



The Demands of Social Marketing

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Abstract:

Social marketing is application of commercial marketing concepts, knowledge, and techniques to non-commercial ends for the society's welfare. Authors view the growth of social marketing paralleling the formative years of a person. The field has had its infancy and adolescence and one could argue that it is just now entering early maturity. As, a field, social marketing grows it requires a deeper understanding of the subjects and the ways to reach them. It requires objective ways for successful social marketing. In this article we shall come across certain ways of structuring the field by applying the general marketing concepts to this one in particular. We shall study what this domain requires as it enters the maturity stage of its existence.

Keywords: Place, Price, Product, Promotion, Social Campaigns, Social marketing

1. Preface

American marketing association defines Marketing as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. Dr. Philip Kotler defines marketing as "the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services." Similarly, marketing has been defined by numerous authors in varied forms. However, in a nut shell, Marketing facilitates exchange and that includes goods, services, events, ideas and so on. Ideas, when marketed, with the motive of bringing a social change would be known as social marketing.

Social marketing was born as a discipline in the 1970s, when Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman realized that the same marketing principles that were being used to sell products to consumers could be used to sell ideas, attitudes and behaviors.

In other words, marketing techniques are the bridging mechanisms between the simple possession of knowledge and the socially useful implementation of what knowledge allows.

Marketing men have advised churches on how to increase membership, charities on how to raise money, and art museums and symphonies on how to attract more patrons. In the social sphere, the Advertising Council of America has conducted campaigns for social objectives, including "Smokey the Bear," "Keep America Beautiful," "Join the Peace Corps," "Buy Bonds," and "Go to College." (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971).

The practice of marketing management as applied to products and services has become increasingly sophisticated. However, application of marketing techniques to social concerns is still developing. As Andreasen quotes “it is useful to think of the growth of social marketing over the past 40-plus years as paralleling the formative years of a person. The field has had its infancy and adolescence and one could argue that it is just now entering early maturity.” (Andreasen, 2003)

Harvey posits that the social marketing field project had its origins with the promotion of family planning in India in 1964. This early effort focused on marketing of Nirodh condoms with the assistance of major private sector marketers like Unilever and Brooke Bond Tea Company, who did much to secure wide distribution of the new low-cost private sector product. (Harvey, 1999)

In 1969, Kotler and Levy first argued that marketers were too narrow in their view of the field. Rather, they asserted: . . . marketing is a pervasive societal activity that goes considerably beyond the selling of toothpaste, soap, and steel. . . . [An] increasing amount of society’s work is being performed by organizations other than business firms . . . [and] every organization performs marketing-like activities whether or not they are recognized as such. (Levy & Kotler, 1969)

Authors argued that the ‘broadening’ of marketing was taking the field well beyond where it properly belonged because marketing obviously only involved markets and this meant buying and selling. (Luck, 1969) Broadening the field, they asserted, would divert attention from critical issues and encroach on other disciplines (Luck, 1969). Kotler and Levy responded that marketing was about transactions, not just market transactions (Kotler and Levy, 1969).

Kotler saw marketing as a technology, he and his colleague Gerald Zaltman explored what it would mean to apply the technology to social issues where, they suggested, it could be called ‘social marketing’ (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971).

Thus, the new field was given a name!

This period of initial academic thinking and attempts at definition caused two kinds of confusion that would plague the field of social marketing for the next two decades. First, it tended to confuse practitioners about three potentially distinct topics – nonprofit marketing, social marketing and socially responsible marketing.

Second, the definition that Kotler and Zaltman proposed for social marketing made it common to confuse it with just plain ‘social advertising’, public relations or, most simply, mere education. A frequently cited version of this new definition is found in 1999 in an article in the Journal of Public

2. Policy & Marketing

Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part. (Andreasen, 2002)

3. As social marketing grows older, what’s next?

If social marketing is to continue to flourish and have the impact that many of us hope it will have, a number of steps will need to be taken in order to make it an objective discipline. We would need greater clarity about the strategies in implementing a social marketing campaign.

For that we need to understand, first, the application of 4 ps of marketing in context of social campaigns.

Secondly, the different approaches in implementing social marketing. It is clear that not all behaviors are alike. Starting something is different from stopping something. Starting something alone (stopping abuse, getting a flu shot) is one thing; starting something involving others (dieting, family planning, AIDS protection) is different. (Andreason, 1994)

We need to understand these differences and parallels and how do these behavior traits affect the society.

4. 4ps of marketing: applied to social marketing

Wiebe examined four social campaigns to determine what conditions or characteristics accounted for their relative success or lack of success. He found that the more the conditions of the social campaign resembled those of a product campaign, the more successful the social campaign. (Wiebe, 1951-52)

Marketers view the marketing problem as one of developing the right product backed by the right promotion and put in the right place at the right price. These key variables in the marketing mix have been named the four P's by McCarthy. (McCarthy, 1968). Kotler & Zaltman examined each of these variables in terms of some well-known social issues, they are discussed as below:

Product-A product is seen as an item that satisfies what a consumer demands. It is a tangible good or an intangible service. Marketers must design social products for each market which are "buyable," and which instrumentally serve the social cause. In some social causes, the most difficult problem will be to innovate appropriate products. For example in spreading awareness of safe driving, helmets could be marketed as a "product" or marketers can sell insurances with higher premium for unsafe drivers or they could be given safety driving classes. Similarly, for regulating birth control, condoms could be used as "buyable"

Promotion- All of the methods of communication that a marketer may use to provide information to different parties about the product. Promotion comprises elements such as advertising, public relations, sales organization and sales promotion (Needham, 1996). Using correct promotional techniques in communicating the social issue is of utmost importance.

In India, a campaign was run for controlling the birth rate where referral fees were paid to salesmen, barbers, and others who bring in consenting males for sterilization, the consenting male was given a transistor radio or a small payment to cover his costs of being absent from work. Women have been offered gifts for consenting to use intrauterine contraceptive devices. (Simon, 1968)

Place- The third element of the marketing approach to social campaigns calls for providing adequate and compatible distribution and response channels. Motivated persons should know where the product can be obtained or where can they practice the desired behavior. For example to encourage people to get their children vaccinated against polio, the government of India set up polio booths in numerous location in order to make it convenient for people to reach for vaccination.

Price- Price includes money costs, opportunity costs, energy costs, and psychic costs. Thus, the cost to persons asked to appear for polio vaccination includes any possible money charge, any opportunities foregone, the expenditure of energy, and the psychological concerns aroused by inoculation. The cost of using seat belts is the charge for buying them, the effort to lock and unlock them, and the psychological cost of not being completely sure one is better off in an accident wearing them or not wearing them.

In Caracas, Venezuela, for example, although there is a free hospital for the indigent, many of them patronize private clinics which cost them 20 bolivars for consultation. Why? Because while there is no charge at the free hospital, there is a substantial cost to the patient in terms of energy and psychological abuse.

The price attached to implementing the required social change must be analyzed thoroughly and efforts should be made to minimize it. Setting up polio booths in every nook and corner reduces the

time and energy that a person would have had to use in order to travel if the booth was centrally located at a faraway place.

Wiebe's Analysis, which is an additional contribution in the attempt to understand the differential effectiveness of social campaigns, is an extension to the 4ps discussed above. He explained the relative effectiveness of these campaigns in terms of the audience member's experience with regard to five factors:

1. **The Force.** The intensity of the person's motivation toward the goal as a combination of his predisposition prior to the message and the stimulation of the message.
2. **The Direction.** Knowledge of how or where the person might go to consummate his motivation.
3. **The Mechanism.** The existence of an agency that enables the person to translate his motivation into action.
4. **Adequacy and Compatibility.** The ability and effectiveness of the agency in performing its task.
5. **Distance.** The audience member's estimate of the energy and cost required to consummate the motivation in relation to the reward.

To show how these factors operate, Wiebe first analyzed the Kate Smith campaign to sell bonds during World War II. This campaign was eminently successful, according to Wiebe, because of the presence of force (patriotism), direction (buy bonds), mechanism (banks, post offices, telephone orders), adequacy and compatibility (so many centers to purchase the bonds), and distance (ease of purchase). In fact, extra telephone lines were in-stalled on the night of the campaign at 134 CBS stations to take orders during her appeal. The effort to buy bonds.(Wiebe, 1951-52)

Thus, we see that it is important to break it into pieces and develop the strategy before marketing a social issue as a whole. It is, all the more, challenging to plan out all the Ps of marketing in social marketing as it is not simply a product we are offering, it is a change that we are expecting from the society.

5. The approaches of social marketing

Social marketing not only differs from marketing in general, but it differs within itself on a case by case basis. Every social campaign has a different agenda and expects a different outcome. As mentioned earlier in the article, sometimes it expects subjects to stop a certain action (such as smoking, unsafe driving etc.) and sometimes it expects them to adopt a certain behaviour (such as polio vaccination, birth control measures, etc.). We, as humans, tend to accept or reject the required social change as per our perceptions or convenience. Thus, sometimes it is not enough to just inform people about the social issue, it becomes important to assure that they incorporate the desired behaviour into their lives. For this, marketers may have to adopt different approaches to launch a successful social marketing campaign. Solomon, Brehony, & Frederiksen in 2013 gave four approaches in implementing a social change through social marketing:

1. **Informational approach-** is the first approach that comes to mind when we want to market a social idea. It includes spreading primary ideas to inform people through workshops, posters, seminars etc.
2. **Economic approach-** aims at using penalties or incentives for a behavior required to be dropped or adopted, respectively. High prices of cigarettes to reduce/stop smoking, free education of girls or distributing free condoms to control population are some examples of economic approach.
3. **Legal approach-** is generally adopted when no social awakening measure works. The undesired behavior is made illegal. However, people find loopholes in laws too. Examples of legal approach in India are dowry made illegal, seat belts and helmets are mandatory during driving, etc.
4. **Technological approach-** uses technology to implement a change such as using electricity conserving technology to save energy, etc.

The approach to be adopted should be decided based on the need of the hour. Also, more than one approach may be used in certain cases. (Solomon, Brehony, & Frederiksen, 2013)

6. Conclusion

Social marketing is not just marketing. It is more complex and requires a deeper understanding of society along with the marketing techniques. It aims to achieve a perfect blend of correct marketing technique, right approach and the targeted subjects. It is important to pick the right tools for every social campaign. We have tried to narrow down the checklist of social marketing campaigns. However, which strategy to adopt remains in the hands of managers and marketers.

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