Impact of Social Marketing on Consumption Reduction

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This article considers the potential of the discipline of marketing to contribute to consumption reduction from a social marketing perspective. The authors review the difficulties of applying conventional marketing theory and practice in pursuit of more sustainable consumption, and the logic of applying an adapted form of social marketing to promote more sustainable lifestyles and reductions in consumption. This study also uses a health-oriented social marketing campaign to demonstrate the potential of a social marketing approach to address ingrained forms of consumer behavior and to successfully 'de-market' products.

INTRODUCTION

The Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987), published 20 years ago, brought the concept of sustainable development into the mainstream of business and political thought. The report's analysis clearly demonstrated the unsustainable nature of existing patterns of development, production and consumption. In the debate that followed the report's publication, environmental campaigners frequently vilified the discipline of marketing for its role in driving the growth in global consumption, while others focused on the potential for marketing to contribute solutions. As concern about environmental and social issues amongst consumers grew, so did expectations that this concern would influence consumer behavior (Vandermerwe and Oliff, 1990; Worcester, 1993), and act as a spur for innovation and the development of new products. Social and environmental performance became seen as a key product or service attribute in many markets, and a source of potential differentiation and competitive advantage for companies (Porter and van der Linde, 1995). The prospect of harnessing the power of commercial marketing and market forces to create more sustainable economies and societies, in a way that avoided any fundamental disruption to existing market structures or lifestyles, possessed a clear and attractive logic.

Twenty years on from the Brundtland Report, the feasibility of such win–win outcomes looks more doubtful. Despite the two Earth Summits at Rio and Johannesburg, the publication of corporate environmental or sustainability strategies becoming commonplace, and the launch of many innovative greener products, environmental and economic data demonstrate that the majority of trends continue to move away from sustain-ability. Particular sources of concern include:

    1-CO2 emissions: fears about climate change are a high priority issue for governments worldwide, but emissions continue to grow. The 2003 global CO_2 emissions linked to fossil fuel

use reached an estimated 7303 million metric tons of carbon, representing an all-time high and a 4.5% increase from 2002 (Marland et al., 2006).

2- Ecological footprints: this technique measures the Earth's productive capacity in terms of its availability (as a concept of 'Earthshare') and how it is being exploited. The eco-footprint of humanity as a whole, and many individual countries, is currently unsustainable and still rising. Globally humankind is using resources requiring the equivalent of 2.8 ha of land per person, while as of 1997 there were only 2 ha per person available (Wackernagel et al., 1999).

3- Growth of consumption within poorer countries: Goldman Sachs Group forecasts (Wilson and Purushothaman, 2003) anticipate per capita GDP in China rising from US$ 1324 in 2005 to $4965 in 2020, and in India from $ 559 to $ 1622 in 2020 (increases of 375% and 290% respectively in per capita consumption growth in countries that are also experiencing rapid population expansion). Although increases in wealth are not necessarily directly coupled to consumption of resources, the two are closely related. Channeling this growth into consumption patterns that mirror the lifestyles of industrialized nations, will have severe consequences for the planet and its population.

Creating meaningful progress towards sustainability requires more radical solutions than just the development of new products and product substitutions amongst consumers, including the promotion and acceptance of concepts such as responsible consumption, consumption reduction, voluntary simplicity and sustainable lifestyles. This situation applies both to industrialized consumer societies, and those less-industrialized countries with rapidly growing economies and populations. The anti-consumption challenge poses some critical questions about how to promote such concepts to make them acceptable to consumers, and what role the discipline of marketing can and should play in this process.

This article seeks to contribute some answers to these questions by reviewing the role of marketing in the sustainable consumption debate, and considering the potential of social marketing in particular to contribute to anti-consumption and the emergence of more sustainable lifestyles. This analysis includes proposals to reconfigure elements of social marketing to make it better able to contribute to the anti-consumption agenda. Specifically, this article uses an example of a successful application of social marketing for consumption reduction from the field of health to provide some potentially valuable lessons about social marketing's potential to change consumption behavior for the better.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF MARKETING IN SUSTAINABILITY DEBATE

Marketing scholars first addressed environmental issues in the 1970s with the emergence of the concepts Ecological Marketing (Henion and Kinnear, 1976) and the Ecologically Concerned Consumer (Kardash, 1976). Fisk (1973) also explored the potential role of consumption reduction in his 'Theory of Responsible Consumption'. These concepts largely represent an environmentally-oriented extension of societal marketing, which holds that marketing activities should take into account the welfare of society, as well as the interests of consumers and business shareholders (Prothero, 1990). This early debate focused on a relatively small number of business sectors (particularly oil, cars and chemicals) and consumer behaviors (such as recycling and fuel-saving). It also lost momentum as the oil shocks of the time receded.

In the late 1980s these concepts re-surfaced with added urgency in the wake of the Brundtland Report under a number of labels such as Green Marketing or Environmental Marketing. This resurgence involved a broader selection of industries, and emphasized the marketing opportunities produced by growing consumer environmental awareness and knowledge (van Dam and Apeldoorn, 1996). Early academic discussions about green marketing spoke of the rapid increase in green consumerism at this time as heralding a dramatic shift in consumption towards greener products (e.g. Prothero, 1990; Vandermerwe and Oliff, 1990). Market research survey evidence provided some initial support for this trend (see Roper Organization, 1990; Worcester, 1993), as did consumer involvement in the global boycott of CFC-driven

aerosols, and the international best-seller status achieved by 'The Green Consumer Guide' (Elkington and Hailes, 1988) and its many derivatives.

Other concepts emerged during the 1990s including Envir-opreneurial Marketing (Menon and Menon, 1997), highlighting the opportunities for innovation from integrating corporate environmentalism and social goals with marketing strategy; and Sustainable Marketing (Fuller, 1999), integrating industrial ecology principles within marketing and arguing the case for both transforming and reducing consumption. Kilbourne and Beckmann (1998), concluded that the earliest and most prolific (if inconclusive) research stream dedicated to the Green Consumer and how to market products to them, was gradually giving way to research that challenged the basic assumptions of the marketing academy (e.g. Kilbourne et al., 1997), and moving towards broader questions of the sustainability of existing consumption and production systems (e.g. van Dam and Apeldoorn, 1996). This review also revealed the extent to which the question of the role of consumption practices, begun in 1973 by Fisk, had been largely ignored until the mid-1990s; and the extent to which the green marketing discourse was almost entirely geared towards trying to persuade consumers to buy more (if different and environmentally sounder) products, or to dispose of them more responsibly. Such behavioral changes represented more responsible consumption, but the emphasis on purchase substitutions in favor of products with environmental augmentations was never likely to make a substantive contribution towards sustainability. The tendency to ignore the question of consumption reduction within the mainstream marketing debate, which continues to this day, reflects the fact that it does not fit comfortably with accepted marketing theory or practice.

In terms of the environmental impacts of individuals' consumption in industrialized economies, the majority of impacts relate to a small number of product categories. The European Environmental Impact of Products (EIPRO) Project (Tukker et al., 2005) provides a rigorous analysis of research into the environmental impacts of products consumed by households. The project's input–output based methodology assesses 255 domestic product types against a wide range of environmental impacts. It concludes that 70%–80% of total impacts relate to:

- food and drink consumption;
- housing (including domestic energy); and
- transport (including commuting, leisure and holiday travel).

These are all sectors where it is difficult to detect any significant improvements from a sustainability perspective in the levels and nature of consumption of products over the last 20 years. There have been no revolutionary changes in the way that the majority of people in industrialized economies are fed, housed or moved during the past 20 years, and overall consumption growth has offset most incremental eco-efficiency improvements. Organic food consumption is increasing, but so is consumption of imported foods and energy and packaging intensive 'ready meals'. In automobiles the growth in segments such as sports cars and 4×4 vehicles offsets the fuel efficiency gains from new engine technologies. European homes are 22% more efficient in terms of energy use for heating compared to 1985, but this improvement is offset by the growth in energy using home appliances. This growth, combined with an increase in the number of households, reflecting the growth in single person households rather than population, has led to a 4% increase in overall domestic energy consumption since 1985 (EEA, 2001).

The past 20 years of debate and business initiatives linked to marketing and the environment have clearly failed to deliver significant change or substantive progress towards sustainability. Smith (1998) proposes that green marketing provides a bridge between the emerging gap between people's environmental concern, and their desire to maintain the western consumer lifestyle. With its focus on conventional models of marketing and consumption, and on encouraging product substitutions in favor of environmentally enhanced products, green marketing has neglected other potentially important issues in the quest to make society, and the consumption within it, more sustainable, including:

- The importance of non-purchase elements of consumer behavior including product use and disposal;

- The potential importance of non-purchase based behaviors as the means for individuals to meet their needs and achieve satisfaction;
- The potential of environmental and social concern to encourage a reduction in the total level of consumption, rather than simply acting as a source of differentiation when choosing between brands and products.

These are all issues that must be addressed if consumption levels are to reduce to become more sustainable, however there are significant questions about the ability of marketing as it is currently understood and practiced, to deliver progress on them.

MARKETING AS A TOOL FOR ANTI-CONSUMPTION

In the face of criticism about marketing's role in encouraging the growth in global consumption, a common defense is that marketing in itself is neither good nor bad, but is a neutral and amoral tool that can be put to any end. Therefore marketing can promote recycling as a consumer behavior, just as effectively as it can promote the consumption of the product that must be recycled. However, this view raises questions as to whether it can do the former as effectively as it does the latter. Although a tool can be used for different purposes, it will perform the task that it is designed to do most effectively. If a tool is put to alternative uses, it will be less effective, particularly where there are major differences between the task it was designed for, and the use to which it is being put.

So it is with marketing. It emerged as a discipline focused on developing tangible products that meet consumer needs in a profitable way. It evolved through the development of sub-specialities such as services marketing to allow the marketing of the intangible; tourism marketing to promote visits to specific places or events; arts marketing for the promotion of culture; and relationship marketing which aims to build and maintain long-term relationships with customers. In almost all cases the common thread is that marketing seeks to encourage an increase in consumption, or at least to shift consumer decision-making in favor of the product or brand being marketed (with certain exceptions, for example the de-marketing of particular tourist destinations in an attempt to limit their appeal to more upmarket and lucrative visitors, see (Clements, 1989). For marketing to make a substantive contribution to consumption reduction, it will need to be through a different form of marketing to that which has characterized the last 20 years. The idea of marketing as most people understand it, working to promote the anti-consumption agenda that is needed, would strike many people as a contradiction in terms.

SOCIAL MARKETING AS AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO MARKETING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A form of marketing which is rapidly growing, and has considerable potential to contribute to consumption reduction, is Social Marketing (which is different from, but unfortunately often confused with, societal marketing). Social marketing seeks to utilize tools, techniques and concepts derived from commercial marketing in pursuit of social goals (Andreasen, 1995). Kotler and Zaltman (1971) first introduced the term in an article describing the use of marketing principles and techniques to advance a social idea, cause or behavior. It superseded social communication as a policy approach to achieving social change by integrating into campaigns commercially-derived concepts such as market research, product development, and the provision of incentives (Fox and Kotler, 1980). Kotler et al. (2002, p. 394) define social marketing as "the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole".

The majority of social marketing initiatives focus on changing behavior to increase the well-being of individuals and/or society. It can be applied to a wide range of social issues, but the majority of campaigns relate to personal health. Campaigns can involve the de-marketing of a particular type of product or behavior (e.g. littering) or the promotion of a particular type of product or behavior (e.g.

engaging in recycling). Like commercial marketing, social marketing is founded on research that seeks to understand the target market, the competition and the marketing context. It is also delivered by the manipulation of a marketing mix, and social marketers also generally apply the traditional commercial Four Ps model, with some adaptations to enable them to talk about the social product and the social price. This mix is developed in order to compete against the current behavior which the social marketer is seeking to change.

There are a number of benefits associated with a social marketing approach to achieving social change:

- Customer orientation: social marketing shares commercial marketing's emphasis on researching, understanding, responding to and communicating with customers. For social issues it moves the communication agenda away from a focus on the message and the expertise of those behind it, to consider the audience's point of view, including any barriers to change that they may face. Such an approach could help to connect consumers with the idea of sustainability and to encourage consumption reduction by moving away from an over-reliance on guilt as a key driver. As Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nation Environment Programme, commented in a February 2003 press release; "Messages from Governments, exhorting people to drive their cars less or admonishing them for buying products that cause environmental damage, appear not to be working. People are simply not listening. Making people feel guilty about their lifestyles and purchasing habits is achieving only limited success."

- Emphasis on behavior maintenance: social marketing seeks to go beyond changing attitudes to changing behavior, and to ensure that new behaviors, once adopted, are maintained. For consumption reduction, this would involve encouraging consumers to go beyond making token green or ethical purchase substitutions to adopt and maintain significantly different lifestyles and patterns of consumption.

- Flexibility: social marketing can be applied to different types of stakeholder (going beyond the target audience to include stakeholder groups such as the media, regulators or related businesses). It can also be applied to people within the target audience at different stages of awareness and responsiveness in relation to an issue or behavior. For those yet to consider an issue the emphasis will be on awareness raising, while for those who are committed to it, the emphasis will be on facilitating behavior maintenance.

- Partnership opportunities: the tackling of social issues, such as the promotion of consumption reduction, can provide new opportunities for partnership amongst public bodies, NGOs, companies and communities. For example a social marketing campaign to reduce the use of private cars for commuting could involve transport providers, major employers and public officials combining to understand the needs of commuters and leading to the development and promotion of improved public transport services, car-pooling activities and cycle-user services.

- Opportunities to de-market unsustainable behaviors: Companies and other organizations with a vested interest in the status quo continue to promote many unsustainable elements of society. For example, tobacco companies continue to market cigarettes despite the overwhelming evidence about their social and environmental harm. Largely on the basis of efforts to promote smoking cessation, social marketers have learned how to analyze, critique and (where necessary) counteract the techniques used by commercial marketers (Hastins and Saren, 2003). The world of commercial marketing is constantly innovating, and social marketers have become good at learning from commercial expertise, experience and resources. In terms of experience of de-marketing it is social marketing that represents the greatest store of knowledge.

The use of social marketing in relation to the promotion of sustainability is already well established. The health campaigns that are the mainstay of the social marketing discipline all aim to deliver quality-of-life and well-being benefits that are central to the concept of sustainability. Also, since the early days of social marketing, campaigns have addressed environmental issues, for example by promoting involvement in behaviors such as recycling (Zikmund and Stanton, 1971), or promoting eco-literacy

(Taylor and Muller, 1992). McKenzie-Mohr and Smith (1999) moved the debate forward with an emphasis on community-based social marketing campaigns for sustainability. The approach they outline represents a toolkit with the potential to promote almost any form of sustainability-oriented behavior within communities. However, in practice, environ-mentally-oriented social marketing campaigns tend to focus on a relatively narrow range of behaviors including recycling, lawn-watering and commuting to work.

A SOCIAL MARKETING MIX MODEL FOR ANTI-CONSUMPTION

Social marketing's progress to date has relied on importing concepts from commercial marketing and applying them to social goals in a relatively uncritical way. However, this approach can create problems and controversies over exactly what concepts like product, price or competition might mean in a social context (Peattie and Peattie, 2003). In the context of anti-consumption, the idea that the product being marketed is the refusal to buy particular products is certainly a recipe for confusion. As social marketing matures as a discipline, and is applied to a wider range of social goals, it will require a new and better-adapted approach to the social marketing mix. Such an adapted mix, and one which would work far better in the context of discussing social marketing for anti-consumption, could involve the following modifications.

Propositions Instead of Products

Although social marketing campaigns can focus on the promotion of a particular type of product, at its heart social marketing promotes a particular proposition (Peattie and Peattie, 2003). This proposition could be that "organic food is good for you and the environment", "you should recycle" or that "you shouldn't litter". Embedded within virtually all of these propositions is a specific behavior or set of behaviors that the social marketer wishes to see adopted and maintained. In the context of anti-consumption the key propositions might be that "we need to consume less"; "you don't buy happiness in a shop"; "new is not always better"; "maintaining and repairing products is a smart strategy" or even "following fashion makes you a victim". A simple example of a specific consumption reduction proposition used within social marketing campaigns in countries including Australia, Denmark and Canada is that "cycling (or walking) instead of driving is good for you and good for the planet". Such campaigns seek to move people away from an intensive form of consumption, both materially and economically, to a much lower intensity behavior to meet the same need.

Accessibility Instead of Place

Since social marketing is not based around physical products (although they may be involved), it is not particularly appropriate to talk about distribution or place issues. Social marketing is more akin to services marketing in that the key issue is accessibility. In the context of promoting consumption reduction, this includes access to alternative means of achieving satisfaction (for example through self-reliance based solutions instead of commercially provided ones) or the means to achieve consumption reduction through access to repair services or access to information or expertise online or in person. To return to the example of promoting cycling instead of driving, access to appropriate cycling routes and route information, access to bikes, secure bike parking and bike maintenance services are all important to motivate and maintain cycling behaviors. In the Australian states of Victoria and Western Australia, the TravelSmart social marketing campaigns to reduce car journeys use survey data to identify people potentially interested in cycling as a transport alternative and then provides them with cycling route maps and other information to make cycling travel solutions more accessible and practicable. In the case of the pilot city of Perth, this campaign led to a 90% increase in cycling levels during the first year (James, 2002). Such campaigns are encouraging a move away from car commuting and towards cycling in Australia and may have contributed to bike purchases out-stripping new car sales during 2006.

Costs of Involvement Instead of Price

In most social marketing interventions, the costs of changing behavior are not financial (although a financial cost could be involved). Costs may be in terms of time and effort, overcoming psychological barriers, or even a physical addiction (as in the case of smoking cessation). It is a much more holistic concept than that of economic price, and has much more in common with transaction cost theory derived from economics. In the case of anti-consumption, the price is unlikely to be economic, since it creates savings rather than expenses. In the long-term how-ever the cumulative impacts of a growth in anti-consumption might be to reverse the spiral of economic expansion, increasing earnings and growing consumption-based expenditure. The short-term cost may be more psychological in terms of not keeping up with fashions or matching the consumption levels of one's' peers. For the example of encouraging people to cycle instead of drive, change could be achieved by raising the costs of driving through congestion charging or parking restrictions. It could also involve reducing the financial costs or any psychological costs involved in cycling. The Bike Bus'ters social marketing campaign run in the Danish city of Århus provides participants with a free bike (worth 4000 Danish crowns) for 1 year, with the option to buy it for only 1000 crowns at the end of the year. The research conducted within the 'Bike Smarts' program aimed at encouraging children to cycle in British Columbia identifies that parents' fears over the risks of cycling are a key barrier to children's involvement and the continuing use of cars for short journeys to school and to transport children locally. The program successfully tackles parents' reservations by stressing the program's safety orientation and encouraging parents to become involved and witness their children's cycling skills to reduce the perceived risks and psychological 'costs' of allowing their children to cycle.

Social Communication Instead of Promotions

Social marketing represents an evolution from previous efforts to achieve social change that relied on health promotion and social communication (or social education). Instead of the one-way dissemination of information that typifies promotion, social marketing shares commercial marketing's interest in two-way communication, interaction and relationship building. So just as commercial marketers communicate to encourage the trial, adoption, identification with and regular purchase of their products, social marketers communicate to encourage the acceptance, adoption and maintenance of a particular social proposition or behavior. For anti-consumption this could involve communicating the benefits of a simpler, streamlined lifestyle. To complete the mix elements examples related to the promotion of reduced car use and the use of less resource intensive cycling instead, the Århus Bike Bus'ters initiative uses many conventional marketing communication tools including flyers, events and a regular magazine for participants. Less conventionally, but more interactively, the campaign involves participants signing contracts that committed them to reducing car use as much as possible and using cycling or public transit instead.

The benefits of adopting this model lie in the degree to which it is more oriented towards the consumer, rather than the conventional mix model which is centered around the product, its price, its place of distribution, and how it is promoted. The alternative mix based around the social proposition considers the costs of involvement to the consumer, accessibility for the consumer, and communication with the consumer instead.

AN EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL MARKETING AS DE-MARKETING -- THE TRUTH CAMPAIGN

It might appear highly unrealistic to expect the same marketing techniques that built the consumption-intensive lifestyles within industrialized economies to be successfully applied to undermine those lifestyles and reverse the growth in the resources that they consume. However, social marketing has achieved successes in overcoming deeply ingrained behaviors and, in some cases, has even made the anti-consumption of certain products appealing. Perhaps the best example is the Truth campaign from Florida which succeeded in significantly reducing levels of youth tobacco use and created positive changes in anti-tobacco attitudes and tobacco use susceptibility compared to other American states (Sly et al., 2001).

The campaign began, as social marketing campaigns should, with market research to understand the targets' needs, attitudes and current behaviors. Hundreds of interviews with young people provided the data needed to understand exactly why, despite all the health messages and evidence about smoking, many of them continued to smoke. These interviews took place in settings where the youths felt comfortable (like skate parks) and were conducted by young researchers who used the same everyday language as the target group in order to appear as peers and to encourage them to talk freely. Hicks (2001) describes the findings of these interviews:

> "We learned that there was 100% awareness that tobacco killed. Schools and health educators had done a great job of explaining the dangers of tobacco. Knowledge was not the problem…We learned that a youth's reason for using tobacco had everything to do with emotion and nothing to do with rational decision making. Tobacco was a significant, visible, and readily available way for youth to signal that they were in control. Like piercing an ear or dying hair, using tobacco was a tool of rebellion and all about sending a signal to the world that the user made decisions for themselves...While rather counterintuitive, what made tobacco so alluring to youth was its deadly qualities. The fact that tobacco killed was the unique selling proposition for youth. Generations of well intentioned social marketers had pounded the airwaves doing everything they could to explain that tobacco kills. What they did not understand (and the tobacco industry did) was that they risked actually making tobacco that much more appealing to youth".

The research also uncovered a widespread dislike amongst the young for judgmental social marketing and anti-tobacco campaigns. They wanted factual information that allowed them to make their own educated decisions, preferably communicated to them with some style and humor, rather than through a life or death tone with an emphasis on telling them not to smoke.

The Truth campaign, armed with these insights, avoided telling youths not to smoke, or even that smoking was dangerous. Instead, its proposition was that it would tell them the Truth: that tobacco is a big, powerful industry, mostly run by the type of middle-aged, wealthy males that the average teenager would despise, who spent millions of dollars on marketing in order to deceive young people into smoking. Buying and smoking cigarettes was portrayed not as an act of rebellion, but as conforming to the promptings of the marketers and as being duped into keeping the corporate "fat cats" wealthy. In that way: "Attacking the duplicity and manipulation of the tobacco industry became the Truth's rebellion" (Hicks, 2001).

To achieve behavior change, the cost of involvement that the social marketers had to overcome was social, not economic (since the economics are stacked heavily in favor of not smoking). According to Peter Mitchell, one of the original authors of the Truth campaign (from correspondence with the authors): "We wanted them (teenagers) to refuse a cigarette if offered one by a friend. The main barriers to that behavior were norms and self-standards. Kids want to look cool, independent and rebellious. If they look like they're doing what the health department and their parents (aka un-cool adult authorities) want, it's difficult to appear independent. So the potential cost of turning down a cigarette is a social one. You risk breaking with your peer group." The campaign therefore sought to make the Truth a brand that young people could recognize and buy into, and that would enhance their social standing amongst their peers in the way that wearing the right branded clothing and shoes can. The campaign brought in expertise from marketers with experience of leading youth brands, rather than from health communication, and analyzed the success of product launches for brands such as Nintendo, Sega and Mountain Dew and youth fashion brands like Vans and Skechers.

Once the core anti-manipulation proposition for the campaign was developed, the researchers created social communications elements including all the usual marketing tools of advertisements, branded merchandise, celebrity endorsements and events. Unusually for a social marketing campaign, its communications budget was substantial, courtesy of Florida's settlement with the tobacco companies. This budget allowed the use of prime-time broadcasting slots to air adverts (including during Superbowl coverage and popular MTV programs) rather than the remainder or public service discounted slots that

such social campaigns usually rely on. The campaign also used more innovative means of communication, including the use of teenage journalists con-fronting tobacco industry figures on camera (much in the style pioneered by Michael Moore), and the production of a documentary showing how tobacco companies manipulate popular culture to promote the tobacco industry's sales agenda.

The key accessibility issue was to respond to the target group's desire to be given factual information by making it accessible, combined with the key communications objective of keeping the subject interesting and humorous. To achieve this objective, the campaign developed a proprietary Truth tabloid-style magazine and distributed it through music stores and surf shops, and a Truth Truck which toured the state to attend popular concerts, beaches, and raves. There was also an emphasis on the development of a website for the campaign, to take advantage of the internet's ability to engage with a teenage audience, and to store factual information in ways that allow teenage users to control how they access information about a key health issue such as smoking (Peattie, 2007).

The campaign succeeded in achieving social change in an area usually considered to be stubbornly intractable. Market research showed that only five months into its marketing campaign it achieved a brand awareness level of 92% amongst its target audience, with the percentage of teens agreeing with certain negative statements about smoking rising by 15% compared to baseline data gathered before the campaign. According to Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS) figures, over the course of one calendar year, the number of middle and high school teens defined as current smokers in Florida declined by 19.4% and 8.0% respectively. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stated that this decrease represented "the largest annual reported decline observed in this nation since 1980."

The message that underpinned the success of the campaign, that cigarettes are not marketed to you to meet your needs, they are marketed to you to help make rich companies and their shareholders richer, could be adapted and applied more generally in an attempt to reduce and reverse the over-consumption endemic within industrialized economies. Social marketing campaigns dedicated to consumption reduction for environmental, rather than health, goals are comparatively rare. There are some examples however, usually relating to reductions in the consumption of water, energy or domestic pesticides. Many of these apply McKenzie–Mohr's principles of Community-Based Social Marketing (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith, 1999; Mckenzie-Mohr, 2000). The best known example is the Ecoteams program established internationally as part of the Global Action Plan for the Earth to reduce household resource consumption. The average impact of Ecoteams projects across participating US cities is a reduction of 25–34% for water consumption, 9–17% for domestic energy consumption, and 16–20% reduction of fuel consumed for transportation (Pickens, 2002).

CONCLUSION

The main achievements of social marketing to date are within the health field, and the Truth campaign is an example of a successful health-oriented social marketing campaign to reduce consumption. Social marketing for health has the advantage that, even though the behavior being promoted might be unpalatable to the target market, there is ultimately a large component of self interest that the marketer can seek to connect with and exploit. The challenge of promoting consumption restraint for altruistic reasons, and for the benefit of future generations, will be a much sterner test of social marketing's effectiveness. The conventional social marketing mix is unlikely to be well suited to this task, and concepts derived directly from commercial marketing of product and price will need to be replaced by the more meaningful concepts in the adapted social marketing mix of proposition and cost of involvement.

The nature of the anti-consumption challenge goes far beyond a need to adjust social marketing's vocabulary of words and ideas. Promoting a consumption reduction agenda within the consumer societies of industrialized nations is a difficult task because it goes against the highly consumption-orientated dominant social paradigm (Kilbourne et al., 1997). Consumption of a product is far easier to portray, stylize and glamorize in the media and in advertising than the joys of frugality or a simplified lifestyle. It is therefore difficult to make consumption reduction appealing to consumers, and despite the widespread

commitment to the pursuit of sustainability amongst policy makers, it is something that policy makers may also find less appealing than conventional health-oriented social marketing campaigns. Health campaigns usually provide both benefits to individuals and a contribution to the achievement of existing policy goals, typically delivering health improvements for individuals and reduced demands upon health budgets. By contrast, successful consumption reduction campaigns that reduce levels of consumer expenditure would negatively impact conventional policy measures such as gross domestic product (GDP), and the tax revenues available to governments. This impact could hamper the ability of such campaigns to gain institutional sup-port unless the need for consumption reduction is accepted across all branches of policy-making (and not just in those with responsibility for the environment) and until better and more qualitative measures of policy effectiveness are developed to replace conventional and limited measures such as GDP. In its favor, one of the advantages of social marketing as a technique is its versatility, and Andreasen (2006) focuses on its ability to influence key stakeholders other than the final target for behavior change (including policy makers or the media), to help create a supportive environment for the changed behavior. The key will be to find ways to make consumption reduction attractive to consumers, and acceptable in practice (as well as in principle) to policy makers.

From a policy perspective, consumption reduction could be addressed in economic terms (through a reduction in expenditure) or in material terms through the redirection of consumer expenditure away from materially intensive forms of consumption towards less intensive forms (e.g. from goods to services). The prospect of making progress towards sustainability partially via economic contraction, rather than simply through the transformation of the economy towards greater material efficiency, is a daunting one for policy makers. However, history demonstrates that predictions of economic disaster due to environmentally-oriented measures tend to be overly pessimistic. The severe economic and social consequences predicted by industry in the wake of measures such as the phasing out of ozone depleting substances or the 1990 US Clean Air act did not occur because companies demonstrated an ability to adapt and innovate when necessary. Consumption reduction also becomes more attractive in policy terms if we measure progress by using a metric such as happiness rather than more conventional measures of economic growth. As Layard (2005) observes, until individuals' annual earnings reach $20,000 their happiness levels increase in pro-portion to what they earn. Beyond this level, additional income does relatively little to increase happiness, which becomes much more dependent on other factors such as personal relationships. The pursuit of additional income to finance greater levels of consumption can ultimately interfere with those personal relationships from which much human happiness derives. What Andreasen (2006) would term the upstream challenge for the social marketer is to persuade policy makers that for them, success is in delivering quality of life, health and happiness to their electorate, and that the generation of wealth is simply one means to contribute to those goals.

In terms of appealing to consumers, there are potentially instructive parallels between the promotion of anti-smoking through the Truth campaign and the promotion of an anti-consumption agenda. The Truth social marketing campaign succeeded because it recognized that youth smoking is not governed by rational consumer decision-making about costs and benefits, but instead reflects emotional and symbolic responses. The green marketing debate has also tended to take an overly rational view of consumption as being about the meeting of material needs and governed by rational decisions (which would allow for the development of solutions whereby consumer needs were still met, but through much more environmentally efficient means, for example through renting or leasing products as opposed to buying and owning them). However, this view neglects the extent to which consumption, and the relationship between consumption and sustainability, is bound up in and complicated by many emotional, symbolic and cultural meanings (space precludes further discussion of this issue, but see Jackson, 2004, for a full and excellent critique). One opportunity for social marketers may be to invest the concept of sustainability itself with the type of emotional and symbolic meanings that encourage restrained and reduced consumption. This approach might sound infeasible in a society in which the normal assumption is that individuals are motivated to maximize their own wealth and consumption. However, there is an interesting parallel with another concept, that of education. There are many societies in the world where it is commonplace for parents to severely constrain personal consumption in order to give their children the

best education possible. The motivation for this behavior is to ensure that their children's prospects and quality of life are enhanced. The similarity between this logic, and the basic proposition behind sustainability, is unmistakable, but what sustainability lacks is the widely recognized and easily understood brand that education enjoys. To succeed in promoting consumption reduction, social marketers will also need to help raise the profile and acceptance of sustainable development as a social proposition.

One element of commercial marketing that social marketers may be able to harness to successfully market consumption reduction, is expectations management. Within services marketing in particular, there is a longstanding recognition that customer satisfaction is a function of the match between a customer's experience and expectations. Therefore satisfaction can be achieved either by raising service standards, or by managing expectations downwards. For social marketers, seeking to create a more sustainable economy and society, a key challenge will be to manage and lower expectations about many things from the availability of cheap international flights, to the level of return it is realistic to demand from a financial investment. Until material expectations become more realistic from a sustainability perspective, social marketing initiatives to create meaningful levels of consumption reduction may struggle to achieve the necessary level of support from consumers, investors and policy makers.

Ultimately the success of consumption reduction may lie in the extent to which it becomes viewed as normal. Anti-smoking campaigns such as the Truth campaign have done a remarkable job of repositioning smoking from a social norm to something widely unacceptable and unfashionable in many countries. There are signs of change emerging within society and the media, which suggest that acquisitiveness and over-consumption are becoming less acceptable and that the idea of aspiring to reduce personal consumption is seen as at least less abnormal. One important trend that social marketers seeking to promote consumption reduction could tap into is 'downshifting', the stepping out of a hard-working, high-earning, consumption-intensive lifestyle and into one that is less materially rewarding, but ultimately more satisfying (Andrews and Holst, 1998). According to research conducted by the UK insurance company Prudential, in recent years some 1.4 million Britons have purposefully reduced their incomes in exchange for a better quality of life, and a further 600,000 planned to downshift between 2005 and 2006. The research revealed that just under a million 35–54 year olds were making serious plans to downshift and over 1.3 million under 35s in full time employment planned to downshift by the year 2013. This social trend is also reflected in reality TV programs such as 'No Going Back' or 'The Frontier House' which follow the fortunes of families who downshift or opt out of the consumer lifestyle. Even if many of the plans to downshift are never acted upon, they clearly represent a considerable latent demand for a lower-stress, less consumption oriented lifestyle that could be the basis for a social marketing campaign for consumption reduction. In this way, there is a possibility to move beyond conventional green marketing attempts to promote alternative products to ameliorate environmental damage. This could also represent a significant step forward in the consumption reduction agenda by moving it away from an issue based around necessity and self-denial, towards a social marketing proposition offering an enhanced quality of life in which the quest for material acquisition and consumption has less negative impact on health or the personal relationships from which much happiness and satisfaction actually flows. Instead social marketers could promote the type of low stress and low consumption but satisfying lifestyles that authors such as Cherrier and Murray (2002) and Andrews and Holst (1998) have envisaged, and that research demonstrates, many people aspire to.

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