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MARKETING

THE NEW CORE SKILL FOR ALL?

IF MARKETING IS ALL ABOUT NEEDS AND WANTS: IS IT MORE ABOUT MEANING-MAKING, COMMUNAL COMMUNICATING, AND SOCIAL TRANSACTIONS – INSTEAD OF JUST SIMPLY COMMERCE? WITH SO MUCH NOISE, SO MUCH INFORMATION, AND SO MUCH COMPETITION: IS MARKETING THE SILVER BULLET? AND, AS MARKETING IS SO IMPORTANT AND SUCH A BASIC FUNCTION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE, SHOULD WE ALL STUDY IT? SHOULDN'T AT LEAST ALL PROFESSIONALS RECEIVE MARKETING TRAINING - ESPECIALLY WITH SO MUCH TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL BRANDING AND MARKETING YOURSELF? READ ON AND FIND OUT WHY ...

Changing Skills

When I was at primary school, what were called the 3Rs – *reading*, *writing* (writing) and *arithmetic* (arithmetic), were considered to form the basics of a good education. With the advent of social media, reading and writing are definitely key. Perhaps arithmetic to some has become less important - as we have machines that can do those things for us. Also, technology consumption points to the abstract memorization of things



and information seeming less important than how we access, link, and use them - in a variety of ways and settings. We have new skills. For example, typing almost everything, predictive text, speech recognition, and spelling and grammar checkers have changed the landscape. Making mistakes, leading to green and red squiggly lines under words, can in fact be a way of problem-based learning. We have the chance to amend our mistakes as many times as we want, with little fuss,

unbeknown to others, and away from their glare and scrutiny. The art of right first time with ink and brush or pen is now just the domain of painters or calligraphers – I haven't written a job application in ink since the nineties. The same can be said for handwriting a full draft before typing it up – it just doesn't happen any more. Also, I used to know all the phone numbers of my friends, by memory. Now, I can count the phone numbers that I know on one hand. Predictions by futurologists such as

Google's Ray Kurzweil also suggest that by 2040 we will be uploading the contents of our brains onto computers – our entire personality, memory, skills and history; possibly also with two-way traffic boosting our brains with processing and storage power. And if we were in any doubt, analysts calculate that Kurzweil is right 86% of the time (Metro Newspaper⁴).

In talking we trust

The Telegraph⁶ reports that UK university admissions staff now rank “good written English” as the key to a good personal statement, beyond anything else – beating extra curricular activities. Kyle Wiens also writes in his Harvard Business Review Blog, titled: “Why I won't hire people who use poor grammar. And here's why”⁷ that, “*Good grammar is credibility, especially on the internet. In blog posts, on Facebook statuses, in e-mails, and on company websites, your words are all you have.*”

So, less time speaking on the phone and more time typing - the art of letter writing is back in fashion; but this season's fashion is cut differently. ‘Writing’ is *typing*; font and typography have replaced handwriting styles; your writing has to be timely, and on the right platform; search and keywords matter; and the tone in many ways has to be timeless – even if it's an instant response. Quick communication that's there forever.

These all point to needing more than just the sort of language instruction that you would receive in most traditional language classes. The timing, slang, marketing, branding, broadcasting, public relations, word of mouth, and ‘likes’ are all key also. We are learning languages within languages, the marketing of language, and the language of marketing. So, could we see a time when marketing appears as a course in more degrees, like science or history?

Also, building trust appears to be taking a different path. Think about arranging to meet your friends. Before, you arranged to meet and that was that – your unchanging word was enough to demonstrate your commitment and valued friendship. You only called your friend again (on and to a landline) if you couldn't make it - well before the time. Now accepting change forms stronger bonds. We SMS, Facebook, or WhatsApp our friends, and frequently more than one person at the same time; and it doesn't stop there – the experiential countdown begins. Texts punctuate the



build-up to the meeting... when you are leaving... you're on the way... you share travel updates... and especially if you live in a city like Jakarta, apologies for being late (or ridiculously early) due to traffic. Perhaps this is also why Indonesia has been branded the most Twitter and Facebook friendly nation on the planet - with a higher proportion of Indonesian internet users signing up to Twitter than in any other country (Vasawani, 2012; cited in Wilson et al, 2013⁹). With hyper-communication, much more is up for revision and change translates into choice.

But I think it's more than that – these texts are also used to share jokes, photos, the moment and any random thoughts, which cement those ties of kinship. So whilst our behavioural patterns have changed, that doesn't necessarily mean that the trust has gone - because we check and reassure through more frequent communication. We have platforms that are encouraging us to share more, and to share linked to real-time.

Seeding marketing

It took Business and Management academics and practitioners, spearheaded by those with marketing leanings, to champion a wave of better acronyms, and shorthand easy to remember memory jogging terms that actually match better

than those like the 3Rs. We have lists of P's and C's, SWOT, PEST, SMART and many more. By the end of this article you will see that I have added one more to your deck of trump cards. So is marketing all about a new wave of producing and packaging anything and everything better?

It would be a mistake to assume that marketing, as we know it, is a fairly modern phenomenon. *Marketing* as a noun and verb is relatively new, as is its study as a separate subject discipline with rapidly expanding specialisms. Texts do place Marketing's origins unsurprisingly within the paradigm of a market, which is governed by constructs outlining economic transactions and exchanges; and the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. The picture painted is one of merchants in a marketplace. However, with the advent of the technological revolution, and the subsequent information and social ages, marketing thinking and historical reflections are moving beyond the initial arguments of marketing being the progeny of the industrial and technological revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

From other perspectives: are marketers still, or have they ever been part of a merchant social class, similar to the one that emerged during the Tokugawa period of Japan? Or, are we members of a Hellenic diaspora? Or... could a case be

made for marketing being a basic facet of human existence, in the domain of all who interact?

Science and marketing or a marketing science?

Adding to the debate, I'd like to draw from an interesting piece of cross-disciplinary research. Last year I saw Beth DuFault and James McAlexander present their research² findings at a conference on Consumer Culture Theory, held at Oxford Saïd Business School. Afterwards, we chewed the fat a little and they were kind enough to send me a copy of their paper. DuFault and McAlexander write that:

"By researching primary source documents, we demonstrate that Newtonian science and the birth of what we now know as the scientific method itself achieved acceptance, in part, owing to the activities of Isaac Newton and his advocates that can be best described as marketing. The successful diffusion of the Newtonian scientific belief system was influenced by marketing activities that included promotion, sales of representative and demonstrative products, and publicity. These marketing activities worked to build the equity of the Newtonian brand and to overcome the competitive offerings of the time."

So, I return to the introduction of my article: especially in the face of increased complexity and connectivity, is marketing so important and such a basic function of human existence that it is something necessitating its study by all? And, with so much talk about the importance of personal branding and marketing yourself – shouldn't all professionals receive marketing training? With so much noise, so much information, and so

much competition can marketing be left to chance?

Well Isaac Newton seemed to fare well without any formal marketing training and qualifications. Also, if we put aside for one minute terms or naming; and instead look at definition meanings, or the 'doing' side of the equation – it would appear that Newton was someone who valued, understood and practiced marketing. Furthermore, imagining what life would be like for Newton if he were around today. It is likely that: he would receive media training, hire a public relations agency and agent, and have his own television documentary series. He'd keep a blog and tweet; and launch a social media campaign - uploading content on YouTube, iTunesU, TED, Pinterest infographics, and SlideShare. Well based upon his previous track record, relative to now it's more than likely that Newton would actually be doing much more.

Similarly, if we look at particle physicist, television presenter, and former chart-topping musician Professor Brian Cox: we have another example of great integrated marketing. In what has been termed by The Telegraph⁵ as the 'Brian Cox effect', Manchester University (where Cox lectures in quantum mechanics and relativity) have increased their A-Level entry requirements onto Physics undergraduate degrees to A*A*A; which is the highest entry threshold for any course in Britain - higher than Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, and Imperial College London. The number of students taking physics in Britain has doubled in eight years, bucking the trend for a dropping demand for higher education, with the introduction of tuition fees. Also, when Manchester

University raised their entry requirements, there was a further surge in applications.

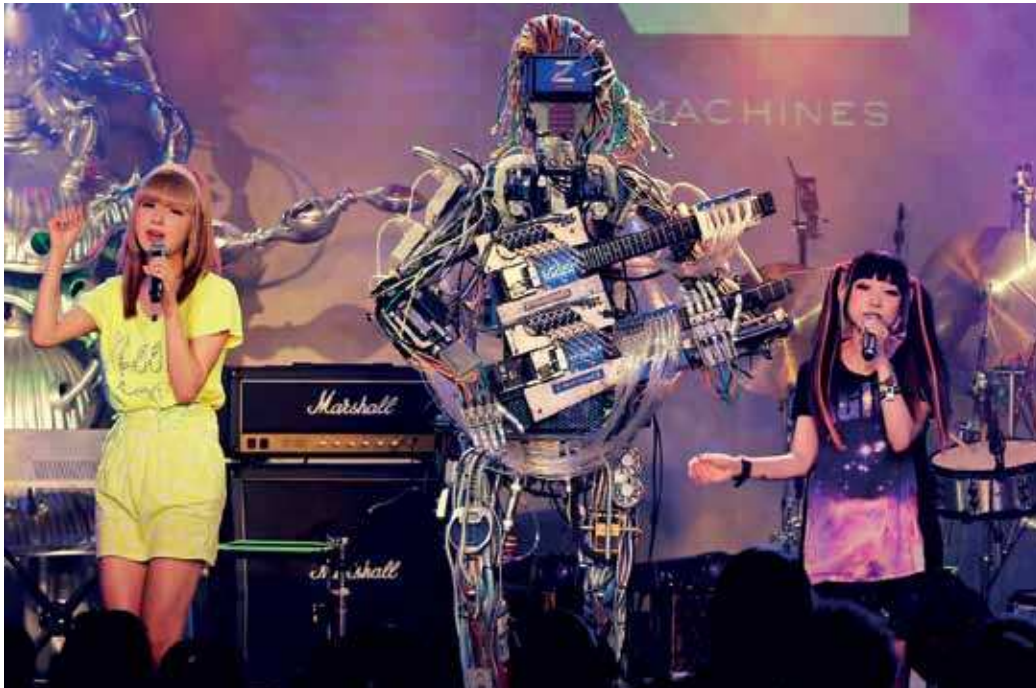
These two examples are great antidotes to the poisonous rhetorical questions challenging the value and need for marketing; often inferring that marketing is about making people want things they don't need or want, and transforming people into mindless objects. However, these examples still only suggest that marketing is a vocation or tool; but not necessarily weighty enough to shoulder scholasticism or yield erudition. For the focus of these two scientists was not marketing, but physics. I am going to argue that marketing, as we understand and frame it today, actually had to be present from the start of scientific experimentation – as a competitive and intended form of communicative transactional response to a variety of internal and external factors. Competition is a key component of marketing; and now marketing is treated by its stellar scholars and practitioners as a science.

Marketing thought and practice is increasingly drawing from art, cultural anthropology, engineering, linguistics, literature, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Literature searches, marketing curricula, and marketing professionals' CVs are evidence of this. These could, in part, be a response to increased competition and complexity; and the greater significance and importance of communication and branding – which are happening en masse and on such a scale that they necessitate greater nuanced and sophisticated engineering and control mechanisms⁸.

With these developments there is an argument for uprooting the reported origins of marketing, and replanting them within the ancestry of speech, which is 100,000 years old; and the birth of symbols, some 30,000 years ago. Alongside this, instead, I am advocating the use of more anthropological theories of value and economics, which are much broader; and understood within the context of culturally defined values - as social constructs. Here, value is judged according to 'meaning-making'.

So, as we are in the business of meaning-making, communal communicating, and social exchanges, so too dawns an age of embracing and celebrating more human traits - beyond industrialisation, commerce and structuralism. This is marketing that accepts and harnesses the paradoxical, oxymoronic, allegorical, metaphorical, and esoteric tensions in culture, emotion and





Suggested Attributes and guiding principles of 21st century Marketing: from A-to-G

So, where do we go from here? The P's of marketing are a well-established and enshrined set of tools, which have maintained their position. But in doing so, they are constantly being reinterpreted, repositioned and extended; in order to maintain their fit with changing geographies¹⁰. In 2010 Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan³ broke with convention, outlining phases of development according to Marketing 1.0 (product-based), 2.0 (consumer-based), and now 3.0 (customers as multidimensional, values-driven people, and potential collaborators). In support of these and in response to the 21st century advancements in connectivity, technology, commoditization, personalization, cross-culturalism, hybridization, virtual socialization - and not to mention the expanding remit and complexity of marketing: two key questions are how to identify, respond to, or create needs and wants – both old and new; and what tactics marketers should focus on?

The following set of guiding principles are offered regardless of the market, or marketing function; and can be applied on a macro, mezzo, or micro level. They are also equally

applicable to the marketing of products, services, organizations, ideas, individuals, collectives, causes, and nations. In-keeping with the spirit of marketing, I've created a marketing model whose letters also market the model. Marketers and their offerings have to be: Articulate, Branded, Credible, Dedicated, Emotional, Functional, and Giving [Figure]. If these can be executed and conveyed successfully, then there is a greater likelihood of target audiences mirroring these activities, leading to greater synergy and collective fulfilment. To this end, the model can be used as an interrogative checklist to establish *what, how and where* there is evidence of these activities.

spirituality.

Technological Artificial Intelligence, is a good example of how we are attempting to design agents that learn and have social and creative intelligence – capturing the human spirit. Japanese robot rockers Z-Machine took the stage for a gig in June this year. Before them in April, German robot heavy metal band [literally] Compressorhead, made from recycled scrap, played hits by the likes of Led Zeppelin and Motorhead at the Frankfurt Music Fair. How long before big data and artificial intelligence will be able to assist these robots in being able to write songs with *wabi-sabi* (imperfect, impermanent and incomplete) chic on their own?

A recent BBC News¹ article reporting the findings of a study undertaken by High Flyers in the UK, cites that graduates who have had internships are three times as likely to land jobs; and Marketing is the most popular sector for these jobs. Advertising and Public Relations are the most desired jobs by graduates, with 50% across the UK planning to work in London and 21% overseas. Furthermore, graduate aspirations of wanting to work in cities like London and further afield are indicators that marketers are seeking environments that are culturally rich and multicultural. Over 300 languages are spoken in London; approximately 45% of the population are



Hong Kong's celebrity tutors take out billboard advertising

White British, 15% are White non-British, and 40% are non-White – what a fantastic microcosm and training ground.

Apart from graduate career aspirations, it could be that the industry demands are greater, and graduates are responding or even being sucked into the profession. Nevertheless the demand is there and the discipline is expanding its tentacles; so should business schools do more to attract marketing applicants – as not all marketers will have studied marketing? And, with such demand, the call for more qualifications in marketing, marketed more widely will surely help contribute to the competitive advantage of individuals and organizations.

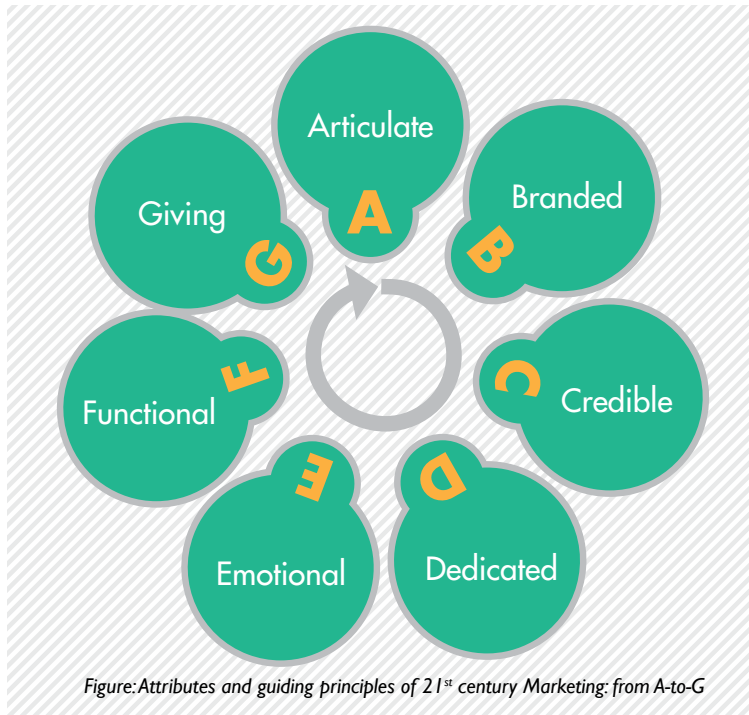


Figure: Attributes and guiding principles of 21st century Marketing: from A-to-G

Articulate: The ability to speak fluently and coherently, injecting ideas, information, and feelings - in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place. 'Speaking' is more than transmitting words and data with pitch, pace and tone; or initiating and responding to communication – it also encompasses the concept of deploying symbols, gestures, and objects. Your products, services, systems, employees and consumers all have to 'speak' to each other – internally and externally. Articulation is also the ability to break things down, join them together and manipulate them in a coordinated yet 'fuzzy' way. This idea of eliciting *Gestaltism* advocates that, "the whole is other than the sum parts" – there is a bigger picture being painted.

Branded: Labelling, claiming, packaging, and joining things together – under one shared interpretive identity. These are the: commodities, services, activities, ideas, communication, individuals and collectives – all in a unified way that is easier to understand, locate, and share.

Credible: A readiness and ability to impart authentic, believable, trust-evoking, and definitive propositions and communications. This is very much an active and collaborative process. The greater the credibility, the greater the latent and current social capital; and more time people are likely to spend engaging, over a longer horizon.

Dedicated: A conscientious, planned,

strategic, and consolidated commitment to delivery; driven by a desire for stability and excellence – manifest in employees and stakeholders; and the tangibles and intangibles that they produce.

Emotional: Compassion and an acceptance of human spirit. Now more than ever Marketing is driven by sociocultural exchanges – and many of these created networks are creative, nuanced, and perishable emotional constructs. These activities cannot be rationalized or controlled completely - and if too much rationalization and control is exerted in the absence of emotion, then there is a risk of: destroying bonds and networks; a rejection of power; or simply missing the point and the bigger picture.

Functional: Knowing, having, and serving a defined, but flexible purpose - with syncretism and synchrony. This is the bedrock for enhancing emotion; maintaining relevance, value, salience, top of the mind awareness, and sustained relative advantage. If you or your offerings have no current, revolutionary, and evolutionary role, then functionality diminishes.

Giving: A mind-set of giving and not necessarily giving to receive straight away, or in the form of a straightforward transactional exchange. But instead, giving with the hope that you will receive something(s), somewhere, from wide sources, and eventually to a sum value greater than your investments. Taking a

more altruistic long-tail approach, the importance of the individual, niches, creativity and innovation, new markets, and the less affluent are embraced and nurtured - rather than being overlooked or shut down.

**Case example:
The flight of the mythical Garuda**

Following my travels to South East Asia, and especially to Indonesia, the Garuda fascinates me. The Garuda is a mythical creature hailing from Hindu and Buddhist mythology. It is the national symbol of Indonesia and Thailand; and its usage can be observed in flags, logos, and statues in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet, and Vietnam. With Indonesia being the most populous Muslim country on the planet, with approximately 203 million Muslims who make up 88% of the Indonesian population: it is interesting to note the wide acceptance of this symbol despite its non-Islamic roots and linkages with other religions. Indonesians have adapted the Garuda's appearance when used as a national symbol, instead fusing it



with a Javanese eagle; so that it no longer resembles the traditional depictions of something which appears as a muscular winged male, with an eagle's beak. This is a smart move, because it avoids the likely censure from Muslims of using a symbol that has no Islamic tradition or resonance – it doesn't look or feel Islamic. It also demonstrates a sense of progression, pluralism and celebration of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the eagle is a symbol of significance. *Al-'Uqab* [the Eagle in Arabic] is one of the names of the pure black flag without any markings, used by Islam's Prophet Muhammad. Its name and colour originates the Arabian merchant Quraysh tribe – whose flag was black with an eagle. The Prophet Muhammad was of the *Bani Hashim* clan, who in turn were members of the Quraysh. The Eagle of Salahuddin (Saladin) is used in the Egyptian flag. Salahuddin is a hailed leader in Muslim history of Kurdish origin - who led Islamic opposition against the European Crusaders in the Levant. At the height of his power, his sultanate also included Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Hijaz, Yemen, and parts of North Africa. In addition, a search reveals that there are over 385 flags globally carrying the Eagle as a symbol.

Finally, the Indonesian national flag since 1945 has been two simple horizontal bands in red and white - symbolizing courage and purity of intent. Also, the flag is similar to that of Poland and Singapore; and almost identical to the German state of Hesse's and Monaco's.

So Indonesia, by luck or design, is gifted with a rich tapestry of symbols, colours and stories, which have the potential to bind together a nation, cultures, and religions – and mirror those of a global community.

Therefore, the argument here is that Indonesian brands, from the Individual right through to commodities, services, corporates and the nation have a fantastic platform from which to compete on centre-stage – that is of course if the guiding principles of marketing from A-to-G are worked on continuously.

Garuda Airlines

With an eagle in a blue to aqua gradient making up part of its logo, Garuda Airlines is perhaps a further good example of work in progress. Since 2009 they have developed a concept of the *Garuda Indonesia Experience*, based upon '5 senses' (sight, sound, scent, taste, and touch); and which includes '24 customer touch points' - from pre-journey, pre-flight, in-flight, post flight and post journey services. My conversations with senior executives over the past few months, following informal dinner table discussions at the MarkPlus 2013 annual conference, in Jakarta on 13th December 2012 indicate that they are up for the task, but transforming reality is a big undertaking. In February 2013 they announced a new 'Garuda Indonesia and Liverpool Experience', teaming up with Liverpool Football Club – who also have their own mythical bird and logo, called the Liver bird. A smart move. I have to say though, when I looked at the press release online, I did notice that the Garuda and the Liver bird logos were both positioned in such a way that the birds had their backs to each other and the Garuda was flying away – which is maybe not the best way of conveying partnership. Furthermore,



continuing in the theme of semiotics, will red of the Liver bird, work for or against the cool aqua of the Garuda? Only time will tell...

An added challenge appears to be that a sizeable number of non-Indonesian tourists and consumers also form a more positive connection with regions, rather than 'Brand Indonesia'. In some instances this even extends to people not realising that these regions are in fact in Indonesia. For example Bali is a popular tourist destination; Sumatran and Javanese coffee evoke images of being rich full-bodied, aromatic, and high-quality. And yet Indonesians are well aware of the fact that International media often encourages this drift by associating Indonesia with Islam (inferring negative traits and problems) and its regions with culture (inferring tolerance and attractiveness).

Conclusion

It's official marketing arrived ages ago and it isn't going anywhere – but it is moving, evolving and growing quickly. Furthermore, it's revolutionizing how people think about life in the 21st century. Everyone to some extent is a marketer - and therefore a key question is, what sort of marketer do you want to be, how plugged in are you, and how do you and others want to market together? My suggestion is that more non-marketing professionals and increasingly collaborating consumers are becoming more accepting of the idea that marketing is something that they can use and want to be part of. Marketing is about the human experience and is a fundamental function of human existence. Therefore, as marketers, we should also embark on a journey of sharing with the wider community not just what we market - but how to market.

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