

Be a Lifesaver: Organ Donation Campaign

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Be a Life Saver

Although many believe organ donation has been around for a very long time, its existence is relatively new. The first successful organ transplantation procedure was a kidney transplant from a living donor to his identical twin. It took place just 59 years ago (“Timeline of Historical Events”). One year later, the first successful kidney transplant involving two people who were not twins was performed (“Timeline of Historical Events”). The next eight years saw many more “firsts” in the development of organ transplantation procedures. For example, the first successful pancreas transplant occurred in 1966 and the first U.S. heart transplant was performed in 1967, while the first successful bone marrow transplant happened in 1968 (“Timeline of Historical Events”). Unfortunately, scientists working on organ transplant surgeries failed many times before the successful transplants of the mid-20th century (“Organ Donor History,” 2013). Tissue typing and immunosuppressive drugs have greatly enhanced the success of these procedures and have increased the survival rate of patients receiving organs (“Organ Donor History,” 2013). In 1994, Prograf was approved by the FDA for use in organ transplant procedures. According to Schooley Mitchell, corporate sponsor of an organ donation campaign known as *Legacy of Life*, this “marks a significant advance in the understanding and suppression of the human rejection response and in the lessening of unwanted side effects (Schooley Mitchell, 2013).” In 1995, a kidney was removed from a donor through laparoscopic surgical methods, using a small incision, which decreases the recovery time for the donor (Schooley Mitchell, 2013). Although organ transplantation has been experimented with for many years, its success is fairly new. It is not a commonplace medical procedure, the need for donors has not been fulfilled and organ donation is a pressing issue.

Despite the recent advances in organ transplantation, the number of suitable organs is sadly lacking. As of 2011, only 40% of drivers in the United States were registered organ donors (“Organ Donation,” n. d.). However, there are currently 117,533 patients in the United States on a waiting list to receive an organ (“The Need is Real,” n. d.). Another name is added to this list every 10 minutes (“Facts About Organ Donation,” 2012). Although an average of 79 people on this list will receive an organ each day, an average of 130 people will be added to the list and an average of 18 people already on the list will die before receiving an organ (“Statistics,” 2011). One organ donor alone has the chance to save up to eight lives; additionally, this same organ donor could improve up to 50 lives if that person chooses to donate his or her tissues and eyes as well (“Facts About Organ Donation,” 2012). More than one million people need life-improving tissues and eyes each year (“Facts About Organ Donation,” 2012). The current situation concerning organ donation must be improved. Unfortunately, there are many myths that exist concerning organ donation, and the field of organ donation will not see the necessary improvements until these myths have been disproven.

Because so many myths exist, it is increasingly important for the targeted demographic to be properly educated about the facts to ensure that group members do not fall victim to existing misconceptions and as a result, refuse to become an organ donor due to ignorance about the issue (“Common Myths of Organ Donation,” 2013). For example, if a member of the target audience should hear a friend or relative say, “If you are an organ donor, doctors won’t try as hard to save you if you are in the hospital,” that person would recognize that the statement is not factual (“Common Myths of Organ Donation,” 2013). Another myth to be refuted is that organ donation surgeries are not as respected as other medical procedures; however, these surgeries are treated with the same respect as any other medical procedure and take place in conditions that are just as

sterile (“Facts About Organ Donation,” 2012). In addition, contrary to popular belief, a donor’s family is never responsible for any of the medical costs associated with his or her donation (“Common Myths of Organ Donation,” 2013). Also, prior illnesses or health issues do not automatically rule someone out of being an organ donor, so it is important to register to be an organ donor and allow a doctor to make the final decision concerning donor eligibility (“Common Myths of Organ Donation,” 2013). Likewise, age is not an issue for donors; an individual can be an organ donor from the time of birth until the time of death (“Organ Donor FAQs”). Furthermore, organ donation procedures do not dismember or disfigure the human body, so living donors would not be forced to live with embarrassment from their procedures, and deceased donors would still be able to have an open-casket funeral (“Organ Donor FAQs,” n. d.). Understanding the facts, rather than buying into the myths, could mean life or death for an individual on an organ transplant waiting list.

That said, perhaps the biggest myth of all is that an individual may only become an organ donor once he or she has died. Many organ and tissue donations do take place once the donor is dead, but living donation is also possible (“Organ and Tissue Donation from Living Donors,” n. d.). In fact, living donation is becoming increasingly popular due to the rapidly growing need for organs to be transplanted (“Organ and Tissue Donation from Living Donors”). Although there is limited long-term data, it appears that living donation has little or no health-related consequences on the donor’s health or activities (“About Living Donation,” 2013). The most frequent living donor procedure is single kidney donation (“Organ and Tissue Donation from Living Donors”). Kidney donors often fully recover and resume their normal activities within two to six weeks of the transplant (“About Living Donation,” 2013). Another common living donation procedure is one in which one of the two lobes of a donor’s liver is transplanted into a recipient (“Organ and

Tissue Donation from Living Donors”). Liver donors typically take at least two months to fully recover and resume their normal activities (“About Living Donation,” 2013). After a kidney transplant, a donor’s remaining kidney will enlarge slightly to compensate for the loss of the other kidney, and after a liver transplant, a donor’s liver will regenerate and function normally (“About Living Donation,” 2013). After a single-lung or partial pancreas transplant, these organs are unable to regenerate; however, donors have not shown any struggles without them (“About Living Donation,” 2013).

Organ donation may be impacted in the future by today’s stem cell research. For example, in a study being conducted at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland, researchers are experimenting with a 3D printer using an ink composed of human stem cells to “print” three-dimensional human tissues (Mukherjee, 2013). Dr. Will Shu, a member of the research team working on the project, said, “In the longer term, we envisage the technology being further developed to create viable 3D organs for medical transplantation from a patient’s own cells, eliminating the need for organ donation.” If healthy organs could be created from an individual’s own stem cells, the scarcity of organs could be eliminated entirely. Using stem cell research to create viable organs for an individual waiting for a transplant could be the answer to the problem that those awaiting organ donations are currently facing. In the meantime, which could be a long time, the number of individuals on waiting lists continues to outweigh the number of registered donors. It is still a pressing, life-or-death issue that must be addressed, even as early as high school.

According to the Cobb County School District website, there are 17 high schools in Cobb County. During the 2012–2013 school year there were 6,867 11th graders in the district. The average age of an 11th grader is 16 years old. According to Baughn, Rodrigue, & Cornell in their

2006 study of potential adolescent organ donors, “The first time most individuals are formally asked to state their organ donation intention is at the time of receiving a driver’s license.”

Further, they say, “All adolescents in the United States are asked at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office at the time of obtaining a driver’s permit or license whether they want to register as an organ donor.” In Cobb County, this group would include all juniors in the school system. Another reason this is an important target audience is that “adolescence is a critical period for the dissemination, promotion, and acquisition of important health related knowledge and behavior” (Baughn, Rodrigue, & Cornell, 2006). “It is critical, therefore, to deliver organ donation educational programs as close to this decision point as possible so that adolescents have had the opportunity to consider the information, their decision, and an action plan” (Baughn, Rodrigue, & Cornell, 2006).

If 16-year-olds in the Cobb County area could be made knowledgeable of organ donation and would decide to become organ donors at the time of receiving their license, the 117,533-member organ donor waiting list could be drastically reduced (“The Need Is Real,” n.d.). Since adults are able to continue behaviors initiated in their teenage years, adolescence is the ideal time to influence individuals to become donors (Baughn, Rodrigue, & Cornell, 260).

The *Be a Life Saver* campaign will be a co-promotional endeavor with the Life Savers[®] subsidiary of the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company for the use of Life Savers images. This benefits them by expanding their market from the 7- to 12-year-old demographic into the 13- to 17-year-old demographic. The message strategy is to provide 16-year-olds in Cobb County with accurate, factual information about organ donation to ensure that they will be knowledgeable enough to refute the existing myths if and when they are presented with them. Providing the

audience with information disproving organ donation myths will increase their existing positive feelings about organ donation and eliminate any fears or hesitations they may have.

This message strategy was selected due to the considerable number of myths that exist pertaining to organ donation (“Common Myths of Organ Donation,” 2013). It is evident that organ donation is misunderstood; therefore, providing the audience with accurate, factual information about the subject at the time they will be asked to make a decision about organ donation will not only allow them to make a more educated decision, it will allow them to recognize a myth when they hear one. The message will persuade them because not only are they at a very impressionable stage in their lives but also because the information will be presented very close to the time they will be faced with the decision of whether to become an organ donor—a logical method to use with adolescents because it gives them just enough to consider their decision and create a plan of action (Baughn, Rodrigue, & Cornell, 2006).

The tactics used to spread the message to the target audience incorporate the following elements from course material: mere exposure, defensive avoidance, the elaboration likelihood model, narrative theories, Packard’s need for a sense of power and strength, the value of the individual, social proof, Burke’s pentad, Fisher’s narrative approach, testimonials and self-efficacy. The message will be distributed in four different ways. The first message distribution tactic is a public service announcement, which will be shown prior to YouTube videos. The second tactic used to distribute the message is a poster featuring Justin Bieber and a reference to how one simple tweet on his Twitter account dramatically influenced the field of organ donation. The third message distribution tactic is a 30-second radio announcement that will encourage self-efficacy pertaining to organ donation among the target audience. The radio announcement will

be played in all 17 Cobb County high schools during morning announcements. The final tactic is a Facebook page featuring testimonials from both organ donors and organ recipients.

The PSA will be used to create awareness. It doesn't contain many facts; it simply addresses one popular myth about organ donation in the most lighthearted way possible to prevent triggering defensive avoidance, which is common in health-related campaigns (Kopfman, Smith, Ah Yun, and Hodges 1998; Larson, 2010). It also establishes the slogan "Be a Life Saver." The overall goal is to touch on the subject so quickly that the mere exposure phenomenon (Larson, 2010) would occur subliminally, creating a more favorable attitude in the teen when he or she is exposed to subsequent elements of the campaign. Other elements in the PSA have been crafted to appeal to a 16-year-old. The PSA takes the form of a narrative that mirrors life, which causes the message to be processed down the peripheral pathway of the elaboration likelihood model (Larson, 2010). Due to the immature state of their frontal lobes, this is how teenagers process most of their information (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011). Teens are more likely to respond to messages that stimulate their emotions—most specifically, their positive emotions (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011). Therefore, both humor and pride are used to that end. Also, in threatening healthcare messages, especially those involving death, a humorous appeal has been proven to be the most persuasive approach (Weber, Martin & Corrigan, 2006). Teenagers are idealistic as they reflect upon the world for the first time (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011), and seeing how a simple choice at the DMV could save someone's life will give them a vicarious feeling of pride (Larson, 2010).

The DMV was chosen as the backdrop because it is a real place where teens will likely be confronted with the decision about donating for the first time (Baughn, Rodrigue & Cornell, 2006). Moreover, 16-year-olds were chosen as the protagonists because studies have shown that

messages take on increased relevance if the characters they are watching are similar to themselves (Weber, Martin & Corrigan, 2006). Likewise, the use of a best friend encouraging the reticent donor takes advantage of the trustworthiness dimension of credibility (Larson, 2010). It also capitalizes on the social proof, wherein people are “satisfied with a decision if they see significant others making the same decision” (Larson, 2010).

The message itself addresses and debunks one of the four most common organ donation myths (Weber, Martin & Corrigan, 2006) while at the same time, it celebrates a friend whose life was saved, invoking the value of the individual cultural myth (Larson, 2010).

Finally, the slogan *Be a Life Saver* is more than a good, old-fashioned pun; it is a categorical syllogism: Life savers are good; you are good; you should be a life saver. Life Savers are also symbolic: The colorful candy mirrors the ring tossed to a swimmer in crisis, evoking not only the joy of salvation, but the joy of a child enjoying candy. This is a powerful symbol, because as Larson (2010) observes, “Symbols are just as or more important than real things to most people.”

Distribution of the PSA will be via YouTube AdWords In-Stream. It was chosen as the primary distribution route because 21.6 million unique teens per month view YouTube (“Reaching Teens,” 2013). The website is able to precisely track its viewership, and as such, it is able to more precisely target its viewership. YouTube AdWords allows an advertiser to target an audience by age, region, interest categories and keywords (“YouTube Targeting,” 2013). The In-Stream feature allows an advertiser to run a 15, 30 or 60 second advertisement in front of any YouTube video that satisfies the category and keyword search requirements (“YouTube In-Stream Ads,” 2013). An option is given for the viewer to skip the advertisement after 5 seconds, and advertisers do not have to pay for any video that is not viewed for at least 30 seconds.

YouTube keywords chosen from website are listed in Table 1 (Google AdWords, 2013) following the PSA script.

The message distribution tactic that will be used in all Cobb County high schools is a 30-second radio announcement. This announcement will encourage self-efficacy with regard to organ donation among the target audience. The tactic will also utilize simple sentences and the mere exposure effect. It will be played during the morning announcements along with other important information that students need in order to complete a successful week at school. When it comes to self-efficacy, individuals are likely to acquire their own self-efficacy principles through observation and verbal persuasion. Larson defines self-efficacy as “an individual believing she or he is capable of a successful performance” (Larson, 2013). Self-efficacy is demonstrated in the radio announcement by informing students that they can make a difference in the world. “That is, a person believes she or he can perform sufficiently to attain certain goals” (Larson, 2013). This provides them with a sense of excitement knowing they can change someone’s life just by signing up and becoming an organ donor. Simple sentences are used at the beginning and end of the radio announcement to provide understandable and direct information. Since simple sentences are easily remembered, this will make the first and last words unforgettable. Simple sentences are direct, to the point, and provide students with knowledge and information that is easily attainable. This is a simple way to introduce the main point, organ donation, to students in the 16 Cobb County high schools.

Last but not least, Robert Zajonc’s mere exposure effect is used in the 30-second radio announcement to provide repetitive information so the message will become second nature to the Cobb County students. According to Larson, “the mere exposure hypothesis is quite simple: Repeated exposure to a stimulus results in more favorable evaluation of that stimulus” (Larson,

2010). Every day 17 Cobb County high schools will play the 30- second radio announcement. The more times the students hear and identify the organ donation message, the more likely they are to be favorable toward it.

The main goal of the Facebook page is to bring awareness of organ donation to the target audience, drawing them in by targeting their interests and hobbies. The title of the Facebook page is *Cobb County Life Savers* and includes testimonies and links to donor registration websites. According to an article written in *The Telegraph*, high school students spend an average of 30 hours online per week. Facebook, being popular among this age group, is the ideal strategy to grab the target audience's attention. The students of Cobb County high schools will be offered free t-shirts if they "like" the page and share a post from the *Cobb County Life Savers* Facebook page. This incentive keeps the target audience satisfied and allows them to spread the word through sharing a post and wearing a t-shirt with the *Be a Life Saver* slogan on it. The five steps of organization by motivated sequence is the best way to get audience attention (Larson, 2010). The first step in the sequence is attention step. Facebook will generally get a high school student's attention because it has become a basis for most friendships and relationships. Next, after hearing they can get a free shirt for "liking" a page and sharing a post, things they do on Facebook anyway, they develop a need for the t-shirt. After looking at the Facebook page and reading the testimonies, they also develop a need to *Be a Life Saver*. The visualization stage requires more work because we need to make the audience feel and want to be a life saver. We do this by allowing the students to read testimonies and see how grateful organ recipients are to their organ donors. The fourth step is the satisfaction stage where the audience must be given a way to satisfy their need (Larson, 2010). This is done by giving the students links to the Facebook page and donor registration websites. Once the students "like" the page, share a post,

and wear the *Be a Life Saver* t-shirt, the target audience is partially committed and on their way to becoming organ donors.

The poster at the DMV does not highlight the existence of any myths, but it instantly appeals to the target audience through its feature of an extremely popular celebrity. Justin Bieber currently has 37,547,443 Twitter followers (Twitter Counter, 2013) and 2,845,300,514 YouTube video views (Statistic Brain, n. d.), making him easily one of the most idolized celebrities at this time. In terms of Burke's pentad, Justin Bieber's tweet to his followers about a young woman needing a lung transplant would be the act, "the motivated or purposeful action that occurs within the scene," and Justin Bieber himself would be the agent, "the person or group of persons who take action in the scene" (Larson, 2010 pp. 148-149).

The goal of the poster is to grab audience members' attention. Justin Bieber's involvement in organ donation uses the tool of influence known as "social proof" (Larson, 2010). Social proof is defined as "viewing a behavior or decision as correct to the degree that we see others performing it" (Larson, 2010). Equally as important as the content of the poster is the placement of it. Placing the poster inside the DMV is crucial to the success of this tactic because, as mentioned previously, this is the first place members of the target audience will be asked to choose whether they would like to register as an organ donor (Baughn, Rodrigue & Cornell, 2006).

The mission of the campaign is to provide accurate, specifically tailored information to the target audience and subsequently disprove the myths associated with organ donation—myths that could prevent them from making the decision to become an organ donor. In an effort to keep the target audience interested, the tactics used to execute the message strategy, will incorporate the interests (Justin Bieber) and hobbies (Facebook) that most 16-year-olds have in common.

Targeting 16-year-olds with the *Be a Life Saver* campaign is crucial to its success because this is the age when the target audience is most likely to hear about organ donation for the first time and to think about whether they would like to be an organ donor. They are asking themselves questions such as, “What kind of car should I get?” The goal of this campaign is to transform their next question from being, “Should I check the organ donor box when I go to the DMV get my license?” to, “Should I use a blue pen or black pen to check the organ donor box when I go to the DMV to get my license?”

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