

## ***Hands-on Social Marketing—A Step-by-Step Guide***

*By Nedra Kleine Weinreich, Sage Publications, 1999, pp 262, Price: \$ 29.95 (Paper).*

Social marketing as a formal discipline and as a part of marketing has matured over the last three and half decades. After the pioneering work of Kelly and Lazer<sup>1</sup> and several intermediate contributions, came the landmark book on social marketing by Kotler and Roberto<sup>2</sup>. This has raised the benchmark and any contribution in the field now has to be judged in terms of what it adds to what has already been said in a very comprehensive and scholarly manner.

*Hands-on Social Marketing* targets both students and practitioners. However, the author does not claim conceptual rigour. The focus is on how to practice social marketing even with small budgets without involving costly external agencies/consultants.

The book has 22 chapters divided into six sections. The first section is introductory and the remaining five sections deal with the five stages of project formulation and implementation: Planning; Message and Material Development; Pre-testing; Implementation; and Evaluation and Feedback.

The book has all the advantages of being written by a consultant with a deep interest and experience in the subject. Some of these advantages are:

- Hands on approach and very practical advice
- Worksheets at the end of major chapters, to reinforce learning and provide a useful template for practitioners
- Emphasis on specificity in setting goals and objectives with specific time frames
- Five excellent appendices covering very useful aspects like social marketing resource list along with useful print and Internet references; sample knowledge, attitudes and behavior survey; sample focus group recruitment questionnaire; sample focus group topic guide; and readability testing formula.

The problematic part of the book begins with the target audience. As the book is also addressed to students of social marketing, it should withstand somewhat serious academic scrutiny. In this regard the weaknesses of the book are:

- The very definition of social marketing, focussing on “...the adoption of a behavior...” (p 3), is restrictive. Social marketers have included ideas, products, services and behaviour in the domain of social marketing for a long time now.
- The fashion among marketing academics and practitioners to add new Ps to the traditionally accepted 4Ps of marketing-mix elements is not new. But adding Ps like Publics, Partnership, Policy and Purse strings — without clearly analysing and articulating whether these should be part of strategic social marketing or tactical-mix elements — compromises on the rigour. Also, the treatment of the Ps is somewhat sketchy.
- Although, while defining social marketing the author emphasises behaviour change, the chapters on Channels, Message, Pre-testing and Implementation focus on just ideas. Also, all the data and references are from the US context, and hence of limited use to users in other countries.
- One wishes that the caselets coming from an author with such a rich consulting experience were a bit more substantive.

On the whole, it is a well produced, readable and action focussed book which will benefit practitioners. Serious students of social marketing are advised to look at more rigorous material on the subject as well.

### **References**

1 Lazer, William and Eugene J Kelley, 1973, *Social Marketing: Perspectives and Viewpoints*, Illi: Richard D Irwin, p 505.

2 Kotler, Philip, and Eduardo L Roberto, 1989, *Social Marketing: Strategies for Changing Public Behavior*, NY: The Free Press, p 40.

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