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Opinion Piece

DDDMP — my ten year top ten

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Abstract

A personal review by the author of the ten most significant contributions to the Journal over its first 10 years which reflect important issues in marketing practice. The contributions are grouped within themes of customer relationship management and data management; integrated communications; consumer behaviour and attitudes; branding; multichannel marketing; marketing governance; and marketing optimisation. The changes to consumer behaviour and communications techniques facilitated by the internet and digital technologies are a theme throughout the review.

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Introduction

As we announced in the Editorial in our last issue, we decided to mark the achievement of 10 years of publication of this Journal by asking a senior marketing figure to choose for us the 10 most significant papers (in their opinion) from our first 10 volumes.

From time to time we publish, at the front of the Journal, an Opinion Piece. This quarter we have what you might call an Opinion Piece in spades: it is what its author calls a ‘personal perspective’ on the most significant papers published in this Journal over the last (and first) 10 years of our existence. As such, it is necessarily a subjective choice — but Dave Chaffey is a highly respected member of the marketing community, and we are sure his choice is of more than passing interest. Of course, if any reader has one or more choices of his/her own, we would be delighted to hear of them. Meanwhile, here are Dave’s views.

Review

In the last 10 years we have witnessed a transformation in marketing practice due to the impact of digital technologies. Over this period, the innovations in marketing this has made possible have been highlighted by contributors to *Interactive Marketing* (more recently renamed the *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*). The transition from direct to interactive marketing has presented many challenges, and many contributors have helped us by suggesting how marketing practices should change.

My review is a personal perspective on the significant changes in marketing concepts and practice over the last 10 years as reflected by contributions to the Journal. When reviewing the range of papers published, some common themes emerged over the period, so rather than presenting a listing of papers, this review is based around the following major themes:

Significant themes for marketing practice

- Customer relationship management (CRM) and data management;
- Integrated communications;
- Consumer behaviour and attitudes;
- Branding;
- Multichannel marketing;
- Marketing governance; and
- Marketing optimization.

For each topic, I have selected what I believe to be the most significant, engaging, and useful papers. These take different forms, whether they are academic frameworks, overviews of an emerging concept, descriptions of best practice or case studies.

Customer sentiment ratings

CRM and data management

We start in the first issue of *Interactive Marketing* in 1999 with a review by Robert Shaw of best practice in measuring the success of CRM strategy,¹ a fundamental approach that has remained a key marketing challenge over the past 10 years. Shaw notes that, at this time, business frameworks for goal-setting and performance assessment often did not take proper account of customers. In the appendix, he provides a useful audit checklist that is still relevant for organizations today. The popularity of current approaches such as Voice of Customer and Net Promoter Score show advances organizations have made in developing a customer-centred approach to marketing.

The second paper I have selected I clearly recall reading back in 2002, since it was a particularly detailed case study of a large-scale CRM implementation. The paper by Martin Nitsche² describes a methodology followed within Deutsche Bank to create the fabled ‘360 degree view’ of the customer made possible through conjoined data sets; he describes a data model of over 1,000 fields in 100 different database tables. Of course, data integration from multiple and increasing sources is a technical challenge many organizations are still striving to meet today. As well as describing the technical approach, this pair of papers is also notable for its description of how CRM should be aligned with business strategy and success measured through regular customer surveys.

Integrated communications and media synergy

Our third paper discusses another theme that has been important over the last 10 years. The paper *Media synergy: The next frontier in a multimedia marketplace*³ from 2006 is by Don Schultz, a contributor to

the journal in 2009 on the same topic. In his original paper, he argues for a model of media-neutral planning whereby the media planner considers the interactions among different media forms in a more holistic way. We return to this theme at the end of this review.

Consumer behaviour and attitudes

When searching for a new product, supplier or experience today, nearly everyone who can will unquestioningly turn to their favourite search engine, and for many this means Google. This shift away from marketing push to consumer pull is one of the most dramatic changes in consumer behaviour over the last 10 years. A 2006 paper by Wilson and Pettijohn⁴ recommends keyword strategies companies should use to tap into the rich seam of information that is available about customer search behaviour through tools such as the Google Keyword Tool.

Many would argue that an even more significant change in consumer behaviour facilitated by digital media is the growth in the direct online interactions between empowered customers and companies. Marketers have adopted the term ‘Web 2.0’ to collectively describe the technologies and marketing approaches used to enable consumers to interact through a bewildering selection of feeds, wikis, social networks, reviews, ratings, and mashups of all of these. Our fifth paper⁵ explains five different categories of Web 2.0 applications and strategies marketers can adopt to exploit their potential.

However, consumer response to the digital technologies has not been entirely positive. Indeed, consumers are rightly highly protective about their personal data, as companies such as Facebook, Google, and TK Maxx have discovered to their cost. Our next paper, by Keith Fletcher,⁶ describes privacy as the ‘Achilles heel’ of new marketing in its title. It reviews new consumer expectations for direct marketing within an era of request or permission marketing, and outlines the importance of developing a privacy strategy and policies.

Branding

It has been essential for brands to develop new ways to remain relevant and engaging in the digital era. A paper from de Chernatony and Christodoulides⁷ describes a holistic framework for using digital channels to support the brand experience. One of the key concepts covered is the need to develop what I term a compelling ‘online value proposition’ that leverages the unique communications characteristics of online channels. The authors refer to this as a ‘differential reward’ for the channel, and suggest that brand marketers should ask why their customers would prefer a web or digital interaction to an interaction through other channels.

Multichannel marketing

Many of the concepts I have described relate to adapting to digital media. While a large proportion of products are now purchased or

Online value proposition

influenced online within some markets such as information products, financial services, and travel, this does not mean that traditional media channels are unimportant in influencing sales. Companies that have succeeded in the digital era understand how to facilitate and measure the customer journey to purchase across channels. For example, Dell use E-codes and product category URLs to direct prospects to specific online locations and connects site browsers to its people through call-back and channel-specific phone number options. In this category, the paper by Bazett *et al.*⁸ remains valuable in providing a balanced scorecard-based framework for setting goals and measuring multichannel effectiveness.

Marketing governance

The organizations that have thrived over the past 10 years seem to me to be those that have successfully adapted to the changes and that have shown strategic agility within their markets. Managing changes to staff skills, organizational structures and the processes of defining and executing strategy have proved essential to remaining competitive. In this category, a paper by Andrew Parsons,⁹ then a consultant at McKinsey on 'organising for the interactive marketing of tomorrow', was and remains helpful in considering alternative strategies and structures to support digital channels.

Communications optimization

Among the papers I have selected, there is a common theme of finding ways to increase understanding of customers and communicating with them in an integrated form across different channels. Our last paper, by Angus Jenkinson,¹⁰ reminds us of the future commitment needed for optimization of marketing communications in what some are now describing as the post-digital marketing era, in which digital interactions integrated with other channels are now the norm.

Jenkinson describes communications optimization as involving a deeper understanding of customer groups, managing customers on a lifetime basis, and requiring a universal communication and planning framework. He also notes the importance of managing and exploiting customer knowledge collected across many touchpoints, with his research suggesting that this is a particular weakness for many brands.

The wealth of information available to companies about their marketplace, their customers, and their campaigns provides a fantastic opportunity to improve competitiveness. But it creates its own challenges of integrating the data sources and providing the best analytics systems and processes such that staff use these data to take action to improve performance. Communications optimization across multiple channels and customer touchpoints will perhaps be the biggest challenge for marketing-led organizations into the future.

My nominations for the most significant ten papers in the first decade of this Journal's publication are summarized in the references below.

Insight from multiple touchpoints

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