

Viewpoint Q&A

Tim Antric

Can you tell us about yourself and your current role?

Ko Mauao te maunga e ru nei take ngākau [Mauao is the mountain that stirs my heart].

Ko Arkengathdale taku riu
[Arkengathdale is my valley].

Ko Arkle taku awa
[Arkle is my stream].

Nō te rohe o te whenua o loka ahau
[I am from Yorkshire].

Kei Hemisphere ahau e mahi ana. He kaiarataki ahau.
[I am the Managing Director of Hemisphere].

Ko Tim Antric ahau.
[I am Tim Antric].

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā iwi, e ngā rangatira, tēnā koutou
[To the authorities, the languages, the tribes, the chiefs, greetings to you].

I'm the Managing Director of Hemisphere, an independent advertising and social marketing agency based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington and Tauranga Moana in Aotearoa New Zealand. I've been working in and around social marketing for more than 20 years. I want to acknowledge Hoani Lambert for introducing me to the practice at the Health Sponsorship Council. And the many social marketing leaders I've worked with since – particularly those that gave up their time for my PhD interviews a few years back.

I've had a pretty unusual route to working in an advertising agency. I began in youth and community work – within Europe's largest social housing development, transforming the area through working with local and central



government, local industry and non-profit partners to create education, work and other new opportunities in a former industrial city. From there, I got into health promotion, initially with the Rainbow community and then across multiple social marketing programmes in different parts of Aotearoa.

What attracted you to the role?

When I first joined Hemisphere, it was the opportunity to work agency side. I'd worked on social marketing programmes for the Accident Compensation Corporation (family violence prevention), Ministry of Social Development (family violence prevention), Mental Health Foundation/Ministry of Health (depression) and Auckland Transport (sustainable transport). And I wanted to be more involved in the design and advertising space. Since that time, I've worked in digital agencies, and led public health units and non-profits. The skills I've developed from social marketing have opened doors to other opportunities.

A couple of years ago, I was invited back to Hemisphere. And given the opportunity to reimagine an advertising and social marketing



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agency. This was too big an opportunity to miss in the closing months of my PhD – an opportunity to put my thinking into action. I'd spent three years exploring the evolution of social marketing in Aotearoa and here was an opportunity to get my hands dirty again.

What are the most satisfying parts of your work as a social marketing practitioner?

For me, the most satisfying part of social marketing is being able to put my values into action – to do work that feeds my soul and makes a difference to our communities. One of the first things we did as an agency was to focus on our values – today, they're the reason people choose to join our team.

Following that, it's got to be getting to develop sound evidence-based strategies – working with our clients, communities and stakeholders to co-create programmes build on the best evidence (wherever that comes from). We've developed our approach to social marketing drawing on Jeff French and Rebekah Russell-Bennett's hierarchical model of social marketing with a good splash of Griffith's CBE process. Drawing on work like this has enabled us to keep pace with global changes in social marketing and get away from more dated approaches that we no longer find fit for purpose.

Can you share with us a project that worked particularly well?

Whenever I'm asked this question, I have to stop and think. I've worked on some fantastic behaviour change programmes for government agencies across health, agriculture, biosecurity, biodiversity, outdoor safety, food safety, transport, privacy and more. But for many of these, the behaviour change results haven't been made public. Our clients have continued investing in them (which we think is a good sign but we can't report the results).

I'm going to say the National Breastfeeding Campaign which we've been supporting since 2008. I think this piece of work has some fantastic examples of what makes good social marketing:

- We have ongoing partnerships with stakeholders from across the country, including Māori health providers, public health leaders and the community
- The campaign has evolved considerably over 15 years – building on insights and ongoing engagement with breastfeeding parents and their supporters
- We've been able to take advantage of different media, including launching into social back in 2010, recognising it was one of the best ways to support new parents
- We've supported local and national action, changed the conversation around breastfeeding in public and increased support in the media
- We saw positive results from early on, and we've been able to continue working to improve breastfeeding rates – one year saw a doubling of Māori breastfeeding rates.

From your experience, what are some of the most significant pain points practitioners face when working on projects?

One of the most significant pain points we've seen is around getting the right people around the table from day one. And doing this in an authentic way that recognises the mana and expertise around the table. As we see it, our brightest experts are people who live and breathe in communities – who understand the messiness of people's lives.

In 2022, we began working with our partners to find a new way to work. An approach based on relationships not transactions – yes, we need to compensate people involved in co-creation but it has to be more than money.

We formed Te Huihui o Te Kakau with our Māori and Pacific partners, supported by Asian, disability and Rainbow whānau. Te Huihui o Te Kakau is a constellation (commonly called Orion's Belt overseas). It heralds a new day, and symbolises a tool. We've created a community of people committed to being a tool to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Aotearoa.

By partnering with people who live, work and play in the diverse communities of Aotearoa we can easily bring the right people to the table. And we're supporting rangatahi [young people] from different communities into our industry – reducing pain points while benefitting our communities.

How do you stay up to date with the latest social marketing issues and trends?

Twitter was my go-to space to keep up with the latest issues and trends. However, with increasing vitriol on the platform, I made the decision to leave it last year. LinkedIn has become my go-to platform – connecting and following industry leaders and social marketing experts. It's fantastic the way people share tools and work – a big shout out to Nedra Kline Weinreich, Sharyn Rundle-Thiele, and NZ's own Phill Sherring for being such prolific commenters and sharers.

I'm also a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and the Royal Society of Public Health which keeps me tapped into thinking in Europe while the Australian Association of Social Marketing, NZ Marketing Association and NZ Social Marketing Network keep me up to speed more locally.

Finally, what tips would you give to other social marketing practitioners?

Number one is always be aware of the messiness of people's lives. Social marketers are often focused on discrete behaviours – these don't exist in isolation. We need to understand people's priorities and where your focus sits in this. You can't invite people to eat better or quit smoking or recycle if they're worried about how to put food on the table, getting a back door installed or getting a home.

Number two is learn from others. We work in a community of incredibly helpful people – some of whom have been working in social marketing for decades. Tap into the social marketing community, learn from what has worked before – or, perhaps more importantly – not worked. My

PhD journey gave me the opportunity to explore many of the social marketing programmes in Aotearoa – there was so much learning to be had. But too often we're that focused on getting on to the next project, working on the shiny new thing, and we forget to gather our learning and share our insights.

Working agency side, I'd encourage social marketers to connect with an agency early if they think they'll be working with an agency. Too often we have people come to us for an advertising campaign. When working together across all the elements of their social marketing programme; using our insights, experience and data can help deliver a better and more effective joined up programme.

Finally, make sure you've thought about how your work is going to be measured and evaluated. How will you know you've been successful? There are too many examples of awareness raising being labelled social marketing. Oh, and know the difference between social marketing and social advertising!

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