8

Developing a Desired Positioning and Strategic Marketing Mix

"I believe the genius of modern marketing is not the 4Ps, or audience research, or even exchange, but rather the management paradigm that studies, selects, balances, and manipulates the 4Ps to achieve behavior change. We keep shortening 'The Marketing Mix' to the 4Ps. And I would argue that it is the 'mix' that matters most. This is exactly what all the message campaigns miss—they never ask about the other 3Ps, and that is why so many of them fail."

—Bill Smith
Executive Vice President
Academy for Educational Development[1]

At this point in the planning process, you will have answered big questions. Who are the priority market segments for this effort? What behaviors do you want to influence? How does your target market feel about what you have in mind?

It's time to open the marketing toolbox. You'll find the four traditional Ps inside: product, price, place, and promotion. Our experience is that you will need all of them to create and deliver the value your target market expects in exchange for a new behavior. Our observation is similar to Bill Smith's. This doesn't happen often, primarily because many, if not most, practitioners think of marketing as

promotion, not recognizing that, instead, it is a process that usually ends up with a promotion.

Yet, even before making decisions about your marketing mix, we recommend that you engage in one more exercise—that of determining a desired positioning for your offer. A desired positioning is how you want your target audience to view your offer, especially compared with that of competing offers (alternative behaviors in most social marketing settings). As described in this chapter, a simple positioning statement becomes a powerful, clarifying reference point when you choose a marketing mix strategy. It is the job of product, price, place, and promotion to help you achieve the position that you desire in your customers' minds.

Our opening case story highlights this positioning practice, as well as the poverty issue of focus in this chapter—malaria.

Sustainable Malaria Prevention: NetMark's Success Story in Africa

Approximately 40% of the world's population is living in areas at risk of malaria, a mosquito-borne disease that has devastating health and economic impact. Every year, between 350 and 500 million people become severely ill with malaria, and more than 1 million die, with most living in the world's poorest countries.[2] In Africa, it is the number one cause of death for pregnant mothers and children under 5 years of age. It accounts for 40% of public health expenditures in Africa, 30% to 40% of inpatient admissions, and up to 50% of outpatient visits in areas with high malaria transmission.[3] Economically, malaria cripples Africa with an estimated loss of US$12 billion each year, slowing economic growth on the continent by 1.3%. As a result, the GDP of African countries is 32% lower than it would be in the absence of malaria.[4]

The World Health Organization recommends insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) as the best way for families to protect themselves from malaria. They are proven to reduce the risk of infection by up to 45% and the risk of death by 30%.[5] In 2000, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initiated a five-year effort called "NetMark" to increase demand for and appropriate use, availability, and affordability of ITNs. In 2002, encouraged by positive results, funding for NetMark was extended.

This case story describes the program's rigorous application of social marketing principles, including the use of all Four Ps in the marketing mix.

Background, Purpose, and Program Focus

Managed by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), a nonprofit human and social development organization, NetMark developed public-private partnerships, including ones with commercial net and insecticide manufacturers and their African distributors. A special focus was given to reaching those most at risk (pregnant women and children; see Figure 8.1) and to creating a sustainable program—one that would survive long after funding disappeared. To accomplish this, AED developed an innovative, market-based approach called Full Market Impact™. It was founded on the premise that as demand grows within a competitive market, consumers benefit from improved quality, lower prices, and wider availability.

Consumer Research

Strategies were informed and inspired by the following:

- Extensive consumer research into knowledge of and beliefs about mosquitoes and malaria

- Beliefs and attitudes about the use of treated and untreated mosquito nets
- Levels of access to and affordability of nets, especially by the most vulnerable groups
- Consumer preferences regarding net size, shape, and color

FIGURE 8.1   NetMark educational session for pregnant women

Barriers to usage included the perceived high cost of nets, lack of variety in net size and shape, concern with safety, fear of potential adverse health effects from treated nets, and limited access. In Nigeria, for example, the vast majority (92%) of respondents said that the closest place they could purchase a net was an outdoor market and that the average time to get there would be approximately one hour by bus.[6] In terms of

perceived benefits of the insect-treated nets, strong value was expressed for the nets' potential to actually kill mosquitoes, not just keep them away.

Positioning

Based on these barriers and perceived benefits, a positioning statement for the program might read as follows: "We want ITNs to be seen as the best way to protect your family from malaria. Unlike untreated nets, they actually kill mosquitoes."

Product

Product strategies focused on ensuring an adequate supply of the treated nets, and a quality product. Supplies were enhanced by coordinating commercial and institutional procurements and by providing technical and financial support to expand manufacturing capacity and quality. A "seal of quality" (shown in Figure 8.2) was developed to reassure consumers that products carrying the seal met international standards, including the use of WHO-recommended insecticides. Partners incorporated the seal into their packaging designs, which served to link their brand with the generic marketing campaign. And new technology was introduced to develop long-lasting nets—ones that did not require retreatment to remain effective.

FIGURE 8.2   The program's seal, assuring product quality

Price

NetMark worked to lower the price of the nets, as well as make them available for those who could not pay. NetMark successfully advocated for reducing taxes and tariffs in the interest of the public good in several countries. This was a stronger and more compelling messenger for policy makers than for-profit businesses could have been. By then engaging the commercial sector in promoting and selling nets to those who could afford to pay (see Figure 8.3), the limited resources available from the public sector were then used to offer discounted or free nets for those who truly could not afford to pay.

FIGURE 8.3   Commercial sign promoting the sale of ITNs

Place

Initially, NetMark chose distributor partners that carried other well-known international consumer packaged-goods brands. But NetMark found that the nets were not a priority for these

large businesses, especially given the nets' size and bulk. Net-Mark then expanded distribution by including small businesses that would focus solely on nets and, as such, were more loyal and energetic market developers. International donors were encouraged to include these smaller enterprises in their funding allocations. Additional distribution channels were created by working with grassroots organizations for community-level distribution (see Figure 8.4) and by creating mobile channels, such as sales staff who would travel the country on motorcycles.

FIGURE 8.4   Rural sales of NetMark at a health clinic

Promotion

NetMark's communications campaign sought to build demand for the nets by informing the public about the dangers of malaria and the benefits of sleeping under treated nets. Two premier advertising agencies helped develop an advertising and communication campaign with regional and country-specific components. The initial tag line was "Mosquitoes KILL. KILL mosquitoes." In subsequent campaigns, the seal was linked with the message "Insecticide Treated Nets are the new way for Africa to live." The campaign included mass media (print, television, and radio) and special promotions such as wall murals, street theater, and road shows (see Figure 8.5).

FIGURE 8.5   The NetMark campaign goes on the road.

Outcomes

The NetMark project has shown that international and African companies are willing to invest in producing, marketing, and distributing treated nets when working in partnership with the public sector. A 2005 report cited the following accomplishments between 2000 and 2005:[7]

- Private-sector partners have invested more than US$18 million in developing the commercial treated net market in Africa.

- ITNs are protecting nearly 15 million more people from malaria.

- More than 100 million people have been educated about malaria, the importance of ITNs, and how to use the nets effectively.

- More than 350,000 pregnant women and children younger than 5 received discount vouchers, of which 243,000 were redeemed.

- Treated nets now cost from 30% to 75% less than untreated ones did in 2000 due to the competition fostered by NetMark.

- Before NetMark, few nets were treated with insecticide, which makes them twice as effective at preventing malaria. Now, 65% of nets owned in NetMark countries have been treated.

- The number of distributors increased from two in 1999 to 29 in 2005.

Positioning

Positioning is the act of designing the organization's actual and perceived offering in such a way that it lands on and occupies a distinctive place in the mind of the target market—where you want it to be.[8]

As you may recall, social marketers strive to create, communicate, and deliver value to a target market in exchange for performing a desired behavior. A positioning statement describes what you want

your target market to think and feel when they hear about your offer. It establishes positive points of difference relative to the competition (alternative behaviors). It is developed with the profile of your target market in mind, including any unique demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavior-related characteristics. It is inspired by findings from your research on perceived barriers and benefits of the behavior, as well as the competition. It is, as advertising executives Al Ries and Jack Trout describe it, a "battle for the mind" of your audience. We live in an overcommunicated society where "the average mind is already a dripping sponge that can only soak up more information at the expense of what's already there."[9]

Positioning involves implanting the brand's unique benefits and differentiation in customers' minds. "Thus, Tide is positioned as a powerful, all-purpose family detergent; Ivory Snow is positioned as the gentle detergent for fine washables and baby clothes. In the automobile market, Toyota Tercel and Subaru are positioned on economy, Mercedes and Cadillac on luxury, and Porsche and BMW on performance. Volvo positions powerfully on safety. Consumers are overloaded with information about products and services. They cannot reevaluate products every time they make a buying decision. To simplify the buying process, consumers organize products into categories—they "position" products, services, and companies in their minds."[10]

One fairly straightforward way to develop a positioning statement is to fill in the blanks of this sentence, or one similar to it:

> We want (OUR TARGET MARKET) to see (OUR DESIRED BEHAVIOR) as (DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE) and as more important and beneficial than (COMPETING BEHAVIORS).[11]

Keep in mind this statement is for "internal use only." It is not the same as your messages for your target market, but it will guide their development. It should be shared with others working on your effort

to develop your marketing mix strategy, helping to unify and strengthen decision making. Consider how agreement on the following statements would guide teams working toward a unified approach. Notice how different target markets require different positioning statements, even for one program effort such as that of NetMark:

- "We want *mothers* to see insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) as the best way to protect their families from malaria and a better choice than untreated nets, because these nets actually kill mosquitoes."

- "We want *commercial manufacturers* of ITNs to see Africa as a great market opportunity, one that can open up an entirely new and large consumer base. We also want them to believe that NetMark will work closely with them to create cutting-edge technology. NetMark also will help reduce taxes and tariffs so that prices can be lowered to reach this large base at the bottom of the pyramid."

- "We want *small business enterprises* in local communities to see focusing on sales and distribution of ITNs as a profitable venture. We also want them to realize that they will not be adversely affected by subsidized nets that the government will provide for those who can't pay."

- "We want *policy makers* to see lowering the taxes and tariffs for commercial partners for ITNs as being in the interest of the public good, and to know that local manufacturers cannot meet the need and expected demand for these nets. We also want policy makers to target subsidies for these nets to those in need who cannot pay."

As mentioned, inspiration for this descriptive phrase will come from the lists of barriers and benefits identified in your research. Ideally, this research would include a prioritization of barriers and benefits, giving you a clear sense of what factors would be most important to highlight. Keep in mind that you are searching for the "higher value"—the key benefits to be gained or costs that will be avoided by adopting the desired behavior.[12]

The Strategic Marketing Mix (The Four Ps)

This section describes in more detail the four traditional elements of the marketing mix, outlining decisions associated with each. A malaria success story will be used to highlight each. The sequence of the Four Ps is significant. Product is determined first, followed by price, because these influence decisions about place. And until all three of these strategies are known, you won't know the offer your communications will promote.

The First P: Product

A product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need. It isn't as many typically think, just a tangible offering like soap, tires, or hamburgers. It can be one of several types: a physical good, a service, an experience, an event, a person, a place, a property, an organization, information, or an idea.[13]

Poverty-reduction efforts include all types of products, as illustrated by the following examples:

- *Physical good.* Mosquito nets, condoms, check dams, high-yield seeds
- *Service.* Job counseling, family planning sessions, tobacco quit line
- *Experience.* Attend school with your child, visit a hospital's malaria ward
- *Event.* World Tuberculosis Day, evacuation training events
- *Person.* Village chiefs, a tuberculosis healthcare worker
- *Place.* Preferred sites for obtaining safe drinking water
- *Property.* A stall for selling crafts, a grain storage bin
- *Organization.* Family planning clinics, microlenders
- *Information.* How to feed earthworms to chickens and termites to tadpoles
- *Idea.* Wash hands long enough to sing "Happy Birthday" twice

Traditional marketing theory puts forward that from the customer's perspective, a product is more than its features, quality, name, and style. It identifies three product levels you should consider when developing your product: *core product*, *actual product*, and *augmented product* (see Figure 8.6).
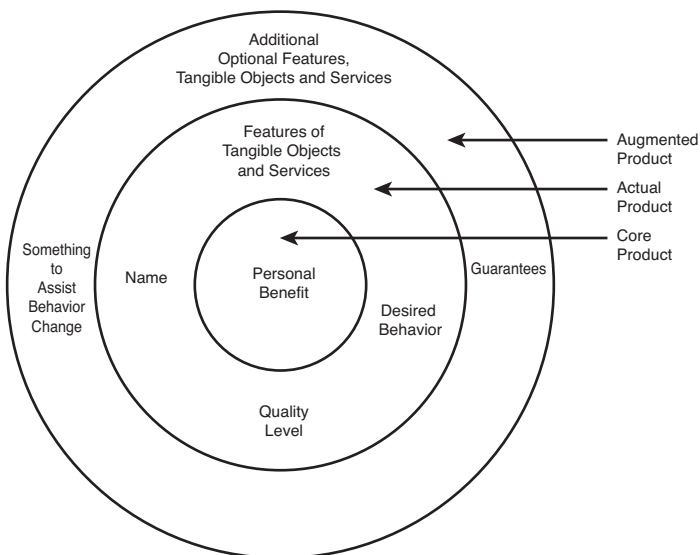

FIGURE 8.6   The Product Circle

Adapted from Kotler and Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing*, 9th edition, p. 294

The *core product*, at the center of the product platform, is the benefit the target market wants and expects in exchange for performing the behavior. It answers these questions: What's in it for the customers to perform the behavior? What benefits will they receive? What needs will the desired behavior satisfy? What problems will it solve that they care about? Keep in mind that each question should be asked from the customer's perspective, not the organization sponsoring the effort. The great Harvard marketing professor Theodore Levitt was known to have told his students, "People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill (the actual product). They want a quarter-inch hole (the core product)!"[14]

The *actual product* is built around the core product. In commercial marketing, it is the tangible product or service, and its features, name, quality level, brand name, and packaging that have all been carefully selected to deliver the core benefit. For example, the Sony camcorder is an actual product. Its name, parts, styling, features, and packaging have all been combined carefully to deliver the core benefit—a convenient, high-quality way to capture important moments.[15] In social marketing, the actual product describes the features of the behavior you want to influence. Sometimes it is a behavior relative to using "someone else's" actual product: use condoms, eat five fruits and vegetables a day, switch to high-yield seeds, or take all prescribed tuberculosis drugs on time. And sometimes the actual product is simply a behavior with specified features: breastfeed exclusively for the first six months, live within your means, or engage in regular physical activity.

The *augmented product* offers additional tangible objects, features, and services. Sony, for example, offers buyers a warranty on parts, a website with detailed instructions on how to use the camcorder, quick repair services when needed, and a toll-free number to call if buyers have problems or questions. You could consider these additions optional on the part of the company. Sometimes, however, it adds just enough value to the bundle of benefits to tip the scale in favor of one brand over another. In social marketing, the augmented product typically is a tangible object or service that helps the person adopt the new behavior. Sometimes these augmented products are ones produced and distributed by the social marketing campaign sponsor (such as wallet-sized immunization cards to keep track of immunizations). Other times they are produced and distributed by a separate organization that the social marketer just supports and promotes (such as mosquito nets).

To illustrate a strong product strategy, we turn our attention from Africa to Sri Lanka, a country that has a long history of being plagued by malaria epidemics, reaching a peak of 687,599 confirmed cases in 1987.[16] And yet, in 2003, there were only 10,510, and in 2007 there

were only 196—and no deaths.[17] What happened? Let's review their product evolution:

- *Extensive indoor residual spraying* began in the late 1950s. It was carried out at regular intervals throughout the year on a blanket coverage basis, resulting in a considerable degree of community resistance. In addition, inevitable leakage of residual insecticides used by the program into the hands of farmers accelerated fears.
- *Selective spraying* was then introduced, based on relevant factors predicting the need for spraying. In addition, more sophisticated assessments were able to determine whether what was needed was year-round coverage, seasonal coverage, or coverage only when evidence of transmission was observed. Community acceptance increased.
- *Mosquito nets* were used in very high malaria risk areas, reducing the number of villages in which the indoor residual spraying needed to take place.
- *Outreach mobile malaria clinics* were introduced to increase early detection and prompt treatment, reducing the time between the appearance of fever and treatment seeking.
- *Rapid diagnostic kits* were given to medical practitioners, helping to identify and treat malaria patients without access to laboratory facilities.

Clearly, additional marketing mix strategies also contributed to this success (pricing of the products, access to them, and communications about them), as well as the political will and funding to support them.

Practical Steps to Developing a Product Platform

1. Determine the *core product*. Review your research on the benefits your target audience says they want or expect in return for performing the desired behavior. If several were identified, conduct informal interviews to help you prioritize them, ideally ending with the top one or two.

2. Clarify specific features of the *actual product* you will be promoting, including a name or brand. If you will be promoting testing for HIV/AIDS, for example, get agreement on how often your target market should get tested and how soon after having unprotected sex. If you are promoting mosquito nets, be clear about what type of net should be purchased, how many are needed, and how they should be installed. If you are promoting handwashing, decide on specific recommendations, including water temperature, type of soap, and length of time hands should be scrubbed.

3. Consider what possible *augmented products and services* you could include in your offer—ones that will assist your customer in performing the desired behavior. Remember that even though these are optional components, sometimes they are the very thing the customer needs in order to quit smoking (a quit line), apply for a job (counseling), or take tuberculosis medicines on time (someone watching).

The Second P: Price

> Price is the amount of money that the customer pays for a product or service, or the sum of the values that they "give" for the benefits of having or using the product or service.[18]

Strategic thinking relative to pricing begins with careful consideration of what the customer will "pay" to adopt the behavior you have in mind. Sometimes there are monetary costs such as those for tangible goods and services (such as mosquito nets). But most of the time, social marketers are selling behaviors that require something else in exchange:

- *Fees* for an ITN
- *Time* to walk an hour to the nearest location to get the mosquito net
- *Effort* to install the net properly over the beds
- *Energy* to help my child get up in the middle of the night

- *Psychological cost* from feeling closed in, almost claustrophobic
- *Physical discomfort*, because sleeping under a net is hotter

Some of these costs can be reduced using the pricing tool. It should be noted, however, that the other three Ps will be needed as well. A place strategy could reduce travel time, bringing nets closer to a village. A product strategy to design nets that are more easily installed should be seriously considered. And the promotional strategy will be needed to make perceived benefits outweigh the costs of feeling closed in and warmer.

The opportunity and objective with the price tool is to set fees, when applicable, and to consider and possibly provide incentives that will increase benefits or decrease costs. These incentives may be monetary or nonmonetary in nature.

Prices set for any tangible objects and services will vary depending on your organization's objectives for the program. Typically they will fall into one of five potential categories:

- *Maximizing retained earnings*, with moneymaking the primary consideration
- *Recovering costs*, where revenue is expected to offset a portion or all of the direct costs, perhaps even indirect ones as well
- *Maximizing the number of customers*, where the primary purpose is just to get people to use the service and/or buy the product
- *Social equity*, where reaching underprivileged or high-risk segments is the priority
- *Demarketing*, where pricing strategies are used to discourage people from purchasing a competing product or service[19]

Four pricing tactics can be used to decrease costs and/or increase benefits:

- *Monetary incentives* reward customers for adopting the behavior. They can take many forms, including discounts, fees based on ability to pay, rebates, allowances, and cash incentives.

- *Monetary disincentives* are used to discourage people from engaging in a competing or undesirable behavior. Fines, increased taxes, and decreased funding are the most common.
- *Nonmonetary incentives* encourage changes in behavior that don't involve money, most often by offering some form of valued recognition, appreciation, or experiences (such as a chance to meet a celebrity).
- *Nonmonetary disincentives* are used to decrease the actual or perceived value of alternative, competing behaviors, using public embarrassment (such as having to register as a sex offender) or mandatory community service (such as picking up litter on the side of the road).

Let's return to Africa to illustrate the challenges of pricing. Tanzania is considered by many the epicenter of malaria because of the high incidence of disease there. For years, the government has subsidized sales of nets for the most vulnerable populations at prices typically between $1.50 and $3.50 each. Proponents of keeping this fee, versus widely distributing nets for free, argue three points. First, they worry about creating a sustainable system for disseminating nets after the topic has fallen off the front page or the top of donors' priority lists. Second, the nets provide jobs and earnings for locals involved in the supply chain. Free nets would undermine the business ecosystems that have sprung up to manufacture and distribute the nets. Finally, they believe that people who buy nets tend to use them more regularly and take better care of them (such as respraying when needed) than those who don't pay.

But even with subsidies, more than two-thirds of the adults and children do not have nets to protect themselves against mosquitoes when they sleep. Some poverty spokespeople advocate distributing free nets to everyone to abate the problem. Others propose stimulating private distribution channels who will charge a few dollars per net while agreeing to give them free to those who cannot pay.

We suggest that this dilemma would be best resolved by committing (or recommitting, in some cases) to a "sales" goal. Is it 100% coverage or 50% coverage, and by when? What goals will be sustained in years 1, 2, and 3? Then assess what price and distribution channels will get the job done, revisiting progress relative to goals on a regular basis.

Practical Steps to Developing a Pricing Strategy

1. Identify all costs your target market will associate with performing the behavior. Highlight those that are monetary in nature, because these are ones the pricing tool will address.

2. If fees are involved for products, first reach an agreement on your organization's pricing objective for these fees. Do you need to recover your costs? Will you be subsidizing any target segments? Are you interested in stimulating demand by setting a low price (for mosquito nets) or in reducing demand by establishing a higher price (for tobacco products)?

3. Consider whether you will need to introduce any monetary or nonmonetary incentives to reach behavior change goals. To decide, you may want to informally test a few ideas with your target audience. If a more rigorous test is needed to decide, you may want to conduct a pilot where one group is offered an incentive (free food at the immunization event) and another (control) group is not. Then compare the results to determine whether the additional costs are justified in order to reach program goals when rolled out.

4. You might also consider disincentives—tactics that will discourage your target audience from engaging in competing/undesirable behaviors. As noted earlier, these might be in the form of increased taxes, fines, public embarrassment, or community service. This strategy may be warranted when the target market is far from "ready to buy" and/or has not responded to more positive tactics in the past.

The Third P: Place

> Place is where and when the target market will be encour-
> aged to engage in the targeted behavior and/or access any
> tangible objects or services associated with the campaign.[20]

In commercial marketing, place is often called the distribution
channel, with options "to buy" beyond that of a physical location such
as a store. The following list includes the range of potential distribu-
tion channels, with examples related to social marketing:

- *Physical location.* A community clinic for a malaria screening
- *Phone.* A domestic violence hotline
- *Fax.* A physician faxes a patient request for a call to a tobacco
  quit line
- *Mail.* An immunization schedule on a wallet-sized card
- *Mobile units.* To deliver high-yield seeds and fertilizers
- *Drive-thrus.* For flu shots
- *Home delivery/house calls.* To observe patients taking tubercu-
  losis drugs
- *Where customers shop, dine, and hang out.* HIV tests at gay
  bathhouses
- *Kiosks/vending machines.* Condoms available in vending
  machines at bars

Your objective with this place tool is to make it as convenient and
pleasant as possible for your market to engage in the targeted behavior
and access any products and services. Walking for an hour one way to
get a mosquito net, or waiting two weeks for the results of an
HIV/AIDS test, or leaving it up to the patient to remember to take his
or her tuberculosis drug, can "make or break" the deal. Your decisions

will also include hours of the day and days of the week that you are "open." Your keys to success will include providing a location that is as close as possible and the hours as long as warranted, making the location appealing, overcoming psychological barriers (such as by offering a mobile unit for a needle-exchange program versus needing to go to a health clinic), looking for opportunities to be where your target audience hangs out, and working with existing distribution channels.[21]

When tangible objects are included in your campaign or program, a network of intermediaries may be needed to reach your market. Kotler and Roberto identify three "players" in the distribution channel, in addition to the *change agent* (you) and the target *adopter* (your customer): *distributors*, *wholesalers*, and *retailers*. As it would seem, the distributors, when involved, provide products to a wholesaler or retailer; the wholesaler interfaces with the retailer; and the retailer interfaces with the customer.[22]

Returning to our malaria discussions, decisions about distribution channels and a network of intermediaries have been shown to be crucial, as well as controversial. A range of delivery systems have been utilized over the last two decades to deliver ITNs. In an article in the Oxford University Press in June 2007, authors Webster, Hill, Lines, and Hanson proposed a categorization of net delivery systems in Africa. Table 8.1 summarizes their approach. They assume that the channel through which the nets are delivered and the cost to the end user are the major factors affecting outcomes. They hope that a framework such as this one can be used on a consistent basis to report outcomes based on large-scale evaluations, which will help settle debates about the most effective delivery systems.

TABLE 8.1 Matrix of Net Delivery Systems by Category and Cost to the End User, with a Partial Listing of Countries in Africa Where Strategy Exists[23]

Delivery System			Cost to the End User		
Sector	Delivery Channel	Timing/Event/ Location	Free	Partially Subsidized	Unsubsidized
Public sector	Routine services	Child clinics, antenatal care, immunization programs, maternal and child health	Kenya, Eritrea	Ghana	
		Intervention packages: mixed delivery	Mali	Benin, Ghana, Senegal	
	Enhanced routine	Child health week/days	Ghana, Senegal		
	Campaigns	Measles	Ghana, Niger, Togo, Zambia		
		Polio national immunization days		Ghana	
Mixed public-private sectors	Assisted routine services	Antenatal care, immunization programs		Kenya, Malawi	
	Voucher scheme	Routine service: retail		Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda	
		Campaign: retail	Zambia		

Private sector	Employer-based	Workplace		Kenya	
	Nonprofit organizations	Retail outlets		Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania	
	Retail sector	Formal/informal			Tanzania and Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, and others
		Formal			Burkina Faso
		Informal			Gambia
Community-based (a mix of systems with a philanthropic aim)	Community-based	Community-based organizations, NGOs, women's groups	Kenya, Tanzania	Mali, Zambia	

Practical Steps to Developing a Place Strategy

1. Decide where and how your market will access any tangible objects or services. Consider ways to make this as convenient as possible, focusing on strategies that will reduce time spent, either traveling or waiting. Are there opportunities for your products and services to be offered in locations where your target market already works, shops, visits, or travels?

2. Are there options to partner with others in the distribution channel who might be influential and/or more convenient? You read in an earlier chapter, for example, how New York City partners with multiple retail outlets to distribute free condoms.

3. Determine hours and days of the week that you will be "open for business," keeping in mind the lifestyles and preferences of the target market.

The Fourth P: Promotion

Promotions are persuasive communications designed and delivered to inspire your target audience to action. In social marketing, the key word here is action.[24]

Developing these communications is a process that begins with determining key messages. It moves on to selecting messengers and creative elements, and then ends with a selection of media channels. Of course, this step considers prior decisions regarding your target market, behavior objective, audience barriers, and benefits. This process is needed to support the desired positioning for this behavior. It also is the tool you count on to highlight your product, price, and place strategies. Each step in developing this communications strategy involves important decisions, as discussed next.

Message Decisions: What Do You Want to Communicate?

Those developing specific key messages for your campaign or program should be inspired first and foremost by a clear response to the

question "What do you want your target audience *to do*?" Hopefully this has been articulated in your behavior objective and product platform, and you merely need to reference it. There may also be things you need your audience *to know*, in order for them to be inspired to act (where to get a mosquito net) or have the skills to perform (how to install the net). These knowledge-based messages are informative in nature, providing key facts about the benefits of the behavior, where and when a product can be accessed, and how to perform the behavior. Often there will be something they need *to believe*—something that, if not altered, could get in the way (such as a concern that the chemicals in the treated net might be harmful to a newborn). Your inspiration for these points will be the research conducted on barriers, pointing to real or perceived concerns with behavior adoption. Your messages will seek to assuage these concerns.

For example, in Zambia, the nation's malaria-control budget has grown from US$30,000 in 1985 to more than $40 million in 2007. Messages inform people of malaria's causes and symptoms and stress the importance of seeking help. Boy Scout merit badges are even awarded for knowledge about malaria. Some messages are designed to help correct widespread traditional beliefs that malaria is transmitted by witchcraft, drinking dirty water, getting soaked in the rain, or chewing immature sugarcane. Others emphasize the proper use of bed nets, correcting misperceptions that they can or should be used for fishing instead.[25]

Messenger Decisions: Who Will Deliver Your Messages or Be Perceived to Be the Campaign's Sponsor?

Who your target audience perceives to be delivering your messages and what they think of this particular messenger can be critical to whether your target audience "buys it." Most often, the messenger is the sponsoring organization and any partners in the effort. It may also include any spokespeople, actors, endorsements, or mascots used to deliver or reinforce messages. In the end, particularly in social

marketing efforts, you want your target audience to see the messenger, or messengers, as a *credible source* for the message. Three major factors have been identified as key to source credibility: perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and likeability.[26] An expert source is perceived as having the knowledge and experience to back the claim. A trusted source is perceived as objective and honest. A likable source is attractive, with qualities such as humor, candor, and naturalness.[27]

For example, in Tanzania, managers of the Bagamoyo Bednet Project found that posters and meetings had a limited impact in persuading the predominantly Muslim population to use bed nets. A different approach was needed. When a sheik in each village was recruited to teach during Friday religious services about the merits of regular bed net usage, regular usage levels rose to 53% and, in some areas, 98%. And traditional healers who were being consulted for treating convulsions and fever were incorporated into local project activities.[28]

Creative Strategy/Execution: What Words, Graphics, and Images Will You Use?

A creative strategy translates the content of your intended, desired messages to specific communications. Traditional elements include copy elements such as taglines, headlines, and any scripts; design elements such as logos, colors, graphic images, and typeface; and any actors, scenes, and sounds when using broadcast media. Factors that are considered when making these creative decisions include the brand image of the sponsoring organization, the desired positioning of the offer, and budget realities (such as whether materials will be in black and white or color).

In their book *Made to Stick*, the Heath brothers present six key qualities to consider when developing ideas and creative strategies: **S**implicity, **U**nexpectedness, **C**oncreteness, **C**redibility, **E**motion, and **S**tories. (And they make it easy to remember these, because they almost spell SUCCESs.)[29]

Media Channels: Where Will Your Messages Appear?

Media channels, also called communication channels, include traditional ones that you are probably most familiar with and exposed to. Media channels also include nontraditional and new-media options—ones that may be more successful in "catching your audience by surprise" and establishing source credibility.

Traditional methods include the following:

- *Advertising* on radio, television, billboards, newspapers, magazines
- *Public service announcements*, which are unpaid advertising
- *Public relations*—working with the media for "free" coverage of events and issues
- *Special events* such as health fairs, demonstrations, and public meetings
- *Printed materials* including brochures, newsletters, posters, and bumper stickers
- *Special promotional items* with messages on clothing, functional items such as water bottles, and temporary items such as balloons
- *Signage and displays* including posters, retail displays, and public signage
- *Personal selling* either face to face, by phone, or through electronic media

Nontraditional and new-media options include the following:

- *Social media* such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and social networking groups
- *Public art* including exhibits and street theater
- *Other electronic media* including websites and emails
- *Popular entertainment media* such as songs, movie scripts, television shows, and video games

Decisions on channels will be impacted by your campaign goals, desired exposure (reach and frequency), target audience media

habits, achieving a desired integrated approach utilizing a variety of media options, and, of course, the budget.

For a malaria media channel example, in Assam, India, a few weeks before the heavy rains of the monsoon, a three-day health fair was held to raise awareness and usage of bed nets among tribes. The fair was attended by over 30 doctors, nurses, and lab technicians with provisions for undergoing blood tests sponsored by the health department. And theater troupes appeared in the Zambian countryside, emphasizing the proper use of bed nets through stage productions in settlements large and small.

Practical Steps to Developing a Promotional Strategy

1. Determine your key *messages*. These are not your slogans. They are simple sentences describing what you want your target audience to know, believe, and do.

2. Decide on *messengers* who will deliver these messages. What organization or organizations' names will be associated with the campaign? Will you use any spokespersons, endorsements, actors, or mascots?

3. Develop a *creative strategy*. This includes graphics, slogans, copy, and visual elements. For those with minimal or tight budgets, try involving your target audience in at least brainstorming ideas and concepts, and then use professionals to refine them.

4. Select *media channels*—where your messages will appear and be delivered. This selection will be based on the lifestyles and preferences of your target audience. Sometimes you can determine these informally by asking "What would be the best way to let you know about the availability of these new mosquito nets?"

Summary

This chapter began by discussing how to determine a desired positioning for your offer. This was defined as the act of designing the organization's actual and perceived offering so that it lands on and occupies a distinctive place in the mind of the target market—where you want it to be.[30]

We then opened the marketing toolbox and defined and described the four traditional Ps inside: product, price, place, and promotion. As stressed, our experience is that you need all of them to create and deliver the value your target market expects in exchange for a new behavior.

- A *product* is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need. It isn't, as many typically think, just a tangible offering like soap, tires, or hamburgers. It can be one of several types: a physical good, a service, an experience, an event, a person, a place, a property, an organization, information, or an idea.[31]

- *Price* is how much the customer pays for a product or service, or the sum of the values that the customer "gives" for the benefits of having or using the product or service.[32] The opportunity and objective with the price tool is to set fees, when applicable, and to consider and provide incentives that will increase benefits or decrease costs. These incentives may be monetary or nonmonetary in nature.

- *Place* is where and when the target market will be encouraged to engage in the targeted behavior and/or access any tangible objects or services associated with the campaign.[33] Your objective with the place tool is to make it as convenient and pleasant as possible for your market to engage in the targeted behavior and access any products and services.

- *Promotions* are persuasive communications designed and delivered to inspire your target audience to action. In social marketing, the key word here is action.[34] Developing these communications is a process that begins with determining key *messages*, moves on to selecting *messengers* and *creative elements*, and ends with a selection of *media channels*.

Endnotes

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