

CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS
--PRODUCING SOCIAL AND BUSINESS GAINS THROUGH
CORPORATE SOCIAL MARKETING

Shuli Du, Boston University

C.B. Bhattacharya, Boston University

Sankar Sen, Baruch College, City University of New York

Investment in corporate social initiatives is escalating in accordance with the increasing recognition of the vast potential of such initiatives. For example, although it represents only a small proportion of overall corporate expenditure on social initiatives, U.S. corporate spending on cause-related marketing jumped from \$125million in 1990 to about \$828 million in 2002 (Porter and Kramer 2002). In today's era of marketing accountability, corporate managers urgently need to assess the returns to social initiatives to justify and sustain commitment of resources to social issues. Addressing this need, our research develops a framework to assess the social and business returns to corporate social marketing (CSM) and empirically tests the framework in the context of "Crest Healthy Smiles 2010" program supported by Proctor & Gamble. CSM is a strategy that uses marketing principles and techniques to foster behavior change in a target population, improving society while at the same time building markets for products or services (Kotler and Lee 2004). In other words, a CSM initiative strategically combines business agenda with a social need and thus provides a context to examine simultaneously the social and business returns.

Our research objectives are twofold. First, we develop and empirically test a conceptual framework for assessing the social and business returns to CSM. Second, in attempting to

delineate the synergistic link between social and business returns to CSM, we explore the trust-building capability of CSM initiatives. Trust is the cornerstone of meaningful consumer-company relationships and has been shown to be a key determinant of consumers' relational commitment (Berry 1995; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol 2002).

In assessing the social returns, we draw upon social cognitive theory (Bandura 1997) and theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) to examine the mechanism of individual behavior change and to gauge a hierarchy of effects ranging from cognitive beliefs, affective reactions, to behavioral responses and increase in individual well-being. In assessing the business returns, we examine the effects of CSM initiatives on consumers' purchase behaviors, loyalty, and citizenship behaviors such as positive word of mouth, resilience to negative information about the company.

We test our framework on "Crest Healthy Smiles 2010" program. This program is a national outreach program designed to improve the state of oral health by providing education and dental care tools and facilities to children in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods across the country. To achieve its goal of "combating America's oral health epidemic by helping 50 million children and their families by 2010", Crest (or Procter & Gamble) has partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the American Dental Association and various local dental schools.

Our research utilizes focus group and follow-up survey methodologies to test our framework and assess the returns to "Crest Healthy Smile 2010" program. We have conducted focus groups in three locations, with both beneficiaries of the program and the general

population, and will present the findings from the focus groups at the conference. Quantitative research is currently in the stage of data-collection.

Some highlights of the focus group findings:

- Dental health is perceived as an important need on both functional and psychosocial level. Dental health is considered important for beautiful smile and popularity in social life.
- Compared to the general population of similar demographic and socioeconomic background, the beneficiaries of “Crest Healthy Smile 2010” program have more accurate and positive beliefs about dental health behaviors, and are more likely to engage in desired dental health behaviors.
- Compared to general population of similar demographic and socioeconomic background, the beneficiaries of “Crest Healthy Smile 2010” program have more positive beliefs and attitude toward Crest, and are more likely to be loyal and talk favorably about Crest
- Crest is considered as more trustworthy and genuine than Colgate
- Beneficiaries of “Crest Healthy Smile 2010” program consider the program as “win-win” solution for both Crest and their community, and consider buying Crest products and Proctor & Gamble products as a way to contribute to their community.

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