Keynote Presentation:
Rethinking Non-profit and Social Marketing in the Marketing Firmament

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Rethinking Social Marketing’s Place in the Marketing Firmament

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What should be my role?

• I have had a long history in the field
• As an academic, I have long sought to provide conceptual underpinnings to social and nonprofit marketing teaching practice
My view of myself

On Cloud 4

What is needed now . . .

Rethinking the place of nonprofit and social marketing in the minds of academics, practitioners, and the media
From its beginning, non-profit/social marketing has had its challenges as a field of study (as well as practice)

- In 1969-71, nonprofit and social marketing was part of the “broadening movement” led by Northwestern University faculty:
  - Philip Kotler
  - Sid Levy
  - Gerry Zaltman

- But marketing academics were threatened

And we have had many other challenges since then

- Health education & promotion experts felt threatened
- Marketing academics considered it an interesting niche but no more
- Now we are confused with social network marketing
- 95% of applications are in health or environment
But social and nonprofit marketing has grown and matured

• Multiple textbooks
• Papers, articles, Journals
• Listserves
• Associations (including AMA)
• Funding
• Conferences
• Private sector involvement

So what is needed?

• Expanding applications horizontally and upstream
• Building proof
• Getting more respect!
My* challenge

• Reposition social and nonprofit marketing vs. commercial marketing
• Make an argument for this position
• Suggest major implications

*Marketing Professor in a major US business school

There is evidence that the marketing world view can be challenged

• Steve Vargo and Bob Lusch have shaken up conventional academic thinking about marketing which has been focused on product marketing (e.g. the 4Ps).
• Services were different and had different challenges
• They proposed a “service dominant view of marketing”
   • It has had wide acceptance
So, how do we reframe our field to accommodate commercial and social sectors?

• Historically, we have said that social marketing and non-profit marketing involves the application of commercial marketing concepts and tools to social challenges*
• That is: we are a spin-off.

*mea culpa

And the commercial and academic worlds assume this

• For example, mainstream marketing textbooks typically devote a few pages to nonprofit and social marketing. They barely
  – Acknowledge its existence
  – Give a few examples
  – Show clever campaigns
And

- Major academics who develop marketing models and frameworks try to help commercial organizations maximize profits and ROI.

But a nonprofit marketer’s challenge is much more complex

- He or she must spend resources optimally to generate:
  - Sales (Goodwill)
  - Donations (Red Cross)
  - Volunteering (Habitat)
  - Corporate partnerships (Boys & Girls Clubs)
  - Grants from government agencies and foundations
  - Behaviors by upstream partners who can remove barriers
What is the commercial marketer’s challenge?
A paradigm shift is needed!!

- They’ve got it backwards --- and so have the textbooks, the popular and academic press, and (probably) the general public)
So, what are the implications?

1. We need to replace “customer” language
   1. I propose “target audiences”
2. We need to encourage modelers to build grander optimization models that can have a sales element – but need not.

We need to promote academic and commercial research that spans sectors

- Study generic target audience behaviors
  - Starting
  - Stopping
  - Switching
  - Increasing
  - Decreasing
  - Stopping
  - Not starting
• 40 years ago Phil Kotler said”
  “Every organization performs marketing functions”

• Today, we need to:
  – Make our language more universal
  – Fundamentally change our textbooks
  – Develop generalizations across sectors – e.g. about target audiences
  – Create ethical frameworks and institutions for all marketing practice

And hold our head a little higher!!

• We need to develop a little arrogance
  – Yes, we learn from commercial marketers
  – But, they have even more to learn from us
  – They have lots of money, lots of waste – we achieve with less

• They have one target; we can have six – more – not necessarily responding to the same marketing tactics
  – We often cannot detect our effects (not smoking) or partial out who created the effects (e.g. who caused you to diet or exercises)
This new way of viewing the marketing field . . .

• Has great promise for making us all smarter and better
• Can change a great many people’s views of who we are and what we do
  – Commercial marketers
  – Politicians and government bureaucrats
  – The general publics

Your takeaway . . .
Questions

Please wait for the microphone and state your name and organisation before asking your question.