

Socially responsible marketing



Drawing on the readings below and your own literature review outline and discuss the concept of ‘ social marketing’. How does this differ from ‘ societal marketing’ or ‘ socially responsible marketing’?.

Provide examples of each of the three approaches to marketing and comment on the extent to which these represent a departure from traditional marketing practice.

Social marketing

Nowadays, social marketing is very common in lots of places, for example government agencies, private nonprofit organizations, private for-profit firms and university. However, many people don’t know what does social marketing is and how it differs from similar fields such as communications and behavior mobilization, it is being confused with generic marketing like ‘ societal marketing’ and ‘ socially responsible marketing’. There are some practitioners are doing social advertising but they think they are doing social marketing. Even some of the literature has defined social marketing improperly. Social marketing is to understand how to influence people’s behavior in a good way and make better standard of living for human, so it is necessarily to make all these marketing concept clear and to understand them more deeply.

To discuss the concept of “ social marketing”, we first have to know the definition of it, there are different versions of definition of social marketing, the original one 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.” (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971), then, there is a revised definition is proposed by Alan R. Andreasen, he proposes the following definition:

“ Social marketing is the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part.”

His definition let the social marketers focus on the result that they influenced and keep the discipline of social marketing distinguishable for the others and also separate social marketing from the areas that is easy to fail.

The idea of social marketing is to use the same marketing principles to propoganda ideas, attitudes and behaviors as that were being used to sell products to consumers. There is confusion whether social marketing was limited to public and nonprofit marketers. Actually, they are not necessarily social marketing, this can be very important that public sector bodies to improve the promotion of their relevant services and organizational aims by using standard marketing approaches, it influence social behaviors not to benefit the social marketer, but to benefit either individuals or society as a whole in long run. There are also some private sector hold many activities aim to change beliefs, attitudes and values, but the only reason they are doing that is to increase sales by prevent change e. g. customers switching to another brand.

Social marketing can improve the behavior and life style of the public to achieve a social good, but there are some difficulties while doing it, the

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problem is not the lack of information that people receive but the confusion of getting too much different information from different sources which are inconsistent or uncoordinated. For some small firms, their managers think that they are also part of the social marketers, then it will be difficult for them to keep their eye on the bottom line – to change behavior, and also some firm get into trouble because they see the action side of social marketing instead of the planning side and also social marketing effectiveness may be limited if the marketer apply the concept wrongly, and people may blame the social marketing for failures.

To apply the social marketing concept, social marketers also need to know the key features and the “ 4P’s (product, price, place and promotion) in order to help them achieve their social marketing goals.

Key features:

Customer orientation –A key element of all forms of marketing, understand the situation of the target customer, where they start from, their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, also their background of where they live and work. It can make the progress easily and smoothly.

An exchange –Defined as an exchange of resources or values between two or more parties with the expectation of some benefits. Social marketers really have to know what is being expected of people and what is their cost to exchange, otherwise, there may be no one are willing to exchange and lead to failure of social marketing.

Long-term Planning Approach –Continuing programs for a long time instead of one-off campaigns, it should be strategic rather than tactical. Starts and finishes with research and use a long time to plan, because we have to know that behavior is not easy to change, people are used to it in their daily life, so we need to understand why people act as they do and therefore how best to support them in their life choices, therefore, we can “ reeducate” them to change their mind.

Moving Beyond the Individual Consumer –It will be pointless if we change the behavior or lifestyle of an individual consumer if they are still operating in the same environment, so, it might be very useful to change a group of people or the entire society to achieve the aim of social marketing.

How does social marketing differ from ‘ societal marketing’ or ‘ socially responsible marketing?’

Many people confuse the meaning of social marketing, societal marketing and socially responsible marketing. Social marketing is more difficult than generic marketing, because it involves changing intractable behaviors. To make it easier to distinguish social marketing from societal marketing and socially responsible marketing, it is better to know more about them.

Societal marketing

Societal marketing is a different concept for a different topic, it is an approach that company stake when they are socially responsible, they make good marketing decisions by considering first, the potential clients’ wants or needs, second, their company’s philosophy and spend and the third is at approach of launching products or services in marketing be socially

responsible. It is closely linked with the principles of corporate social responsibility and of sustainable development.

Societal marketing and social marketing should not be confused. The societal marketing concept was a pioneer of using commercial marketing strategies from sustainable marketing in integrating issues of social responsibility. On the other hand, social marketing uses commercial marketing theories, tools and techniques to social issues.

Societal Marketing actually included the concept of sustainable development and Corporate Social Responsibility, so the companies will go beyond delivering their work and products for the benefit of the consumers and the society and it is more than just having an exchange relationship with customers.

Socially responsible marketing

Socially responsible marketing is a marketing philosophy; it suggests that a company should considerate what is in the best interest of society in the present and long term. Socially responsible companies should produce desirable products fervently. Consumer's immediate gratification can obtain from this kind of products and this kind of product can also benefit consumers and society in the long term.

Special features of social marketing

There are some special features to distinguish social marketing, it is the systematic application of marketing along with other concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioral goals for a social good, it is an

over-simplification although it sometimes seen only as to achieve non-commercial goals by using standard commercial marketing practices

‘ Social good’ is the primary aim of ‘ social marketing’ and it is its first outcome while ‘ financial’ is the primary aim in ‘ commercial marketing’. But social good can still be contributed to achieve by commercial marketers. Gradually, people describe social marketing as having a ‘ social parent’ which is social sciences and social policy, and a ‘ marketing parent’ which is commercial and public sector marketing approaches.

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.”

Example of social marketing

Social marketing applies a “ customer orientated” approach, it can be applied to promotion by making the society to buy merit goods and dissuade the use of demerit goods and also to tell the society that they consider the society’s well-being as a whole, for example ask people not to smoke in public areas, reducing cigarette smoking, ask people to use seat belts, prompt them to follow speed limits, encouraging condom use etc.

Social marketing knows that commerce brings many benefits, but it can cause harm to individual and society. Tobacco is an extreme example of this, it kills half of its long term users, as Wiebe famously argued, “ you can sell brotherhood like soap”. So, ‘ social marketing’ can do the reverse like tobacco company use marketing to encourage people smoke.

Health-related social marketing is widely used in this marketing concept, it is systematical, the behavioral goal is to improve health and reduce health inequalities. There is a specialist team in the Department of Health. The Social Marketing and the team have been established to support work to integrate a social marketing approach in key work streams. For example:

- Health Trainers
- NHS LifeCheck
- Health Literacy
- Skilled for Health
- Drug Misuse
- Alcohol Misuse
- Tobacco
- Sexual Health
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- 5 A Day
- Obesity
- Health Inequalities
- Healthy Schools and Children and Young People's Public Health

Example of societal marketing

Nowadays, many organization such as MacDonald's, Unilever and Procter & gamble are following the societal marketing concept, they can give out positive message to the government, public, partners, stakeholder and their customer that they are not only working for the profits but also for the well-being of the society.

For example:

McDonald's: McDonald's stop using their one time innovative Styrofoam packaging and replaced it with a more environmentally paper packaging and bring the message that they are environmentally aware, by using their various forms of packaging to remind us not to litter and be environmental friendly.

British American tobacco Company: BAT participates in many society activities all around the world. Their societal marketing strategy is tree plantation.

Body Shop: Body Shop is a cosmetic company. All of its products use vegetable based materials. It is also against animal testing, supports community trade, activate self-esteem, defend human rights, and overall protection of the planet. It is a company that completely follows the societal marketing concept.

Societal marketing has become more and more important and profitable marketing strategy for companies. It often focused on environmental issues, but it can also focus on promoting healthy behavior while discouraging unhealthy behavior

Example of socially responsible marketing

An example of socially responsible marketing would be the advertising of alcoholic drinks when there are no rules or regulations. If a beer company is following the socially responsible marketing concept, it would avoid advertising its products to young person under the drinking age, they can

advertise their products on TV at late night or in adult magazines, then minors are less likely to see them.

Another example of socially responsible marketing is that a catalogue company uses recycled paper to make its catalogues, then this can be shown in the catalogue and it could help persuade customers that the company is environmentally conscious. By doing this, the company can gain market share by differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Social marketing represent a departure from traditional marketing practice

To a large extent social marketing is different from traditional marketing, it is depend on the type of target audience that social marketers would like to convey their message to. Following are some of the main differences between traditional marketing and social related marketing.

Improved response time in social marketing.

There is no real contact between customers and the company in traditional marketing, so if the customer got any inquiries, the company needs to go through few parties to get the answer and it lead to a slow responses but in social marketing, they usually response very quickly and some of them use auto-responders to answer customer.

Content availability.

In this modern world, it is very easy to use the internet to access information about anything and obtain any answer that consumer wants to know. In traditional marketing, the information available is only provided by the distributor from the company, and it might be fabricated.

Price

Social marketing is much cheaper than traditional marketing, because social marketing can use countless resources from the internet and different ways to advertise, educate and communicate people but traditional marketing have to pay for every single minute of every type of media such as TV advertisements, newspaper and magazines etc.

A more level playing field. In social marketing, any company in any size can compete for client with any larger company which is very difficult for traditional marketing to do so, because in social marketing there are no restriction and it is just a matter of using available resources.

The ability to changing. It is very In social marketing, it is very easy and cheap to change your message or to provide additional information regards to the product, but in traditional marketing, it is not easy for the television and radio commercials to change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social marketing is a very innovative and good idea to promote any idea in a good way, so I think government and health organization should use it more often, but government should also set up more rules and regulations of using social marketing, because there are some company use social marketing to increase their sales by encourage customers buy demerit goods e. g. make people think smoke is healthy.