



Social marketing: A new marketing tool for social change

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Abstract

Social marketing is an approach used to develop activities aimed at changing or maintaining people's behaviour for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole. It takes the same principles used in selling commercial goods. Combining ideas from commercial marketing and the social sciences, social marketing is a proven tool for influencing behaviour in a sustainable and cost-effective way. The major areas where social marketing techniques were utilised are health promotion, injury prevention, environmental protection and community mobilisation. If the attitudes and behaviour changes we are encouraging are still not perceived as beneficial, acceptable and attainable by the priority population, it may not be worthwhile to develop a social marketing campaign at this time.

Keywords: social marketing, commercial marketing, behaviour, society, people

1. Introduction

Social marketing is an approach used to develop activities aimed at changing or maintaining people's behaviour for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole. It seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good. It also seeks to integrate research, best practice, theory as well as audience and partnership insight. Its goal is to deliver competition sensitive and segmented social change programs that are effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable (International Social Marketing Association, 2013) [7]. The term 'social marketing' was coined by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971 [8] and they defined it as "the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research." They conclude that "social marketing appears to represent a bridging mechanism which links the behaviour scientist's knowledge of human behaviour with the socially useful implementation of what that knowledge allows" (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971) [8].

The Social Marketing Report defined it as the application of commercial marketing techniques to social problems. That means it take the same principles used in selling commercial goods. Combining ideas from commercial marketing and the social sciences, social marketing is a proven tool for influencing behaviour in a sustainable and cost-effective way. Social marketing is the use of commercial marketing principles and techniques to improve the welfare of people and the physical, social and economic environment in which they live. It is a carefully planned, long-term approach to changing human behaviour. The main difference between Social marketing and commercial marketing is that in the former the primary aim is social good and in the later it is financial. In the same way social marketing is using standard

commercial marketing practices to achieve non-commercial goals while the commercial marketing contribute to achievement of social good. Social marketing uses a commercial approach but for different outcomes. Below are some of the differences between social marketing and commercial marketing:

So the social marketing research is usually more thorough than commercial research because facilitating enduring individual and social behaviour change is complex. Thus commercial marketing tries to change people's change for the benefit of the marketer. But social marketing tries to change people's behaviour for the benefit of the consumer or of the society as a whole. The social marketing employs an additional "P" to the four basic principles of commercial marketing referred as the "4 Ps". These "5Ps" are

P1: Product (what we are marketing)

In social marketing the product is a behavioural change or a shift in attitude. That is people must believe that there is a problem and that the product being offered is a good solution to that problem.

P2: Price (the cost)

Here price is the cost of changing behaviours. The goal of social marketing is to reframe the recommended behaviour change so that the consumer realizes that the benefits of change outweigh the efforts or costs. As a result the price of a product can be monetary, involve time and effort and require the consumer to give something up or involve discomfort or condemnation.

P3: Place (where and how the priority population can be reached)

The place represents all efforts to make the behavioural change as easy as possible to a consumer. That is it describes the way that the product reaches the consumer.

P4: Promotion (the ways used to notify the public about the change messages)

Advertising is just one method to achieve this goal. A promotion campaign includes incorporating messages about the recommended behavioural change into all existing programs in the community in order to reinforce the message on multiple levels. The promotion channels include television, internet, radio, posters, pamphlets, direct mail, billboards, news papers etc.

P5: Policy

The intent to influence policy will not be punitive but will promote positive behavioural change.

Increasingly, social marketing is being described as having “two parents”

- Social parent: including social science and social policy approaches and
- Marketing parent: including commercial and public sector marketing approaches (Aiden, 2010) [14].

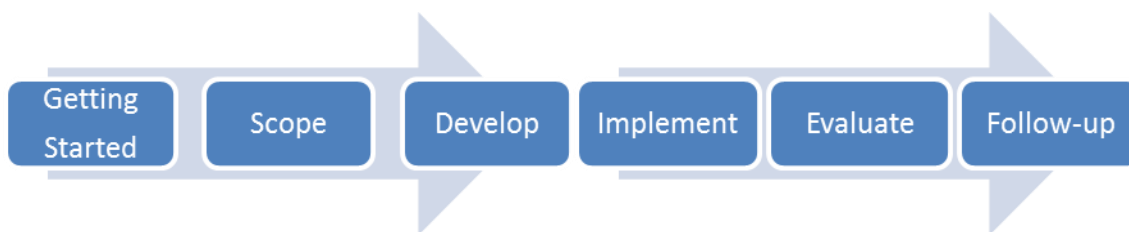


Recent years have also witnessed a broader focus in social marketing beyond the influences on and changing individual behaviour, to socio-cultural and structural influences on social issues (Jeff & Ross, 2015) [4]. Consequently, social marketing scholars are beginning to advocate for a broader definition of social marketing, beyond behavioural change, which is equally concerned with the effects (efficiency and effectiveness) and the process (equity, fairness and sustainability) of social marketing programs (Saunders, Barrington & Sridharan, 2015) [13]. It helps to decide:

- Which people to work with
- What behaviour to influence
- How to go about it and
- How to measure it

Craig Lefebvre and June Flora (1988) outlined eight essential

It has six steps like



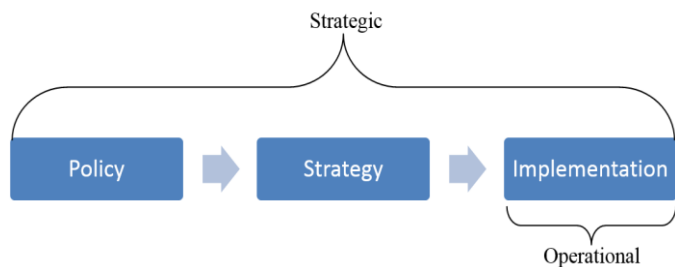
components of social marketing:

- A consumer orientation to realize organizational (social) goals
- An emphasis on the voluntary exchanges of goods and services between providers and consumers
- Research in audience analysis and segmentation strategies
- The use of formative research in product and message design and the pretesting of these materials
- An analysis of distribution (or communication) channels
- Use of the marketing mix-using and blending product, price, place and promotion characteristics in intervention planning and implementation
- A process tracking system with both integrative and control functions
- A management process that involves problem analysis, planning, implementation and feedback functions.

Social marketing is not the same as social media marketing. But now there is a distinction between strategic social marketing and operational social marketing. Strategic social marketing identifies that social change requires action at the individual, community, socio-cultural, political and

environmental level, and that social marketing can and should influence policy, strategy and operational tactics to achieve pro-social outcomes (Jeff & Ross, 2015) [4]. But in the operational social marketing it includes only the implementation stage. The peculiarity is that in all these stages

social marketing become the key element. That is



Through social marketing, policy goals become realistic and achievable by making use of understanding of people's lives. Likewise in the case of strategy, social marketing enables cost effectiveness and best impact over time. But in the implementation stage products, services and communications that fit people's needs and motivations can be developed with the help of social marketing process. Usually social marketing uses a series of techniques and approaches to change people's behaviour in a clearly defined and positive way. These techniques are commonly known as a 'marketing mix'. The main aim of these techniques are to achieve a particular 'social good', rather than commercial benefits - even though it uses many of the same methods as commercial advertising and marketing. The National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) has identified eight National Benchmark Criteria as a checklist for marketing campaigns. They are:

- **Customer Orientation:** Put the customer at the centre of all decision-making processes.
- **Insight:** Use research to identify 'actionable insights'. These are key pieces of understanding that will underpin our programme development.
- **Behavioural Goals:** Aim to change people's actual behaviour rather than just their attitudes by setting out clear measurable behavioural goals with timescales.
- **Segmentation:** Identify audience 'segments' which have common characteristics and tailor interventions appropriately.
- **Exchange:** Consider both the benefits and the costs of encouraging people to adopt a new behaviour. This will help to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs to create an attractive exchange.
- **Competition:** Find out what competes for audience's time, attention and inclination to change. Work with or learn from the competition.
- **Methods Mix:** Use a mix of methods to bring about behaviour change, including education, support, control and design techniques.
- **Theory:** Use behavioural theories to understand human behaviour and inform programmes.

In a nutshell for the social marketing campaign we have to identify what behaviour we want to change, whose behaviour we want to change, what barriers to change and reduce the barriers to change. In addition we have to preset our ideas on a small number of people and publicize both the benefits of change and our efforts to make change easier in a way that will draw people to take advantage of our efforts.

Stages of a Successful Social Marketing Effort

A successful social marketing effort includes the following stages:

- **Create awareness and interest:** For that the recipient must get the message literally
- **Change attitudes and conditions:** The recipient has to develop a positive attitude or positive frame of mind about the behaviour which we intent to change.
- **Motivate people to want to change their behaviour:** The recipient has to form an intention to act on the basis of that attitude.
- **Empower people to act:** The recipient has to act i.e., convert that intention into action.
- **Prevent Backsliding:** The recipient's action must be followed by reinforcement, by the provision of some benefit for having acted, so that the desired action will be repeated

Social marketing is also being explored as a method for social innovation, a framework to increase the adoption of evidence-based practices among professionals and organizations, and as a core skill for public sector managers and social entrepreneurs. It is being viewed as an approach to design more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable approaches to enhance social well-being that extends beyond individual behaviour change to include creating positive shifts in social networks and social norms, businesses, markets and public policy (Lefebvre, 2013) ^[11].

Applications

Social marketers typically attempt to encourage their target audience to partaken in four types of behaviour change. They are

- Accept a anew behaviour
- Reject a potentially undesirable behaviour
- Modify a current behaviour and
- Abandon an undesirable behaviour

The major areas where social marketing techniques were utilised are health promotion, injury prevention, environmental protection and community mobilisation. The first documented evidence of the deliberate use of marketing to address a social issue comes from 1963 Reproductive Health program led by K.T. Chandy at the IIM, Calcutta in India (Chandy, *et al.*, 1965) ^[3]. The cultural and regulatory environments of the target audience must be taken into account while conducting social marketing campaigns in order to maximise effectiveness. This is because these cultural and regulatory environments have strong influence upon these social marketing campaigns. Examples for campaigns which considered the cultural and regulatory environments of the target audience are hepatitis B campaign in China, anti-HIV/AIDS case study in Mexico, anti-dengue campaign in Singapore etc.

The social marketing campaigns systematically apply the marketing and other concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioural goals for a social good. So, asking people not to smoke in public places and use seat belts while driving are included in the social marketing campaigns. In India,

especially in Kerala we largely use social marketing for health promotion and AIDS awareness programmes. For that professionally trained social workers are working. The important social marketing campaigns in India includes anti-tobacco campaigns, anti-drug campaigns, anti-pollution campaigns, road safety campaigns, anti-dowry campaigns, protection of girl child campaign, campaign against the use of plastic bags and green marketing campaign.

Advantages of Social marketing

If it is used properly social marketing can be a new marketing tool. The beneficial effects can be tremendous but must be used in the most efficient possible way. The distinct advantages of social marketing, which make it vital tools to any marketing campaign, are promotes consumption of socially desirable products, promotes health consciousness in people and helps them adopt a healthier lifestyle, it helps in green marketing initiatives, it helps to eradicate social evils that affect the society and quality of life, one of the cheapest ways of marketing and any one can take advantage of it, even from their home. Now the advantages of social marketing can be generalised as

- It helps to reach the target audiences we want to reach
- It helps to customise our message to those targeted audiences and
- It helps to create greater and longer lasting behaviour change in those audiences

Thus we can say that we are depending on the social marketing approach in this modern age because it

- Impacts a significant portion of the priority population
- Facilitates active behaviour change over a period of time
- Stimulates change with limited resources
- Develops creative ideas
- Community partnerships become assets that compensate for limited funds
- Elevates the voice of the priority population and increases community identification and
- Influences policy and promotes positive social change

But this social marketing approach is not free from limitations. The major limitation is that if the attitudes and behaviour changes we are encouraging are still not perceived as beneficial, acceptable and attainable by the priority population, it may not be worthwhile to develop a social marketing campaign at this time. In this situation, it is better to introduce a behaviour change recommendation by developing connections with community and agreeing on a unified goal before planning a social marketing campaign. As a result, all social marketing campaigns are not effective everywhere. For example, anti-smoking campaigns such as World No Tobacco Day while being successful in curbing the demand for tobacco products in North America and in parts of Europe, have been less effective in other parts of the world such as China, India and Russia (Fedyashin, 2009) ^[2].

Conclusion

Social marketing is fairly new term in the health and development fields. It helps individual and society as whole to live better lives. The goal of it is always to change or maintain how people behave. It does not consider what people think or

how aware they are about an issue. That means we are not doing social marketing when our goal is only to increase awareness or knowledge or change attitudes. Thus to achieve and sustain behaviour change with the target audience social marketing approach should be used.

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