

Reflections from an Award Winner: Marketing and Marketing Education

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At this year's Marketing Educators' Conference I was privileged to receive the Association's Marketing Educator of the Year Award. The award session provided an opportunity to reflect on the Marketing discipline and marketing education, and the discussion led the *Journal for the Advancement of Marketing Education* to invite this summary of some of the perspectives presented. They cover three areas (a) the evolution of the Marketing discipline, (b) the challenges faced by marketing educators, and (c) the future for marketing educators' associations and marketing educators' conferences.

Evolution of the Marketing Discipline

Marketing educators' conferences often bring experienced educators and early-career professors together. This mix of educators often leads to interesting reflections about the changes to the marketing domain both in terms of content areas and also in terms of pedagogical advances. Relative to many other disciplines it is certainly fair to say that marketing has been a dynamic, fast-paced field of study for educators and for students.

Consider, for example, that in 1985 principles of marketing textbooks did not include chapters about global marketing, multichannel marketing, integrated marketing communications, social media, mobile marketing, ethics, sports marketing, nonprofit marketing, or services marketing. In fact, one of the most exciting aspects of our discipline is that the opportunities for marketing to improve the creation and delivery of products and services, and to increase the value of those products and services to customers, are constantly growing. The boundaries of marketing have expanded to include every aspect of the global marketplace!

Technology that has an impact on marketing has changed dramatically also. It's easy to view the beginning of this shift as the adoption of "information technology" which led to what we called database marketing, and eventually relationship marketing. At that time, the idea that technology would generate customer-specific information that could be accessed through database management, and lead to more personal relationships with customers, was a revolutionary idea. None of us could imagine the current environment where the Internet of Things provides such extraordinary detail about individuals that privacy has become one of the most discussed topics among marketers.

In fact, the changes in content and technology have combined to allow us to describe distinct orientations adopted by organizations over the decades. The production era, the sales era, the marketing concept era, and the market orientation era all evolved over a long period of time. The most recent changes in technology, however, led marketers to consider a new orientation where traditional marketing is blended with online marketing. Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2021) suggest that our future orientation, called Marketing 5.0, will utilize "technology for humanity." They suggest that machine learning, natural language processing, robotics, blockchain, and other new technologies will combine to emulate human marketers and enhance value for future customers.

Marketing Education

While we have been making substantial investments in keeping abreast of the changes in our discipline, we have also been faced with unprecedented changes in our pedagogical and delivery approaches. Certainly, in the lifetimes of many of our colleagues the dominant teaching/learning experience involved only face-to-face lectures, modest interaction and participation, and in-class written examinations. Although a shift to high-engagement, experiential learning was underway, the pandemic necessitated a rapid pivot to remote online learning models. We quickly learned to adapt to social distancing guidelines and we are just now looping back in a post-pandemic environment to combine the best of both educational approaches.

Many programs now include field studies, live cases, internships, competitions, immersive challenges, hackathons, and sprints as tools for developing "work-ready" students. Certifications such as Google Analytics, Salesforce CRM, and Microsoft Office Specialist have also become popular credentials. In fact, the National Association of Colleges and Employers reported that the percentage of employers who screen job applicants by GPA has hit an all-time low (Job Outlook, 2021). Add to this the growing demands for online collaboration skills, digital communication expertise, and work-from-home discipline and it is clear that marketing educators are facing an expanding universe of necessary "deliverables" for their student audience.

Another fascinating development for the marketing discipline is that current undergraduate students are members of what we now call Generation Z. They see technology as an essential element for learning and

combine the use of computers and phones to find information and collaborate with friends, teachers, and influencers. This orientation puts a premium on up-to-the-minute information, practices, and marketplace events. Dorsey and Villa (2020) observe that “Gen Z has come of age with more outlets for learning than any previous generation in history. Long gone are the days when knowledge was locked away and only accessible in textbooks updated every few years. ... Now, almost all members of Gen Z can watch history on their phone as it’s being made...”. This development means that recency has increasing importance for educators’ classroom performance.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Looking forward it is clear that marketing educators face a variety of changes in the content of our discipline, the pedagogical tools available to us, and the student audiences we serve. In light of these changes it’s clear that marketing educators’ associations (e.g. the Marketing Educators’ Association, the Marketing Management Association, and the Society for Marketing Advances) can play an important role in our development as professional educators. First, the associations can serve as a source of knowledge about new content in the marketing discipline through our colleagues who are at the leading edge in their areas of expertise, and through partnerships with sponsors who are developing new tools and technologies. Second,

the associations can continue to facilitate research and publication opportunities by building on existing relationships with discipline research and publication opportunities through the *Journal of Marketing Education*, the *Journal for the Advancement of Marketing Education*, and the *Marketing Education Review*. Finally, the unique resources, collaboration opportunities, and membership interests create an opportunity for the associations to serve as enablers of “balanced” career tracks and master teacher levels of professionalism.

Oddly, there may be some circumstances where we are looking back also. For example, the looming ban on third-party cookies will soon have marketers utilizing pre-tracking marketing approaches again. Similarly, the descriptions of target audiences we simply called profiles are making a comeback as marketing “personas”. Finally, the increasing focus on privacy has many elements of our traditional discussions about confidentiality and anonymity and is magnified by the use of new widespread technologies.

It’s possible to feel a bit overwhelmed by the scope of the changes taking place in our discipline. However, it is also possible to see this environment as dynamic and exciting and an opportunity to lead business education to new levels of relevance, impact, value, and professionalism. The future is guaranteed to be a challenge and a chance to embrace a new landscape!

REFERENCES

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