Healthcare Marketing Contribution to the Sustainable Development of Society

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Abstract

Health is one of the priorities that ensure the sustainable development of society. But health is an area that raises many problems of economic, social and even moral, so to contribute effectively to sustainable development process requires a constant analysis of population health and how health services are provided the population. In this regard, marketing plays an important role, which by creating an effective marketing audit, and by applying viable marketing strategy contributes to ensuring health services to the population at a level at least satisfactory. This article aims to show how marketing contributes to sustainable development of society.

Keywords: sustainable development, public health, marketing strategies, market analysis

Introduction

Considered the main vehicle for socio-economic progress (Poenaru, 2007), health has become one of the four key priorities of sustainable development, along with climate change, sustainable transport system and natural resources. European Council in 2006, were established factors affecting the sustainable development of a country, so that the new EU strategy for sustainable development can be found following developments: climate change and clean energy, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production;
management and conservation of natural resources, public health, social inclusion, demography and migration; external challenges related to sustainable development and poverty.

The European Union’s analyzes at the various stages of consultation have highlighted the fact that the new strategy will be designed taking into account developments in health on three axes: health care, health threats and health in all policies (Balaceanu, 2012). In this context, health is the country’s engine of sustainable social development.

Thus, the concerns of all organizations in the field should move towards providing quality services tailored to customer needs, which will improve the quality of life pillar of sustainable development. In this approach, an important role of marketing and the application of marketing by industry organizations and represents thus a challenge, an approach to economic and social boundary between an attempt to balance consumer-oriented action-oriented organization. To establish viable marketing strategy in the field and for measuring the effectiveness of marketing activities conducted both at macro and micro is recommended in this area use marketing audit as a tool for substantiation and evaluation strategy and control.

**Marketing audit in Health**

Marketing audit is a comprehensive, periodic, systematic, independent analysis of marketing environment, objectives, strategies and concrete actions in order to determine their opportunities and threats and to recommend an action plan to improve performance organization. (Kotler, Keller, 2009). It is an instrument which measures the value, risk and effectiveness of marketing efforts. Considered to be different from primary sources and secondary research data, marketing audit increases data acquisition efforts aimed at the organization's performance and future perspective through the past and present. (Parmerlee, 2000)

Application of marketing in health services differ from other sectors due to its characteristics determined by market characteristics, organizations, products, staff and customers, and achieving a marketing audit should consider these aspects in order to increase accessibility and quality of services health. Also be taken into account that marketing application in the field is done both at the macroeconomic level, the Ministry of Health and micro level of organizations providing health services and an efficient marketing audit should be conducted primarily the Ministry of Health because it considering the realities of health services, is based decisions and designing service offered depending on individual needs of a community.

Marketing efforts at macroeconomic level aimed through policies, strategies and tactics adopted public health surveillance, public health promotion, disease prevention, and offer design and size according to the characteristics and conduct of the application (Radulescu, 2008).
Market Analysis

The point of departure in the marketing audit is the market analysis to identify opportunities and threats. Health market is atypical, marked by a number of features. Thus, a real market, in economic terms, in health field is questionable because the operation of the law of supply and demand is different from other markets, changes in demand and supply in most cases does not affect the price change. (Radulescu, 2008)

Offer depends on government policy and various other restrictions, and demand is determined by the security, availability of resources and activities of physicians, and more than the disease in the population. Moreover, a real market would imply that motives and activities of health care providers and others are purely economic, which is not typical behavior health organizations. In a real market, health care providers enter in competition for consumer resources and this competition determines the price of goods and services, not specific in situation of health services. In addition, many organizations have a monopoly for a particular service thus creating a private market. Is frequently oligopoly, consumers are often limited in their choice of medical personnel or services.

Although health services provided to consumers without insurance, payment is made directly, there are ethical considerations for patients with serious problems should be treated even if they do not have insurance and can not pay. In other markets, products and services are paid directly by the consumer, the vast majority of health services are paid through third payer. Nonprofit organizations play an important role in health. Although a large number of doctors was incorporated into the centers and medical offices focused on profit, there are a number of nonprofit organizations and their orientation creates an environment different from other fields. Another aspect that differentiates these organizations in other fields, is related to the relational system that works, that creates relationships between primary care physicians and those in hospital. Thus, hospitals accept patients based reference, except emergency hospitals. The importance of this type of relationship is reflected in the fact that in most cases, the decision to use the services of an organization or another does not belong to the consumer.

Marketers must therefore analyze and substantiate strategies taking into account not only the final consumer, but all factors which may influence this system of relations (primary care physicians, health plans at local, regional or national, etc.). A comprehensive analysis of the market, must pursue and present its dimensions. Thus, on the market area, the characteristics of health services, especially related to intangibility and inseparability of the provider, the area is generally limited, as an expression of local demand and rigidity offer (Olteanu, 2003), the market is in mostly local or regional and national rarely (if epidemics, national vaccination campaigns and so on).

Health of the population, the incidence of various types of disease, access to health services, are matters subject to the geographical origin of the patients and the demographic characteristics of the population. Therefore, the macro market segmentation is required depending on the geographic, demographic and psychographic. Heterogeneity health services
market requires market segment structure, activity segmentation can be viewed from two perspectives:

- • segmentation in terms of supply of services involves identifying categories according to their features, addressing specific consumer segments (e.g., prevention, curative and rehabilitation services or pediatrics, cardiology, dermatology, etc.).
- • demand segmentation involves grouping consumers according to their type, their expectations, demographics, economic, and consumer purchasing behavior.

To be used by healthcare organizations, market analysis must be expressed in a quantitative form, meaning market capacity limits within which transactions to take place and specific marketing activities.

Market capacity can be expressed by means of several indicators, both value and quantity. Most times, the market capacity is expressed as the number of health care consumers (patients) of the service at a time, or the average number of periods. In health services, along with the offer, the number of patients / patients is the most used indicator which is expressed by market capacity.

Marketing Strategy Audit

Internal audit involves obtaining a global perspective on business organization and must answer questions about the existence of resources and their management, as a starting point in formulating strategy.

In case of organizations internal audit health concerns:

- ✓ Operational variables: capacity hospital or clinic concerned, the number of patients admitted, quality of services, relationships with insurance funds and other bodies involved, various relationships with employers, market share, technical equipment, investments, financial position of the organization and so on;
- ✓ Objectives, strategies and tactics for marketing on the marketing mix elements: product, price, distribution and promotion;
- ✓ Organization of marketing - the type of structure function used, the assignment of responsibilities for marketing and distribution, collaboration, and communication service / marketing department and other departments / sections of the organization;
- ✓ Marketing information system - the use of information for marketing decision making, the system's ability to provide accurate, current and relevant experience in marketing research, etc..

In health, product design should contribute more decision makers at macro and microeconomic factors responsible sustainable development, namely: Ministry of Health, organizations, physicians and consumers (Laing, 2002).

Ensuring equity and equality in terms of access to health care for all members of a community requires that the Ministry of Health to play a major role in health service design and size. Therefore, access to primary care, secondary and tertiary, and series of activities through which
the services are heavily regulated. In health, there is a wide range of services, which often are grouped offered. For example, surgery involves a series of procedures / services that often are difficult to define and measure. Marketers face serious problems when it comes to defining these services. Also, most of them are not substitutes, as other types of services. The creation and delivery of health services involves a set of interrelated elements operating under certain rules. Relations between different groups of partners, including system components, as well as the relationship with consumers directly reflects the quality of service. (Radulescu, 2008) Thus, from the point of view of the government or third party payers, quality is closely associated with efficiency and appropriate use of resources, while healthcare professionals focus on expertise, resources and patient health consequence of these processes. For consumers, quality is influenced by interpersonal relationships and then professional competence, health care facilities as causing certain features of the competence of personnel, conduct of providing individualized care, technical and material basis. (Palmer, 1991)

The audit in terms of sustainable development, which is mainly focused on ensuring the physical and mental well-being of the population, need to consider and the quality of services provided population, by reference to various indicators. Providing health services at different levels (primary care, hospital services, outpatient) requires clarification of the concept of quality at every level. Approach of GP services provided in terms of quality focuses on the following elements: accessibility seen in terms of organizational, geographical, financial and psychological, continuity by providing services both within and outside the cabinet, patient satisfaction given by extent that the doctor meets with consumer expectations (Armean, 2002). Strategies for quality assurance in health care, is a new approach to primary care, putting the customer center. This can be achieved by developing integrated primary care services in a group practice that brings together medical doctors with medical and auxiliary personnel.

Organising an integrated primary health care services lead to improved quality of service by reducing waiting times for patients, provides quick and easy access, ensure continuity of care, allows scheduled investigations, requires training and development of staff, increase patient satisfaction. In the hospital quality measurement may sometimes be very difficult, especially when referring to the performance of an individual or a team, to certain sections or therapeutic interventions or treatments such complex operations ( Rădulescu, Cetină, Barbu, 2008 ). Hospital care is not based on guidelines or protocols and service delivery and outcomes are measured and monitored properly, not systematically audited and evaluated by the College of Physicians. (Radulescu, 2012)

Hospital service quality can be assessed from the perspective of the consumer, through the following elements: personal, physical support of the benefit, the hospital, the creation and delivery of services, treatment outcome.

In terms of pricing audit, it must take into account the fact that the industry organizations, except private facilities and some health services that are not funded by health insurance, the price as a marketing tool plays a small role because intervention of the third payer (purchaser of health services). In these services, while the customer is consumer, it pays no direct service,
but through health insurance made in advance. As a result, the pricing of health services involved a number of factors, including: national home insurance, private insurance companies, the Ministry of Health, private companies etc. The financing of health services intended to ensure all citizens have access to health services, which is consistent with sustainable development. Health care market, public organizations, in particular the price may be set based on the cost, and demand, and if private organizations on competition and consumer price perception.

Characteristics of health services determines that in most cases, the distribution channels used to provide direct services to, especially primary care services, however, some authors (Hillestad, Berkowitz, 1991) considers that the provision of specialized services is through indirect channels, which imply the existence of an intermediary. Thus, groups of specialists that depend on the system of referrals from GP, provides these services through indirect channels.

Due to the characteristics of health services, distribution decisions should aim at people's access to the service in any point, so the main elements that you need to base decisions are: location of sanitary facilities, opening hours and how to provide the means scheduling system and routine service and emergency.

In order to improve the quality of life requires a constant communication with consumers of health services, both for preventive services and treatment. In terms of public health services, the Ministry of Health is one of the largest emitters through information campaigns, education and communication on issues concerning public health.

Thus, marketing strategies audit must monitor and analyze the communication policy of all organizations concerned. Communication and health promotion also have distinct features due to specific services. Throughout its development, communicative activities conducted by health organizations hadn’t targeted the end consumer, but primary care doctors, who through the recommendations and references contributed to increased demand for their services. Only after 90s organizations began to focus efforts directly and to the final consumer. In addition, communication and health promotion health is not only used in organizations, it is an important component to the Ministry of Health.

Health promotional activity is restricted as in other areas, it is considered unethical and therefore restricted. However, in addition to using traditional media - advertising, sales promotion, public relations, and other means to code as: contact staff, the physical system and consumer benefit. Advertising is used in conjunction with other means, such as: brand, symbols, contact personnel, customer price. More widely used public relations, education and communication activities of the organization.

Health communication efforts initiated must respect the basic principles, namely, building a consistent communication message unique to be transmitted through promotional communications techniques appropriate to the target consumer profile. Emphasis will be placed on an integrated marketing communication programs based on persuasive
communicative information to determine the target audience on the one hand, and awareness of health problems on the other. Health communication rules should consider protecting consumers.

**Conclusion**

In recent years, health issues as an integral part of sustainable development, has gained unprecedented ground and because European Court of Human Rights has developed a very comprehensive view on the concept of "private life" within the meaning of Art. Article 8. (1) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Radulescu, 2012), health is thus considered a part of privacy.

Sustainable development can not be achieved without a constant attempt to improve the quality of life that means at least maintaining the health of the population at a satisfactory level. This role is for all organizations working in the area, mainly the Ministry of Health, which is responsible the analysis of environmental factors affecting human health and making sustainable decisions regarding supply mode of funding, distribution of public services and not finally the communication and promotion of certain services.

To achieve goals and increase quality of life, use of communicative consistent application programs on the most appropriate health services aligned with the target consumer profile can be a solution in terms of achieving quality of life in Romania. Although health penetrated hard, because these services features and ethical issues, marketing strategies helps to formulate viable and relevant in that they are formulated according to the needs, wishes and preferences of consumers. An important role in proper grounding strategies adopted in the field of health, but also in the evaluation and control of their implementation lies and marketing audit.

This, through various instruments, allowing internal and external environment analysis of various organizations working in health. Macro factors analysis, market analysis, marketing strategies, marketing systems help organizations from various levels involved in the formulation of strategies to meet the needs of the market and EU health regulations. Only through a deep analysis of all the factors involved, the strategies adopted will be viable, will help ensure fairness and equality in the provision of public health, will also improve the quality of life and therefore will support sustainable development strategies undertaken by our country.

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