How can we motivate Canadians to move more? What are the factors that contribute to an effective public awareness and behaviour change campaign? The Canada on the Move (COTM) campaign successfully encouraged Canadians to walk more through distribution of millions of pedometers and through its messages:

- “Donate your steps to research” and
- “Add 2000 steps”.

COTM ran from late 2003 until mid-2004. Over this time period, the campaign:

- garnered awareness of its brand name and its messages;
- increased awareness and ownership of pedometers; and,
- increased walking.

In 2004, almost three in five Canadian adults had heard of a pedometer and just over one in ten reported actually owning one. Indeed, over the course of the campaign, pedometer ownership increased significantly from the beginning of the campaign, when less than 2% of Canadians reported ownership, to just over 11% after the second phase of the campaign. People who stated that they had heard of COTM and its messages were more likely than others to own a pedometer.

Canadians who were aware of COTM and both of its messages were almost four times more likely to report having used a pedometer in the previous week than those who were unaware of the campaign. Almost one-third of Canadians reported sufficient walking (defined as at least an hour a day in the week prior to the survey). However, compared to Canadians overall, pedometer owners who reported having heard both messages were 13% more likely to report sufficient walking. Moreover, those who owned a pedometer and were aware of COTM and its altruistic “donate your steps to health research” message were four times as likely to report sufficient walking immediately after the launch of the campaign, and 3.5 times more likely to do so six months after the campaign than those who were unaware of the campaign.

**Grounded in theory**
The Hierarchy of Communication Effects model proposes a series of influential steps leading to behaviour change. Before individuals change their behaviour, they:

- must be exposed to the message;
- become aware of the message;
- understand the content of the message;
- pay attention to this knowledge;
- form an intention to take action based on this knowledge; and then
- make the behavioural change.

**Guidelines for adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps per Day</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5000</td>
<td>sedentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000-7499</td>
<td>low active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7500-9999</td>
<td>somewhat active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10000</td>
<td>active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;12500</td>
<td>highly active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Catrine Tudor-Locke, Arizona State University, Affiliate Scholar, Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute
COTM successfully created awareness and related behaviour change. Messages in the media and cereal boxes delivered the campaign messages. Repeated exposure to these messages resulted in a greater likelihood of pedometer ownership. Pedometer use, whether of one from a cereal box or obtained through purchase, supported by the ability to track daily steps on a website, provided feedback to encourage walking and sustain the behaviour.

**A unique partnership**
COTM was a public-private partnership between the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Kellogg Canada. Canadians were asked to “donate” their steps to health research through a CIHR website where they entered their physical activity and daily steps. Kellogg distributed over 2,000,000 pedometers via cereal boxes, which displayed educational messages and the website address. Kellogg also conducted mass media campaigns that promoted walking and pedometer use. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, in partnership with CIHR, measured the campaign impact via its Physical Activity Monitor.

**What was measured?**
A large sample of Canadians was contacted and interviewed on an ongoing basis, commencing in late 2003, prior to the campaign launch, and continued throughout 2004. Survey respondents were asked:
- whether they had walked in the previous seven days for work, chore, transport and leisure time activities;  
- if they had heard of the campaign or any of the tag lines in the previous month; and,  
- if they had ever heard of a pedometer or step counter, and if so, whether they owned one, and if they did own one, where they acquired it.

Pedometer owners were asked:  
- On how many days in the last seven days did you wear a pedometer?  

**Where do we go from here?**
The success of COTM demonstrates the potential impact for ongoing nationally funded public awareness campaigns. Further, combining motivational health-related messages with the distribution of an easy-to-use tool for self-monitoring motivates and reinforces behaviour. The combined effect appears to have had a larger impact than either component alone. Appealing to Canadians to donate their steps to health research appears to have resonated with Canadians.

**More Info...**

**What have we learned?**

- **Repeated messaging increased campaign and message awareness, which in turn led to increased pedometer ownership and walking.**

- **A number of features of pedometers may make them suitable for community-wide interventions to promote physical activity: they are simple to use, unobtrusive, affordable and provide immediate user feedback.**

- **The combined strategy of motivational messaging with behaviour monitoring appears to be effective in promoting walking.**

- **There is a place for ongoing nationally-funded campaigns to motivate Canadians to move more.**