

Chapter 31

E–Novation Curriculum (Communication and Education): Who Should Care?

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ABSTRACT

Marketing techniques need to reflect the era that they operate in, match customer needs, environmental dynamics such as social media, and evolve through educative processes to enhance ethical and expert practice. The future will reflect a scenario where customers become sparser than capital (Rogers, 2007), and if dissatisfaction levels in surveys can register highs of 70%, marketing approaches need to change (Jaffe 2007). Marketers are still fixated on labelling and attributing general characteristics to different generations and groups of people so that marketing can be targeted “appropriately.” For example the exposure of Generation Y to technology is unequivocal but the descriptions of people in this generation elevate this to levels where somehow these consumers have become genetically modified human beings, without the same frailties, emotional responses, and foibles because of their exposure to technology. Images from YouTube could be collected everyday to provide us with ready examples of Generation Y consumer frailties.

Generic labelling of consumers does not demonstrate sophisticated marketing and does not reflect the level of analysis that can be done to target appropriate or one to one marketing. On an ethical level, marketers need to focus on permission based marketing and apply co-creation models which have the potential to address the bottom line and shareholder returns without compromising the interests and wellbeing of consumers. Emotion remains the key brand response from consumers, but the new online research environment offers opportunities for marketers to apply analytical diversity and the use of creative

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and lateral thinking (Cooke & Buckley, 2007), rather than just intrusive marketing practices enhanced by technological capabilities. Improved practice, together with ethics, should be represented in marketing and business training and in the profession. All of this is influenced by technology and its flawed or decent application reflects human intervention as always. How much protection or care then should marketers exercise towards consumers in their environments especially since consumers are deemed to be more sophisticated? Educative systems should also ensure that sustainability practices are a promise of future marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Each new technology in our world is greeted with enthusiasm by some, fear by others, disdain, acceptance or just acquiescence. Technology provides us with great freedoms and tools. Imagine life without the discovery of electricity, the invention of the wheel, radio, phone, computer, camera or the iPod. Yet with the freedoms that technology provides come concomitant responsibilities and traps for the unwary, the crowd followers, the sophisticates and the thinkers. The pace with which technology develops is less fearful when you are immersed in it but future trend discussions often resonate with the more fearful scenarios that technology can promise to affect, even when that is not the intention of the futurists discussions. As both a positive and a negative, human intervention in the form of individuals, companies or marketers stands in between as a variable that will influence the uses of technology with varying levels of control, with positive and negative intentions and with beneficial or harmful uses. Marketers need to ensure that their applications of technology are responsible and ethical.

Organisations reflect our human frailties and marketing through its creations reflects the intent of those organisations to promote quality products and services or formulates a fiction as a means to an end. These fabrications or product or service untruths reflect the less palatable forms of marketing which engender distrust in consumers who find them frustrating and harmful. Unethical practices should also resonate with others in the marketing profession as unacceptable. Marketing

permeates all of our lives and so its conduct is very important.

What does “marketing” mean? Marketing is described as advertising, promotion or a function of the process of buying and selling. At a fundamental level is it about transferring and communicating information. So simple a premise and yet there is nothing simple about the way people process information, gather it and then use it to best effect.

It is very easy for some to condemn and dismiss marketing and yet ironically not be able to avoid relying on it in some form or another. The pervasiveness of marketing means that how it is taught both professionally and via curriculums needs to match the demands of the era that it reflects. In a world with so much data to hand, consumers expectations high, fragmentation of segments, social media networks, opportunities for new forms and methods of cooperative research and creation of products and services, marketing can evolve into very sophisticated forms. The Obama presidential campaign is a clear example of this. Co-creation models where consumers and companies work together to enhance product or service development appeal for their potential to address company and shareholder returns without compromising the interests and wellbeing of consumers.

However sophisticated consumers or marketing becomes some traits remain unchanged. In this technological age we retain our need for human contact, the fundamental sense of the need to belong to a group. In allowing us to achieve this in some forms online we have become even more vulnerable. Tangible alternative worlds/cultures

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