

# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL MARKETING: A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO EXAMPLES PROJECTS CONDUCTED IN TURKEY

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## Abstract

In a world that is rapidly globalizing, it has become necessary to turn towards social issues in order to maintain competitive superiority in the market. Nowadays, corporations carry out their public relations practices and present them to the public under the names of either corporate social responsibility or social marketing. These two concepts hold different characteristics even though corporations tend to ignore the differences. The most important reason for this is the fact that the population does not have preliminary information regarding social marketing and perceive the projects realized by corporations as “corporate social responsibility”.

In this research, an in depth literary search has been conducted to compare and examine the different characteristics of corporate social responsibility and social marketing. Two example projects carried out in Turkey will be thoroughly analyzed in order to understand under which public relations practice they need to be assessed.

**Keywords:** Social marketing, Corporate social responsibility, Public relations

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## Özet

Küreselleşen dünyada işletmelerin pazarda rekabet üstünlüğü sağlamak amacıyla toplumsal konulara yönelmeleri bir gereklilik haline gelmiştir. Günümüzde işletmeler yaptıkları halkla ilişkiler çalışmalarını kimi zaman kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk başlığı altında kimi zaman da sosyal pazarlama biçiminde gerçekleştirerek topluma sunmaktadırlar. Bu iki kavram farklı özellikleri bünyesinde barındırmasına rağmen işletmeler sözkonusu çalışmalarda kavramlar arasındaki farklılığı göz ardı etmektedirler Bunun da en önemli nedeni toplumdaki bireylerin kurumların gerçekleştirdiği projelerin çoğunu „Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk projesi“ olarak algılaması ve sosyal pazarlama ile ilgili ön bilgilerinin bulunmamasıdır.

Bu araştırmada kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk ve sosyal pazarlama kavramları hakkında geniş bir literatür taraması yapılarak kavramların özellikleri karşılaştırılacak, sözkonusu iki kavramın arasındaki ayırım irdelenecek ve Türkiye’de yapılmış olan iki örnek proje ele alınarak bu projelerin hangi halkla ilişkiler uygulaması çerçevesinde değerlendirilmesi gerektiği ortaya konmaya çalışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal pazarlama, Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk, Halkla ilişkiler

## 1. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL MARKETING DEFINITIONS

Corporate social responsibility and social marketing have many definitions. The concepts given below include characteristics accepted nationally and internationally. Definitions have been chosen for these two terms in accordance to this.

Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee are well known for their practices in the marketing sector. According to them corporate social responsibility ameliorates the population’s prosperity through the contribution of corporate resources (Kotler and Lee, 2006:2) Whereas Mohr, Webb and Haris define corporate social responsibility as the commitment of the corporation to minimize all detrimental effects on the population and create long term advantages at the highest level (Aktan, 2007:13). Equivalent to this definition, according to Lantos corporate social responsibility is the positive contribution a company makes to society, as it becomes a member of that society and strives to fulfill the long terms needs and expectations of that society (Lantos, 2001: 595). According to another definition, corporate social responsibility is the proper production of a company’s scarce resources to meet the wishes and desires of society without harming the company’s economic activities, employees, shareholders, consumers and the individuals in society (Çelik 2007: 62).

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As for social marketing, Kotler and Andreasen define it as social behavior that benefits primarily the target audience and the general population, as opposed to the marketer (Weinreich, 1999a). In another definition, they label it as the analysis, planning, practice and evaluation of programs designed to influence the behaviors of the target audience by using traditional marketing methods (Argan, 2007). In this sense, the aim of social marketing is to serve the interests of the population and their real needs, as well as increase their general well-being (Sezer, 1999:53). Furthermore, social marketing is a social thought, a social case, a marketing activity that is designed to ensure the acceptability of desired behavior (Zikmund and d'Amico, 1996:364). By taking advantage of product marketing principles, social marketing offers benefits according to the target audience's desires, reduces obstacles, and, by using persuasion motivates, and leads to the planning of a willing behavioral change program (Almendarez vd., 2004:114).

If we continue to look at definitions, social marketing is the design, implementation and control of marketing programs with the use of tools such as product planning, pricing, communicating, distributing and market research to facilitate the acceptance of certain social thoughts. Independently from the person, organization, and establishment that support this kind of marketing, it is an effort to form, maintain and to change the counter behavior against a specific kind of thought and/or cause (Tek and Özgül, 2005:34). In addition to this, social marketing has several goals. They can be summarized as education, enabling a kind of behavior, changing a behavior, and a belief (Kotler vd., 1987:16).

The main difference between social marketing and marketing is that social marketing has an abstract approach, and the need to change attitude towards a thought or a goal. The aim of social marketing is to find an answer to a social problem and to enable positive change in the target audience. Like service marketing, social marketing is to market "an abstract product". For example, safe driving, eating healthy, family planning, the reduction of tobacco use are certain topics. In social marketing concrete products are marketed as well. For example safety belt and condoms are good concrete examples of social marketing (Kotler and Roberto, 1989:7).

In the next section, according to the given definitions, the confusion between these terms will be resolved by the use of examples.

## 2. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL MARKETING

According to the definitions made about corporate social responsibility, aside from key words such as the use of corporate resources, the well being of the population, to benefit society, corporate social responsibility is mentioned as the responsibility of the corporation. Though this is partially correct, many sources underline that this is an insufficient statement. As we know, corporate social responsibility contains a more extensive frame. According to Carroll, who created the corporate social responsibility pyramid, corporate social responsibility can be examined at four different levels. These levels are economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Carroll, 1991:4).

- **Economic Responsibilities:** the primary responsibility of all companies is to sell to consumers the products and services they need and desire, while making a profit for themselves.
- **Legal Responsibilities:** the set of principles and values lawmakers have established that the companies need to follow while maintaining their economic activities.
- **Ethical Responsibilities:** responsibilities that are not stated in the laws but that meet the expectations and set of values of society.
- **Philanthropic Responsibilities:** activities that portray the company as a good citizen and reinforce its good intentions in the eyes of individuals.

### Shape-1: Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid



**Source:** Carroll 1991:42

The business world has become increasingly competitive nowadays. Corporate social responsibility projects have provided companies with esteem and brand recognition. Other than production, profit, efficiency, and

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employment, the business world makes investments that benefit society; these are their corporate social responsibility projects which influences the company's reputation in a positive manner.

For a corporate social responsibility project to be successful, several factors come into play: the project needs to be sustainable, its topic and practice abide by ethical standards, sensitive to society's needs, embraced and supported by the company's employees, create the aimed effect on the target audience, and every year, and the project needs to be evaluated to see how beneficial it is.

In social marketing, the topics emphasized are influencing social behavior in order to benefit society, persuading individuals so that the wanted sale can be made, and the willing change of behavior. It is a question of marketing a product or a service. The goal is to sell something with a profit while increasing brand recognition and transforming a negative attitude and behavior into a positive one. According to the definition given by Kotler and Andreasen, social marketing aims to positively influence behavior in order to benefit society (Weinreich, 1999a); however this definition fails to mention the benefits provided by the company. Like in every marketing activity, social marketing there is a "win win" relationship. In other words, the earnings should be in the interest of both sides.

Taking into account the differences stated in the definition, a table demonstrating the differences between corporate social responsibility and social marketing has been put together.

**Table-1: Comparison of Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Marketing**

	Direct Market Profit	Liability	Social Well Being	Long Term Benefits	Short Term Benefits	Behavioral Change	Product Marketing	Human Relations Activities	Persuasion
Corporate Social Responsibility	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	O
Social Marketing	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	O	X

**Source:** Created by the writers.

### **3. THE COMPARISON OF THE OPET VE BRIDGESTONE PROJECTS**

In Turkey, corporate social responsibility projects are generally concentrated on the environment, education, health, sports, the protection of cultural values and art. These areas cover the needs of society, paralleling their progress. For example; since 2000, Opel has traveled to 72 provinces and covered a distance of more than 1 million km for their “Clean Toilet” campaign. This was a successful corporate social responsibility project: it was chosen as the best in the “Social Responsibility Projects” category at the 2004 IPRA (International Public Relations Association) Golden World Awards Competition. Furthermore, this project took first place at the Third Golden Compass Competition organized by HID (the Public Relations Association) under the “Social Responsibility Projects” category, as well Nokta Magazine’s “At the Peak” survey’s “Social Responsibility Campaigns” ([www.opet.com.tr](http://www.opet.com.tr)). The “Clean Toilet Campaign” created a consciousness in Turkey about toilet cleanliness and hygiene. No doubt, the success of this campaign comes from the fact that it is sustainable, creates awareness and is appropriated to the population. Opet wanted to solve an existing social problem with this project. Without carrying the worry of trying to sell a product or service and make a profit, Opet invested in its corporate reputation.

As an example of a social marketing project, we will look at “Bridgestone Safety Tire” which was announced initially as a corporate social responsibility project.

With the “safety on the road is a safe long road” project, Bridgestone ([www.bridgestone.com.tr](http://www.bridgestone.com.tr)) brought attention to traffic accidents, vehicle safety precautions, traffic awareness while at the same time promoting the safety of the product. In the Bridgestone Safety Tire commercials, the company has used celebrities who ooze trust, thus breaking the stereotypical use of automobiles in tire commercials. Here, the tire is used as a visual metaphor and is put around the body like a safety belt. Thus, there is both a social message given to the population as well as a product marketed with the aim of making a profit. Furthermore, Bridgestone aims to get the population in the habit of wearing a safety belt, hence creating a behavioral change.

To summarize then, Opet’s “Clean Toilet Campaign” has no profit worries, and only aims to benefit the people, whereas Bridgestone’s initial goal is to market its primary product, by utilizing a social matter. Therefore, these projects need to take place in two different categories.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

With an increasingly globalizing world and fierce competitive environment, corporations are no longer just producers and profit makers; they look out for social well being, and have a social consciousness. In order to stay

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afloat corporations do need to make a profit. However, in corporate social responsibility this is not a marketable profit, rather, it is a long term investment in corporate reputation and brand recognition. Whereas in social marketing, the goal is to make a profit in the shortest possible time frame.

Terms such as corporate social responsibility and social marketing are being newly discussed, and it is interesting that corporations present their projects under the corporate social responsibility title. Corporate social responsibility projects help corporation become more reputable and to be preferred by the target audience.

It could be said that there is not a definite separation between the terms corporate social responsibility and social marketing, however there are important idealistic differences. When the sector is in such chaos, it is difficult for corporations to make solid division between these two concepts. It is important that scientific practices increase so that corporation can become more aware and thus end the meaning confusion between the terms.

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