

Consumer education

What it can and cannot do

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Who are we?

- *Consumer Focus is the new UK statutory organisation campaigning for a fair deal for consumers in England, Wales, Scotland, and, for postal services, Northern Ireland.*
- *Created through the merger of three consumer organisations – Energywatch, Postwatch and the National Consumer Council (including the Welsh and Scottish Consumer Councils), Consumer Focus will be THE voice of the consumer, and work to secure a fair deal on their behalf.*

Past Credentials

- The National Consumer Council, has played a lead role within consumer education:
 - Developing materials for teaching consumer education via English national curriculum subject of Citizenship
 - Influencing policy at national level and contributing to other organisations' programmes
- So has the Welsh Consumer Council, where consumer education is part of the national curriculum subject of Personal & Social Education

1. Consumer Education Is Essential

“Consumer Education contributes towards the formation of a participative, critical and competent citizenship. All governments should be urged to incorporate consumer education as a part of the basic school curriculum, and to have this applied in practice in the classroom. Teachers should be trained to impart knowledge that consumers need...”

Consumers International Policy Statement, 17th Congress, Lisbon
2003

2. Is Information Education?

“It would be easy to give the public information and hope they change behaviour but we know that doesn’t work very satisfactorily. Otherwise none of us would be obese, none of us would smoke and none of us would drive like lunatics”

Iain Potter
New Zealand Health Sponsorship Council
New Zealand Herald

3. Changing behaviour

Communications & message based approach

**crafting
'our messages'**

accurate / relevant / clear



**communicating
the messages**

*creative / clever / funny / impactful /
interesting / attention grabbing / etc*



Customer based social marketing approach



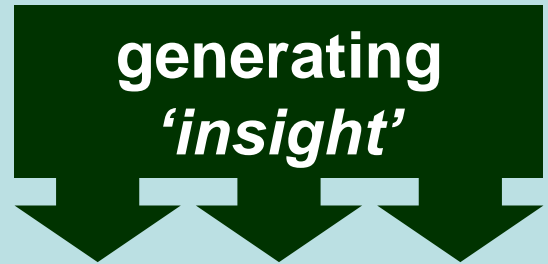
**understanding
the customer**

what 'moves & motivates'



**generating
'insight'**

*directly informing intervention options
(intervention mix & marketing mix)*



Starts with the customer and what's important to them

4. Looking Ahead

4 requests:

1. Implement consumer education strategies, and consumer education in school curricula
2. Distinguish consumer education from advice and information
3. Get the right balance between consumer education and adequate regulation and policy
4. Understand consumer behaviour and use the right approaches to influence it