

Challenges of Social Marketing in the Contemporary Society

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ABSTRACT

Social marketing is largely concerned with human development. It includes people as the participants in the developmental process. Social concerns and sensitivities along with the techniques of marketing constitute the core strategy of social marketing. The pre-requisite components of this strategy are largely related to the needs and demands of the society. Social marketing involves the development perspective, social understanding and communication abilities towards market products. The concept of marketing is the interface between the different and competing value systems. They include the firm, the customers and also the people related to the business. Generally marketing management relies on providing products and services that create value for the customers and satisfying them. To enable a company to play a responsible role in the society the marketers have to be aware of the ethics in their activities. Marketing ethics is the moral evaluation of marketing activities and decision whether they are right or wrong. The marketing behavior is judged as ethical or unethical on the basis of the common acceptability of the consumers in the society. In this context, the present paper is about challenges of social marketing in the contemporary society.

1. Introduction

Human beings vary in their perceptions with regard to the work. These perceptions are inevitably shaped through certain processes. The best of them become the tools of success. They are monopolized by the resourceful forces that are motivated by private profit rather than social gain. In the contemporary society the concept of monopoly has been broken and skilled practitioners have emerged as a social change for the sake of the public good. Social marketing instructs that, perception is the only reality and the public must be taken seriously into consideration. It demands the finest creative talent. In this context I wish to present a paper on various ethical issues with regard to the human resource their creative skills and also their contribution in the growth of social marketing. The concept of social marketing is originated in USA. But it has more relevance to the poor and under developed countries. Because of limited resources; the social and health indicators are very low and also the limited resources have to be utilized to the maximum extent in these countries. In India also all these conditions exist. Perhaps it is the first country in the world executed this concept successfully during 1960s.

Social marketing is largely concerned with human development. It includes people as the participants in the developmental process. Social concerns and sensitivities along with the techniques of marketing constitute the core strategy of social marketing. The pre-requisite components of this strategy are largely related to the needs and demands of the society. Social marketing involves the development perspective, social understanding and communication abilities towards market products. The concept of marketing is the interface between the different and competing value systems. They include the firm, the customers and also the people related to the business. Generally marketing management relies on providing products and services that create value for the customers and satisfying them. To enable a company to play a responsible role in the

society the marketers have to be aware of the ethics in their activities. Keeping in the view of ever – growing importance of the consumer orientation in marketing, the companies should formulate the code of ethics that help in framing policies at every level of marketing. Because, it enables the employees to follow the uniform standard of ethics. There are many factors that influence the ethics in decision making in marketing. They are:

- a) Individual factors
- b) Significant factors
- c) Opportunity factors.

- The individual factors are the moral values inculcated through the family, education and culture. The individual factors play important role in framing the decisions in the marketing.
- The significant factors refer to the extent to which the reference groups, management and peers influence the marketer. They play major role in the organizational climate of the markets.
- The opportunity factors are the ethical codes and standards that are promoted in an organization. They are the rules and policies framed by organization, and all the employees are expected to adhere.

The marketing practitioners must recognize that, they are not only serving their enterprise but also act as stewards of the society in creating, facilitating and executing the efficient and effective transactions. They must embrace highest ethical norms and values as their responsibility towards the stakeholders.

2. Elements of Marketing

2.1. Ethical issues relating to Product:

It is the first element in marketing. Many decisions are basing on the product. They include:

- Quality of the product
- Safety of the Product
- Package and Brand Issues
- Product warranty

The demand for high quality products is the most important thing. It is the general responsibility of the business to ensure that the quality of the product measures the reasonable claim of consumer expectation.

The first priority of the product is safety and warranty. No doubt that safety is purely based on the budgetary consideration. There are two factors that are associated with cost. They are:

- a) The product may cause serious injury
- b) The frequency of its concrescence.

The ethical issues in product also involves two major attributes of the product. They are packing and branding. It is the moral obligation of the manufacturer to provide clear and accurate information with regard to the labelling and packing of products. Usually they label the products as biodegradable, environmental friendly or recyclable without defining the terms. Pollution is another important issue. The protest against the recent issue in Tamilnadu at Tuttukudi sterilite industry, the residents reveal that choosing the place for an industry is the most important crucial and sensitive, because it involves the life and well being of the people as well as the living creatures and eco-system. Bhopal gas tragedy is also another ghastly incident and still the local people are experiencing the after math of the leakage.

2.2. Ethical issues relating to price

- Price fixing
- Price discrimination
- Price increase
- Deceptive Pricing

Price fixing is an agreement between the business competitors to sell the same product or service at the same price. Ethically price fixing is illegal. But some governments and countries sanctioned it. Price discrimination exists when the sales of the identical goods or services are transacted at different prices from the same provider. It may occur when it costs more to supply one customer to the other. Sometimes the product will be sold at a low price due to the competition in the market or to create a barrier to entry into the new competitors. The price war indicate the state of intense competitive rivalry along with the series of price reduction. In case of the dumping pricing policy the product will be exported from one country to another. It is more relevant to the international trade. The price of the product would be either below its changes in its home market or even below its cost of production.

3. Ethical issues relating to Place

Generally place is a point at which the customers able to access the information about a particular product or service and get the final product. It moves from the supplier to the consumer. Place includes the process of distributing the product and also the type of delivery service offered to the consumer. Some unethical practices arise in the market place when it adopts:

- Distribution to Exclusive territories
- Dealers Rights
- Predatory competition

Sometimes the product may be distributed to certain restricted territories. The issue of unethical practices arises when the marketer stops distribution to a particular place for various reasons like not yielding profits. The consumers who frequently purchase the particular product from the particular place may be deprived of getting the product from the desired place. The customer who depends regularly buying the products from those places have to depend on other places.

The rights of dealers is another important ethical issue. Sometimes the dealers are entitled with the exclusive rights of distribution and they may misuse the rights. The concept of dumping is another important unethical issue. In specific cases the product will be exported from one country to another at a lower price to dump them. In such cases the products may be available at cheaper rates due to the excess manufacturing.

4. Ethical Issues in promotion

The general phenomena of all companies is : advertising and public relations strategies to attract the customers. Each and every company adopts to promote its products. But the way in which it communicates to its customers are subjected to lose scrutiny by the consumers. Advertisement has certain code of ethics. It is considered as unethical basing on the following factors:

- False and deceptive advertising
- Promotional allowances
- Bribery

Advertisement is considered as unethical when it degrades the rival's product and misguides with the false information. It conceals the information that vitally affects the human life. Eg: side effects of drugs. Another unethical method of advertising is obscene or immoral way of depicting. The unethical advertisements offer untruthful claims like loss of weight, growth of hair and height, freedom and independence. There are some exaggerated claims in the advertisements like advertisements of ice-creams, cakes, visuals of T.V. and so on. All these advertisements are created with the models that have nothing to do with the look, feel and also the taste of the product.

Unethical advertising:

The unverifiable claims in the advertisements of the products like Horlicks, Maltova and other energy drinks promotes the idea of number of vitamins and how they help children to grow strong and tall. For all these claims there is no way of verifying.

Use of misleading name:

The Indian advertisers are being frequently warned by Multinational companies not to use brand names and labels of their products.

Usage of Testimonials:

The advertisement pay huge amounts of fees to the celebrities who have nothing to do with the use of product or the service to endorse their products.

Creating false impressions:

The advertisers frequently exploit the 'heaviness' of Indians for foreign products by giving foreign brands names like "Park Avenue" or Cambridge or by choosing Europeans or Americans to endorse the products. Some manufacturers advertise indigenous cosmetics and perfumes by using names like France or Paris or cologne in the advertisements and creating erroneous impression that such products are belonged to foreign.

Depicting Women:

To advertise some of the products women are targeted. They are cars, bikes and after shave lotions. They are seductively made use to advertise such products.

Alcohol and Tobacco Advertising:

It is a fact that advertising alcoholic drinks and tobacco are prohibited in the broad casting media. The advertisers violate all these rules in the ingenious ways. Eg: Soda, mineral water. Such kind of indirect advertisements are called as surrogate

advertising. Firms like Mc Donnell sponsor sport events and promote their brands of liquor. The sponsorship of sports events and historical places have been commonly used by the manufacturer.. Like this there are many more unethical advertising strategies executed by the manufacturers to attract the consumers and also to earn more money.

5. Conclusion

Marketing ethics is the moral evaluation of marketing activities and decision whether they are right or wrong. The marketing behavior is judged as ethical or unethical on the basis of the common acceptability of the consumers in the society. The manufacturer has to fulfill the expectations and establish the reliability of the product. Then only the product will sustain the competition. It also upholds the organizations management and also individual's personal moral values. The unethical practices and ethical violation definitely put the trust in marketing exchanges difficult. Because faith, honesty and trust are foundations for conducting any business for the longer period. The self-established standards of the organization acts as a catalyst and leads to the maintenance of healthy relationships among the employees, customers and community as a whole.

Perhaps it is the fabric describing the integrity as values of business as exhibited by its leaders and employees. It is a fact that a good business with ethics leads to the improved products and services, improved employee performance and greater customer loyalty. It is the glue that binds together the separate constituents of the business.

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