

Social Marketing 101

What is Social Marketing?

Social Marketing uses marketing concepts and techniques and other ideas to achieve specific behavioral goals for social good. The difference between social marketing and commercial marketing is that social marketing is aimed at social good and commercial marketing is for financial gain.

The term "Social Marketing" became a formal term in 1971 when Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman promoted the use of commercial marketing principles to sell ideas, viewpoints and behaviors in their publication, "Social marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change." A good example of a current social marketing campaign is the "Green" campaign. A good example of a long-term effective social marketing campaign is the "Truth" campaign.

The core concepts of social marketing are: Research, Value Proposition and Effective Branding.

Research

To develop an effective social marketing plan, research on the target audience must be done. This research should include gathering a understanding of he wants, needs, hopes, fears, perceptions, culture, behavior, and perceived risks of the target audience as well developing and testing strategies before and after the social marketing campaign.

Value Proposition

Value proposition is a clear statement o the real results the target audience will receive from the product or service being offered. Compelling value propositions must be perceived to be worth the price, rooted in the benefits and minimizes or offers solutions to the barriers.

Effective Branding

To be effective, the social marketing campaign must have a brand and a brand strategy that creates an emotional relationship with the target audience by being credible, memorable, compelling, relevant, multi-dimensional, and successful in building long term brand loyalty.

The Five P's of Social Marketing

Although there are many concepts used in a social marketing informational campaign, the Five P's are probably the most used and known. The purpose of the Five P's is to develop a message strategy that provides the best possible "marketing mix" of **product, price, place, promotion, and positioning**.

- **Product**

The name, design, and packaging of a product or service that meets the needs of the target audience. It depicts the behavior or idea that the campaign would like the target audience to adopt.

- **Price**

The costs associated with buying the product. What does the behavior change. With most social issues price is an intangible cost such as: peer acceptance, time, effort, enjoyment and embarrassment/psychological toll.

- **Place**

This is how the product will be distributed so that it can be accessed by the target audience. When the product is a physical item, it must be easily obtainable. When it's an idea it must be socially accepted by the target audience by using research about the needs, wants, beliefs and attitudes of the targeted group.

- **Promotion**

The integrated use of advertising, public relations, media messaging and personal selling. The publicity efforts should be done to evoke the positive attitudes and intentions of the campaign to ensure the targeted behavior.

- **Positioning**

The product or service should be positioned in a manner that will maximize benefits and minimize costs. Positioning is a psychological creation that involves the location of products relative to other products or services for which it competes.

Conclusion

Social marketing campaigns force us to look at what we are saying and how we are saying it. For example, condemnation messages and scare tactics have been used to try to coerce behavior change. Research has shown that "scare tactics" usually do not work, especially for teens. Instead of using condemnation and scare tactics, cooperation from your target audience is a better way to effectively use others to get your message out. Redefining the product and program midstream if necessary is important for an effective "social marketing" campaign.

To ensure that your campaign is working as it should be it is necessary that you conduct outcome evaluations. These outcomes should be linked to the desired behavior change. This can be done by determining if you reached your target audience, did the product or service you provided have an impact and did the desired outcomes actually occur.

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