Branding theory and practice within social marketing is arguably only partially developed,\textsuperscript{1} with few examples of branding applied to behaviour change available in the literature.\textsuperscript{2} Brands are often recognisable by their logo, for example, a famous brand logo is the ‘Nike swoosh’. This logo is used as a communication tool to convey implicit associations with Nike and Nike product users (such as athletic mastery) backed up by the strap-line ‘just do it’. As a key technique used by commercial marketers for decades to build relationships between target customers and products or services\textsuperscript{3} there is a strong argument for the use of branding techniques for social marketers wishing to build relationships between their target audience and the behaviours they seek to manage.\textsuperscript{4} The case for the use of branding in social marketing is growing\textsuperscript{5} \textsuperscript{6} \textsuperscript{7} and successes such as the ‘Verb’\textsuperscript{5} and ‘truth’\textsuperscript{7} campaigns are well documented:

**The VERB Campaign**

- The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) made use of branding in its public health campaign to encourage children aged 9 – 13 yrs to be physically active.
- The brand – VERB – and tagline, ‘It’s what you do!’ were developed in conjunction with a number of advertising agencies, however a crucial element of VERB was that it was created “for tweens, by tweens”\textsuperscript{8} thus resonating with tween values.
- Research conducted with tweens revealed that the brand should portray physical activity as something that was fun, not competitive, easy and accessible to all children.
- Brand attributes for VERB were: inclusiveness, playfulness, having fun while being active with friends, and accessibility.
- The campaign involved raising brand awareness among the target audience; creating brand equity through association with other popular brands; and bringing the target audience into contact with the brand through experiential marketing activities and promotional tie-ins.
- Affinity with the VERB brand was associated with more positive attitudes towards physical activity among the target audience.

**The truth® Campaign**

- The American Legacy Foundation wanted to develop a brand capable of competing with the idealised image of smoking associated with tobacco brands like Marlboro and Camel, which would appeal to teens and influence them not to smoke.
- The truth brand aimed to expose the tobacco industry as manipulative, delivering idealised counter-images of young people joining a social movement, taking control of their lives and rebelling against this industry.
- As with VERB, the ownership of the brand by its target audience (teens aged 12 - 17 yrs) was essential to the development and success of the brand.
- Change, stemming from exposure to the campaign, was evaluated by awareness of the various components of the campaign (such as ads) and, ultimately, by the decision not to smoke.
- Brand equity was measured on a variant of Aaker’s\textsuperscript{8} (1996) ten dimensions model and the brand was found to have high equity amongst its target audience, and to be perceived as being of high quality.
- The campaign was consistent with social psychological theories on the formation of self-image which indicated that young people would adopt and act on self-images that are idealised and consistent with their values.
Key points:

- Potential drawbacks of using a branding strategy for a public health campaign include the cost and length of time required for a brand to gain awareness and for a shift in attitudes and social norms to take place, as well as the difficulty of evaluating and measuring actual behaviour change.

- However, the successful development of a relationship and affinity between a brand and its target audience makes it a valuable asset that can be adapted locally or regionally, or be taken up by partner organisations.

- In line with social marketing’s customer orientation criteria, brands should be based on detailed ‘insight’ into the benefits to individuals over those of competing behaviours. For a brand to succeed in building strong relationships branding should elicit a value proposition\textsuperscript{viii} where benefits must be perceived as credible, believable and desirable to the target audience.

- The degree to which the consumer feels bonded to the brand depends on how closely they feel it fits their perceived self image.\textsuperscript{ix} Brand images that reflect and enhance the self image may more effectively challenge competing behaviours than functional benefits (as previously used in many public health awareness campaigns) would alone.\textsuperscript{vii}

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