

Chapter 5

The Marketing of Information and Knowledge Management

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the issues of customers' satisfaction and needs, in terms of information, as a basis for the practice of marketing in information management. It underlines the arguments of the relationship between Marketing and information science. The main idea is that Marketing practice cannot occur without information about customers and to customers. This way, the relationship of marketing to information management, in information science, is emphasized. Likewise, the importance of the studies and research on Marketing of information, as philosophical approach of the information management process, is highlighted. The structure of the chapter synthesizes the existing academic work while seeking to generate new knowledge. Moreover, it presents the promotion and communication of information in organizations from the evolution of the concept of Marketing, in an integrated manner. Finally, the implications for future research are advanced.

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to make an innovative marketing approach of information from the market and business understanding of information in organizations with or without profit. In this sense, it is necessary to clarify certain concepts in the field of information science. One of these concepts is the unit of information, although very widespread in the literature, is not yet widely defined. Guinchat and Menou (1994, p. 337) use the term to refer to the companies that have as their mission: “to identify, as accurately as possible, information that can be useful to managers in support of decision making”.

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METHODOLOGY OF APPROACH

This is a descriptive and analytic approach seeking to know and analyze the existing scientific or cultural contributions on this subject, from the review of the existing literature. The survey was structured based on the systemic approach to the understanding of the problems of post modernity in the work of Erikson (1998), looking for practical, operational or troubleshooting application of “real life” organizations.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Data, Information, and Knowledge

In a global economy, information and knowledge are the greatest competitive advantages that organizations can have (Thomas Davenport & Laurence Prusak, 1998, p. 13). In recent years, we have witnessed a remarkable transformation in society, that is, we have moved from a society based on industry and transport into a knowledge-based one.

One major challenge for management is to understand what information means: how to manage and interpret it and what decisions it allows to make in an era of world-wide communications, since information is the link that unites us. By being able to transmit large amounts of information quickly across continents, we transform the world into a global metropolis.

Another challenge facing managers is the wealth of information in present day society, whose most obvious distress signal in this kind of society is the combination of the production of large amounts of information, the intensive use of information technologies and communication, and the continuous learning process. The articulation of these three aspects suggests that the information society quickly transitioned into the society of knowledge. The symbolic culture of this society requires new types of learning, organization and management and, therefore, also one for information management.

In the information and knowledge society there are several hierarchical levels or progressive stages directly related to the learning process of this knowledge. Thus, we can distinguish three stages: data, information, and knowledge. The messenger on foot or on horseback gave way to the highways of information. So, what is information all about, then? Whatever resource may become valuable to be compiled, saved, duplicated, sold, stolen and even sometimes, a motive for murder.

Many people in organizations spend their workday gathering, studying and processing information. Some industries have been developed based on the information resource to produce technology (process technology - the computer, product technology - software and communication technology - communications equipment + software) in order to collect, store, process, transmit and easily access information.

Managers cannot open a newspaper without being confronted to the term “information.” Countless books contain the word “information.” Lots of people in organizations perform activities related to the word “information”. It seems easy to describe what it consists of. However, when we start thinking about the term “information”, we experience some difficulty in finding the appropriate definition. Part of the difficulty for managers in understanding information lies in the fact that they are so accustomed to dealing with it on a day-to-day basis that they do not realize the complexities involved. Managers only realize difficulties when they are confronted with a new language. The potential for misinterpretation is always present.

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