# The Fundamentals of Social Marketing

# 2

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**Chapter Overview**

This chapter introduces the key principles of planning a social marketing program. Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing and other principles to influence behavior for the good of the individual and society. In order to develop a social marketing program to influence behavior for good, it is important to set clear objectives regarding what you want your target audience to do, know, and believe. To reach these objectives, set specific, measurable, relevant, and time sensitive goals. You should then segment the potential audience into prospective groups, and target the most promising group or groups. When selecting a target, consider who has the greatest need for change, will be receptive to change, is reachable, of sufficient group size, fits with your organization, and will be cost effective to reach. Once you have selected your target audience, position your program in a way that will appeal to your target, considering the benefits this behavior could offer them, and the barriers they face. When developing your program, clearly define your product. Know the price of it for your target audience, particularly considering the non-monetary costs, and try to minimize this price. Consider the placement of your product offering, including all aspects of how the target audience will attain it as well as any augmenting components, and make these placements as convenient as possible for your target. Then develop the promotion for your program, realizing that promotion is not the most important element and is not always achieved through advertisement pieces. Always consider the ethical implications of your program, and give voice to the target audience when developing the program. Include research at all stages of your program to enhance your chances of program success.

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Valuable further guidance in social marketing can be found online. See this chapter's appendix for a listing of further resources.

## Introduction

Every April, in the hills overlooking the river valley of Lethbridge, Canada, you can see groups of people dotting the hillsides, each carrying a large garbage bag. They are participating in the Coulee Clean-up, an annual social marketing program to clean litter from the river valley. Participants take the opportunity to enjoy nature and each other's company while cleaning the nature preserve. This program has been very successful, with participation increasing each year. This success comes from careful planning, perceptive implementation, and regular evaluation. In this chapter, we cover the steps necessary for developing a successful social marketing program.

In Chap. 1, we discussed the big picture surrounding social marketing. We explained the importance of examining the macro-environment and using all tools available to influence behavior for good. This includes considering all of the social, structural, and environmental influences that affect individual behavior. We discussed the important first steps of fully analyzing your situation and identifying competing behaviors when designing a social marketing program. In this chapter, we outline the basic principles of creating a social marketing program. Most of these are explained in terms of downstream individual-level behavior change, and the examples given in this chapter tend to focus on how to encourage an individual to perform (or give up) a certain behavior. As discussed in Chap. 1, social marketing can also be applied upstream to influence decision makers who develop the social and environmental policies and structures that contribute to individual behavior. For example, social marketing could be used to influence local government lawmakers to make decisions which will promote healthier communities, such as creating bicycle paths. Downstream, a social marketing program could be created to encourage people to choose to ride their bikes more frequently. Ideally, these would both be addressed, as well as examining other structural, economic, social, and policy factors that influence people's bicycling behavior, in a macro-social marketing effort, for the most effective outcome. An appendix at the end of the chapter offers online links for further study of the topics in this chapter.

## Program Objectives

A wide variety of factors can lead to the development of a social marketing program. In the area of health, these are often epidemiological, such as concern about increased rates of diabetes or heart disease within the population. Similarly,

environmental changes could motivate program development, such as increases in pollution levels or fire devastation. Often funding organizations will establish priorities, and offer funding for program proposals that address their priorities. Whatever the motivation, your first step is to look at the overall problem, then consider which aspect you could realistically address. From there you determine a feasible objective for your program. For example, if your organization is concerned about the increased threat of fire, before beginning a social marketing program you would consider the potential sources of fire, such as lightning, cigarettes, and campfires. You then would select program objectives that are feasible. You cannot reduce the incidence of lightning, so you would instead elect to specifically address one or more of the human-made risks, such as campfire safety.

All social marketing programs should have clear, measurable objectives. For example, Chap. 25 presents a dog training program for koala safety. The authors set out specific objectives for their program, specifying 1000 Dog Fest attendees within 12 months, and at least a 10% improvement in dog behavior, on average. Setting out clear objectives allows you to plan your program more effectively, because you know what you are striving for. If you don't know your goal, you will never know whether you have reached it. Setting objectives can be one of the most difficult parts of planning a social marketing program, because setting goals and objectives necessarily means accepting that you cannot do everything.

Each social marketing program should have a clear *behavioral objective*. This is the behavior you are seeking to encourage (or discourage). For example, consider the Coulee Clean-up program in Chap. 24, which we described at the opening of this chapter. The program had a behavioral objective to get volunteers to clean up the riverbed area. In addition to behavioral objectives, social marketing programs often have *knowledge* and *belief objectives* as well (Lee & Kotler, 2011). A knowledge objective specifies information we want our target audience to have. These are facts about the topic. For example, in the Coulee Clean-up program, a knowledge objective was set that every volunteer understands the fragility of the coulee landscape, and the danger of walking on it after a rain. A belief objective addresses what we want our audience to believe and to feel about the issue. These are more subjective views on the issue. Using the same example, the Coulee Clean-up had a belief objective of influencing perception so individuals believed environmental protection to be a social norm.

**Social Marketing Objectives**

Behavioral Objectives: What they do
Knowledge Objectives: What they know
Belief Objectives: How they feel/what they believe

Objectives should be considered at the individual level as well as at higher social levels. For example, in Chap. 6, which seeks to increase citizens' safe behavior around rail crossings, getting people to sign an online pledge of rail safety was an individual level objective, and the community level behavioral objective was to gain 12,000 online pledges of rail safety.

From here, it is important to set specific goals regarding your objectives. How much of a change will signify success? Goals should be *SMART*, that is *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time sensitive* (Lee & Kotler, 2011, p. 165). It is difficult to know if you have attained a goal that is too vague (not specific) or one where you have no way of actually measuring your success. Similarly, if you select an unrealistic goal (not achievable), or one that is not important (not relevant) you will simply be wasting resources. Finally, if your goal lacks a specific time frame by which it will be achieved, you will not know when to make your final assessment. So, for example, the Coulee Clean-up in Chap. 24 has a behavioral objective of getting people to participate in their annual clean-up effort. The specific behavioral goal is for 550 participants per year to volunteer with the program, which fits the requirements for a SMART goal.

**Setting SMART Goals**

Social marketing *goals* specify the way in which you will reach your objective. Goals must be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time Sensitive

One of the difficulties in objective setting is that it is hard to know what objectives and goals are realistic. In Chap. 1, we discussed how to assess your situation, in order to determine where you are now. Chapter 3's discussion of research will help with this. Formative (preliminary) research can provide you with an initial, concrete measure of your situation, in order to determine what goals might be reasonable. Then later in your social marketing program, outcome research will allow you to evaluate your program's success, by measuring how far you have come toward meeting your goals. Past research and existing research theory can also provide valuable grounding, to help you better understand the background of your situation based on what others have found previously, without having to reinvent the wheel. Commonly used theories in social marketing are reviewed in Chap. 4, with a historical perspective offered in Chap. 5.

## Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning (STP)

Harvard Professor Michael Porter, renowned for his theories on business strategy, astutely noted that "Strategy 101 is about choices. You can't be all things to all people" (Michael Porter, as cited in Hammonds, 2001). That is the primary notion behind segmenting, targeting, and positioning. These three are essential components of commercial marketing, and they are so inextricably intertwined that together they have come to be known as STP. Segmenting, targeting, and positioning are principles from commercial marketing that are welcomed in social marketing with very little debate. The general idea behind STP is that people have different needs, and respond to different motivators; therefore, you should choose who you wish to reach, and do that well, rather than trying to reach everyone with the same approach.

### Segmenting

The first step in STP is to *segment* the audience. Segmenting means that you examine the full population you could potentially reach with your behavior influence efforts, and then you determine the most logical or appropriate way to break this population up into smaller groups. Importantly, you want to create groups that are meaningful. The groups should be those who you would be able to influence, with enough of them to allow your program to have a measurable impact, but small enough that you can effectively reach those people with your available resources. The people within a group should be similar enough that the same strategy would appeal to them. If different people in your selected target require a different approach, then you probably do not have a single segment and you will need to reassess your segmentation effort. And finally, you have to be able to reach the group. If you have no way to effectively reach a particular group, then it cannot be a viable target.

*Behavioral* segmentation is the gold standard. If there is some way to identify and reach people based on their current behavior, your task is relatively straightforward. For example, if your program can reach sexually active men who are not monogamous, further understanding this group, finding ways to influence their behavior, or providing them with free or low-cost condoms could be a very efficient strategy. Sometimes there is a means to reach such a behavioral segment who would respond well to the same program strategy. Behavioral segmentation allows us to consider how people live their lives. For example, a 20-year-old male and a 50-year-old female who both run 10 km per day may have more in common than two 20-year-old males with very different activity levels. These behavioral segments might include church attendance, whether they eat meat, or current recycling habits. However, reaching people who only fit into a particular behavioral segment is often difficult. Alternatively, lifestyle segmentation can help identify life-stage or life-style choices that may be relevant for your program. For example, reaching new

mothers might provide a group of people who would be particularly receptive to a children's nutrition effort. Although *demographics* can sometimes be a useful method of segmentation, this is only if the behavior you are interested in varies based on demographics, or if you can create a more effective program by adjusting for demographics (demographics includes age, sex, employment status, income, ethnicity, etc.). *Geographic segmentation* can also be helpful. This can include targeting certain geographic areas, such as certain neighborhoods, cities, or countries. Geographic segmentation can also focus on where people are physically located relative to something your program addresses, for example, distance from an emergency room, or distance from a grocery store that sells fresh produce. Finally, *psychographic* segmentation addresses various psychological variables and how these influence elements relevant to your program. For example, people differ in terms of their risk-taking attitudes, and this can be important for some social marketing programs (see Chap. 6, which discusses risk-taking and thrill-seeking attitudes and their relevance to a social marketing rail safety program).

You may also wish to combine several factors when segmenting. You can consider a variety of ways to segment your audience, keeping in mind that the method(s) you select need to produce groups that are an appropriate size, that will respond well to the same strategy and that you can effectively reach. For example, if you were to develop a mountain bike safety program you might choose a behavioral segmentation (by bicycling status), a demographic segmentation (segment by sex and age), and a psychographic segmentation (segment by risk-taking orientation). Remember that segmenting means cutting the larger population into groups. You have not yet chosen a focal group or groups at this point; you have just created groups based on variable(s) that are relevant to your intended program.

## Targeting

After you segment your population, you then select the group or groups that will be the focus for your program. This is your *target audience*. You will design your program to appeal to your target audience. Although you may wish you could reach everyone, trying to do so generally wastes resources and results in a very ineffective program. It is usually better to target a specific group or groups for whom the issue is relevant, who may be receptive to your efforts, and "speak" to them in a way that suits their needs and preferences. For example, a train safety program may be better targeted toward 20-year-old males and would likely look different than one targeted toward 60-year-old women. Although segmenting and targeting are intertwined, it is important to remember that they are separate steps—segmenting involves understanding the different types of people and targeting means selecting from among them. Be sure you consider a wide variety of possible ways to segment the population before selecting a target audience—your first inclination may not be the best choice.

Several factors should be considered when selecting a target. Lee and Kotler (2011) identify four key issues for selecting a target audience: who needs the program most, who will actually be receptive to the program, who you can

realistically reach, and who your organization is best suited to work with. Along with these issues, you must consider your budget, the size of the target group, and the timing of the intended program. Each factor must be assessed in light of the others to determine the most promising target audience(s).

**Target Selection Criteria**

- Need for change
- Receptive to change
- Reachable
- Good fit
- Affordable
- Appropriate size

Commercial marketers are increasingly moving toward customization in marketing. Advances in technology offer commercial marketers the ability to customize a product to the desires of an individual customer, effectively creating a target audience consisting of one person. As technology continues to advance, social marketers too can customize their efforts to more specifically suit the individual. For example, this can be done with electronic applications that are customized for the individual, such as exercise and dieting apps.

## Positioning

Once you have selected a target audience, you need to determine the positioning of your program. Positioning is how your program will be viewed in the eyes of your target audience. Positioning is what makes your effort unique based on how your program will be perceived from your target audience's point of view (Ries & Trout, 2001). This is important because the same program can often be positioned in many different ways. For example, a free after-school sports program for children could be positioned to parents as a safer alternative than leaving children home alone, as a healthier option than letting children watch television, or as a good way to help children make friends. You could use formative research (discussed further in Chap. 3) to determine whether parents (the target audience) are more concerned about their children's safety, health, or social connections to determine how to position your program. As you may have guessed from this example, you should consider the primary benefits your target audience may be seeking and the barriers they may face when determining program positioning. These are discussed in the next section.

## Exchange, Benefits and Barriers

The concept of *exchange* is a central tenant of the field of marketing (Alderson, 1957; Kotler, 1972; see Chap. 4). In its most simplified form, exchange theory involves each party offering the other something they value and a trade occurring where each feels they are better off than they were before. The notion of exchange as the foundation of marketing assumes that people are largely motivated by self-interest (Rothschild, 1999). Exchange theory is just as applicable to social marketing as it is to commercial marketing. The social marketer must offer something of value to the target audience in order to influence the desired behavior. To do this, a social marketer must identify what the target audience values. Specifically, in order to position your program in a way that appeals to your target audience, you should consider the benefits they can gain from the behavior you are addressing—this is what will motivate them to change their behavior. You should also consider the things they may have to give up and other barriers that are likely to keep them from doing what is advocated. Then you can proactively address each, to create an appealing offering that will lead to the desired behavior.

### Benefits

It is important to try to identify all the benefits your target audience could gain from adopting the suggested behavior (or abandoning it, depending on the program). This will probably require some research with your target audience. Do not assume you can guess what they are thinking, and what will motivate them—instead, find out from them, through research (discussed further in Chap. 3). When considering benefits, identify *who* will receive the benefit, and the *time frame*. In terms of who receives the benefit, benefits may accrue for them personally, for their family and friends, their communities, or society in general. As rule of thumb, the more closely a benefit is directly beneficial to the individual him or herself, the more compelling it tends to be, however, general notions of humanitarianism and altruism can also be compelling.

It is also important to consider the time frame of the benefit. In social marketing, the benefits can often be delayed and vague, which can make it more difficult to encourage behavior change (Rothschild, 1999). The more immediate the benefit, the more appealing it is. As the benefit becomes more distant, it becomes less persuasive. A benefit to oneself that can be experienced immediately is more appealing than a benefit to society in general that will happen at some general time in the future. For example, the immediate and personal benefit of saving $1 right now for bringing your own bags for grocery shopping may be more appealing than the distant and impersonal benefit of knowing you may have helped the planet sometime in the future. Whenever possible offer immediate, concrete, and personally relevant benefits to the target audience. Again, considering the Coulee Clean-up program in Chap. 24, a barbeque event with prizes is offered at the end of

the clean-up period as a benefit for all participants and whomever they wish to bring along. Saving the environment for general community benefit is good, but attending a free party with friends and/or family offers a more immediate, concrete benefit.

### Barriers

Good social marketing efforts require that you identify and understand the barriers your target will face. Barriers can be real or perceived (Lee & Kotler, 2011). Keep in mind that perceived barriers are actually quite real to the perceiver. Barriers can also be internal to the individual, or external (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). *Internal barriers* relate to factors within the target audience themselves, such as a lack of skill, knowledge, and confidence. *External barriers* relate to their environment, such as a lack of community infrastructure, resources, and supportive social norms. As with benefits, you should conduct research with the target audience in order to correctly identify barriers. As an example, Rothschild and colleagues (2006) wanted to reduce drunk driving in rural Wisconsin, but, after talking with young men in the target audience, found that not being able to get drunk at the bar was a huge barrier; as a result, their "Road Crew" program bought used limousines and provided rides to and from the bar to allow drinking to continue but at minimal risk. The benefit that they were later able to communicate was Road Crew allowed them to get drunk without having to worry about how they would get home or the risks associated with drunk driving. Minimizing or removing barriers, both real and perceived, is critical to achieving success.

## The Four (or Seven) P's of Social Marketing

Social marketing applies commercial marketing (and other) tools to influence behavior in order to gain individual and societal benefit. The core structure for this is the classic "four P's" of marketing. In commercial marketing, *product, price, place, and promotion* have long been seen as the key components for any marketing plan. This four P's structure dates back to McCarthy (1964). Although the structure certainly has its limitations, it provides a useful framework for considering many social marketing issues. All of the cases in part 2 of this book apply a four P's approach in order to lend an ordered structure to the creation and assessment of social marketing programs.

### Product

In social marketing, the *product* is the behavior that you are trying to encourage (or discourage). So, for example, your product could be riding one's bicycle to work rather than driving a car. The notion of product in social marketing has been

discussed, debated, and elaborated upon. Here, we see it as a useful frame upon which to place our program objectives. This is what you want your target audience to (not) do. Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, and Wong (1999) added two additional levels to the definition of product, labeling the benefits the target audience receives from behavior change as the *core product*, the behavior change itself as the *actual product*, and any services or tangible objects the program offers to help the target reach behavior change as the *augmented product*. Some find this to be a useful way to further refine the notion of social marketing product.

Since social marketers do not create the behavior, but instead rely on the individual for this, scholars have questioned the applicability of the term *product* in a social marketing setting. Peattie and Peattie (2011) proposed that social proposition might be a good substitute. The social proposition is the value the individual and/or society gain from the behavior change. This value could include a wide variety of things, including things like money saved from quitting smoking, or cleaner air from reducing one's driving. Subsequent cases in this book tend to use the term *product* in their frameworks, but you may find it useful to also consider what the *social proposition* is within each case.

## Price

Price is what it will cost your target audience to adopt (or abandon) the behavior. Generally, the greatest cost to the target is not money. There may be social costs to changing a behavior (e.g., "my friends will think I'm not cool if I don't smoke"). There may be time costs (e.g., preparing healthy meals at home takes more time than buying fast food at a restaurant). There may be hedonic costs (e.g., it feels better to lay on the couch and watch television than it does to exercise). There may be psychological costs (e.g., I am afraid to get an HIV test—I wouldn't know how to react if it comes back positive). And of course, there may be financial costs (e.g., using only the prescribed amount of water when mixing baby formula is too expensive). It is important to identify all of the costs your target audience perceives regarding the behavior, and to offset or minimize these costs as much as possible. For example, if they are concerned about the additional time it takes to prepare healthy food, a cooking guide could be offered providing quick and healthy recipes (this would be an augmented product).

## Place

Place is where the behavior will be performed. It is also where the target audience will get any goods or services that facilitate their behavior change (the augmented products). Given the wide array of possible social marketing programs, place may mean a lot of different things in different situations. In some cases, place is actually where a service occurs, such as getting a vaccine at the doctor's office. Place may

also be where the individual performs a behavior, such as making healthier food choices in the cafeteria.

Place encompasses the whole channel involved with the desired behavior change. This may involve the location where the target audience obtains the augmented product, as well as where they perform the actual behavior. They may pick up healthy recipes and purchase healthy food at the grocery store, but they would then take these things home to prepare them.

An essential goal for social marketers is to make the behavior change as easy as possible for the target audience. This means conveniently placing all support elements. If you are trying to increase bike ridership within your city, then carefully assess where citizens want to ride, and put bike paths in these places. The more convenient you make the behavior, the more likely it is people will adopt it.

## Promotion

Promotion is how you will communicate and share meaning with your target audience in order to persuade them to adopt the desired behavior change. It is very important to remember that promotion is just one part of the social marketing program, and if the other components are done well, promotion may be one of the least important components. Unfortunately, social marketers sometimes place all of their emphasis on crafting a persuasive message, overlooking the importance of the other components. Even the most persuasive message cannot overcome high perceived cost of behavior adoption, or inconvenient placement. A social marketer must first reduce the perceived costs and increase the perceived convenience and benefits of the behavior as much as possible, before crafting a message. The message then simply needs to communicate the benefits of the new advocated behavior and how it overcomes the barriers.

When considering promotion, the social marketer must specify what will be said, by whom, in what way, and through what format or media. For example, a social marketer targeting teen smoking may want to communicate the message that smoking makes your breath stink, they may wish to do it in a humorous way, they may want to have a famous teen idol communicate the message, and they may wish to distribute the message through popular social media platforms.

Often social marketing does not involve advertising-style communications pieces. It may instead involve personal communication, such as having doctors mention to patients that they offer free HIV testing. In this case, the promotion is coming through word of mouth from one's doctor. It is important that you do not confuse promotion and communication with social marketing. These are components of social marketing, but on their own they do not constitute a social marketing program. Putting together an eye-catching billboard that tells people not to drive drunk, on its own, is not a social marketing program.

## The Other Three P's

Commercial marketing scholars recognized that services require additional considerations, and expanded the four P's to seven P's to accommodate these considerations. Specifically, the notions of *People, Process, and Physical Evidence* were developed (Booms & Bitner, 1981). These concepts are often relevant to social marketing as well. *People* address who will be providing the service or executing the program. For example, if you plan to offer a needle exchange program to reduce the spread of disease among intravenous drug users, who will be handing out the needles? This can be extremely important, as the target audience may avoid the program if they are not comfortable with the people administering it. *The process* must also be considered. What exactly takes place, and what does it require of the target audience? Perhaps you want to offer free nicotine patches to help the target audience quit smoking. That is great, but what do they have to do to attain the patches? If they have to go to a specific government office to pick up a voucher, then take that voucher to a specific retailer to redeem it, they may find the process too cumbersome. Can you simplify the process for the target audience? Can you make it more appealing? Finally, *physical evidence* should be considered. This concept was introduced specifically for services in the commercial marketing realm, because the service itself is fleeting and often has no physical trace. Marketers found that they could more effectively position, and gain more value, when they included physical evidence to support their services. In a commercial setting, banks offer a service. Some of the few pieces of physical evidence offered to customers are the debit and credit cards customers use to access their accounts. If these appear to be flimsy or of low quality, customers may infer that they also receive inferior banking service. Similarly, with social marketing, there may be physical evidence to accompany any services received. This physical evidence may be the augmented product, such as nicotine patches to facilitate smoking cessation. It may also be other physical elements of the situation, such as the appearance of the waiting room for HIV testing. The goal should be to make all aspects of the desired behavior change as positive and pleasant as possible, and this may include adding or improving any physical evidence.

## Concerns with the Four P's (or Seven P's) in Social Marketing

The four P's approach has received quite a bit of criticism for many reasons, including its lack of clarity and specificity (Van Waterschoot & Van den Bulte, 1992), nonetheless it has proven to be a handy tool for marketing scholars so its use endures. The four P's are frequently applied to social marketing, and here too their application has received criticism (see Peattie & Peattie, 2011), yet the functionality of the framework seems to offset the concerns for many social marketers. The cases in this book use a four P's (and sometimes seven P's) approach because we find the framework useful, though we acknowledge that it is also somewhat problematic.

We encourage you to carefully consider the benefits and drawbacks of the approach within each case, and to consider possible alternatives as well.

## Community-Based Social Marketing

The field of psychology offers a wealth of insight regarding why people make the choices they do. These insights can be extremely valuable to social marketers. McKenzie-Mohr (2000) has proposed a social marketing framework to ensure that social marketers apply psychological theories to their efforts, to maximize their effectiveness. This framework, called community-based social marketing (CBSM), was originally focused on environmental issues, but the general principles can be applied to any social marketing effort. CBSM proposes that social marketing efforts should begin by identifying barriers to the desired behavior, similar to any social marketing approach. The difference, however, is the strong emphasis CBSM places on identifying underlying psychological theories that help us to understand and explain the behavior, and identifying effective means of overcoming the barriers. CBSM stresses the need to perform formative research (research to help you develop or form the program) in order to identify these barriers (research is discussed further in Chap. 3), and from here to develop the program. The next step is to pilot test the program, to be sure it will be effective before fully rolling it out. Changes should be made to the program, based on the results of the pilot study, and then the program is ready for implementation. The final step is to evaluate the program's success through outcome or evaluative research.

Performing formative research within the target community and conducting a pilot study of the program within the target community allow social marketers to develop a more effective program. In addition, these steps allow social marketers to develop inclusive programs, whereby they are truly listening to the needs and desires of those they are seeking to help. In this way, social marketing can be done "with" the target audience, rather than "to" the target audience.

## Ethics

Social marketing is filled with ethical dilemmas. Many may already have occurred to you as you read this chapter. Others will come to you as you read actual cases later in this book. A social marketer should always be looking for and proactively responding to ethical concerns. Some may be relatively easy to address, but most will not. Some ethical concerns tug at the very fiber of social marketing. We do not believe that there are right (or wrong) answers here, but in this section we raise some of the questions that you should consider as you move forward with social marketing. Here, we identify some of what we feel are the largest and most

compelling arguments, recognizing that there are many other very important ethical issues that we do not address.

**Social Marketing as Manipulation**

First and foremost is the practice of social marketing itself. Some see it as manipulative, and view manipulation as bad by definition. We believe there is an element of truth to this. In social marketing, we seek to influence behavior. It may be only a small step from influencing to manipulating. Social marketing supporters will argue at this point that it is "for their own good" or perhaps "for the greater good." The counterargument to this is that many historical efforts were performed for these reasons, and we now see the error of those efforts—forced sterilization, lobotomies, and forcing indigenous children into residential schools are a few examples of misguided efforts to benefit individuals and society.

When considering whether social marketing is manipulative, it is perhaps appropriate to consider the larger societal context. Many social marketing programs are developed to counter the effects of commercial marketing efforts. If you view social marketing as manipulative, then commercial marketing must certainly be manipulative. Is it appropriate to use manipulation to counter manipulation? Taking this a step further, consider commercial marketing efforts that go beyond manipulation into the realm of deception. Sadly, a number of large-scale lies come to mind. Volkswagen has intentionally installed devices to cheat government-mandated emissions (Blackwelder, Coleman, Colunga-Santoyo, Harrison, & Wozniak, 2016). The sugar industry funded questionable research to implicate fat intake as a culprit in heart disease, while covering up the negative effects of their own product (Kearns, Schmidt, & Glanz, 2016). Major financial institutions were pressuring their personnel to sell additional, unneeded products to customers, and many did so without customer knowledge or consent (Johnson, 2017) and in fact financial institutions around the world were implicated in various forms of deception (Luong, 2018). A social marketing program that discourages driving in the interest of the environment, one that discourages sugar intake, or one that promotes financial literacy may be an appropriate response. Nonetheless, social marketing should never be manipulative. Social marketing is intended to influence behavior through informed, voluntary, and ethical means. Social marketing can encourage and incentivize, but it must not cross into manipulation. Each and every social marketer is beholden to this principle and must assure their practices remain ethical.

**Social Marketing as Hegemony**

A second argument against social marketing relates to the question of who is deciding what for whom. Generally, a group with more power is deciding how a group with less power should behave. Often, the decision makers do not come from the target audience's social or ethnic group, sometimes not even from their country. This may suggest an inappropriate hegemony. Social marketing best practice suggests that program development always involve the target audience through research and consultation, to avoid or minimize these concerns. The community-based social marketing model (CBSM) described above offers a method for this. Consultative, formative research should be conducted to access the voices of the

target audience. These voices should be honored when developing a social marketing program. In addition to avoiding an inappropriately paternalistic or hegemonic approach, this consultation will also result in a more effective program, one that is much more likely to gain acceptance from the target audience.

On the other hand, rather than being concerned with who is targeted for social marketing programs, there can be concern with who is not targeted. Social marketing uses effort and resources to improve the situation of individuals and communities. When one audience is targeted, it necessarily means that others are not. If the program effectively offers benefit, then the non-targeted groups are in effect being relatively disadvantaged. This is the troubling reality faced by any one responsible for distributing limited resources. Formative research is again a valuable tool to counter this concern. Research can suggest which groups are at greatest risk, and which are likely to attain the greatest benefit from the limited resources. These factors must be weighed when determining a target audience. This approach does not change the fact that some groups will receive the social marketing benefits while others will not, but it does add reason and rationale to the distribution of scarce resources.

Another ethical concern with social marketing involves uncertainty of the outcome. What if the effort fails? Perhaps the program will not be effective, and limited resources will have been wasted, when they could have been put to a better use. Even if the program is successful, how does one know that was the best use for the funds? All social marketing efforts should be planned and executed with the highest level of rigor, to guard against wasting precious and limited resources. Here again, research is important. Conducting research throughout the process can help to develop program design and assess effectiveness, allowing you to make informed changes if the program fails to perform as expected.

**Concern with the Social Marketing Message**

Sometimes it is the message itself that prompts concern. Social marketing efforts often communicate social norms. Social norms indicate to a target population what the "average" person does. This helps people to gauge and adjust their behavior (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991). For example, if teenagers learn that, despite tall tales being told, their peers are not actually having sex at high rates, then they will feel less pressure to have sex. Though effective for the group who had overestimated the norm, this effect can backfire for those who had underestimated the norm, and may lead them toward undesirable behaviors (Werch et al., 2000). For example, if a teen learns that they are well below the norm for drinking alcohol, they may choose to increase their alcohol intake. In this way, the use of social norms in social marketing can backfire. It is possible though to avoid this boomerang effect with proper execution (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007).

Fear appeals have long been used in social marketing efforts. This appeal type often depicts a frightening and/or gory scene in order to discourage a behavior. Such messages can be upsetting and distressful. Research suggests that in order to be effective, fear appeals must contain several specific components—fear alone is not

enough (Witte & Allen, 2000). Even when a fear appeal is well executed, it may be unnecessary. Research on HIV suggests that if individuals are already scared about a risk, there is little benefit in trying to scare them further with fear appeals (Muthusamy, Levine, & Weber, 2009). Fear appeals tend to be overused and they are often ineffective. Unless research demonstrates a clear and non-damaging benefit for the use of fear appeals, it may be best to avoid their use in social marketing.

**Social Marketing Partnerships**

Consumers increasingly expect companies to be socially responsible. This can take many forms, but one of these is to support a "good cause" (Cone/Ebiquity, 2015). To meet these expectations, companies are becoming involved in social marketing efforts in various ways; Patagonia's Worn Well campaign in Chap. 12 is a good example of this. Patagonia encourages consumers to keep their clothing longer, to reduce fashion waste going to the landfill or garbage dump. To facilitate, they offer mobile clothing repair services. In some cases, companies partner with non-profit organizations in order to engage with social marketing efforts. The airline Jet Blue, for example, facilitates customer donations to carbonfund.org to offset the carbon emissions created from their flights. Similarly, Aquafina is working with schools on a recycling program, and Sam's Club is taking back used coats to give to those in need (examples from Engage for Good's (ND) Halo Award winners, http://engageforgood.com). These are all examples of companies engaging in social marketing efforts. In programs such as these, the fit between the company and the cause can impact the effectiveness of the program. The preceding were all examples of negative fit. That is, the company actually causes the problem they are addressing in the program (Basil, Runte, & Liebetrau, 2018). Sometimes companies partner with causes in an effort to legitimize their negative behaviors. Should social marketers simply be happy for the support? Or should they refuse to partner with those who caused the problem in the first place? This is an ethical dilemma that most likely will depend on the situation and the social marketer, but it should be considered thoroughly and carefully.

Many other important ethical issues in social marketing exist but are not addressed here. For further study in this area, we encourage you to see Alan Andreasen's book, Ethics in Social Marketing (2001).

## Appendix: Additional Resources for the Fundamentals of Social Marketing

Janelle Marietta-Vasquez

This appendix provides supplementary resources online to help better define social marketing and the components needed to conduct social marketing programs. This is a list of online resources to help you understand each step of the social marketing process. We note that online resources and links change rapidly, and therefore it is possible that some of the links provided may no longer be available.

1. Audience Segmentation

This Web page from the USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discusses the importance of identifying the population segments and audience. https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/audience/index.html

The Health Compass Web site provides a how-to-guide on audience segmentation. https://www.thehealthcompass.org/how-to-guides/how-do-audience-segmentation

This video, taken from the World Social Marketing Conference in Washington in May 2017, discusses branding and segmentation in social marketing. Jeff Jordan, Founder of Rescue Social Change Group, provides specific examples of segmentation in youth and how to create targeted social marketing campaigns. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z28al_fsW40

In the Marketing Review Final Report prepared for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence created by the University of Stirling, they describe the process of how to segment and target your audience. On page 16, point 4, they describe three criteria for defining your segmented audience. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph6/evidence/behavior-change-review-6-social-marketing-pdf-369664530

2. Benefits and Barriers

In Chap. 7 of Lee and Kotler's Up and Out of Poverty: The Social Marketing Solution, they discuss benefits and barriers. On pages 168 and 171, they provide tables clearly identifying the types of barriers and benefits within a social marketing campaign. https://nscpolteksby.ac.id/ebook/files/Ebook/Business%20Administration/Up%20and%20Out%20of%20Poverty%20The%20Social%20Marketing%20Solution%20(2009)/9.%20Chapter%207%20-%20Understanding%20Barriers-Benefits%20and%20the%20Competition%20for%20Change.pdf

Fostering Sustainable Behavior: Community-based social marketing Web site, they have created a guide to identifying barriers and benefits. This guide shows how to conduct research in order to identify benefits and barriers perceived by the target audience. http://www.cbsm.com/pages/guide/step-2:-identifying-barriers-and-benefits/

This article by sustainable brands discusses the importance of perceived benefits and barriers from the perspective of the target audience. It provides examples of perceived value to provide more context to these terms. https://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/behavior_change/changing-behavior-through-social-marketing

The Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance provides a sheet with specific examples of barriers within a recycling program. http://www.p2pays.org/socialmarketing/barriers.asp

3. Four Ps of Social Marketing

**Product**

In this PowerPoint, the Community Women's Health Education Centre of Tulane University, demonstrates how product is identified within a social marketing

campaign. It provides examples and shows how product differs in social marketing and commercial marketing campaigns. http://womenshealth.tulane.edu/uploads/Social_Marketing_and_the_4_Ps_version_2-1389204479.pdf

In this online booklet *Social Marketing: Behavior Change Marketing in New Zealand*, presented at the Social Marketing Conference in Wellington in 2003, New Zealand social marketers Tracey Bridge of Senate Communication Counsel and Nick Farland of the Bridge provide a detailed three-step guide to social marketing. On page 14, they provide a clear example of a social marketing campaign targeting binge drinking, and demonstrate how product is used to support behavior change. http://www.nzaf.org.nz/assets/ee-uploads/files/20_socialmarketing.pdf

**Price**

This blog article, Incentives for Change in Public Health and Social Marketing Programs, discusses price in more detail, with two cases to demonstrate the use of charging nominal fees in public health social marketing initiatives: http://socialmarketing.blogs.com/r_craiig_lefebvres_social/price/

The Community Tool Box, Social Marketing and Sustainability of the Initiative discusses costs in Sect. 6. This section demonstrates an individual's decision process and how they weigh the costs and benefits of adopting a desired behavior. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/sustain/social-marketing/promote-behavior-change/main

**Place**

"Right Place, Right Time" marketing approach is discussed in this exchange article. This article emphasizes the importance of strategic placement of messaging in any marketing campaign. These principles can be applied in social marketing to ensure desired behavior is adopted. https://exchange.cim.co.uk/editorial/the-rise-of-the-right-place-right-time-marketer/

In the online booklet *Social Marketing: Behavior Change Marketing in New Zealand* mentioned above, New Zealand social marketers Tracey Bridge and Nick Farland provide an example for the Retirement Commission program on page 15, showing how the "place" p was adjusted to better meet the needs of the target audience. http://www.nzaf.org.nz/assets/ee-uploads/files/20_socialmarketing.pdf

**Promotion**

In the Marketing Review Final Report to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellent (NICE), created by the University of Stirling, they provide detail on the use of promotion and promotional channels used by food marketers to reach children (page 36, 5.1). How can we use our knowledge of commercial promotion to strengthen counter social marketing campaigns? https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph6/evidence/behavior-change-review-6-social-marketing-pdf-369664530

Richtopia provides eight examples of social marketing promotional material used within campaigns. These examples demonstrate eight distinctly different topics and how promotional materials can effectively get a message across to their target audience. https://richtopia.com/strategic-marketing/what-is-social-marketing-how-does-it-work

This list of campaign videos and print materials provided by Brogan and Partners offers 21 examples of social marketing campaign promotional materials. https://brogan.com/blog/21-creative-social-marketing-campaigns

4. Ethics in Social Marketing

This was a presentation at the Social Marketing Workshop for the National Social Marketing Centre entitled Inequalities and Ethical Considerations in Social Marketing. It clearly and simply identifies key issues in ethical social marketing. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/presentation/7f15/23b0099a88acaa9cf6809d8db344859596fe.pdf

This extensive report prepared by Lynne Eagle for the National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) defines ethics, offers ethical frameworks, and identifies key areas in targeting where ethical dilemmas often occur. http://www.thensmc.com/sites/default/files/public-files/NSMC_social_marketing_ethics.pdf

This academic conference paper by Jones and Hall examines community complaints about social marketing efforts in Australia and New Zealand from an ethical perspective. https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.ca/&httpsredir=1&article=1528&context=hbspapers

5. Objective Setting

The National Social Marketing Centre provides an article outlining the process in setting objectives for a social marketing campaign. http://www.thensmc.com/content/define-behavioral-goals-and-objectives-1

This short article from Dorie Clark at Duke University discusses the importance of having clear behavior, knowledge, and belief objectives. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dorie-clark/social-marketing-goals_b_1011641.html

This short video from Hootsuite focuses on social media and commercial marketing, but the information is useful for social marketers as well. It discusses how to create goals and objectives, and the importance of identifying KPIs (key performance indicators). https://hootsuite.com/education/courses/social-marketing/strategy/objectives-kpis

6. Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation

This article from the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, provides a step-by-step guide on the research, monitoring and evaluation of a social marketing campaign, specifically using Violence Against

Women as the case study. http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/research-monitoring-and-evaluating-vaw-social-marketing-campaigns

This article on testing, dissemination, and evaluation of a social marketing campaign, is taken from the article series, Principles of Social Marketing provided by FrogDog marketing firm in Houston, Texas. This article series covers various social marketing topics, with a guide on dissemination and evaluation techniques to implement in a campaign. https://frog-dog.com/social-marketing-testing-dissemination-and-evaluation/

7. Social Marketing as a Field of Study

This is a seminal academic article by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) which introduced the idea of social marketing. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f2c7/1a435b2d3e54c6dbd179417570bed0b85893.pdf

The Web site Ninja Outreach created a simple comparison of Commercial Marketing to Social Marketing. The chart created simplifies the definition of product, objectives, and focus when conducting social marketing. This helps in understanding how to apply commercial marketing practices to social marketing and behavior change. https://ninjaoutreach.com/commercial-marketing-vs-social-marketing/

This video is an overview of marketing, and the various types of marketing including social marketing, presented by Dr. Philip Kotler, Professor at Northwestern University. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sR-qL7QdVZQ

8. Training and Tools for Social Marketing

The CDCynergy is an interactive training and decision-support tool specifically designed for staff and public health professionals to help plan communication programs within a health context. https://www.orau.gov/cdcynergy/soc2web/default.htm

Tools of Change are an interactive Web site which was supported by Health Canada and Natural Resources Canada to provide resources around the social marketing framework to support sustainable programs. http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/tools-of-change/

The Tools of Change workbook was developed in 1998 by Jay Kassirer as a resource for the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. http://www.cullbridge.com/Projects/TOOLSE.pdf

The National Social Marketing Center Web site provides step-by-step guides and resources to better understand each the decisions made in a social marketing campaign. http://www.thensmc.com/content/what-social-marketing-1

This one-page quick reference guide, developed by Nancy Lee and Philip Kotler, explains social marketing and the 10-step guide to planning. It provides easy to apply steps and definitions of key social marketing terms and theories. https://www.socialmarketingservice.com/site/assets/files/1010/socmkt_primer.pdf

This article developed for the CDC's Healthy Community Program, provides tips for implementing social marketing on a budget. https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/pdf/social_marketing.pdf

The National Clearinghouse developed the Social Marketing Toolkit, specifically designed to build capacity of change agents within the school setting. It offers resources on developing a campaign. https://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/learn/reference-guides/social-marketing-toolkit

The Community Tool Box step-by-step guide to implementing a social marketing campaign. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/implement-social-marketing-effort

9. Overview of Social Marketing

This is a practice-oriented guide provided by the National Social Marketing Centre that gives a brief yet relatively comprehensive overview of one approach to the social marketing process:

http://www.thensmc.com/sites/default/files/Big_pocket_guide_2011.pdf

This article published in the Journal of Public Administration discusses and provides a guide for the development of a social marketing plan specific to health campaigns. This article provides an overview on the use of social marketing in the health field. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290648934_Developing_Social_Marketing_Plan_for_Health_Promotion

This video is a presentation from the 2013 World Social Marketing Conference in Toronto. Jeff Jordan, founder of Rescue Social Change Group, explains the difference between commercial marketing and behavior change marketing. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcPcrPFhqPA

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