Social Marketing Techniques in Health Communication

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ABSTRACT
Social marketing is an excellent apparatus for promoting public health activities and it is a systematic and strategic planning process that results in an intended practice. The main objective of social marketing is to influence the social behaviour to benefit the target audiencebut not the marketer. Thepaper analysedAndreasen's Benchmark (1994) and National Social Marketing Centre Benchmark techniques to explain how advertising and social marketing techniques can be used in health communication and the degree of influence theycan have in persuading target audience towards a changed behaviour. The paper concludedthat social marketing techniques are helpful in developing audience profiles, situation and marketing analysis, and defining health problem and potential solutions.

Keywords: Advertising, Social Marketing, Techniques, Health Communication

Background

Advertising and social marketing play a vital role in dispatching messages to the world. Social marketing aims at developing and integrating marketing concepts with other approachesin orderto influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good. The "social" in social marketing is not related to its use of social media, but to the primary aim of social marketing which is to achieve "social good" and bring about social change. In public health, social marketing campaigntargets specific behaviour change component which is in contrast to traditional or commercial marketing where the aim is primarily financial gain.

Social marketing campaign uses multiple media channels like social media tools, traditional media (billboards, radio, TV, etc.), events,

and promotional materials, to reach a target audience and bring about desired behaviour change. This prompts the need for strategies of development, implementation, and evaluationof social marketing campaigns among target or potential audience even when it occurs in a participatory context. Research tools and techniques were therefore adoptedfrom marketing practicesto have greater impact. This brought about development of various theoretical concepts on how social marketing campaigns should be implemented like the Andreasen's Eight Point benchmark criteria (1994), Marketing Mix, and National Social MarketingCentre (NSMC) Benchmark. In view of these development therefore, this paper discussesthe aforementioned social marketing techniquesto explain their degree of influence in persuading target audience towards a health related changed behaviour.

Advertising and Social Marketing

Advertising differs from social marketing because the sole aim of advertising is to increase commercial profits and the demand of the consumers. Moriarty, Mitchell and Wells (2007) define advertising as: "paid persuasive communication that uses nonpersonal mass media as well as other forms of interactive communication to reach broad audiences to connect an identified sponsor with a target audience" (p. 5). Similarly, Tuten (2008) posits that ''advertising is the placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas" (p.4). Nevertheless, advertising is the primary tool to make people aware about the product or service and try to persuade people to go for the product.

The Concept of Social Marketing

The concept of social marketing was established in 1970s by Kotler and Zaltman, whentheyrealized that the principles used in

commercial marketing could alternatively be used to sell ideas and behaviours. Over the years the field of social marketing advanced and the emphasis has shifted away from raising public awareness and individual approach to long-term behaviour change and social benefit. Kotler and Zaltman (1971) were the first to define social marketing as "the design, implementation and control of programmes calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research" (p.5).

Inanother definition of social marketing, Kotler, Roberto, andLee, (2002) proposed that: "Social marketing is the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behaviour for the benefit of individuals, groups and society as a whole" (p. 5).

Andreasen (1995) incorporates the importance of planning and evaluation processes and defines social marketing as: "…the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programs designed to influence thevoluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of society" (p. 7). There are numerous other authors who have provided definitions for social marketing but the common overlapping themes across all of these definitions are that social marketing is an application of marketing principles to influence target audiences to voluntarily change their behaviour in a way that benefits both the individuals and the society as a whole.

National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) (n.d.) postulates that social marketing is a proven tool for influencing behaviour in a sustainable and cost-effective way. It helps you to decide on which people to work with, what behaviour to influence, how to go about it and how to measure it.

French, Blair-Stevens, McVey, and Merritt (2010) strengthen the above point by adding that social marketers also need to

differentiate social advertising from social marketing. They believe that social advertising campaigns are useful for raising public awareness and affecting opinions on social issues, but are often unsuccessful in producing long-term behaviour changes. Andreasen (2002) also stresses that media campaigns which are only informative in their nature (more of advert) cannot be considered as genuine social marketing campaigns.

The point is that social marketing is behaviour change and in order to achieve that the marketing campaigns must go beyond communication efforts and incorporate other elements such as considerations of the marketing mix and competition analysis into the implementation process to increase chances of behavioural change.

Techniques of Social Marketing

In order for a social marketing campaign to be successful, there are numerous techniques that can be considered during development and implementation processes of the campaign. This paper considers three social marketing techniques effective for behaviour change when it comes to health communication. The three techniques discussed are:

1. Anderson's Eight Point Social Marketing Benchmark
2. Marketing mix, and
3. National Social MarketingCentre (NSMC) Benchmark.

1. Eight-point social marketing benchmark:

The Anderson's Eight Point Social Marketing Benchmark Criteria concerns eight elements; behaviour change, audience research and implementation, theory, insight, exchange, segmentation and targeting, and marketing mix:

a) Behaviour change: The main mission of social marketing is to alter target audience's behaviour in a positive way. New

behaviour must be presented to the consumer and it must be seen as having higher value than the previous behaviour. Kotler and Lee (2011) propose that social marketers have the option to influence their target audience toward one of four behavioural changes: 1) accept a new behaviour 2) reject potentially undesirable behaviour 3) modify current behaviour or 4) abandon an old undesirable behaviour.

b) Audience research and orientation: According to Andreasen (1994), social marketers should not make assumptions about the characteristics of the target audience, but base them on formative research. Health behaviours cannot be forced upon, but they must come from within. In order for the social marketing campaigns to succeed the focus of the campaign creation process needs to be on the target audience and on their specific needs.

c) Theory: This uses behavioural theories to understand behaviour and inform the intervention. For instance, upon understanding that demand for HIV testing is linked to social norms, a social marketing strategy will develop an intervention that would apply one of a number of social learning theories to influence HIV testing behaviour.

d) Insight: Audience and market research identify "actionable insights"; pieces of understanding that will guide intervention development. For instance, The Legacy Project identified that teens typically want to rebel against authority; the project used this insight to position its anti-smoking "Truth" campaign as a way to encourage youth to rebel against big tobacco companies.

e) Exchange: In order for the process of voluntary exchange to occur, the perceived benefits of the product must outweigh the perceived costs for both parties. In social marketing the provided benefit for the target audience is usually a healthier lifestyle and the cost of participation is time or effort. The goal for social marketers is to identify what kind of

emotional appeal motivates the target audience to change their behaviour, how they can be best approached and how much they are willing to pay for participation.

f) Competition: Social marketing takes place in an open competitive environment and therefore there are always alternative options available for consumers. It is necessary to identify all actual and potential competitors and to develop strategies for dealing with them (Donovan &Henley, 2003). Competition is divided into: internal and external. Internal comprisespsychological factors influencing individual behaviour decisions (habits, lethargy, and addiction). External involvesother influences competing for audience's attention and/or promoting negative behaviours. This can include counter-productive messages from private sector e.g. alcohol producers.

g) Segmentation and targeting: One of the key resolutions in social marketing that guides the planning of most health communications is whether to deliver messages to a general audience or whether to "segment" into target audiences. Audience segmentation is usually based on socio-demographic, cultural, and behavioural characteristics that may be associated with the intended behaviour change (Evans, 2006). Furthermore, target segmentation is the process of dividing a broad heterogeneous target market into more homogeneous sub-groups, based on specific needs, attitudes, values or behaviours. Segmenting can be done using demographic factors such as: gender, income, ethnicity, etc. In health promotions, segmenting can also be done based on psychological or behavioural variables: level of health consciousness, willingness to change or current behaviour patterns (Forthofer & Bryant, 2000; Grier & Bryant, 2005).

2. Marketing Mix

The marketing mix refers to the set of actions, or tactics, that a company uses to promote its brand, product, services, or idea in the market. These include:

i. 4Ps Marketing mix and

ii. 4C's marketing mix.

i) The 4P's Marketing Mix: This makes up the initial and typical marketing mix which comprisesPrice, Product, Promotion and Place. In general, the 4P's marketing model holds thatcombining promotional strategies and how to go about it depends on budget, the message to communicate, and the target market. This is presented better in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: 4P'S Marketing Mix

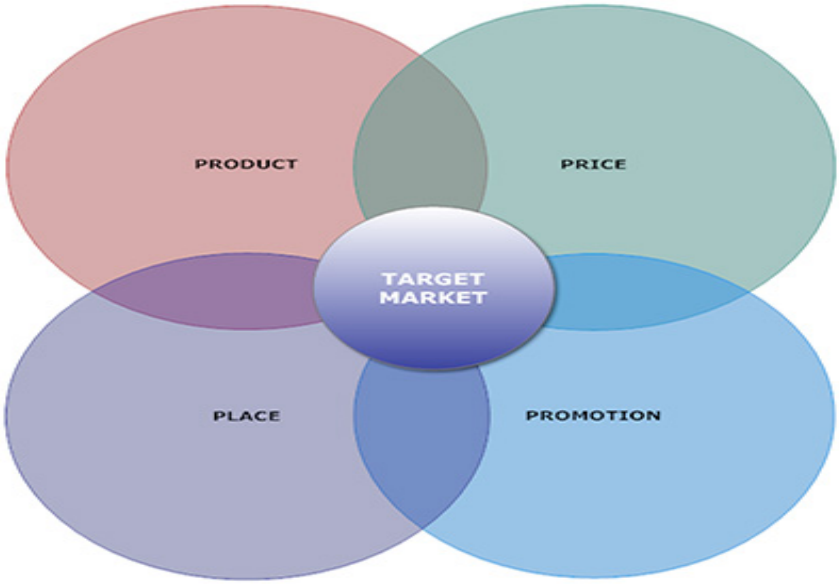

Figure one shows the 4 P's marketing mix and how they are interrelated.

a) A product is an item that is built or produced to satisfy the needs of a certain group of people.Product may be tangible (vaccinations, condoms, fruit, nicotine patches) or intangible (ideas, values, services).And in developing the right product, such questions like what does the client want from the service or product?How will the customer use it?Where will the client use it?What features must the product have to meet the client's needs?Are there any necessary features that you missed out?Are you creating features that are not needed by the client?What's the name of the product?Does it have a catchy name?What are the sizes or colours available?How is the product different from the products of your competitors?Or what does the product look like?need to be answered.
b) Price represents the cost that was paid by the consumer to access a product or service; sometimes this can involve the aggregation of the costs of obtaining the service or product (for example, the cost of transportation to reach a clinic where a family planning service is offered). Price is a very important component of the marketing mix. It is also a very important component of a marketing plan as it determines your firm's profit and survival. Adjusting the price of the product has a big impact on the entire marketing strategy as well as greatly affecting the sales and demand of the product. This is inherently a touchy area though. If a company is new to the market and has not made a name for them yet, it is unlikely that your target market will be willing to pay a high price. Also here, some important questions like how much did it cost to produce the product? The customers' perceived product value, If the slight price decrease could significantly increase your market share, and If the current price of the product keep up with the price of the product's competitors need to be asked when setting the product price.
c) Place refers to the channel where the product or service is available and accessed by a consumer. Examples include a health centre, pharmacy, retail outlet, or community based

distribution agent. Placement or distribution is a very important part of the marketing mix. You have to position and distribute the product in a place that is accessible to potential buyers. This comes with a deep understanding of your target market. The questions that are answeredin developing distribution strategy include: where the clients should look for your service or product, the kind of stores do potential clients goes to, how to access the different distribution channels, how the distribution strategy is different from competitors, and whether there is a need for a strong sales force.

d) Promotion: Refers to the means, tools, and channels used to communicate the benefits of the change using interpersonal communication, advertising, public relations, media, advocacy, information materials, word of mouth, or direct mail. In creating an effective product promotion strategy, the following questions are also asked: How will marketing messages be sent to potential buyers? When is the best time to promote the product? How can the potential audience and buyers be reached? What is the promotion strategy of the competitors?

ii. 4C's Marketing Mix

The 4Cs Marketing Model, as developed by Robert F. Lauterborn (1994), is an extension and modern marketing mix. Itincludes cost, consumer, communication and convenience also presented better in Figure 2 as follows:

Figure 2: 4C's Marketing Mix

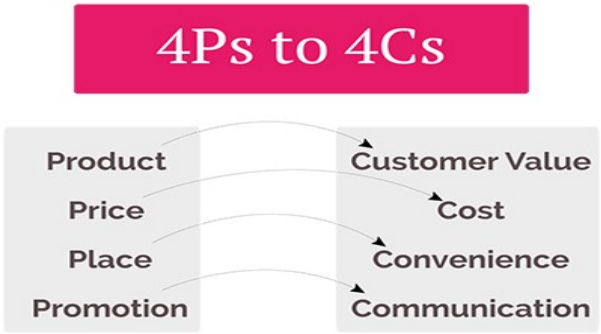

Figure 2, concerning 4C Marketing mix, shows how products, price, place and proportions inter-relates with consumer value, cost, convenience and communication.

a) Products are significant indicators for customer values.

b) Price relates to cost which is not only incurred when purchasing a product but cost of morality or opportunity in respect to product ownership.

c) Place relates to convenience**,** which meansthe ability of producers to make products/messages readily available to the consumers. This is by strategically placing the products in several visible distribution points.

d) Promotion relates to use of communication more cooperative in nature. Marketers use communication to create an open dialogue with potential clients based on their needs and wants.

3. The National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC)Benchmark

The NSMC Benchmark is also a social marketing technique which has been proven to change behaviour. It provided eight (8) steps to achieving that as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: NSMC Benchmark Criteria

Benchmark	**Description**

1. Behaviour Change	Aim of a social marketing campaign is to change people's behaviour (not to inform or change beliefs) Interventions should have clear and measurable behavioural goals.
2. Customer Orientation/Audience Research	Various data collection and research methods should be used, in order to fully understand the target audience and their needs.
3. Theory	Use ofbehavioural theories to understand behaviour and inform the intervention.
4. Insight	Audience and market research identify "actionable insights"; pieces of understanding that will guide intervention development.
5. Exchange	Potential benefits and costs of adopting a new behaviour need to be considered (costs can be tangible/intangible). Motivation for the exchange process must be provided.
6. Competition	Competing messages need to be identified and actively countered in order to ensure the target audience's attention.
7. Segmentation	Based on audience research, different target audience segments should be identified and suitable marketing methods tailored to the selected segments.
8. Marketing Mix	Uses all the elements of the marketing mix (product, place, price, promotion) should be considered during the product/service development.

Source: National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC)

Social Marketing and Health Communication

Social marketing benefits to society in general or to the target audience in particularcan be impacted in many ways. Some ways as identified by Cheng, Kotler, and Lee (2011) includefour major areas which all concernhealth promotion, injury prevention, environmental protection, and community mobilization.

a) Health promotionaccording to him relates tobehavioural issues that could be changed or prevented for a healthy life style. This include messages about tobacco use, heavy/binge drinking, obesity, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, fruit and vegetable intake, high cholesterol, breastfeeding, cancers, birth defects, immunizations, oral health, diabetes, blood pressure, and eating disorders.

b) Injury prevention also relates to behavioural issues in the aspect of prevention which is believed to be better than cure. In this aspect the concern is to help market to people how to behave in a manner that will ensure their safety. Messages that usually comeunder this category include dangers of drinking and driving, use of seatbelts in cars, proper safety restraints for children in cars, suicide, drowning, domestic violence, gun storage, school violence, fires, injuries or deaths of senior citizens caused by falls, and household poisons.

c) Environmental protection in particular revolves around behavioural issues concerning the environment in which we live. The messages are targeted at issues of waste reduction, wildlife habitat protection, forest destruction, toxic fertilizers and pesticides, water conservation, air pollution from automobiles and other sources, composting garbage and yard waste, unintentional fires, energy conservation, litter (such as cigarette butts), and watershed protection.

d) Community mobilization which concerns behavioural issues that aimed at bringing out consciousness and concern, and

empathy among people to act and contribute their part as a group and members of the society for their or other members' health betterment. This relates to mobilisation of members on a particular course such as organ donation, blood donation, voting, literacy, identity theft, and animal adoption (Kotler & Lee, 2011).

Conclusion

Social marketing's major contribution to health communication is in its component as a systematic audience-centered and market-driven approach to programme research. It is particularly helpful in developing audience profiles, situation and marketing analysis, as well as defining the health problem and potential solutions. In the course of analysing the social marketing techniques, this paper found it obvious that social marketing in the health context can be quite helpful and proves to have more impact on changed behaviour. Also observed is that social marketing technique has been used is solving health problems such as reducing AIDS risk, preventing teen smoking, promoting family planning, breastfeeding, childhood immunization, physical exercise and good nutrition.

The study therefore recommendsthat social marketing techniques in health promotion should be adopted by health communicators so as to ensure:

1. Health policies are based on understanding of the people's lives in order to realise and achieve goals.
2. Resources are targeted at cost-effectively.
3. Best interventions that have the best impact over time are selected.
4. Products, services and communications that fit people's needs and motivations are developed.

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