



Social Marketing: Expanding Dimensions

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ABSTRACT

Social marketing is not in competition with theories of behavior. The objective of social marketing is behavior change; theories of behavior are very useful to the social marketer. A social network service focuses on building and reflecting social network or social relationship among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities. A social network service essentially consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. It is sometimes felt that social marketing is restricted to a particular spectrum of client -the nonprofit organization, the health services group, the government agency. Indeed, these often are the clients of social marketing agencies, but the goal of inducing social change is not restricted to governmental or non-profit charitable organizations; it may be argued that corporate public relations efforts such as funding for the arts are an example of social marketing. Consumer marketing approach is organization centered. Both commercial and social marketing uses a combination of influence factors to bring about change.

KEYWORDS: Social marketing, social marketing mix, marketing concerns

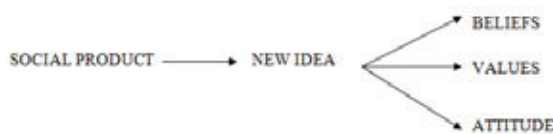
INTRODUCTION

Social marketing is the systematic application of marketing, along with other concepts and techniques, to achieve specific behavioral goals for a social good. Social marketing can be applied to promote merit goods, or to make a society avoid demerit goods and thus to promote society's well being as a whole. For example, this may include asking people not to smoke in public areas, asking them to use seat belts, or prompting to make them follow speed limits. Increasingly, social marketing is being described as having 'two parents' -'social parent' i.e. social sciences and social policy, and a 'marketing parent' i.e. commercial and public sector marketing approaches.

Since social marketing is a practice, there is no need to test or compare its "goodness with the theories of behavior – just as there is no need to test accounting. Social marketing is not in competition with theories of behavior. The objective of social marketing is behavior change; theories of behavior are very useful to the social marketer.

DEFINING SOCIAL MARKETING

A social marketing campaign or programme contains the following elements: a consumer orientation (Lefebvre and Flora 1988, Lefebvre 1992b, Andreasen 1995), an exchange (Lefebvre and Flora 1988, Lefebvre 1996, Leathar and Hastings 1987, Smith 1997) and a long-term planning outlook (Andreasen 1995).



In marketing, one of the important terms is KISS. It means Keep It Simple, Stupid. Remember, there is no person out there that is going to think just as you do. Each person will have their own brain and their own way of thinking and doing things. In addition, each will have their special hot spot in which the informer will need to reach to achieve the outcome in which you are looking for. This concept is just like getting the potential customer from the initial phase through to the buying phase of the program.

HOW SOCIAL MARKETING IS DIFFERENT FROM COMMERCIAL MARKETING?

The main aim of 'social marketing' is 'social good', while in 'commercial marketing' the aim is 'financial'. Consumer marketing may aim to influence the brand choice of an individual (e.g. a brand of toothpaste) while social marketing aims to influence the behavior of the individual in relation to oral hygiene (e.g. increase the frequency of teeth cleaning) (Kotler & Andreasen, 1987). It is important not to confuse 'social marketing' with other types of 'commercial marketing' where there is

a contribution to a social good involved but not the primary aim. For example 'societal marketing', 'cause-related marketing' or 'pro-social marketing', each of these are aspects of commercial marketing that can contribute in different ways to 'social good' but the distinction between these and 'social marketing' is that in their case 'social good' is not the primary goal, but a related goal in order to support the companies commercial and financial aims. In 'social marketing' the distinguishing feature is therefore its 'primary' focus on 'social good', and it is not a secondary outcome.

A commercial marketer selling a product may only seek to influence a buyer to make a product purchase. Social marketers, dealing with goals such as reducing cigarette smoking or encouraging condom usage, have more difficult goals: to make potentially difficult and long-term behavioral change in target populations. Consumer marketing approach is organization centered. By contrast the social marketer's approach is to "adopt a customer centered approach and recognize that change will only come about if one starts with the customer's reality and adapts messages and other program elements to the customers' perceptions, needs, and wants." Both commercial and social marketing uses a combination of influence factors to bring about change.

DEPARTURES FROM COMMERCIAL MARKETING

There are some important differences between social and commercial marketing. Specifically, in social marketing:

- The products tend to be more complex.
- Demand is more varied.
- Target groups are more challenging to reach.
- Consumer involvement is more intense.
- The competition is more subtle and varied.

POTENTIAL CONCERNS ABOUT SOCIAL MARKETING

- A. Disclosure Concerns
- B. Information Quality Concerns
- C. Identity Control Concerns

A. Disclosure Concerns

Probably the most evident concern raised by social marketing is the potential threat of unauthorized and undesired disclosures of particular pieces of personal information. Social marketing depends on a flow of information from the customer featured in an endorsement message to that customer's friends. The ads function only by revealing that the endorser bought a certain shirt, browsed on a certain page, or signed up to receive news about a certain musician. But some people might not want information about their browsing and shopping shared automatically with a large number of others, and particularly with their friends.

In principle, social marketing initiatives could transmit a user's implied endorsement of anti-diarrhea medicine, condoms, emergency mort-

gauge counseling, or an anarchist group. Though such disclosures might seem the most obviously and seriously troubling, in reality, they are extremely unlikely.



B. Information Quality Concerns

The virtues of peer recommendations depend very much on their high perceived reliability and independence. Social marketing advertisements may not always share in this level of dependability and could convey exaggerated, misleading, or even completely false information or endorsements. Such claims could deceive a recipient into taking actions or making purchases that might not otherwise have occurred, thus distorting choices with bad information. Worse, over time either inaccurate or overly frequent social marketing would seriously undermine the effectiveness of online word of mouth altogether. These concerns can be grouped together as worries about the information quality of social marketing.

C. Identity Control Concerns

The final potential concern about social marketing is much more abstract and theoretical than the first two. Those other concerns arise because the content of social marketing messages contributes to some other consequential harm. Concerns about disclosure relate to the personal details that a customer's friends might discover through social marketing and some of the injuries the customer might suffer as a result of that knowledge, such as embarrassment or awkwardness. Information quality concerns derive largely from the possibility that the substance of a message might mislead or confuse consumers, or the danger that social marketing will contribute to information overload.

Regardless of whether the information conveyed in the message is sensitive or misleading, nonconsensual reputation piggybacking may intrude on autonomy. Moreover, observers often object in particularly strong terms when personal identity is unwittingly entangled in commercial marketing. Identity control differs from disclosure because identity could be implicated regardless of any specific information that might accompany a social marketing message.

Social Marketing (Marketing & Communication) Mix

Product

The social marketing "product" is not necessarily a physical offering. A continuum of products exists, ranging from tangible, physical products, to services (e.g., medical exams), practices (e.g., breastfeeding, ORT or eating a heart-healthy diet) and finally, more intangible ideas (e.g., environmental protection). In order to have a viable product, people must first perceive that they have a genuine problem, and that the product offering is a good solution for that problem. The role of research here is to discover the consumers' perceptions of the problem and the product, and to determine how important they feel it is to take action against the problem.

Price

"Price" refers to what the consumer must do in order to obtain the social marketing product. This cost may be monetary, or it may instead require the consumer to give up intangibles, such as time or effort, or to risk embarrassment and disapproval. If the costs outweigh the benefits for an individual, the perceived value of the offering will be low and it will be unlikely to be adopted. However, if the benefits are perceived as greater than their costs, chances of trial and adoption of the product is

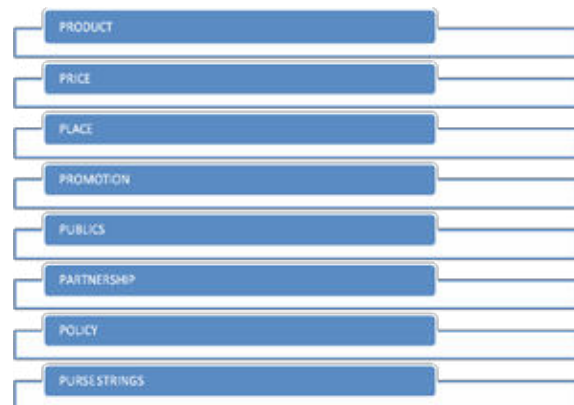
much greater.

Place

"Place" describes the way that the product reaches the consumer. For a tangible product, this refers to the distribution system—including the warehouse, trucks, sales force, retail outlets where it is sold, or places where it is given out for free. For an intangible product, place is less clear-cut, but refers to decisions about the channels through which consumers are reached with information or training. This may include doctors' offices, shopping malls, mass media vehicles or in-home demonstrations. Another element of place is deciding how to ensure accessibility of the offering and quality of the service delivery.

Promotion

Finally, the last "P" is promotion. Because of its visibility, this element is often mistakenly thought of as comprising the whole of social marketing. However, as can be seen by the previous discussion, it is only one piece. Promotion consists of the integrated use of advertising, public relations, promotions, media advocacy, personal selling and entertainment vehicles. The focus is on creating and sustaining demand for the product. Public service announcements or paid ads are one way, but there are other methods such as coupons, media events, editorials, "Tupperware"-style parties or in-store displays. Research is crucial to determine the most effective and efficient vehicles to reach the target audience and increase demand.



Additional Social Marketing "P's"

Publics--Social marketers often have many different audiences that their program has to address in order to be successful. "Publics" refers to both the external and internal groups involved in the program. External publics include the target audience, secondary audiences, policymakers, and gatekeepers, while the internal publics are those who are involved in some way with either approval or implementation of the program.

Partnership--Social and health issues are often so complex that one agency can't make a dent by itself. You need to team up with other organizations in the community to really be effective. You need to figure out which organizations have similar goals to yours--not necessarily the same goals--and identify ways you can work together.

Policy--Social marketing programs can do well in motivating individual behavior change, but that is difficult to sustain unless the environment they're in supports that change for the long run. Often, policy change is needed, and media advocacy programs can be an effective complement to a social marketing program.

Purse Strings--Most organizations that develop social marketing programs operate through funds provided by sources such as foundations, governmental grants or donations. This adds another dimension to the strategy development--namely, where will you get the money to create your program.

CONCLUSION

Social marketing may be a complex exercise but it is no impossible, by any means. If the message is strong and it can be related to common people then it is successful. Commercial marketing cannot be mixed with social marketing but some lessons can be adopted for effectiveness in social concept.