

Chapter 8

Marketing for Social Entrepreneurship

Nigel Chiweshe

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship has been motivated by the reality that conventional for profit organisations did not have the capacity to address social challenges endemic to society. Further to this the notion of pairing social goals and entrepreneurship is paradoxical in nature. This chapter therefore presents the marketing of social ventures to address social problems. The chapter proposes that this will be done through an in depth understanding of where marketing and social entrepreneurship interact, providing clarity as to what social entrepreneurship is, indicating what is driving social entrepreneurship and developing marketing strategies for social entrepreneurship from the knowledge shared by various writers in the disciplines of entrepreneurship and marketing. Through a critical analysis of the writings of the various researchers the chapter offers a tactical tool to market social ventures and ultimately provide social improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship has been drawing significant attention and resources in this millennium. Despite this growing popularity there has been limited clarity as to what social entrepreneurship is and how to formulate marketing strategies for social entrepreneurship. This lack of consensus has led to various authors offering definitions as to what social entrepreneurship is. Some of the definitions as cited by Rogerson et al. (2013, p.2):

- Yunus (2009) defines an SE as a ‘non-loss, non-dividend company that is created to address and solve a social problem’
- Whitley et al. (2013): ‘An organisation committed to social and/or environmental returns as part of its core business while seeking profit or return on investment’

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- BIS (2011): ‘Businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community’
- Dees (2001) states that ‘Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector’, including an emphasis on their ‘recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission’
- Bornstein (2007) focuses on the character of social entrepreneurs, who are ‘Transformative forces: people with new ideas to address major problems who are relentless in the pursuit of their visions, the social entrepreneur changes the performance capacity of society’

This chapter therefore seeks to shed light on what social entrepreneurship is and how various marketing strategies can be adopted to satisfy consumer needs.

Social entrepreneurship is a contested concept, to date there has been no single conceptual framework for social entrepreneurship that has been offered (Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Rogerson et al. 2013; Gras & Mendoza-Ibarca, 2014). Until recently there had been limited research regarding social entrepreneurship and to date the research is still in its infancy (Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Gras & Mendoza-Ibarca, 2014). Traditional non-profit organisations “cringed” at the inclusion of “entrepreneurship, profits and sales” in discussions related to their operations (Foster & Bradach, 2005).

Gras & Mendoza-Ibarca (2014, p. 393) state that:

On the positive side of the ledger, scholars argue that market funding can provide supplemental income, income stability, and self-sufficiency. As such, scholars in this camp generally contend that entrepreneurial behavior has a positive effect on the performance of NPOs. On the negative side of the ledger, being more businesslike can distract organizations from achieving their social aims, create cultural conflict, increase financial risk, and threaten the legitimacy of the organization. Scholars in this camp generally assert that entrepreneurial behavior has a negative effect on the performance of NPOs. While the debate is far from settled, a review of the extant literature indicates that a greater number of scholars adhere to a ‘the more the merrier’ approach to market-based income generation than the converse.

Though there is asymmetry in the definitions of social entrepreneurship due the paradox of profit and serving social needs the common goal is positive social impact and financial outcome the challenge. Through the integration of marketing to social entrepreneurship this chapter seeks to offer insights to address social challenges profitably.

Outline

The chapter will contain discussions on:

- Challenge of Social Entrepreneurship
- Social Entrepreneurship Marketing
- Social Entrepreneurship Marketing Mix
- Social Entrepreneurship Ethics

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