Fear appeals in social marketing

An explorative study on how fear appeals succeed in bringing about behaviour change and what are the consequences of their frequent use in social marketing

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, achieving and maintaining desirable social change is more challenging than ever due to the rapidly changing technologies witnessed all over the world. Physical inactivity as a result of labour saving devices or computer-driven home entertaining systems \(^1\) is one of the many public health issues with serious consequences for health of the individual. Moreover, companies such as McDonald’s, KFC or Coca-Cola, known for their harmful products, have now entered even the remotest and poorest markets, contributing to the spread of this health-threatening condition.

Apart from public health, other social issues in the area of safety, the environment and community involvement are in need of social marketing efforts aimed at delivering a positive benefit for the society. Social marketing, together with other factors that positively affect social change (e.g. laws, public policies) have been used for over a quarter of century to help reduce tobacco use, decrease infant mortality, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, decrease littering etc.

Since its early stages, social marketing has been viewed as an effective way to persuade people to voluntarily adopt desired behaviours for issues that may require more than just stating the facts. The marketing principles and techniques involved are similar to those private companies use to sell their products: a consumer-oriented approach, market research and a systematic process for developing a marketing program. \(^2\) Yet a key characteristic that distinguishes social marketing from commercial marketing is the type of product sold - in the case of social marketing, the marketing process is used to sell a desired behaviour, while in commercial marketing it is aimed at selling goods and services.

However, selling a desired behaviour is far more challenging than selling an actual product or service: it involves communication of information rather than promotion of products. Consequently, deciding on messages, principles of communication and persuasion are debatably more important in social marketing than in commercial marketing.

There is a variety of persuasive mechanisms advertisers can decide on: from negative forms of appeal (fear, pity, guilt) to more positive ones such as humour, patriotism, warmth, ingratiation or

\(^{1}\) Donovan & Henley, 2003: 1
\(^{2}\) Weinrich, 2011: 4
even sex. These motivational appeals are external inducements used to increase an individual’s will to do something, in this case to accept and follow the promoted behaviour.

This thesis will specifically address one motivational appeal: fear appeal. Health promotion and social marketing campaigns have extensively made use of this tactic, which is based on a behavioural learning theory: the content of the message arouses a sense of fear, which is reduced only if the individual adopts the recommended behaviour. As it will be seen throughout this report, fear appeals are common in health areas, particularly dealing with drugs and tobacco addiction, road safety, energy conservation, recycling, fire and crime control.

Despite the extensive use, there is some disagreement on the efficacy of fear appeals. Researchers have not concluded whether less or more fear is better in increasing ad interest, involvement, recall and persuasiveness. Instead they found that the success or failure of a fear appeal is vastly dependent on the target audience’s evaluation of the two aspects of the message: perceived threat (the susceptibility of the person to the threat together with the severity of the threat) and perceived efficacy (the ability of an individual to perform the action).

The use of fear appeals is a highly controversial issue; it has been criticized as being unethical, manipulative, exploitative, eliciting unintended responses from individuals and exposing viewers to offensive images. Moreover, theorists suggest that arousing fear may even have the opposite effect, especially when used to persuade people to abandon on anxiety-soothing behaviours such as smoking, overeating, drug and alcohol abuse.

This thesis highlights these critical aspects in an overview of various models of persuasive communication processes. Moreover, it is aimed at answering not whether fear appeals can be effective, but rather when and for whom fear appeals are effective.

1.2. Problem statement

As mentioned earlier, fear appeals are used quite often in social marketing campaigns, not always to good effect. Social marketers believe that they will succeed in getting people to take action if

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1 Donovan & Henley, 2003: 78
2 Lennon, Rentfro & O’Leary, 2010: 97
3 Henley & Donovan, 1999
they try to instil the fear of what might happen if you do not support their causes. Yet, when people are confronted with this type of messages, they will respond either by taking preventive action to deal with the threat or controlling themselves by denial or avoidance of the issue. Many theorists claim that fear appeals are often ineffective, but if research shows that the target audience responds to this approach, fear-based appeals might be the best option.

In relation to this, a problem statement has been formulated and will be answered throughout the thesis:

“When and under what circumstances should social marketing practitioners make use of threat appeals in social marketing communications?”

However, several sub-questions must also be taken into consideration and resolved in order to come up with a solution to the above-mentioned problem statement.

- How do fear appeals work?
- To what type of behaviour change is fear appeal more suited for?
- What are the consequences of arousing fear in social marketing?
- What ethical considerations should be considered?
- What are the alternatives of fear appeals?

1.3. Delimitations

With regards to this thesis, there are several different perspectives that might be taken into consideration, yet due to the limited amount of space, a strong emphasis will be put on communication and persuasion aspects. Other delimitations of this report will be mentioned as it follows.

First of all, developing a communication strategy (the last component of the Marketing Mix in the social marketing plan) is a process that should cover discussions regarding messages, messengers, creative strategy and communication channels; however only parts of the creative strategy will be explored throughout this thesis (the content of the intended, desired messages seen from a

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6 http://blog.social-marketing.com/2006/06/making-fear-based-campaigns-work.html
persuasion perspective). Additionally, other parts of the planning process such as selecting target markets or establishing budgets will not be accounted for.

Secondly, the fields of social marketing and persuasion have been investigated from numerous perspectives over the past decades, yet only relevant researchers have been selected so as to properly address the problem statement mentioned in the previous section.

Thirdly, the content of this report will provide a better understanding regarding negative emotional appeals; hence the positive emotional appeals will not be comprehensively discussed. The latter will only be mentioned in the section comprising the alternatives of fear appeals. Also, theory on emotional appeals will not include other approaches such as rhetoric or discourse analysis.

Last but not least, the case study analysis concentrates on the appeals in the verbal/written elements of the selected materials and ignores elements such as visuals, colours, actors etc. even though they are equally important in capturing the attention of the target audience.

### 1.4. Scientific method

This thesis will primarily be based on the interpretation of information and research concerning the principles of communication and persuasion appeals in the field of social marketing. In addition, it analyses the use of the aforementioned concepts in relation to CDC’s (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) “Tips from former smokers” campaign and provides a set of recommendations with regards to the campaign.

Consequently, since this thesis will seek to reveal the meaning and gain an in-depth understanding of the academic material in the field, a hermeneutical approach will be taken into account. The phenomenon of understanding in this case goes beyond mere textual and visual analysis; hence it gives to hermeneutics a potentially broad significance with regards to the project.

In Gadamer’s view, the process of coming-to-understand, is “not a matter of unprejudiced appropriation of an object such as a text”, rather an alignment of one’s own ‘horizon’ of meanings and expectations with that of the other person’s text. Accordingly, a horizon of meanings created

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7 Skinner, 1985: 31
during the Social Marketing course will be aligned with those of various social marketing theorists such as Philip Kotler, Nancy R. Lee, Rob Donovan, Nadine Henley etc.

On the other hand, hermeneutics is also concerned with the interpretation of texts. Palmer (1969) distinguishes between two types of interpretation: grammatical and psychological. The grammatical interpretation is more about the work itself in relation to language, both in the structure of the sentences and in the interacting parts. However this is not the case. In this thesis the process of interpreting is about really understanding what the authors were thinking and feeling when writing about the field of social marketing. By re-experiencing the mental processes of the author, the reader will be able to interpret the research to its full potential, but also acknowledge the different points of view regarding the matter at hand.

This last statement is in connection with another concept discussed by Palmer (1969): the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle refers to the idea that the interpreter will gain an in-depth understanding of the subject only through continuous interpretation of the individual parts and the whole. Therefore this thesis will include different parts from the discipline of social marketing and persuasion. At first, the concept of social marketing, communication and persuasion strategies, emotional appeals and ethics will be individually discussed so as to one could relate them afterwards to the “Tips from former smokers” case, giving a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

### 1.5. Method and structure

In order to answer the problem statement, this thesis includes information and viewpoints from a number of different researchers, as well as a description, evaluation and discussion of theory with regards to the “Tips from former smokers” campaign.

The thesis will be divided into four large sections: introduction, theoretical background, case study analysis and conclusion, as seen in the figure below, each section contributing to the overall understanding of the thesis.

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8 Palmer, 1969: 89
9 Palmer, 1969: 87
The first two sections serve as a base of understanding, while the analysis will show a realistic view on the different theories initially discussed.

“Theoretical framework” consists of six subsections. The first subsection introduces the field of social marketing and attempts to provide a valid overview of the social marketing principles, which later on will be useful in analysing the campaign materials. The most important theorists reviewed here are Donovan, Henley, Kotler and Lee. The second subsection comprises two cognitive processing models which explain how cognitive processing of messages influences persuasion. The section is based on a broad academic framework however the predominant theories are those developed by Petty, Cacioppo, Rossiter & Percy. The third subsection elaborates on fear appeals by bringing to the table the extended parallel process model and protection motivation theory. These theories are among the best theories explaining how fear appeals work. Again, many
researchers argued on this subject, yet, Gass & Seiter, Williams and Conner will be cited the most, as their approach seemed the most comprehensive. The last sections deals with ethical concerns raised by the use of fear appeals, unintended consequences of arousing fear in social marketing as well as the alternatives available at hand. The reason why special attention is given to fear appeals is because studies indicated that much of social marketing relies on fear arousal to persuade people to change and 100 out of 127 public service announcements (PSAs) in Australia for instance, used fear appeals.  

The purpose of section 3 is to discuss the theoretical background in relation to the “Tips from former smokers” videos and printed materials, seen in the appendixes. This analysis adds value to the overall report as mere theories and hypotheses may seem worthless without a practical example where they have been employed.

The thesis will conclude with section 4 where the most prevalent findings will be presented.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The field of social marketing

Over the past decades, social marketing has evolved from a ground-breaking idea to a full standing discipline, recognized as an effective approach for changing behaviour. Many non-profit and government organizations such as the National Center for Health Marketing or the United Kingdom’s National Social Marketing Center turn to the field of social marketing in order to encourage behaviours which not only ensure the wellbeing of the individual but also the wellbeing of the many. This approach should always be the first option professionals and policymakers consider before developing other more coercive methods that would eventually lead to a society in which liberty and free choice no longer exists.

Kotler and Zaltman firstly defined social marketing in 1971 as the application of principles and tools of marketing to achieve socially desirable goals which benefit the society as a whole rather
than for profit or other organizational purposes. In accordance with, Donovan & Henley (2003) come up with a more precise delineation in which social marketing is “the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary or involuntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve the welfare of individuals and society.” Their approach to the field is more satisfactory as they see the social marketing not just focusing on individual voluntary behaviour change, but also taking into consideration the social, economic and environmental factors that influence health behaviours (e.g.: workplace, education, transport etc.).

Given this overview, social marketing is still a concept misunderstood by many. Academics and practitioners tend to refer to social marketing as all about “behaviour change”. Additionally, sometimes prevention of behaviour is the only goal in many social marketing campaigns all over the world. Andreasen (2006) makes an interesting point with regards to this matter and suggests the use of “behavioural influence”, as a more suitable term when referring to social marketing.

Another aspect which contributes to the misunderstanding of social marketing is its most recent “positioning”: lately, many observers see social marketing as a downstream approach to social change and perceive it as a method used in influencing only people with “bad behaviours” – smoking, taking drugs, etc. However, this underestimates social marketing’s potential of making a social problem disappear. Social marketing must re-position itself as a discipline which targets other audiences besides “problem people”. Under these circumstances, designing a communication strategy strongly enough to influence people’s behaviour is even more challenging.

However, to set the stage for the development of communication strategies, an overview of the social marketing principles will be given in the following section, comprising the social marketing planning primer and the 4Ps. Also, as mentioned in the introduction, this section will later on be useful in gaining a better understanding of the “Tips from former smokers” campaign.

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11 Donovan & Henley, 2003: 5
12 Donovan & Henley, 2003: 6
13 Andreasen, 2006: vii
14 Andreasen, 2006: vii
2.1.1. The marketing planning primer

The social marketing plan outlined below is similar to those created for profit seeking organizations, however three aspects are slightly different from the original ones. In contrast to a commercial marketing plan, target markets in social marketing are selected prior to establishing objectives and goals, competition is identified later when audience research is conducted and goals are the quantifiable measures of the plan, whereas in commercial marketing goals are the overall purpose of the plan.\textsuperscript{15}

According to Kotler et. al. (2008), social marketing planning consists of 10 steps:

- **Step #1.** Describe the Background, Purpose and Focus for the Planning Effort
- **Step #2.** Conduct a Situation Analysis
- **Step #3.** Select and Describe the Target Market
- **Step #4.** Set Marketing Objectives and Goals (Behaviour, Knowledge, Beliefs)
- **Step #5.** Identify Audience Barriers, Benefits and the Competition
- **Step #6.** Write a Positioning Statement
- **Step #7.** Develop a Strategic Marketing Mix (The 4Ps): Product, Price, Place, and Promotion
- **Step #8.** Determine an Evaluation Plan
- **Step #9.** Establish a Campaign Budget
- **Step #10.** Outline an Implementation Plan

The process may seem sequential at a first glance, however from personal experience it is relatively iterative: in order to complete the plan, one may have to go back one step and make adjustments.

\textsuperscript{15} Kotler & Lee, 2008:34-35
This report is primarily concerned with the step concerning communication strategies – the 4th in step 7: promotion. Once social practitioners have developed a product, established prices and distribution channels, the next step is to create promotions – persuasive communications which according to Kotler et. al. (2002) should highlight the following:

- Product benefits, features, and associated tangible objects and services;
- Pricing strategies, including an emphasis on value compared to competition, as well as incentives, rewards or recognition if any;
- Place components as a point of access.\(^\text{16}\)

Developing communication strategies involves decisions on two major elements: creating messages and selecting media. Even so, selecting media, as well as other part of the social marketing primer (mapping the environment, selecting target audience, objectives and goals and managing the social marketing programme) are not a matter of interest throughout this report, therefore my attention will now turn to the message execution strategies - the four elements that could be considered: rational, emotional, moral and non-verbal elements.\(^\text{17}\)

Theorists suggest that successful communications are those that will capture the attention of the target audience and persuade them to adopt the desired behaviour\(^\text{18}\). Under this premise, the social practitioner must consider and choose from the elements mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Firstly, decisions regarding rational elements are made in relation to one-sided vs. two-sided messages. One-sided messages usually present a major benefit and are suitable for people who are favourable towards an idea and have a low level of education. On the other hand, two-sided messages address both benefits and drawbacks and are aimed at highly educated people, without a predisposition to the product.

Secondly, when deciding on emotional elements, social marketers must consider whether to use negative messages designed to provoke a feeling of fear, guilt or shame or positive messages aimed at causing a sense of humour, love, pride or joy. An audience is much more likely to pay

\(^{16}\) Kotler et. al., 2002: 264
\(^{17}\) Kotler et. al., 2002: 268
\(^{18}\) Kotler et. al., 2002: 268
attention and remember a communication if people’s emotions are interlinked with the message. As humans, we emotionally react to a person’s personal story who managed for instance to overcome the challenges of adopting certain behaviours or sadly, is negatively affected by a health problem. Numerous studies proved that stories enhance an emotional response from an audience and gets them to take action, while statistics only activate the individuals’ analytical thinking. These aspects will be discussed later on, but for now it must be mentioned that it is important to determine to which appeals our target audience is more prone to respond to.

Last but not least, moral elements appeal to the audiences’ own beliefs of what is right and appropriate, while nonverbal elements consist of actual visual aspects of the communications: graphics, symbols, colours etc. It can be seen throughout the media that most of the social marketing campaigns use several of these elements, however only one dominant approach is recalled later on.\(^\text{19}\)

### 2.1.2. The marketing mix

Like in traditional marketing, social marketing practitioners are also selling something, only this time the product is a certain behaviour. They concentrate on influencing behaviours that will improve health, prevent injuries, protect the environment and contribute to communities.\(^\text{20}\) Even so, the primary focus is on the consumer – discovering people’s needs and wants. The planning process described above takes this aspect into account by addressing the elements of the well-known “Marketing Mix”: Product, Price, Place and Promotion (4Ps).

According Kotler & Lee (2008), the social marketing “product” consists of three levels: the core product – benefits the target audience expects in return after adopting the desired behaviour, the actual product (the desired behaviour) and the augmented product: additional items/services that will support the promoted behaviour.\(^\text{21}\) Furthermore, Weinrich (2011) states that for a product to be worthwhile, people must first perceive that they have a problem and that product is the solution for the problem.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^{19}\) Kotler et. al., 2002: 296
\(^{20}\) Kotler & Lee, 2008: 7
\(^{21}\) Kotler & Lee, 2008: 206
\(^{22}\) Weinrich, 2011: 10
“Price” refers to the costs the target audience associates with adopting the new behaviour. Costs may be monetary or nonmonetary in nature; however, it is important that social practitioners decrease the costs for the desired behaviour, while in the same time, increase benefits for the desired behaviour as well as the costs for the competing behaviour. In setting the price, marketers must also overcome audiences’ “price sensitivity” by increasing the perceptions of quality and offering a sense of dignity to the transaction.\(^{23}\)

Place, the third “P”, consists of channels and physical distribution. It is the place where individuals will perform the desired behaviour, acquire any related tangible objects and receive any associated products. Therefore, the marketer’s job is to make it as accessible and identifiable as possible so that the audience will be free from any problems related to performing the promoted behaviour (e.g. feeling embarrassed when going for an HIV test or breast cancer screening).

Finally the last “P”, promotion, is persuasive communications designed and delivered to motivate the individual to take action. It can range from the integrated use of advertising, public relations, promotions, to personal selling and entertainment vehicles. It consists of four major components as mentioned earlier in the previous section – messages, messengers, creative strategy and communication channels, all useful in making sure the target audience knows about the offer, believes they will experience the stated benefits.\(^{24}\)

2.2. Cognitive processing model for persuasion

The following section attempts to describe the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), a cognitive processing model very helpful in clarifying how cognitive processing of messages explains persuasion. The model highlights some of the most important aspects social marketers should take into consideration when designing the content of a message: the audience’s attitude towards the issue, their interest in the matter, as well as their ability to process the information and personal involvement.

\(^{23}\) Kotler & Lee, 2008: 239
\(^{24}\) Kotler & Lee, 2008: 287
2.2.1. The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion

The ELM is defined by theorists as an information processing theory of persuasion which provides an integrative framework for understanding the antecedents and consequences of attitude change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Petty, Heesacker & Hughes, 1997). Attitudes can be defined as people’s own evaluations in regard to others, themselves, tangible and intangible objects. Their scope is to guide people’s actions; therefore, it is important to change disagreeable attitudes so as to achieve more desirable behavioural outcomes.

Furthermore, researchers suggest that apart from the target audience’s initial attitudes, other factors determine people’s behaviour. They may be their involvement or level of interest with regards to the matter at hand or feelings of self-efficacy to process the information given. Additionally, Petty, Heesacker & Hughes (1997) mention perceptions of the attitudes of others and prior habits and behaviours as also related to attitudes (p. 108).

ELM provides a comprehensive framework for understanding all of the above mentioned processes underlying attitude change. Petty & Cacioppo concluded in 1986 that the ELM emerged from their attempts to account for the differential persistence of communication-induced attitude change and many of their different empirical findings and theories in the field emphasize two distinct routes to persuasion: a central route and a peripheral route.

The central route

Petty & Cacioppo state that the central route involves extensive consideration of the arguments in the message. In other words, the individual, under this route, is actually thinking about the message presented and, as a consequence, develops a favourable and/or unfavourable reaction to it. However, in order for this route to be followed, several conditions must be fulfilled.

First of all, as seen in Appendix 1, the individual must be motivated to process information. One variable which affects a person’s motivation is personal relevance to the subject: the greater the relevance and interest the target audience shows in the message, the higher the chances he/she

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25 Donovan & Henley, 2003: 70
will elaborate on the message.\textsuperscript{26} Another variable is the person’s need for cognition; generally, people who enjoy thinking tend to form attitudes based on arguments, hence, they have a predisposition towards a central route to persuasion.

Secondly, it has been observed that an individual’s ability to process information is also relevant for the central route to be taken. Variables affecting this aspect such as distraction in the persuasion context, repetition or knowledge to understand the content of the message can enhance or reduce argument scrutiny.\textsuperscript{27} Last but not least, it has been suggested that aspects such as text, words, written material used in the message are also important in the central route to persuasion.

All in all, if an individual satisfies the afore-mentioned conditions, a “well-articulated, readily accessible and integrated” attitude will be generated.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{The peripheral route}

In contrast to the central route, Morris et. al. (2005) define the peripheral route as the path taken when the content of the message has little or no relevance to the receiver. In this case the individual relies on so-called “heuristic” cues (e.g. seals of approval, expert opinions, number of arguments/statistics presented) but he/she is also influenced by colour use, people/lifestyle depiction, visuals etc. (p. 81). The peripheral route may prove its effectiveness in achieving short-term outcomes, however the attitudes formed via the central route are considered as more persistent and resistant to change.

\textbf{2.3. Motivations and emotions in social marketing}

The proposed conceptual framework here is based on Rossiter and Percy’s model of motivations, used in advertising. The model was later on adapted to the health promotion area by Donovan and his colleagues because of its emphasis on identifying the appropriate motivations for the target groups as the basis for attitude and subsequent behaviour change.\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Morris, Woo & Singh, 2005: 81
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Petty & Cacioppo, 1986: 5 – \textit{Table 1-1 “Postulates of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion}
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Petty, Heesacker & Hughes, 1997: 109
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Donovan & Henley, 2003: 103
\end{itemize}
In their view, the consumer decision making can be classified in terms of the level of involvement with the decision (high/low) and the nature of the primary motivations driving the decision (positive/negative). Involvement depends on the degree of perceived risk in making the wrong decision: high involvement is conditioned by the individuals’ efforts in gathering information so as to reduce the risk of making a wrong decision while low involvement involves a try-it-and-see attitude.\textsuperscript{30} These resemble Petty & Cacciopo’s central and peripheral routes discussed previously in an earlier section, therefore will no longer be a matter of interest.

On the other hand, motivations for behaviour largely determine the message strategy and can be classified as positive (the goal is drive induction), or negative (the goal is drive reduction). Furthermore, the goal for positive motivations is to achieve an above ‘normal’ state while conversely, the goal for negative motivations is to remove or avoid a negative experience and return to normal.\textsuperscript{31} The energising component behind these motivations is emotion. As seen in Table 1, each motivation has its own relevant emotion and it is very important that social marketers portray the correct emotion. Moreover, Donovan & Henley (2008) further suggest that it is also important the sequence of emotions, not just the arousal of single emotions.

Clearly, the model delineates for the first time throughout this thesis between positive and negative appeals and emphasizes the role of emotion in message strategy. Rossiter-Percy model will be applied later on during the case study analysis since it will serve as a theoretical basis for the discussion regarding the type of emotions the videos/printed materials in question are expected to provoke.

\textsuperscript{30} Donovan & Henley, 2003: 103
\textsuperscript{31} Donovan & Henley, 2003: 103
Negative motives | Emotional sequence
---|---
1. Problem removal | Annoyed > relieved
2. Problem avoidance | Fearful > relaxed
3. Incomplete satisfaction | Disappointed > optimistic
4. Mixed approach-avoidance | Conflicted > reassured
5. Normal depletion | Mildly annoyed > content

Positive motives emotional sequence | Emotional sequence
---|---
6. Sensory gratification | Dull (or neutral) > joyful
7. Intellectual stimulation/mastery | Bored (or neutral) > excited
8. Social approval | Naive (or neutral) > competent
9. Social conformity | Apprehensive (or neutral) > flattered
10. Self-approval | Indecisive (or neutral) > belonging

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<th>Emotional sequence</th>
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<td>Conflict (or neutral) &gt; serene, confident</td>
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Table 1: Rossiter & Percy’s hypothesised relationships linking emotions to motivations (Donovan & Henley, 2008: 107)

2.4. FEAR APPEALS

Evidently, fear appeals are built upon fear—“a distressing emotion aroused by impeding danger, evil pail, whether the threat is real or imagined". Since the beginnings of mankind, this emotional state has evolved as a survival mechanism to protect us, humans, from life-threatening situations and due to the circuits in our brain, fear is often times more powerful than reason.33

According to Donovan & Henley (2003), there are two types of fear: anticipatory and inhibitory. The former is elicited by exposure to vivid, horrible images, while the latter results from arousing the individual’s anticipation of what is likely to happen if they ignore the recommended course of action.34 It has not been concluded whether one is more appropriate than the other, however theorists suggest that health communicators should arouse anticipatory rather than inhibitory fear since they must establish a link between the threat presented and the person’s willingness to continue the “bad behaviour”.

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32 [www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/fear](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/fear)
33 Williams, 2011: 1
34 Donovan & Henley, 2003: 79
There is no agreement regarding whether a message can be accounted for as a fear appeal, however Kim Witte, an important author in this area, defined fear appeals as “persuasive messages that arouse fear by depicting a personally relevant and significant threat, followed by a description of feasible recommendations for deterring the threat”. From his definition it can be concluded that fear appeals are used only for addressing issues personally relevant to the individual such as smoking, AIDS, safe sex, immunization however, this approach was also used in raising awareness of societal issues such as women abuse or climate change.

As it will be seen in the following sections, the use of fear appeals is only likely to work under particular circumstances involving the identification of specific behaviour which successfully reduce the fear, and as Soames also suggests this principle basically requires the assessment of the level of fear aroused, and the level of fear reduction achieved by the prescribed action, before the campaign is implemented.36

2.4.1. How fear appeals work: theoretical framework & hypotheses

When developing messages that can produce lasting positive effects on the target audience, one must understand theories of how fear appeals work and successively how behaviour change occurs. As Weinrich (2011) suggests, behaviour change may seem like an easy process with two alternatives: either someone engages in a behaviour or not (p. 105). However, after taking a look at the studies done so far (Pelsmacker, 2011; Block & Heller, 1995; Roser 1995), it can be concluded that adopting behaviour is a process highly dependent of numerous variables. Thus, the following section will elaborate on the theoretical framework and hypothesis behind these notions.

2.4.1.1. The extended parallel process model (EPPM)

There are numerous models explaining how fear appeals work, however Gass & Seiter (2011) consider Kim Witte’s extended parallel process model (EPPM) among the best.37 EPPM is a dual-process based on a parallel process model (PPM) originally developed by Leventhal in 1970.

35 Gore, Madhavan, Curry, McClurg et.al., 1998: 34
36 Soames, 1988: 166
37 Gass & Seiter, 2011: 273
To begin with, PPM claimed a positive and linear relationship between the emotional response of fear and persuasion.\(^{38}\) Yet if fear appeals are too strong or too weak, individuals may avoid the message or simply just ignore it. Consequently, Witte strengthened this theory and argued in his EPPM that fear must be re-incorporated as a central variable, while in the same time take into consideration the relationship between threat and efficacy.

Theoretically, the perceived threat leads to either danger control or fear control.\(^{39}\) In other words, assuming the individual feels threatened by the message, he/she could focus on the solution (workable, practical remedies aimed at reducing the danger) and thereby trigger danger control. In contrast, if the evoked fear is too high, the person might resort to fear control (defensive avoidance, panic) which leads to counterproductive results.

As seen in Appendix 2, the EPPM also addresses the perceived effectiveness of a fear appeal, through the concept of perceived efficacy. It is an important aspect in activating the more productive means of dealing with a fear appeal, danger control. In this situation, the receiver must consider that the consequences triggered by the fear appeal can be avoided through effective and reasonable recommendations. In scientific terms, these aspects are also known as response efficacy and self-efficacy.

To cut a long story short, for a fear appeal to achieve its purpose, it must generate strong perceptions of fear, followed by strong perceptions of efficacy with regard to the recommended behaviour.

As an extension to the EPPM, Williams (2011) also reminded how an individual’s level of anxiety influences both the threat and the efficacy of the recommended behaviour.\(^{40}\) Seemingly, researchers discovered that a person’s characteristic level of anxiety correlated with his/hers defensive avoidance. Even though anxiety may not influence directly one’s attitudes, intentions or behaviour, the more susceptible and anxious a person feels the better. This issue will also be addressed in a later section of this report as the use of fear appeals is open to question due to the possible negative social effects of anxiety stimulation.

\(^{38}\) Williams, 2012: 7
\(^{39}\) Pelsmaker et.al., 2011:173
\(^{40}\) Williams, 2011: 8
Protection motivation theory (PMT) was developed by Rogers in 1975 as a framework useful in understanding the impact of fear appeals. In his first attempt to identify the key variables in fear appeals, Rogers based his work on a previous study (Hovland et al., 1953) which proposed that there are three main stimulus variables in a fear appeal:

a) The severity of the event (seriousness);

b) The probability of event occurrence, if no preventive measures are taken;

c) The efficacy of recommendations to reduce or eliminate the harmful event.\textsuperscript{41}

At first, Rogers included these variables in his formulation of PMT and further suggested that each variable initiates a certain corresponding cognitive process. Thus, as seen in Appendix 3, the impact of a fear appeal is mediated by perceived severity, vulnerability, and response efficacy, which in turn influence the intention to follow the behavioural advice, or in more scientific terms, initiate the protection motivation.

Later on, in a revised version of PMT, Rogers also observed the importance of variables such as observational learning, past experiences and personality in initiating cognitive processes. Additionally, he extended the model by focusing on perceptions of the rewards of maladaptive responses, self-efficacy and response costs which intervene in threat appraisal and coping appraisal.

PMT is therefore similar to the EPPM discussed in previous paragraphs; however it adds value to it by taking into consideration the social cognitive variables underlying health protective behaviour.\textsuperscript{42} How these variables influence an individual’s intention to adopt the recommended behaviour is discussed below.

Firstly, in the left part of the PMT (see Appendix 3), it can be observed that the probability of maladaptive behaviours (e.g. denial, avoidance) is influenced by factors fundamental to threat appraisal. Conner (2005) states that while an individual’s perceptions of severity and their

\textsuperscript{41} Conner, 2005: 82

\textsuperscript{42} Conner, 2005: 87
vulnerability to the threat obstruct maladaptive behaviours, intrinsic (e.g. pleasure) and extrinsic (e.g. social approval) factors increase the probability of maladaptive responses. (p. 83)

Secondly, in the right part of the model, coping appraisal is depicted as a process conditioned by the responses available to the individual. In turn, the probability of adaptive responses is strengthened by both the belief that the suggested behaviour will reduce the threat (response efficacy) and the belief that one is capable of following the recommendations (self-efficacy). On the other hand, response costs or barriers (e.g. availability of resources) inhibit one’s will to adopt the behaviour.

2.4.2. Alternatives to fear appeals

Social marketing campaigns often use fear appeals in an attempt to encourage certain behaviours, with varying degrees of success. While much is known about fear appeals within the marketing context, other negative emotional appeals such as guilt or shame or positive emotional appeals have not been sufficiently studied, yet they hold great potential in affecting attitude, and subsequently, behavioural change.

In commercial marketing for example, the manufacturers realized the effectiveness of guilt appeals in promoting weight loss services, exercise equipment and fat-free products while trying to keep up with the latest interests in health and well-being. Why shouldn’t road safety and smoking cessation campaigns known for their shocking, fear-inducing ads reposition themselves and approach other means of persuasion apart from fear?

According to Huhmann & Brotherton (1997), guilt is one of the most common negative emotions across cultures and has been defined as “an emotional state involving penitence, remorse, self-blame, and self-punishment experienced after committing a violation or contemplating a future violation of internalized standards of proper behaviour” (p. 36). Many times, people misunderstood the differences between the negative emotions of shame, fear, regret and guilt because they all involve a negative consequence as a result of an individual’s choice.

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43 Coulter & Pinto, 1995: 697
At a glance, guilt is an experience largely attributed to the self or when internal sanctions are activated. More precisely, it is a function of five factors: unpleasant feelings associated with the negative outcome, perceived responsibility for causing the negative outcome, perceived insufficient justification for one’s actions, perceived violation of values and beliefs about whether the outcome was foreseeable or preventable.\(^{44}\) Like in the case of fear appeals, an individual can take two distinct paths to eliminate the feelings of guilt: guilt reduction or guilt avoidance. To conclude with, there are no empirical studies to help predict whether guilt facilitates or undermines more the act of persuasion or if it is more effective than fear or other emotional appeals, however guilt-appeal is a persuasive tool that should not be neglected.

There is another option that might help to draw new attention to an issue when the effect of fear appeal has diminished: positive appeal, including humour, joy, inspiration, empathy, compassion. According to Lewis et. al. (2006), the introduction of more appeals to positive emotions such as humour might help to renew interest in messages, especially for persons who might have considered themselves as being overly familiar with a campaign.\(^{45}\)

All in all, when there is a possibility for fear appeals to induce maladaptive behaviours, social marketing experts should consider the potential persuasiveness of other emotional appeals playing on guilt, joy, or inspiration.

### 2.4.3. Fear appeals - Ethical considerations

So far throughout this report, it has been observed that persuasive communication shaped by fear appeals can as function as a positive, pro-social tool used to increase public awareness about a variety of social problems such as HIV transmission, drug and alcohol abuse and so on. Yet, even though their use is for the receiver’s own good, fear appeals hold great potential for criticism. Most people confuse this way of persuasion with mere manipulation and as Gass & Seiter (2011) also state, they see it as a one sided approach to communication (p. 349). Consequently, questions such as whether the use of fear appeals is even ethically justified and if so, under what conditions or circumstances or are there any types of emotional appeals more ethically defensible than

\(^{44}\) Block, 2005: 2299  
\(^{45}\) Lewis et.al., 2006: 62
others arise. In an attempt to answer these questions, a number of ethical concerns regarding persuasive strategies will be discussed in the following section.

There are numerous reasons why social marketing practitioners should think twice before using fear appeals. First of all, Gass & Seiter (2011) consider threats as unethical since their effectiveness depends on creating a state of “psychological distress” in receivers (p. 348). Moreover, they also mention that threats tend to ignore status differences in relationships: a relationship of equality between the sender and the receiver is always more ethically defensible.

As seen in section 2.4.1.1. of this thesis, the effectiveness of a fear appeal is also dependent of the morale and self-esteem of the addressee, as the more susceptible the individual is and confident about following the recommended behaviour, the better. However, using threats may diminish these characteristics, which again is ethically questionable.

Last but not least, another reason why fear appeals might not always be ethically appropriate is that on the long run, threats do more harm than good: they disturb the already disturbed - many researchers noticed a culture of fear and anxiety developing over the last decades. Therefore, even if fear appeals proved many times to be highly efficient, they should never be a persuader’s first resort.

Whether playing with people’s emotions is ethically justifiable, is another matter of interest for this report. As mentioned in a previous section, people link logical and rational appeals to messages they agree with, while on the other hand, the messages they disagree with are those employing emotional appeals. There are no studies contradicting the use of emotional appeals, however it has been suggested that emotional appeals should not constitute the only mean of persuasion. Their use should complement sound reasoning and evidence. Another aspect worth taking into consideration is whether positive emotional appeals are more ethical than negative emotional appeals. The truth is, negative appeals always remind the individual of feelings of pity, guilt, while the positive ones are always accounted for as inspiring. While many researchers prefer positive over negative forms of appeal, Gass & Perry (2011) adopt an objective approach, claiming

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46 Gass & Seiter, 2011: 349
47 Gass & Perry, 2011: 352
that both negative and positive appeals should function as useful complements to the use of
evidence (p. 352).

It has been argued that both social marketing and commercial marketers face many similar ethical
problems, however the following paragraphs will further on discuss the distinctive moral
challenges confronted in social marketing. Brenkert (2002) reminds of ethical problems linked to
the ultimate end social marketing promotes, the rationale it offers for achieving those ends and
the effects it may have on its targets (p. 14). The latter will however be discussed in the next
section comprising the unintended consequences of arousing fear in social marketing.

Regarding the ultimate ends social marketing promotes, one particular question comes to mind:
What are the standards by which social problems are identified? Throughout the media numerous
social problems are addressed: from pollution control, drug and alcohol abuse to church
membership, charity donations and public medicine. Nevertheless disputes over whether each of
these issues is actually a social problem arise. Not everyone agrees that for instance female
circumcision (especially in some African countries) is a problem that needs attention. Moreover,
Brenkert argues that social marketers target people who may not believe they suffer from a
problem or deficiency in their welfare; consequently problems are ultimately identified
independently of what people may or may not believe.\footnote{Brenkert, 2002: 16} As such it can be assumed that most of
the social marketing campaigns depend on those people who acknowledge the problems,
subjectively determined by social marketing practitioners.

The rationale social marketing relies when addressing motivational problems necessarily involves
various theories of behaviour change. This approach triggers certain ethical problems though, as
social marketers end up either appealing to one level of moral reasoning or changing the nature of
the moral reasoning involved in social problems.\footnote{Brenkert, 2002: 19} For instance, a theory of behaviour change
(let’s say the theory of planned behaviour) takes into consideration only self-centred moral values
and norms with regards to a certain social problem. Therefore it may not be fully appropriate
when it encounters a range of social problems. Also it does not address the ethical reasoning
required for behavioural changes.
2.4.4. Unintended consequences of arousing fear in social marketing

As mentioned earlier, social marketers employ fear-arousal for the receiver’s own good, however it has been observed that their frequent use may create a sense of helplessness in the audience, especially in those whose anxiety-soothing, addictive behaviour (smoking, drug & alcohol use) is to be corrected. According to Donovan & Henley (1999), helplessness has become an important issue in next millennium’s social marketing, and has been proved to be a leading cause in one of the world’s primary health problems, depression (p. 1). Moreover, it creates a fatalistic thinking (e.g. “when your number is up”, “if it’s going to happen it will happen”) among both targeted and untargeted audiences, and also a predisposition towards acceptance of the threat and failure to engage in other forms of coping (e.g. danger control).

It has been suggested in this report that high levels of perceived efficacy undermine the negative effects of fear arousal: people with high self-efficacy and solution efficacy are likely to adopt the recommended behaviour. Yet people who are addicted to behaviours such as smoking, drug and alcohol use are expected to have low levels of self-efficacy, therefore, arousing fear for this particular audience may have a counterproductive effect.

Apart from these consequences, Hastings et.al. (2004) also state that repeated exposure to fear campaigns has a diminishing effect on the message; in their opinion, it is unlikely that responses to fear-appeals remain static –attitudes are continuously changing over the duration of a campaign.50

At first, a shocking ad may undoubtedly capture the attention of the audience - the question is whether in time it will have the same impact. Repetition leads to habituation, annoyance and an increased tendency for individuals to tune out the message.51 For example, the warnings on cigarette packs the European Union proposed have lost their power to persuade and smokers familiarized themselves with the content over time. All in all, the frequent use of fear appeals in social marketing may have severe consequences of the individual’s well-being, therefore special attention must be given in advance to this emotional appeal.

50 Hastings et.al., 2004: 966
51 Hastings et.al., 2004: 966
3. Case study analysis

3.1. Campaign overview

The first section of the analysis regarding the “Tips from former smokers” social marketing campaign will begin by briefly identifying the social issue addressed: tobacco use.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States and each year approximately 443,000 people die prematurely from smoking or exposure to second-hand smoke. Additionally, 8.6 million suffer from serious illnesses caused by smoking. Despite the numerous information campaigns, other initiatives, and that people are well aware of the dangers of smoking, 16.7% of Americans are still tobacco smokers and each day more than 1000 adolescents become smokers. 52 Smoking is a habit that has serious consequences on the individual’s health, as well as on the people surrounding him/her: husbands, wives, children, family members and friends.

Tobacco use-related illnesses include cancer of lungs, stomach, mouth, oesophagus, pancreas, and kidneys; heart disease; and bronchitis; emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (CODP) 53. Second-hand smoke exposure is as dangerous as smoking, and especially children, can suffer from acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more frequently, asthma attacks. The smoking-related conditions featured in the “Tips from former smokers” campaign are Buerger’s disease, cancer, heart disease and stroke and second-hand smoke and asthma, hence the following paragraphs will briefly describe only these conditions.

According to the information provided by CDC’s website, Buerger’s disease (also known as thromboangiitis obliterans) is a disease which typically affects blood flow to the hand and feet. There, the blood vessels become blocked by blood clots; hence less blood circulates in the affected tissues. As a consequence, in order to avoid pain and gangrenes, amputation is required. Heavy-smokers are the most likely to develop this condition, however it has not been concluded how

52 Euromonitor International: Consumer lifestyles in the US, 2012: 53
53 http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/osh.htm
tobacco use increases the risk for Buerger’s disease. All it is known is that there is no cure and patients diagnosed with this disease must necessarily stop using all tobacco products.\textsuperscript{54}

Cancer is another disease millions of people suffer from these days. There are more than 100 types of cancer, however smoking most likely causes lung cancer, cancer of the larynx and oesophageal cancer. Of course there are other risk factors for cancer such as growing older, family history of cancer or exposing to ionizing radiation, but people can avoid cancer by staying away from risk factors they have under control such as smoking or being exposed to smoke. Dealing with cancer is a continuous struggle: the treatment depends on the type of the cancer, the stage of the disease and can range from surgery, radiation surgery to stem cell transplantation.\textsuperscript{55}

Moving on to heart diseases and strokes, statistics indicate that the most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease, which often leads to heart attacks. Over time, this condition weakens the heart’s muscles and can also cause arrhythmia. Strokes not only cause death or severe disability, but also make the patient unable to swallow, speak or emotionally stable.\textsuperscript{56} Heart diseases are US’s number one cause of death, with more than 600.000 people dying each year. Like in the case of lung cancer, some of the risk factors are hereditary and cannot be avoided, however by staying away from cigarettes and second-hand smoke reduces dramatically the risk of having a heart attack. Patients who experience heart attacks need to be kept under observation and activities such as going to work, travelling, having sex or exercising need to be restricted.

Last but not least, asthma is a disease that affects the lungs and during an attack the individual experiences difficulties in breathing, coughing and in rare cases can even lead to the death of the patient. Asthma is a disease most commonly seen at children and in 2010, approximately 7 million children suffered from it.\textsuperscript{57} Second-hand smoke, due to its high content of chemicals, can trigger asthma attacks severe enough to send a child to the emergency room or even worse, cause his death.

The campaign “Tips from former smokers” launched by CDC’s Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) on March 12, 2012 illustrates people who are living with the conditions reminded so far. The

\textsuperscript{54} http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/overviews/buergers-disease.html
\textsuperscript{55} http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/overviews/cancer.html
\textsuperscript{56} http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/overviews/heart-disease-stroke.html
\textsuperscript{57} http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/overviews/secondhand-smoke-asthma.html
damaging effects caused depicted (limb amputations, asthma) throughout the campaign materials contribute towards reducing the number of smokers in USA, by raising awareness of the consequences smoking has on the individual and his peers. Also, after understanding the complications associated with any of the conditions reminded above, patients could promote the recommended behaviour further to friends and family through word-of-mouth.

“Tips from former smokers” will run for 12 weeks, while the PSA’s including an ad promoting quitting will run longer. The resources made available by CDC include fact sheets, buttons and badges, print ads, videos, and podcasts. Paid advertising and PSAs will be places in/on TV, radio, print (magazines and newspapers), billboards, bus-shelters, in-theatres and online.58

The campaign behavioural objectives59 are to encourage smokers to quit or even better not start smoking and visit CDC’s campaign website (www.cdc.gov/quitting/tips) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free assistance. Other objectives are to build public awareness of the health consequences caused by smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke (knowledge objective) and make smokers believe anyone can suffer from Buerger’s disease for instance and not only the persons depicted in the videos are victims of this condition (belief objective).

The primary target audience identified by CDC for this campaign is a very broad one: smokers between 18-54 years. The secondary audiences include parents, family members and adolescents.

When the social marketing principles of this campaign were evaluated, a closer look at the 4 Ps was given. With regard to the “Tips from former smokers”, the actual product was the desired behaviour change, in this particular case study, abstaining from smoking and keep the children away from cigarette smoke, by telling other to quit smoking around them. The core products highlighted are the benefits of not getting addicted cigarettes, thereby eliminating the risk of having a hole in your throat, your fingers and legs amputated, etc. The augmented products are the hotline and website – resources to help smokers defeat their tobacco addiction. The prices involved with engaging in smoking cessation are both financial and personal.

58 http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/about/campaign-overview.html
59 Kotler & Lee (2008) come up with three types of objectives associated with a social marketing campaign: behavior objective (what we want our target audience to do), knowledge objective (what we want our target audience to know) and belief objective (what we want our target audience to believe, feel), p. 138
Quitting smoking involves a certain psychological, nonmonetary cost: enjoying a cup of coffee without a cigarette, social disapproval from friends who are smokers. Another nonmonetary cost would be the time and effort spent doing sports or telling your friends about your progress in quitting, instead of having a cigarette. Even though it may create a certain physical discomfort, exercising and receiving others support for your efforts increases the nonmonetary benefits for the desired behaviour.

The place associated with the campaign is the online resources providing assistance as well as the telephone line where smokers can also receive support. These place-marketing tools chosen by CDC experts are very useful in reducing access-related barriers and time-related barriers.

Finally, CDC primarily promotes its products through conventional outlets such as print media, television public service announcement, and radio podcasts. In addition, they also make use of Web 2.0. tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, catching their younger audience by surprise.

3.2. Discussion

CDC’s public health campaign against tobacco use mostly relied on fear as a persuasive strategy with the aim of producing specific changes in attitudes, intentions and behaviours. The videos and printed materials depict real people with larynx/lung cancer, amputated limbs, surgery scars as resulting from their addiction to cigarettes. These appeals aim to evoke a negative emotional response in the audience, namely fear, that is expected to motivate compliance with the message recommendations (“You can quit. For free help call 1-800-QUIT-NOW/visit www.cdc.gov/quitting/tips”).

If the Rossiter-Percy model is applied, the first ad seen in Appendix 5 is appealing to the negative motivation of problem avoidance. This is achieved by presenting a threatening message (“Smoking causes immediate damage to your body. For Shawn, it caused throat cancer”) and a shocking image of a hole in the man’s throat. This arouses the emotional response of fear, which is then followed by a feeling of reassurance resulted from the statement “You can quit [...]”. The intended message even if it is hidden under a ”tip” largely highlighted in the ad, is that people can avoid the problem of throat cancer by getting help with their tobacco addiction. This way, the simple act of
shaving is no longer threatened by a hole in the throat, and men can shave without worrying for a stoma. Hence the emotional sequence would be Problem avoidance: fear>relaxation.

Applying the ELM to the content of the ad, it can be observed that the authors of the campaign relied on a central route to persuasion. Assuming a smoker sees this ad, he/she will be motivated to process the information due to their personal relevance to the subject. However, the argument scrutiny may be reduced by the gruesome condition depicted and as I said earlier in this report, the perceived threat may lead to counterproductive results – viewers may just avoid or be doubtful about the advertisement.

After a second look at the content of the ad, it can be concluded that it may not achieve its purpose. If one takes a look at the EPPM in relation to the ad, the threat depicted may trigger fear control. The consequences triggered by fear control can be avoided by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW, however this recommendation may not be perceived very efficient by the smokers; the hotline may probably be occupied hence the strong perceptions of efficacy to the recommended behaviour are rather low.

Another reason why this ad may trigger maladaptive responses is found by applying the PMT: the smokers’ perceptions of severity are blocked by some intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (smokers may feel that smoking is relaxing, it improves concentration, and it is considered cool and attractive by peers). Furthermore, their risk perception is already quite high, since even though they are aware of the negative consequences of smoking, they simply ignore them and justify their behaviour with positive outcomes.

All in all, there are numerous reasons why the advertisements based on fear-appeals may not succeed in bringing about behaviour change, therefore the authors of the campaign also issued a number of podcasts, printed ads and videos which take a whole different approach. The advertisements seen in Appendix 6 and 7 make use of guilt and respectively positive appeals in order to address the relatively diverse and large audience.
4. Conclusion

This thesis and its findings contribute to understanding how and when fear appeals are used in social marketing campaigns, what are the ethical considerations that should be taken into consideration and what may be the consequences of constantly raising fear among audiences, both targeted and untargeted. Today, fear appeals are a growing trend among social marketing practitioners, however, they should think twice before influencing behaviour through threats – it is recommended that this persuasive approach complements sound reasoning and evidence.

The problem statement found at the beginning of the report was answered by reviewing some of the most important theories in the field of social marketing and persuasion (the elaboration likelihood model, Rossiter & Percy’s model of motivation, Witte’s extended parallel process model and Rogers’ protection motivation theory). Moreover, the case study analysis contributed towards a better understanding of the subject by taking a look at a practical example where fear appeals have been employed. From these methods it can be concluded that emotional appeals are a powerful tool for persuasion, yet there are several factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, self-efficacy, perceived seriousness which determine whether a fear appeal triggers maladaptive or adaptive responses. In addition, it could not be assessed whether positive or negative appeals are more effective due to the inconclusive studies.

Finally, it can be seen throughout this report that fear appeals are mostly discussed from an individualistic point of view and in social marketing campaigns, have been used in addressing personal issues.
Bibliography


Appendix 1

![Diagram of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion]

Figure 1. The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion (ELM). The figure depicts the central and peripheral routes to attitude change. Adapted from Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986).
Appendix 2

Diagram of the Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM)

- Message
  - Threat
  - Efficacy

- Fear
  - High susceptibility and severity

- Threat Appraisal

- Disregard
  - Low susceptibility or severity

- Efficacy Appraisal

- Danger Control
  - Constructive response
    - High Self and Response Efficacy

- Fear Control
  - Defensive response
    - Low Self or Response Efficacy

Adapted from Witte (1992).
Appendix 3

Figure 3.1 A schematic representation of the cognitive mediating processes of protection motivation theory.
Appendix 4 - campaign resources (videos)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=GEWky9PEroU
Anthem Ad
(This TV ad, from CDC's "Tips From Former Smokers" campaign, features three people who have stomas as a result of their smoking. They provide tips on how to live with this condition.)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=-WrWwUsKKN8
Buerger's disease Ad
(Smoking causes Buerger's disease, which can lead to amputations. In this TV ad, Brandon and Marie talk about living with the effects of Buerger's disease as part of CDC's "Tips From Former Smokers" campaign.)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zWB4dLYChM&feature=relmfu
Terrie's Ad
(Smoking causes cancer. In this TV ad for CDC's "Tips From Former Smokers" campaign, Terrie talks about how she gets ready for the day after the effects of treatments for throat cancer caused her to lose her teeth and hair, and to have a tracheotomy.)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=d6iS44aHy4s
Cessation Tips
(You can quit smoking! This inspiring TV ad features three people who successfully quit smoking after many years. They share their practical tips on how to quit for good in this ad from CDC's "Tips From Former Smokers" campaign.)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=3eUOjSTZMIE
Jessica's Asthma Ad
(Exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger a life-threatening asthma attack. This TV ad, from CDC's "Tips " campaign, features Jessica, a mother with a young son who suffers from asthma attacks due to secondhand smoke exposure. In her tip, she urges people not to be shy to tell people not to smoke around kids.)
Appendix 5 - campaign resources (fear-appeal ads)
Appendix 6 – campaign resources (guilt appeals ad)

DON’T BE SHY ABOUT TELLING PEOPLE NOT TO SMOKE AROUND YOUR KIDS.

Aden, Age 7
Jessica, His mother
New York

Half of U.S. kids are exposed to secondhand smoke. For Aden, it triggers his asthma attacks. Keep kids smoke-free. If someone you know wants free help, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
Appendix 7 – campaign resources (positive appeal ad)

A TIP FROM A FORMER SMOKER

LET YOUR KIDS INSPIRE YOU TO QUIT.

Beatrice, Quit at age 37
New York

There are a lot of reasons to quit smoking. Don't stop trying until you find yours. Beatrice did it. You can too. For free help, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.smokefree.gov