MARKETING PRACTICES AS A STRATEGY TO SOCIAL CHANGE

DR KABUOH MARGRET
Business Administration & Marketing Department
Babcock University Shagamu Nigeria

Abstract

The importance of social change in an individual, group, society and organization cannot be over emphasized. Social Change could be properly effected via marketing practices hence the need for this study. This paper took a critical analysis and phenomenological view of social change with marketing practices strategy as the base of analysis using 50 randomly selected Babcock University students which was analysed with percentage method. Review and discussion were done on meaning, theories, causes, resistance, processes and consequences of effecting social change in the society. Marketing practices as training and communication, participation and involvement, persuasive and coercion, negotiation and agreement strategies presented better options for resisting change in the society. The three-phase process of change; unfreezing, changing, and refreezing must be adapted for effective change such that the new idea or behavior can be integrated or replace the old across the system imbibing the change as a normal way of permanent life.

Keywords: *Marketing practices, Social change, Strategy, Resistance, Unfreezing/Refreezing.*

Introduction

Life is all about transformation. No individual, organization, plant or even animal remains stagnant. Every living creature would want to experience upward growth so does an organization or a group. Marketing plays a strategic role in the conviction of a target group when new idea, product, or service is being introduced with great appeal and persuasion which consequently is adopted and embraced by the target group. The adoption of the new idea, product, or service no doubt becomes an added value to the adopter leading to ones social life change, hence the need for this paper.

According to Kotler & Keller, (2009) Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. It is as 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. Thus we see marketing management as the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping and growing customers through creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value. The superior customer value here is a progressive type that transforms to social change.

Change is the only constant object that keeps changing. Social life of an individual begins as a fetus in the womb to a born baby, to a toddler, grows to an adolescent, full adulthood then to a very old age. Each of these stages is associated with social needs, status, and taste amongst others. Organisations transform from micro-small-medium-large, if possible to international and multinationals.

Statement of the problem

Some individuals and organizations despite the benefits of change are still indifferent to change due to the following reasons;

(i) **The nature of change;** When the change comes so sudden or unexpected, there is most likely that it will generate confusion of not being ready at that particular time. The new idea may sound so abrupt for both to be adopted, it may an introduction of new

product or development of existing one.

(ii) Lack of communication; Communication cannot be said to be effective until a feed back is originated from the receiver and confirmed by the sender (encoder). It is an effective instrument by which a marketer uses to communicate his product or service to the prospective customers. Yet most managers and marketers fail to communicate effectively and this will lead to resistance to change.

(ii) Misunderstanding/ignorance/lack of skill; Change could be resisted for lack of understanding. If an organization wants to increase her market share from present position by 25%, the organization needs to embark on market survey; bench mark competitors, embark on some social corporate responsibilities to enable them penetrate the market. These strategies must be understood by managers and other employees as this might attract additional target. If not properly communicated to them (employees), may lead to resistance.

(iii) Fear of the unknown; Social change that is not well spelt out through marketing practices of trade exhibition, road shows, customer and workers' participation, may result to resistance which may mar the organization vision. It is always advisable for managers to pretest and carry along the subordinate on expected issues to douse their level of fear.

(v) Perception of inequity; The theory of equity and justice at times are not unhealed by marketing practices. Managers assigning responsibilities, recognizing, awarding commendations partially to some employees while disregarding others might not digest well with the disregarded which consequently results to change resistance.

(vi) Different goals and objectives; An organistion goals must be set such that every worker must make an input towards achieving such goals. Team work, motivation among others at times may be lacking while different goals and interest become the other of the day, and when this is the case, people may not comply to the expected change.

Objective of the study
The main objective of this paper is to evaluate the effect of marketing practices on social change.

Hypothesis;
The formulated hypothesis for this study is thus;
Ho; Marketing practices strategy has no effect on social change
H1; Marketing practices strategy has effect on social change

Literature review
Various literatures are being reviewed in this section on; organizational change,

Organisational change;
(Daft, 2010) views Organizational change as the adoption of a new idea or behavior by an organization. No wander, society metamorphosised from Agrarian pre-industrialized to industrialization and now post industrialisation. Product change is a change in the Organisation's product or service output while Technological change is a change that pertains to the oganisation's production process (Daft2,2010). These really confirm that change is constant.

Harper (1993) in his book "exploring Social Change" defines social change as the significant alteration of social structure and cultural patterns through time. And that social structure is made up of a persistence network of social relationship in which interaction between people or group has become repetitive. Among the many means of creating social change are direct action, protest, advocacy, community, organization, community practice, revolution and political

activism (Giddens, 2006).

Change is any alteration to status quo, affecting both individuals and work environment or organizations while organisational change is defined as the adoption of a new idea or behavior by an organization.

Social change is the alteration in basic structures of a social group or society. It is an ever present phenomenon in social life but has become especially intense in the modern era (Ojo,2012). The concept of social change implies measurement of some of the characteristics of a group of individuals. And the consequences could undermine or eliminate ways of life that are considered positive. Generally, there are two way sources of changes vis-à-vis the non-systematic change such as climate change, technological innovation from the outside and the system change. Literature has it that some changes come about through the combination of both systematic and non-systematic processes. At individual level, social change entails examination of how individual's perception, belief system; moralities, identities and behavior are determined by their position in social space.

Promotion as one of the marketing practices.

Marketing practices are a set of all marketing activities of products, price, promotion, place, person, processes and physical evidence (7Ps) that marketers use to effectively and efficiently promote their ideas, products or services while enhancing social life of the people. Achumba (2002) defined sales promotion as those marketing activities, other than personal selling, advertising and publicity that stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness, such as displays, shows and expositions, demonstrations etc. Sales promotion is a proactive technique aimed at stimulating sales (Hingston2001). Stimulation of sales by marketers results to customer's

loyalty which consequently becomes an added value and change to his social life.

Literature has reviewed that Product promotion involves informing, reminding and persuading the consumer about a particular product. The aim is to keep customers nearer to the products and stimulate stronger market response of a minimal cost while meeting company's target of profitability. Achumba and Osuagwu, (1994) defined marketing promotion as the art of transmitting information for marketing purposes. It is the process of establishing communication relationship between a marketer and its publics. For a marketer to assess his promotion effort, he must evaluate the public's stimuli response rate towards the product or service. Sales promotion is a key ingredient in marketing campaigns and consists of a diverse collection of incentive tools mostly short term designed to stipulate quicker or greater purchase of particular products or services by consumers (Kotler, 2003).

The nature of change

Change is a human and technological problem, and could lead to pressure and conflicts that will eventually cause a break down somewhere in the organization eg. An employee who becomes dissatisfied with his job and resigns. We live in a dynamic and exciting world where change is always taking place and it affects both individuals and organizations. As individuals, we regularly experience change in our everyday lives. In recent years, lives have been changed by the introduction of computers and other innovations. In other to survive and prosper in a competitive world, organizations have to change and or adapt to change.

Causes of Social Change

Inconsistencies, discrepancies and discontinuous are the product of faulty social system. Hence, what are the probable reasons for attempting and/or effecting change in the society?

(1) Internal set of contradictions: This entails institutionalization of power and economic relationship such that the subordination or exploitation of one class by another is legitimated in the value, norms and laws of the system.

For Karl Marx, the essential contradiction in capitalistic society was the opposition of interest between owners and workers. This contradiction was compounded by the social cooperation in the production process and the individuals' appropriation in the distribution of rewards. Such opposition of interest built into the central structure of the society could not be resolved without a radical change in structure. Here, Marx sees revolutionary change as the only solution.

(2) Generational Differences/Discrepancies: It has generally been observed that each generation has its peculiar nature that is associated with an identical environment for which same generation are brought up. In the present era of developing technological society, the gap between the socialization setting of parent and children has widened considerably. The mode of fashion, fades, taste and other social lives of present generation is totally different from past generation. This could be confirmed by children at times referring to parents as "Old School".

Educational differences separate two generations and the discrepancy among the two generation can be in terms of aspiration, motives, value and behavioral patterns.

(3) Individual and Group competition for Reward within the Societal Framework: Another condition that generates social changes has to do with the individual and group discrepancies in rewards, both material and psychological competition among various groups to capture more reward for the system. A typical example of this is the agitation of the Niger-Delta case.

(4) Contact and Clash with the External Environment: This can be cooperative and competition in trade relation; interaction with other Nations can lead to new technology, new needs and new ideas. International conflicts can strengthen or weaken existing social structure. If it is weakness, it can lead to stagnation or discontinuity.

Theories of social change

Social change has some associated theories. Each theory is associated with a peculiar practice for which it is known for. Most of the practices are found in a social group, community, organization, state or entire country impacting either negative or positive consequences. The theories as listed below;

(a) Functionalism theory

The functionalists in their discussion of social change concluded that social change is a gradual disruption of traditional social norms and a shift to modernity, capitalism and mechanization. As tradition and custom wither away, bureaucratic, financial and other impersonal forms of control came into existence leading to estranged masses that can easily be manipulated. Social change is then found as moving from traditional, familiar status forms of social life to those based on contract and law. Personal authority and custom give way to impersonal, bureaucratic authority based on law. As noted by Haralambos (2004) that the economy is solely responsible for resolving societal problems with industrialism playing an especially crucial role.

(b) Symbolism Theory

This theory emphasises on two folds; The frequent modes of adjustment between people in organization on one hand and the social cues on the other was really stressed by Arthur (1996)

The change in institution and ideas needs to be interpreted. This interpretation is manifested in the way that people and organization adjust to changes in social cause and symbols.

To a large extent, this school of thought holds that ideology and ideas play a dominant role in social change and are catalyst for change which serves to define that limit to that change. Thus, social change is based on how people interpret the nature of their society and its context at any given moment. Reality is constructed rather than given.

Revolt theory

Revolution is defined as the radical break that is created when a society outgrows the forms of production imposed upon it (Cohen 1980). At this point, what is expected is either obsoletism (out datedness) or adoption of current materials or equipment to enhance production.

Social life is based around the adjustment of the population to differing modes of production as opined by the traditional socialist model of social change. As technology changes, so does mode of production and ultimately change in social organization.

Hegelian Theory

This theory holds that societies at any given moment in time represent synthesis of opposing force. Hence, social organism is in constant compromise between opposing forces such as capital and labour, real and ideals theory and practice, ruler and ruled. Society is therefore in constant flux as it strives to reach its own self image- its own construction of its destiny is to bridge the gap between actor and act, idea and real. Thus, social change can be interpreted as society constantly striving to manifest its own ideological basis (Raapana & Friedrich, 2005).

Thus, Hegelian dialectic model of change is based on the interaction of opposing forces.

Strategies Marketers/Managers use for overcoming Resistance to Change

1. Education and communication- This strategy is appealing because i t advocates prevention rather than cure. The idea here is to create awareness using promotional strategy by marketers.

2. Participation and involvement- Personal involvement through participation tends to defuse both rational and irrational fears about any expected change.

3. Facilitation and support-support from superiors, marketers or leaders are needed in form of training to douse the fear of change resistance.

4. Negotiation and agreement- Marketers use personal selling to negotiate and agree with prospective customers on terms of sale transactions that may lead t o overcoming resistance to social change.

5. Manipulation and co-operation- Seminars, events and campaigns could be arranged to co-opt participants to encourage successful change especially during sales seminars.

6. Coercion- Managers use formal power to force employees to change, this could be by threatening them with termination, loss of pay or transfer.

Thus, marketer's role in this aspect involve the use of various marketing strategies to try and get people adopt new ideas. In the marketing place, new idea is a sine- qua non to new product that would be acceptable based on the factors of its quality, cost, information, availability and accessibility (Kotler, 2001).

Such idea must be beneficial; in fact, it must add value to lives. Pricing involves affixing value to a product and provide yardstick to measure transaction in an exchange relationship. In the same vein, new ideas must be capable of leading to satisfaction.

Disseminating new idea involve the use of marketer's weaponry especially the promotion mix of SAPP (Sales promotion, advertisement, personal selling and publicity). These are the tools being used by marketers to create, remind, and sustain awareness about new product (Ojo, 2012).

The Changing process (Behavioral Awareness in Managing Change)

Change agents should be aware of a three-phase process in managing change: Unfreezing, Changing, and Refreezing phases.

(1) Unfreezing; this prepares the members of a social system for change and then helps neutralize initial resistance. Sudden, unexpected change is socially disruptive. The management must pave the way for 'unfreezing the situation' so that members would be willing and ready to accept the change. Unfreezing means that old ideas and practices need to be cast aside so that new ones can be learned. This stage constitutes a necessary first step to stimulate people feel and recognize the need for change. This could be done by making announcements, holding meetings, and launching a promotional campaign in the organization's newsletter and on bulletin boards.

(2) Changing; Changing is the step in which the new ideas and practices are learned, tried, and tested. Once the members have been prepared to accept change, their behavioral patterns have to be redefined. This process involves helping an employee think, reason, and perform in new way. It can be a time of confusion, disorientation, overload, and despair. The changing step usually is also mixed with hope. discovery, and excitement.

(3) Refreezing; this is systematically following up a change program for lasting results. Refreezing occurs when the new behavior becomes a normal way of life. The new behavior must replace the former behavior completely for successful change to take place. The behavior should be permanent in nature. Accordingly, the new behavior must be continuously reinforced so that the newly acquired behavior does not diminish or extinguish.

Consequences of Social Change
Social change has its pros and cons. Let us look at some of the consequences of social change

(1) Destructions and weakening of integrative values in the society: Another latent consequence of change is to undercut or challenge existing values and norms.

(2) Change is balance between aspiration and achievement: one common side effect of change involves shift in the balance between individual aspiration and opportunities for achieving them. That is, the degree to which change agent is justified in tampering with the aspirations.

(3) Strengthening the power of group at the expense of other: A programme of social intervention may lead to the unintended effect of strengthening the bargaining power of one group over another.

(4) Cultural incongruity: The effect of change may lead to cultural disharmony. This occurs especially in a diverse society. Change that occurs in one part may not affect the other area of the country. Hence, disharmony may occur.

(5) Rural-Urban Migration: In an attempt to benefit from the goodies in the urban area as a result of change that has taken place, rural dwellers would migrate.

Health Hazard as a result of industrialization: Change brings about industrialization and the bye-product of most industries is in the form of pollution of poisonous and inimical substances. This has negative effect on the well being of the people in such areas. Thus, Industrialization brought about as a result of change becomes a source of health hazard.

Methodology.

Both secondary and primary data were collected. For the primary data, the researcher randomly selected 50 Babcock students from various departments and levels who attended a rally organized by students during 2013 all students' week ceremony. A simple structured questionnaire on reasons why people resist change was administered and collected immediately on completion as the students were in a relaxed mood. The secondary data were gotten from texts, and journals.

50 Babcock Students Random Sample on Reasons for Change Resistant

Table 1

Reasons	Nos.	%
Nature of the change	12	24
Lack o communication	10	20
Misunderstanding, Ignorance , Lack of Skill.	7	14
Fear of the unknown	10	20
Perception of inequity	8	16
Different goals and objective	3	6
	50	100

The above table highlights various reasons why people resist change.

The nature of the change ranks highest with 12 (24%) while lack of communication and fear of the unknown follow with 10 (20%) each. Followed by perception of inequity 8 (16), misunderstanding 7(14) and lastly different goals and objective with 3(6). People would want to be sure of the change nature for fear of the unknown. This is where information is key. The duty of a good marketer is to formulate appropriate strategies to communicate the change information to the concerned individuals.

Summary; Marketing practices if well coordinated, has significant effect to social change.

Conclusion

Change is any alteration to status quo affecting both individuals and work environment or organizations while Organisational change is defined as the adoption of a new idea or behavior by an organization. Despite all emphasis on change, people still resist change for various reasons as; nature of the change, lack of communication, misunderstanding, fear of unknown, perception of inequity, & different goals and objective.

Change could be proactive where the manager's role is to introduce continual changes that could bring a better fit between the firm and its environment.
Social change could be effected strategically through marketing practices of the 7Ps.

Marketing practices entails identifying the want and needs of consumers through information search and satisfying them at a profit. Marketing plays a strategic role in the conviction of a

target group when new idea, product, or service is being introduced with great appeal and persuasion which consequently is adopted and embraced by the targeted segment.

Consumers would embrace new product only if it is of good quality, if it possesses desire benefits, available and accessible as well as constant messaging. In like manner, social change becomes feasible with enough information and pronounced benefit. For social change to occur and be sustained, there must an underlying pattern of action such that new input can be integrated with what already exist across the system, otherwise, the new will disappear.

However, there are consequences of social change as discussed above which we suggest for future researchers to work on.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested based on the findings; For social change to be effective, marketers and managers alike should strategically position all marketing practices in their required places.

All reasons for the change resistance as listed in table 1 above should be guided against by change agents as well as marketers and other managers.

There should be timely training, promotional campaigns and events relating to the product/service at hand to impact positively on social change.

Change agents should be aware of a three-phase process of managing change; Unfreezing, Changing and Refreezing to neutralize initial resistance and imbibe change acceptance and adopting the new behavior as a normal way of life.

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