal publishing houses need to market content and any adopted changes above to make themselves more attractive to practitioners via social media, advertising, pracademics' support and through direct relationships with those in practice and their agencies. Such efforts would widen access contributing additional revenue streams for publishing houses.

Facilitation from social marketing associations and peak bodies

While we have put most of the work to bridge the gap on the shoulders of academics and their universities along with practitioners and their agencies, professional associations have an important role to play (Kassirer *et al.*, 2019; Lee, 2020; Tucker and Lowe, 2014)—first by the creation of standards and benchmarks for best practice that will assist in closing the gap, including research quality, integration of theory and guidelines for effective partnerships.

Next, by supporting improved knowledge sharing and capacity-building; associations such as the International Social Marketing Association and its regional sub-associations can take a lead role in this area (Dietrich *et al.*, 2022). In addition to providing general training opportunities in social marketing (International Social Marketing Association, 2022), an increased emphasis can be placed upon communication and narrative training (Douglas *et al.*, 2022; Olson, 2015) to make academic writing more coherent and accessible. Overall, associations can do a lot to ensure future research efforts are more closely aligned to practitioners' needs and that research and practice actively support each other.

Associations can create databases compiling and aggregating useful information such as case studies (which can be sorted by collaboration type and theories used), and listings of individuals willing to engage in collaborative activities such as working on projects, publishing, giving presentations and hosting internships and sabbaticals. Rewarding those that contribute to practice is another enticement from associations, such as the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy (ANZMAC). ANZMAC have recently implemented (in partnership with the *Australian Marketing Journal*) the ANZMAC AMJ Industry Relevance Award (Bove and Murphy, 2023).

Associations can also ensure that conference agendas include a mix of both academic and practitioner interests (Cateriano-Arévalo *et al.*, 2022 note this is increasingly happening). For example, both the Academy of Marketing (UK) and the Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) have featured keynote speeches from practitioners, while the World Social Marketing Conference speaker lineup included both practitioners and academics. Efforts that actively support practitioners to present at conferences, particularly practitioners from the Global South, should also be continued (Gordon *et al.*, 2016; Zainuddin and Jones, 2016).

Finally, new subcommittees or working groups devoted to bridging the gap can be created to demonstrate a commitment to the attainment of this joined up state. Representation within these groups' leadership must include both academics and practitioners. The New Zealand Social Marketing Network is an example of this. The network was originally established by government-based practitioners, but as it grew made the conscious move to place academics on its organising committee. In 2023, a Co-Chair leadership structure was formed (one from academia, one from practice) to show its commitment to both sides of the discipline. Joint leadership – involving academics, practitioners and pracademics – may provide the clearest path towards closing the academic/practitioner divide and ensuring that future events and supportive initiatives can merge the interests of both groups.

The path forward

To support the implementation of these recommendations, we propose a research and implementation agenda with an overarching goal of increasing theory-driven work within practitioner settings and practice-driven research within academia. We also suggest the development of tools, resources and approaches to foster increased collaboration.

Research can be carried out in two stages (Figure 1), with the first stage focussed on obtaining baseline insights that can inform the second stage aimed at developing and piloting initiatives aimed at bridging the academic/practitioner gap.

While exploring barriers and challenges is important and essential, priority should initially be placed on defining the value exchange for both parties to identify meaningful incentives for collaboration that can be leveraged and/or created. For instance, under what circumstances will academics and practitioners willingly participate in the collaborative contexts we have outlined and how does the value exchange shift for different segments of each group (e.g. early career vs senior researchers vs tenured professors; practitioners of different organisational types)? In other words, what needs to happen for a critical mass of

academics and practitioners to believe that the benefits to their careers outweigh the costs of collaboration?

Another research priority should be to explore if and how the application of formal theory and benchmarks, *and the collaborations themselves* lead to better outcomes in terms of project success. Emerging evidence supports the former scenario (Carins and Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Xia *et al.*, 2016), including the importance of reporting theory (Kim *et al.*, 2019). Thorough testing permits an evidence base to be firmly established, while practices such as using and reporting theory assist in knowledge transfer. Benchmarks and metrics can be identified and developed to measure and track progress within a continuum from initial relationship-building to genuine collaborative partnerships.

We also call for greater efforts to amplify existing examples of academic/practitioner collaboration. Much of the academic/practitioner work we cite in this piece is not outwardly evident as resulting directly from collaborations. We became aware of them through our own experiences and networks such as the community of practice listserv (Social Marketing Association of North America, 2018). This general lack of visibility is unfortunate as it prevents others from learning from and replicating best practice. Documenting and sharing trends (through a range of media channels) – particularly that norms are in the process of changing – can itself spur behaviour change (Mortensen *et al.*, 2019; Sparkman and Walton, 2017), and “observability” is a key factor in the successful diffusion of innovative ideas and practices (Rogers, 2003).

Finally, we acknowledge that the barriers and challenges linked to the academic/practitioner gap are complex and complicated, and many are systemic in nature. Given this reality, strategies and solutions will need to be devised for both the near- and far term, taking into account the policies, politics, procedures, and structures that can and cannot realistically be changed at the individual level within short-term timeframes. Long-term systems-level structural change is nevertheless necessary to promote greater mutual engagement (Posner, 2009) and will require ongoing and coordinated efforts (Conduit *et al.*, 2022). Academics and practitioners can nevertheless get involved in partnerships and can advocate for systemic change while demonstrating pragmatic approaches to navigating within existing systems and structures.

Conclusion

In this piece, we examined the concept of the academic/practitioner gap and explored how the discipline of social marketing currently situates itself within this phenomenon common to many other disciplines. Despite the shared goal between academics and practitioners to drive social and environmental change, we found that the discipline is not immune to the systems and structures that cause and uphold the disconnect between groups.

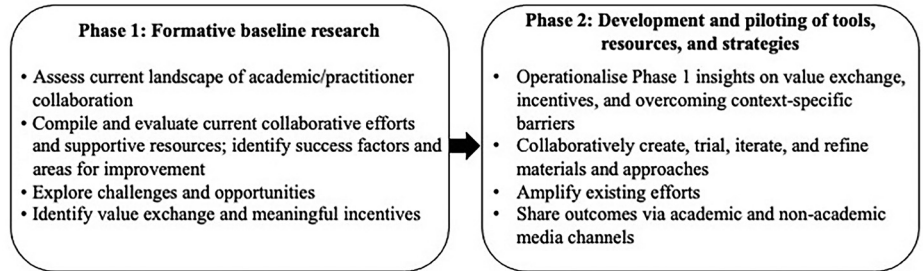


Figure 1.
Research agenda to
address the
academic/practitioner
gap

Source: Authors’ own work

Bridging the academic/practitioner gap should be a priority for the field of social marketing. We have proposed the beginnings of a research agenda that will investigate how appropriate and applicable our recommendations may or may not be, while seeking to develop new approaches, tools and materials guided by a realistic assessment of the value exchange at play. Our “magpie model” (as we like to refer to it) is an attempt at a pragmatic set of solutions, and we invite the social marketing community to join in the discussion and help us refine the research agenda and test its underlying assumptions. We hope that this process can help create new pathways for partnerships and foster a shared understanding, empathy and trust between the groups to dispel some of the existing tensions.

Our call for improved friendliness between the groups should not be seen as a criticism of the discipline, but rather an opportunity to build upon the solid basis for collaborative work that currently exists in social marketing. As a co-author team, we have experienced the disconnect and tensions ourselves, and have been challenged by the problematic systems and structures that create the barriers we described. But between us we have seen many inspirational examples of collaboration within social marketing – perhaps more so than other adjacent disciplines – that make us proud to be part of this community. It is encouraging that in developing this piece, we were able to find numerous examples of collaborative efforts that are occurring in spite of the many challenges faced by academics and practitioners, indicating that the existing barriers are not all insurmountable everywhere.

Change does need to occur in both the near- and far term and we have contributed this piece to add our voices to the many others calling for improvements to the system to support new and better ways of doing things while elevating the value and impact of the work we do as social marketers.

References

- Ahmed, A., Al-Khatib, A., Boum, Y., Debat, H., Gurmendi Dunkelberg, A., Hinchliffe, L.J., Jarrad, F., Mastroianni, A., Mineault, P., Pennington, C.R. and Pruszyński, J.A. (2023), “The future of academic publishing”, *Nature Human Behaviour*, Vol. 7 No. 7, doi: [10.1038/s41562-023-01637-2](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01637-2).
- Ajzen, I. (1991), “The theory of planned behavior”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 179-211, doi: [10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T).
- Ajzen, I. (2015), “The theory of planned behaviour is alive and well, and not ready to retire: a commentary on Sniehotta, Presseau, and Araújo-Soares”, *Health Psychology Review*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 131-137, doi: [10.1080/17437199.2014.883474](https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2014.883474).
- Akbar, M.B., Foote, L. and Lawson, A. (2023), “Conceptualizing, embracing, and measuring failure in social marketing practice”, *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 3, doi: [10.1177/15245004231187134](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004231187134).
- Akbar, M.B., Foote, L., Lawson, A., French, J., Deshpande, S.A. and Lee, N.R. (2021), “The social marketing paradox: challenges and opportunities for the discipline”, *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 367-389, doi: [10.1007/s12208-021-00308-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12208-021-00308-0).
- Akbar, M.B., Foote, L., Soraghan, C., Millard, R. and Spotswood, F. (2021), “What causes social marketing programs to fail? A qualitative study”, *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 99-116, doi: [10.1177/15245004211010202](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004211010202).
- Alpert, F., Brown, M., Ferrier, E., Gonzalez-Arcos, C.F. and Piehler, R. (2022), “Branding’s academic-practitioner gap: managers’ views”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 218-237, doi: [10.1108/JPBM-09-2020-3105](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2020-3105).
- Andrade, E.L., Evans, W.D., Barrett, N.D., Cleary, S.D., Edberg, M.C., Alvayero, R.D., Kierstead, E.C. and Beltran, A. (2018), “Development of the place-based adelante social marketing campaign for prevention of substance use, sexual risk and violence among Latino immigrant youth”, *Health Education Research*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 125-144, doi: [10.1093/her/cyx076](https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyx076).

- Askelson, N.M., Golembiewski, E.H., Meier, C.L., Smith, R., Montgomery, D., Lillehoj, C.J. and Wilson, S. (2019), "Pester power: Understanding parent-child communication about fruits and vegetables in low-income families from the child's perspective", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 182-192, doi: [10.1177/1524500419839497](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500419839497).
- Australian Research Council (2023), "Research impact principles and framework", available at: www.arc.gov.au/about-arc/strategies/research-impact-principles-and-framework (accessed July 24 2023).
- Baines, P.R., Brennan, R., Gill, M. and Mortimore, R. (2009), "Examining the academic/commercial divide in marketing research", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 43 Nos 11/12, pp. 1289-1299, doi: [10.1108/03090560910989894](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560910989894).
- Barkemeyer, R., Dessai, S., Monge-Sanz, B., Renzi, B.G. and Napolitano, G. (2016), "Linguistic analysis of IPCC summaries for policymakers and associated coverage", *Nature Climate Change*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 311-316, doi: [10.1038/nclimate2824](https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2824).
- Bator, R.J., Phelps, K., Tabanico, J., Schultz, P.W. and Walton, M.L. (2019), "When it is not about the money: Social comparison and energy conservation among residents who do not pay for electricity", *Energy Research and Social Science*, Vol. 56, p. 101198, doi: [10.1016/j.erss.2019.05.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2019.05.008).
- Bator, R.J., Tabanico, J.J., Walton, M.L. and Schultz, P.W. (2014), "Promoting energy conservation with implied norms and explicit messages", *Social Influence*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 69-82, doi: [10.1080/15534510.2013.778213](https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2013.778213).
- Baum, F. (1995), "Researching public health: behind the qualitative-quantitative methodological debate", *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 459-468, doi: [10.1016/0277-9536\(94\)E0103-Y](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(94)E0103-Y).
- Beall, T., Wayman, J., D'Agostino, H., Liang, A. and Perellis, C. (2012), "Social marketing at a critical turning point", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 103-117, doi: [10.1108/20426761211243946](https://doi.org/10.1108/20426761211243946).
- Bednarek, A.T., Wyborn, C., Cvitanovic, C., Meyer, R., Colvin, R.M., Addison, P.F.E., Close, S.L., Curran, K., Farooque, M., Goldman, E., Hart, D., Mannix, H., McGreavy, B., Parris, A., Posner, S., Robinson, C., Ryan, M. and Leith, P. (2018), "Boundary spanning at the science-policy interface: the practitioners' perspectives", *Sustainability Science*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 1175-1183, doi: [10.1007/s11625-018-0550-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0550-9).
- Berkman, E.T. and Wilson, S.M. (2021), "So useful as a good theory? The practicality crisis in (social) psychological theory", *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 864-874, doi: [10.1177/1745691620969650](https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620969650).
- Biroscak, B.J., Khaliq, M., Truong, S., McDermott, R.J., Lindenberg, J., Schneider, T., Mayer, A.B., Panzera, A.D., Courtney, A.H., Tyson, D.M., Loi, C.X.A. and Bryant, C.A. (2015), "Social marketing and policy making: tools for community-based policy advocacy", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 249-259, doi: [10.1177/1524500415609880](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500415609880).
- Bove, L. and Murphy, A. (2023), "Perspectives on the history and future of the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy (ANZMAC)", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 181-185, doi: [10.1177/14413582231174539](https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582231174539).
- Brennan, R. (2004), "Should we worry about an "academic-practitioner divide" in marketing?", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 492-500, doi: [10.1108/02634500410551879](https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500410551879).
- Brennan, L., Previte, J. and Fry, M.L. (2016), "Social marketing's consumer myopia: applying a behavioural ecological model to address wicked problems", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 219-239, doi: [10.1108/JSOCM-12-2015-0079](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSOCM-12-2015-0079).
- Brennan, R., Tzempelikos, N. and Wilson, J. (2014), "Improving relevance in B2B research: analysis and recommendations", *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 29 Nos 7/8, pp. 601-609, doi: [10.1108/JBIM-09-2013-0201](https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-09-2013-0201).
- Brodie, R.J. (2010), "Academic interface with marketing practice: leading and following and not losing the way?", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 177-178.
- Bryant, C.A., Courtney, A.H., McDermott, R.J., Lindenberg, J.H., Swanson, M.A., Mayer, A.B., Panzera, A. D., Khaliq, M., Schneider, T., Wright, A.P., Lefebvre, R.C. and Biroscak, B.J. (2014), "Community-

- Based Prevention Marketing for policy development: a new planning framework for coalitions", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 219-246, doi: [10.1177/1524500414555948](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500414555948).
- Bryant, C.A., McCormack Brown, K.R., McDermott, R.J., Forthofer, M.S., Bumpus, E.C., Calkins, S.A. and Zapata, L.B. (2007), "Community-Based prevention marketing: organizing a community for health behavior intervention", *Health Promotion Practice*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 154-163, doi: [10.1177/1524839906290089](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839906290089).
- Buerck, A.M., Khaliq, M., Rakotondrazaka, R., Rakotoarisoa, L., Paul Barrett, L.J., Sommariva, S. and Mihelcic, J.R. (2023), "Convergence of social marketing and engineering: a lead mitigation study in Madagascar", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 87-104, doi: [10.1177/15245004231153951](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004231153951).
- C+C and Washington State Department of Health (2022), "COVID-19 preventative behaviors social marketing report", DOH Publication 825.
- Carins, J.E. and Rundle-Thiele, S.R. (2014), "Eating for the better: a social marketing review (2000-2012)", *Public Health Nutrition*, Vol. 17 No. 7, pp. 1628-1639, doi: [10.1017/S1368980013001365](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980013001365).
- Cateriano-Arévalo, E., Alrakhayes, S., Foote, L., Hussain, T., Lai, K. and Nyundo, L. (2022), "Social marketing at 50: towards an epistemological expansion of the discipline to embrace diversity. a viewpoint", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 315-336, doi: [10.1108/jsocm-09-2021-0223](https://doi.org/10.1108/jsocm-09-2021-0223).
- Center for Disease Control (2023), "Prevention research centers", available at: www.cdc.gov/prc/index.htm
- Chen, C., Jim Wu, Y. and Wu, W. (2013), "A sustainable collaborative research dialogue between practitioners and academics", *Management Decision*, Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 566-593, doi: [10.1108/00251741311309661](https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741311309661).
- Conduit, J., Lu, V. and Veer, E. (2022), "(re)gaining our voice: Future of marketing in Australasia", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 168-177, doi: [10.1177/18393349211039100](https://doi.org/10.1177/18393349211039100).
- Cook, J., Fries, S. and Lynes, J. (2020), "Checking our blind spots: the most common mistakes made by social marketers", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 14-27, doi: [10.1177/1524500420903016](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500420903016).
- Cook, J., Lynes, J. and Fries, S. (2021), "Exploring mistakes and failures in social marketing: the inside story", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 13-31, doi: [10.1177/1524500421990176](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500421990176).
- Cook, C.N., Mascia, M.B., Schwartz, M.W., Possingham, H.P. and Fuller, R.A. (2013), "Achieving conservation science that bridges the knowledge-action boundary", *Conservation Biology*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 669-678, doi: [10.1111/cobi.12050](https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12050).
- Crosier, K. (2004), "How effectively do marketing journals transfer useful learning from scholars to practitioners?", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 540-556, doi: [10.1108/02634500410551923](https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500410551923).
- D'Agostino, E.M., Dave, G., Dyer, C., Hill, A., McCarty, D., Melvin, S., Laver, M., Jean, J. and Perreira, K. M. (2022), "Listening to community partners: successes and challenges in fostering authentic, effective, and trusting partnerships in the RADx-up program", *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 112 No. S9, pp. S846-S849, doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2022.307104](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2022.307104).
- Davidoff, F., Dixon-Woods, M., Leviton, L. and Michie, S. (2015), "Demystifying theory and its use in improvement", *BMJ Quality and Safety*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 228-238, doi: [10.1136/bmjqs-2014-003627](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjqs-2014-003627).
- Davison, R.M. and Bjørn-Andersen, N. (2019), "Do we care about the societal impact of our research?: The tyranny of the h-index and new value-oriented research directions", *Information Systems Journal*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 989-993, doi: [10.1111/isj.12259](https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12259).
- Deshpande, S.A. (2019), "Social marketing's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT): a commentary", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 231-242, doi: [10.1177/1524500419881770](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500419881770).
- Deshpande, S.A. (2022), "Celebrating lessons learned from 'unsuccessful' social marketing interventions", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 28 No. 1, doi: [10.1177/15245004221077324](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004221077324).
- Deshpande, S.A., Robinette, T., Kirby, S., McDivitt, J. and Olabisi, A. (2022), "Social marketing quarterly", *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Social Marketing*, Springer International Publishing, Berlin, pp. 1-9, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-14449-4_47-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-14449-4_47-1).

- Dibb, S. and Carrigan, M. (2013), "Social marketing transformed: Kotler, Polonsky and Hastings reflect on social marketing in a period of social change", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47 No. 9, pp. 1376-1398, doi: [10.1108/EJM-05-2013-0248](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-05-2013-0248).
- Dietrich, T., Hurley, E., Carins, J., Kassirer, J., Rundle-Thiele, S., Palmatier, R.W., Merritt, R., Weaven, S. K. and Lee, N. (2022), "50 Years of social marketing: seeding solutions for the future", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 5, pp. 1434-1463, doi: [10.1108/EJM-06-2021-0447](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-06-2021-0447).
- Dietrich, T., Rundle-Thiele, S., Kubacki, K., Durl, J., Gullo, M.J., Arli, D. and Connor, J.P. (2019), "Virtual reality in social marketing: a process evaluation", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 37 No. 7, doi: [10.1108/MIP-11-2018-0537](https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-11-2018-0537).
- Domegan, C. and Bringle, R.G. (2010), "Charting social marketing's implications for service-learning", *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 198-215, doi: [10.1080/10495142.2010.483272](https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2010.483272).
- Douglas, M., Bahr, K. and Olson, R. (2022), *The Narrative Gym for Science Graduate Students and Postdocs: Using the ABT Framework for Proposals, Papers, Presentations, and Life in General*, Prairie Starfish Productions.
- Fernandez, P., Azucar, D. and Zambale, K. (2023), "A dose of truth: a qualitative assessment of reactions to messages about fentanyl for people who use drugs", *Substance Use and Misuse*, Vol. 58 No. 4, pp. 520-527, doi: [10.1080/10826084.2023.2177112](https://doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2023.2177112).
- Foote, L. (2022), "The diffusion of a discipline: examining social marketing's institutionalization within environmental contexts", *Environmental Studies Department*, Antioch University New England.
- Foote, L., Kelly, K., Lee, N.R. and Abrash Walton, A. (2023), "Picking up the beat: social marketing academic course offerings and trends as the discipline marks 50 years", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 3, doi: [10.1177/15245004231191538](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004231191538).
- Fraser, K., Deng, X., Bruno, F. and Rashid, T.A. (2020), "Should academic research be relevant and useful to practitioners? The contrasting difference between three applied disciplines", *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 129-144, doi: [10.1080/03075079.2018.1539958](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2018.1539958).
- Gadsby, E.W., Hotham, S., Eida, T., Lawrence, C. and Merritt, R. (2020), "Impact of a community-based pilot intervention to tackle childhood obesity: a 'whole-system approach' case study", *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 20 No. 1, p. 1818, doi: [10.1186/s12889-020-09694-2](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09694-2).
- Galletta, D.F., Bjørn-Andersen, N., Leidner, D.E., Markus, M.L., McLean, E.R., Straub, D. and Wetherbe, J. (2019), "If practice makes perfect, where do we stand?", *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, Vol. 45.
- Gordon, R., Russell-Bennett, R. and Lefebvre, R.C. (2016), "Social marketing: the state of play and brokering the way forward", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 32 Nos 11/12, pp. 1059-1082, doi: [10.1080/0267257X.2016.1199156](https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2016.1199156).
- Graf-Vlachy, L. (2022), "Is the readability of abstracts decreasing in management research?", *Review of Managerial Science*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 1063-1084, doi: [10.1007/s11846-021-00468-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-021-00468-7).
- Gray, D.E., Iles, P. and Watson, S. (2011), "Spanning the HRD academic-practitioner divide: bridging the gap through mode 2 research", *Journal of European Industrial Training*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 247-263, doi: [10.1108/03090591111120403](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090591111120403).
- Griseri, P. (2002), *Management Knowledge: A Critical View*, Palgrave, London.
- Han, H. and Stenhouse, N. (2015), "Bridging the research-practice gap in climate communication: Lessons from one academic-practitioner collaboration", *Science Communication*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 396-404, doi: [10.1177/1075547014560828](https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547014560828).
- Hastings, G. and Domegan, C. (2017), *Social Marketing: Rebels with a Cause*, Routledge, London.
- Hayes, D.P. (1992), "The growing inaccessibility of science", *Nature*, Vol. 356 No. 6372, pp. 739-740, doi: [10.1038/356739a0](https://doi.org/10.1038/356739a0).
- Hubbard, R. and Norman, A.T. (2006), "What impact has practitioner research had in the marketing academy?", *Management Research News*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 25-33, doi: [10.1108/01409170710724278](https://doi.org/10.1108/01409170710724278).

-
- International Social Marketing Association (2022), "Trainings", available at: <https://isocialmarketing.org/trainings/>
- Kapetanaki, A.B. and Spotswood, F. (2021), "Teaching social marketing", in Brennan, R. and Vos, L. (Eds), *Teaching Marketing*, Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kassirer, J., Lefebvre, C., Morgan, W., Russell-Bennett, R., Gordon, R., French, J., Suggs, L.S., Lee, N.R. and Biroscak, B.J. (2019), "Social marketing comes of age: a brief history of the community of practice, profession, and related associations, with recommendations for future growth", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 209-225, doi: [10.1177/1524500419866206](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500419866206).
- Katsikeas, C.S., Robson, M.J. and Hulbert, J.M. (2004), "In search of relevance and rigour for research in marketing", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 568-578, doi: [10.1108/02634500410551941](https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500410551941).
- Keeling, D.I. and Marshall, G.W. (2022), "A call for impact! launch of the new impact article", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 9, pp. 2509-2514, doi: [10.1108/EJM-08-2022-0578](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-08-2022-0578).
- Khalik, M. (2020), "Salt reduction in the Americas", *Sight and Life Magazine*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 145-149.
- Khalik, M., Sommariva, S. and Bryant, C. (2021), "Advancing social marketing at the university of South FL", *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Social Marketing*, Springer International Publishing, pp. 1-10, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-14449-4_34-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-14449-4_34-1).
- Khalik, M., Sommariva, S., Buerck, A.M., Rakotondrazaka, R., Rakotoarisoa, L., Barrett, L.J.P. and Mihelcic, J.R. (2021), "Midstream players determine population-level behavior change: Social marketing research to increase demand for lead-free components in pitcher pumps in Madagascar", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Vol. 18 No. 14, p. 7297, doi: [10.3390/ijerph18147297](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18147297).
- Kim, J., Rundle-Thiele, S. and Knox, K. (2019), "Systematic literature review of best practice in food waste reduction programs", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 447-466, doi: [10.1108/JSOCM-05-2019-0074](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSOCM-05-2019-0074).
- Kirby, S.D. (2019), "Social marketing practitioners: Should you share your work in SMQ?", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 179-181, doi: [10.1177/1524500419864195](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500419864195).
- Knight, J. (2003), "Scientific literacy: clear as mud", *Nature*, Vol. 423 No. 6938, pp. 376-378.
- Kotler, P. and Zaltman, G. (1971), "Social marketing: an approach to planned social change", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 35 No. 3, p. 3.
- Kubacki, K., Rundle-Thiele, S., Lahtinen, V. and Parkinson, J. (2015), "A systematic review assessing the extent of social marketing principle use in interventions targeting children (2000-2014)", *Young Consumers*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 141-158.
- Kubacki, K. and Rundle-Thiele, S. (2013), "Contemporary issues in social marketing", Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge, available at: <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10905660>
- Lee, N.R. (2020), "The future of social marketing: let's get it in orbit by 2025!", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 3-13, doi: [10.1177/1524500419889141](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500419889141).
- Lee, D., Rundle-Thiele, S., Wut, T.M. and Li, G. (2022), "Increasing seasonal influenza vaccination among university students: a systematic review of programs using a social marketing perspective", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Vol. 19 No. 12, p. 7138, doi: [10.3390/ijerph19127138](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19127138).
- Lilien, G.L. (2010), "Is academic marketing losing its way? Embrace intermediaries", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 174-176, doi: [10.1016/j.ausmj.2010.06.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2010.06.011).
- Lindgreen, A., Di Benedetto, C.A., Clarke, A.H., Evald, M.R., Bjørn-Andersen, N. and Lambert, D.M. (2021), "How to define, identify, and measure societal value", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 97, pp. A1-A13, doi: [10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.05.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.05.013).

- McDivitt, J.A. (2020), "Behind the scenes at the Social Marketing Quarterly from the perspective of the new associate editor", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 187-188, doi: [10.1177/1524500420949793](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500420949793).
- McKenzie, C.J., Wright, S., Ball, D.F. and Baron, P.J. (2002), "The publications of marketing faculty – who are we really talking to?", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 36 Nos 11/12, pp. 1196-1208, doi: [10.1108/03090560210445137](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560210445137).
- Manikam, S. and Russell-Bennett, R. (2016), "The social marketing theory-based (SMT) approach for designing interventions", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 18-40.
- Markides, C. (2007), "In search of ambidextrous professors", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 762-768, doi: [10.5465/amj.2007.26279168](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.26279168).
- Merritt, R., Kendall, S., Eida, T., Dykes, F. and Pérez-Escamilla, R. (2023), "Scaling up breastfeeding in England through the becoming breastfeeding friendly initiative (BBF)", *Maternal and Child Nutrition*, Vol. 19 No. S1, p. e13443, doi: [10.1111/mcn.13443](https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13443).
- Mortensen, C.H., Neel, R., Cialdini, R.B., Jaeger, C.M., Jacobson, R.P. and Ringel, M.M. (2019), "Trending norms: a lever for encouraging behaviors performed by the minority", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 201-210.
- Mulally, A., Bias, V., Konkle, B., Watson, C., Yellen, I. and Maxwell, A. (2020), "Making knowledge hereditary: public-private partnership drives progress in rare disease community", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 218-228, doi: [10.1177/1524500420944979](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500420944979).
- National Alliance for Broader Impacts (2018), "The current state of broader impacts: Advancing science and benefiting society".
- National Institutes of Health (2023), "Community partnerships to advance science for society (CompPASS)", available at: <https://commonfund.nih.gov/compass>
- O'Driscoll, A. and Murray, J.A. (1998), "The changing nature of theory and practice in marketing: On the value of synchrony", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 14 No. 5, pp. 391-416, doi: [10.1362/026725798784867815](https://doi.org/10.1362/026725798784867815).
- Olson, R. (2015), *Houston, we Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Palmedo, P.C., Flores, S., Castillo, K., Byrne-Zaaloff, M. and Moltzen, K. (2022), "Exploring countermarketing messages to reduce youth sugar-sweetened beverage consumption in the Bronx, NY", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 274-287, doi: [10.1177/15245004221126580](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004221126580).
- Parker, B., Verissimo, D., Cugnière, L., Bullough, L.-A. and Collavo, T. (2022), "Challenges to academic-practitioner knowledge exchange on illegal wildlife trade [preprint]", SocArXiv, doi: [10.31235/osf.io/n59ap](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/n59ap).
- Parsons, E.C.M., MacPherson, R. and Villagomez, A. (2017), "Marine "conservation": You keep using that word but I don't think it means what you think it means", *Frontiers in Marine Science*, Vol. 4, doi: [10.3389/fmars.2017.00299](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2017.00299).
- Plavén-Sigray, P., Matheson, G.J., Schiffler, B.C. and Thompson, W.H. (2017), "The readability of scientific texts is decreasing over time", *eLife*, Vol. 6 No. e27725, doi: [10.7554/eLife.27725.001](https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.27725.001).
- Pluye, P., El Sherif, R., Gonzalez-Reyes, A., Turcotte, E., Schuster, T., Bartlett, G., Grad, R.M., Granikov, V., Barwick, M., Doray, G., Lagarde, F. and Loignon, C. (2020), "Outcomes of equity-oriented, web-based parenting information in mothers of low socioeconomic status compared to other mothers: participatory mixed methods study", *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, Vol. 22 No. 11, p. e22440, doi: [10.2196/22440](https://doi.org/10.2196/22440).
- Pluye, P., Sherif, R.E., Bartlett, G., Granikov, V., Grad, R.M., Doray, G., Lagarde, F., Loignon, C. and Bouthillier, F. (2015), "Perceived outcomes of online parenting information according to self-selected participants from a population of website users", *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 1-3, doi: [10.1002/pra2.2015.145052010072](https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2015.145052010072).

- Posner, P.L. (2009), "The pracademic: an agenda for re-engaging practitioners and academics", *Public Budgeting and Finance*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 12-26, doi: [10.1111/j.1540-5850.2009.00921.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5850.2009.00921.x).
- Rescue (2023), "A dose of truth", available at: <https://rescueagency.com/case-study/a-dose-of-truth> (accessed 24 July 2023).
- Rogers, E.M. (2003), *Diffusion of Innovations*, Free Press, London.
- Rubenstein, L., Dukes, S., Fearing, C., Foster, B.K., Painter, K., Rosenblatt, A. and Rubin, W. (2018), "A case study for social marketing: Key strategies for transforming the children's mental health system in the United States", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 132-150, doi: [10.1177/1524500418788298](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500418788298).
- Rundle-Thiele, S. (2022), "A reflection on motivating community action to protect an endangered species using marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 9, pp. 2558-2572, doi: [10.1108/EJM-03-2022-0146](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-03-2022-0146).
- Rundle-Thiele, S., David, P., Willmott, T.J., Pang, B., Eagle, L. and Hay, R. (2019), "Social marketing theory development goals: an agenda to drive change", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 35 Nos 1/2, pp. 1-22, doi: [10.1080/0267257X.2018.1559871](https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2018.1559871).
- Salazar, G., Mills, M. and Verissimo, D. (2018), "Qualitative impact evaluation of a social marketing campaign for conservation", *Conservation Biology*, pp. 1-11.
- Salazar, G., Neves, J., Alves, V., Silva, B., Giger, J.C. and Verissimo, D. (2021), "The effectiveness and efficiency of using normative messages to reduce waste: a real world experiment", *Plos One*, Vol. 16 No. 12, pp. 1-14, doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0261734](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261734).
- Scott, M.L. and Mende, M. (2022), "Impact for good: a journey toward impact through marketing scholarship", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 9, pp. 2573-2585, doi: [10.1108/EJM-03-2022-0153](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-03-2022-0153).
- Sharma, G. and Fischhoff, M. (2017), "How to publish research co-created with practitioners: Advice from editors", *Network for Business Sustainability*.
- Sherring, P. (2021), "Using co-design to create community advocacy for biosecurity behavior change", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, pp. 34-38, doi: [10.1177/15245004211003111](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004211003111).
- Sherring, P. and Foote, L. (2023), "Friends with benefits: Practitioner publishing as a pathway to collaboration in social marketing", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 3, doi: [10.1177/15245004231190987](https://doi.org/10.1177/15245004231190987).
- Skerletopoulos, L., Makris, A. and Khaliq, M. (2020), "Trikala quits smoking": a citizen co-creation program design to enforce the ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces in Greece", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 189-203, doi: [10.1177/1524500420942437](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500420942437).
- Social Marketing Association of North America (2018), "Social Marketing Association of North America Listserv".
- Sparkman, G. and Walton, G.M. (2017), "Dynamic norms promote sustainable behavior, even if it is counternormative", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 28 No. 11, pp. 1663-1674, doi: [10.1177/0956797617719950](https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617719950).
- Tapp, A. (2004), "A call to arms for applied marketing academics", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 579-590, doi: [10.1108/02634500410551950](https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500410551950).
- Tapp, A. (2005), "Why practitioners don't read our articles and what we should do about it", *The Marketing Review*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 3-12, doi: [10.1362/1469347053294779](https://doi.org/10.1362/1469347053294779).
- Tapp, A., Pressley, A., Baugh, M. and White, P. (2013), "Wheels, skills and thrills: a social marketing trial to reduce aggressive driving from young men in deprived areas", *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, Vol. 58, pp. 148-157, doi: [10.1016/j.aap.2013.04.023](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2013.04.023).
- Tertiary Education Commission (2023), "New Zealand's Performance-Based research fund", available at: www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/fund-finder/performance-based-research-fund/ (accessed May 15 2023).
- The Research Agency (2023), "A cheat's guide to the COM-B behaviour change model", available at: <https://theresearchagency.com/mainframe/human-behaviour/com-b-model>

- Thomas-Walters, L. and Verissimo, D. (2022), "Cross-cultural mobile game evaluation shows improvement in environmental learning, but not behavior", *Conservation Science and Practice*, Vol. 4 No. 9, doi: [10.1111/csp2.12784](https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.12784).
- Thomas-Walters, L., Verissimo, D., Gadsby, E., Roberts, D. and Smith, R.J. (2020), "Taking a more nuanced look at behavior change for demand reduction in the illegal wildlife trade", *Conservation Science and Practice*, Vol. 2 No. 9, doi: [10.1111/csp2.248](https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.248).
- Tovar-Aguilar, J.A., Monaghan, P.F., Bryant, C.A., Esposito, A., Wade, M., Ruiz, O. and McDermott, R.J. (2014), "Improving eye safety in citrus harvest crews through the acceptance of personal protective equipment, community-based participatory research, social marketing, and community health workers", *Journal of Agromedicine*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 107-116, doi: [10.1080/1059924X.2014.884397](https://doi.org/10.1080/1059924X.2014.884397).
- Truong, V.D. (2014), "Social marketing: a systematic review of research 1998-2012", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 15-34.
- Tucker, B.P. and Lowe, A.D. (2014), "Practitioners are from Mars; academics are from Venus?: An investigation of the research-practice gap in management accounting", *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 394-425, doi: [10.1108/AAAJ-01-2012-00932](https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-01-2012-00932).
- UK Research and Innovation (2023), "What is the REF?", available at: www.ref.ac.uk/about-the-ref/what-is-the-ref/ (accessed July 24 2023).
- University Grants Committee (2023), "Research grants council", available at: www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/.
- Verissimo, D., Pienkowski, T., Arias, M., Cugnière, L. and Doughty, H. (2020), "Ethical publishing in biodiversity conservation science", *Conservation and Society*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 220-225, doi: [10.4103/cs.cs_19_56](https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_19_56).
- Walker, D.H.T., Anbari, F.T., Bredillet, C., Söderlund, J., Cicmil, S. and Thomas, J. (2008), "Collaborative academic/practitioner research in project management: examples and applications", *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 168-192, doi: [10.1108/17538370810866313](https://doi.org/10.1108/17538370810866313).
- White, L.A. (2018), "Social marketing in the Caribbean: philosophy, programs, projects, and pedagogy", *Social Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 35-44, doi: [10.1177/1524500417752311](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500417752311).
- Willmott, T.J. and Rundle-Thiele, S. (2021), "Are we speaking the same language? Call for action to improve theory application and reporting in behaviour change research", *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 1-8, doi: [10.1186/s12889-021-10541-1](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10541-1).
- Willmott, T.J. and Rundle-Thiele, S. (2022), "Improving theory use in social marketing: the TITE four-step theory application process", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 222-255, doi: [10.1108/JSOCM-05-2021-0117](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSOCM-05-2021-0117).
- Wood, M. (2012), "Marketing social marketing", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 94-102, doi: [10.1108/20426761211243937](https://doi.org/10.1108/20426761211243937).
- Woolston, C. (2021), "Impact factor abandoned by Dutch university in hiring and promotion decisions", *Nature*, Vol. 595 No. 7867, pp. 462-462, doi: [10.1038/d41586-021-01759-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-01759-5).
- Xia, Y., Deshpande, S. and Bonates, T. (2016), "Effectiveness of social marketing interventions to promote physical activity among adults: a systematic review", *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, Vol. 13 No. 11, pp. 1263-1274, doi: [10.1123/jpah.2015-0189](https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2015-0189).
- Yoshihama, M., Ramakrishnan, A., Hammock, A.C. and Khaliq, M. (2012), "Intimate partner violence prevention program in an Asian immigrant community: integrating theories, data, and community", *Violence against Women*, Vol. 18 No. 7, pp. 763-783, doi: [10.1177/1077801212455163](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801212455163).
- Yousef, M., Durl, J. and Dietrich, T. (2023), "Everyone's NOT doing it: how schools, parents should talk about vaping", *The Conversation*, available at: <https://theconversation.com/everyones-not-doing-it-how-schools-parents-should-talk-about-vaping-196139>
- Zainuddin, N. and Jones, S. (2016), "Guest editorial", *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 98-103, doi: [10.1108/JSOCM-02-2016-0006](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSOCM-02-2016-0006).

About the authors

Liz Foote is a Research Fellow with Social Marketing @ Griffith at Griffith University in Australia. She received her PhD in Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies and Sustainability from Antioch University New England in the USA. She has more than 20 years of experience working as a marine conservation practitioner, and has expertise in social marketing, behavioural science, conservation social sciences, communications, marine ecology and sustainability. Her Viewpoint (Cateriano-Arévalo *et al.*, 2022), co-authored with an international multidisciplinary team of academics and practitioners, was the #1 top-cited article in *Journal of Social Marketing* in 2022 and was awarded Best Student Submission at the World Social Marketing Conference that year. Liz Foote is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: l.foote@griffith.edu.au

Phill Sherring has a career spanning over 20 years. He has experience in both commercial and government marketing roles and has worked on social marketing programmes covering topics such as biosecurity, COVID-19 and road safety. Phill is a former Executive in Residence at Griffith University, and currently Co-Chair of the New Zealand Social Marketing Network.

Professor Sharyn Rundle-Thiele was trained in marketing, and today, she applies marketing to protect people and the planet. She founded Social Marketing @ Griffith, a centre renowned for its ability to apply marketing to improve people's health and wellbeing and to protect the environment. In 2022, more than 850,000 people were engaged delivering change for the better. The work Sharyn has led has changed adolescent attitudes to alcohol drinking, reduced food waste, reduced koala deaths from dog attacks by 40%, reduced leaves entering waterways and more. She has published more than 245 books, book chapters and journal papers, and she has taught marketing to more than 100,000 people. Sharyn was the first female president of the Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy and today she serves as the Vice-President of the International Social Marketing Association.