Editorial

A plethora of marketing terms

I often wonder if marketers are born with an innate tendency to create new terms for every little aspect or development in marketing – a desire, no doubt spurred by the idea that if you can claim to be the first to invent a new term and publish a book or article, you will ultimately become rich and famous. Indeed, I have always admired the Americans' ingenuity in conjuring up new terms such as 'selectronics'; meanwhile the rise of digital marketing and CRM have encouraged even more new nonsensical marketing terms from IT vendors, management consultants and new media experts. Are these terms meant to dazzle clients in agency meetings?

As former Chairman of the IDM, Graeme McCorkell has said, 'a good test of these marketing terms is if you reverse it does it still work?'. In relationship marketing, for example, can you have marketing which does not intend to create a relationship? Take integrated marketing, can you have disintegrated marketing?

Partly for your amusement and partly for a serious reason I have compiled the following A-Z of terms which might be attached to marketing. It is by no means complete and perhaps you would like to make further suggestions which will add to the myriad of terms.

A–Z of marketing terms

- A** Advocacy, AOL, acquisition, analogue, affinity, adult, awareness
- B** BTL, bottom-up, B2B, B2C, B2E, brand, blanket
- C** CRM, cause-related, cooperative, consumer, consumer-centric, competitive, curriculum, continuity, category, corporate, collaborative, conquest, coupon
- D** Direct, database, digital, dialogue, defensive, door-to-door, drip-fed, desk-top, data-driven, demassified, demographic
- E** Electronic, e-mail, effective, export, event-driven, experience
- F** Frequency, field
- G** Geographic, grey, global, geo-demographic
- H** Horizontal, household
- I** Interactive, individual, international, inertia, integrated, internal
- J** Junk, just-in-time
- K** Knowledge-based, knock and drop
- L** Loyalty, lifestyle, lifetime value, latitudinal, longitudinal, letterbox, local
- M** Mass, micro, MGM, measurable, maxi
- N** New media, niche, network, negative option
- O** Offensive, one-to-one, online, offline
- P** Permission, pareto, pyramid, POS, penetration, product-centric, partnership, positive option
- Q** Qualified, quality-driven, quartile
- R** Retention, relationship, response, real-time, reciprocal, regional, relevance
- S** Scientific, systematic, syndicated, sequential series, segmented, symbiotic, segment of one, spam
- T** Trade, target, top-down, tactical, telemarketing, territorial, third party
- U** Unaddressed
- V** Value-added, variable, vertical, virtual
- W** WAP, worldwide, website, wraparound
- X** A tough one
- Y** Youth, yuppie, yield
- Z** Zero-based

The emperor's new clothes

On a serious note, for the bright, aspiring cherubs inheriting the new marketing mantle, with this wealth of sexy terms and definitions to hang their hats on, there is almost a parallel to the evolution of the term 'direct marketing'. It was originally invented in a speech in 1961 by Lester Wunderman. Lester had learned the science of direct marketing from mail-order businesses, but felt he could not sell such methods to oil, automotive, financial services and airlines under that name, hence the new term, direct marketing.

Today, the same is true, as many of the definitions of relationship marketing or customer relationship marketing (or management) are really definitions of direct marketing under a new guise, but consultants and IT vendors know it will be easier to sell under these names to the new marketers at banks, telephone companies and airlines. The problem is that instead of embracing it, many academics and consultants dismiss direct marketing as being different from, say, database marketing and relationship marketing.

What CRM really does is integrate information systems and deliver the right pieces of information to the right places, on demand. This enables good marketing, but is clearly not a marketing philosophy or formula in its own right.

The term 'customer management' is the latest piece of jargon proffered by some consultants. No one will ever understand marketing if they think it is about managing customers — customers manage themselves and are not willing to be managed.

If marketing wishes to be taken seriously at board level it should be clear on its own definitions. Sadly, while new marketing terms which only repackage other definitions are still in vogue, the trend will continue. (For a few more examples, see the review, in this issue, of Faith Popcorn's and Lys Marigold's book, 'eve-olution: the 8 truths of marketing to women'.)

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