

Karbowski, Adam

Article — Manuscript Version (Preprint)

Changing consumption patterns. The case of Polish health campaign 'Drink milk. Grow to be great!'

Kwartalnik Nauk o Przedsiębiorstwie

Suggested Citation: Karbowski, Adam (2009) : Changing consumption patterns. The case of Polish health campaign 'Drink milk. Grow to be great!', Kwartalnik Nauk o Przedsiębiorstwie, Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw, Vol. 11, pp. 61-65

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/128147>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.

Changing consumption patterns.

The case of Polish health campaign ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’

Adam Karbowski

Warsaw School of Economics

adam.karbowski@sgh.waw.pl

Introduction and research question

The following paper discusses the social marketing campaign ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’. This is the successful Polish health campaign which promotes milk drinking among Polish children¹. The purpose of the article is to identify sources of success of the discussed campaign. The question is whether the fruitful outcome could be attributed to the specific model of the campaign and how this specificity supports behavior change of the target audience. The inquiry into the degree of sustainability of the behavior change completes the research landscape of the article.

Case presentation

Before we look into the model of the campaign, let me briefly introduce this social initiative itself. ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’ is the part of the nationwide and long term oriented program of the International Advertising Association of Poland ‘Marketing for the Future’. The main aim of the program is to increase the competitiveness of the Polish economy through strengthening the social arenas which are decisive for higher competitiveness, i.e. health promotion, entrepreneurship, education and environmental protection. ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’ is the social marketing campaign within the first pillar of the program, i.e. health promotion.

The history of the campaign begins in September 2002 when the pretesting phase was executed. In the period of two months slogan, brochures and TV spots were carefully tested.

¹ At the age of 5 – 13.

The trial of the campaign met a positive response from the target audience. Since January 2003 the campaign has been running nationwide (Lorenc, 2005).

Due to the focus of the campaign on the long term positive health changes in the Polish society, children were selected as a target audience. Then, milk promoting was chosen as a content of the campaign. What is then the link between milk drinking and healthier society?

According to data delivered by the National Food and Nutrition Institute in Warsaw (Szponar, 2003) Polish children consume only 50 per cent of the safe level of calcium which is vital to proper bone growth and prevention of osteoporosis occurrence at a later age. Osteoporosis may affect 50 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men aged 50 and over in their lifetime (Kotler et al., 2002) and brings about risk of shorter life in 3 out of 10 incidents. To compare, breast cancer brings about risk of shorter life in 9 out of 100 incidents. Perfect way to avoid osteoporosis at a later age is to drink milk² in the childhood, since 90 per cent of calcium storage of the organism is created up to the age of 20 years old. Therefore, the objective to promote milk drinking among children has been established.

The campaign from the early beginning managed to galvanize huge network of media supporting the initiative. Cooperation with major TV stations, print media, including the most influential Polish dailies and weeklies, and well – known web portals turned out to be a very effective and fruitful tool to manage change in the Polish society (Lorenc, 2005). Obviously, media channels focused on the young audience³ were heavily involved in the promoting efforts.

‘Two thousand posters appeared on billboards across the country and more than six hundred vehicles displaying ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’ stickers cruised around the streets of the largest Polish cities. Some of 1,4 million theatergoers enjoyed the movie spot in 24 cinemas and children were treated to a number of events that were organized as part of the campaign’ (Lorenc, 2005, 6).

Endorsement of the campaign by Polish celebrities triggered even greater popularity and word of mouth marketing. Children and youngsters could watch TV spots with people they really like, admire and identify with and the message given to the young audience was clear: all successful people really enjoy milk drinking!

² One liter of milk includes 1,2 grams of calcium which is easily absorbable by the organism.

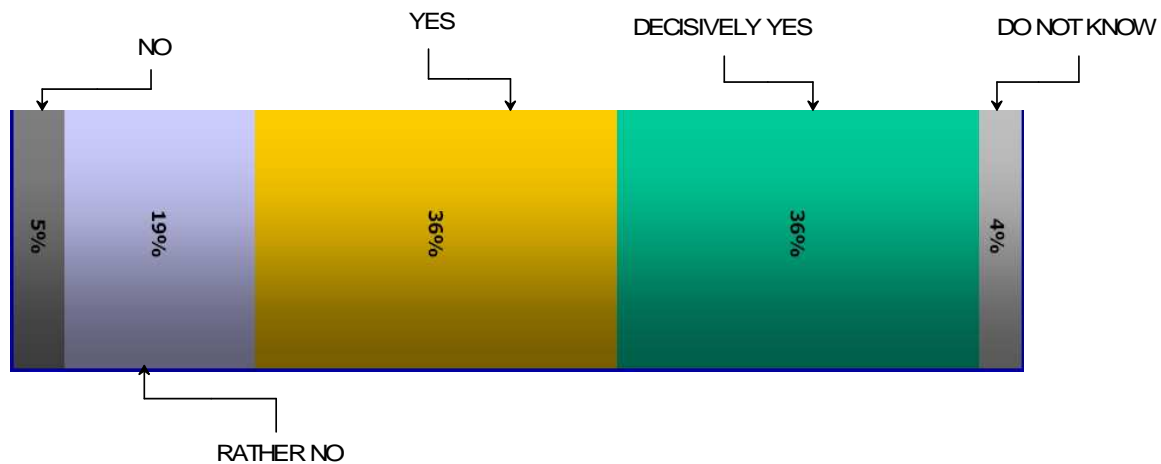
³ To name some of them: Cartoon Networks, Cogito, Fox Kids, Minimax, MTV Poland, Perspektywy.

Apart from the real life celebrities (e.g. Kayah, Bogusław Linda, Krzysztof Hołowczyc) the campaign was also supported by cartoon character – Shrek. As we may read in the article written by Lorenc (2005, 6): ‘Permission from DreamWorks and Universal Pictures to use the image of such a popular star to endorse the milk campaign is an unprecedented move’.

The campaign turned out to be very successful, though it is still running. Evaluation of the campaign is carried out each year by the leading marketing research institute in Poland⁴. Since the campaign was planned for at least 5 years long, let me here quote the outcomes of the marketing action from the middle of the planned time period, i.e. 2006. From the various outcome measures (Kotler et al., 2002) allow me to demonstrate the strongest measure in my view, namely, **observed change in behavior**.

As shown in the diagram below, the campaign managed to persuade 72 per cent of the young population⁵ to drink milk more often than in the previous year. Only 5 per cent of the respondents were sure that the campaign was fruitless.

Diagram 1. Observed change in behavior: social marketing outcome measure.



Source: www.iaa.org.pl.

From 84 per cent of the respondents in another test⁶ that declared to remember any slogan of Polish milk promoting campaign, in 96 out of 100 incidents the slogan ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’ has been reported. To compare, previous Polish campaigns which were focused on promotion of consumption of dairy products reached the **unaided awareness**

⁴ SMG/KRC.

⁵ As generalized from the sample.

⁶ www.iaa.org.pl.

measure of about 6 per cent in the population. ‘Drink milk. Grow to great!’ translates then into totally different quality⁷. The question is, however, how was it possible to attain?

Theoretical discussion

The claim is that the success of the campaign can be explained to the high extent by the *specificity* of the social marketing model and perfect fit between that specific model and the *context* within the model has been immersed. This claim will be then carefully elaborated upon.

First of all, the campaign is not based on fear, threat or any negative incentive. There is no word in the communication process about potential negative consequences of drinking, e.g. cola or soft drinks instead of milk. What we find there is encouragement, positive trend shaping, understanding of children’s language and artifacts⁸. The campaign motivates then to do something instead of motivating from doing something. In my opinion, *motivation to* is far more powerful tool in influencing children’s behavior than *motivation from*. I think it is due to children’s natural curiosity and willingness to explore.

‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’ as the campaign model based on positive incentives is then pretty different than the **health belief model**, the **basic protection motivation theory** or the **cognitive dissonance theory** (Donovan & Henley, 2003). Although these are really complex persuasion theories, all of them include or refer to fear arousal in communication, anxiety recognition, threat understanding, i.e. negative incentives.

Secondly, the discussed campaign is not settled within the framework of **theory of reasoned action** (Donovan & Henley, 2003; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In marketing action we do not observe any attempts to influence behavior by shaping beliefs and, consequently, attitudes which lead to intention formation and behavior realization. We do observe, however, shaping of emotions. The message from the social marketers is conveyed thanks to the creation of an affective link between milk (first stimulus) and feeling of greatness (reaction) through attractive and appealing material⁹ (second stimulus). This means that even before children start thinking about milk, positive emotions are already there. This approach makes

⁷ However, outcomes cannot be fully comparable due to different methodologies and sizes of the samples.

⁸ Cartoon characters, music, values that youngsters identify with.

⁹ Brochure, poster, TV spot.

the model of the campaign akin to **applied behavior analysis concepts** (Donovan & Henley, 2003).

The applied model is also pretty different than the **theory of trying** (Donovan & Henley, 2003). In my opinion, the theory of trying belongs to *outcome oriented* models of behavior change. Obviously, somebody may claim that the theory of trying is focused not on the pure outcome achievement, but rather on the process of trying to attain the desired result. But still, though weakened, strong outcome orientation is there. What is symptomatic, 'Drink milk. Grow to be great!' seems to be to the *target audience oriented* campaign. The desired outcome is then achieved as a by – product of the efforts of making the audience feel just *great*.

What is more, the discussed model utilizes different understanding of motivation concept than could be derived from the **Rossiter – Percy motivational theory** (Donovan & Henley, 2003). This theory refers to motivation in relation to the current behavior, behavior which is already in action in order to bring positive emotional state (positive motivation) or avoid future problems (negative motivation). The model utilized in Poland draws heavily on the Rossiter – Percy motivational theory, but the understanding of people's motivation is shifted from the *current* behavior towards the *future* one. This approach makes the campaign really long term oriented and allows to shape positive and sustainable change in the society. In a sense of **theory of interpersonal behavior** (Donovan & Henley, 2003) which distinguishes between *new behavior* and *established* one, we may say that the Polish campaign strives to inject new behavior into the target audience, behavior that could be then soundly established as a *consumption pattern*.

To determine the specificity of the discussed model, it is not sufficient to point out its differences in relation to generic concepts. The task is also to stress its similarities to the mainstream perspectives. In my view, the Polish campaign to the highest extent is sourced from **applied behavior analysis** school of thought and **social learning theory** (Donovan & Henley, 2003; Bandura, 1977). In its essence the model draws on emotions and stimuli – reaction links which are enforced in the social learning process by the opinion leaders and peers who already accepted the new behavior. Therefore, the efficiency of the campaign is contingent upon the *social context* within it has been immersed. Here I refer to the essential fit between driving forces within society at the given time and the content of the campaign (Gladwell, 2005).

To draw conclusions, let me then clarify my standpoint in the following way:

Proposition 1.

When the model of behavior change is truly adjusted to the target audience, is *target audience specific*, and the context of the social marketing effort is *conducive*, change within society could be leveraged successfully.

Obviously, the model – context consistency is to my way of thinking *sine qua non* for the success of the campaign. However, I strongly believe that this is not a sufficient condition to reach success. Proper *communication* makes it real. Therefore, I am convinced that communication strategy should be carefully developed to support the model – context consistency. Therefore marketers need to ‘develop attention – getting and motivational messages’ (Kotler et al., 2002, 60), ‘use appropriate media and watch for and exploit opportunities for audience participation’ (Kotler et al., 2002, 61) and ‘allocate appropriate resources for media’ (Kotler et al., 2002, 63). This is exactly what social marketers involved in the Polish campaign did. They not only developed an attention – getting message, they actually set a new trend within society.

When we look into the communication process of the Polish campaign from the perspective of psychological **persuasion models** (in particular Elaboration Likelihood Model), we may observe a clear *peripheral route* dominance of the *central channel* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Children do not extensively engage in analysis of issue – relevant arguments in the message, they are rather more focused on the form of it and emotions evoked by it. Such a specific target group has to really like the campaign in order to comply with the desired behavior. Therefore, the **principle of liking** (Cialdini, 1993) seems to be decisive factor when it comes to design of a social marketing action focused on children and youngsters.

Behavior change in the course of time

Even the best – managed social marketing campaigns are challenged by the flow of time. The question then arises, how sustainable is the behavior change in the course of time? Does it go into oblivion just at the end of marketing action or is it successfully internalized in the society? This puzzle will be discussed in the following paragraph.

The social marketing campaign struggles to find the proper way to bring target audience from being ‘unaware and incompetent’ (Hjelmar, 2007) to state of awareness and competence in relation to a certain issue. This path, however, is not a linear one, very often it

is spiral and consumers shift from one state to another. How then to fix the once established behavior within the target group in the course of time? Do we really have to cross the same bridge many times?

My idea is then to implement sort of *enforcement mechanism*. Enforcement mechanism should be designed to make people stick to once established and desired behavior. Three kinds of such mechanisms come to my mind, two of them are externally (socially) driven and one is internally (psychologically) driven.

Mechanism 1. Peer pressure

This is an externally driven and microsociological mechanism which could be successfully galvanized by the social marketers. When they manage to promote a sort of trend among members of a certain group, the behavior change could maintained longer within period of time due to existence of tight bonds and peer pressure in the group.

Mechanism 2. Social norms

This is an externally driven and macrosociological mechanism which could be to the certain point utilized by the social marketers. Social norm is an enforcement at a general level of society, beyond peer groups. Social norms provide incentives to behave in a certain way, but are difficult to establish. Social marketers can, however, initialize the discussion to legitimize some new norms at the institutional level of the society.

Mechanism 3. Commitment

This is an internally driven and psychological mechanism which could be applied by the social marketers. Creation of emotional attachment apart from pure rational argumentation may make people stick to recommended behavior for a longer period of time. Long term effect of marketing action could be then observed.

When we look into ‘Drink milk. Grow to be great!’ campaign, we can easily spot that the peer pressure and commitment building mechanisms were employed. First of all, positive trend among youngsters was successfully set thanks to involvement of opinion leaders, cartoon stars and creation of catchy slogans. Secondly, positive emotions were attached to the

core message, so the commitment rise occurred. Thirdly, the whole campaign was from the very beginning designed for the future purposes and focused on the young target audience. Therefore, I strongly believe that the positive health changes within Polish society will be observable through the long period of time.

To conclude, let me propose the following claim which I have been trying to build up throughout this article.

Proposition 2.

When the model – context consistency within social marketing action is secured and proper enforcement mechanism is applied, *long term* change within society could be leveraged successfully.

Literature

- Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Cialdini, R. (1993). *Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Donovan, R. and Henley, N. (2003). *Social Marketing – Principles and Practices*. Melbourne: IP Communications.
- Gladwell, M. (2005). *The Tipping Point*. London: Abacus.
- Hjelmar, U. (2005). The concept of commitment as basis for social marketing efforts: Conversion Model as a case. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2.
- Hjelmar, U. (2007). Social Marketing – The Basic Steps. September 11, lecture at the Copenhagen Business School.
- Kotler, P., Roberto, N. and Lee, N. (2002). *Social Marketing*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lorenc, R. (2005). Drink milk. Grow to be great. *Osteoporosis Action*, vol. 9, no. 1.
- Petty, R.E. and Cacioppo, J.T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 19.
- Szponar, L. (2003). *Household food consumption and anthropometric survey*. Warsaw: National Food and Nutrition Institute.
- www.iaa.org.pl.

Changing consumption patterns.

The case of Polish health campaign 'Drink milk. Grow to be great!'

Adam Karbowski

Summary: The following paper discusses the social marketing campaign 'Drink milk. Grow to be great!'. This is the successful Polish health campaign which promotes milk drinking among Polish children. At the very beginning the case of Polish campaign is briefly presented in order to facilitate theoretical discussion in the core part of the article. Reflections on the long term effects of the given campaign and social marketing initiatives in general are included in the final parts.

Keywords: Social marketing, Social psychology, Health campaigns, Behavior change.