

Social Marketing : A Communication Tool For Development

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Social Marketing: Conceptual Framework

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. Kotler and Andreasen define social marketing as "differing from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organization. Social marketing seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society." Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing concepts and techniques to target populations to achieve the goal of positive social change.

Social marketing uses commercial marketing tools to "sell" products and ideas for the public good. The key to a successful social marketing campaign is learning what will work with the target population. This is far more effective than simply telling people what they "should do." The target population is more likely to adopt a desired behavior if we assess and subsequently try to change their attitudes toward the behavior, their perceptions of benefits of the new behavior, and their perceptions of how they think their peers will view their behavior.

Social marketing relies on commercial marketing's conceptual framework to guide program development and implementation. This framework places consumers at the center of an exchange process in which they act primarily out of self-interest attempting to maximize the ability to satisfy wants and needs and minimize the cost to do so. Social marketing identifies consumer wants and needs and then develops ways to satisfy them. Social marketing may be used to get people to adopt new protective behaviors such as healthful diets or exercise, or to stop practicing risky behaviors such as smoking. The product may also be a service such as prenatal care or immunization, with the objective being to increase people's utilization of the service. A commodity, such as a condom, may also be promoted, but again the focus is on the behavior associated with the commodity.

Social Marketing Vs. Commercial Marketing

The primary 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 behaviour 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 it's 'primary' focus on 'social good', and it is not a secondary outcome.

Public sector bodies can use standard marketing approaches to improve the promotion of their relevant services and organisational aims, this can be very important, but should not be confused with 'social marketing' where the focus is on achieving specific behavioural goals with specific audiences in relation to different topics relevant to social good (eg: health, sustainability, recycling, etc).

Also, whereas commercial marketing often aims at a comparatively simple influence over its target market, social marketing goals can be far more subtle and complex. A commercial

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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.

It is sometimes felt that social marketing is restricted to a particular spectrum of client -the non-profit 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 organisation-centred. 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." (Andreasen, 1995 p. 11).

Both commercial and social marketing uses a combination of influence factors to bring about change.

The Social Marketing Approach

Social marketing is distinguished from other management approaches by six basic principles:(1) the marketing conceptual framework is used to design behavior change interventions; (2) there is recognition of competition; (3) there is a consumer orientation; (4) formative research is used to understand consumers' desires and needs; (5) there is a segmentation of populations and careful selection of target audiences; and (6) continuous monitoring and revision of program tactics help to achieve desired outcomes.

The **PRECEDE Module**, developed by Green and Kreuter (1991), suggests that individuals need to be considered in the context of their community and society as a whole when social marketing strategies are developed. Individuals are influenced by

- Predisposing factors—knowledge, attitudes, behavior, beliefs, and values prior to intervention that affect their willingness to change
- Enabling factors—the structure of the environment or community and the individual's situation that facilitate or present obstacles to change
- Reinforcing factors—the positive or negative effects of adopting the behavior that influences continuing the behavior.

Diffusion of Innovation

Diffusion of innovation (idea/service in case of social marketing) is a process outlined by Rogers (1983) by which an innovation (e.g., new idea, approach, strategy) is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. In other words, diffusion is concerned with spreading new ideas. The characteristics of an innovation as perceived by members of a social system determine its rate of adoption. Whether the message is accepted (or the behaviour adopted) depends upon whether the recipients:

- perceive it as beneficial;
- see it as in accordance with their needs and values;
- find it easy or difficult to understand or adopt;
- can try the behaviour;
- feel that the results of the trial or acceptance are viewed positively by their peers.

Social Marketing (Proposed Model)

For Social Marketing there has to be a **consumer centric approach**. People must perceive their real needs and identify their real problems. This is only possible through proper participation and communication.

The key components of the Social Marketing Model are:

1. Needs Assessment of Consumer

Needs Assessment - Gaps Analysis is important i.e.

- What the audience **should know/would** like to know?
- What the audience actually does know?
- What is the **GAP**?

A central principle in the social marketing mindset is a commitment to understand the consumer and to design products to satisfy consumers' wants and needs. Those applying social marketing methods need to know about the people whose behavior they want to change—their aspirations and values; their relevant beliefs and attitudes; and their current behavioral patterns. They also look at the broader social and cultural factors that influence consumer behavior, recognizing that behavioral change is influenced by a combination of environmental as well as personal and interpersonal factors.

Unfortunately, many people still incorrectly equate marketing with sales and advertising. Marketing's consumer orientation is actually the antithesis of a sales orientation. In contrast to the belief that sales-stimulating devices are needed to bring results, a consumer orientation requires program planners to understand and respond to consumers' desires and needs. The social marketing approach seeks ways to design services and develop behavioral recommendations that are compatible with consumers' values and beliefs. In contrast to top-down, expert-driven approaches, social marketing attempts to create interventions that enable the target audience to solve problems and realize the dreams that people consider important.

Social marketers believe that the behaviors being promoted should contribute to the consumers' and society's well-being.

2. Consumer Research

A consumer orientation requires an examination of consumer perceptions of product benefits, product price, the competition's benefits and costs, and other factors that influence consumer behavior. Marketing healthful behavior relies on the social and behavioral sciences to guide formative research and subsequent program design.

Program planners use consumer research findings to identify the factors to address in promoting behavior change to the people they hope to reach.

3. Audience Segmentation

Another distinguishing feature of social marketing is audience segmentation. Audience segmentation is the process of dividing a population into distinct groups based on characteristics that influence their responsiveness to interventions. Segmentation may be used to identify subgroups. They can realistically be reached with available resources or to determine the best way to reach particular groups. Segments may differ in terms of the benefits they find most attractive, the price they are willing to pay, the best place to communicate with them or to locate services, or their differential responsiveness to promotional tactics.

Use combination of behavioral, attitudinal, and demographic data.

4. Social Marketing (Marketing & Communication) Mix

The Four P's of marketing i.e **Product, Price, Place, Promotion** are very much relevant in case of Social marketing. Besides, Four more P's can be added i.e **Partnership, Policy, Politics** and **Participation by audience** (communication). Besides, it is also important to gauge the **Competition**. If this Marketing and Communication mix is followed by a positive approach, goals can be met effectively and behaviour change is bound to occur.

a. Product

Product is the knowledge, attitudes, or behavior you want the target audience to adopt. The product can be an idea such as not using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. The product could also be an actual related commodity such as seeds for a substitute cash crop such as wheat or corn, or a nicotine substitute to help smokers quit.

The exchange for such program benefits is “costs” which may be intangible (e.g., changes in beliefs or habits) or tangible (e.g., money, time, or travel)

Product Must Be:

- Congruent with the recipient’s values, beliefs, practices & needs. (It is important to make the participants understand the importance of message or service being talked about so that they realize its need.)
- Solution to a problem
 - Benefits
 - Unique
 - Competitive

b. Price

Price is what audience members must give up to receive the program’s benefits. This price is usually something more abstract than money. The perceived benefits must outweigh the price. The key is to determine the appropriate price, with the help of your target audience (i.e participation).

The cost of adopting the product could be:

- Money
- Time
- Pleasure
- Loss of self esteem
- Embarrassment
- Psychic hassle
- Physical trauma
- Others

c. Place or Channels

Place describes the way the product reaches the consumer. The place could be tangible in terms of a retail outlet or intangible in terms of information delivered through a communication channel. Research is conducted to identify the places that consumer's frequent so that products and information can be placed there. Social marketing also identifies when and where a target audience will be most receptive to promotional messages i.e.

- Where is the behavior practiced?
- Where are the decisions made?
- Where people will act?

Important Considerations for Place:

Some of the important considerations for place include:

- Will the product be available at the place you have instructed people to go/call? Will there be enough to meet the demand?
- Is the place easy to use/access?
- Is the channel you have chosen for your message appropriate for that audience?
- Have you chosen the right time for your message to be delivered?

d. Promotion

Promotion is the means for persuading the target audience that the product is worth this price. It may include a publicity campaign through the mass media but it can also involve teaching life skills or community activities. (Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, 1988)

To be effective, promotional strategies must be carefully coordinated with other components of the marketing mix. Promotional efforts cannot succeed if the product's benefits, price, and placement are not also in line with the people's wants and needs.

Promotion creates and sustains demand and may use a combination of advertising, public relations, promotions, media advocacy, personal selling, etc.

e. **Partnership**

The social marketing organization can enhance its programme effectiveness by teaming up with other organizations pursuing similar goals. Eg. AIDS awareness programme can be jointly worked by WHO, NACO, UNAIDS and various non-government organization.

f. **Policy**

Certain policy changes are essential to ensure an environment conducive for sustaining social change in the long run. Eg. Tax exemptions allowed for donations to voluntary organizations, providing special increments for undergoing tubectomy or vasectomy.

g. **Politics**

The social marketer often has to deal with groups other than the target audience, mobilize support and pre-empt resistance. Religious leaders and organizations, village heads or community leaders may be permission granting groups whose approval is necessary. Further, their participation enhances the pace with which the required critical mass is influenced in order to trigger social change faster.

h. **Participation**

Participation is the key component as only that message works which is aligned with consumers needs & wants. Their participation is required from deciding of product, price, place & promotion.

i. **Competition**

- What competes with your product?
- How can you position your product to be more competitive?
- What image does it have among consumers?
- Can you enhance benefits?
- Can you lower costs?

5. Develop and Pre-test your material

- Develop message statements and concepts. Message concepts include its presentation style, the spokesperson or source, and the slogan or other essential words or symbols.
- A message can appeal to a variety of emotions and perceptions such as logic and reason, self-esteem, fear, and patriotism. Design the message to appeal to a variety of emotions and perceptions.
- Use an engaging style.
- Vocabulary, tone, and appeal should make the target audience feel that this message is meant for them.

Pre-testing assesses the audience's response to the campaign. It measures recall, comprehension, and reaction - Is the message believable? It is relevant? Acceptable? What are the strong points? The weak points?

Pre-testing methods include:

- **Focus groups**—Small groups of 8 to 12 people who meet with a moderator to discuss ideas and materials. Focus groups are especially helpful in the early stages of materials development to test themes, images, and general issues.
- **Interviews**—In-depth interviews can be used to gauge an individual's reactions to a sensitive issue and/or specific materials.
- **Central-location-intercept interviews**—These interviews are held in public areas where members of the target population congregate. These areas include shopping malls, movie theaters, schools, and churches. Questions are designed for quick answers that are easily tabulated.
- **Theater testing**—Many people in the same location view messages (such as public service announcements) embedded in other programming.

- **Self-administered questionnaires**—(mailed or delivered) This method provides access to people in rural areas or those who are not likely to attend focus groups or to be in areas for central-location-intercept interviews.
- **Readability testing**—Used to gauge the reading levels of materials. One widely used formula uses both sentence length and syllable counts to estimate reading levels.

6. Implementation

Promote and distribute the idea through all chosen channels.

7. Continuous Monitoring and Revision

Social marketing also relies on continuous program monitoring to assess program efficacy in encouraging the desired behavior changes. Monitoring also aids in identifying activities that are effective and those that are not, and in making midcourse corrections in program interventions. The process and impact evaluations identify components that are working and those that should be discontinued, and social marketing devotes considerable resources to this activity. There are constant checks with target audiences to gauge their responses to all aspects of an intervention, from the broad marketing strategy to specific messages and materials.

8. Evaluation

Evaluation is an ongoing process that enables planners to discover strengths and weaknesses and to refine the product. It is done to determine what has worked well based on the goals and objectives established at the beginning of the program. It also assesses how the program affected the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the target population.

Four types of evaluation are generally used:

- Formative evaluation includes pre-testing of materials and is designed to test for program strengths and weaknesses before implementation.
- Process evaluation reviews the tasks of implementing the program. It tracks program activities. It answers questions such as - Did we do well? What do we need to improve? How do we improve?
- Outcome evaluation describes the program's immediate effects. It answers such questions as, Did the target population show any measurable changes in behavior, attitude, knowledge, or perception? Did their awareness of alcohol and other drug problems increase?
- Impact evaluation focuses on the long-term outcomes of the program. It answers such questions as, what effect has the program had on the community? How have the beliefs and behaviors of the target populations been influenced? What changes have occurred in how community members think about the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs?

The design, development, and analysis of both outcome and impact evaluations require the skills of a trained professional.

9. Feedback/Reconsideration

If the feedback turns out to be positive then the idea/service may be replicated to separate target audience or separate locale may be chosen. In case any faults are pointed out then they may be rectified.

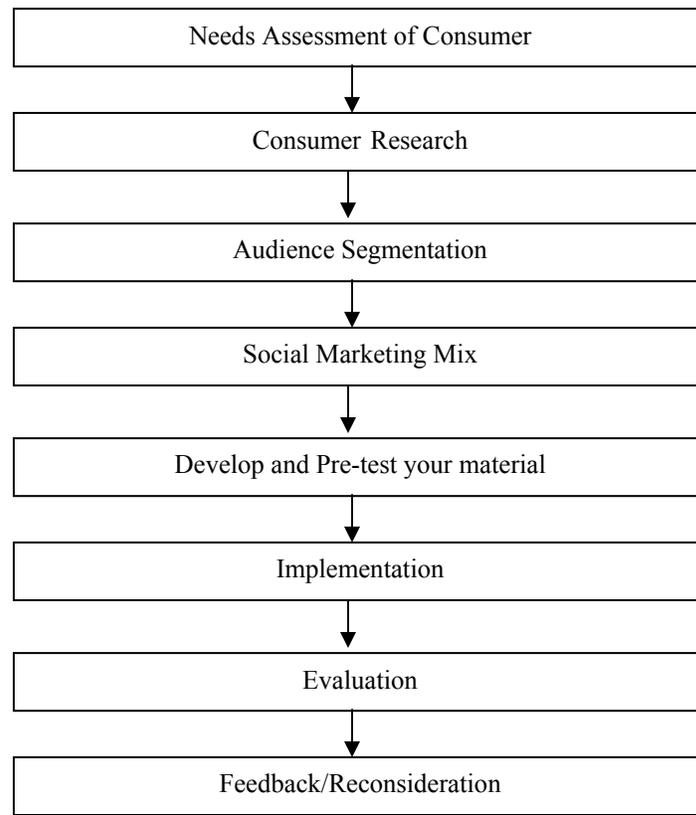


Fig. 1. Proposed Model of Social Marketing

Potential of Social marketing

Effective social marketing/communications can

- Raise awareness
- Increase knowledge
- Influence attitudes
- Show benefits of behavior change
- Reinforce knowledge, attitudes, and behavior
- Demonstrate skills
- Prompt an immediate action
- Increase demand for services
- Refute myths and misconceptions
- Influence norms
- Raise the volume of the public health voice.

To conclude, it can be said that Social Marketing has a major role to play in the developing countries where there are several problems. People first need to be sensitized so that they become aware of their problem and once they realize that the problem exists then only they can work for it. Thus, there is a need to use a combination of marketing and communication mix emphasizing much on participatory communication.

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