Social Marketing

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Abstract: Social marketing operates on the concept of changing people's behavior. It is the application of commercial marketing standard techniques to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences and improve their personal welfare and that of the society.

It is one the fastest growing forms of online marketing, but not exactly as traditional online marketing because traditional online marketing never expects listening to customers. This paper provides a brief introduction to social marketing.

Key Words: social marketing, social behavioral change, social responsibility

Introduction

The concept of social marketing was developed in the 1970s to bring about positive social changes and promote a variety of pro-social behaviors such smoking cessation, reducing drug abuse, preventing heart disease, family planning, traffic safety, and promoting contraceptive use [1]. Social marketing aims at changing the knowledge, attitudes and ultimately the behavior of individuals and groups. In an attempt to understand how to influence people's behavior, social marketing draws from many bodies of knowledge such as commercial marketing, economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and communications. Social marketing always values ethical considerations in handling every issue so that it does not have any negative consequences in the long run.

Sometime, social marketing is regarded as using standard commercial marketing practices to achieve non-commercial objectives. It is a marriage between social science approaches and commercial, public marketing approaches. Although the basic concepts are identical, the principles of social marketing differ from commercial marketing in many respects. While commercial marketing aims at changing people's behavior to benefit the marketer, social marketing aims at changing people's behavior to benefit individuals and society at large. While commercial marketing focuses on products and services, social marketing is concerned with customer behavior. Instead of selling goods or services for profit as is done in commercial marketing, the social marketer sells behaviors. Like commercial marketing, social marketing cannot spend resources lavishly. Customer satisfaction, trust, integrity, and commitment are all crucial considerations in social marketing.

Commercial organizations do not participate in social marketing. Organizations that develop and process social marketing campaigns include governments, schools, human services, safety administration, and department of health.

Basic Principles

As shown in Figure 1, the social marketing process consists of six major steps or tasks: initial planning; formative research; strategy development; program development and pretesting of material and nonmaterial interventions; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation [2].

Social marketing is based on the marketing principles which are summed up in four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion [3,4]:

- **Product:** This is what we are marketing. The product is the targeted behavior designed to meet the target audience's wants and needs. Targeted individuals must understand the problem that needs to be solved, and that the product offering is a good solution for that problem.
- **Price:** This is what the audience pays for the product. This is how much it will cost an individual to stop or take on a certain behavior. Costs and benefits can be determined through research and used in positioning the product appropriately.
- **Place:** This refers to the accessibility of the product, as well as response channels. Some channel of distribution is needed for tangible products. Social marketing efforts make it easier to change behavior by making sure the necessary supports are accessible to the most people possible.

- **Promotion:** This entails the persuasion needed to make the product familiar and desirable to the audience. It is the advertising one does in newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, etc. In recent years, advertising done through online media, such as social networking sites, is becoming increasingly popular. Just as in commercial marketing, advertising is an important component of social marketing. Promoting your social cause does not need to take a lot of money. You can do it on a local level, when you have limited resources. However, advertising social problems is a contentious issue because the potential manipulation of citizens by politicians or special interest groups through advertising is a main concern.

Social marketers combine product, price, place, and promotion to maximize product use by specific individuals and groups. However, some scholars question the relevance of the 4Ps model (also known as the marketing mix) to social marketing. The principles of marketing mix are not mutually exclusive, and most programs used a combination of marketing mix strategies. Since social marketing is service-oriented in nature, an extra p apart from the four ps is needed. The p refers to public or people whose attitude needs to be changed by the social marketing program [5]. Social marketing begins and ends with a focus on the individuals or society. Although education and persuasion can be part of a social marketing strategy, human interaction is important. By its nature, social marketing manipulates people's values.

Applications
Since the inception of social marketing in the early 1970s, social marketing applications have expanded to cover a wide range of social issues. Social marketing has been practiced in several nations including the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India. The government in the United Kingdom announced the development of its first social marketing strategy for all aspects of health in 2007. In 2010, the US national health objective was to increase the number of state health departments that use social marketing in health promotion and disease prevention programs. In developing countries, social marketing is used for to HIV prevention, control of malaria, and provision of basic health services [6].

Social marketing solves several problems in education, social engineering, health including smoking, drinking, food, drug, nutrition, gambling, family planning, and obesity, and environment such as protection of water sources, air purification, and forest protection.

Benefits and Challenges
Social marketing uses the benefits of doing social good to achieve social goals like anti-smoking campaigns. Social change requires action and commitment at the individual, community, political, and environmental levels. Social marketers may be promoting products with tangible value such as contraceptive devices for family planning or the cessation of cigarette smoking. They tend to convince individuals that the benefits of a recommended behavior exceed the costs.

Despite the benefits of social marketing, resistance by senior management, community leaders, policy makers, grant-making agencies, and others can create barriers to the use of the social marketing. The definitive challenge facing social marketers today is supporting and transforming societies to be capable, free, equitable, fair and sustainable. The six common challenges facing social marketing across the globe are [7].

(1) Equity: Equity in health status and social justice are an integral part of the social marketing.
(2) Social networks as determinants of behaviors: The role of social networks for behavioral changes is creating new opportunities.
(3) Critical marketing: Moving social marketing into public policy analysis through critical marketing studies is a vital element for the continued relevance of the field.
(4) Sustainability: This remains an elusive quality for all social change programs.
(5) Scalability: Social marketing must support scaling up programs that have been shown to be effective in promoting social causes in pilot projects.
(6) comprehensive programming or the total market approach (TMA): The TMA to the delivery of commodities and services sets out to establish equitable, efficient, sustainable and affordable services across all populations.

Conclusion
Social marketing is focused on enabling, encouraging and supporting behavior change among target audiences. It is a relatively new concept. It is a powerful means of changing behavior. It is a proven tool for influencing behavior in a sustainable and cost-effective way. Social marketing represents an attractive approach to tackling behavioral issues for governments because the governments need to simultaneously tackle the environmental, social and economic determinants of health [8]. Social marketing has been effectively and successfully applied in health behavioral change interventions. However, much remains to be done in order to

increase the knowledge and adoption of social marketing across the globe. More information on social marketing can be found in the *Journal of Social Marketing*, *Social Marketing Quarterly*, and several books on the topic in Amazon.com.

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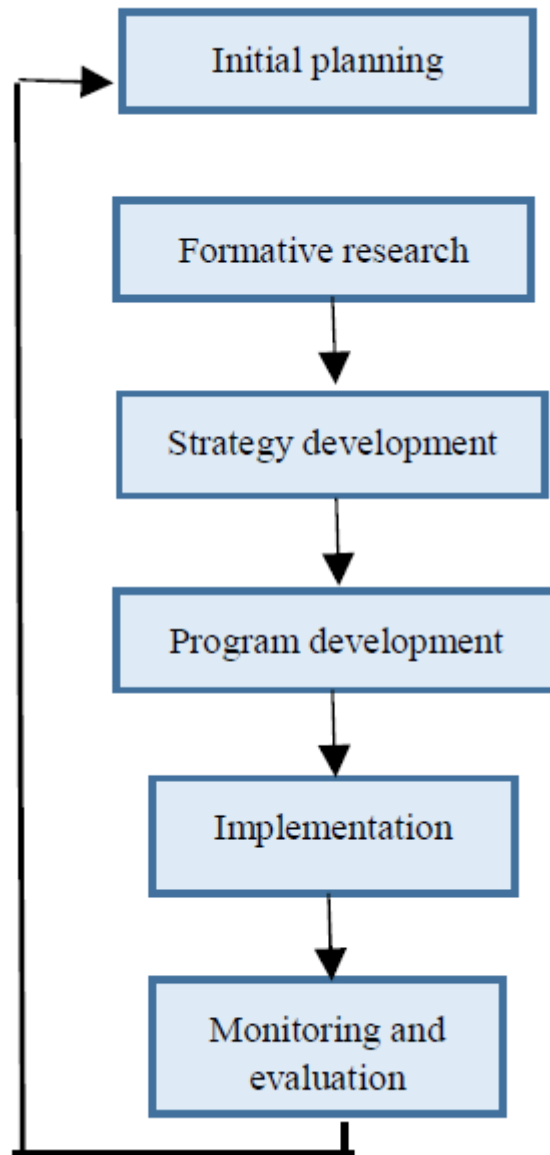
Figure 1: The social marketing theory [2].