

## Chapter 88

# Marketing or Social Marketing: Is There an Identity Crisis?

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The challenge is to understand what marketing is: is it a business activity or is it ultimately all about managing the social order and influencing the behavioural changes in the societies. The chapter gives a conceptual understanding of social marketing from multiple perspectives, analyzes key issues and challenges in social marketing which makes it different from traditional marketing, and identifies certain areas in social marketing where further research is required. Because of its uniqueness, the extended marketing mix becomes very important in social marketing and social objectives can be achieved through creating experiences to offer solutions, which, in turn, influence behaviour.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer experience is a business imperative to grow and sustain competitive differentiation in today's market. If marketers deliver the experiences consumers expect, consumers will respond with loyalty, advocacy, and repeat purchases ensuing in long-lasting and profitable relationships. Consumer experience is the consumer's perceptions and related feelings caused by the one-off and cumulative effect of interactions with a supplier's employees, channels, systems, or products. Consumers strive to have a consistent, connected, personalized, and efficient experience across all

phases of the customer lifecycle and across all their channel interactions.

Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers (1935). Later, the slightly revised definition read as follows: "the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers" (AMA Committee on Definitions 1960, p. 15). Further, marketing was defined as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives

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(1985). Thereafter in 2004 it was defined as an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. What we observe that until 1985, the field's definition of marketing was pluralistic and thus easily translatable to more aggregated issues, such as competition, system performance, and contributions to consumer welfare. However, in the year 1985 change firmly turned focus toward the manager's tasks as embodied in the four Ps (notably, by focusing on the concept of mutually satisfactory exchanges, Although the 1985 definition also implicitly defined marketing to be in the best interests of consumers but overall, this change made it more difficult to adopt aggregate perspectives on the field. The new 2004 definition is much in the same spirit, with a singular focus on the individual organization acting alone. However, it is significant if we realize that this definition is one of "marketing management," not of the entire field or discipline of marketing. Moreover, this definition does not seem to cover the impacts of marketing on the world, beyond the particular concerns of the firm and its stakeholders. Thus, the issue is that with a sole focus on the firm seems to be incomplete, insofar as some broader questions like social and societal issues and behavioral responses and changes required will go unanswered precisely because the managerial perspective within a firm does not ever need to consider these questions while striving to act only in that firm's own interest. Therefore, marketing should be conceived as not only a business activity but also a societal institution and a way of maintaining social order. Further, in terms of the practice of marketing, the definition does not provide sufficient focus on collaboration and co creation activities; in terms of the domain of marketing, the definition needs to recognize marketing more explicitly as a societal process; and in terms of the emerging dominant logic, the definition needs to pay particular attention to adaptive social

and economic processes. Also, when discussing "Marketing," we often implicitly equate marketing practice and marketing academics, as if the problems, opportunities, and issues are equivalent in these spheres. Although the two indeed have a symbiotic relationship, there are also occasions for which issues, perspectives, and behaviors should be sharply distinct. In addition to this, the role of the marketing function in a management concept is not so much to be skillful in making the customer do what suits the interests of the business as to be skillful in conceiving and then making the business do what suits the interests of the customer. However, in practice the views of the consumer are often ignored and integrated marketing does not provide the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose, and the right to be heard. The public voice is not for destroying the businesses and processes. If businesses are to survive in a democracy, they must listen to the voice of the public for marketing is an activity and process given legitimization by society. Furthermore, in the 1972 edition Kotler, introduced the societal marketing concept, which he defined as a "customer orientation backed by integrated marketing aimed at generating customer satisfaction and long-run consumer welfare as the key to satisfying organizational goals" (p. 26). As such, marketing is an adaptive process of doing things in interactive collaboration with the customer. Value is perceived and determined by the consumer on the basis of value in use. Consequently, firms cannot add value but can only offer value propositions. However, Marketing is not an end in itself. It must serve not only business but also the goals of society. It must act in concert with broad public interest and share the problems and goals of the society. Therefore, with the lack of recognition of marketing as an innovating or adaptive force, there is need to look for an alternative paradigm of marketing that can account for the continuous nature of relationships with broad public interest and share the problems and goals of the society rather than promoting

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