

Marketing social good

by Jeff French

ABSTRACT: This paper sets out some of the key insights and principles about why effective social behavioural design needs to incorporate marketing principles. The paper explores how social marketers, politicians and other stakeholders can build strategies that are enhanced by marketing principles and methodology into all social policy. The key thesis of the paper is that social marketing can help inform social policy strategy, selection and implementation through a process of citizen centric policy development and delivery. Without this understanding social interventions risk continued sub optimal delivery and a growing tendency of rejection by citizens.

Keywords: Social Marketing; Citizen Centric; Behaviour; Social Policy; Strategy

Marketing do bem público

RESUMO: Este artigo apresenta algumas das principais ideias e princípios sobre o porquê de processos eficazes de comportamento social precisarem de incorporar princípios de marketing. O artigo explora como os especialistas de marketing social, os políticos e outras partes interessadas podem construir estratégias que sejam reforçadas pelos princípios e metodologias do marketing em todas as políticas sociais. A principal tese do artigo é que o marketing social pode ajudar a informar a estratégia, a selecção e a implementação de políticas sociais, através de um processo de desenvolvimento e aplicação de políticas centradas nos cidadãos. Sem essa compreensão, as intervenções sociais correm o risco de resultados deficientes e de uma crescente tendência para a rejeição por parte dos cidadãos.

Palavras-chave: Marketing Social; Focagem nos Cidadãos; Comportamento; Política Social; Estratégia

Marketing del bien público

RESUMEN: Este artículo presenta algunas de las principales ideas y principios sobre el por qué los procesos eficaces de comportamiento social necesitan incorporar principios de marketing. El artículo explora como los especialistas de marketing social, los políticos y otras partes interesadas pueden construir estrategias que sean reforzadas por los principios y metodologías del marketing en todas las políticas sociales. La principal hipótesis del artículo es que el marketing social puede ayudar a indicar la estrategia, la selección y la implementación de políticas sociales, a través de un proceso de desarrollo y aplicación de políticas centradas en los ciudadanos. Sin esa comprensión, las intervenciones sociales corren el riesgo de obtener resultados deficientes y de una creciente tendencia al rechazo por parte de los ciudadanos.

Palabras clave: Marketing Social; Enfoque en los Ciudadanos; Comportamiento; Política Social; Estrategia

Jeff French

jeff.french@strategic-social-marketing.org

PhD, Leeds Metropolitan University. Visiting Professor, Brighton University Business School. Fellow, King's College University of London. CEO, Strategic Social Marketing. Attabara, Conford, Liphook, Hants, GU30 7QW, UK.

Doutorado pela Leeds Metropolitan University. Professor Catedrático convidado da Brighton University Business School. Fellow do King's College University of London. CEO da Strategic Social Marketing. Attabara, Conford, Liphook, Hants, GU30 7QW, RU.

Doctorado por la Leeds Metropolitan University. Profesor Catedrático invitado de la Brighton University Business School. Miembro del King's College University of London. CEO de la Strategic Social Marketing. Attabara, Conford, Liphook, Hants, GU30 7QW, RU.

Received in April 2017 and accepted in September 2017

Recebido em abril de 2017 e aceite em setembro de 2017

Recibido en abril de 2017 y aceptado en septiembre de 2017

According to GroupM (2016) the business community will invest over a trillion dollars in 2017 on marketing programmes to promote the uptake of goods and services. One of the key factors in the success of commercial organisations is that they not only invest in marketing but they also invest time and effort in strategic marketing planning and research. They think long term and they select and execute strategy based on data and insights about their customers, the environment and the competition they face. They try to drive out guess work and reactive responses in favour of long term strategic action to influence consumer behaviour.

Whether they like it or not politicians and public servants are also in the business of influencing behaviour (House of Lords, 2011). The underlying premise of this paper is that there is a need for not for profit organisations, governments and their agencies to understand better and apply marketing principles and techniques as an integral part of their policy, strategy and operational delivery process.

There is a need for not for profit organisations, governments and their agencies to understand better and apply marketing principles and techniques as an integral part of their policy, strategy and operational delivery process.

As citizens become more educated, wealthy and empowered, governments and other public organisations increasingly have to be driven by people's expectations and needs rather than by just data and expert analysis alone. This shift in emphasis signals an inevitable and fundamental change in the power relationship between states and public organisations and the citizens they seek to serve. This shift necessitates the integration of social marketing as an embedded and consistent feature of social policy development and delivery, this is because social marketing is the discipline that is focused on developing understanding of citizens and how they can be influenced and engaged in helping to deliver solutions to social challenges.

We know that many individual decisions and consequent behaviour related to social problems such as alcohol misuse, overeating and energy use are influenced by a mix of social, economic, cultural and unconscious and automatic thinking as well as rational mindful consideration (Dawnay and Shah, 2005). These decisions have both personal and social implications and are influenced by a range of evolutionary derived responses and heuristic systems that interplay with the specific emotional contexts, social influence, environmental prompts, and factors such as timing, and our physiological state (Social Market Foundation, 2008; Prinz, 2012). Much of this new understanding about how to influence behaviour has for many years been used by the commercial marketing sector but less so by governments.

We are all marketers now

In 2013, the first consensus definition of social marketing was developed by the International Social Marketing Association in collaboration with the European Social Marketing Association and the Australian Association of Social

There is a need for not for profit organisations, governments and their agencies to understand better and apply marketing principles and techniques as an integral part of their policy, strategy and operational delivery process.

Marketing (ISMA, ESMA and AASM, 2013). These organisations defined social marketing as: “Social marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good.”

Social marketing is focus on the application and use of marketing principles, concepts and techniques to bring about social good. Over the last forty years social marketing has slowly become more prominent in social policy arenas driven by increasing evidence that suggests it is an effective social change approach (Gordon et al., 2006; Stead et al., 2007; French, 2011).

Building on existing developments, social marketing is now proffering new ideas relating to social programme management (Tapp and Spotswood, 2013), upstream policy focused marketing (Gordon, 2013), strategic thinking (French and Gordon, 2015), applying service logic to social issues (Russell-Bennett et al., 2013), critical thinking (Gordon, 2011), value creation (Zainuddin et al., 2011), sustainability (Smith and O’Sullivan, 2012), and transformative thinking (Lefebvre, 2011). Insights are also being developed to enable the application of social marketing to influence broader, ‘systemic’ analysis and solution generation to be adopted (Hastings and Domegan, 2014).

Marketing informed and citizen focused social programme design

The processes associated with developing effective social programmes designed to influence behaviour and bring about social progress is a challenge faced by all governments as well as a challenge faced by all public, private and NGO organisations. It is vitally important that social marketing is incorporated into social policy and programme design as it can make a significant contribution. New understanding about how to design, implement and track social interventions has been emerging for many years as evidence informed policy making has gained momentum (Bullock et al., 2001).

Further evidence and insights are also emerging from management science, behavioural sciences, the datafication of society, community engagement, empowerment methodologies and also social design. These contributions are reflected in an increasing use of evidence, data and citizen centric approaches to social policy design and delivery (Cabinet Office, 2009; Orszag and Nussle, 2016; Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, 2013; Cottam and Leadbeater, 2004; What Works Network, 2014).

Books like **Nudge** (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) and **Thinking, Fast and Slow** (Kahneman, 2011) and many others that seek to popularise some of our new understanding from the fields of behavioural science have also hit the best seller’s lists. Their contents are scrutinised by politicians and public policy makers and the recommendations that they make are beginning to find their way into social policy solutions. However rather than such piecemeal uptake of ideas such as ‘Framing’ or the application of behavioural ‘Defaults’ it is necessary that we develop and apply a more systematic and cohesive approach to designing

interventions that aim to influence people's behaviour. This is one of the key strengths of social marketing as just like other integrating systems methodologies such as lean production (Womack and Jones, 2007).

Social marketing is focus on core processes and the application of core principles and concepts that deliver added value. Unlike a narrowly focused approach reliant on one field of study it takes a more systemic approach to analysing problems and a systematic approach to developing and testing interventions that are dictated by analysis rather than by selecting from a predefined set of options as is often the case with the application of approaches such as behavioural economics (French, 2011).

The organising potential of social marketing

Social marketing is one of the most comprehensive organising set of principles and concepts that we have for strategic assessment, design, delivery and evaluation of social programmes that seek to influence behaviour for social good. Just like marketing in the for-profit sector, social marketing is a field of study that draws on theory, evidence and data from every discipline and then proceeds to synthesise it through systematic and transparent analysis, planning and management processes. These processes are informed by principles that include value creation, exchange and relationship building, brand building, segmentation, user centric product and service design and implementation.

A new paradigm for social programme design is inevitable because we are now at a point in human history in many countries where a confluence of factors is coming together that mean that existing approaches to social policy selection, design and application are no longer tenable. This situation has come about because of increased literacy, wealth, new evidence about what works, new technology and new understanding about how behaviour can be influenced (Oliver, 2013). The need for a paradigm shift is being driven by the fundamental power shift from elites to citizens that these developments are bringing about (Clarke et al., 2007). As people become wealthier, educated, empowered by more responsive governments they experience more power as 'citizen consumers'. This expectation of choice and power is transferred into expectations about how government and other not-for-profit institutions should behave and function.

Given impetus by these factors social marketing has begun to influence the social policy agenda. It has been given momentum by the growing recognition among policy-makers about the limitations of traditional forms of state action (Shafir, 2013; Oliver, 2013). What is needed now are approaches to social policy that reflect a more equal distribution of social power and responsibility and more citizen insight informed social policy and programmes. What this means in practice is assisting and working with citizens to transform how they are viewed by governments and agencies from being passive recipients of social programmes in systems that deny them both power and responsibility to being

It is vitally important that social marketing is incorporated into social policy and programme design as it can make a significant contribution.

active co-creators of social services and solutions to social challenges.

This emerging new paradigm signals a break from a situation where governing elites ruled and the ruled were grateful, experts told people what to think and do and they did it. It also reflects modern conceptions of marketing practice that emphasise relationship building (Gummesson, 2002; Finne and Gronroos, 2009), and the dominance of quality service delivery (Lusch and Vargo, 2006) rather than just a focus on products or services.

The marketing responsibility of politicians and not for profit institutions

It is clear that it is insufficient to consider an individual's voluntary behaviour change in isolation from social, economic and environmental influences on behaviour (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). The impact of social, economic and environmental factors has a large influence on people's ability to behave in certain ways, their choice envelope and their motivation and ability to act (World Health Organization, 2008). The behaviour of others and the general, economic, cultural and social environments expressed through notions of social capital (Putman, 1995) and community resilience also needs to be considered and targeted if individuals are to be helped to sustain a positive social behaviour or modify damaging behaviour (Woolcock, 2001).

Governments and other agencies concerned with influencing behaviour to achieve social objectives often focus on information, education and 'voluntary' behaviour change. However, in some circumstances governments will need to use other policy tools to create supportive environments in which positive social behaviours and social change can be achieved. These tools include legislation, penalties and incentives, as well as the design of systems, services and environments. For example, in the field of road safety fines for speeding and road systems design that encourages people to slow down at crossing points are effective interventions. When risk and threat is great and highly probable governments may need to use different tools to influence people to be compliant with social policy, including incentives and or sanctions.

It is probable that in most circumstances in both the developed and developing world to succeed in designing optimally effective, efficient and acceptable social programmes the marketing concepts of value creation, exchange and relationship building will all need to be used to design programmes that create social good. These core marketing concepts, focus on building social policy and intervention strategies through collaborative consensus building and efforts aimed at the genuine engagement and empowerment of citizens in the policy selection and implementation process. The development of social strategy based on both value creation and citizen engagement also lead to the application of a longer-term strategic approach and a more diverse mix of interventions being applied. This is because when citizens are engaged and listened to they often generate policy responses and intervention solutions that goes beyond the narrow confines of legislation enforcement and information provision.

As people become wealthier, educated, empowered by more responsive governments they experience more power as 'citizen consumers'.

How social marketing can assist with more responsive and inclusive governance

This paper makes the case that there is a significant cultural and technical shift required within governments and specialist not for profit agencies to move towards a more citizen focused social marketing informed approach to social policy development and delivery. Such an approach will necessitate developing a fully integrated partnership between marketing professionals and policy and delivery professionals if a more optimum set of social outcomes are to be achieved from social policy interventions.

In the past many social programmes have been developed on the basis of their fit with the prevailing political, economic, ideological and moral sensibilities of ruling elites. Alongside these considerations there has also been a focus on evidence and efficiency based policy making and social programme delivery. This approach is informed by undertaking systematic evidence reviews and gathering evidence about what works through the setting up of demonstration projects and pilots. The data collected is then analysed by experts who decide what the 'evidence' indicates about what works and what should be invested in.

At other times, however policies are developed based on trigger factors such as reactions to disasters or if a policy might win a political party votes at an upcoming election. Both the 'expert defined' and 'reactive' approach to social programme selection lack the 'expert' knowledge of the people who are experiencing the issue and a deep understanding of what they say would help them and what will not.

Applying social marketing as an integral part of the selection, design, implementation and evaluation of social programmes begins with a commitment to building solutions around citizens expressed needs and wants. Developing propositions and interventions that are valued by citizens requires an additional commitment to investing in understanding their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, and using this insight to help select and structure interventions designed to impact on the selected social issue. Creating value for citizens is not about abdicating responsibility for defining what constitutes social good by just responding to what people say they need and want. It is about understanding, listening and engaging people as partners in defining the nature of problems and in the selection and delivery of solutions. Social marketing is a respectful process.

A starting point for a more citizen centric approach is investment in active and continuous stakeholder and citizen engagement. To this end the OECD (2001), identifies three levels of government-citizen relations and investment. First government disseminates information on policy making or programme. Design and information flows from the government to citizens in a one-way relationship. A second and enhanced approach is when governments asks for and receives feedback from citizens on policy-making and programme design. In order to receive feedback, government defines whose

views are sought and on what issues. Receiving citizens' feedback also requires government to provide information to citizens beforehand. Consultation thus creates a limited two-way relationship between government and citizens. The third and most effective approach advocated by OECD is 'Active participation and citizen engagement'. In this scenario citizens are actively engaged in policy and decision-making processes. Citizens may propose policy options and engage in debate on the relative merits of various options, although the final responsibility for policy formulation and regulation rests with the government.

Engaging citizens in policy making and programme design requires that both governments and citizens commit to an investment in the process. It represents more than just a simple two-way dialogue rather all citizens, community groups' organisations and government have a responsibility to reach out and engage in a systemic way with potential stakeholders, partners and target groups so that every social asset and stream of insight can be used to develop solutions to social problems.

Engaging citizens in policy making and programme design requires that both governments and citizens commit to an investment in the process. It represents more than just a simple two-way dialogue.

Conclusions

This paper has explored the challenges for governments and social institutions when seeking to develop social policy focused on influence behaviour for social good. The complex web of influences on behaviour and the equally seemingly complexity associated with developing effective and efficient interventions is clear.

The current tendency in many countries to rely on simplistic information transmission and legal and fiscal sanctions to influence social behaviour can reduce the impact of social programmes.

This paper has sought to draw out some of the key issues and features associated with the development of more effective social programmes and how they can be enhanced by the application of social marketing principles. This means developing social programmes and interventions that are informed by citizens needs want and aspirations and are valued by citizens.

Ideally these social marketing informed programmes should also be delivered through civic relationships that demonstrate that citizens are engaged in the selection, design, delivery and evaluation of interventions.

Social marketing principles can be used to inform and structure this process and ensure that the creation of citizen defined value and social good sits at the heart of future social policy development and delivery.

References

- BULLOCK, H.; MOUNTFORD, J. & STANLEY, R. (2001), **Better Policy Making**. Centre for Management and Policy Studies, London.
- CABINET OFFICE (2009), **A Guide to Social Return on Investment**. Cabinet Office, London.
- CLARKE, J.; NEWMAN, J.; SMITH, N.; VIDLER, E. & WESTMARLAND, L. (2007), **Citizen-Consumers: Changing Publics & Changing Public Services**. Sage, London.

COTTAM, H. & LEADBEATER, C. (2004), "Red Paper 01 Health: Co-Creating Services". Design Council, London.

DAWNAY, E. & SHAH, H. (2005), **Behavioural Economics: Seven Principles for Policy-makers**. The New Economics Foundation, London.

FINNE, A. & GRONROOS, C. (2009), "Rethinking marketing communication: From integrated marketing communication to relationship communication". *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 15(2/3), pp. 179-195.

FRENCH, J. (2011), "Why nudging is not enough". *Journal of Social Marketing*, 1(2), pp. 154-162.

FRENCH, J. & GORDON, R. (2015), **Strategic Social Marketing**. Sage, London.

GORDON, R. (2011), "Critical social marketing: Assessing the cumulative impact of alcohol marketing on youth drinking". PhD thesis, University of Stirling, Stirling. Available at <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/3135/1/Ross%20Gordon%20PhD%20FINAL%20SUBMITTED.pdf>; accessed 10 March 2017.

GORDON, R. (2012), "Re-thinking and re-tooling the social marketing mix". *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 20(2), pp. 122-126.

GORDON, R. (2013), "Unlocking the potential of upstream social marketing". *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(9), pp. 1525-1547.

GORDON, R.; McDERMOTT, L.; STEAD, M. & ANGUS, K. (2006), "The effectiveness of social marketing interventions for health improvement: what's the evidence?". *Public Health*, 120(12), pp. 1133-1139.

GROUPM (2016), "GroupM Predicts 2017 global marketing expenditures will surpass \$1 trillion". Press release, 2nd August 2016. Available at <https://www.groupm.com/news/groupm-predicts-2017-global-marketing-expenditures-will-surpass-1-trillion>, accessed 10 March 2017.

GUMMESSON, E. (2002), **Total Relationship Marketing: Rethinking Marketing Management**. 2nd edition, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.

HASTINGS, G. & DOMEGAN, C. (2014) (Eds.), **Social Marketing: From Tunes to Symphonies**. 2nd edition, Routledge, London.

HOUSE OF LORDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SELECT COMMITTEE (2011), **Behaviour Change**. Authority of the House of Lords, London. Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/ldsctech/179/179.pdf>; accessed 10 March 2017.

ISMA, ESMA & AASM (2013), "Consensus Definition of Social Marketing". Available at http://www.i-socialmarketing.org/assets/social_marketing_definition.pdf, accessed 8 July 2016.

KAHNEMAN, D. (2011), **Thinking, Fast and Slow**. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

LEFEBVRE, R.C. (2011), "An integrative model for social marketing". *Journal of Social Marketing*, 1(1), pp.54-72.

LUSCH, R.F. & VARGO, S.L. (2006), **The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions**. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, NY.

MAYER-SCHÖNBERGER, V. & CUKIER, K. (2013), **Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think**. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, MA.

OECD (2001), **Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making**. OECD, Paris.

OLIVER, A. (2013) (Ed.), **Behavioural Public Policy**. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

ORSZAG, P. & NUSSLE, J. (2016), **Moneyball for Government**. 2nd edition, Disruption Books, New York.

PRINZ, J. (2012), **Beyond Human Nature: How Culture and Experience Shape Our Lives**. Allen Lane, Penguin Group, London.

PUTMAN, R. (1995), "Bowling alone: America's declining social capital". *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), pp. 65-79.

RUSSELL-BENNETT, R.; WOOD, M. & PREVITE, J. (2013), "Fresh ideas: Services thinking for social marketing". *Journal of Social Marketing*, 3(3), pp. 223-238.

SHAFIR, E. (2013) (Ed.), **The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy**. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford.

SMITH, A. & O'SULLIVAN, T. (2012), "Environmentally responsible behaviour in the workplace: An internal social marketing approach". *Journal of Marketing Management*, 28(3-4), pp. 469-493.

SOCIAL MARKET FOUNDATION (2008), **Creatures of Habit: The Art of Behaviour Change**. Social Market Foundation, London.

STEAD, M.; GORDON, R.; ANGUS, K. & McDERMOTT, L. (2007), "A systematic review of social marketing effectiveness". *Health Education*, 107(2), pp. 126-140.

TAPP, A. & SPOTSWOOD, F. (2013), "From the 4Ps to COM-SM: Reconfiguring the social marketing mix". *Journal of Social Marketing*, 3(3), pp. 206-222

THALER, R. & SUNSTEIN, C. (2008), **Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness**. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

VARGO, S. & LUSCH, R. (2004), "Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing". *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), pp. 1-17.

WHAT WORKS NETWORK (2014), **What Works? Evidence for Decision Makers**. What Works Centres, London. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378038/What_works_evidence_for_decision_makers.pdf, accessed 10 March 2017.

WILKINSON, R. & PICKETT, K. (2009), **The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better**. Allen Lane, London.

WOMACK, J. & JONES, D. (2007), **Lean solutions**. Simon & Schuster, London.

WOOLCOCK, M. (2001), "The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes". *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 2(10), pp. 11-17.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2008), **Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health. Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health**. World Health Organization, Geneva.

ZAINUDDIN, N.; PREVITE, J. & RUSSELL-BENNETT, R. (2011), "A social marketing approach to value creation in a Well-Women's health service". *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(3/4), pp. 361-385.

O maior directório de entrevistas em directo com Gurus de Gestão & Tecnologia

JANELA
na WEB.COM

O seu PORTAL para o
Management em português

GURUS ON LINE
www.gurusonline.tv
Entrevistas sobre Administração de Empresas

REGISTE-SE NA
JANELA NA WEB

eb2001