



CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES ON MARKETING OF HEALTH SERVICES

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Abstract:

The article investigates the contemporary economic tendencies that marketing is a new perspective for health management, offering greater and broader view of the progress made to date by different sciences and disciplines. Appropriating marketing as a management tool means to have a broader instrumental to work according to carry the drugs market, medical technology and instrumentation, offer and reorient services, design and implement health programs, reconciling the objectives and purposes of the health institution with the user, consumer and patient, thus, both achieve their ends. If we are applying appropriate marketing techniques, surely, we will find an ally to produce well-being, to respond to the new paradigms that become ineluctable challenges of everyone, anywhere in the world, we advocate the health of mankind.

Keywords: management, marketing of health services, health economics, health promotion

Introduction

Peter Drunker, considers that "*effective people are not oriented towards the problems, but to opportunities, feed opportunities and let them die of inertia to the problems.*" Based on the above postulate, I think that for health managers, in any context and latitude, marketing is an "*opportunity*" for both feeding opportunities and a management tool for troubleshooting, hence it is appropriate for us travel by theory and reach practical application, how marketing becomes a necessary ally to respond to new paradigms of health in modern times. The more we appropriate knowledge; reality can be interpreted in more varied forms. When we apply the knowledge to explain and understand the reality, we are improving reality and enriching knowledge, as long as the scientific method and objective approach prevail in what we do. For such reasons, marketing is a

science that allows responding to new paradigms of health and opportunity, to find solutions to the problems faced today, to lead people and society to wellness.

Marketing began in the so-called commercial marketing, in the first half of the last century and with the passing of time became evident their ability to use the services field and then to the ideas. Today, it is inconceivable the launch of a new product without marketing program, which was based on market research study of consumers, proper selection of strategies using a marketing mix that allows to reach the target market and positioner the product. The launch of a service is also preceded by a similar process, mainly in those where impacts more globalization and demands that are highly competitive. The social marketing is also a common practice to counter aggressive strategies of commercial advertising to promote consumption of harmful to health products, others to advocate social causes of public good. Also, the corporate image of institutions is made, while considering the marketing policy that increasingly thrives on highly sophisticated techniques to sell their ideas and projects.

The business marketing, which includes everything related to products and services, has a good representation in present. Corporate marketing is a science that requires creating a philosophy of action of managers, to drive the production of goods and services to the satisfaction of the needs, desires and demands of consumers. Social marketing, you have to satisfy the consumer requirements, maintain a transparent and balanced market that allows you to choose rationally and consciously best suited to their needs goods and services. The new era requires therefore different attributes in human resources in general and particularly managers; it requires a different mental attitude, creative, innovative and globalizing capacity. The current manager has to think marketing approach, thinking about product concepts for what they are and the benefits they provide, on competitiveness by product quality and services, management of prices in specific markets for specific audiences, with a flexibility that allows them to survive in such a dynamically changing environment.

Health and its concept, which has also come a long way, is moving towards new paradigms that require different views with regard to the goods and services, to respond to new needs and transformation in the way of thinking and acting of the contemporary consumers. Regarding the most recent health policies, we can remark that within the current demands and standards raised on the agenda worldwide, health promotion probably must be the most innovative, comprehensive and possible, being both the most difficult and costly to implement. Five lines in the strategy outlined in the Ottawa Charter characterize it:

- a) formulation of healthy public policy;
- b) creating supportive environments;
- c) strengthening community action;
- d) developing personal skills, and
- e) reorienting health services

All these guidelines, involve a profound change in the individual, the community and the institutional environment. Therefore, to achieve this, it is necessary to apply diversified approaches in order to change strategies, so that social marketing becomes an ideal tool to achieve these purposes. The above approach is reinforced, considering the three parallel lines of action involving health promotion:

- a) promoting healthy lifestyles;
- b) enabling people to increase their capacity to control the delivery of beneficial health services, and
- c) implementing structural conditions that make possible the full and effective health for the entire population.

Assimilating new paradigms, also it requires the participation of new disciplines of science which converges: social marketing, coupled with social mobilization, communication and involve the community through participation, to achieve change in terms of the traditional patterns to see related health cure of the disease. It is only possible to face the paradigm of health seen as a challenge to reduce inequities, as expressed in the goal of "*health for all*", expand the scope of prevention, and helping people to confront their circumstances, to encourage social participation, strengthen community services, health and promote healthy public policies.

Hiroshi Nakajima said in 1988, that "*...health is a product of social action and not merely a result of medical care*". Focusing on health with this new paradigm requires undoubtedly confront with the support of the social sciences, based on the development of medical science and the technological advancement. The preventable deaths, both individual responsibility and public health care, justify the effort to educate, inform, persuade, train, change the environment and improving the conditions in which man lives, so you can get a higher quality and thus being. Only in this way we can bridge the gap between policy and reality and respond to the claim of equity and access to health services as quality health services you have to come after people gain access him and that is why it is one of the most sensitive issues on the agenda of international organizations that advocate the right to life of the planet.

Some countries, for more than 35 years ago they gave solution related to access to health and discrimination, highlighting how from this principle of equity can exhibit indicators similar to those of developed countries health. Even in difficult economic conditions, the presence of family doctors, as a key link in the Primary Care Systems Emergency and rapid response of the health service to all epidemiological situations so requires, ensure the health of the population. Without the issue of quality in the service offered, remains a major point of reflection and analysis, to meet the needs of the population and reorienting health services based on meeting them. Thus, corporate marketing applied to services, facilitates work in terms of improving health and well-being. Because of its positive contribution to constantly improve the performance of health services, marketing, in all its possible applications, it makes it a powerful ally of

the health manager, by helping him to respond to the challenges posed by current health policies in the light of new paradigms. Apply marketing to public health, it is an imperative of our time, in a context of *contra-marketing* that recommend to avoid practices and products that are harmful to health, such as alcohol, snuff, drugs and programs and campaigns to bring rational limits products consumption products, such as fat, salt, artificial foods and GM, as well as prevent sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

Among others, the application spectrum of marketing to health activity is not limited to its potential in promoting health and promoting healthy lifestyles, it covers the quality of health services, the rational use of drugs and the approach and contribution to solving the various public health problems that are generated as a result of inequality. The high competitiveness leading globalization requires *marketing* as a tool to guide development toward wellness, towards ethical consumption and sustainable development. It is a working tool that should be considered in the change in the physician relationships patient, where an increasing maturity and autonomy that is reaching the patient, derived among others, the actual development of work health promotion and raising the health culture, which favors a new dimension in the relationship is more remarkable health culture, which favors a new dimension in the relationship where the health professional has to accomplish the transaction through negotiation and not from the hegemonic position previously occupied. An interesting element that we must consider is the fact that the Internet can act in this relationship both in a role of ally as opposition, increasing the role of patients, users of health services, demanding drugs and technologies for the health professional or the system itself cannot be answered or actually does not constitute an important element or even effect is not yet proven. Although the mindset of managers, officials and health professionals in general, always intended to provide the highest quality service and promote healthy behaviors is present, it is not unusual to find that they have the theoretical elements and instruments of marketing to address it.

Actually in that so-called "*new management model of health services*", the approach to the consumer and considers the worker health as the internal customer, who has to be satisfied to produce satisfaction external customers. Hence, the importance of that communication flows in both directions, the structures flatten and epidemiological information enables to respond to the present and foresee the future, so that health services can respond to the interests of consumers and the requirements public health. marketing is a tool based health management, while enabling detect and respond to the health needs from research, evaluation and analysis of health demand, patient satisfaction and make this identification to anticipate and meet both requirements. It is therefore a useful tool for organizational change based on the full implementation of health objectives in the light of the paradigms that currently support health policies.

Functions and potentials

Marketing is considered a "...comprehensive process, seen from the final results, from the point of view of the consumer" a "business philosophy and mental attitude", "a generation of guidelines to select and develop appropriate products and services essential activity life, promoting and distributing them so they get the maximum benefit for the capital employed." Analyzed in this way, it can be considered also as "...the strategy that allows reconciling the objectives and motivations that come to market the consumer and the producer or supplier of goods and services".

The market is the place where consumer and producer or supplier are, the consumer intends to acquire goods and services to meet needs based on their acquisitive possibilities, while producer and supplier offering goods and services to be profitable, profit that allows them to continue the production of goods and services. This approach is valid for both profit and nonprofit, obviously in the case of non-profit, entities profitability is the basis of sustaining these institutions and make progress towards improving its management. From this premise functions detach the marketing and marketing applied to health, the first and essential social dimension, aimed at improving the quality of life with an ethical approach and supported in promoting health, early detection and timely, appropriate and effective treatment. At the same time, this does not relieve the economic dimension aimed at achieving profitability and rational use of resources in terms of achieving the objectives. Its potential is evident when it is measured as the application of marketing possible to improve the use of resources, build and deploy new services and programs based on the needs and motivate and engage workers and regulate demand from adequate production of services and products required, attracting resources in terms of improving the health and quality of life and improve the image of health institutions, among others.

Paradoxes and Controversies

One of the most debated issues regarding marketing and its application to the field of health, is conceived as concerning the commodification of health and when it comes to social marketing to individual freedom. Both arguments put marketing and use by health professionals in an ethical plane, when really what it is is to use an appropriate tool for health management. Other arguments are aimed to consider that no use is necessary and they are very limited the possibilities offered in relation to health, when in fact what it does is open a much wider to face reality spectrum. in our view, controversies and paradoxes, are lack of knowledge and in other cases, arguments are nothing more than the reaction of the critics of social causes and those who are responsible for handling and misleading advertising, trying to curb social change

programs regarding behaviors in general and health in particular, as they put at risk their economic interests. Transnationals seek ways to reach consumers without information and unprotected, to replace its markets to those that either have already taken decisions consistent with the health and quality of life, or die product of not being able to have the knowledge required to make a proper balance between what I should and should not eat, or because when his health has been severely affected, income does not allow them access to health services.

The social marketing, it is the answer to the changes required from a behavioral point of view and is routinely used in solving problems related to health, promoting adoption of healthy behaviors and the appropriate use of health services. The social marketing programs educate, persuade and guide the individual and societies about everything that affects their health.

Arguments supporting the application of marketing to health management

Management of health services does not require use marketing strategies and is not ethical because transgresses individual freedom, promote or change ideas and behavior of individuals, are the central points that support the arguments against the usability of marketing in health management. We consider convenient through each of the arguments and present our view on this, although generally already been outlined in this paper.

When we point out the importance of applying marketing as a management tool in health services, we are not referring to market the medicine and never have to reduce it to private health services. We have already noted how the marketing approach is to essential principle project and provide health services according to the needs of the target market, that is, users and customers, patients, in order to preserve their health. Using the concept “*preserve health*”, it implies both prevent and cure. The marketing will be the tool that will enable the social service orientation. Public and private are to be directed to their human content, where by managers achieve to meet the needs, expectations and desires of external customers and internal. The concept of internal marketing or internal marketing as possible to respond to external marketing is a premise to have satisfied customers from getting employees are sensitized with the philosophy of quality and commit to it. Simply that meet customer needs is the *raison d’etre* of any entity and in the case of health institutions, is also achieve well-being. When health workers feel involved with the institution and its philosophy of action is customer satisfaction, we have a high probability of having satisfied customers and this will enable both the customer possible to identify the needs of health services for reorienting them based in reality leading to improvement of health management. Effectiveness, efficiency, quality and equity, through the rational use of resources, must be both goals, both public and private health institution would be the

difference if the State or the owner responsible for ensuring that these principles govern. It is important to make clear that the state must also be held accountable with this principle that governs the lucrative sector. The marketing system means the exchange between clients and health professionals meet the needs and expectations with respect to health, to achieve the individual and social welfare is reached and to that extent meets the objectives of the health organization. With regard to the management of health institutions, considering them as a business, both in the public and private sectors, involving handling business, through which the objectives of providing the service and receiving it at any time deceive or manipulate, but the proper orientation, diagnosis and treatment required leading to welfare, accompanied by greater respect for the patient are met and facilitating to play their role in a new context, precisely where health education allows its active role and involvement becomes more useful.

The marketing is the tool that allows reconciling the objectives and motives of the population and health institutions. Using it properly is the skill of the manager; hence, the knowledge and skills development will enable the attainment of these goals. This approach does not make for clear and known that it is the principle of quality as far as health care is concerned, is deemed unnecessary to take it into consideration and work according to optimize it. Among other things we can point out are those concerning the culture of quality, which means not only education staff provides service with regard to the social responsibility they have, but also on the patient, client or user of the health service. The quality of care is a learned concept and its users must be informed which is and what are its dimensions. We can meet a lucrative service that has high technology and instrumental diagnosis, which is very favorable for the quality of service offered, but discriminating when their use is necessary is something very important. If used only for profit, it is deceiving the patient and in addition, it is not be ethical and can be harmful or at least not beneficial to health.

However, at the opposite extreme are how some users of health services public, consider that if they are not subjected to diagnostic tests of this nature have not been well served. The marketing approach is aimed at giving the customer what they really need and when health care is the consumer orientation; translated health education is more than ethical imperative and necessary. The concept of quality in health must frame it in five key elements:

- a) professional excellence;
- b) efficient use of resources;
- c) minimal risk for the patient;
- d) high degree of satisfaction, and
- e) the final impact on health.

The quality of health services cannot be reduced to one or some of these elements, as necessarily involves the integration of all these elements of a technical nature and process them, objective and subjective, in order to achieve user satisfaction and efficiency of the health institution. As we have seen, the management of health services does require use marketing strategies, this does not mean that health for commercial purposes and profit is seen, but on the contrary, that although concerns private services these must be framed on ethical and socially oriented.

Place the medical institution able to provide answers to the new paradigms of health; it is a challenge for health managers, first by the need to change the philosophy of action, the form of individual, community and institutional thinking. As we have analyzed, social marketing, is an instrument of great value to achieve the changes required, to take on new paradigms and to enable different strategies for different audiences.

Marketing is a philosophy of action and orientation of the health organization to the consumer, client or patient involving the achievement of maximum awareness to reorient health services based on real needs, where the customer is an active player in this reform, whose central purpose is reducing the distance between the manager of the health institution and one for which the service is offered. It allows also to enhance the corporate image, regulate demand, motivate and engage employees, satisfy users and provide a better utilize more rationally the resources are available. Social marketing is a strategy that launched together with the marketing services, enabling its application. But the scope of social marketing and questioning its application focuses primarily on the so-called anthropological quandary or dilemma of ethics, identifying as violation of individual freedom to propitiate changes in ideas, attitudes and behaviors that are harmful to health and which generally are associated with unnecessary, irrational and even addictions consumption.

It is important to note that social marketing programs are aimed to form or modify ideas and health behaviors that positively influence this. They will inform and persuade, not manipulate or deceive. They will enable individuals to make decisions regarding their health having knowledge of the relationship between their way of thinking, acting, eating, and behaving, that is, their lifestyle and health. The social responsibility of ensuring the health and welfare of the population is obviously the health authorities and health personnel. There is an error or confusion related to marketing in the conceptual order and is relative to consider it synonymous with advertising, promotion and information about the idea, product or service. Limiting the use of information and communication as instruments to achieve behavioral change reduces the possibilities to act and get results. It is proven that changes from educational elements are just very slow and sometimes it is not possible to obtain the desired impact. The social marketing faces behavioral changes from the theoretical perspective of corporate marketing, appropriating the skills developed in the field of

communication and technology development, information technology and social planning. Denying this possibility is also to deny the development of social sciences and their application possibilities. Research impact achieved with these programs and comparison with control groups, have highlighted the possible results obtained when the political will translated into policy combined and efforts come together in terms of achieving the desired changes either in terms to create barriers to access or delete them. It is not to deny the importance of communication programs change ideas, attitudes and behaviors, but to see them integrated into a strategy that combines the social product to be promoted, be it an idea, practice and is accompanied or not tangible objects, but that the costs of adoption, availability, are converging to achieve the desired change.

Conclusion

If we reflect on the issues raised, we will find that marketing is undoubtedly a new perspective for health management, offering a more comprehensive and breadth approach by integrating the progress made to date by different sciences and disciplines. Appropriating marketing as a management tool, it means to have a broader instrumental to work according to carry the drugs market, medical technology and instrumentation, offer and reorient services and design and implement health programs underway, reconciling the objectives and purposes of the healthcare institution with the user, consumer and patient, thus, both achieve their ends. Let us lead by controversies that encourage detractors is to miss an opportunity to promote health and wellness, to fight for equality and respect citizens' rights so that humanity has a place to live right, to be consumed what is needed and has a beneficial effect on the individual and society. Submit to the paradoxes which put us in the difficulties is to deny the possibilities It offers science to counter them is to see reality from a narrow and outdated prism, look at the past and not the future, let the epidemic we approach and not have the epidemiological thinking to analyze information to predict correctly the strategy preventive. If we appropriate marketing, surely, we will find an ally to produce well-being, to respond to the new paradigms that become ineluctable challenges of everyone, anywhere in the world, we advocate the health of mankind.

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