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SPANDREL CONSULTANCY LTD

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## SUSTAINABILITY VERSUS OLD STYLE CONSUMERISM.

Could the theory of social marketing help change how business is done?

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Marketing and advertising pervades every aspect of our daily life, from getting us to eat butter to celebrate our "Britishness", or to buy cars that are too big to park outside primary schools. If time and effort can be put influencing us to do things such as this that don't benefit the bigger picture then surely marketing can be used to help effect a greater change in the way that we think and act as a set of individuals within a greater community. This is the essence of social marketing.

Until now social marketing has been used to help educate and change public behaviours about health issues such as heart disease and healthy eating. I suggest that the business world is in fact ready to utilise some of the theory and approaches of social marketing to help effect a broader change in how business is done today in the UK and beyond.

Businesses great and small are now recognising that all decisions taken have a cumulative impact upon how their business culture is perceived, by the workforce and perhaps more importantly by the consumer, customer or client.

The tough global economic climate that we are currently living in demands that businesses start to think innovatively in order to manage their place in the market, maintain existing and attract new customers. Whether a company is considered to be a "good guy" or a "bad guy" is increasingly important as customers are starting to use a broader spectrum of factors to select their provider / supplier of choice. Contrary to popular belief the end price is not the sole factor in making the decision of which company to buy from.

Reliability, solidity and standing for something more than profit are constant factors in companies that experience growth during these "Credit Crunch" days. Customers are becoming more conscious of sustainability rather than old style consumerism. As marketing experts will tell us, consumers are attracted to products which offer us a greater benefit than are purely rewarded by purchasing the goods or service.

Similarly businesses can shift their behaviour if the benefits of change are attractive, not just to stop an old habit but to adopt new ways of working because they give an alternative pleasure. Examples might be a deeper understanding of working relationships, a greater sense of working together for a shared goal or knowing that the business is working within a moral framework that the workforce can be proud. These non monetary assets are normally all pulled together under a companies CSR banner.

Now is the time to take a leaf from another book and look at how lessons from social marketing can be applied to your business investing in a long term reward and raising awareness of your values across your workforce and the marketplace.

Spandrel is a leading consultancy focused on helping organisations get the most from Partnerships and all types of collaborative working.

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