

Have the rules of
marketing changed



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1) Have the rules of Marketing changed? If so, how? Yes according to the case study we can confidently say that the rules of marketing have changed marketing has evolved from an intrusive, “ keep throwing the brand in the consumer’s face” to a more intelligent non intrusive and “ let’s only throw it to only those who need or want it”. Marketing has learnt that through repeat advertising and repetition of brand communication only causes disinterest in the consumer till the point that he tunes it out. This is not to say that traditional outbound advertising is not effectual it is, but marketing has evolved to something much more than these rudimentary techniques. It has now found a medium which is intrinsic to the lives of consumers making it much more effective than traditional communication ever could be. Today marketing has become inbound that is it is done through social mediums over the net where it is marketed sublimely almost, by communicating something of value that the consumer wants to know and then merging the brand communication with that information leads to higher brand resonance with the consumer. Subtlety is now the name of the game for marketers in today’s digital age gone are the preachy, buy tones of communication today it is about telling the consumer what he wants to know and the adding the suggestion of purchase. Today marketing has moved from a push approach to a pull approach by developing content consumers find interesting marketers create lasting relationships as consumers find it interesting thus they keep revisiting that touch point to discover new information and thus the role of marketer has changed instead of his going to the consumer the consumer is now coming to him. Today the marketer has added roles he has to gain the attention of the consumer through content which fascinates him, to distribute this content unobtrusively to the targeted group and to create a

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community of followers who in the company's communications find an opportunity for personal productivity. Thus today's marketing man is much more than a salesman or an advertiser he has to become an outlet, an outlet for the consumer to find information relevant enough for him to spend time and keep visiting the touch point again and again. By giving free advice solutions and information relevant to the consumer the marketer is able to create a channel and the consumer who finds the information relevant will be drawn to it automatically, as a matter of fact in some cases it leads to consumer contact and consumer himself wants to know more about the product thus the roles are reversed where marketing has cold calling now the consumer himself calls to know more because he has found value in the product.

Thus the role of marketing has changed initially where marketing was all about grabbing attention and building recall today marketing is all about relationship building and providing relevant information and its distribution. Today the channels of marketing also have changed from traditional mediums to internet based media and social media. Where marketers initially communicated through advertising released en masse without any control over the disbursement of the communication, marketing is now done through blogs, podcasts, webinars and papers dedicated to specific groups only and here the marketer has complete control over the disbursement of the communication. Also these channels have a two way communication model instead of earlier times where marketing was one way now it has become two way, here using social mediums consumers can voice their opinions and needs which for marketers are invaluable as its direct feedback.

Without having to conduct surveys or group discussions marketers can now get relevant feedback through the net by introducing incentivised form filling and data collection using promotional measures they can get relevant data to narrow down their fields of communication by identifying the truly interested consumer and segregating him from the rest. Thus marketing has become more value driven.

2) Is Hubspot finding and serving the right set of customers?

In my opinion based on the case we might be able to infer that HubSpot is able to find the right set of consumer using their “ Funnel Approach” and servicing them. In case of finding the right consumer it seems quite clear that their channels are the right ones, by blogging tweeting and using social mediums only those interested would be approached and only they would follow the blogs and tweet, thus the touch points seem to be quite in order. Also the leads generated through their website and employees’ social mediums also seem to be enough, furthermore they segregate them and only the ones having the maximum potential are pursued which is a smart way of eliminating the ones which have no intention of purchase. Also by not targeting a specific consumer group the company was attracting a lot of diverse consumer segments thus by servicing all of them the company was creating buzz simultaneously in several industries at the same time. By creating groups on social websites, by creating videos and songs and podcasts the company was announcing its presence only in the select circles of media and internet savvy consumers it was looking forward to target. By creating songs like “ cold calling is for losers” it immediately created a unique positioning for itself and was able to attract the right target group-

those interested in marketing. Also through giving free software it was giving samples of its work once again only those interested would download them and use them. Thus it was finding the right consumer in view of their inbound marketing strategy.

Whether HubSpot was serving the right consumers is apparent from their process of weeding out weak leads and only pursuing those which had maximum potential not only for becoming consumers but also for sustaining a long term relationship with the firm. Also the firm's policy of customizing their software for the segregated consumer classes including " Owner Ollie's and Marketer Marie's" also talked about their separate needs and how to fulfil them in the best possible manner. To service customer diversity HubSpot took the pains of customising the learning strategies for adapting the consumer to the new software and products of the firm. By having different levels of product and platforms for B2B and B2C consumers the firm was able to keep both the big firms who had functioning websites as well as the small consumers who had just started with their online presence.

Also by focusing their energies on the Content Management Systems according to Lopin's strategy the firm took another key step in reducing the number of consumers who were just using the firm's product for an initial burst in their sales and then deserting the company by cancelling their subscriptions. By shifting them to the content management systems the firm was able to ensure they remain with the firm for longer durations. Thus they were servicing the right kind of consumer again by segregating them on the basis of their loyalty towards the firm into those who went for the content management system and those who did not and also on the basis of the

duration of their relationship with the firm and the amount of revenue they generated for their firm.

Thus in my opinion the firm is targeting the right kind of consumer by targeting the small business owners and the marketers without having any bar on industry or type of business HubSpot is technically choosing the widest range and base of consumers possible and then further choosing them on the basis of their potential to become long term clients of the firm.

3) Is Hubspot being too stubborn by not doing any outbound marketing? What do you advise to Halligan and Shah?

I feel that HubSpot is being a bit stubborn by not adopting outbound with the inbound marketing. Though they feel that it's against their policy of inbound marketing it doesn't have to mean that inbound and outbound marketing are substitutes they can also be complimentary to each other. Also the potential that is currently open for the firm would be tapped better using both these strategies also they can be combined using traditional messages but on modern media and channels. For e. g. playing TV adverts on a blog or creating virals which can be sent along with direct e-mailers, etc. Also if Roberge felt that he was dependant on the marketing team for leads and the sales team should also be given a chance to be proactive I agree with him on that if consumers are obtained through traditional outbound modes how could it affect the company. Also the policy of no cold calling is also a bit restrictive and extremist in nature I feel that sometimes the companies have come to expect cold calling and will not search for these products through the social channels, those customers are being missed out by the company using only inbound method. Also those consumers who are not internet

savvy at all would also be lost by using only inbound modes, they could be obtained by traditional methods and then persuaded to use inbound methods as well. Also not all consumers would be replacing their outbound marketing methods entirely with the inbound methods then HubSpot should be under no obligation to do the same. The sales figures and results would speak for themselves so then why should they have to stop from using outbound methods. This is the advice I would give Halligan and Shah and I'd propose a trial period where the sales department would be given free rein to use whatever methods of outbound marketing they would want to, at the end of let's say a month we could compare the results and if the number of clients obtained through outbound methods are not substantial enough then the company could go ahead with its policy of using only inbound marketing tools, but if the numbers are substantial enough then those outbound methods should be continued in my opinion. I feel that the sales department should also be given the autonomy it requires and a trial would do no harm, also outbound techniques should also be given a chance and that it would be a biased decision not to try out outbound techniques and dismissing them entirely.