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AAD 630 Research Methods

Research Techniques

Social Marketing

In starting the nebulous task of determining research methods for my upcoming research project, I am faced with the challenge of defining what it is that I am actually interested in researching. I find it an extreme challenge to determine which research techniques could be applicable to my emerging interests, when I'm not entirely sure what those interests even are at this point. As it stands right now, I feel pulled in two separate directions with my initial research topic ideas.

Currently, I am interested in the intersection between museums and their use of technology, specifically in how it relates to the visitor's authentic engagement with museum exhibits. I am intrigued at how technology, especially portable technology (i.e. cell phones and tablets) and social media affect the lens in which visitors engage with museums. However, I am also interested in the ways that technology has increased the accessibility of information, and how the internet has become a third space learning environment rather than just a tool for educational purposes and informational sharing. I feel as though this project would be best approached through in-depth case study analyses, or also through an evaluative approach.

Aside from my interests in technology, accessibility, and authentic engagement, I am also interested in developing an in-depth marketing strategy for the Stripped Strong art project, spearheaded by Melissa Brooke DeHart. This project is based on victims of sexual, social, and domestic abuse, by taking one sentence from their story, most often something that had been said

to them from their abuser, and paint the phrase on their bodies. Next, DeHart will take photos of the models with their message, but then take photos of the models as the wash away the phrase. Lastly, DeHart will take photos of the models as they stand strong, having been symbolically cleansed the the hurtful words that they have carried inside of them from the past. The idea of this project is to break the social taboos of assault and rape culture, as well as offer a level of personal and individual healing to the participants.

In the Stripped Strong project, I am interested in developing a working research project within the framework of an Action-Oriented process. This could also be addressed through the use of case study analyses, and literature reviews on similar activist projects of this scope and scale.

Literary Analysis

When performing preliminary research for these topics, I came across the article titled *Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change* by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman (1971). In this article, Kotler and Zaltman delve into the delineation between social marketing and social advertising. Although this article was written in 1971, there are still key elements within their discussion that are applicable to the Stripped Strong efforts.

The beginning of the article goes into a brief overview of differentiating sales versus marketing. In the opening paragraph, Kotler and Zaltman state that "...sellers of commodities... are generally effective, while 'sellers' of social causes are generally ineffective" (p. 3). The article goes on to address that the social behavior patterns of the general public react differently to social causes than they would in consumer behavioral patterns. As advocated for social

change, we set ourselves up for failure if we attempt to promote our social efforts to our targeted audiences as we would as if we were selling a product.

Social advocacy is not something that can be promoted in the same ways that one would sell soap (Kotler & Zaltman p.3). Marketing is the concept of listening to the needs of our targeted audience, and developing products to satisfy those needs. In reference to the article, Kotler and Zaltman reference the work of Lazarsfeld and Merton's analysis for social advertising and the limitations that it possesses. In order for social marketing to be successful, it must also meet at least one of the following requirements: monopolization, canalization, or supplementation .

Monopolization requires the social advocacy efforts to remain unopposed by other conflicting opinions or efforts. In other words, there must be a general consensus that the cause is worth fighting for, and that does not allow any room for opposition. Canalization requires the opinions not to be changed or altered, but for the directives to be rerouted towards a specific cause. Supplementation requires the efforts of the cause or campaign to be followed up by additional efforts such as face-to-face interactions (as cited in Kotler & Zaltman, 1971, p. 6).

The article also goes on to reference the analysis work of Wiebe regarding the effectiveness of the social cause and the audience member's experience with the cause in relation to the force of the campaign, the direction, the mechanism, the adequacy and compatibility, and the distance (as cited in Kotler & Zaltman, 1971, p. 6). Wiebe argues that the overall success of any given campaign will be directly affected by the these factors. For example, if there is not a proper mechanism to promote the message of the campaigning efforts, the message will not have

the same impact as it would as if those mechanisms were in place. If the distance between the cause and the targeted audience is too great, then the success of the cause will also be affected.

The success of any given marketing campaign is also addressed with in this article. A successful marketing strategy must also address the following: "the right *product* backed by the right *promotion* and put in the right *place* at the right *price*" (p. 7). Determining these factors is a challenge that all marketing strategies face. However, when marketing for social change other factors must be taken into account.

Data Collection

As of this moment, I feel compelled to continue my potential research towards the efforts of the Stripped Strong Art Project. Data collection for this feels rather daunting, as there are so many factors that will play into the success of the project. On a practical level, one issue that requires addressing is the factor of funding. Questions that I would like to address on this matter are:

- Are there grants available for this type of project?
- What are other fundraising opportunities that would allow for adequate promotion and exposure of this project?
- What do we do if this project is financially unviable?

As for the social element, I would like to address the following questions:

- What is the mission of Stripped Strong? What is it *exactly* that we hope to achieve for ourselves as artists, but also as community members, for our viewers, and our participants?
- How will this project contribute to the art community at large?

For data collection, I would like to focus my efforts on viewing other projects of this scope and scale to see what their marketing efforts were, what was affective, and what had room for improvement. I would also like to conduct interviews on the participating models to see what their emotional process is, and how it was affected in participating in the project.

References

Kotler, P., & Zaltman, G. (1971). Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change. *Journal of Marketing, 35*, 3-12. Retrieved February 11, 2015, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1249783.