HEALTHY WEIGHT

COMMITMENT

Getting a Voluntary Approach Right
Healthy Weight Commitment

- Description + Results
- How It Worked
- Complexities
- Lessons Learned
- Pros + Cons
- PS: Other US Voluntary Models
Why a Commitment?

Childhood Obesity:
• Complex problem, complex solutions
• Many in US working on prevention
• Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) committed $500 million/5 years to prevention
• “We cannot succeed without industry changes” (RWJF)
The Commitment 2010:

• Remove 1 trillion calories annually from the US marketplace by 2012*
• Remove 1.5 trillion calories annually from the US marketplace by 2015*

The first US food industry commitment with independent evaluation

*Compared to a 2007 baseline
Bumble Bee Foods, LLC
Campbell Soup Company
ConAgra Foods (Ralston Foods)
General Mills, Inc.
Hillshire Brands (Sara Lee Corp)
Kellogg Company
Kraft Foods Group/Mondelez
Mars, Inc.
McCormick & Company, Inc.
Nestlé USA
PepsiCo, Inc.
Post Foods
The Coca-Cola Company
The Hershey Company
The J.M. Smucker Company
Unilever
RESULTS

• In 2012, the companies collectively cut an est. 6.4 trillion calories from the US marketplace

• More than 4 times their pledged reduction for 2015
• 3 years sooner
How It Worked: The Players

• 16 Manufacturers
• Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (CEOs on Board)
• Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (independent evaluation funder)
• Dr. Barry Popkin, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health (independent evaluator)
  • + Scientific Advisory Committee
Bringing the Parties Together

• 30 attorneys + many meetings
• Trust + Principles + Memorandum of Understanding
• Roles + Responsibilities
  (“RWJF is NOT a HWC Partner”)
• Finding common ground across industry, health + academia
HWCF+RWJF Agreement: Principles

- Transparency + accountability
- Meaningful, measurable objectives + benchmarks
- Stated childhood obesity prevention goal
- Objective, scientifically-sound measures
- External oversight + conduct of evaluation
- Agreement to protect the confidentiality of identifiable proprietary company data
Memorandum of Understanding: Roles + Responsibilities

HWCF/RWJF agree to:
• Importance of restoring “energy balance”
• Independent, objective evaluation, publicly transparent

RWJF will:
• Fund independent scientists to define metrics to assess the impact of HWC’s pledge in the US marketplace

All resulting evaluation reports will be released publicly.
Evaluation Design

• Factory to fork: marketplace sales ➔ (household purchases) ➔ youth consumption
  • Population-level effects -- youth aged 2-19

• National-level public and commercial data (e.g., Nielsen Scantrack)
Timeline

• 2007: Baseline year for calorie count
• 2008: Negotiations begin
• 2009: Public announcement of commitment
• 2009: Evaluation grant
• 2009-2014 Continued HWCF/RWJF meetings
• 2014 Public announcement: Commitment met!
Complexities

• **HWCF**: Working with competitors
  • Manufacturers shy about risk of a bold goal vs meaningful commitment
  • Companies track calories
  • Product changes take time (*formulation, packaging, marketing*)
  • Companies change ownership

• **RWJF**: Not used to working with manufacturers
  • No existing evaluation design; varied data sets
  • Juggle academia, advocates, industry
Lessons Learned

- Strong, sustained commitment by all-- across long time
- Will to negotiate--understanding, trust, design
- Need arbitrator + independent evaluator
- Reputational risks must be accepted
- Expect changes (*market, corp. ownership, Great Recession*)
Lessons Learned

• Costs to all parties
  • Manufacturers—HWCF
  • RWJF—independent evaluation $3 million +
  • Future tracking cheaper/simpler

• Threat of regulation=strong industry incentive

• Results can have sustaining effects (*product changes; industry trends*)
Pros

• No policy/regulation required
• Companies gain stature as sector leaders
• Industry aligns to tackle obesity vs penalized (taxes)
• Reward for risk
• Consumer preference trends supportive
• Trends toward healthier food take hold (more manufacturers, more products, profits)
Cons

- Public commitment risks failure, market share, profits, reputation, Board/stakeholder support
- Requires negotiation, commitment, investment
- Subject to unanticipated changes (ownership, recession)
- Long timeline
Other Successful US Models

• Alliance for a Healthier Generation + Am. Beverage Association (2004-2010)
  90% reduction in bev. calories shipped to schools

• Better Business Bureau: Children’s Food & Beverage Advertising Initiative (2006-)
  18 food & bev. companies + quick-serve restaurants shift mix of foods adv. to kids under 12
Would We Do It Again?

YES,
Now that we know it has had lasting effects

NO,
If we knew at the beginning how hard it would be, how long it would take and how expensive it would be, it might not have happened

Would we recommend it?

YES,
...building on what has been learned
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