

Importance of Effective Branding in Social Marketing

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ABSTRACT – The twenty-first century has provided organizations and individuals with many possibilities, also altered the manner in which companies and their consumers interact. Social marketing is a strategy for creating activities that seek to change or sustain people's behavior for the benefit of both individuals and society as a whole. Consumers will create good word of mouth in online communities and increase brand loyalty if a business is effective in establishing a customer-brand connection. With the assistance of successful social marketing companies, the function and significance of branding in social marketing is discussed in this article.

Keywords: Management Education, Branding, Social Marketing, Social Branding

I. Introduction

While attending a social function such as a business conference, corporate luncheon, or a cocktail event sponsored by the office used to be the norm, nowadays it also includes socializing via electronic and online intermediates such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, and Snapchat. These technological marvels enable individuals to not only establish new acquaintances and connections, but also offer a glimpse into their personal life via photos, videos, and personal information. According to Berthon and colleagues (2012), social media enables the development of cheap content, communications, and associations, as well as online user interoperability. Increased accessibility caused by the transfer of activities from the desktop to the web; greater interaction resulting in a transfer of value production from the organization to the consumer; and the transfer of power from the organization to the consumers are three major ways in which social media differs from computer-mediated interactions (Okazaki and Taylor 2013).

The study's focus is on social marketing branding and the effect of social marketing on brand image. Branding is defined as actions that seek to improve brand equity in the context of this research. Consumer impressions of a brand are referred to as brand image. The study's goal is to look at how social media may be utilized for branding and to investigate how social media affects brand image. The thesis investigates what factors should be considered when utilizing social marketing for branding reasons, as well as comparing the use of social media to the use of traditional media and the importance of social media against the importance of traditional media as a brand image influencer.

II. BRANDING

Branding is the process by which a company differentiates itself from its competitors by creating a one-of-a-kind offer with tangible and intangible characteristics aimed at specific target markets, then combining these with an identifying name and image that can be associated with quality and satisfaction (2004, Building a Brand).

The goal of branding, also known as brand building, is to develop and successfully convey a brand that stands out from the competitors, with high brand recognition and a favorable brand image among customers, resulting in brand equity.

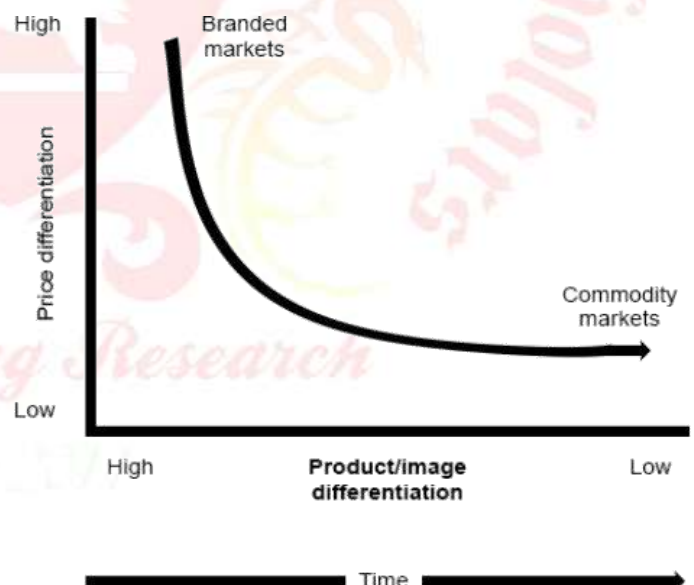


Figure 1: 'The commodity slide', decay from brand to commodity

The practice of differentiating a business from its rivals is known as brand positioning. Brand positioning is identifying the brand's unique values, objectives, and attributes (Geelhoed, Samhoud, and Hamurcu 2013) and utilizing them as a foundation for developing a brand that customers perceive as different from competitors.

A strong brand is a valuable intangible asset that may be worth a lot of money. According to De Chernatony, McDonald, and Wallace (2011), brands account for at least 20% of the value of companies listed on major stock exchanges.

III. SOCIAL MARKETING

The main aim of social marketing is to achieve "common good." Traditional commercial marketing goals are mainly pecuniary in nature, but they may also have good societal consequences. Social marketing would improve general health, increase awareness, and induce behavioral changes in the context of public health. In today's culture, the most prevalent method of social marketing is via social media. However, seeing social marketing only as the use of conventional commercial marketing techniques to accomplish non-commercial objectives is oversimplifying the situation.

The goal of social marketing is to combine marketing ideas with other methods to social change. For the greater good, social marketing seeks to promote behaviors that benefit people and communities. The aim is to provide effective, efficient, equitable, and long-term social change initiatives that are competitively responsive and segmented.

Social marketing is increasingly being referred to as having "two parents." The method used by the "social parent" is based on social science and social policy. Commercial and public-sector marketing techniques are used by the "marketing parent." In recent years, there has also been a shift in emphasis. Individual behavior is no longer influenced by social marketing. It fosters socially meaningful socio-cultural and structural transformation. As a result, some social marketing scholars are advocating for a broader definition of the term: "social marketing is the application of marketing principles to enable individual and collective ideas and actions in the pursuit of effective, efficient, equitable, fair, and long-term social transformation." The new focus balances the results (efficacy and effectiveness) with the process (justice, fairness, and long-term viability) of social marketing initiatives. There is also an argument that "a systems approach is required if social marketing is to address the increasingly complex and dynamic social problems confronting modern societies," in addition to a new social marketing definition that focuses on social change.

The earliest recorded instance of marketing being used to solve a social problem comes from In 1963, at the Indian Institute of Management in Calcutta, India, Chandy launched a reproductive health program. Chandy et al. developed and then executed a nationwide family planning program that includes the distribution and sale of high-quality, government-branded condoms at affordable rates throughout the country. As part of the initiative, an integrated consumer marketing campaign was run in combination with active point-of-sale advertising. To carry out the campaign, a new organization was created, and merchants were trained to market the product vigorously. Social marketing has expanded to encompass HIV prevention, pediatric diarrhea care (through oral rehydration therapies), malaria control and treatment, point-of-use water treatment, on-site sanitation methods, and basic health services in impoverished countries.

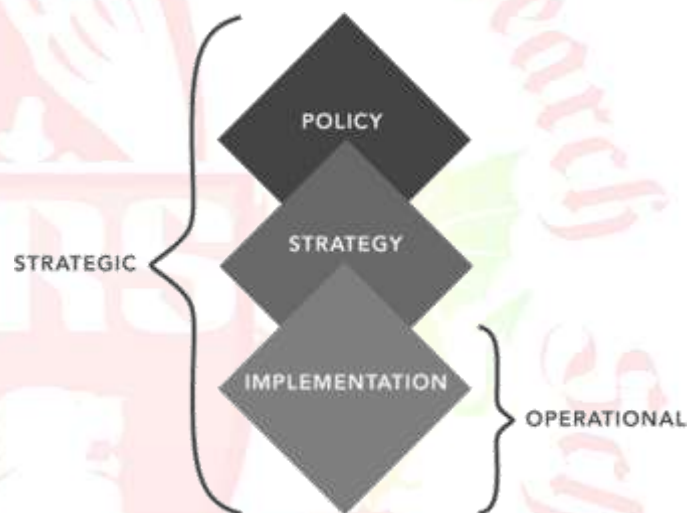


Figure 2: A social marketing approach

IV. SOCIAL MARKETING PROCESS

Anyone who has worked on a project or program development will be acquainted with the phases of the social marketing process. The National Social Marketing Center, on the other hand, emphasizes the significance of the scoping step, which is at the heart of the whole process. The main aim of the scoping stage is to set clear, executable, and quantifiable behavior goals so that the remainder of the process may be focused. The success of social marketing is dependent on the evidence of a direct influence on behavior; it is this characteristic that distinguishes social marketing from other forms of communication or awareness-raising (where the main focus is on highlighting information and helping people understand it). The goal of the scoping phase of the process is to establish the intervention's goals and the goals of the stakeholders. This requires careful attention and a great deal of knowledge. At this level, social marketers try to figure out

what drives and motivates end users in order to figure out how to achieve behavioral objectives. In terms of general marketing, this stage may be thought of as the point at which the product or service is specified.

The difficulty of marketing a societal behavioral change necessitates a well-structured social marketing strategy. However, there may have been inadequate discussion in the literature of a step-by-step approach for the social marketing process. Initial planning, formative research, strategy formulation, program creation and pretesting of material and nonmaterial treatments, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation are the main steps followed in public health applications in the United States. Because they are utilized at the early planning stage, the four Ps, or fundamental marketing principles, are at the center of this process.

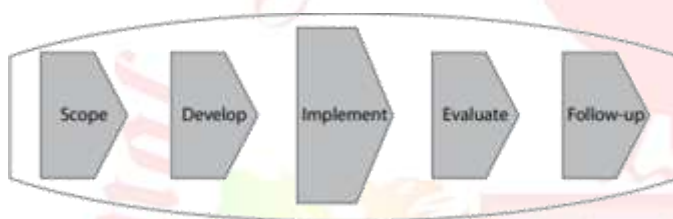


Figure 3: The Social Marketing Process

V. BRANDING FOR SOCIAL MARKETING

Branding a product or service and subsequently promoting the brand is a feasible marketing approach for any company. Every year, organizations across the world spend millions of dollars on branding initiatives. A brand may be defined as a word, a name, a sign, a symbol, a design, or a person, or a combination of these things. Branding not only sets a product out from its rivals, but also gives the impression that it is addressing a customer's issue. A successful brand is one that effectively communicates its message, establishes the company's reputation, emotionally connects with consumers or prospective target segments, stimulates the buyer, and focuses on retaining and growing client loyalty.

To make a brand effective, one must first understand the requirements, desires, and expectations of the target consumer group and then incorporate them into the brand. At every stage of customer / market interaction, this should be reinforced via effective communication methods. Developing a strong brand allows a company to stay ahead of its rivals, particularly in today's market, when the fight between brands is becoming more intense with each passing day. A successful and powerful brand remains alive in the heart and mind of the consumer (market) forever, therefore it is also critical for an organization to fully study, comprehend, define, and develop a brand.

It is not enough to bring about change on a regular basis. In social marketing, it is often necessary to put a focus on maintaining a desired habit. This implies that the message must be powerful, clear, and repeated, and it must stick in the minds of the audience for a long time. This is accomplished by combining a powerful communication message with equally powerful branding. Even if done for a different purpose, social marketing requires the development of a strong brand in order to accomplish its aim (for the reasons stated above). Furthermore, the campaign should not only target the primary target audience, but also the secondary target audience, those who have an impact on the primary target audience's immediate surroundings. The secondary audience's behavior/support is crucial in not only influencing and executing the change, but also in maintaining it.

Understanding the attitudes of the community in which the cause must be addressed, as well as a step-by-step ordered campaign for successful outcomes, are two essential elements of branding in social marketing campaigns. Recognizing ever-changing trends would also provide the campaign the essential edge for success.

A. Help Age India

It is a non-profit organization that focuses on the social problem of improved senior care. The group, which was established in 1978 and has a slogan of "Fighting Isolation, Poverty, and Neglect," focuses on collecting funds to protect the rights of India's elderly and to provide them with assistance via different interventions. The most effective program for HelpAge India is collecting money via partnerships with educational institutions such as schools and colleges. Students are urged to donate money to the elderly. This is successful in two ways: first, it raises money to aid in the execution of different initiatives, and second, it raises awareness of the cause among the youth.

B. CRY

Child Relief and You is a non-profit organization that was established in 1979 with the goal of improving the lives of underprivileged children by addressing their fundamental rights to food, housing, health, and education. This project is a government-public-private collaboration that raises funds through selling greeting cards, calendars, address books, stationery, and soliciting contributions. They've also launched a one-of-a-kind initiative to adopt a kid and fund his or her education. CRY presently supports a number of collaborations addressing problems such as vocational training, street children, child labor, disaster relief, foster care, and differently-abled children. Its branding and advertising activities are aimed at raising awareness of the organization's work to improve the lives of disadvantaged children, as well

as the relevance and significance of their support. CRY's greeting cards and other promotional materials not only helped raise money, but also served to establish the brand. CRY.

C. Change-Oriented

The brand that is developed should complement and improve the program's behavioral change. The name and logo must be focused on the issue at hand and effectively convey it. For the basic reasons, the Female Child Campaign – which concentrated on rescuing, adopting, and teaching a girl child – was successful.

D. VERB™

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States has launched a successful youth program. The VERB campaign aimed to increase and sustain physical activity among tweens aged 9 to 13 years old, with the slogan "It's what you do." Because of their eating habits, sedentary lives, and single-kid syndrome, this demographic now has a majority of fat children. To reach its target demographic of tweens, the VERB campaign included paid advertising and marketing techniques, as well as different partnerships. Parents, teachers, youth leaders, health professionals, coaches, doctors, and others were among the secondary audiences targeted by the campaign. It's challenging to concentrate on lifestyle behavioral changes like increasing physical exercise, and it's much more difficult to keep doing so. The project was started in June 2002 after a pre-launch study was performed to better identify the target demographic. The campaign was evaluated on a regular basis over a period of time in order to assess the reaction. The campaign was unique in that it used all means of communication. Today, VERB is a highly successful brand that is associated with physical exercise. Because the audience is aware of branding, it also highlights the significance of it. Instead than displaying or discussing the significance of physical exercise in advertisements, the creative techniques used to interpret the message are great. The following are VERB's many branding and marketing initiatives.

VI. Culturally Appropriate

Because the relevance is likely to be the same, certain companies are able to easily transcend cultural barriers. CRY may be used as an example once again because of its childcare efforts and relevance. However, a problem like AIDS, which is caused by sex-related illnesses, requires a different approach. In India, it is forbidden to discuss sex or anything even connected to it, thus any efforts including it must be handled with extreme caution. The color of the logo (which is done successfully in the case of AIDS), form, brand name utilized, and, to some degree, who the brand ambassador is all

influence how the problem is framed and presented to the target audience. Testing the campaign with a specific target demographic would give accurate feedback.

A. Compatible

The brand image should be appropriate for the project or cause being promoted. To be compatible, the brand must concentrate on the problem or initiative's qualities, the target demographic, and the brand's functional context.

B. Caring

The focus is on forging an emotional connection between the brand and its target market. This is another way of engaging with the audience by gaining a better knowledge of their attitudes and needs and concentrating on them via different communication channels. This may be achieved by engaging in different interactions with your target audience and convincing them that your brand is the most relevant. One such effort is the CRY brand, which has been explored. CRY is the first social marketing brand that comes to mind when it comes to children today.

C. Competitive

Even social marketers have challenges since they are competing for the same audience's purse for supporting initiatives/causes. It's tough to stand out among other social marketing efforts and emphasize the relevance or significance of one's program. To be successful, a brand must be thought of as authentic, with a higher focus and implementation-to-success ratio than other efforts in the same category. Depending on the project, an organization may go up against large brands (such as McDonald's, Infosys, Coke, and others) with superior branding and marketing tactics, vast financial resources, or the ability to draw funding more effectively.

VII. CONCLUSION

Competition is fierce, and overcoming it is a big task. However, it's worth noting that branding has a detrimental impact on social marketing. It encourages unhealthy rivalry among charitable groups in order to raise their exposure and recognition. It often promotes providing vital information to attract attention and an edge over rivals, leaving the audience or funders perplexed as to how their support makes a difference. Despite the criticisms leveled against branding social marketing, it is essential to remember that branding produces a positive reaction in terms of program implementation as well as raising awareness, attention, and funds.

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This manuscript is published in Vol. 15 No. 01 2025 issue of IARS' International Research Journal (I'IRJ).
This is a Peer Reviewed (Refereed) International Journal published by IARS' Press Australia (International Association of Research Scholars)
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Date of Submission	14 December 2024
Date of Final Review	27 January 2025
Date of Acceptance & Schedule	17 February 2025
Date of Publishing	28 February 2025

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