Editorial

On page 318 — we print a letter from a reader who chides us gently for devoting too much space to e-matters when the bulk of our readers' budgets and time are spent in more traditional areas of direct marketing. To this rebuke he adds a critique of much of the 'hype' surrounding eBusiness, which he sees as techno-led rather than market-led: a series of solutions anxiously seeking problems.

Mr Chapman has a point, or two. The IDM is in process of extending its educational reach to cover the emerging areas of e-marketing. But it will do so while maintaining its total commitment to its existing flagship products — the Certificate and Diploma in Direct Marketing, together with an appropriate mix of ancillary courses to meet the demands of its traditional market. The *Journal*, as the organ of the IDM, aims to reflect this continuing commitment, and we would ourselves like to see rather more contributions on new developments in such familiar areas as segmentation, modelling, scoring, data mining, CRM etc. We promise not to be lax in seeking such contributions, and would be glad of any help from readers in obtaining the same.

The *Journal*, however, reiterates its aim in every issue, together with the issue's contents, '...to provide an indispensable resource for senior marketing managers seeking awareness of *new* [emphasis added] marketing concepts, strategies and applications'. Of course, there can be new concepts within direct mail, CRM, lifetime value analysis or privacy issues, and we acknowledge it is our duty to cover these. But when we ask each quarter what is new in direct marketing, a glance at the list of forthcoming seminars or the contents pages of our contemporary publications gives a clear answer. It is interesting to note that in Vol 1 No 1 of this *Journal* we printed 28 abstracts of articles in contemporary journals; six of these related to e-matters. In this edition (Vol 2 No 4) the count is 17 out of 27 articles.

Indeed, as we go to press, news comes that the *Journal of Brand Management* (also published by Henry Stewart Publications) will shortly be producing a special issue on interactive electronic marketing and brand management — guest-edited by a member of our own Editorial Board, Professor Mark Uncles of the School of Marketing at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.¹

Finally, there is an unfortunate growing tendency to regard the term 'interactive marketing' as covering only e-marketing. This is neither our understanding nor our intention in choosing this title for our journal. *All forms of direct marketing are interactive*. This is no mere semantic issue: the tendency to regard e-marketing as something separate and unique implies, and will consolidate, a failure to learn the hard-won lessons available from other areas of interactive marketing. Practitioners of e-mail will not thrive unless they can learn from their direct mail colleagues; the objectives and much of the methodology of e-CRM are no different from those of any other kind of CRM; the mining, or segmentation, or scoring of records on a database require the same skills regardless of whether these records are derived from activities on the Web or the telephone, or through the mail or interactive television. And for the seller of a physical product, the problems of fulfilment do not change by one iota when the originating order is received electronically rather than by mail or telephone.

Fulfilment is the subject of James Woudhuysen's paper, the second half of which we publish in this issue. Professor Woudhuysen indeed entitles the first half of his paper 'E-fulfilment', on the not unreasonable ground that he is discussing fulfilment of tangible products in the context of e-commerce. Nonetheless, he recognises that the physical problem of transferring a product from factory to consumer (whether or not through intermediary points) is one that direct mail and mail-order catalogue companies have been struggling with — not always very successfully — for many years. No one who has tried to do their Christmas shopping from a mail-order catalogue, only to find too late that items are out of stock, or wrongly picked, or delivered after Christmas, will underestimate the problems that are likely to arise from, for example, grocery shopping online. Traditional mail-order companies may not have all the answers — but they do know the problems.

Fulfilment (or, as he terms it, d-commerce) is also at the forefront of Alastair Tempest's piece on e-commerce. He too recognises, as no Director General of FEDMA could fail to, that this is a familiar problem to mail-order specialists — but one which e-practitioners are still failing to cope with. He goes on to explain the increased dimension of e-commerce problems caused by a reach which is not merely global but which is actually blind to national boundaries, and the dangers of failure to create adequate methods of self-regulation.

Lucy Jacobs of Siebel contributes an interesting paper on creating a multichannel eBusiness strategy, which includes a brief survey of the approach to this problem taken by BT Wholesale Services and Solutions. She defines eBusiness as 'the application of information technology to manage customer relationships more effectively' but with the crucial addendum that eBusiness is 'fundamentally a customer-centric phenomenon'. In our view, (leaving aside all the technological wizardry) this is the only truly new feature of eBusiness — but it is, potentially, revolutionary. It might well raise the question whether the marketer's (including, but not exclusively, the e-marketer's) aim of 'managing customer relationships' is, in the long term, viable: perhaps consumers will manage their supplier relationships instead.

But in the non-virtual world of today, CRM is still what it's about for most practitioners. Andrea Micheaux's paper on the creation of a relationship marketing database is a welcome contribution from France, built around the experience of a chain of garden centres. A detailed account of an actual client experience is embedded within, and illustrates a careful consideration of refined segmentation techniques through the use of customer questionnaires.

Gareth Jones contributes a paper on e-commerce and identity fraud, which contains a section on how to perpetrate fraud on the Internet, followed, thankfully, by a section on methods of prevention. While credit card fraud is no new phenomenon, there is no doubt that Internet shopping does give it a new twist, of which suppliers, and their customers, should be cognisant.

Peter Sleight's best practice paper on Tesco.com (which features also in James Woudhuysen's two papers last quarter and this) alleges that this business 'is by common consent the most successful online grocery retailer in the world'. Certainly it seems to have solved, in its own context, the fulfilment problems with which Woudhuysen is concerned, but, as he points out, its numbers, while impressive in absolute terms, are still very small in the context of overall grocery purchases.

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References

1. See the journal homepage at <http://www.henrystewart.com/journals/bm>