

Social Media INSIDER

THE INSIDE LINE ON SOCIAL MEDIA & MARKETING

(/publications/social-media-insider/)

Using Social Media For 'Sexy' Family-Planning Social Marketing

by Thom Forbes (/publications/author/3071/thom-forbes/), Featured Columnist @tforbes (<http://www.twitter.com/tforbes>), 23 minutes ago

Chris Purdy, the president of DKT International in Washington D.C., is used to people saying something like, "Oh, you're in social marketing, you must work with Facebook."

Yes, DKT does utilize Facebook — along with the whole gamut of other social media and traditional marketing levers — to inform women and men about family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention through 22 programs in 19 countries. But social marketing predates social media by several decades.

"Social marketing is using the tools, the infrastructure, the incentives of the private sector to market, sell and distribute a wide range of health products — in our case, contraceptive products — not only from the supply-chain side but also from the demand-generation side," he says. "But it's for a social impact."

As similar as DKT's efforts are to commercial marketing, Purdy's eye is not on the P&L statement. "We sell these products; we don't give them away for free," he says. "But the bottom line is, how many people went out and changed their behavior? How many went out and purchased a condom?"

The answer: In 2015, DKT sold more than 622 million condoms, 73.9 million oral contraceptives, 1.9 million IUDs, and averted 5.5 million unwanted pregnancies.

The concept of selling products, not giving them away, is rooted in the philosophy of DKT, which board chairman Phil Harvey started in 1989. In [this video](https://vimeo.com/139350173) (<https://vimeo.com/139350173>), he describes a moment when, as a CARE worker in India in the 1960s, a woman threw herself at his feet in gratitude as he was handing

out food during a flood. As he reflected on that action later, Harvey resolved to find a way to help people that did not create “a disparity between the giver and the recipient” and a sense of “gratitude.”

Social marketing is particularly well-designed for this, Harvey suggests, because when you're selling something, as cheap as it may be, the customer is spending his or her own money and becomes “an equal” in the transaction. And, in many ways, social media is the perfect vehicle for getting the message across, Purdy says.

“You are able to be more controversial because you're being more targeted,” he points out, which also means that you're able to be “more sexy” when talking about family planning products.

“Not many young women wake up on Saturday morning and say to their friends, ‘Hey, how was your reproductive health life like last night?’” he says. “They talk about sex. And it's hard to talk about sex on TV ... but you can tease that out when you're using social media.”

When we talked Wednesday, Purdy had just received an email from DKT's Brazil office, where the Seventh Annual Prudence Condom Testers campaign had just begun. Users download an app, put in a user name and then track when, where, with whom and in what position they are having sex. A online digital map shows any interested party what's going on where (<http://www.testadoresdecamisinhas.com.br/>), as well as which variety of Prudence is in play. In addition, 100 “testers” chosen for having the “best stories” get a month's supply of condoms and blog about what they like — or don't — about the product.

A few other example of current campaigns:

- In Egypt, where the law prohibits the use of mass media to promote condoms and lubricants, DKT's Facebook and Instagram accounts play a critical role. Using the hashtag #MorePleasure, a recently launched campaign targets males, 18-34, and females, 24-45, by talking about the pleasure of using a variety of Fiesta condoms and lubricants.
- In Turkey, DKT uses Facebook, Google Adwords, an e-newsletter and viral and email marketing to promote the Fiesta brand.
- Three videos (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7XwhElfwZI6iZTXEY7-EVQ>) in Ghana launched on YouTube since November use animation, focusing on the themes of pleasure and safety in an ongoing effort to break taboos and dispel myths. They have received more than 230,000 views and reached more than 800,000 people.

- DKT Myanmar is bypassing television with 15-second ads on the [Kiss Myanmar](https://www.facebook.com/kissformyanmar/videos?fref=photo) (<https://www.facebook.com/kissformyanmar/videos?fref=photo>) Facebook page that appeal to youth — three for Kiss condoms and one for Kiss Easy-Jel lubricant.

Purdy, who majored in anthropology at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., joined DKT in Indonesia 1996. He is “sort of a self-made marketing guy,” he says, and feels his academic background has shaped his career as a social marketer.

“Anthropology is understanding how cultures change, or what culture is, or why people behave the way that they do,” Purdy says. And that’s at the core of DKT’s mission.

“How do you get the root causes as to why someone wants to use family planning? To my mind, that is one of the most impactful, influential decisions you can make. Whether you have children, or how many, the minute you make that decision, whether you’re 19 or 29 or 39, your life is irrevocably changed.”

6 SHARES

Tags: [facebook \(/publications/tag/facebook/\)](/publications/tag/facebook/), [instagram \(/publications/tag/instagram/\)](/publications/tag/instagram/), [social media \(/publications/tag/social-media/\)](/publications/tag/social-media/), [social networking \(/publications/tag/social-networking/\)](/publications/tag/social-networking/), [youtube \(/publications/tag/youtube/\)](/publications/tag/youtube/)

Recommend (2)

All content published by MediaPost is determined by our editors 100% in the interest of our readers ... independent of advertising, sponsorships or other considerations.

Leave a Comment

THOM FORBES (</publications/author/3071/thom-forbes/>)

Thom Forbes was editorial director of Adweek and its sister publications in the 1980s and has written about marketing and media as a freelancer since 1990.



Contact MediaPost Editorial (</publications/masthead/>)

Subscribe to *Social Media Insider*

enter your email address

Subscribe

More from Social Media Insider (</publications/social-media-insider/>)