Editorial

Marketing, in common with many other disciplines, is driven and developed by learning from the latest fashionable topics — trends that everyone clambers on board, which are seen as the latest holy grail, but which inevitably give way to another new trend or topic.

In the 1990s we went from database marketing to relationship and loyalty marketing and on the turn of the century moved to the Internet and the new digital media revolution. When the hype subsided on the latter and business reality set in, a new trend emerged — customer relationship marketing. IT directors were empowered to pour billions into software and systems, while most marketers were relegated to the edge and watched with a fascinated interest from the sidelines, only really becoming involved when a communication had to be sent to customers.

The acronym 'CRM' is currently devalued in many businesses as it has failed to deliver the ROI expectations of most major companies. Perhaps it was the lack of a clear definition, too ambiguous business objectives or a failure to make the necessary cultural changes or properly train the staff that has caused this devaluation. The excuses are copious.

Whatever the reason, while it is still with us, companies are continuing to try to make it work for them — but there is a looming void. What follows CRM as the next major trend? What is the new marketing holy grail?

Recently there has been a surge of integrated marketing communications (IMC), sometimes called media-neutral planning. This, however, is not new. It was invented in the 1980s by the consultant Professor Don Schultz of Northwestern University, his first book appearing on the subject in 1993.

Don will actually be editing the next edition of *Interactive Marketing*, giving us a stateside view of the latest trends in the USA. He is in the UK in May to give a two-day seminar based upon his most recent book on IMC, which will explore the latest trends and thinking.

In addition, Don is giving a one-day senior seminar — 'Beyond direct marketing and CRM — Moving to a value-based marketing approach'. What is important about this is Don's pulling together of all the existing trends (CRM, DM etc) and pointing to a new way of thinking about marketing and to new direction for the future — perhaps this will be the new holy grail?

If you have any views on the new holy grail of marketing, do let us know.

Returning to reality, this issue of *Interactive Marketing* includes a number of excellent papers. Susan Baker's piece, 'CRM in the context of new consumer marketing', is based on the work of two research groups run by Cranfield School of Management — The New Marketing Research Group and the CRM Research Group. It gives a thorough examination of why CRM has not worked for so many companies. If CRM is to move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 it will need to adapt the learnings which are discussed in this paper.

Professor Adrian Sargeant and Elaine Jay's paper, 'The fundraising performance of charity websites: A US/UK comparison', gives a fascinating insight into why, despite the prediction that the Internet would generate a new set on online donors, this has not happened. Zahay and Handfield's paper which follows defines interactive marketing processes broadly to include CRM, SCM (supply chain management) and NPD (new product development). It explains very well how these processes work and how they can help the firm create value.

The final paper by Tom Lacki is based on a major research project which identifies the practices in the UK today among exemplary relationship marketing companies that are proven to deliver business results. To conclude this edition there is an excellent case study on Vauxhall Motors, Silver winner of the IDM business performance award, a legal update on the electoral register and a new technology briefing on search engine marketing.

For information on the two exclusive Don Schultz UK seminars go to www.theidm.com/dons.

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