

Tipe Koleksi: eBook - Sosial Sains & Humaniora

Ageless Marketing? Strategies for Reaching the Hearts & Minds of the New Customer Majority

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Abstrak

We have been arguing for many years that marketing as usual is simply not working any more, and that fundamentally new thinking is needed to revive and rejuvenate this most vital and potentially noble of business functions—one that has, unfortunately, become the object of scorn and derision among most of its stakeholders. The book that you hold in your hands provides a large measure of such needed new thinking, and will complement very nicely our forthcoming book, *Share of Heart*, for which we are honored and delighted to have David Wolfe as a coauthor. Marketing's problems are legion, and *Ageless Marketing* highlights many of them brilliantly. Our own observations over the past decade or so have led us to conclude that marketing has been losing efficiency as well as effectiveness over time. In other words, marketing has been and continues to be in the throes of a productivity crisis. Other business functions (most dramatically, operations/manufacturing, but also many management support functions) have made striking advances in both efficiency and effectiveness, and have been able to do more with less year after year. Marketing, on the other hand, has managed to do less with more, gluttonously demanding and receiving more resources year after year, while delivering worse results: declining customer satisfaction levels, shockingly low customer loyalty levels, increasing numbers of alienated customers, continued reliance on gimmicks and constant sales promotions. There was a time when marketing's current *modus operandi* worked, and worked rather well. It was a time when most customers were young, the rate of household formation was high, national brands were few, national distribution was limited, national media were just emerging, television was in its infancy, latent demand in many product categories was high, and making things with reasonable quality and at low cost was a challenge. None of those conditions prevail any more. Yet, for marketers and their increasingly irritated customers, it seems, every day is *Groundhog Day*—recall the movie in which Bill Murray was condemned to relive the same day every day, without end. We don't deny that marketing has added new things to its bag of tricks, such as pop-up ads on your computer screens (which make Web surfing akin to duck shooting as you attempt to close windows faster than they appear) and a tidal wave of increasingly over-the-top and offensive e-mail messages that fill your in-box to overflowing every morning, many disguised to seem as though they are from long-lost friends. The problem is that marketing remains fixated on its bag of tricks. Though many of those tricks were novel and even interesting at one time, they are anything but that today. Moreover, marketing's use of such tricks has increased geometrically as the Internet has greatly lowered the direct cost of doing so: more marketers than ever before can use these tricks with ever greater frequency. The side effects of marketing today overwhelm its intended main effects. It seems that the more marketed to a customer is, the more frustrated and irritated he or she becomes, and the more manipulated and helpless he or she feels. This is clearly no way to win customers and influence buyers. Noise pollution, information overload, empty promises, outright exaggerations—marketing's negative effects on society have never been more pronounced. Sound marketing practices lead to low marketing costs

coupled with highly satisfied customers, minimal spillover of marketing communication to groups outside the target market, long-term co-destiny relationships between companies and their customers, and a strong emotional bond between companies and customers. Unfortunately, these have become the rare exception rather than the rule. The harsh reality facing marketers today is that their bag of tricks has become a useless, even dangerous relic of a bygone era. The power in the marketplace—economic, informational and psychological—has shifted to customers. Old-style marketers have themselves become sitting ducks now, and information-savvy customers can readily exploit them to their own advantage. In order to succeed in this new environment (i.e., deliver a reasonable ROI on marketing spending), marketers have to radically change their mindsets. Not only must they accept the reality that customers today are far more empowered than ever before, they must embrace it to fashion a new deal with customers, one predicated on respect, integrity and a long-term vision. Current demographic megatrends add to the urgency of the need to do so. Every market in the world is evolving rapidly. Emerging markets such as China and India are growing fast, but consumers there already have access to cutting-edge information tools that enable them to blunt the edge of traditional marketing weapons. Developed markets such as North America, Europe, and Japan are characterized by much slower growth and a simultaneous maturing of the population, blurring of gender distinctions, and the rise of feminine values in society and hence the marketplace. More and more consumers are in the more highly evolved, later stages of life, which is reflected in every aspect of how they lead their lives. Marketing must learn how to relate to such consumers.