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Critical Issues in Social Marketing: A Review and Research Agenda

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INTRODUCTION

Social marketing has enjoyed a period of evolution and growth in recent years. It has matured as a discipline and is currently a key contributor to social and health behaviour change efforts globally (Andreasen 2003). Now is an opportune time to take stock of social marketing's progress and review its current challenges. This chapter provides a review of social marketing and offers a research agenda for the future. It begins by examining the evolution and growth of social marketing before addressing key contemporary issues and challenges within the social marketing field. These include:

- defining and conceptualising social marketing
- building an evidence base and creating a research agenda
- identifying new areas in which social marketing can be applied
- considering how to market social marketing
- ensuring the sustainability and durability of social marketing.

SOCIAL MARKETING: EVOLUTION AND GROWTH

The term 'social marketing' was first coined by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971 to refer to the application of commercial marketing techniques to the resolution of social and health problems. The idea dates back to the early 1950s, when Wiebe asked the question '*Can brotherhood be sold like soap?*' For the first time, people seriously contemplated whether techniques used successfully to influence behaviour in the commercial sector might transfer to the non-profit sector. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, marketing academics considered the potential and limitations of applying marketing to the political and social arenas.

Social marketing evolved in parallel with commercial marketing. The expansion of marketing itself combined with a shift in public health policy towards disease prevention paved the way for the development of social marketing. Over the next two to three decades, marketing academics and public health experts developed and refined social marketing thinking, learning particularly from international development efforts, where social marketing was used for disease control programmes and family planning (Manoff 1985). By the 1980s, academics were no longer asking *if* marketing should be applied to social concerns, but rather *how* should this be done? During this period, practitioners shared their experiences and made suggestions for the development of social marketing theory and practice (Ling et al 1992, Fox and Kotler 1980, Bloom 1980). In 1981, Bloom and Novelli reviewed the first decade of social marketing and advocated more research to dispel criticism that social marketing lacked theory or rigour. They identified a need for research to examine audience segmentation, choosing communications channels and designing message appeals, implementing long term positioning strategies, and organisational and management issues (Bloom and Novelli 1981). Lefebvre and Flora (1988) and Hastings and Haywood (1991, 1994) then gave social

marketing widespread exposure in the public health field, generating lively debates about its applicability and contribution. The publication of these papers was followed by a widespread growth in social marketing's popularity (Lefebvre 1996). Centres of expertise began to emerge, including the Centre for Social Marketing at Strathclyde University (now the Institute for Social for Social Marketing at Stirling at the Open University).

Social marketing is now located at the centre of health improvement in numerous countries. In the USA, social marketing is increasingly being touted as a core public health strategy for influencing voluntary lifestyle behaviours such as smoking, drinking, diet and drug use (CDC 2005). Recently in the UK the potential of social marketing was recognised in the White Paper on Public Health, which talks of the "*power of social marketing*" and "*marketing tools applied to social good*" being "*used to build public awareness and change behaviour*" (Department of Health 2004). The National Social Marketing Strategy Centre, led by the National Consumer Council and the Department of Health, has been established to "*help realise the full potential of effective social marketing in contributing to national and local efforts to improve health and reduce health inequalities*" (NCC/DH 'Realising the Potential of Effective Social Marketing' 2005). It is leading a national review of social marketing and developing the first National Social Marketing Strategy for Health in England. Similarly, the Scottish Executive recently commissioned an investigation into how social marketing can be used to guide health improvement. Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, as well as the USA, all have social marketing facilities embedded high within their health departments. The BMJ has also already responded to this growing interest by publishing a series of articles on social marketing (Hastings and McDermott 2006, Evans 2006).

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL MARKETING

Defining and Conceptualising Social Marketing

This growth and development is extremely welcome, but as social marketing increases in visibility and acceptability, funders and policymakers are increasingly asking for hard evidence of its effectiveness. Providing this evidence is challenging, not least because it is difficult to 'prove' that many kinds of complex social interventions work. But there is a particular difficulty in the case of social marketing, and that is that social marketing remains poorly understood, not only by the outside world but even within its own field (Maibach 2002). In part, there are too many definitions which conflict in both major and minor ways. There is also insufficient differentiation from competing behaviour change approaches and social marketing has often been confused with related – but quite distinct – marketing concepts such as societal marketing, socially responsible marketing and non-profit marketing (MacFadyen et al 2003). The term social marketing is also commonly erroneously used to refer simply to social communications or advertising. As social marketing experiences significant growth it is imperative to ensure that it is correctly understood.

A recent definition, offered by the National Social Marketing Centre in the UK, describes social marketing as *'the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioural goals relevant to the social good'* (French and Blair-Stevens 2005). Here the emphasis is on the unique, defining feature of social marketing - taking learning from the commercial sector and applying it to the resolution of social and health problems. Another useful definition was proposed by Lazer and Kelley (1973) during the early days of the discipline:

‘Social marketing is concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts, and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with analysis of the social consequence of marketing policies, decisions and activities.’

(p. ix)

This definition too captures the essence of social marketing as well as highlighting both sides of the social marketing ‘coin’. On the one hand, social marketing encourages the use of marketing skills and insights to progress social good. On the other, it facilitates the control and regulation of commercial marketing through critical studies of its impact on the health and welfare of society.

Like commercial marketing, social marketing is not a theory in itself. Instead, it is a framework that draws upon several other disciplines, including psychology, sociology and communications theory, in an effort to understand human behaviour and how we might influence it (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Like generic marketing, social marketing offers a strategic planning process that utilises conventional marketing techniques. Over the past thirty or so years, social marketers have systematically applied concepts from commercial marketing – concepts like consumer research, segmentation and targeting, the marketing ‘mix’, competitor analysis and, more recently, branding and stakeholder marketing – to topics as diverse as domestic recycling, cancer prevention, sexual health and road safety. Several other key features characterise the social marketing approach. The first is a focus on *voluntary* behaviour change: social marketing isn't about enforcement or coercion. It is based on the voluntary exchange of costs and benefits between two or more parties (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Social marketers try to bring about change by applying the principle of

exchange – the recognition that there must be a clear benefit for the customer if change is to take place (Houston and Gassenheimer 1987). In addition, the *end goal* of social marketing is to improve individual welfare and society, not to benefit the organisation doing the social marketing. This is what distinguishes social marketing from other forms of marketing (MacFadyen et al 2003). The emphasis on society as well as the individual illustrates another key point about social marketing: it can apply not only to the behaviour of individuals, but also to that of professionals, organisations and policymakers. Good social marketing embraces this idea of going ‘upstream’ (Lefebvre 1996, Goldberg 1995). Encouraging retailers to stock healthy foods as opposed to confectionary at checkouts, or policymakers and legislators to ban junk food advertising to children, are just two examples of upstream social marketing.

Several key departures from commercial marketing also suggest that undertaking social marketing may be a more challenging task (MacFadyen et al 2003). For example, the social marketing product is often inherently more complex than a commercial product. It may be intangible (eg. a change in beliefs); it may require considerable involvement and effort on the part of the target audience (eg. visiting the gym regularly or using a condom); or it may represent a change in behaviour to which people are resistant, such as quitting smoking. Furthermore the benefits may not always be immediate or direct (eg. recycling to protect the environment).

Bearing these key principles and characteristics in mind can help ensure a shared and coherent view of what is (and hence what is *not*) social marketing. However, for academics and policymakers charged with the task of answering the question ‘is social marketing effective?’ a more precise yardstick is required against which to decide whether an

intervention is a legitimate application of social marketing. A recent series of systematic reviews of social marketing effectiveness sought to identify such a yardstick. The reviews, undertaken on behalf of the National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) at the Department of Health and the National Consumer Council, evaluated the effectiveness of social marketing in improving diet and physical activity and tackling substance misuse (McDermott et al 2006, Gordon et al 2006, Stead et al 2006). As a means of identifying legitimate examples of social marketing for inclusion in the reviews, Andreasen's (2002) six essential benchmarks of a 'genuine' social marketing intervention were used (see Table 1). The benchmarks were used as a set of criteria against which potentially eligible interventions could be assessed. If an intervention was judged to meet all six criteria it was defined as having adopted a social marketing approach, regardless of the label which the author used to describe the programme.

Table 1: Andreasen's Benchmark Criteria

Benchmark	Explanation
1. Behaviour Change	Intervention seeks to change behaviour and has specific measurable behavioural objectives.
2. Consumer Research	Intervention is based on an understanding of consumer experiences, values and needs. Formative research is conducted to identify these. Intervention elements are pre-tested with the target group.
3. Segmentation and Targeting	Different segmentation variables are considered when selecting the intervention target group. Intervention strategy is tailored for the selected segment/s.
4. Marketing Mix	Intervention considers the best strategic application of the 'marketing mix'. This consists of the four Ps of 'product', 'price', 'place' and 'promotion'. Other Ps might include 'policy change' or 'people' (eg. training is provided to intervention delivery agents). Interventions which only use the promotion P are social advertising, not social marketing.
5. Exchange	Intervention considers what will motivate people to engage voluntarily with the intervention and offers them something beneficial in return. The offered benefit may be intangible (eg. personal satisfaction) or tangible (eg. rewards for participating in the programme and making behavioural changes).
6. Competition	Competing forces to the behaviour change are analysed. Intervention considers the appeal of competing behaviours (including current behaviour) and uses strategies that seek to remove or minimise this competition.

(adapted from McDermott et al 2005)

The reviews represent the first systematic test of Andreasen's benchmarks as a concrete method for identifying social marketing programmes. The approach worked well in practice and overall the benchmarks proved workable. However, several key challenges were met. For example, it was often difficult to make judgments based on the amount of information provided in the papers and, as anticipated, some criteria were easier to judge than others (eg. identifying whether research was undertaken to formulate the strategy versus determining whether a meaningful exchange was being offered). It is also possible that Andreasen's benchmarks fail to fully capture some of the recent thinking in social marketing (eg. the use of branding and relationship marketing). Despite these limitations, the reviews represent the first attempt to systematically translate a generalised definition of the social marketing approach into a set of precise measures against which potential interventions can be assessed. This kind of work is crucial because it helps us move towards a consensus on the key defining and recognisable features of social marketing. More vigorous debate among academics and funding bodies is needed on, for example, the merits and limitations of the Andreasen model and any possible alternatives.

Creating an Evidence Base and Research Agenda

The rise of social marketing has led many to ask for evidence that it actually works. The evidence base to support the use of social marketing to improve health and tackle social problems is gradually growing. A number of reviews have examined social marketing effectiveness in an international development context, particularly in the promotion of family planning (Family Health International 2004, Price 2001). However, these have been somewhat limited by their narrow definition of social marketing (which in the reviews is

often taken to mean, principally, the free distribution of condoms) and by their use of non-systematic methods.

More recent research has improved this situation. A series of literature reviews commissioned by the NSMC provides a systematic account of social marketing and its effectiveness in improving a range of health behaviours and, as discussed earlier in this chapter, has brought a more consistent approach to assessing the effectiveness of social marketing. The first of these was a full-scale systematic review of the effectiveness of social marketing nutrition interventions (McDermott et al under review). The review found that social marketing nutrition interventions were strongly and equally effective at influencing nutrition behaviour, knowledge and psychosocial variables such as self-efficacy and perceptions of the benefits of eating more healthily. Social marketing appeared to be less, but still moderately, effective at influencing stage of change in relation to diet, and to have a more limited effect on diet-related physiological outcomes such as blood pressure, body mass index and cholesterol. This latter finding might be expected, as these kinds of outcomes are arguably more difficult to influence, and changes are likely to take a much longer time to occur and be detected. The review also found that social marketing interventions could achieve both narrower and broader goals. Social marketing interventions which sought to target nutritional behaviours in several domains at once (for example, increasing fruit and vegetable intake, reducing fat intake) could be just as effective as those concerned with change in just one domain (for example, fruit and vegetable intake only). This suggests that social marketing interventions can produce changes across a relatively wide spectrum of behaviours, rather than only working, or working better, when they have a narrow behavioural focus. There are clear cost-effectiveness implications if it is possible to design social marketing interventions which can produce changes in several behaviours and risk factors at once.

Two additional reviews examined the use of social marketing in increasing physical activity and tackling tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use. The reviews found reasonable evidence that interventions developed using social marketing principles can be effective (Gordon et al 2006).

A majority of the interventions which sought to prevent youth smoking, alcohol use and illicit drug use reported significant positive effects in the short term. Effects tended to dissipate in the medium and longer term, although several of the tobacco and alcohol interventions still displayed some positive effects two years after the intervention. These results are broadly comparable with systematic reviews of other types of substance use prevention interventions (eg. Foxcroft et al 2002, Sowden and Arblaster 1998, Thomas 2002). The evidence is more mixed for adult smoking cessation, although small numbers of programmes were nonetheless effective in this area. There is modest evidence of impact on levels of physical activity and psychosocial outcomes, with an apparently weaker effect on physical activity related physiological outcomes. The interventions seem also to have had some effects on the behaviour of retailers, and to have encouraged adoption of policies and other environmental-level changes, although the data on these are less robust and it is often difficult to attribute changes to the interventions rather than to other events and trends in the community. The reviews also imply that the quality of implementation of the intervention may have a bearing on effectiveness though this needs to be more directly researched.

As discussed earlier, social marketing is also concerned about the impact of commercial marketing practices on the health and welfare of society. These effects have been examined in numerous studies. Several decades of international research have shown that advertising

and other forms of tobacco marketing encourage young people to take up smoking and adults to continue smoking (Hastings and MacFadyen 2000, Aitken et al 1987, Aitken and Eadie 1990, Aitken et al 1991, Pollay et al 1996, Pierce et al 1996), and there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that alcohol marketing plays an important role in encouraging and sustaining drinking (Hastings et al 2005, Atkin et al 1984, Aitken et al 1988, Grube and Wallack 1994). One of the most systematic examinations of the effect of marketing on health behaviour is a recent review into the effects of food promotion on children's diet for the Food Standards Agency (Hastings et al 2003). Using rigorous and systematic review procedures, this research found convincing evidence that food promotion has an effect on children, particularly in the areas of food preferences, purchase and consumption behaviour.

In the coming years, social marketers must endeavor to continue to develop and expand the social marketing evidence base in a systematic and rigorous way. Evidence of social marketing's effectiveness in improving health in other areas, such as sexual risk behaviours and taking care in the sun, is needed. On the critical marketing side, similarly rigorous evidence is needed to identify the impact of commercial marketing on the health and welfare of society. Through this kind of work, social marketers can help get the balance right by ensuring that the potential for harm is monitored and controlled. Burgeoning areas of commercial marketing activity require particular attention – for example, the promotion on prescription only medicines and the marketing of gambling and betting practices.

Identifying New Areas in Which Social Marketing Can be Applied

Rothschild (1999) distinguished marketing as an alternative to education and the law for effecting social change, with education sufficient in situations in which information alone will achieve the desired behaviour change, and the law intervening where consumers are

reluctant to act. Everything else can be prospectively covered by social marketing (Andreasen 2003). Therefore the areas and opportunities for the application of social marketing are almost limitless. However, as discussed previously, the process of applying social marketing also involves making clear distinctions of the approach - how it differs from other behaviour change approaches and being consistent in doing so (Andreasen 2003).

Social marketing is traditionally regarded as being restricted to a particular arena and client base – non-profit organisations, public health bodies and government agencies. Undeniably these are often the areas in which social marketers work and in which social marketing principles and practices are applied. However the aim of effecting positive behaviour change in society is not restricted to these arenas, the corporate sphere is ripe with opportunities for the application of social marketing ideas, particularly with the increased focus on ethical behaviour and corporate social responsibility in the commercial world. Indeed Andreasen (2003) has suggested that we be bolder in suggesting ways in which social marketing lessons can be transferred back to the private sector, such as to influence the behaviour of personnel (eg. Nieger 2001), franchisees, channel partners and other stakeholders.

Given the long-standing trend of voter apathy and disengagement in politics there is an opportunity for social marketing interventions to build upon efforts to improve citizen engagement (McKenzie Mohr 1999, Bhattacharya and Elsbach 2002) especially amongst younger age groups. Mass media campaigns carried out by organisations such as 'Rock the vote' have already attempted to get people to engage in politics and such efforts could be developed using social marketing principles. Social marketing interventions could also be developed to encourage financial solvency which is especially topical given the growing concern over personal debt in the UK (BBC News 2006). Interventions such as the 'Sorted'

campaign in New Zealand which encourages young people to save for retirement have demonstrated the applicability of such programmes.

Social marketing has already been applied to a number of environmental issues (Altman and Petkus 1994, Geller 1989, Shrum et al 1994) and this is an area with opportunity for expansion given the huge focus on such issues currently. For example, campaigns to encourage recycling (Herrick 1995) have emerged but there is capacity to increase such efforts. Exploratory research has examined whether social marketing could encourage composting (McDermott et al 2004) and also play a part in improving carbon efficiency by encouraging people to change a range of carbon emitting behaviours (Marcell et al 2004). The field of land management has also experienced social marketing in action. For example, a study in Australia advocated the application of social marketing strategies to assist in the management of pest control in Victoria (Binney et al 2003). However these are areas in which social marketing has merely 'dipped a toe in the water' and there are many opportunities for development and expansion.

In the critical marketing arena attention has rightly focused on tobacco (McFadyen et al 2001), food (Hastings et al 2003) and alcohol marketing (Hastings et al 2005). Yet doubts remain over the effect if any of alcohol marketing on drinking behaviour (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2004). Despite recent longitudinal research suggesting a causal link (Stacy et al 2004, Ellickson et al 2004, Snyder et al 2004) further research is needed to assess the impact of the full range of alcohol marketing communications. Research has commenced in the UK (Gordon et al 2006) and New Zealand which will add to the evidence base but more research would strengthen the case for regulatory decisions.

Recently there has been concern expressed over car marketing especially with relation to SUVs and an obsession with speed and inefficient, pollutant vehicles (Hastings in press). This is an area in which research could evaluate the effect on behaviour and inform the development of interventions designed to limit car use or change the types of cars driven by people to reduce road accidents and pollution. De-marketing the car has been suggested (Wright and Egan 2000) and the possibilities of marketing clean and efficient vehicles has been examined (Kurani and Turrentine 2002). Encouraging the use of public transportation could be achieved using social marketing methods. Other areas in which social marketing has been suggested as a behaviour change approach include the illegal marketing of weapons (Goldberg 1995), the illicit drugs market and issues surrounding the homeless (Hill 1991), and gambling (Byrne et al 2005).

Upstream social marketing is an area that would benefit for development and increased prominence (Andreasen 1995, Goldberg 1995). Although social marketing's primary niche is at the individual level, efforts to effect social change at the wider societal level can be made (Wallack 1990). This involves a focus on media advocacy, policy change, regulation and law making. Upstream application of social marketing can influence communities, regulators, managers, policy and law makers. Critical marketing research to inform regulation such as in tobacco control, food and alcohol marketing, or community interventions designed to effect policy changes are examples of where upstream social marketing can be applied. Debate has raged on whether social marketers should become politically active or merely let their research speak for itself (Goldberg 1995, Wells 1995), however the insights that such research can offer to society can be valuable.

Marketing Social Marketing

Recent years have witnessed the emergence and growth of a number of training courses and educational programmes in social marketing and this section will examine some of these, the importance they hold, and discuss ways in which social marketing can be further disseminated to practitioners and academics alike.

Social marketing conferences are a good way for people to meet, debate and discuss issues within the field. Indeed there are now three annual social marketing conferences, one of which has been established for over a decade (Andreasen 2003). However attendance at such events should not be restricted to social marketers but should also encourage people from other fields and disciplines whom might benefit from gaining an understanding of social marketing. Professional training courses in social marketing are also a good way to expand knowledge and understanding and such courses are already offered to health professionals in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Social marketing has also been expanding in higher education with modules offered in universities in several countries. Efforts are being made to start an MSc in Social Marketing at Universities in Stirling in the UK and Wollongong in Australia, and the Open University is to launch an online Social Marketing course in 2007. Social Marketing textbooks are becoming increasingly common; several textbooks have already been published (Andreasen 1995, Kotler et al 2002) with more in the pipeline (Hastings in press). Chapters on social marketing are now appearing in non-profit and critical marketing books and these all help in bringing social marketing to a wider audience. The university environment is a key arena for targeting the social marketers of the future. Student access to good teaching and textbooks on social marketing are vitally important. Yet although there have been promising developments

in this area, social marketing still lacks academic stature - it is rarely taught as a stand alone subject and there is a lack of recognised academic qualifications in social marketing (Andreasen 2002).

Wide dissemination is also required to keep social marketing on the map. This requires social marketers to continually make efforts to hold well publicised dissemination events for their research findings and by submitting articles to journals with both high impact scores and large readerships. Social marketing has its own journal, *Social Marketing Quarterly*, and efforts should continue to improve its contribution and readership base. Inter-disciplinary collaboration and dissemination is also an important consideration, and research, seminars and events involving other disciplines will help broaden the base and appeal of social marketing. Traditionally there has been a tendency for social marketing to be promoted to those working in the public health or marketing arenas, but other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and political science may benefit and welcome input and ideas from the social marketing field. As Andreasen highlights, social marketing must understand better and then advocate how it can complement other approaches to social change (Andreasen 2003). These suggestions are very much compatible with the current drive to encourage inter-disciplinary collaboration in universities.

Social marketers must also embrace media and technology to market the discipline effectively to the general public. Media training and management are important skills for social marketers to develop and it is important for those working in the field to seize opportunities to gain publicity for their research or the wider discipline when they present themselves. Therefore social marketing agencies and organisations should include such training in their staff development programmes where possible.

Sustainability and Durability of Social Marketing

Social marketing has become a fairly fashionable concept among policy makers. This section will discuss the sustainability and durability of social marketing and ways to ensure it does not merely become a flash in the pan idea among decision makers.

It has taken a lot of time, effort and persistence to bring social marketing into adulthood (Andreasen 2003) and onto the political landscape, getting decision makers to think about it when forming policy or interventions. Recent years have witnessed increasing acknowledgement of social marketing and its applications amongst politicians and government albeit if sometimes the principles and definitions are a little misunderstood. However it must not be taken for granted that social marketing will always be on decision makers' radars and efforts must be taken to avoid social marketing becoming another public policy fad (Andreasen 2002). Other public policy approaches have been fashionable and then fallen by the wayside and the dangers of this happening have been well documented (Hilmer and Donaldson 1996, Adams and Hess 2001). In the political world there is as an issue attention cycle (Hogwood and Gunn 1984) in which certain issues which are brought onto the agenda by the media, experts, the public or the government, or by a combination of these sources. It can be difficult to set the agenda and this is an area in which social marketers must work hard to ensure that the issues discussed earlier are brought onto the agenda and that the power of social marketing to offer solutions is accentuated. There is a requirement for social marketing to be self confident (Andreasen 2003) and become a trusted concept to utilise when making policy decisions and this can be achieved in a number of ways.

As discussed at several points within this chapter, there is also a need to agree on social marketing concepts and definitions and unify the field behind them. It must be made easier

for people to understand what social marketing is and what it can do. As social marketing has matured there have been calls for less of a dogmatic reliance on commercial marketing principles; replacing products with social propositions, price for costs of involvement, place for accessibility, promotion for social communication, exchange for interaction and framing competition in terms of competing ideas and the need to win attention and acceptance to effect behaviour change. (Peattie and Peattie 2003). This is in line with the call from convergents (Altman and Petkus 1994, Gilder et al 2001) who argue for an inter-disciplinary approach to social marketing generating ideas for progression in the field. Indeed it has been argued that social marketing's future development will be enhanced by creating its own unique tools, theories and vocabulary. Traditionalists are more focused on retaining the neoclassical theoretical basis of social marketing adopted from commercial marketing theory (Black and Farley 1979, Zimmerman 1997). These are issues that must be developed and conclusions reached to enable social marketing to move forward.

First class research needs to be carried out and continued into the effectiveness of social marketing interventions and also in critical marketing studies. This means considerable effort to raise and secure funding, carry out good quality research and disseminate findings effectively. Research into social marketing effectiveness can be problematic (Pavia 1995, Hornik 2001), though not insurmountable (McDermott et al 2005, Stead et al in press) and efforts must be continued to make measurement easier. Furthermore there is a need to ensure that the findings of such research are acknowledged and lessons learned and the necessary changes effected. For example, research into the effectiveness of social marketing interventions has shown us that certain conditions can boost the likelihood of an intervention succeeding. Therefore these must be adopted when designing and implementing social marketing interventions.

Implementation is a key issue here and an area in which many social marketing interventions can fail. Adequate resources, training and focus must be provided on the proper implementation of social marketing interventions for them to have a greater chance of succeeding. Appropriate funding is vital as often interventions can have a short-term impact and then fade into obsolescence or do produce instant results and are then terminated. There is a requirement for a more long term view and a realisation that social marketing interventions must be given adequate time and resources to make a measurable impact on behaviour.

In commercial marketing, brand loyalty and recognition are key facets of any successful brand; Coca Cola has been established as a brand for over 100 years. However in the public sector the political and social landscape often results in regular re-organisation, re-branding, expansion and retrenchment of brands. For example in Scotland the public health board has been re-branded four times in the last 20 years, preventing an established brand from being formed over a period of time which can help brand recognition and customer loyalty. Branding concepts and principles can and should be applied to social marketing programmes as required to allow interventions to go beyond advertising and create a brand image, awareness and attitudes for campaigns (Keller 1998). This is a clear area for improvement, if social marketing campaigns are delivered using recognised, trusted and successful brands this can only help their chances of success.

There is also a requirement for building and maintaining good working relationships with other stakeholders including decision makers. Efforts at collaboration with other academic disciplines should be encouraged, broadening the level of understanding and allowing for a

pooling of resources and expertise. Furthermore relationships with government bodies should be maintained at a workable level. Although it is often a requirement to ‘shout loudly’ and often critically achieving the required outcomes involves forming effective partnerships. Yet there is a danger in losing independence and academic integrity and credibility should be maintained at all times. Often it can be easy to succumb to political pressure to make recommendations that are preferable to the client but do not actually reflect the reality of what is required. Herein lays a careful balancing act of working in partnership but remaining at arms length.

Social marketers must also work hard to keep abreast of what is going on around them, keeping their eyes open and their ears to the ground as to what issues are on the agenda in society and watching out for trends and emerging concerns. Furthermore diversification is paramount and forming a review and research agenda such as this aids the discipline by focusing minds, stimulating debate and offering ideas about how social marketing can continue to expand and branch out. This involves rethinking how social marketing can be applied to new areas and problems - an area that has already been discussed. Finally social marketing must prove its adaptability to changing conditions by demonstrating an ability to alter strategies and tactics caused by changes in the marketplace.

If the above requirements are met then the likelihood of social marketing maintaining its position as a mainstream concept on the social change landscape will be greatly increased.

CONCLUSIONS

For social marketing to reach its full potential it must continue to expand, develop and the discipline must exude confidence in its ability to effect social change. Here we have outlined some of the ways in which this can be achieved by offering a review and research agenda. It is now up to social marketing students, academics and practitioners alike to accept these challenges and progress the discipline into a long and successful future.

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