

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN MARKETING THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract:

Marketing is in a continuous development theoretically and practically, under the influence of a extremely dynamic and competitive global environment. Year by year, marketing budgets, regardless of the field of activity, grow, strengthening the statement of Robert Louis Stevenson: "everybody lives by selling something", and proving that organizations have understood that only in this manner they can maximize their opportunities.

Technological revolution and the Internet have created the premises for the affirmation of new marketing specializations, the latter managing also to be relevant in areas previously considered unattractive, such as those focused on non-profit activities that only reinforce the universality of marketing.

Key words: marketing theory, marketing evolution, marketing practice, globalization

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Currently, marketing is experiencing a tremendous development on both levels - theory and practice, development, which is underlined by the economic and social processes that occur in the world, such as globalization, the remarkable advances in technology, deregulation, market fragmentation, the levers of power customers etc.

However, in retrospect, marketing has emerged and started to be deepened both as a science and as a practice in countries with developed economies. Their retail markets were characterized by an abundance of products and services that were designed to put consumers in a position to choose the product best suited to their own needs. Equally true is the fact that marketing was spreading slowly, "only in the 50s its expansion began to be" explosive" concerning enterprises and other organizations from economies with various structures and levels of development" (Balaure 2002).

Integration of marketing within developed economies has created a misleading picture of the causes that were imposed at that time, accrediting the opinion that the abundance of consumer goods and services underpin the grounding and development of marketing.

Abundance is, a favorable condition, but not determining of appearance and of marketing promotion. In case of abundance, organizations are forced to focus their efforts towards the thorough study of the market. At the same time, however, organizations operate in extreme conditions, with more complex relationships in society, responding to the new, more refined demands and needs, which modify the structure of production, supports the pressure of transposing innovation, technology, new materials and products into profits, all involving a more accurate and permanent understanding of the market.

Furthermore, marketing is not only useful in the case of abundance, but also of the scarcity, that manifests itself in economic life, in some areas. Therefore, in recent decades, when society faced serious difficulties in ensuring the basic needs of raw materials and energy, researchers and practitioners have demonstrated that "the

importance of marketing cannot be reduced, but only occur changes in manner of use" (Cătoiu & Balaure, 1990).

Another phenomenon that has caused dramatic changes in the beginning of the century, was the increasing number of companies producing goods which focused a large part of the production factors, which led, on one hand to increase labor productivity and complexity and on the other hand to the deepening of social division of labor, to the specialization of producers, which multiplied the relationships between producers, and between producers and consumers.

If in the past, relationships between buyers and sellers were carried on in confined spaces, which give them the possibility of knowledge and correlation of supply and demand, emerging phenomena, a variety of providers and beneficiaries, of new and diverse products, _ a wide range, from a spatially point deployment of of view, of relationships buying and selling and so on, led to the of supply and demand non - synchronization, the manufacturer no longer being able to meet the needs of any company for his products quantitatively, but also structurally and temporally, which led to the emergence of stocks of unsold goods in some areas and periods, and in others to the lack of some products.

Under these conditions of enhancement of the market size, the economic operator was forced to operate, it emerged as a necessity the knowledge of the market size and structure, which involved identifying the needs, desires, motives, preferences, tastes of consumers, including the anticipation of their change.

The world we live in today is characterized by permanent changes. It is a world defined by two words: internationalization and globalization. In this context, to know how to survive, is for major organizations worldwide the main problem. Because of the internationalization and globalization processes, increasingly more companies are fighting for the same market, which led to the intensification of competition and hence the search for solutions to resist on that specific market.

Thus, to remain competitive, companies are forced to cooperate among themselves in different ways, to share knowledge and resources for gaining the necessary competitive advantage. Companies must accept that is the required to act - reactive and proactive, to the opportunities and challenges that accompany globalization (Nicolau, 2008).

The economic and social environment, which is in a continuous transformation, obliges organizations to change their physiognomy and way of action through the development of concepts, methods and techniques whose theoretical coverage represents the reconceptualization of marketing. Relationship marketing (the marketing of relations) and network marketing are expressions of such developments.

The company is evolving, practically, from the traditional one to a modern one, functioning in an apparent paradox, trying to be both centralized and decentralized, high and low, global and local (Olteanu, 2006).

In the practice of marketing, as Philip Kotler notes (2008), the following tendencies can be noticed:

- Acceleration - the organization needs to design their own structures and processes in order to respond rapidly to changes in the business environment;
- Globalization - companies should "think globally and act locally";
- Organizational redesign - staff training towards the creation of value for the customer and eventual elimination of disagreements between departments;
- Outsourcing;
- Partnerships with suppliers and customers - that way the company seeks to add value to goods and services;

- Mergers and acquisitions - benefic for achieving economies of scale and economies of diversity;
- Focusing - finding the most profitable business and consumers segments and focusing on them;
- Benchmarking - analyzing other companies' best practices for improving their own company;
- The transition from active ownership to brand holding (Kotler P. 2006);
- Shift from mass marketing to the personalized one;
- Companies no longer operate on a single market, but also in cyberspace;
- The notion of "market share" represents replaced with the "buyer share ".

We notice quite easily that the role of marketing in the organization is changing. In traditional marketing, marketers were the ones who had to understand customer needs and had to present them the functional departments of the organization, but nowadays any functional area can interact with the customer, this being even advisable. Companies that fail to do so and to respond favorably to the new tendencies are at risk of falling behind or even disappear.

Another factor that defines the role of marketing in current conditions is represented by the modification of consumers' value systems. The consumer is informed, sophisticated and powerful due to scientific and technical progress that has increased the quality, reliability and durability of products and the to the enlargement of opportunities for information, he is especially concerned about value, quality and service.

The consumer is the one who says to the economic agent what he wants, becoming thus part of the creative process, is one that sets prices and can choose the distribution channel which best suits them. It appears thus a new concept - reverse marketing that actually defines that consumer who has the initiative in defining the terms of making a change.

As a consequence, marketing must provide the manufacturer means through which to meet the most various desires of consumers and to make it available as soon as possible such goods and services. In this context, design, speed and standardization become increasingly important ways of influencing the consumer.

If we were to look in terms of traditional marketing, it is based on a number of instruments by which it manifests, as sales force, advertising, sales promotion and marketing research.

However, it is now necessary to have a newer set of tools such as customer relationship management, creation of complex databases, direct marketing, e-marketing, profitability analysis by product, segment, channel marketing or customer, experimental marketing (Kotler, 2006). The latter implies that marketers to filter out what customers feel when they buy a product or service and, practically, provide a simulation of that experience. For example, Bentley provides customers with an experience, not just a car.

Another tendency, which characterizes the current state of the practice of marketing in particular, is certainly represented by the emergence of meta markets which supposes the existence in one place of all activities related to a product or service. A good example is represented by the companies that operate in the online environment which offers you the possibility that at the purchase of a computer system to buy almost any adjacent product.

Even on such market (actually just like on a traditional market) it has switched to a higher level in terms of competitiveness and complexity of relationships. This level

is called hypercompetitive market and its main feature is that the position and sustained competitive advantage are really hard and not for long.

Moreover, such markets are characterized by unprecedented evolutions and dynamics, such as in the field of pre-packed goods where it has massively increased the concentration of distribution, the number of competitors has decreased, while the number of brands has massively increased.

At the same time:

- product life cycles have decreased dramatically;
- companies are going upon the principle that it is cheaper to replace than to repair;
- for any product, the number of alternatives increased dramatically;
- in advertising saturation rate reached a maximum and the fragmentation of the media complicates the launch of new products;
- the ability to find free space in the minds of consumers has diminished.

A new concept that Philip Kotler and Fernando Trias de Bes have developed and to which all companies are heading in the current market conditions is known as lateral marketing . It requires a marketing process that does not exclude the market nor as a starting point, nor as the end point, and puts at his center the creativity and innovation included in the instrument of marketing assets as valuable alternative for developing business activities.

At company level, however, the innovation process is confused with creativity. As highlighted by Professor Edward de Bono (www.edwarddebono.com), innovation requires the organization to implement a new idea; it often happens that the same idea has been used before by another company (Pascu, 2011), or it may have been borrowed, stolen from the competition - what is vital is to have novelty for that organization (Nicolau, 2011).

Creativity, on the other hand, means generating new ideas based on the circumstances of the company. As a result, innovation in itself does not involve a creative process, but the implementation of something new within their organizations. Very important is the fact that order to have a truly remarkable result in this direction, companies must know how to combine these two concepts (Nicolau, Muşetescu, & Tilea, 2010).

Lateral thinking is very different from conventional, vertical thinking. Information, for example, is used for the effects they produce and sometimes you might need for a mistake in a certain stage to finally arrive to the correct solution, which is impossible in vertical thinking (De Bono, 2010).

The alternative of lateral marketing gets great theoretical and practical value in market situations, analyzed in detail by the two authors, in which the vertical marketing, also known as the classic marketing, exhaust their potential, proving its methodological limitations. Practically in saturated markets, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find "niches" that provides companies development opportunities, the only alternative for these being the creation of new markets based on creating new needs, difficult, if not impossible, to surprise by playing classic marketing process (Olteanu, 2006).

The continuing evolution of the business environment, regardless of industry, will lead the emergence of new marketing concepts and will force the development of new specializations that certainly will have as central element the consumer.

Also, Kotler (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010) is trying to trace the future of marketing science, proposing, in this respect, possible concepts that could be assimilated soon, among them being :

- Community based processes - gathering consumers in representative community-type social media systems in which there are common bonds based on direct individual relationships between members; in fact, the consumer wants to connect with others like him, not with various organizations (Godin, 2008). The sooner they understand this, the more it will be able to try to create communities for their customers.
- Building character - the consumer appreciates authenticity and honesty and in most cases manages to identify the difference between the message sent and the reality (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Therefore, companies will have to focus on authentic messages and to provide experiences that exceed expectations. The loss of their confidence is equivalent to market extinction.
- Co-creation - a more recent approach in innovation, which supports the idea that each consumer a different experiences contact with the product / service reviewed, customizing it according to his needs and wishes. Co-creation implies the existence of a network in which customers, suppliers and all other participants in the channel are interconnected (Prahalad & Krishnan, 2008) and is based on three processes:
 - creating a generic product (platform) that can be further customized by each user;
 - allowing consumers belonging to the community to adapt the platform to their needs;
 - request feedback from consumers to continuously improve the platform.

Marketing, as a scientific field and as practical action, it is envisaged as having a content currently under reconceptualization, able to ensure the most profitable integration for the company in the characteristic economic and social environment.

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