

## Chapter 59

# Marketing: History and Development of Its Definition

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### ABSTRACT

*The article contains a description of the historical evolution of marketing and the evolution of marketing definition. Learning the history of marketing and the evolution of its thinking is supposed to be an inconsequential effort, or at the very least it can be expected to be an unbalanced effort, where the benefits obtained are potentially out of proportion to the commitment required and the knowledge obtained. It is also pertinent to complete the history of marketing with the evolution of the definition of marketing, assessing what has changed over the years to the current version. A table will be presented with a list of the most prominent definitions identified in the bibliography, starting with Converse's 1921 definition and ending with the 2017 AMA definition.*

### INTRODUCTION

There is no denying the fact that learning the history of marketing has enormous educational value for those who build marketing theory, ensuring an understanding of how ideas have evolved, why they stand, and how they can be integrated. They provide the essential ingredients for transforming concepts into constructs and constructs into theory. But the truth is different and shows the constant and inefficient

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use of academic sources, with the insistence on redefining old concepts in new terms (Shaw, 2009), a certain consequence of those who want to help build a science are under no obligation to study its history.

Just as books are divided into chapters and performances into acts and scenes, historians also periodize their narratives or resort to some kind of organization (Hollander et al., 2016). Analyzing the bibliography on the history of marketing or the history of marketing thought it is concluded that they have been organized temporally or by categories of themes, the latter also called spatial organization, conforming with the prescriptions required in historical research. Temporally it is divided by chronological periods or by historical milestones or events, while in the spatial division, the themes are framed in schools of marketing thought (Shaw, 2009).

Marketing history can also focus on the practical side (e.g.: history of advertising, distribution, etc.) or on the history of marketing thought (e.g.: history of concepts, theories, institutions, associations, schools of thought, etc.), realizing that the two areas overlap. It should be noted that the history of marketing practice, the history of marketing thought, and the development of marketing theories are distinct concepts, but they have common points, and that the bibliography resulting from historical research on marketing and on marketing-related subjects, i.e. on the three previous concepts, has been carried out by two groups of academics (Hunt, 2011): 1) professors of marketing in business schools; 2) professors of management history in history departments. An indispensable element in the marketing disciplinary area, as in all sciences, is a theory, which is sometimes in opposition with proponents of empiricism who support the idea that “facts speak for themselves”, this does not consist in truth, as facts have no meaning until the moment they are given meaning, and this meaning is conferred by theory (van der Merwe et al., 2007). For this reason, the following section defines what marketing thinking is.

When starting the historical review of marketing, particularly focused on the evolution of its thought, it is essential to first define what is understood by marketing thought, being defined as the ideas, concepts, designations, and terms associated with the discipline. It is essential to clarify that there are differences between the history of marketing and the history of marketing thought. The former focuses on describing the development of marketing practice, while the latter gathers how marketing ideas developed (Shaw, 2009).

## **BACKGROUND**

Robert Bartels, probably one of the researchers who has devoted the most time to the study of marketing history, states that the dimensions of marketing thought are at least the following:

- **Structural - Division into subfields:** Advertising, sales management, market studies, distribution, and other subfields
- **Intellectual:** Scientificity of the discipline
- **Temporal:** Temporal evolution of its development
- **Spatial:** Cultural evaluation
- **Interdisciplinarity:** Degree of interrelation with other disciplines of knowledge
- **Personal:** Influence by subjective factors that determined the individual vision

But Shaw and Jones, also researchers on the subject of marketing history, make a more succinct definition of the marketing school of thought, proposing only that it includes: 1) a substantial body of

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