

MODULE 11: Promoting Your Telecentre

UNIT 2: SOCIAL MARKETING

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2.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe and use marketing techniques in telecentre operations
- Describe and apply social marketing approaches to marketing of your telecentre

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit you were introduced to the concept of Marketing – its definitions and elements.

In this Unit, we will take a more detailed look into marketing for your telecentre.

What do you market in your telecentre?

While you may have some products in your telecentre (like mobile card recharges, CDs), in most cases it will be **services** which will be the centre of your marketing activities.

Marketing and promoting something **intangible** (hard to describe) like services is more challenging than marketing and promoting a **tangible** (easy to describe, like a battery) product.

In a tangible product, there is something which you can show to your target market, something which they can evaluate based on their basic senses (see, feel, touch, etc.).

In the case of your telecentre, they have to experience your services first hand or hear the story of those who were able to experience them. Take note though, that this “somebody” cannot just be anybody but someone who has the credibility and is an authority in aspects related to your services, IT, for instance.

In the previous Unit, we discussed the four Ps in the traditional context of commercial marketing:

- Product
- Pricing
- Place
- Promotion

When it comes to marketing services, there are three more P's that you need to consider. These are:

1. People

There are two ways by which people can be involved in the consumption of a service: *directly or indirectly.*

Directly - as the **clients** of your telecentre.

Indirectly – as those **delivering services** to your telecentre.

2. Physical Evidence

How can you provide physical evidence of the use of the services of your telecentre? In most cases through communication and documentation: pictures and logs of users or testimonials of those who are regular customers of your telecentre.

3. Process, procedure and flow

This is how your telecentre services are being used or how the client can buy a product. Everything must run smoothly to keep the trust of your client. The process procedure and flow should also or reflect reliability and quality of services that your telecentre offers.

The concept of **social marketing** is best matched for the promotion and marketing of your telecentre.

2.2 SOCIAL MARKETING

What is social marketing?

Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing techniques to the design, implementation and control of programmes aimed at increasing the acceptability of a social idea or practice in one or more group of target users. In this case, it is your telecentre.

It is a little different from commercial marketing by its emphasis on non-tangible products, such as ideas and practices. It is designed to positively influence the voluntary behaviour of target audience and therefore, improve their personal welfare and that of the society.

So, for the purposes of this curriculum, social marketing is the application of commercial marketing techniques to positively influence the voluntary behaviours of the target audience (telecentre clients) and improve their lives.

Social marketing practitioners also identify additional P's which can be added to the P's identified earlier. These are:

- People
- Process
- Presentation
- Positioning
- Partnership
- Policy/politics

People and process were already discussed in the previous section.

Presentation – this is the setting in which the clients acquire or use the product.

Positioning: This is how you present your product (your telecentre or the services you offer) in so that it stands out from other competing issues, services or products.

Positioning should be able to create a distinctive and attractive image of your services in the minds of your target clientele. Simply saying that your telecentre can answer the needs of your target client group is not enough. The question is “how different is it from other entities providing the same?”

You should therefore think of your Unique Selling Point (USP).

For instance, when you hear of “energy drink” or “healthy drink”, is there a brand of drinks that will immediately come to your mind? When you hear of “beauty soap”, is there a specific brand that will come to your mind?

With regard to your telecentre, how would you want it to be remembered by your target customers? Would it be “Services you need at your fingertips” or “The voice of the community”?

Please note that when you position your telecentre that way, you must have the services to support your claim.

Partnership: How do you work or networking with other organisations or stakeholders who can boost your marketing activities?

Policy/ Politics include government interventions; political diplomacy with community organisations and other activities which can support you're the marketing of your telecentre.

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL MARKETING

For effective marketing of your telecentre, consider the **basic principles** in social marketing:

1. Using the framework of commercial marketing

Social marketing relies on commercial marketing's conceptual framework specifically expressed in terms of the four Ps of marketing. The essence of marketing is to identify client wants and needs and then develops ways to satisfy them.

Note and remember that additional P's were identified in social marketing. This is because of the nature of the product being marketed. Also, the general or overall goal of marketing these products or services is not only to profit the telecentre but for community development. This integrates a "social conscience" to your marketing activity and makes it different from the usual commercial marketing activity.

2. Recognition of Competition

A sound marketing plan recognises the presence of the competition. This competition may be in terms of other entity selling the same product or providing the same line of services or other factors which may prevent purchase of the product or services your telecentre provides. Knowing and studying these competitions will enable you to:

- i. *Design or develop competitive products or services.*

If your telecentre provides access to internet and there are other entities providing the same service (i-café's, for instance), then your telecentre can probably offer a faster or better connection; more and newer computer units; add-ons like a webcam, earphone; and updated software and various applications. Your telecentre can also put in more relevant content or more relevant information to your client group.

- ii. *Design or develop more relevant products and services*

This requires some research and finding out what the community needs. You know by now that not all needs will be expressed concretely. The client and community needs assessment will provide you with ideas in terms of what other lines of products and services can be explored by your telecentre, which are not offered by your competition.

One example is 'information bank' for various client groups like job seekers; various topics for students doing research; etc. For instance, your telecentre will not just provide access to potential employers but may also keep a database of job seekers and employers and connect and match them.

- iii. *Building a directory of contacts*

Rural people may want to use phones, but have no idea who to call to gain access to specific information because simple telephone directories for agriculture, health and education contacts are unavailable. Friends and relatives as well as urban organisations needing to contact rural field workers, may want to call rural people, but because rural telephone kiosk numbers are not clearly posted or available, no one will know what number to dial. The development of creative applications of rural

communication systems, such as agricultural marketing information services, or health care worker assistance services, may be ignored by technicians who see telephones as simple voice communication tools.

iv. *Other products and services*

These would be for another client group not being catered to by your competition. For example:

Some telecentres go beyond what would be considered information and communication services. A rural telecentre in Western Australia took on a banking function when the only local commercial bank moved out of the community.

In Hungary, telehouses have launched a great variety of services, some providing a place for job training or postal services, others simple health services such as blood pressure testing. Often these are done on contract for government agencies or non-governmental organizations. The Hungarian telecottages have become part of the fabric of their communities rather than an odd (though useful) ad on.

v. *Design or develop products or services that are aligned to that of your competition*

If your competition is providing access or computer time, your telecentre may provide quick tutorial services like “How to Use the Computer”; “How to Surf the Internet efficiently and maximise Your Internet Time”; or quick tutorials on various software and computer applications. Again, this will require knowing what your competition has.

Recognising your competition will also enable you to think of what will be your unique selling point or USP or what will make your telecentre different you’re your competitors.

3. Client Orientation

Marketing should be client oriented. You need to think of your product/service as something that will meet the needs of your clients.

This means that you as the telecentre operator have to understand the clients’ wants and needs. And, at the same time, their values, beliefs and behavioral patterns so you can identify, design, and develop your services along these lines. This is also in harmony with the placing your clients at the centre of the marketing process. However, this should not discourage you to provide services you believe will improve the lives of the people in your community - which would require a separate marketing and promotion plan/activity.

4. Client Research

Client based services mean examining clients perceptions of product benefits, product price, the competition's benefits and costs, and other factors that influence consumer behavior. Marketing healthy behaviour relies on the social and behavioural sciences to guide formative research and subsequent programme design.

Your client research will be good inputs to product design and development in connection with the previous discussions on recognition of competition.

5. Audience Segmentation

Another distinguishing feature of social marketing is audience segmentation. This means dividing your clients into distinct groups based on characteristics that may influence their decision to use your telecentre services. Segmentation will also be useful if you need to prioritise which products and services you will develop or offer and which will give you the competitive advantage over other entities in the same line of business. Knowing the market will also help you determine the most appropriate marketing strategy as well as product/service-consumer matching.

Some variables which may be considered in audience segmentation are:

1. Socio-demographics

- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Economic class
- Language/dialect
- Media habits
- Marital status
- Family size
- Religion
- Race
- Occupation
- Geographic situation

2. Practices

- Habits
- Behaviours
- Lifestyles

3. Psychographics

- Predispositions
- Attitude
- Values

- Customs
- Traditions
- Social Norms
- Indigenous belief system

There are also different kinds of audiences:

1. **Primary Audience** – these are people/clients you focus on when you decide on the products and services to offer. You will develop your marketing plan and telecentre promotion activities around them. Your primary audience will determine how you operate your telecentre.

For instance, if your target group is **students** and given that they are in school during weekdays and practically the whole day, you may want to operate your telecentre in the afternoon or during weekends. Or, you may offer other services for which you can still make full use of your facilities when majority of your primary audience are not using them.

You could also offer the same services or products for students may, with just a minor re-organisation, to **out-of-school youth**. Or you can be a research arm of research organisations/institutions in charge of gathering local data.

Or, you could identify another group to use the same services. This group will then be your secondary audience.

2. **Secondary Audience**. Your secondary audience can be those groups which your line of services can also serve. They will have the same needs, wants or aspirations which can be met by your products and services. But, they are not the same as the primary audience.

Taking off from the example above, if your primary audience are the students who will frequent your telecentres from 3:00 pm up and during weekends, you could lease a portion of your telecentre space to **freelancers** who need constant and immediate access to computers, telephones, and internet. Examples of this are online **teachers/mentors or tutors** who can schedule work hours and who need good and reliable internet connection and up to date software/computer programmes.

6. Continuous Monitoring and Revision

Just like any other business, social marketing relies on continuous monitoring to assess the effectiveness of mechanisms being implemented.

This requires identification of concrete or tangible indicators of success. One example is the number of people who are using your telecentre services. You could conduct an informal survey by asking how they heard about the telecentre, what other services they want and what you could offer them.

7. Your clients' environment

What are the factors that can affect your clients using your services?

Look at your clients' environment and the various factors in it that can affect their decision to use your telecentre and its services.

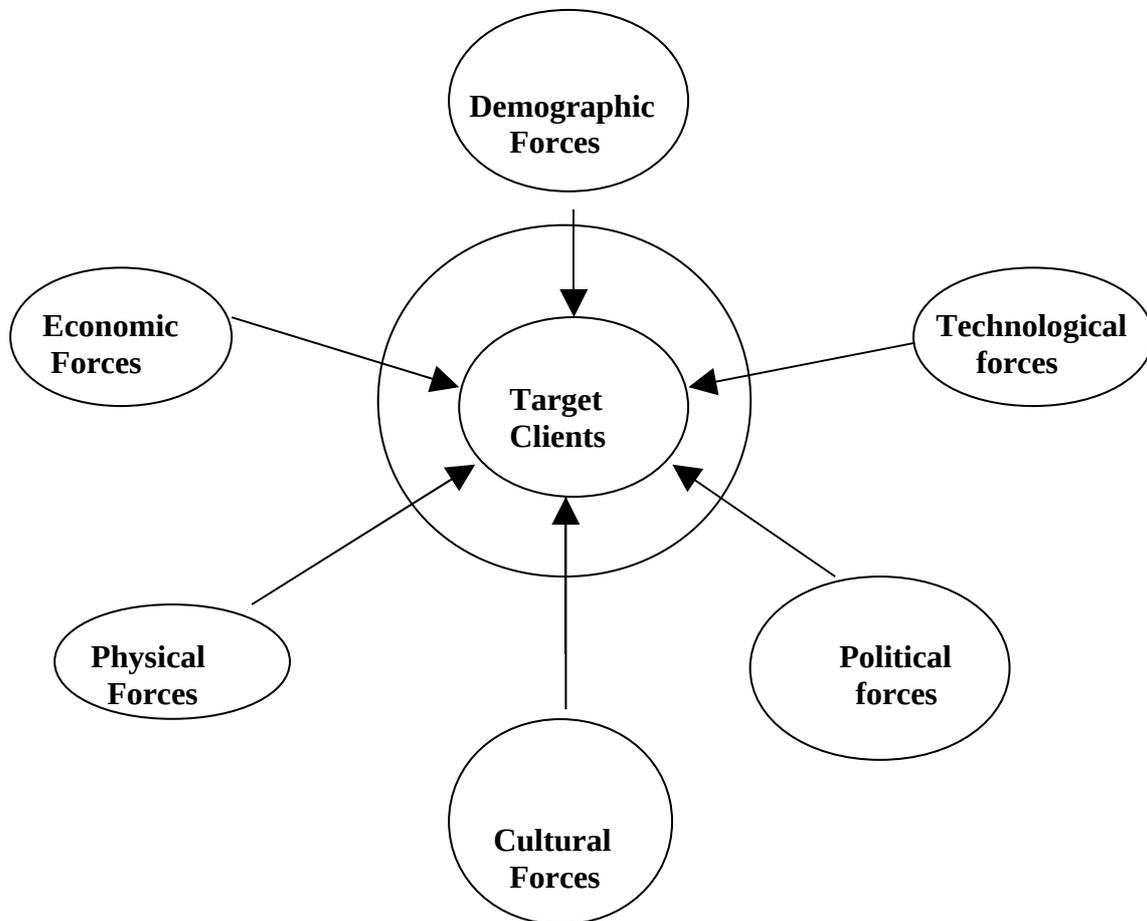


Figure 1: The forces affecting the behavior of your telecentres target clients

1. **Demographic forces** - this refers to the client's age, gender, education, religion, socio-economic status, etc.
2. **Economic forces** - may be associated with the cost of the product or services and which may constrain your target client to avail themselves of the services of your telecentre.
3. **Physical forces** - this could include conditions like accessibility of you telecentre to your target client group and other groups which you may want to reach (like location, access to the differently abled). It can be linked to available transportation facilities in the area where your telecentre is located.
4. **Political forces** - this means local policies supportive of the operations and services of your telecentre. Passing of supportive ordinances to IT literacy, for instance, can affect the consumption of the products your telecentre offers.

5. **Socio-cultural forces** - this includes values, belief systems, preferences, mindset and motivation among others. If the community is tolerant, for instance to women seeking education or working, then the chances are that this group will go to your telecentre for the services you offer and which will support these needs and aspirations.
6. **Technological forces** - this could be the heart and soul of telecentre operations. The clients have to know about and be convinced that these technologies can be relevant to and change their lives before they will use your telecentre.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

Note:

- a) Please use the space given below each question for your answer
- b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit

1. Define Social Marketing (in 25 words or less)

2. List the 6 P's of Social Marketing

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| i | _____ |
| ii | _____ |
| iii | _____ |
| iv | _____ |
| v | _____ |
| vi | _____ |

3. List 7 basic principles of Social Marketing (in one sentence)

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| i | _____ |
| ii | _____ |
| iii | _____ |
| iv | _____ |
| v | _____ |
| vi | _____ |
| vii | _____ |

4. List 6 factors that affect your clients use of your services

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| i | _____ |
| ii | _____ |
| iii | _____ |
| iv | _____ |
| v | _____ |
| vi | _____ |

2.4 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we have discussed social marketing for telecentres. The main points are:

Social marketing

- Is more suitable and desirable marketing approach for telecentres
- Takes into consideration the community that telecentres are based in
- Incorporates the principles of commercial marketing in its approach
- Is a process that that requires a combination of people, process, presentation, positioning, partnership, policy and politics

2.5 Check Your Progress: Model Answers

1. Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing techniques to positively influence the voluntary behaviours of the target audience (telecentre clients) and improve their lives.

2. The 6 P's of Social Marketing are:

1. People
2. Process
3. Presentation
4. Positioning
5. Partnership
6. Policy/politics

3. The 7 basic principles of Social Marketing are:

1. Using the framework of commercial marketing
2. Recognition of Competition
3. Client Orientation
4. Client Research
5. Audience Segmentation
6. Continuous Monitoring and Revision
7. Your clients' environment

4. The 6 factors affecting clients use of telecentre services:

1. Demographic forces
2. Economic forces
3. Physical forces
4. Political forces

5. Socio-cultural forces
6. Technological forces

2.6 DEFINITIONS

1. Social Marketing

Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing techniques to positively influence the voluntary behaviours of the target audience (telecentre clients) and improve their lives.

2. Socio demographics

Social demographics relates to a combination of [sociological](#) and [demographic](#) characteristics.

3. Psychographics

Psychographics is the use of demographics to obtain marketing data from people's attitudes, lifestyles etc

2.7 ASSIGNMENTS

Using what you have learned in this unit about social marketing make a presentation on how you will market one or more than more services.

The presentation could be

1. A 5-7 minute cassette or CD audio recording
2. A video tape (5 minutes)
3. A written essay (1000 words)
4. A drawing
5. A poem
6. A photos essay (with about 10 photos and text)

2.8 GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

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