

Introduction

Social marketing was “born” as a discipline in the 1970s, with the increasing need to “sell” ideas, attitudes and behaviors, a paradigmatic shift from the need to market products only. 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. The focus is on creating and sustaining demand for the product and service by market modification or even creation. Social marketing seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society, so as to create and/or modify the entire target market structure partially or entirely. This technique has been used extensively in international health or social awareness programs, especially for contraceptives, oral rehydration therapy (ORT) and AIDS. Today it is being used with more frequency for raising awareness in diverse topics as drug abuse, socio-psychological disorders, potentially life threatening sexually transmitted diseases and organ donation..

Credit: <http://business-fundas.com/2011/marketing-mix-the-4-ps-of-social-marketing/>

1. Product

The social marketing “product” is not necessarily a physical offering. The products can range from intangible to actual physical products, so services (nursing, human rights violation), practices (AIDS awareness or breastfeeding) and finally, more intangible ideas (e.g., environmental protection). Since to have a viable “product”, the target segment must first perceive a genuine problem or a need, and that the product or service being marketed is a good solution for that problem. The role of research here is to discover the consumers’ perceptions of the problem and the product, and to determine which are the more important perceived factors regarding the same..

2. Price

“Price” refers to what the consumer must do or pay (in terms of financial, physical effort time or any other resource) in order to obtain the social marketing product or service. This cost may be financial (Dollars/Pounds), or it may instead require the consumer to give up intangible sources of value, such as time, effort, or to risk embarrassment and social ostracism. Just like product marketing, if the costs outweigh the benefits for an individual, the perceived value of the offering will be low and it will be unlikely to be adopted, but if the benefits are perceived as greater than their costs, chances of trial and adoption of the product is much greater..

The 4-Ps of Social Marketing



3. Place

“Place” describes the methodology the product or service reaches the target segment. Think about where and when the audience will perform the behavior or access the new or adapted product/service. How can you make it convenient and pleasant so as to increase chances of adoption? Also think about training your sales team – the people that will take your program to the audience. By training the team on the details of the activities and habits of the target segment, as well as their experience and dissatisfaction with the existing delivery system, better adoption may be achieved..

4. Promotion

Use of extensive market research is necessary to determine the communication channels that will best reach your audience for easy adoption of the products or services. It becomes crucial to understand which advertising or public relations media would play a greater role (e.g., radio, newspaper, postcard racks) since that WILL VARY depending on the product/service and also on the target segment.