MAKING SOCIAL CHANGES PROFITABLE

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Abstract
Executing social change is associated with non-profit activities conducted by nongovernmental organizations, public institutions or some companies, but only those CSR oriented. The aim of this article is to show different perspective, as well as presenting the potential of social campaigns, not only as a tool to form an image, but also as a tool to influence corporate profitability, with a particular emphasis on social campaigns conducted through social media.

Keywords: social campaigns, changing attitudes, social changes

Paper type: Case study/Literature review

1. Introduction
Attitudes as subjective, difficult to change elements of personality, strongly rooted opinion on people, objects and ideas are a challenge for everyone, who tries to change or create them. Assessment of factors influencing attitudes changes, as well as barriers precluding those changes, seem interesting. Changing attitudes through social campaigns became popular lately. Especially if we consider pro-health campaigns, that encourage to regular medical examinations, blood and marrow donation, changing diet and lifestyle, or fight off addictions, including nicotine one. Most of those actions don’t yield long-term results, but supply for this kind of initiatives doesn’t decrease. Moreover, social changes are associated with non-profit activities, what often reflects on social campaigns budget, which is usually lower than commercial ones, “unprofitability” doesn’t bring higher expenditures.

The aim of this article is an attempt to answer the question of possibility of solving social campaigns low effectiveness problem with relatively small budget, as well as answer the question of possibility of making those campaigns profitable, with emphasis on social campaigns conducted through social media.

2. Attitude change
Years of social science development brought high variety of attitude concept definition. All of them have one component in common, which shows the essence
of its meaning – value judgment, subjective, difficult to change evaluation of given object (Aronson, 2009: 146, 172). Taking above-mentioned into consideration, attitude is a lasting evaluation – positive or negative – of people, objects and ideas (attitude objects) (Aronson et al., 2006: 316). Evaluation, which is not strongly, subjectively rooted, at least for some time, in mind, awareness of people is not an attitude.

Ones created, attitudes become an interpretation basis of social world, influence on logical thinking and ability to reasoning, even on perception and recognition of moral values like good and evil (e.g. wrong is what a given person perceive as undesirable, dangerous, distasteful and what awakes negative emotions) (Aronson, 2009: 173–174).

Attitude is difficult to change. That is why social campaigns task seems to be challenging. Attitude change can be done through social influence using its tools.

3. Social influence on attitude change to socially required

Social influence could be defined as changes in opinions and behaviours (attitudes) of an individual or a group affected by real or imaginary pressure from others (Aronson, 2006: 268–269; Aronson, 2009: 20). Process of social influence contains that kind of behaviour of an individual or a group of people, which produce a certain effect (or arise from the intention) of changes in behaviour, feelings, opinions, thoughts of other person or a group about the stimulus, where stimulus can be political issue (e.g. abortion, in vitro reimbursement), product (yogurt that helps in digestion or sugar-free beverage) or action (e.g. exam cheating) (Zimbardo and Leippe, 2004: 19).

There are three broad varieties of social influence on attitude change: interpersonal, persuasional and using public communication, mass media (Zimbardo and Leippe, 2004: 19).

Interpersonal dimension is characterized by direct contact and small number of people involved. There is a face-to-face communication between subject and object of influence (Zimbardo and Leippe, 2004: 20). Interpersonal dimension is rather a reference to an individual influencing an individual or a group of individuals that know each other.

However, from the perspective of social campaign effectiveness more important are persuasional and mass-media dimensions. Persuasion is an attempt of an individual to influence a number of people from the audience. In the case of mass media influence, message is send by impersonal sender and mass receiver and at the moment is the most successful way of influence used by authors of social campaigns (Zimbardo and Leippe, 2004: 21).

Regardless of given ways of social influence, there are also principles of influence based on psychology of human behaviour. The author of this conception, Robert Cialdini pointed out that, apart from the obvious magnification of own
interest, there are six “weapons of influence”, on which all techniques of social influence are based: reciprocity, consistency, social proof, liking, authority and scarcity (Cialdini, 2009: 12).

Author of this article focused on principles that are significant from the perspective of changes pursued by social campaigns. Commitment and consistency principle is a way to influence using the fact that people do not want to be self-contradictory, they aim to conformity of words, beliefs, attitudes, actions and their consequences. It is caused by three factors: firstly, consequence is a virtue highly admired by society; secondly, regardless of social consequences, being consistent is usually beneficial for people, who gather up the courage to act this way; thirdly, being consistent free from constant thinking (Cialdini, 2009: 110). Commitment to something often implies being dedicated to a cause and intensifies, even when in consequence it occurs a mistake and conditions that determined this commitment disappeared. This principle is often used in positive way, e.g. in social campaigns, but could be also used in manipulation using foot-in-the-door technique that involves getting a person to agree first to a modest request, but similar to a large one and later to agree to the other one or foot-in-the-mouth technique that relates own declarations to consequences of one’s behaviour (the trap of consequence – e.g. an individual declares good mood feels obligated to make others feel good too and gives money to charity) (Cialdini, 2009: 110, Doliński, 2005: 34, 35).

The next important principle is the principle of social proof, which “states that we determine what is correct by finding out what other people think is correct” (Cialdini, 2009: 152). This principle applies especially to the way we decide which behaviour is correct and which is not: we treat a behaviour as correct in a given situation to the degree that we see others performing it (Cialdini, 2009: 114). Social proof is identified with conformity – getting similar in beliefs, opinions, clothes, decisions, behaviour towards other people, imitation. We may distinguish two types of social influence that result from the principle of social proof: first of them has is informational, second one normative (Doliński, 2005: 36). Informational influence occurs when an individual reacts like others to be right like others – “if others are right, their opinions are correct, then thanks to following them our behaviour and opinions are also right”, whereas normative social influence is a typical conformity, which becomes means of maintaining (or gaining) relation with a given group, getting its acceptance or avoiding its disapproval (Doliński, 2005: 36). The principle of social proof could be used to induce (or manipulate) people to submission by proving that others have already yielded or are yielding right now (Cialdini, 2009: 152). This technique is used in commercials where statistics on the number of people who already use a given product or have the use of services of a given company are presented. In one of them this slogan was used: “(number) of people already trusted us”.

Great importance for social campaigns has a principle of authority which relates to obeying authority figures, whose status can be a result not only of knowledge, power and wisdom, social and professional status, titles and achievements, wearing appropriate clothes, or having certain things, e.g. car, house, yacht (commonly related to authorities) (Cialdini, 2009: 198–205, 212–213; Doliński, 2005: 41–43). Using the status of authority is one of the strongest tools of social influence and is a result of automatism of getting submission through authority, whom range and scale subordinate could not be aware of (if authorities is usually right, they should be right in this case (which is not that clear to us) too, because they probably know this situation better than us) (Cialdini, 2009: 198–205, 212–213; Doliński, 2005: 41–43). One of the examples of social campaign using the principle of authority was a Polish campaign called “Pij mleko! Będziesz wielki!” (“Drinking Milk will Make You Great!”) conducted in years 2003–2009. The authors of the campaign wanted to cause drinking milk become trendy. They invited famous sportmen, musicians, actors to take part in it, inter alia: Krzysztof Hołowczyc, Jagna Marczułajtis, Otylia Jędrzejczak, Bogusław Linda, Kayah. It was one of the most recognisable social campaign during the last couple of years.

Persuasion is together with mass media influence effective and the most used way of influencing others. Persuasion is usually defined as “process that leads to change in private attitudes as a consequence of message reception (Wosińska, 2004: 175; Cialdini et al., 2002: 232).

One of the sender’s characteristics should be credibility that helps to gain recipient’s trust, which is required to build effective persuasional message (Wosińska, 2004: 180–181).

Credibility, as the essence of persuasion, is also noticed by Kevin Hogan. In his opinion credibility consists of: competence, solidity, skill, liking, self-control and sociability (Hogan, 2007: 74).

Factors mentioned above let to increase message’s effectiveness, e.g. to be perceived as a qualified person, which could have practical advantages for professional career.

To increase effectiveness of message, sender should be attractive to recipients, attractive in physical appearance and similarity of beliefs, but also be an expert in given field (Wosińska, 2004: 180–182). Link to the principle of authority can be noticed here.

In Poland persuasion based on authority is often used in a wrong way, that is: authorities sometimes are not authorities in a field of which advertisement is done, are well-known and recognisable, but don’t bring required increase in message efficiency (Wierzchoń and Orzechowski, 2007: 94).

Result of persuasion to a notable degree depends on characteristics of recipients – their motivation and possibility to think over the message. Permanent
change, resistant to the lapse of time is possible in case of high level of recipient’s motivation and possibility to think over the message. Personal significance of message for the recipient could be a motivation for deep consideration, e.g. information about the raise in rent in residential district where they live, or a need to get knowledge, natural inclination of people. Recipient’s involvement is also conductive to permanency of attitude change. Involvement can be achieved through direct communication, using grammatical second person: you (Cialdini et al., 2002: 243–252). Age of recipient is also important. Younger people change attitude more often than older people (Wosińska, 2004, p.196), it means that social campaigns aimed on attitude change are the most effective when are targeted to children, but may low durability.

Persuasion can be done in direct (personal) way or through mass media. Researches prove higher effectiveness of personal contact (Wosińska, 2004: 176, 177). However not only the message’s channel is relevant, but above all its character, is it emotional or rational, evoke positive or negative emotions, message is one-sided (shows only “pro” or only “against” arguments) or two-sided (shows both “pro” and “against” arguments) (Wosińska, 2004: 178, 183–185).

One-sided message is more efficient when receivers in general agree with the position of sender, meanwhile it is easier to convince opponents presenting also their arguments (Aronson et al., 2006: 321).

Message based on strong essential arguments (central persuasion strategy) is used when receiver is willing to concentrate on them, what can be caused by personal significance, while influence based on emotions (peripheral persuasion strategy) is more effective when the receiver is not focused on rational deliberation, then sender should have prestige, be attractive for receiver and the matter touched in the message has small personal significance to the receiver (Aronson et al., 2006: 323–325). Peripheral persuasion strategy fulfils its task perfectly especially in public service announcement, thus in social campaigns targeted on children too. As an example could be used a campaign already mentioned before: “Drinking Milk will Make You Great!”, where message was based on encouraging children to follow their idols, superheroes, not on strong arguments. Campaign was conducted on a big scale – on TV, press, radio, Internet and through outdoor advertisement.

4. Public service announcement
Public service announcement (public service ad) could be a perfect tool for creation socially required attitudes related to, for example, to comply with speed limits, being sober while driving or, as in the case of campaign “Drinking Milk will Make You Great!” related to changes in eating habits among children. Public service announcement is defined as “persuasional process aimed on causing socially required attitudes or behaviours” (Maison and Maliszewski, 2009: 9).
Attitudes changed through public service announcement comparing to advertisements has both higher level of complexity and deeper level of required change. It results in necessity of conducting longer campaigns than commercial ones. Another difficulty in preparing and carrying out social campaigns (public service announcement) is necessity of large investment, although social campaigns budget is usually smaller than commercial ones, what often results in not enough amount of money for professional advertisement (Maison and Maliszewski, 2009: 9).

There is a wide range of differences between public service ads and advertisements, but both forms use the same style of message and are created on the basis of the same principles of communication (Keler and Nóżka, 2007: 88). Common characteristic for both types of advertisement is also an aim; it is: the aim of commercial advertisement is to attract consumers attention to the product, what results in purchase (re-purchase, increase in purchase), whereas the aim of public service ads is to attract attention to problem and creation or change of attitude towards it (Stasiakiewicz, 2003: 15), what could result in purchasing given type of products (e.g. fish, milk, crush helmet, water filter, condoms, etc.).

Social service announcement could be used individually or together with other tools, becoming a part of social campaign (Stasiakiewicz, 2003: 14). Attitudes subjected in social service ads are deeper than those in commercial advertisements, so more than one tool is often used. Popular is also using advertisements in different media (television, radio, press, Internet, outdoor) to assure that social service ad was, first of all, noticed, later remembered and after fulfilling both of them – caused attitude change.

In social service ads techniques of social influence are often used to induce an individual to certain behaviour. The most significant principles of social influence from the perspective of attitude changes: consistency, social proof and authority were already mentioned (Keler and Nóżka, 2007: 90).

Particularly challenging is attempt to change attitudes related to habits and health. Health is one of the most important social issues and could be a reason of its frequent appearance in social campaigns. During the last couple of years a lot of pro-health campaigns were conducted, inter alia: “Twoja krew – Moje życie” (“Your blood – My life”) encouraging to become a blood donor, “Woda – naturalnie ze źródła” (“Water – from spring, naturally”) aimed on changing attitude related to increasing water consumption, as well as “Nie pakuj się do trumny” (“Don’t go into the coffin”), “Uratuj kobietę” (“Rescue a woman”) encouraging women to gynaecologic cytopathology and mammography tests or “Trzeba wiedzieć, żeby zwyciężyć” (“You have to know to win”) aimed on fight against lung cancer (Kampanie społeczne, 2012).

Social campaigns of health issues are specific, because of the bad name of Polish health care system physicians or pharmacists authority is rarely used, whereas very often in role of sender we can see “celebrities”, famous and
successful people receivers want to follow, as well as famous people touched by illness or who deal with relatives diseases, e.g. Ewa Błaszczyk (Zajączkowska, 2007: 130).

Attitudes related to health are strongly rooted, not only those ones concerning addictions, but also eating habits or lifestyle. That is why it is difficult to change them (Zajączkowska, 2007: 128), what gives additional argument for taking care of quality and rightness of message, as well as duration of social campaign.

Social campaigns are relatively little appreciated way of improving a competitive status. For example, campaigns financed/supported by pharmaceutical companies aimed on increasing of awareness of diseases, medical tests and medical treatment may influence on their competitive status. Social actions bringing positive changes and helping in lengthening lifespan could be profitable. So far “social” activities have mean “non-profit” or that kind of activity which generates additional cost, not income. Pharmaceutical companies have additional tool to use, which is very valuable, because have not been used often yet.

Those campaigns bring positive social results and, at the same time, increase patients awareness, which leads to increase of medicine’s sale. When patients find out their illness, they start to take medicines. Pharmaceutical companies should be interested in detecting illness as soon as possible, what increases the period of taking medicines and patient’s lifespan.

Social campaigns will bring the highest effectiveness (in quantity) in case of mass diseases and potentially have the highest chance to influence on increase in company’s income. Those diseases are above all diabetes, heart diseases and cancer. It is worth to mention a campaign prepared by high school students – 5th edition of Youth Programme “Mam haka na raka” (“I have cancer on a toast”) winners. It is presented on picture nr 1. “Campaign called ‘Zabezpiecz tyły! Zrób kolonoskopię!’ (“Protect your back! Go for colonoscopy!”) was made on the mafia theme. Its members in daily life have power and money and feel safe in every situation. But daily routine, based on racketeering and eating typical Italian dinner is interrupted by unexpected incident – a stone wrapped in a piece of paper comes through the window. Message contains a treat: ‘I’m coming for you, don Pablo. This year I have caught 14 thousand more innocent people than you’” (Rynek zdrowia, 2012). It is ready solution that could be used by pharmaceutical companies producing medicines to fight against large intestine cancer or to avoid it. This campaign has not been conducted yet.

Cancer often is a taboo, sometimes even the source of shame. Using sense of humour to avoid embarrassing associations, campaigns may cause changes in social awareness, encouraging to do medical tests, what leads to early detection. One of the diseases, which is often seen embarrassing is prostate cancer. During the third edition of “Męska sprawa” (“Men business”) campaign, in June and July educational meetings on this topic were conducted. Advice on prevention,
symptoms and treatment were given by specialists, as well as nurses with a long-term experience in work with patients with urological problems. This campaign is organised every year and sponsored by AstraZeneca Pharma Poland (Stowarzyszenie pacjentów z chorobami Prostaty, Nerek, Pęcherza i Jąder „GLADIATOR” im. Tadeusza Koszarowskiego, 2012).

5. Corporate Social Responsibility and profitability

Involvement into social campaigns is included in the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that could be defined as “process of getting to know and including social expectations into corporate strategy, as well as monitoring the influence of this strategy on company’s competitiveness. Within the CSR framework each company may get involved into social issues to mould the social capital, improve management system, build organizational capital, implement innovational solutions for the common good and create possibility for development” (Rok, 2012: 424).

Prahalad and Hammond emphasize that corporate involvement into social issues, e.g. help in development of developing countries, is in company’s interest, because increase in consumers income implies increase in their purchasing power and decrease risk of expansion and investment on well-developed markets (Prahalad and Hammond, 2007: 7–9).

Question is how well did companies develop using socially responsible activities to increase profits. According to Porter and Kramer they did it to a small degree (Porter and Kramer, 2007: 35–40). In this context two aspects are particularly interesting. First of them, mentioned above, it is a contribution into environment development, or positive impact on increase of purchasing power of potential customers. Second one is building an image of the company with the aim to get new customers with more than average salary.

According to Porter and Kramer companies should try to achieve situation when both aspects are fulfilled to strengthen or improve competitive situation by support of social aspects related to companies field of action. That leads to improvement of social situation and influence on company profits (Porter and Kramer, 2007: 35–40).

In author’s opinion financial aid to social campaigns should be conducted in methodical way, companies wanting to get involved into social issues should do it in fields directly related to their activity, e.g. company producing sport shoes should choose campaigns related to healthy lifestyle and doing sports, pharmaceutical companies should choose those ones related to medical tests, car producers – into campaigns related to driving safely. As an example of not implementing this idea is a campaign of NIVEA “Szkółki piłkarskie NIVEA” (“NIVEA football schools”). NIVEA is an international producer of skin care cosmetics, that is why conducting activities in field of sport for children seems

■ 101
not a very good idea. It could be useful to analyse market segments and target campaign to a segment with the highest potential, e.g. creating a campaign targeted on women, how to take care of oneself in pregnancy, after childbirth or in menopause, because in this life periods the risk of depression is high. Discovering own beauty on different life stages could prevent women from depression. That kind of campaign have positive impact on society, but also could help in building an image of socially responsible company and increasing income from women and babies cosmetics sale.

List of social change areas together with potential business beneficiary are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL CHANGE AREA</th>
<th>POTENTIAL BUSINESS BENEFICIARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Shoes, sport clothes, sport equipment producers, gym owners, fitness clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy nutrition</td>
<td>Healthy food and water producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophylaxis, medical tests</td>
<td>Pharmaceuticals companies, health food, shoes, sport clothes, sport equipment producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe driving</td>
<td>Car producers, insurance agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book reading</td>
<td>Bookshops, publishing houses, tablets producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals rights, educational influence of having pets on children</td>
<td>Pets food and accessories (leashes, baskets) producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time outdoors with children instead of watching TV or playing on computer</td>
<td>Agritourism projects places of active rest as climbing wall, funfair, swimming pool, cirrus; bikes, roller-skates, scooters, skies producers; whole society, including real estate (children will internalise social patterns, will be less aggressive and won’t destroy public property)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Social change influencing income increase of companies
Source: own work.

This table contains only examples of potential participation area. Each company that considers getting involved into social campaign should check potential benefits first, especially those, which may have impact to income increase. The aim of companies is to generate profit, what makes social campaigns perfect tool to obtain this goal, but only if it is deeply analysed and used properly.

Profits related to social activities may come out not only of increase in income, but also of decrease in marketing cost thanks to use of Internet as a communication channel, especially social media. According to data presented in “World Internet Projects” report, practices on using media has changed. Internet becomes more popular, especially between people under 40 years old, who in 2011 spent more time using Internet than watching TV (data referred to those, who spent more than 10 hours a week on given activities). In general result, TV still has the advantage over the Internet, but it is only 4 percentage points (Ipsos, 2011: 43). It shows high potential of the Internet as a tool of communication with customers.
One of the ways of contacting and building relations with customers is permanent presence in social network: by creating a profile on Facebook or Nasza-Klasa. It is possible to conduct successful social campaign through those services. For example, in New York there was conducted a campaign related to the problem of homelessness. Twitter accounts were created and mobile phones were given to four homeless people, who shared with their activities and feelings. As a result, they got a job, one of them after eleven years met his daughter, they got a lot of positive emotions from strangers (Underheard in New York, 2012). Another example is a campaign, where main character is a 91-years old Friderika, whose grandson – professional photographer – took pictures of her stylized on a superhero. He created a Myspace account for her and shared those pictures with other users. Comments and popularity made Mrs. Frederika happier and increased her self-esteem (Suuuper Babcia, 2012).

Social media are also used in commercial way, involving customers into contests, actions encouraging to share the ideas related to the product. According to the author, potential of social media could be also used in social campaigns that also generate profit for the company. It will let to decrease costs, especially comparing to commercials and have higher effectiveness that traditional marketing tools.

6. Conclusion
Thinking about social campaigns from the perspective of financial benefits has a considerable significance, particularly in time of intensive competition, higher consumers awareness and popularity of Corporate Social Responsibility. Companies activities could be unethical (what is often against the law), ethical or pro-social. Choosing pro-social activities company may expect higher income not only caused by changes in image. Social campaign prepared properly may have impact on corporate income, especially when is conducted in field directly or indirectly related to products or services of the company. Additionally using potential of the Internet, especially social media may lead to decrease in costs and increase in range and effectiveness of the campaign.

References


