Marketing Ethics to Social Marketers: A Segmented Approach

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Ethical behavior is by its nature individual behavior. We choose to act ethically or to ignore ethical considerations when faced with conflicting behavioral alternatives. The consequences of such behaviors are similarly personal in that we are the ones who will feel the guilt of acting unethically, the pangs of conscience of skirting the "ethical fine line" or the pleasure at "doing what is right."

But ethical behavior also has implications for others – not only for the person or persons who are the target of the behavior. One's personal ethical behavior has implications for organizations or groups with which one is associated, especially if the behavior in question is taken in one's role as a member of the organization or association. Because unethical – or even ethically questionable – behavior can reflect negatively on such institutions, their stewards have a vested interest in insuring that (a) ethically relevant decisions and behaviors are recognized by institutional members and (b) high standards of ethical behavior are maintained. Elsewhere in this volume, Michael Basil addresses the challenges facing social marketing organizations in promoting ethical behavior. In the present chapter we shall consider how the social marketing *profession* might raise its ethical standards.

Because we are seeking to influence the future behavior of our social marketing colleagues, it is appropriate that we apply our own discipline to this task. In this chapter, we begin with the important premise that, as in most social marketing situations, it makes no sense

to treat all members of the profession as a single target audience, but to segment them in meaningful ways that have implications for future interventions. Further, relying on the work of Andreasen (1995), and others, we recognize that the desired behaviors will only come about if the target audience becomes aware of the need and desirability of such behavior, believes others who are important to them are supportive of the behavior and believes that he or she can actually carry such behavior out. To assist the latter, we offer a formal framework whereby conflicted social marketers can wrestle with difficult ethical dilemmas. We recognize that considered ethical choices may still be unpopular with many in the institutional environment. Thus, an important outcome of a subset of ethical decisions – i.e. controversial ones – is that relevant other stakeholders should be apprised of likely backlash and given the opportunity to inoculate themselves from possible reputational damage.

Who Should Market Ethical Behavior to Social Marketers?

Ours is a practical profession which is resistant to abstract explorations that have no practical consequences. Thus, merely urging higher ethical standards on the profession – when no one is given responsibility for achieving this – would prove ineffective. Thus, we argue that the profession needs to create or designate an institution to meet this challenge. Two obvious candidates emerge. First, promoting ethically responsible behavior is clearly part of the mission of the recently formed Social Marketing Institute which has a mission of "advancing the science and practice of social marketing." A second alternative would be ethics programs in schools of business. A number of universities including Georgetown, Virginia, Harvard, and others have faculty and, in some cases, centers devoted to ethical issues in business practice. It would be a reasonable challenge for such individuals or centers to stretch their purview to include social

marketing which is, of course, an application of commercial marketing concepts.

Why Should the Profession Care About This?

Does the social marketing profession have a stronger obligation to ethical practice than commercial marketing? Our conclusion is that, yes, social marketers do have a stronger obligation to assure that social marketing programs are ethical. As has been argued in other chapters in this volume, social marketing is a profession that seeks to improve societies. This is true even if those societies value multiple voices and different groups have different ideas of what is Agood@ for their society. It is not generally up to social marketers to define what is Agood@ for society -- this is done through both the political system (for government programs) and deliberations of trustees (for programs supported by private foundations)[1]. Because, as Kotler and Andreasen (1996) have noted, these sponsors are subject to the glare of publicity, the ethical demeanor of social marketers in projects in which they engage must be above reproach. If program managers behave unethically and are caught and criticized, funding for – and credibility of - future programs may be in jeopardy. Certainly, this has practical implications for social marketing organizations – unethical practice means less "business."

But, there is a second, moral reason for social marketers to behave ethically: their programs are typically focused on inducing socially "good" behavior in target audiences. Social marketers urge individuals to exercise, stop using drugs, immunize their children and wear seat belts. It would be hypocritical for social marketers to urge "good" behavior while at the same time behaving "badly" themselves. Of course, there are cases in which the social marketing manager could be working to do good, but might unintentionally harm society, thus undermining the goal and definition of social marketing. This, however, does not absolve the profession from

seeking to do good in good ways!

Segmenting the Social Marketing Profession

Crooks, legalists, rationalizers, seekers, and moralists. These are the labels that Eugene

Laczniak attached to the five segments into which he divided all commercial marketing managers

in terms of their approach to ethical behavior (Laczniak, 1993). *Crooks* know what is right but

often act unethically to achieve personal or organizational gain. *Moralists* are the managers who

act on principle, who always try to do the right thing. Because Crooks are unlikely to change

their values and Moralists are trying to do what is right, Laczniak argued that it is a waste of

resources to target these segments for behavior change. Rather, he saw the best improvements in

ethical practice in the commercial marketing profession likely to come from targeting the

Legalists, *Rationalizers*, and *Seekers*. All three groups comprise individuals who are recognize

ethical dilemmas when they encounter them – but treat them differently. *Legalists* address

ethical dilemmas by doing no more than what is legal. *Rationalizers* take actions that often are in

their self-interest and then minimize the ethical implications of what others might categorize as

unethical. The last segment*, Seekers*, want to be ethical but are uncertain about what they can and

should do.

Laczniak concludes that those seeking to influence the ethical practices of the marketing

profession should plan programs that address the intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that

influence ethical practice in each of these segments. For the Legalists, he suggests that an

introduction to *ethical theory* would be beneficial. The Rationalizers would benefit most from

ethics education to heighten their sensitivity to the unethical implications of many of their

actions. Finally, for the Seekers Laczniak sees the development of *ethical reasoning skills* as a

step toward more ethical practice.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOR OF SOCIAL MARKETERS

Segmenting Social marketers and identifying "at-risk" social marketing managers

Do the Legalists, Rationalizers, and Seekers describe the audience segments in the social marketing profession? How can social marketing academics or the Social Marketing Institute help these segments improve the ethics of our profession? Is this a marketing problem? As Rothschild (1999) might ask, should we market ethical behavior? Would education be sufficient? Or, at the other extreme, do we need the force of law?   We could argue that education is the best strategy, that social marketing professionals are wise, educated individuals who need simply to be informed about potential ethical dilemmas and how to deal with them. In this case, teaching ethics theory and ethical reasoning may be sufficient. On the other hand, maybe the force of law should be the only course – perhaps social marketers will only "do right" if there are likely consequences to their pocketbook or freedom.

Of course, if we think about Laczniak=s (1993) segments for commercial marketing managers, we recognize that the appropriate course of action will vary by segment and the segment's characteristics. If we apply Laczniak's segmentation distinctions to social marketing managers, we might have somewhat different labels and two additional categories (see Table 1). We propose that the social marketing segments be called *Do-Gooders, Rationalizers, Seekers, Tryers, Moralists, Legalists and Crooks.*

Table 1: Ethics Strategy Segmentation Categories

Laczniak Categories	Kirby/Andreasen Categories
Crooks	Crooks
Legalists	Legalists
Moralists	Moralists
Rationalizers	Rationalizers
Seekers	Seekers
	Do-Gooders
	Tryers

Crooks and Legalists have the same definition in both sectors. While there is at present no data that permit estimation of the size of the various segments, we believe that Crooks – who will do anything to achieve their ends and thus ignore ethical considerations – are rare in social marketing because of the typical glare of publicity that surrounds social marketing programs. On the other hand, for the same reason, we suspect that Legalists may be more common in social marketing where a legal defense of actions may deflect public criticism. Because these two groups are relatively indifferent – even hostile – to strictly ethical cautions, they will receive limited attention here – as will Moralists. Moralists are those social marketers who are consistently conducting ethical assessments of their programs, are convinced that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, and intend to conduct ethical assessments on future programs. One of the new segments, the Do-Gooders will also receive limited treatment. Do-Gooders are convinced that what they are doing is for the good of society so it must be ethical and therefore

an ethical assessment is unnecessary. They, too, are presumably relatively impervious to future

ethical marketing efforts.

On the other hand, we will focus on the remaining three segments, Rationalizers, Seekers,

and Tryers. *Rationalizers* are pretty sure what they are dong is ethical, but fear that dedicating

resources to this minor activity will deter them from achieving their overall goals, so they

rationalize that doing an ethical assessment and acting on it is a waste of precious resources.

Seekers are a group of social marketing professionals who are convinced that the advantages of

doing an ethical assessment outweigh the disadvantages, but are unsure how to go about doing

one, who should be involved, and what to do with a negative finding.   The *Tryers* are a group

who have done at least one ethical assessment, but are unsure if the advantages of this assessment

outweigh the disadvantages.   Tryers are unsure if they will dedicate resources to this effort in the

future.

Stages of Change

In order to develop strategies for influencing the ethical behavior of these segments, we

must turn to our own frameworks. One of the most commonly used frameworks is Prochaska and

DiClemente=s Transtheoretical Stages of Change (Prochaska and DiClemente 1983). This

approach provides a valuable framework for understanding the target segments and what

interventions may be useful in effecting change in them. Their model proposes that people

change behaviors in a progressive, developmental manner and that most influence attempts work

best at moving people from one stage to the next instead of directly from stage one to stage five.

Prochaska and his colleagues have proposed five stages of development toward behavior change,

Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance. In the first stage,

Precontemplation, the intended audience, is not thinking about changing his/her behavior and does not usually even consider the desired behavior change to be on her radar screen. This can occur either because the person at this stage is unaware of the need/opportunity for desired behavior or believes that the behavior is not appropriate for them – for one reason or another. If enough education, social force, personal persuasion, or self-enlightenment occurs at this stage, the Precontemplator may move into Contemplation. A Contemplator is considering the change in question, actively weighing the advantages and disadvantages of adopting the behavior. In order to move on to Preparation, the Contemplator will have to make some small steps, or trial behaviors, to establish his or her intention to change behavior.

Once a Preparer has made the commitment to act and, in fact, taken some action, he/she begins movement into the Action stage, where he/she will firmly begin the new behavior at the desired level (e.g. undertaking moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes 5 days per week). The person in Action is no longer trying out the behavior, but has made a commitment to adopt it at the recommended level for some period of time. The target audience member is not considered to be in Maintenance (the final stage) until a sufficient time period has passed for the person to assume a reasonable sense of his/her ability to maintain the behavior. During the Maintenance stage, he/she will need to address environmental stimuli that could induce recidivism, such as social group influence and easy access to the old behavior. In the present context, the ultimate behavior in question is to practice social marketing ethically and the initial behavior is to conduct an ethical assessment of a program=s plan.

With respect to ethical behavior, Stage 1 (Precontemplation) is the starting point at which the Aactor@ has little or no interest in ethics or in ethical behavior from a personal or organizational perspective. Stage 2 (Contemplation) is characterized by an awareness that ethical situations exist, that these situations might create problems, and that there may be some value in behaving more ethically. Someone in Stage 3 (Preparation) is best described as a person who has weighed the pros and cons and decided to make a small level of commitment to pursue ethical behavior. Stage 3 usually involves some skill-building before people can be fully committed to detecting and addressing ethical dilemmas at Stage 4 (Action). In the Action stage, people are seeking out and reacting to ethical dilemmas, but have not been doing so for a very long period of time (often designated as six months in empirical studies),. Stage 5 (Maintenance) is characterized by being fully committed to ethical practice for a sufficient period of time that greatly reduces the risk of relapse to earlier stages. In the present context, we define a "gold standard" for ethical practice as a personal and/or organizational commitment to regularly seek out and address ethical dilemmas as contrasted with ignoring such issues or simply reacting to them when forced to by others such as competitors or the media.

A comparison of the ethical market segments outlined earlier with the Stages of Change model suggests that the former are really descriptors of groups "stuck" at a particular stage of progression toward committed ethical practice. That is, one can see the Do-Gooders, Crooks, and Legalists as all in the Precontemplation Stage in that they are not at all thinking about changing their behavior. On the other hand, Rationalizers are target audience members who are contemplating ethical practice but have convinced themselves that they do not need to prepare and take any further actions – i.e. they are in Stage 2. Seekers are clearly in Stage 3 in that they

are looking for ways to implement an ethical orientation while Tryers have moved beyond preparation to actually undertaking new approaches to ethical action. And, finally, the group we have labeled Moralists are those who have reached Stage 5, Maintenance, and are routinely detecting and acting on ethical issues.

This comparison of stages and segments for both commercial and social marketing segments is outlined in Table 2. Table 2 also contains suggestions (after Prochaska and DiClemente (1993)) about processes that might be useful in moving segments to the next stage in model's progression.

Table 2. Stages of Change and Hypothetical Segmentation of Commercial and Social Marketers

Stages of Change Toward Ethical Assessment	Laczniak's Ethical Segmentation of Commercial Marketers	Hypothetical Social Marketing Manager Segments	Processes for Moving to Next Stage
Precontemplation (no interest in ethical assessment)	*Legalists,* have no use for ethics, if it=s legal it=s ethical.; *Crooks*, believe that self-interest makes ethical considerations irrelevant.	*Legalists*, believe that one must only obey the law and no more. *Crooks*, believe that self-interest makes ethical considerations irrelevant; *Do-Gooders*, Believe no assessment of ethical decisions is necessary. Know that what they are doing is ethical because it=s for the good of society.	Consciousness raising, Confrontations
Contemplation (some interest, weighing pros and cons)	*Rationalizers,* aware of ethical problems, but haven=t yet been convinced that they can act ethically and get what they want, so they rationalize unethical acts.	*Rationalizers*, believe that what they are doing is socially Agood@ and worry that spending time on minor issues like ethics means they might never achieve their big goals, so they rationalize that no ethical assessment is necessary.	Continuing consciousness raising, dramatic relief, role playing, values clarification

Preparation (some action toward ethical assessment, but need skills to maintain behavior)	*Seekers* recognize situations with moral consequences but cannot properly address them.	*Seekers*, want to conduct ethical assessments but are not sure how to proceed, who to involve, and how to handle negative outcomes.	Continuing dramatic relief, role playing, values clarification, commitments to act, public pledges,
Action (doing some ethical assessments but not institutionalized yet)		*Tryers,* have done some ethical assessments, but not sure they will dedicate the resources and time to engage in this for every decision-making opportunity. An intermittent behavioral commitment. Not sure the benefits outweigh the cost	Continuing commitments, rewards, countering, controlling environment including interpersonal contacts, social support
Maintenance (institutionalized ethical assessments)	*Moralists* generally are making ethical decisions on a routine basis.	*Moralists* generally are making ethical decisions on a routine basis.	Continuing rewards, countering, environmental controls, and social support

Marketing Development: **Applying the 4 P=s to the Marketing of Ethical Practice**

Now that we have identified the target segments, we can begin to plan for behavior

change. Using Stages (and Processes) of Change theory, we can make some assumptions about

what may work to move social marketing segments from one stage to the next. While academic

ethics centers or the Social Marketing Institute in future should collect market research data on

the proposed segments and their likely responsiveness to the processes of change, we may

speculate on approaches that might prove effective in changing ethical behavior. Among those in

the Precontemplation Stage, it is very unlikely that Crooks would ever be interested in pursuing

ethical behavior, although Rothchild's Force of Law may be the one tool to get their attention.

Legalists are probably immune from influence unless they can be shown examples where a lack

of attention to ethical considerations *beyond legal mandates* has cost other organizations revenue

and growth opportunities. Do-Gooders are also difficult to approach in that they are aware of the importance of ethics but think that the "goodness" of their mission means that what they are doing is *de facto* ethical. Here, the best tactic will be to provide them with examples where blindness to ethical considerations has led to tarnished reputations. Do-Gooders are a group that highly values their reputations and such messages may be powerful.

Rationalizers in Stage 2 are a more promising prospect in that they <u>might</u> consider conducting an ethical assessment, even a minor one, if they can be convinced that the pros outweigh the cons. The main barrier keeping Rationalizers from moving to Stage 3 is their perception that there are either more disadvantages than advantages, or that the disadvantages are more heavily weighted than the disadvantages. It is the change agent=s job then to present the target segment, Rationalizers, with either more or stronger advantages for conducting an ethical assessment. Another method for moving people from the contemplation stage (Rationalizers), according to Prochaska and DiClemente (1983), is to provide *consciousness raising* or *dramatic relief*, generally in the form of a communication. In order to market ethical practice to specific Rationalizers, a marketing manager would need to implement some audience research to determine the most prevalent and heavily weighted advantages and disadvantages to ethical practice and then develop a program designed to maximize the advantages and minimize disadvantages using some consciousness-raising, role-playing, or dramatic relief tactics.

In social marketing, it is important to use all of the 4P=s, so any market research aimed at a target segment should investigate how ethical practice is packaged (product), how it is delivered (place), why, where and how social marketers would participate in ethical practice(price and place), and how the change agent can promote routine ethical assessment and

consideration (promotion). In a simple program, this design could consist of a series of social

marketing newsletter stories. The first in the series could be about a social marketing manager

who is thinking about conducting an ethical audit and is currently weighing the pros and cons.

The newsletter could develop an Ainterview from the field@ talking with a social marketing

manager about his/her attitudes toward an ethical audit and what benefits and costs he/she

expects to encounter.   The feature story would have to demonstrate that there are more or

stronger benefits to conducting than not conducting an audit, in order to address concerns of the

Rationalizers segment. The change agent could also introduce ideas in the interview that explore

the potential negative effects of not conducting an ethical assessment and make clear the

interviewee's intentions to conduct future ethical assessments.

The second story in the series could focus on another factor important to moving social

marketing managers from Contemplation to Preparation by presenting an interview with

someone to explore the cost of conducting an ethical assessment based on real experience. The

interviewee could explain the process he or she used, the costs involved, and the program

changes that have been implemented based on the audit. This interview would provide social

modeling of the desired behavior, social pressure to perform ethical assessments, and real

information about the costs of such an audit that can replace misperceptions about such costs.

Thus far, the intervention directed at Rationalizers is mostly about pros and cons of the

specified behavior change, a benefits-cost approach. Andreasen=s (1995, p.272) and Prochaska

and DiClemente=s (1983) work suggest that a cost/benefit focus for those in contemplation,

especially the early stages, would likely create the most change. Of course, such an intervention

appears to be much more of an *education* intervention than marketing, except that the emphasis

is on *perceived* benefits and costs, instead of just urging the target audience to do an ethical assessment. Further, as Andreasen (1995) urges, a social marketing approach would place a strong emphasis on the cost side of the equation whereas traditional education and communication approaches would stress benefits. One of the characteristics of Rationalizers is that they cannot be bothered with ethical dilemmas and rationalize their neglect. Clearly, one explanation for such an attitude would be that they think the costs of paying attention to ethical considerations are too high in terms of time and organizational effort. An effective campaign to market ethical practice must address this concern. This is where an effective process for routinely identifying ethical issues and resolving them could mitigate the concerns and provoke movement to Stage 3 where the Rationalizers would become Seekers.

The *Seekers* segment in Preparation is characterized as planning to conduct an ethical audit, but having few skills to do so and therefore a low sense of self-efficacy (Bandura 1992). Skill development can come from educational opportunities promoted by ethics academics or the Social Marketing Institute at conferences, training courses, short internal seminars, listserve discussions, websites, textbooks, and other communication activities. A Social Marketing newsletter, suggested as a channel to reach the Rationalizers, could also be used to reach the Seekers.   In the newsletter series, an interview could provide intensive background on how to conduct an ethical audit, impart specific skills and help social marketing managers anticipate challenges with managing the process. The newsletter could refer readers to websites that offer assistance with ethical audits or link them to people who have conducted an ethical audit in the past. Such communications would not only teach skills but would also bring to bear some amount of social pressure which theory suggests is important for individuals in the Preparation

stage. The websites could serve both as a distribution network for ethical management products as well as a direct promoter of desired actions. As Smith argues in this volume to secure desired behavior, it is important to make it fun, easy and popular. Much of the marketing at this Stage should focus on making attention to ethical issues popular by making clear that the approach is widely followed – particularly by leaders in the field. Once skills are developed and social influence is brought to bear, it is much more likely that the Seekers will become Tryers.

The final segment that ethical social marketers need to address is the *Tryers*. This segment can be characterized as having some commitment to ethical practice, but currently unsure of their intentions to permanently dedicate resources to this in the future. So, the major issue with the Tryers segment is solidify their commitment. The principal method of insuring this behavior is to reinforce such efforts. There are many ways to do this. First, Tryers can be the focus of the newsletter stories mentioned above, implicitly legitimizing and praising their efforts. Tryers can also be invited to participate in panels on ethical issues at conferences and universities.

Another important issue in moving target audiences to the Maintenance Stage is controlling expectations. Individuals who have made progress up to the Preparation and Action stages are sometimes frustrated by the outcomes of their experiences in identifying and acting on ethical dilemmas. Sometimes the problem is that their expectations are unrealistic. For example, a social marketer will carefully consider the ethical implications of some potentially offensive communication, evaluate the alternatives (perhaps using the framework outlined by William Smith in the first chapter in this book) and make his or her ethical judgment. However, their subsequent action raises vocal criticism which offends the social marketer who thought that

his/her choice would be respected. The expectation that ethical choices would always be honored for their sincerity was not met. There is therefore the risk that the frustrated marketer will recycle back to earlier stages, for instance becoming Rationalizers who simply justify their inaction. It is important, therefore, that those who wish to promote more ethical commitment make clear that ethical decisions are often difficult and not all observers will agree with the outcome. But, it is important that the Tryer persist in the conviction that he/she is satisfied that the right course has been taken. Reinforcement by significant others should help solidify this conviction.

Social marketing professionals can also help by sharing with colleagues the benefits they have experienced from pursuing ethical courses of action. Again, the proposed newsletter can be helpful here. The newsletter series on ethics in social marketing could present an interview with a noted and respected social marketing professional who could describe realistic expectations of an ethical audit and ethical choices and ways to anticipate difficulties they have overcome.

A Program of Action

So what is the social marketing field to do to market ethical behavior to its professionals? The first step, obviously, is to identify a group or institution that will shoulder the responsibility of promoting ethical behavior for the profession. The next step would then be to identify potential allies within existing social marketing organizations. The latter would be responsible for internal marketing of ethical practice within their own organizations as well as serving as promoters and reinforcers of the behavior of others.

Those responsible should then do as all good social marketers do – conduct formative research, in this case on themselves. In particular, such research should assess the validity of the segments hypothesized here. In the course of that research, we need to learn the principal benefits

and costs of instituting ethical assessments and decisions. It is to be expected that one of the findings of this research is respondents' complaints about the absence of a simple, usable framework and guide for introducing and managing a social marketing ethical practice that is easy to use, easy to distribute, and accessible around the world. As noted earlier, there are several components to a "gold standard" ethical practice. First, there must be mechanisms put in place for detecting and addressing ethical issues in the field. For example, as Andreasen and Drumwright indicate in their chapter, organizations might rely on an Ethics Monitor to watch over potential ethical lapses or, alternatively, schedule monthly meetings to review programs and tactics for possible ethical problems. Second, there must also be a framework for evaluating ethical dilemmas once detected. We present one such possible framework below.

Mechanisms must also be put in place to routinely share successful ethical assessments with other social marketers to increase social pressure. If individual organizations' personnel resources are too strained to conduct their own audit, it would be important to develop a system of sharing auditing expertise. Providing technical assistance with ethical audits is perhaps one of the best areas in which social marketing practitioners could collaborate with social marketing academics and/or the Social Marketing Institute.

But over the long haul, social marketing practitioners themselves must come to accept that ethical assessments should be an integral part of program planning and resources should be specifically allocated for this activity. Of course, the field is a long way from such institutionalization of ethical assessments. That is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

Ethical Assessment Guide

Duke, et al. (1993) have proposed a process for evaluating the ethics of fear appeals

in marketing communications. This approach has the potential to be generalized to a broad range

of social marketing dilemmas. The framework integrates multiple ethical philosophies as well as

multiple stakeholder groups. (The importance of multiple stakeholders is emphasized in William

Smith's model elsewhere in this volume where he argues that social marketers must pay attention

to impacts on both intended and unintended audiences.) The framework is called an ethical

effects-reasoning matrix or ERM. It has two dimensions: stakeholders and ethical reasoning

approach. In a simple analysis, the authors explain that the fear appeals in a commercial

advertisement could be assessed by examining the potential benefits and costs that any

stakeholder group could reasonably expect to experience from exposure to a commercial ad

containing such appeals. Each benefit and detriment is assessed against several ethical reasoning

approaches (for a detailed explanation of this process see Duke et al., p.126).

The authors offer the example of an ad for a familiar tire manufacturer (Michelin) that

uses babies placed inside a tire for the visual component of the campaign. They indicate that the

first issue in conducting an ethical evaluation of the ad is to identify the stakeholders potentially

affected by this appeal. One stakeholder is society at-large. Society may perceive that exploiting

children in the Michelin ad diverts public attention from important car safety issues and thus the

advertisement is ethically questionable. Under an ethical reasoning approach based on Utilitarian

principles that focuses on achieving the greatest good for the greatest number, the ad is judged to

be ethically weak because it reduces sensitivity to exploitation of children in advertising and

because other (possibly more important) safety issues such as the need for rear safety seats may

not be attended to because the ad implies that all one needs to protect the child is Michelin tires! An alternative ethical reasoning approach is the Golden Rule which views ethical behavior as that which treats others as the ethical actor would expect to be treated. Under the Golden Rule approach, society might view the Michelin ad as unethical because children's safety is being compromised in the advertisement and most social marketers would not want their children treated this way.

A third ethical reasoning approach is based on the writings of Emmanuel Kant and states that all individuals have basic rights, e.g. to privacy, fair treatment, and so forth. Under this standard, the advertisement might be rated as unethical because it preys upon societal fondness for cute children, thus distracting us from paying attention to diverse issues of child safety. A fourth reasoning approach has been labeled Enlightened Self-Interest and argues that ethical behavior is that which maximizes personal benefits while minimizing the harm to others. In contrast to the other approaches, this standard might view the ad as ethical because the fear appeal is soft, thus there is minimum harm to others, while children may benefit from increased tire safety awareness, a societal benefit.

This analysis only addresses one characteristic of the Michelin advertisement as perceived by one stakeholder group. In the ERM framework, one must list all of the relevant stakeholder groups and the potential significant benefits and detriments for each group. The final step is then to assess how the advertisement would be judged under four ethical reasoning approaches.

The ERM model provides a useful way to examine the ethics of many potential social marketing program decisions. The multiple stakeholder approach certainly suits a marketing mind-set. The listing of benefits and costs for each stakeholder group also fits well into a social

marketing philosophy. However, the evaluation of the ethical effects from a range of potential

benefits and costs for multiple stakeholders under multiple ethical philosophies may be seen to

many practitioners as too cumbersome to be practical. And, as we noted earlier, a major

impediment for many social marketers to committing to routine ethical analysis is that they do

not have the time. Further, the ERM is designed only for one element of the marketing mix,

advertising. Thus, social marketers may reject the approach because it does not consider other

elements of the 4 Ps.

　　　To increase the usefulness of the matrix approach, we propose two major revisions. First,

we recommend that a Social Marketing Ethical Assessment (SMEA) include benefits and costs

for all of the four Ps of the marketing mix as does the American Marketing Association=s code of

ethics. The second revision is to decrease the number of ethical reasoning approaches in the

model. In social marketing, we are concerned with societal good more so than individual rights,

minimizing the value of the Kantian standard. Further, in our view, the Golden Rule standard (do

unto others as you would have them do unto you) encourages idiosyncratic, highly personal

standards when we are seeking in this chapter to bring the profession toward the adoption of

relatively uniform standards (for example, that can be publicized across organizations and

settings).

　　　This leaves the SMEA model with two major philosophical standards: Utilitarianism or

"does the approach to product, price, place and promotion achieve the greatest good for the

greatest number@ and Enlightened Self-Interest or "does the approach result in significant

benefits for the intended target audience with a minimum harm to others in the unintended

audience." Both standards have the added advantage that they rely on informal calculation of

potential impacts and then "rational" judgment of the results of these calculations – procedures that would seem relatively less foreign to social marketing practitioners accustomed to formal evaluations in other parts of their work. This would leave us with a matrix which could be filled in either by subjective estimates by ethics officers or an ethics committee or estimated empirically on the basis of nominal group research or focus groups with relevant stakeholders and target audiences.

An Illustration

To illustrate the potential use of the SMEA matrix , let us consider the following situation.

A Social Marketing program is developing a tobacco prevention program for young women. One of the Aprice@ variables identified during formative research was vanity. Young girls in this country were horrified to see (on a computer imaging system) the effect that tobacco would have on their skin, specifically premature wrinkling and age spots. Other pricing variables were discovered, too. The premature wrinkling Aprice@ was rated the strongest of four prices by this target audience. The program planners hired a creative firm to develop a distribution strategy for a promotional campaign and concepts for the effort. The creative firm is recommending a partnership with two places frequented by women in the targeted age bracket: a cosmetics retailer and a prominent coffee house. They also recommend using *prevention of wrinkles* as a major benefit to smoking cessation, illustrated by way of computer imaging execution in print, posters, and TV ads. They plan to package tobacco cessation information and nicotine patch coupons with a wrinkle cream manufactured under

the label of the cosmetics retailer.

The Social Marketing group is considering the creative firm=s recommendation, but feels the need to assess the ethics of the recommended distribution and promotion strategies. The creative ad execution hits a nerve with them. They are a little offended by the blatant in-your-face tone of the ads that stress that having wrinkles makes you undesirable, out-of-touch, and behind the times. They are also concerned about the cross-product packaging of tobacco materials and discount coupons with wrinkle cream. Their ethical dilemmas center on a concern that the campaign will reinforce the country=s cultural obsession with youth and beauty and send an unintended negative message to all women. The execution might drive older and already wrinkled women into plastic surgery – or simply make them feel worse about their own appearance. At the same time, a strong reinforcement of the cultural value of youthful beauty might encourage younger women to try dangerous and unproven methods of retaining their youth.

While this situation may seem a bit exaggerated, one can easily see a scenario like this happening in the near future. Social marketers may feel that strong attacks are needed to attack a serious problem. This predilection may be reinforced when partnering with private sector marketers, like the cosmetics and coffee firm described above, who themselves often employ cutting edge messages and images. The value of a routine ethical assessment using a framework like the SMEA is that it makes it more likely that the social marketers will be protected from moving forward with a campaign that can have serious repercussions to the social marketer's image and its ability to craft future

cause-related partnerships (Andreasen 1996).

Conducting an ethical assessment using the SMEA

Figure 1 presents a form that can be used to conduct an SMEA analysis. In the example just described, those conducting the ethical evaluation should then start by listing their ethical concern in the top left box. Intended and unintended audience segments should be listed in the first column. The second column should identify the parts of the marketing mix that each audience segment affected by. For example, young women who are the primary target audience will be exposed to the advertising, the cross-product packaging, and the in-store promotions. So elements of pricing, product, and distribution come into play for this target audience. (For the sake of brevity, pricing issues are not detailed in the matrix.) Once each marketing element has been briefly described for each segment in the matrix then data on the segment's perceived beliefs about costs and benefits of that marketing element need to be described briefly. These data should ideally come from empirical research with the target audience, including focus groups and key informant interviews. Expert judgment can be substituted for empirical research when the expert has real knowledge of the target audience and when resources are extremely low.

Up to this point the evaluators are merely observing and recording data in a systematic fashion. Ethical reasoning is the next step. The evaluators, possibly with the aid of an ethics consultant, must then assess the potential impact on each audience using as a frame of reference either Utilitarianism or Enlightened Self-Interest. In Figure 1, we have analyzed the impact of the marketing elements on three female segments using both standards. Within each ethical approach, the evaluators will need to consider how the decision to go forward with the campaign would be judged ethically by the target segment based on a specific view of ethics. The matrix allows the evaluators to see how someone who

has a Utilitarian view of ethics might judge the decision to go forward with the marketing plans and how that might or might not agree with the views of someone who believes that decisions should yield Enlightened Self-Interest. The advantage of analyzing the decision from multiple ethical perspectives is that it allows the social marketer to anticipate different reactions. Thus, if the social marketer opts for a Utilitarian standard that supports the planned campaign but the alternative standard recommends against it, the social marketer can expect criticism. In cases where the criticism might be potentially damaging, the social marketer may wish to add a modest public relations offensive to justify the action and deflect criticism.

Figure 1.   Social Marketing Ethical Assessment Matrix

Program element description: A proposed advertising campaign aimed at young women will stress that smoking causes wrinkles and that having wrinkles makes a woman undesirable, out-of-touch, and behind the times. Cross-product packaging of tobacco cessation materials with discount coupons for wrinkle cream will reinforce this message				Ethical Reasoning Approaches and Rating Comments	
Stakeholder or Target Segment	**Marketing Element (4 Ps)**	**Consequences (Benefit or Cost of marketing element to the target segment)**		**Utilitarian** (greatest good for greatest number)	**Enlightened Self-Interest** (benefits to self and minimal harm to others)
		Benefit	**Cost**		
Young women aged 20-30 (intended audience)	**Product:** cross-product packaging	**Cross-product packaging will provide direct access to quitting materials. Shows that multiple organizations support the idea.**	**Wrinkle cream may increase in price to cover cost of the coupons.**	**A young woman would say:** multiple efforts increase the likelihood that society gains as fewer young women use tobacco and the impact on older women is not great.	**A young woman would say:** multiple efforts increase the likelihood that society gains as fewer young women use tobacco and the impact on older women is not great.
	Promotion: in-your-face ads	**Gives a very personal reason for quitting.**	**Makes growing old and wrinkled a scarier future.**	**A young woman would say**: strong messages are need to achieve the effect on the most young women.	**A young woman would say:** strong messages are need to achieve the effect on the most young women can see that some older women would feel bad.
Middle-aged women Aged 40-55 (unintended audience)	**Product:** cross-product packaging	**All efforts are needed to reduce tobacco use among young women. This will also reduce everyone's healthcare costs.**	**Younger women would feel more pressure to try other unproven and dangerous ways to prevent wrinkles.**	**A middle-aged woman would say:** society gains a major health benefit as fewer young women use tobacco and the implied demeaning of wrinkled women is "only psychological" and minor. So, having multiple supporters is good.	**A middle ages woman would say:** I support the role of multiple organizations in trying to achieve any social change.
	Promotion: in-your-face ads	**All efforts are needed to reduce tobacco use among young women. This will also reduce everyone's healthcare costs.**	**Younger women would feel more pressure to try other unproven and dangerous ways to prevent wrinkles.**	**A middle-aged woman would say:** society gains a major health benefit as fewer young women use tobacco and the implied demeaning of wrinkled women is "only psychological" and minor. So, having a strong message is good.	**A middle-aged woman would say:** strong messages make it most likely that the young women will change and I will get reduced health costs. But, I am disturbed that I am beginning to have wrinkles and the message makes me feel bad.

older women, aged over 55 (unintended audience)	**Product:** cross-product packaging	**All efforts are needed to reduce tobacco use among young women. This will also reduce everyone's healthcare costs**		**An older woman would say**: it is good that multiple organizations are trying to get young women to quit smoking. This will reduce my health costs.	**An older woman would say:** I support the role of multiple organizations in trying to achieve any social change.
	Promotion: in-your-face ads	**All efforts are needed to reduce tobacco use among young women. This will also reduce everyone's healthcare costs**	**Women with wrinkles will be seen as inferior and pitiable.**	**An older woman would say:** strong messages are needed to influence the young but the damage to the psyche of wrinkled women is too great.	**An older woman would say:** this is very harmful to me.

In many cases, it may also be desirable to consider the perspectives of partners involved in the proposed campaign. In the example in Figure 1, it would be important to know the views of the wrinkle-cream maker and retail store about the ethics of the campaign elements. The involvement of collaborators would be especially valuable if the assessment detects possible points of backlash. It is important that all parties present a uniform face to critics in delicate ethical situations.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that program managers must be prepared to act on the changes suggested by the ethical assessment. In the press of campaign time-pressures, managers may be tempted to ignore ethical red-flags or to neglect to prepare needed public relations counter-measures. Such actions could be very injurious to them and their organization. But it would also be damaging to the social marketing profession. If it is to mature and occupy a significant role in future social change programs, our profession cannot afford *not* to conduct ethical assessments and *act on them*. This chapter has presented both a segmentation plan and an ethical analysis framework that should make this outcome more likely.

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[1] Davidson (this volume) argues that private corporations also engage in social marketing.