Lecture 2 Friday Sept., 5 2014

WHAT IS SOCIAL MARKETING?

Generally, Social marketing is the use of business marketing concepts and techniques to change behavior for the betterment of society.

*Origin:*

1980s

The World Bank, World Health Organization, and Centers for Disease Control start to use the term and promote interest in social marketing.

1981: An article in the *Journal of Marketing* by Paul Bloom and William Novelli reviews the first 10 years of social marketing and highlights the lack of rigor in the application of marketing principles and techniques in critical areas of the field, including research, segmentation, and distribution channels.

1988: An article in the *Health Education Quarterly*, “Social Marketing and Public Health Intervention” by R. Craig Lefebvre and June Flora, gives social market­ing widespread exposure in the field of public health.

1989: A text by Philip Kotler and Eduardo Roberto, *Social Marketing: Strategies for Changing Public Behavior*, lays out the application of marketi

*Social marketing* is a distinct marketing discipline, one that has been labeled as such since the early 1970s and refers primarily to efforts focused on influencing behaviors that will improve health, prevent injuries, protect the environment, contribute to communities, and, more recently, enhance financial well-being. Several definitions from social marketing “veterans” are listed in Box 1.1, beginning with one we have adopted for use in this text. It seems clear there are several common themes. Social marketing is about (a) influencing behaviors, (b) utilizing a systematic planning process that applies marketing principles and techniques, (c) focusing on priority target audience segments, and (d) delivering a positive benefit for society. Each of these themes is elaborated upon in the next four sections.

*Definitions From a Few Social Marketing Veterans*

Social Marketing is a process that uses marketing principles and techniques to influence target audience behaviors that will benefit society as well as the individual. This strategically oriented discipline relies on creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have positive value for individuals, clients, partners, and society at large.

Nancy R. Lee, Michael L. Rothschild, and Bill Smith, 2011

Social Marketing is the application of commercial marketing concepts and tools to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences to improve their lives or the society of which they are a part.

Alan Andreasen, 2011

Social Marketing 2.0, more specifically, is the systematic application of interactive marketing principles and techniques that harness audience participation to deliver value and achieve specific behavioral goals for a social good.

Jay Bernhardt, 2011

Social Marketing is the application of commercial marketing principles and tools where the primary goal is the public good.

Rob Donovan, 2011

Social Marketing is a set of evidence- and experience-based concepts and principles that provide a systematic approach to understanding behaviour and modifying it for social good. It is not a science but rather a form of ‘technik’; a fusion of science, practical know-how, and reflective practice focusing on continuously improving the performance of programmes aimed at producing net social good.

Jeff French, 2011

Social Marketing is a process that involves (a) carefully selecting which behaviors and segments to target, (b) identifying the barriers and benefits to these behaviors, (c) developing and pilot testing strategies to address these barriers and benefits, and, finally, (d) broad scale implementation of successful programs.

Doug McKenzie-Mohr, 2011

Social Marketing is a way to reduce the barriers and increase the facilitators to behaviors that improve the quality of life for individuals and society. It uses concepts and planning processes from commercial marketing to make behaviors “fun, easy, and popular.” It goes beyond communication, public service announcements, and education to give you a 360-degree view of potential causes and solutions for health and human service problems.

Mike Newton-Ward, 2011

Social Marketing is the use of marketing principles and techniques to promote the adoption of behaviors that improve the health or well-being of the target audience or of society as a whole.

Nedra Weinreich, 2011

*We Focus on Behaviors*

Similar to commercial sector marketers whose objective is to sell goods and services, social marketers’ objective is to successfully influence desired behaviors. We typically want to influence target audiences to do one of four things: (a) *accept* a new behavior (e.g., composting food waste); (b) *reject* a potentially undesirable behavior (e.g., starting smoking), which is why we refer more often to behavior influence than behavior change; (c) *modify* a current behavior (e.g., increase physical activity from three to five days of the week or decrease the number of fat grams consumed); or (d) *abandon* an old undesir­able behavior (e.g., talking on a cell phone while driving). It may be the encouragement of a one-time behavior (e.g., installing a low-flow showerhead) or the establishment of a habit and the prompting of a repeated behavior (e.g., taking a five-minute shower). More recently, Alan Andreasen suggested a fifth arena, in which we want to influence people to *continue* a desired behavior (e.g., giving blood on an annual basis), and a sixth, in which we want people to *switch* a behavior (e.g., take the stairs instead of the elevator).

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of social marketing (also its greatest contribution) is that it relies heavily on “rewarding good behaviors” rather than “punishing bad ones” through legal, economic, or coercive forms of influence. And in many cases, social market­ers cannot promise a direct benefit or immediate payback in return for adopting the proposed behavior. Consider, for example, the task of influencing gardeners to pull their dandelions instead of using harmful chemicals. It’s tough to show the healthier fish their actions helped to support. And it’s tough to convince youth who want to look good to use sunscreen so they will (maybe) avoid skin cancer later in life.

*HOW DOES SOCIAL MARKETING DIFFER FROM COMMERCIAL MARKETING?*

There are a few important differences between social marketing and commercial marketing.

In the commercial sector, the primary aim is selling goods and services that will pro­duce a *financial gain* for the corporation. In social marketing, the primary aim is influ­encing behaviors that will contribute to *societal gain.* Given their focus on financial gain, commercial marketers often favor choosing primary target audience segments that will provide the greatest volume of profitable sales. In social marketing, segments are selected based on a different set of criteria, including prevalence of the social problem, ability to reach the audience, readiness for change, and others that will be explored in depth in Chapter 6 of this text. In both cases, however, marketers seek to gain the greatest returns on their investment of resources.

Although both social and commercial marketers recognize the need to identify and position their offering relative to the competition, their competitors are very different in nature. Because, as stated earlier, the commercial marketer most often focuses on selling goods and services, the *competition is often identified as other organizations offering similar goods and services.* In social marketing, *the competition is most often the current or preferred behavior of our target audience* and the perceived benefits associated with that behavior, including the status quo. This also includes any organizations selling or promoting competing behaviors (e.g., the tobacco industry).

For a variety of reasons, we believe social marketing is more difficult than com­mercial marketing. Consider the financial resources the competition has to make smoking look cool, yard cleanup using a gas blower easy, and weed-free lawns the norm. And consider the challenges faced when trying to influence people to do any of the following:

Give up an addictive behavior (e.g., stop smoking)

Change a comfortable lifestyle (e.g., reduce thermostat settings)

Be uncomfortable (e.g., give blood)

Establish new habits (e.g., exercise five days a week)

Spend more money (e.g., buy recycled paper)

Be embarrassed (e.g., let lawns go brown in the summer)

Hear bad news (e.g., get an HIV test)

Risk relationships (e.g., take the keys from a rush driver)

Give up leisure time (e.g., volunteer)

Reduce pleasure (e.g., take shorter showers)

Give up looking good (e.g., wear sunscreen)

Spend more time (e.g., flatten cardboard boxes before putting them in recycling bins)

Learn a new skill (e.g., create and follow a budget)

Remember something (e.g., take reusable bags to the grocery store)

Risk retaliation (e.g., drive the speed limit)

Despite these differences, we also see many similarities between the social and com­mercial marketing models:

*A customer orientation is critical.* The marketer knows that the offer (product, price, place & promotion) will need to appeal *to the target audience*, solving a problem they have or satisfying a want or need.

*Exchange theory is fundamental.* The target audience must *perceive benefits that equal or exceed the perceived costs* they associate with performing the behavior. As Dr. Bill Smith often purports, we should think of the social marketing paradigm as “Let’s make a deal!”

*Marketing research is used throughout the process.* Only by *researching and under­standing the specific needs,* desires, beliefs, and attitudes of target adopters can the marketer build effective strategies.

*Audiences are segmented.* Strategies must be tailored to the unique wants, needs, resources, and current behavior of differing market segments.

*All 4Ps are considered.* A winning strategy requires an integrated approach, one utilizing all relevant tools in the toolbox, not just relying on advertising and other persuasive communications.

*Results are measured and used for improvement.* Feedback is valued and seen as “free advice” on how to do better next time.

HOW DOES SOCIAL MARKETING DIFFER FROM NONPROFIT MARKETING, PUBLIC SECTOR MARKETING, AND CAUSE PROMOTIONS?

As you will read, social marketing efforts are most often initiated and sponsored by those in the public and nonprofit sectors. However, in the nonprofit sector, marketing is more often used to support utilization of the organization’s services (e.g., ticket sales), purchases of ancillary products and services (e.g., at museum stores), volunteer recruitment, advocacy efforts, and fundraising. In the public sector, marketing activities are also used to support utilization of governmental agency products and services (e.g., the post office, community clinics) and engender citizen support and compliance. In summary, social marketing efforts are only one of many marketing activities conducted by those involved in nonprofit or public sector marketing.

Cause promotions primarily focus on efforts to raise awareness and concern for a social issue (e.g., global warming, domestic violence) but typically stop short of charging themselves with influencing specific behaviors. This change in knowledge and belief may be a necessary prelude to impacting behaviors, and social marketers may contribute to this awareness building and attitude change—but the ball their eyes will be on is whether the desired behavior was adopted.

*Group Learning Questions:*

1. *Based on the given definitions formulate a comprehensive definition of the Social Marketing (SM).*
2. *What is the major focus of SM? What are the associated key challenges?*
3. *How does SM differ from commercial and not for profit marketing?, discuss.*
4. *Based on the answers to above questions identify and select a social issue (target behavior) for your social marketing plan project.*