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Rethinking social marketing: towards a sociality of consumption

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore how members of an online alcohol reduction community learn, construct and engage in alcohol reduction consumption consistencies.

Design/methodology/approach – Blog data from 15 individuals participating in the online community of Hello Sunday Morning were collected and analysed. Informants also participated in a series of in-depth interviews to gain a self-reflective perspective of alcohol reduction action, activities and interactions.

Findings – The findings indicate learning of new alcohol reduction consumption consistencies occurs through three modes or learning infrastructures: engagement, imagination and alignment, enabling a collective sense of connection in the creation of new alcohol-related rituals and traditions, competency of practices and transmission of values and norms beyond the community.

Research limitations/implications – The results underscore the need for social marketers to recognise learning of alcohol reduction behaviour is continually negotiated and dynamically engendered through socially reproduced conditions, responses and relationships.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the transformational potential of social marketing situating behaviour change as a social interaction between actors within a dynamic market system.

Keywords Culture, Alcohol, Behaviour change, Habits, Community of practice, Responsible drinking

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Behaviour change is accepted as the core, and the bottom line, of social marketing (Andreasen, 1995). Nonetheless, current scholarship contends social marketing is narrowly fixated on behavioural outputs as the key measure of programme success (French *et al.*, 2012; Donovan, 2011). Consequently, attention is directed to viewing the social phenomena under investigation at an individual level premised on the assumption individuals are responsible for their own health quality (Szmigin *et al.*, 2011; Wymer, 2011). This purview of social marketing neglects rather than considers the wider social forces impacting behaviour and that behaviour change is a relational interaction between individuals within social contexts (Wymer, 2011; Szmigin *et al.*, 2011). Lefebvre (2012) challenges the state of play of social marketing, suggesting the discipline has become myopic in its continued application of marketing principles to influence individual behaviour rather than attempting to shape markets.

Calling for the broadening social marketing critics advocate for greater inclusion of a market systems approach within social marketing planning and development (Lefebvre, 2012; French *et al.*, 2012; Donovan, 2011). A market systems approach urges

social marketers to think beyond individual behaviour by conceptualising behaviour and behaviour change as operating within a dynamic, evolving market. In this context, the market space takes precedence as a place where individual behaviour change may be influenced. As Lefebvre (2012) notes, viewing behaviour change as "markets of behaviours" represents "out of the box" thinking bringing to the forefront the "social" in social marketing.

This paper contributes to the transformational potential of social marketing situating alcohol behaviour change as operating as a social interaction between actors within a dynamic market system. Viewing behaviour change as a socially entwined practice between individuals and considering individuals as active participants in the behaviour change process, the purpose of this paper is to investigate and explain how members of an online alcohol reduction community – Hello Sunday Morning (HSM)– learn, construct and engage in new alcohol reduction consumption consistencies. To date, social marketing aimed at reducing unhealthy consumption of alcohol has largely focussed on intervention effectiveness, with little attention directed towards understanding how individuals transition from risky to less risky behaviour.

To achieve this, Wenger's (2000) Communities of Practice Theory is applied to investigate and explain learning of intentional-alternate alcohol reduction consumption consistencies. Prior to discussing the communities of practice approach as related to social marketing, the following section elaborates on the potential role of habit formation, or more importantly disruption of habits and creation of new habits, as central in the learning of new consumption consistencies. Study findings explicating HSMers learning of new alcohol consumption consistencies and implications for social marketing are then discussed.

New consumption consistencies and the sociality of habits

Consumer culture theory suggests individuals, through experiences, actively transform symbolic meanings from consumer culture to further their identity position and lifestyle goals, which are continually fashioned and co-produced with other partners within the social space (Shanker *et al.*, 2009). Extending this viewpoint to social marketing, Peattie and Peattie (2009) suggest the effectiveness of consumption reduction programmes in overcoming deeply engrained behaviours rests on the extent to which new consumption reduction behaviours become more widely appealing in society and viewed as normal.

Kruglanski *et al.*'s (2002) theory of goal systems proposes goal directed behaviours for performing and not performing certain actions belong to two separate decision-making systems with distinct sets of cognitive reasoning for each alternative. This reasoning suggests decision-making processes and related pathways to action and inaction are significantly different and psychologically distinct (Richetin *et al.*, 2011). As such, intentions for drinking to get drunk (e.g. to have fun, socialise with friends and get plastered) provide quite separate reasons than those for drinking sensibly (e.g. improve health, look good and not rely on alcohol for a good time). Goal systems theory opens a space for considering responsible drinking as a consumption entity that is more than simply diametrically oppositional to that of intoxication (Fry, 2011).

Considering responsible drinking as a viable consumption entity, Wood and Neal (2007) assert creation of new consumption consistencies is dependent on disrupting environmental factors that automatically cue habit performance. Over time, habit performances representing recurring performance acts become increasingly triggered

by environmental cues, internal states (e.g. moods) and through interactions with others (Verplanken and Wood, 2006). Habits by nature require little, if any, cognitive input from consumers' intentions or decisions to act. It is the dependent nature of habit formation involving the creation of new associations in memory between actions and the automatic cueing of behaviour by stable performance circumstances that Verplanken and Wood (2006, p. 91) argue represents an "important point of vulnerability". Habits represent a barrier to information use as they are not easily changed through persuasive appeals, yet they can be influenced through changes in environmental circumstances or modifying the context in which behaviours are performed (Wood and Neal, 2007).

As such, disrupting environmental cues that trigger and maintain specific performances provides social marketers with the opportunity to not only challenge habitual mind-sets, but also put in place strategies to impair the automatic cueing of well-practiced responses (Verplanken and Wood, 2006). Unfreezing existing behavioural patterns, thus opening habits to change, allows for the creation of new information, actions, experiences and behaviours through the formation of new consumption consistencies involving new patterns and habit performances. Jackson (2005) maintains unfreezing existing behavioural patterns needs to occur at the community level, where group members actively support those involved in negotiating change. Harnessing this perspective, any success in positioning responsible drinking as a valid consumption entity is underpinned by recognising behaviour change as a social proposition.

Consumption communities as spaces enabling intentional alternate behaviour

In the marketing literature, the concept of consumer brand communities is well-established (Schau *et al.*, 2009; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Yet, leveraging community as an agent of social change in alcohol-related social marketing remains at the margin (Szmigin *et al.*, 2011; Fry, 2010). Virtual communities of consumption represent collectives where people gather together beyond traditional social or geographic boundaries to learn, form and reinforce relationships on a casual basis on any given field of interest (Kozinets, 1999). Hagel and Armstrong (1997) emphasise the relationship building potential of virtual communities as they provide for people with similar interests an opportunity to come together, unrestrained by time and space, to meet some of their social and commercial needs.

For Wenger (2000, p. 27) learning is a social phenomenon and is defined as the "interplay between social competence and personal experience". Viewing learning as an active entity emphasises learning as a relational, dynamic, two-way interaction between people and the social learning systems in which they participate. Communities of practice facilitate knowledge sharing as it is within a community that competence and experience converge, enabling learning to take place. Members both contribute and seek knowledge, yet knowledge can only be harnessed through practice (Brown and Duguid, 1998). Through sharing of practice experiences within the community participants internalise tacit knowledge, whilst simultaneously encouraging member participation in the process of knowledge creation, accumulation and diffusion (Ardichvilli *et al.*, 2003). Communities of practice evolve from things individuals' value or rate as important, thus represent situated learning where individuals develop practices, norms, values and relationships appropriate to the community (Handley *et al.*, 2006).

Wenger (2000) identifies three infrastructures or modes for learning essential for productive communities of practice: engagement, imagination and alignment. Without engagement, communities of practice would not exist. Engagement represents the connectivity between members, the mutual agreement in taking responsibility for learning how to enact responsible drinking, and signifies active involvement in the mutual processes of negotiating meaning. Participation is crucial to engagement, as without participation knowledge is not created, and therefore does not evolve.

Imagination refers to the construction and sense-making associated with developing new competencies within the community alongside others. Imagination enables community members to share a collective consciousness in the doing of alcohol reduction and locating their engagement in a broader system other than the self. It is through engagement in the collective that imagination allows the self to conceptualise, engage and improvise alcohol reduction practices. Wenger (2000) asserts communities of practice require practices to solidify a community's purpose and membership through reification. Reification represents the range of processes associated with the sense-making and doing of responsible drinking. In practical terms, imagination signifies opportunities for learners to think out of the box, to break from the norm and to journey outside the dominant norm.

Alignment represents common patterns of action and diffusion of ideals, practices and identity within the group, and more importantly beyond the boundaries of the group. Alignment requires sharable artefacts related to responsible drinking alongside creation and adoption of a broader discourse surrounding responsible drinking within society (Wenger, 2000). Moving towards a higher order discursive consciousness, alignment signifies creation of cultural meaning surrounding responsible drinking and acceptance of responsible drinking as a viable, relevant and doable consumption entity.

These three learning modes are distinct entities, yet operate in concert. Neither alignment nor engagement provides capability for grounded sense-making. Imagination is required for reflexivity of responsible drinking sense-making, yet needs to be grounded by alignment and engagement. Thus, communities of practice as social containers that bring people together leverage the complementarity of the three learning modes to facilitate a sense of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire of resources (Wenger, 2000).

Method

The online alcohol reduction community of HSM is the context of investigation. HSM operates independently of Australia's public health alcohol prevention. The organisation morphed from a personal journey of one person – Chris Raine – who decided to give up drinking in 2009 and blog about his experiences. Named in reference to not waking up to a Sunday morning with a hangover, Chris's first person introspective contributed valuable insight into the process, emotions, sociality and psychological responses of living and socialising without alcohol. During the year of "giving up", the blog attracted over 1,000 followers (Hamley and Carah, 2012). Recognising the limits of government-based alcohol strategies, Chris transitioned HSM to a community social networking site.

The HSM alcohol reduction model involves two key elements:

(1) individuals choose to voluntarily pledge abstinence from alcohol for a period of time (3, 6 or 12 months); and

(2) members blog about their alcohol reduction practices and experiences.

The pledge is designed to propel action towards reducing alcohol consumption, yet abstinence is not mandatory. This study defines alcohol reduction as practices associated with lowering alcohol consumption, including, but not restricted to, abstinence.

A purposive sample of consumers was obtained through a two-phased approach. First, invitations were distributed to individuals known to the lead researchers to participate in HSM, which yielded three respondents. Second, participant-led sampling was used by requesting initial contact participators to forward a research participation invitation to individuals within their social networks who were also participating in HSM. The two-phased sampling approach yielded a total of 20 informants. Five respondents dropped out of the research process, leaving a total of 15 informants. Table I details informant profiles.

To meaningfully study the learning of alcohol behaviour change, various forms of data were collected from informants over a 12-month period. First, informants' blog data, denoted as (B) in the following section, explores the lived "community" experiences of individuals transitioning from excessive to more moderate levels of drinking (Kozinets, 2006). Second, insight from in-depth interviews with the 15 informants generated a self-reflective perspective of alcohol reduction action, activities and interactions, with data denoted as (I) in the following section. Interviews followed Thompson et al. (1989) long interview design, and were conducted as casual conversations, were held monthly, ranged from 50-120 minutes and were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The method of analysis of participant's lived experiences of learning to drink less used a hermeneutic approach (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995), applying a modified constant comparative method iteratively noting similarities and differences across

Name	Age	Occupation	Pledge commitment	Stage of commitment	Alcohol status	Blogging status
Niray	26	Retailer	3 months	Early	Abstain	Occasional[a]
Steven	24	Carpenter	3 months	Mid-way	Reduce	Daily
Sally	22	Student	3 months	Mid-way	Reduce	Daily
Simon	21	Carpenter	3 months	Near-end	Reduce	Occasional
Keiran	28	Lawyer	3 months	Mid-way	Abstain	Daily
Jackson	30	IT specialist	3 months	Mid-way	Abstain	Daily
Mike	36	Builder	3 months	Near-end	Reduce	Daily
Tim	23	Apprentice	6 months	Mid-way	Reduce	Occasional
Leisa	29	Administrator	6 months	Mid-way	Reduce	Daily
Megan	24	Model	6 months	Near end	Reduce	Daily
Annabelle	24	Manager	6 months	Mid-way	Reduce	Daily
Craig	31	Taxi driver	6 months	Near-end	Reduce	Daily
Katy	25	IT specialist	6 months	Near-end	Reduce	Daily
Pete	30	Electrician	12 months[b]	Near-end	Reduce	Daily
Isabelle	23	Secretary	12 months[b]	Near-end	Reduce	Daily

Notes: [a]Occasional = 2-3 times a week; [b]previously conducted 1×3 month HSM

Table I.
Informant profile

individual transcripts and blog entries. Interpretation of data emerged from theoretical insights (i.e. Wenger's learning modes) and enquiry of participants actual lived experiences. Individual lines of transcript were sorted and constantly compared with generate content that served to explain individual's learning and transitioning towards less drinking.

HSM as a consumption community

Learning to engage

Learning to engage represents transitioning of thoughts, emotions and psyche towards being a responsible drinker, alongside active involvement in negotiating personal meaning of responsible consumption of alcohol.

Learning to break habits: first stop mind space! Establishing new habits is critical to the HSM journey. Shedding ritualised habits involves learning how to socialise without alcohol. Informant's blogs constructed their previous practices of drunkenness as a necessary aspect of socialising and "being with friends" with benefits positioned as "fun", "pleasure", "being happy" and "feeling good". The nexus between drinking as a practice embedded in a wider drinking culture, and the desire to drink less yet also socialise within alcohol-fuelled environments represents a challenging reality. Interview data identified removing oneself from alcohol environments was not a solution to enacting behavioural change. Rather HSMers chose to find ways to integrate within alcohol-infused spaces while maintaining their commitment. Pete highlights "socialising with alcohol is what we did; not socialising with my friends was not an option so I had to work out a way that I can do both" (I). He further illustrates deciding not to drink or drinking less is a critical aspect of the HSM commitment. According to Pete:

HSM is not something you do for a couple of weeks, you commit for at least 3 months, up to 12 months. That's a long time. The challenge is finding a way to fit HSM in your life which means creating new ways of living without alcohol. HSM is a personal journey that you do with other people. You can't hide for 12 months. It's about making alcohol less important and not the reason why you socialise. (I)

Joining HSM was about finding a good balance in maintaining the "fun" and positive experiences with consuming less alcohol, alongside the challenges of doing HSM when peers asserted the dominant norm of drinking. For example, as Megan said:

I think about alcohol all the time. Breaking this cycle is challenging! It's about enjoying the moment and making every moment count rather than thinking about what you don't have. (B)

The period of time prior to committing to HSM was described in terms of emotional and psychological anguish as individuals question their survival without alcohol. Katy describes her pre-HSM anguish in terms of deciding on her personal mode of alcohol reduction.

As Katy states:

I'm battling between two approaches to drinking. Moderation equals the ability to still be able to get pleasure from wine, but risks falling into bad habits. Abstinence equals control and commitment to a lifestyle that should bring me peace but feels boring, painful and going against what I have known for 15 plus years. Arghhh. (B)

Veteran HSMers near achievement of their goal or doing a second HSM acknowledge the stage of reconciling alcohol reduction goals as a critical step towards commitment. There are no rules associated with giving up alcohol; rather, the process requires individuals to personify and negotiate the new behaviour. Discourses, both blogs and interview narratives, reveal breaking habits requires a reflexivity regarding interactions in social contexts without alcohol involving cognitive, psychological and emotional repositioning of the self in relation to practices of sociality and dealing with social pressures to drink.

Learning boundaries: creating personal meaning. A necessary part of breaking habits is the creation of personal meaning around responsible drinking prior to the "doing" of responsible drinking. Blog entries illustrate varied meanings of responsible drinking. Many informants were guided by safe drinking guidelines denoting quantity levels when setting responsible drinking boundaries. For example: "one or two drinks on a Friday and Saturday night, nothing during the week" or "two or three drinks when out with friend on weekends". Others were more ambiguous when specifying their alcohol reduction boundary and were less likely to define alcohol reduction in quantity terms. For example: "banning drinking during the week but not weekends" or "not denying myself alcohol but mindful of making efforts to reduce consumption". Choosing to drink less alcohol, rather than completely abstain, was based on informant's "liking of alcohol", "not being able to visualise myself in a social situation without alcohol" and the "thought of completely banning alcohol as unrealistic". For Steven, setting alcohol reduction boundaries entailed considered decision-making:

> I'm customising my journey. My ultimate goal is not to be problem drinker. I want to be able to drink socially and not get drunk. I'm trying moderation – no more than 2-4 standard drinks per drinking session and no more than two separate drinking sessions per week. If I can make moderation work it's the ultimate goal but if I'm fooling myself and I do binge I'll go back to complete abstinence. (B)

Learning to imagine

Imagination refers to the construction of belonging to a community and construction of the self as a community member. Imagination represents the link between "doing" of alcohol reduction practices in social contexts and blogging of experiences.

Learning new consumption consistencies. Creating new consumption consistencies involves learning, acquisition and tailoring of alcohol reduction practices. Learning of new alcohol reduction practices was viewed as more than simply limiting consumption. Annabelle's blog describes her exploration and tailoring of alcohol reduction practices as "illuminating", "stressful", "confronting" and "emotional", both personally and socially. Reflecting on learning new alcohol reduction practices, Leisa described the process of giving up as akin to "putting on a new skin; you're undressing and finding a new way of living without alcohol" (I). Blogs often described alcohol reduction as a series of new experiences and a process of tailoring practices to suit individual and social circumstances. Yet, over time, as Leisa illuminates, "the new skin transformed into a comfy coat" (I) as competency in alcohol reduction practices strengthened. Blogs illustrate engagement of a variety of alcohol reduction practices when socialising in clubs or pubs ranging from alcohol imitation strategies of "drinking soda from a champagne glass", "drinking mocktails" or "soft drinks" to constraint strategies such as "slowing down my drinking; holding onto my drink for longer", "turning up to the pub

late" "swapping a full beer for an almost empty one" or "alternating between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks". When catching up with friends informally (e.g. barbeques or dinners at home), informants would bring their own "packaged fruit juices, soft drinks, non-alcoholic wines" or their own creations. For example, as Isabelle states:

> I really tested the limits one night when I turned up to dinner with freshly made cucumber/ celery and ginger juice. Yes, I bought a juicer this week because I'm already sick of drinking soda water! (B)

Learning new consumption consistencies also involves control of when and how often to socialise. Informants were not willing to totally eschew alcohol-infused environments or not socialise with their friends. Yet, until competency over alcohol reduction skills were gained, informants controlled their socialisation interactions. Blog entries identified establishment of new rituals, such as taking up "running in the evening" or "going to the gym more often", enabled informants to not think about alcohol and drinking, particularly at evening time and weekends. As Craig mentions "It's said that you don't ever break habits, you replace them with other things, so I guess more exercise has been my replacement - and it's great" (B). Learning new consumption practices illustrates self-control, imagination and creativity in the customisation of new rituals and alcohol reduction habits.

Learning responsible drinking as a shared repertoire. Sharing alcohol reduction experiences within the HSM community facilitates a "we-ness" in learning and appropriating alcohol reduction as a consumption entity (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002). As Megan explains the:

> […] sense of communal participation starting from a feeling that we're all going through the process and that we all know – or potentially know – each other is what makes this work (I).

Similarly, Simon reflects "it's that connectedness with others and the collective action we're all making towards creating a better future" (I). For Sally and Jackson, blogging and sharing alcohol reduction experiences is more than just giving up alcohol. Sally comments "People support you, give you tips. Even when you relapse you're not condemned. You get back on the bicycle and try again" (I). Likewise, Jackson explains:

> The forum is great. I can be honest about my drinking and it's affirming to find other nice humans who are battling the same stuff, being so frank and so real about how difficult it can be but at the same time so encouraging of one another. Even though it's all in cyberspace this still feels like (and is) a living and breathing community […] which means I also feel accountable to you, my dear HSMers. (B)

This discourse reinforces learning alcohol reduction practises is a continual negotiation of trial and error. Critically, learning new alcohol consumption consistencies relies on a sociality of consumption and the discursive validation of experiences.

Learning to align

Alignment refers to competency of individuals in developing and articulating a shared purpose, norms and codes of behaviour, and how these are transmitted beyond the community within the broader social landscape.

Towards a heightened consciousness. Learning and negotiating alcohol reduction practices requires not just behavioural action, but also reconciliation of the self. Informants constantly defined and redefined their identities as they travelled through

the HSM journey. Early stages of HSM experience are pre-occupied with blog entries concerning the giving up of alcohol and the fear of missing out by not drinking. As informants gained competency in their alcohol reduction practices, learning transitioned beyond a behavioural outcome (drinking less) towards a revitalisation of the self with life, achieved by setting higher order goals. Mike illustrates:

> You'd think that by banning booze I'd be limiting myself; limiting what I could do and all that. But it's exactly the opposite […] removing alcohol has done quite the opposite (B).

Transcending towards his future possible self, Mike reinvigorated his love for climbing and is preparing to climb Kilimanjaro. Other HSMer blog entries contextualise their future possible self as "studying for a pilot's licence", "being there for my family", "love my work not just survive it", "living in Italy for six months", "saving up to build my dream house" or "not working to live, taking time out to think about where I want to be when I'm 50 or 60". Tim reconciles:

> I realised half way through my HSM I was doing it to give my life a new purpose. It's not just about the here and now and what pub we're going to tonight. My thoughts and ideas aren't blurred by alcohol. My life has a new direction. Definitely taking a longer term view rather than only thinking about what pub we're going to tonight. (I)

Legitimising responsible drinking. Responsible drinking for many is a new consumption entity. Interviews highlighted informant's inscriptions of alcohol and society did not allow consideration of not drinking or less drinking as a potential consumption entity. As Keiran comments "HSM doesn't tell you to stop drinking rather allows you a choice between not drinking and drinking" (I). Katy illustrates HSM's street-cred appeal in creating a space legitimising time out from alcohol. As Katy states:

> My friends and I know drinking too much is bad and unhealthy. But it's what you do, it's what the group does, so you do it to. Ads tell us not to drink so much and you think about not drinking but it doesn't get much further than that. HSM isn't big brother, but represents a reality that not drinking is hard, is challenging emotionally and downright confronting. Reading about HSM I realised that I might be able to actually do something about my drinking and that I'm not doing it alone. (I)

Alternately, Niray illustrates the value of HSM as a community of consumption where learning responsible drinking is continually interpreted and reinterpreted, and how the assertion of new norms and values challenges dominant inscriptions associated with Australia's drinking culture:

> I find people are interested and fascinated by my decision not to drink alcohol for 3 months. I talk much more about why I decided to embark on this challenge and realise I'm impacting my friends drinking. Some have decided to join HSM, others are in that pre-stage of thinking about doing HSM, others totally think it's not normal not to drink. (I)

This excerpt illustrates the raising of responsible drinking within a discursive consciousness among friendship groups and the power of individual influence to share and propagate knowledge of alcohol reduction practices within broader society. The HSM journey enabled a space for informant's to reflect on their ongoing relationship with alcohol, to critique the role of alcohol as an important social artefact and more broadly to consider ways to address the cultural embed of alcohol in society. Leisa identifies: "I didn't realise how attached I was to alcohol and how important it was in my life, to my friends and the extent it facilitates socialising" (B). Similarly, Niray notes

"there's a lot of cheap wine on the market and I'm noticing alcohol advertising much more than before" (B). Megan has taken on the challenge to transfer as many people as she can to HSM as a "way of getting my friends to think about how much they're drinking […] it's my personal crusade to help change society" (I).

Discussion and implications

The application of Wenger's Communities of Practice framework to HSM, a mechanism to disrupt alcohol consumption habits, shows how learning of alcohol reduction practices and ultimately behaviour change can be understood as a situated social practice. Importantly, for social marketing practice, knowledge creation of responsible drinking practice and meaning occurs as a relational interaction between individuals within a broader market system. Learning and knowledge creation occur through participation where participation is denoted as meaningful activity developed through relationships, shared identity and socialisation of responsible drinking practices. The knowledge embedded in the HSM community approach to alcohol behaviour change supersedes any one individual, but rather results from the continual creation, interpretation and reinterpretation across many individuals within the community (Wenger, 2000). Consequently, HSMers act as individual consumers and collective citizens in the process of learning and engaging in meaningful socially embedded everyday discourses and practices relating to alcohol reduction (Jackson, 2005).

Governments struggle with effecting alcohol-related cultural change precisely because of tensions between the nature of alcohol's pleasures and damage caused (Moore, 2010), and the cultural embed embracing an intoxigenic experience economy (Brain, 2000). In reality, drinking and drunkenness is inextricably linked with community and cultural norms, yet social marketing aimed at reducing unhealthy consumption of alcohol largely neglects the extent to which alcohol and its consumption is bound up in and complicated by emotional, symbolic and social meanings (Peattie and Peattie, 2009). Sociological treatments of behaviour change have relevance for social marketing thinking, particularly in incorporating social networks of influence to disrupt entrenched habits. Breaking entrenched habits, creating new norms and developing social marketing interventions that are of value and relevance to target audiences is critical in the delivery of desired social improvement.

As evidenced in this study, responsible drinking is constructed as a distinct consumption entity, rather than viewed simply as oppositional to risky drinking. This viewpoint allows for a broadening of the theoretical scope for developing social marketing solutions. Observing behaviour change as a human experience and as a distinct consumption entity permits social marketing thinking to extend beyond an individualistic perspective and be more inclusive of contemporary marketing paradigms, such as value co-creation, sustainable marketing, relationship marketing and consumer culture theory to name but a few. As Lefebvre (2012) notes, the future of social marketing centres on creating mutually satisfying exchanges, and as such, the discipline must extend its current myopic perspective.

This study evidences how structural interventions connect individuals, who may not necessarily have connected with one another, to embed sustainable drinking practices into everyday life. HSM operates as a community of consumption, a service entity and as a space where influencers (persons/organisations) interact with enactors (a person) involved in the behaviour change process (Russell-Bennett et al., 2013). There is

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significant potential for mid-stream thinking, through design architecture, to disrupt and recreate contexts and structures to facilitate the sociality of new habits and behaviours. Critically, addressing behaviour change solutions from a mid-stream approach captures insight into how institutional structures impact the doing of behaviour change and how individuals as active participants in the behaviour change process transition from risky to less risky behaviours.

While this study forms the basis of a structured understanding of learning alcohol reduction practices, all studies have their boundary conditions and this one is no exception. Observations are based on a sample of informants within the context of a single case study. While potentially a shortcoming, this single-case approach illustrates the complex negotiations and continual process of re-negotiating alcohol reduction meaning and the interactions between individuals in learning alcohol reduction practices. Exploration of issues associated with the structure and design of virtual behaviour change communities of consumption are outside the scope of this study. Additionally, the objective of this study was not to analyse the effectiveness of HSM in facilitating responsible drinking behaviour, but rather to examine learning of responsible drinking as a social artefact. The emergence of alcohol behaviour change communities in Australia, including Febfast, Ocsober and Dry July, each offering a variety of alcohol reduction models (e.g. online, offline and fund-raising component), provides opportunity to examine alcohol reduction as a social phenomenon. To what extent do varying design formats affect learning and sustaining of alcohol reduction practices? What design concepts from other fields beyond Wenger's model can be applied? Are communities of behaviour change applicable to other risky behaviours? To what extent does market readiness affect success of creating new social norms related to positive behaviours?

Integration of "healthy lifestyles" as a valid consumption choice within contemporary culture is a relatively new consumption paradigm. Inspired by Weibe's (1951) suggestion that as a social good "brotherhood" could be sold using commercial marketing strategies, social marketing has gained currency as a good fit with government's growing political emphasis on behavioural change as the driver for health improvement (Peattie and Peattie, 2009). Yet, as recent scholarship contends that the future success of social marketing relies on a broader holistic view of behaviour change that inexplicitly integrates the sociality of consumption in transforming behaviour. This study contributes significantly to this emerging debate in social marketing by viewing behaviour change as a consumption entity and social artefact within a broader market system.

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