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Chapter VIII

The Evolution of the Theory and Practice of Marketing in Light of Information Technology

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Abstract

Marketing is a discipline that concentrates on the process of exchange between two market groups, and for this reason, it has been immediately involved with developments in the Internet—understood as a suitable phenomenon for discovering new opportunities and possible threats to modern business management (Burke, 1996) and as a commercial business tool (Alba et al., 1997; Quelch & Klein, 1996). The aim of this chapter is to highlight the marketing elements that, according to an accurate review of international literature, have been involved in the development of new information technology and, in particular, the Internet. The investigation concerns in particular

- *customers: the buying behavior of Internet users compared to traditional behavior;*
- *relations and communication: in this section we try to understand what are the barriers to the development of these relations: trust, safety, and manipulation are some of the obstacles examined;*

- *marketing research: an accurate review of international scientific literature highlights the online research techniques and tools that are of greater use to companies;*

- *marketing management: products, prices, place (distribution), and promotion are unequivocally decided by the company but may become an area of negotiation between companies and customers thanks to new multimedia tools; and*

- *marketing performance: this section illustrates what are the best performance indicators for measuring the activities carried out by an e-commerce project.*

Introduction

Marketing is a discipline that has become well-established within companies. It concerns the "social and managerial process by which a person, or group, obtains that which is the object of their desire, creating, offering and exchanging products and values with others" (Kotler, 1984, p.). It is because this discipline concentrates on the process of exchange between two market groups that is has been immediately impacted by new technologies such as the Internet. New terms have been coined within this discipline to describe the impact of technology, among which are interactive marketing (Deighton, 1996; Iacobucci, 1998; Webster, 1996), real-time marketing (McKenna, 1997), one-to-one marketing (Peppers & Rogers, 1997), and digital marketing (Parson, Zeisser, & Waitman, 1998). The problems arising from the recession of the "new economy," however, has made it necessary to carefully rethink and reposition some of the theories about the impact of the Internet on marketing.

The aim of this chapter is not to bring about a new interpretation of the marketing evolution in light of new technology but to highlight the marketing elements that, according to an accurate review of international literature, have been involved in the development of new information technology and, in particular, the Internet.[1] The investigation will focus on the following:

- relations and communication
- customers
- marketing research
- marketing management
- marketing performance

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