The bold items in the margin describe the subject matter and are keywords for text retrieval. The final reference number under each abstract is also used for this purpose.

Abstracts

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Each abstracted paper is awarded 0–5 stars for each of four qualities:

- (1) depth of research
- (2) value in practice
- (3) originality of thinking
- (4) readability for nonspecialists.

No abstract is included for any paper awarded less than seven stars overall.

Measuring stock market reaction to sponsorship announcements: The case of Fiat and Juventus

G.S. Spais and G.N. Filis

CASE STUDY. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing* (UK), Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 169 (12pp)

Sponsorship, stock market, Fiat, Juventus, Italy

Notes a renewed rise in sponsorship deals, which more than doubled in value between 1996 and 2004. Sets out to examine which party benefits most from a sponsorship agreement — the sponsor or the sponsored — by reference to a 2008 three-year sponsorship deal between Fiat and Juventus football club, worth 33m euros. Concentrates on the corporate objective of sponsorship (enhancement of corporate image) rather than the marketing objective of brand awareness. Uses an event-study method (ie looking at occurrences both before and after an event) to investigate the behaviour of stockholders in both organisations during the five-month period surrounding the announcement of this deal. Analyses 123 daily stock prices, for both companies and for the Italian market index (Mibtel), noting also events other than the sponsorship announcement occurring in the five-month period. Finds that the announcement had a greater effect on Juventus's stock than on Fiat's; moreover the effect on Juventus was negative, whereas that on Fiat positive.

The approach has a limited interest: not only is the finding post hoc, but it is impossible to generalise from this to any other sponsorship agreement, actual or putative. Nor is there any attempt to relate the effect on company stocks to the 33m euros invested/acquired.

Research: *** Practice: * Originality: ** Readability: **

Ref: 10302

Net Promoter Score (NPS), word of mouth, WOM, Reichheld

Net Promoter

R. Shaw

OPINION PIECE. *Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management* (UK), Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 138 (3pp)

Notes the appetite of managers for new tools, typically abandoned after some 18 months. Looks at Reichheld's Net Promoter Score (NPS) as 'a nonfinancial metric that should be seen in the broader context of performance measurement and management'. Quotes Kaplan and Norton, inventors of the balanced scorecard, on measures of outcomes (lagging indicators) and performance (leading indicators). Asks three questions about NPS: (i) is it a lead measure; (ii) does it have the right characteristics in terms of cause and effect; and (iii) is it a general-purpose measure? Concludes that NPS is a lag rather than a lead indicator. Notes the differences between low-involvement (the great majority) and high-involvement purchases, and the irrelevance of word of mouth (WOM) in the former; questions its relevance as a factor of cause and effect even in the latter, except in very rare situations. Suggests therefore that NPS could only be relevant in very high-involvement situations. Quotes Kaplan and Norton again as decrying the very idea of general-purpose metrics. Notes Reichheld's use of an agency to generate substantial numbers of favourable reviews of his book. Concludes that NPS is pretty much a waste of time.

As if the experimental exposé of NPS (abstracted in our last edition ref. 10206) were not enough, here is a three-page authoritative demolition job: don't just read it — frame it. (See also our Editorial in Vol. 10, No. 2.)

Research: * Practice: *** Originality: ** Readability: *****

Ref: 10203

Consumers, service, complainers, WOM, Australia

Complainers versus noncomplainers' retaliatory responses towards service dissatisfactions

I. Phau and M. Baird

STUDY. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 26, No. 6, p. 587 (18pp)

Sets out to investigate, in an Australian context, different forms of retaliatory responses by consumers towards unsatisfactory service encounters. Notes four different forms of consumer behaviour in response to dissatisfaction: exit action, voice complaint, negative word of mouth and third-party action. Notes the differences in voicing complaints observed between people living in an individualistic culture as distinct from a collectivist culture. Notes that voicing a complaint is a desirable form of action from the supplier's point of view, since it provides an opportunity to correct the problem, whereas the other forms of action are either invisible to the supplier or beyond control. Details a questionnaire given to 157 Australian respondents who had endured an unsatisfactory experience: 81 of them had complained, and

76 had not. Shows the collection of both demographic and psychographic data, and the types of product/service involved. Finds that, in contrast to past research (in Singapore, Indonesia and the USA) gender, income and education have no effect on complaining behaviour, and that there are few differences between psychographic variables. Both complainers and noncomplainers engage in some form of retaliatory action. Recommends giving consumers facilities to complain, and analyses feedback.

The negative findings about both education and income are curious: is Australia really that different?

Research: *** Practice: ** Originality: * Readability: **
Ref: 10314

Word-of-mouth communication within online communities: Conceptualising the online social network

J. Brown, A.J. Broderick and N. Lee

EXPLORATORY. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* (US), Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 2 (19pp)

WOM, online communities, social networks

Notes the importance of word of mouth (WOM) in online consumer interactions — particularly within online communities. Speculates that offline WOM theory may not be adequate in an online context. Sets out to use a social network perspective to examine three key influences on the influence exerted by WOM online: tie strength (the strength of the relationship between information seeker and source); homophily (the similarity of characteristics between members of the social group); and source credibility (taking account of perceived competence and bias). Details two studies: the first a series of qualitative interviews with 30 respondents; the second an analysis of the interactions of an online community. Finds that traditional notions of homophily (eg correspondence of age, gender, education, socio-economic class, etc) are not particularly relevant online. Rather, the dominant dimension of online homophily is shared interests. Finds also that tie strength is not from individual to individual, as in offline theory, but between an individual and the website itself, with interaction between the individual and the site being an indication of tie strength. Similarly, individuals' estimate of source credibility was to a large extent based on the website, rather than the individual poster. Shows contrasting diagrams of WOM networks both offline and online. Concludes with a consideration of management implications, for website design in particular.

This is a fascinating study of how online communities work, and the findings make sense. The research base is very small, however, and there is surely much more to be learned from further work in this area.

Research: *** Practice: *** Originality: *** Readability: ***
Ref: 10311

**Online communities,
ILX****Participation cycles and emergent cultures in an online community***T. Ewing*CASE STUDY. *International Journal of Market Research* (UK), Vol. 50, No. 5, p. 575 (16pp)

Looks at the dynamic cultures growing up in online communities through the medium of one particular message-board example, ILX (www.ilxor.com), which started in August 2000. Indicates that this mature community is stable at some 80–100,000 posts per month. Notes that the basic unit of the message-board is a ‘thread’ or topic that, once introduced, produces interactive response; it may peter out, or lie dormant and revive. Describes the hierarchy of participants in such a community: lurkers (who observe but do not participate); newbies (new participants); regulars; elders (or experts, sometimes moderators); legacy members (those about to leave). Distinguishes motivations of members as principally content-based (finding and providing information on the central interest of the community regardless of personalities) or social-based (interested in social interactions with like-minded members). Suggests that a typical member’s lifecycle moves in emphasis from the first to the second of these, which is a key factor in the development of a community’s self-awareness and unique culture. Discusses the emergence of in-groups within a community, and the problems of moderation of content — freedom of expression versus censorship; should moderators also be participants. Discusses marketing problems of low consumer involvement, linking this to ‘talkability’ on such subjects within online communities.

Beyond doubt, businesses can benefit from interacting with online communities — perhaps from setting up or running them. But not without first acquiring an understanding of the cultural norms that they have acquired. For that purpose, start here.

Research: *** Practice: *** Originality: *** Readability: ***
Ref: 10320

**Data protection,
Information
Commissioner****Data protection: Tougher enforcement and increased power for the Information Commissioner?***E. Nettleton and I. Turner*LEGAL UPDATE. *Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management* (UK), Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 207 (6pp)

Notes recent drive for changes in data protection legislation, following repeated scandals of data loss by government departments, as well as representations by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) urging the grant of greater powers. Changes urged by the ICO include a penalty for knowingly or recklessly failing to comply with data protection principles; a power for the ICO to inspect processing of personal data, and to require a report from a data controller; strengthened enforcement powers to halt unlawful processing or to

prevent likely breaches of the Act. Notes the ICO's complaint of lack of effective sanctions. Notes a call for a legal requirement to report any security breach to those affected and possibly to the regulator, subject to a *de minimis* clause (as required elsewhere, including some 40 US states). Notes the recent grant to the ICO of power to impose a monetary penalty under certain circumstances, together with safeguards against the ICO acting as prosecutor, judge and jury.

(NB For more on this subject, see the Editorial in this same issue of Database Marketing.)

Data protection is a moving target, and is moving faster than ever at the moment. It is of course ironic, after the way in which governments have pursued the private sector over privacy, that the chief sinners are government departments themselves; government sins are now going to make life harder still for all of us.

Research: ** Practice: *** Originality: — Readability: ***
Ref: 10204

Managing event-driven customer relationships in telecommunications

E. Xevelonakis

EXPLICATORY. *Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management* (UK), Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 146 (7pp)

**Customer
relationships,
telecommunications,
CLV**

Claims that customer behaviour is influenced by six factors: competition, convenience, image, price, quality and lifecycle triggers. Discusses each in the context of telecoms: competition has greatly increased; convenience is enhanced by mobiles. Discusses lifecycle events (triggers) that can be used for an event-driven relationship approach: change of job; marrying; children; divorce; moving; retiring; end of contract. Notes ways of increasing customer value: cross-selling; up-selling; increasing usage; longer retention. Recommends creating customer clusters by using a clustering algorithm in conjunction with customer attributes, such as type of product used; usage (peak/off peak; national/international, etc); demographics (age, region, language, nationality, profession, buying power, etc). Discusses the attribution of numeric values to these characteristics, and the process of transformation (Sigmoid or Logarithmic) to equalise distribution. Gives some examples of how to interpret the clusters identified by this process. Briefly discusses testing, and the choice of channels for communication.

A mostly bland listing of the building blocks required for creating customer relationships. An easy read that tells you (some of) the things to do, without offering much help on how to do them.

Research: * Practice: ** Originality: * Readability: ***
Ref: 10205

Women, female executives**A business case for women***G. Desvaux, S. Devillard-Hoellinger and M.C. Meaney*SURVEY. *The McKinsey Quarterly* (US), 2008, No. 4, p. 27 (7pp)

Notes the increase in recent years in the hiring, retention and promotion of female executives — and at the continuing, if reduced, gender imbalance. Acknowledges that measures to improve women's opportunities have a cost — mentoring, monitoring, part-time working, etc — but claims that they also carry hard business advantages. Gives some statistics of women in senior positions in the EU, the US, South Korea and Japan, and the increase in the numbers of these in recent years — sometimes from a very low base. Notes the growing shortage of talent at all levels, set to increase as baby boomers retire. Quotes McKinsey research and research from Columbia and Maryland universities to suggest that companies with higher numbers of senior women have better organisational and financial performance. Makes some suggestions on ways of encouraging applications from women for positions, and for promotion: notes that women tend to apply only when they feel 100 per cent qualified, against 60 per cent for men. Discusses mentoring initiatives in the UK, and the use of family-friendly policies in Korea.

Not an in-depth analysis of a complex problem, but a narrative showing change occurring, suggesting further change required and pointing to some methods of securing change.

Research: * Practice: ** Originality: * Readability: ***

Ref: 10306

Innovation, co-creation, Wikipedia, Linux**The next step in open innovation***J.R. Bughin, M. Chui and B. Johnson*SURVEY. *The McKinsey Quarterly* (US), 2008, No. 4, p. 113 (10pp)

Notes the growth of online communities involved in the creation of knowledge, products and services. Instances LEGO, some of whose enthusiastic customers started to share designs online, prompting the company to recruit them in a co-creation process, and Threadless, which sells clothing designed interactively with its customers. Notes the problem of intellectual property rights; finds that most individuals involved in co-creation understand that these will belong to the brand, and that most are in the job for such rewards as fun, fame and altruism. Notes the development of Wikipedia, which now has over 1,500 participating administrators, and whose scientific papers are held by *Nature* to be as accurate as Encyclopaedia Britannica. Refers particularly to software products, including Linux, the open-source rival to Windows; suggests that distributed co-creation of software is actually a ticket to quality. Claims that 25 per cent of Western European internet users post comments and reviews of products. Speculates that these are the first steps in a long trend.

Having endured the largely bogus nonrevolution of CRM, we may now be about to face the real customer revolution in which customers tell producers what — and how — to produce. Do you prefer to fight it, or to join it?

Research: ** Practice: ** Originality: ** Practice: ***
Ref: 10307

Inconsistencies in US consumers' attitudes toward and use of electronic banking: An empirical investigation

Yi Cai, Yali Yang and B. Cude

RESEARCH. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing* (UK), Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 150 (14pp)

**Electronic banking,
US, online banking**

Distinguishes between e-banking (all services including telephone and ATMs) and online banking (via the internet). Notes the relatively low number of online users in the US (28 per cent in this study), compared with 50 per cent in such countries as Brazil, New Zealand and Finland, and slow growth (9.7 per cent from 2005 to 2006). Sets out to examine the relationship between the attitudes of consumers to e-banking, and their actual usage of these services. Details a research survey of 1,002 consumers collecting data on attitudes to e-banking, actual usage of various e-banking services and demographics. Online banking users had a lower mean age than nonusers; older consumers (and African Americans) experienced more barriers to online banking and/or perceived more disadvantages. Other demographic indicators, such as gender, income and education, had little correlation with usage. There was a discrepancy between attitudes and actual usage, inasmuch as people's attitudes reflected perceived problems in online banking, whereas its benefits were better predictors of actual usage.

Banks (at least in the US) seem to have assumed that customers would fall over themselves to use e-banking, and have failed adequately to answer fears, or to sell benefits. Nothing surprising there, is there?

Research: *** Practice: *** Originality: ** Readability: **
Ref: 10308

Mobile banking innovators and early adopters: How they differ from other online users

T. Laukkanen and M. Pasanen

ANALYTICAL. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing* (UK), Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 86 (9pp)

**Online banking,
mobile banking,
innovation, early
adoption, Nordea,
Finland**

Notes research interest in adoption of sundry forms of electronic banking, but claims that mobile banking, as a subset of electronic banking, has been neglected. Seeks to determine what differentiates innovators and early adopters in mobile banking from users of other online banking services. Claims that the ability of mobile banking to provide time-critical information (eg in stock trading) makes it a very important value-added service, but complementary to other online

services rather than a substitute. Introduces a questionnaire filled in by 2,675 users of online banking with Nordea Bank (leading world provider of internet banking, with 4.7 million online customers and an SMS-based service since 1995 and WAP from 1999). Shows profile by gender, age, education, profession, household income and size of household. Of these 2,675, 320 (11.1 per cent) were mobile banking users. Finds that only age and gender were significant variables: men and 30–49-year olds were the most likely users — in contrast to the accepted innovation pattern of youth with no gender bias. Speculates on the likely reasons for this.

Mildly interesting, but hardly counter-intuitive. Perhaps even more interesting is why mobile banking is still only used by 11 per cent of Nordea customers after 13 years' availability. Is it doomed to be a fringe minority service in perpetuity? Are its users not innovators/early adopters at all, but something like its total market?

Research: *** Practice: ** Originality: *** Readability: ***
Ref: 10309

Factors affecting consumer use of the internet for information search

A.L. Jepsen

ANALYTICAL. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* (US), Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 22 (15pp)

Notes the wider opportunities for obtaining pre-purchase information offered by the internet. Notes that use of the internet for this purpose has been found to be affected by low search costs, by the amount of information available and by freedom from physical contact with sales staff. Sets out to develop a model that will express the effect of all these factors in determining use of the internet for obtaining pre-purchase information. Details an experiment carried out with 233 Danish internet users. Shows the questionnaire used, which respondents were asked to fill in in relation to the search for pre-purchase information on one of a selected number of high-involvement products. Questions related to time spent in a variety of ways, to product interest and product knowledge, to general use of the internet, to perceptions of availability of internet information and costs of obtaining it, and to attitudes to shopping both offline and from home. Finds that exposure to in-home shopping, and amount of usage of the internet in general, lead to a greater perception of availability of information on the internet and of low internet search costs, leading in turn to extended use of the internet for information search. Finds that differences in shopping enjoyment or pleasure in contact with sales staff is not a significant factor; nor is product knowledge, although product interest is. Quantifies the positive factors in the model.

Nothing unexpected here: greater familiarity leads to perceived cost benefits and to increased use. While there may be some intellectual

**Internet, information
search, home
shopping, Denmark**

interest in being able to describe this in a quantified model, it isn't at all clear what marketing benefits can be derived.

Research: ** Practice: * Originality: * Readability: ***
Ref: 10310

If we choose to believe what Emerson didn't say, then we're all doomed

J. Bullmore

**Marketing, growth,
consumption**

JOURNALISTIC. *Market Leader* (UK), Summer 2008, p. 15 (2pp)
Paints a Doomsday scenario of fossil fuel exhaustion, climate change leading to landmass depletion, continuing population growth, and popular failure to adapt ingrained and selfish habits to changed circumstances. Comments that comfortable certainty that it won't happen like that does not rule out the possibility that it very well may. Looks at the universal obsession with the concept of perpetual growth and unrestrained consumption — linked in the public mind with the activity of marketing, whose whole purpose is seen as the encouragement of consumption. Holds that demonising marketing may be an obvious approach, but would be counter-productive. Extols marketing as the necessary partner of invention — and invention as the only route out of the mess we are in — as well as the means of persuasion to change attitudes and habits on a large scale: the one thing we know about marketing is that it can greatly accelerate the pace of change.

In a pause from the clatter of everyday life, one sometimes wonders whether the whole world of politics, business, sport, entertainment isn't simply dancing its heedless way to Armageddon. Well, here's another guy that feels the same. So what are we both doing about it? And you? Not much.....

Research: — Practice: * Originality: ** Readability: ****
Ref: 10312

Effectiveness of marketing expenditures

M.K. Baidya and P. Basu

**Marketing, customer
satisfaction, ROI,
Bengal**

THEORETICAL. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing* (UK), Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 181 (8pp)

Sets out three objectives: to study the impact on sales of such marketing efforts as advertising, sales promotion, salesforce, distribution and price; to investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction and emotional reactions to each marketing effort; and to obtain an ROI for each marketing effort, adjusted by the customer satisfaction indices. After a literature review relating to the above five types of marketing effort, proposes the use of three models, one for each of the three aforementioned objectives. Indicates the use of marketing data from one firm in West Bengal, together with consumer data from the area covered by this firm. Describes the research questionnaire used with consumers, and presents a regression equation

describing the relationship between sales and individual marketing efforts across the five types of activity. Draws conclusions, for this company/brand, regarding the relative effects of investment in each type of activity.

It is an extraordinarily ambitious (at first sight risible) aim for a short paper based on one small company/brand in India to provide a generalised formula for measuring every aspect of everybody's marketing. Nonetheless interesting, if treated with caution.

Research: **** Practice: ** Originality: *** Readability: **
Ref: 10301

Does marketing undermine public health?

M.B. Royne

CAMPAIGNING. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* (UK), Vol. 25, No. 7, p. 473 (3pp)

Notes the current concern among public health officials in the US over childhood obesity, running at 17 per cent in 2–19-year olds. Accepts that corporate marketing is not solely responsible for this, but claims it plays a significant role. Points to the advertising of high-calorie low-nutrient foods on children's television, and at the inability of public health officials to counter this, regardless of funding resources. Claims that improving public health in this area demands the cooperation, and acceptance of social responsibility, of food companies. Notes the occasional attempt to provide a healthier food option, frequently ending in poor sales, conclusion of unprofitability, lack of a market for 'healthy' food, and withdrawal. But points to success of low-calorie beers, originally produced as a healthy alternative, deemed a failure, but now successfully sold on the basis of taste — as also various forms of diet sodas. Claims it is time for public health officials to partner with marketing experts to produce effective interventions in dietary habits, and to promote the sale of healthy foods as regular products through effective communications to the marketplace.

A cri de coeur that I doubt will find much response from marketers. An industry that spent decades trying to defend the unrestricted advertising and sale of tobacco is scarcely likely to take on the malpractices of the food industry.

Research: * Practice: ** Originality: * Readability: ***
Ref: 10315

Brand equity for online companies

R.E. Rios and H.E. Riquelme

THEORETICAL. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* (UK), Vol. 26, No. 7, p. 719 (24pp)

Sets out to discover whether traditional methods of measuring brand equity on offline businesses apply in an online context by developing a

Marketing, public health, obesity, food, TV

Brands, brand equity, loyalty, Amazon, CDNow

measurement model of brand equity in an online context. Notes the alternative views that key principles of brand development are unchanged online, or that the internet, by creating a perfect market, renders brand considerations irrelevant. Notes, however, studies that show customers are prepared to pay 6.8 per cent more for books bought from Amazon than from CDNow. Starts with the traditional approach that brand awareness, brand value associations, trust and loyalty together create brand equity (defined as the premium consumers are willing to pay for a branded product). Creates a series of hypotheses about the interrelationships of these factors. Details a questionnaire delivered to 795 Australian students (of whom 503 had bought from Amazon, e-Bay, CDNow or Dell) with questions relating to awareness, perceptions of value, trust, loyalty and brand equity. Finds that awareness does not contribute directly to brand equity, but indirectly through associations of value and trust; perceived value contributes to brand equity both directly and through trust and loyalty; trust does not affect brand equity directly, but indirectly through loyalty; loyalty is the most important driver of online brand equity (an increment of one unit of loyalty produces 0.73 extra units of brand equity).

An interesting study; clearly, despite the price-comparison facilities of the internet, a small number of companies have managed to establish an online brand awareness leading to an enhanced brand equity.

Research: *** Practice ** Originality: ** Readability: ****
Ref: 10313

The competence and constraints of brand building for contract manufacturers

Feng-Hsu Liu, Heng-Yih Liu and Ting-Ling Lin

THEORETICAL, with examples. *The Journal of Brand Management* (UK), Vol. 15, No. 6, p. 412 (23pp)

Looks at the situation of contract manufacturers of electronic equipment in Taiwan, with whom giant US companies have placed contracts. Indicates that this outsourcing from the US was driven primarily by relative cost advantages in Taiwan. Shows how some such companies, having acquired manufacturing expertise and knowledge both of the products concerned and of the needs of the end users, have developed ambitions to create their own brands. Indicates the need for such contract manufacturers to evaluate both their own competence levels and the constraints that operate on them — particularly the constraints that arise from the possibility of conflict with their existing customers. Distinguishes between two different types of customer structure within this market — a concentrated structure, where a manufacturer's four largest customers account jointly for more than 50 per cent of orders, or a dispersed structure where this is not the

**Contract
manufacturers, brand
building, Taiwan, US**

case. Indicates that a company with a concentrated customer structure has more to lose if he loses one big customer; additionally he has fewer sources of knowledge to tap in trying to increase his competence. Looks in more detail at the affairs of four contract manufacturers (Quanta and ASUS manufacturing Notebooks, and BenQ and HTC manufacturing mobile phones), with the first of each pair having a concentrated customer base, and the second a dispersed one.

An interesting study on the long-term effects of outsourcing manufacturing, seen from the angle of the company to which the manufacture is outsourced.

Research: ** Practice: * Originality: ** Readability: ***
Ref: 10321

Consumer warfare: Implications for marketing strategy

D.J. Burns and H.B. Warren

IRONIC. *Journal of Business Strategy* (UK), Vol. 29, p. 6 (9pp)
Recalls the 1950s and 1960s as an era of population growth in the West, in which company growth was a function of the expanding economy. Claims this was replaced in the 1970s and 1980s by marketing warfare between companies, competing for a growing share in a market that was no longer automatically expanding. Claims that the success of marketing warfare as a business strategy has been lessened by shifts in power within the channels of distribution — for example, the growth in power of major retailers at the expense of manufacturers. But notes also the growth of consumer power, and the arrival of a marketplace in which warfare between companies is replaced by warfare between consumers, each seeking to outdo the other in the competitive acquisition of products for the purpose of interpersonal communication and competition: possessions become tools for constructing the idea of one's self, and for engaging, competing with and defeating others' selves. Elaborates a series of aggressive strategies by means of which consumers may seek dominance over others, and a series of defensive strategies by which they may repel such attacks. Suggests, in each case, ways in which marketers may take advantage of this state of warfare to sell appropriate products to either side. Instances recent advertising campaigns by Porsche and Ferrari.

I trust this piece is as ironically tongue-in-cheek as it sounds. Even then, it is an uncomfortably close-to-the-bone description of at least parts of our materialistic society. Perhaps the recession will cure all (some) of that.

Research: * Practice: * Originality: *** Readability: **
Ref: 10316

**Consumers, warfare,
strategy**

**Customers,
consultation,
collaboration,
engagement, corporate
transparency, public
sector**

Customer feedback

M. Benjamin

JOURNALISTIC. *Customer Strategy* (UK), Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 23 (4pp)

Advocates the process of consultation (obtaining public input), collaboration (a structured recursive process) and engagement (publicity for the issue of consultation) between a company and its customers. Claims that such a process not only improves customer care, but also provides better understanding of customer needs. Emphasises growing legal requirements for corporate transparency and inclusiveness: suggests that web-based collaboration presents a ready-made platform for companies willing to go down this line. Advocates learning from the public sector: many local authorities have been much quicker than corporations to understand the advantages of web-based communications with, and feedback from, their stakeholders. Provides a number of tips: profile and segment the audience for consultation; promote the consultation; deploy a comprehensive range of consultation techniques (interactive documents, polls, surveys, forums); acknowledge responses and keep consultees informed of outcomes; report upwards on, and analyse, responses. Emphasises the need for a customer database, to which responses can be fed back. Advocates keeping track of, and using, social networking sites. Acknowledges the difficulty of persuading people to respond when asked; suggests use of incentives.

Undoubtedly this is the direction in which the corporate world is moving. You can move now, and obtain some of the advantages of an early adopter, or be dragged kicking and screaming at some later date in a hopeless attempt to catch up with history.

Research: * Practice: *** Originality: * Readability: *****

Ref: 10317