

Is marketing science or arts flashcard



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Introduction The debating question concerning marketing whether it is a form of science or art has long been a controversial subject. Scholars over the past several decades have constantly argued attempting to classify and prove the term marketing belonging into either the art and science category. Marketing is derived by which a product/service originate, priced, promoted and placed/distributed to people who consume them. It involves lots of preparations, developments, organizing and decision making for all the four P(s) of marketing.

People's general misconception of the term 'marketing' is that it is an artistic field whereby the role of marketers is to be creative, innovative and thus cook up impressive actions and put their ideas ranging from product adverts, slogans, logos and mascots across the board. What people fail to realize is that beneath all above, there lies the strategic science that revolves the four fundamental P(s) of marketing – the product, price, place/distribution strategy that needs to be developed and finally the promotion .

The scientific classification for marketing is divided into a group of four factors ranging from practicality, knowledge based, academic based as well as intellectual needs. This essay will focus on some of key factors to argue the point that while marketing as an activity does tend to involve artistic endeavors requiring creativity on the part of marketers, the core of marketing itself as a subject matter is that it's very much grounded in the principles of social science, like psychology, for example. Discussion
Marketing Is Science:

In the past, academics like Vaile (1949), Bartels (1951), Hutchinson (1952) and Buzzell (1963) have strongly affirmed that marketing is a form of an art due to the complexity of marketplace behaviors was impossible to be formulated based on theories. Vaile (1949) believes that innovation, creativity with styles and intuitive feel is what appeals to consumers for a particular product or service. On the contrary, we have another group of academics that stands on the other side arguing that marketing is indeed science, people like Converse (1945), Brown (1948), Alderson and Cox (1948), Kotler (1972) and Hunt (1976).

Zyman (1999) states that his fundamental belief of marketing is that is not just alchemy or art but rather it is science because marketing needs to be carried out in accordance to business principles. It is a strategic activity focusing on a discipline and using the right tools to carry it out. Again, Zyman (1999) affirms that marketers whose focus is merely based on creativity are bound to have plenty of ideas but not when it comes to sales.

It is certainly undeniable that marketing jobs requires some artistic facets to attract consumers to their products or services in the vein of innovative taglines, slogans, design and packaging but these artistic elements do not just appear out of thin air but from methodological advancement of studies be it behavioral science or business areas as well as sociology. Sutton and Klein (2003) claims that marketers are businesspersons and their role is not merely consisting of being imaginatively trendy.

It is therefore a marketer's accountability to contribute intellectual research and process discipline to the enterprise marketing management. Marketers

must have hypothesis of marketing hopes versus marketing expectations to achieve based on a scientific methodology and setting out to experiment it. The common marketing failures are due to the incapability of marketers to apply knowledge of their clients to position their brands, inability to effectively market their brands beyond traditional media plus failure to create necessary customer processes due to lacking of culture and organization information for brand management.

Arndt (1985) in his own words quoted that ‘ Even a cursory perusal of scholarly articles in marketing journals is bound to confirm dominant status of logical empiricism’. He then further qualified that with proper resources such as technology and correct instruments, marketers would be able to produce and more pragmatic manner to solve any marketing issues. The diagram above further illustrates Arndt’s scientific marketing theory by dividing four factors (subjective, objective, harmony and conflict) containing four models (logical empiricist, sociopolitical, subjective world and liberation).

Marketing Institutes and Association Generally, science is classified as a method by which scientists and academics venture to erect a precise, consistent and logical representation or interpretation of a particular subject. Science also involves empirical research or otherwise knowledge, especially gained through experience. Referring back to the milestones of marketing development, The American Marketing Association, a professional association for individuals and companies worldwide associated with marketing was founded in 1937 and based in North America.

The establishment of AMA was resulted in a merger of National Association of Marketing Teachers (NAMT) and American Marketing Society (AMS). AMA's website (2004) approved and defined the role of marketing as a linkage between buyers and sellers through a flow of information which is used to identify and define the marketing prospects and issues from generating, refining and evaluating marketing actions to monitoring marketing performance as well as improving the understanding of marketing as a process.

Therefore, the study in marketing involves the information required to address the above subjects, derive a methodology plan to acquire the information, data massaging, result analysis and finally to communicate the conclusions and propositions. Subsequently, AMA (2007) went further to describe marketing as “ the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large”.

On the other hand, the Marketing Science Institute (MSI), founded in 1961 was established to bridge the gap between the theories of marketing science as opposed to real life business practices. Academic research and progress are funded by this nonprofit organization in terms of marketing comprehension in the business world (MSI Website 2010). According to Anderson (1994), based on the historical chronology of marketing, science has proven to be an adequate infrastructure with the establishment of institutions such as MSI and The Advertising Research Foundation (ARF).

Scientific Tools for Marketing Over the last number of decades, marketing scholars have invested much time and effort in developing the science of marketing (Anderson 1994). The culmination of all this work is the perception that marketing is now not quite accepted as a 'snake-oil' or 'seat of the pants' style of discipline but instead is seen as a more scholarly subject, one which can be clearly and professionally measured and studied (Brown, Bell and Carson 1996). The emphasis on methodological study and application of marketing as a science is strongly pushed by Sergio Zyman (1999).

He directly argued that marketing is clearly and undeniably a science, not an art – if marketing is simply taken as a creative effort, a marketer will have many ideas but likely not a lot of customers. He insisted that marketing in the real world is all about observation, creation of theories to help make predictions followed by execution or application of said theories/predictions and finally a review of results and fine-tuning of theories vs real world results. Market research is another area under marketing that's filled with scientific characteristics.

Duboff and Spaeth (2000) argued that market research can help an organization understand better its place in the market and not only present areas of opportunity but also potential pitfalls in the near future. Research when properly done with the correct tools will result in more accurate data from the highly subjective and human part of the market research equation – the customers. Organizations and companies these days have come to realize the real potential of marketing importance and have implemented more methodical and corrective approaches toward marketing their products and services to customers and clients.

The works of Thomas, Wodarz and Robitaille (2008) emphasizes on the returns of marketing investment (ROMI), which is a marketing metric that is entailed based on data management, analytical tools and technologies as well as organizational focus. The concept of ROMI has been adopted by several organizations from Walmart, Wachovia, Frito Lay to Procter and Gamble. All these three factors are scientifically based as they require extensive research and vigilant analysis before making an effective decision or forming an efficient strategy.

Sutton and Klein (2003) clearly state that organizations that have become industry leaders normally excel in their marketing methods because they view marketing as an investment and not as an expense. The 2 key marketing leadership factors are that these companies don't simply approach marketing activity based on gut-feeling and instinct - they execute clearly researched marketing plans and they religiously monitor ROMI (Return On Marketing Investment) using proprietary analysis tools.

These kinds of analytical activities enable the companies to make the right decisions and take the correct actions to maximize return to their businesses. Sutton and Klein (2003) go even further to advice that business leaders measure ROMA (Return On Marketing Assets) the same way that traditional business assets are measured for their rate of return to the business. However, while ROMI may be a commonly understood and accepted standard metric in measuring marketing effectiveness, typically, each organization has developed its own data model and calculation algorithms to obtain the results of its marketing activities.

The methodologies are usually kept as company secrets as the data from the calculations provide very valuable competitive advantages to the organization (Thomas, Wodarz & Robitaille 2008). For example, Procter and Gamble reportedly developed and used a form of regression or marketing mix model to better optimize allocation of resources and measure its ROMI values, finally using this data to set advertising budgets for a number of their brands (Neff 2006). Even an established market leader like Dell went on to engage an external consultant to create a better marketing effort vs. business outcome analysis model with the aim to improve the way they market their products and solidify their customer reach (Bender & Zambianchi 2006). A culture of accountability (i. e. measurable success or failure in marketing efforts) was even strongly driven by the CMO of Wachovia, Jim Garrity, according to Mahoney (2005). Garrity encouraged his managers to provide reports and recommendations not just based on ‘intuition’ but also to back their presentations with ‘fact-based decision making’.

Inevitably, this focus on marketing measurement not only kept Wachovia on top of its game in business, but also consistently put Wachovia on Fortune’s top 100 places to work list. Another organization that heavily emphasizes a culture of accountability and measurability for marketing activities is Frito Lay, where access to real time data due to its direct store delivery model makes the company able to respond quickly to the effects of marketing actions.

Measurement of marketing impact is not just the job of the marketing department but also has permeated to the upper levels of this organization’s management (Thomas, Wodarz & Robitaille 2008). Marketing Anthropology

and Sociology Marketing academics have provided their insights of their individual theories when it comes to marketing and its co-relation to social science. Kaplan (1964) defines theory as a system of laws whereby the laws are modified into a methodical correlation between one another.

It is clear that since marketing as a science concerns transactions between buyer and seller which happens in a social world, marketing is actually a social science. In fact, it can be said that both marketing scholars and managers basically study human behavior (Zinkhan & Hirschheim, 1992). When it comes to marketing anthropology, there are various ways to categorize research community which basically refers to the buyers and customers (Peter and Olson 1983).

Organizations need to take into consideration what potential customers are seeking in order to cater to market the products or services. Therefore, in order to achieve this, it will involve various mathematical modeling, research and surveys on demographics, geographical factors and customer behaviors. According to Dowling (2004), it is a complex process to understand the psychology behind the motivation of consumers' purchasing decisions.

Therefore it is crucial to build a strategic research technique to study the behavioral science of consumers which are generalizations, structural frameworks, strategic recommendations and market-sensing principles. Already it can be seen that in the sub-areas of marketing such as consumer behavior, sales management and channel behavior, marketing has already evolved from 'creative' research to one fraught with theories and a

collection of problem statements needing evaluation and tests (Anderson 1983).

As early as 1950s, Bartels (1951) has concluded that for marketing to become a proper science, it has to evolve from a purely business-world tool to one that has a number of basic irrefutable principles or theories. This evolution from business to science must be jointly worked on by both marketers and social scientists, the former to formulate basic hypotheses based on their real-world experiences and the latter to refute or support the hypotheses by way of experimentation and observation.

Admittedly, marketing has a long way to go before it can be recognized as a fully fledged social science discipline. When compared to more established social sciences, like economics, for example, marketing still carries the perception that it is a subject that does not prioritize the principle of knowledge acquisition or the drive to improve human society. Unfortunately, many still see marketing as fulfilling the needs of only a specific segment of society; name the commercial sector (Anderson 1983). On a positive note, Hunt (1983) postulated that marketing is progressing in his area on a good pace. He listed 4 sets of marketing fundamentals that need to be scientifically explained: 1. Buyer behavior 2. Seller behavior 3. Institutional frameworks which facilitate buyer-seller exchanges 4. The consequences of 1-3 on society in general With progress being made on at least 3 of the 4 fundamentals shown above, he is positive that given sufficient time and effort, like other recognized social sciences, marketing would one day have its own tried, proven and testable general theories.

Conclusion Marketing as a science may not be as established or mature in comparison to other social sciences such as psychology but it is also not a purely artistic subject matter. The ongoing argument regarding marketing being art or science is likely one that will not be concluded anytime soon but it is clear that serious efforts have been made and are still being made to establish the fundamental rules and measurable theories and hypotheses to push marketing up the scientific ladder.

The argument that marketing cannot be made a science does not hold water as essentially, marketing is the study of the human condition albeit not just a mental science like psychology – regardless of location, and race, culture and religion, human response to stimuli are basically not markedly different. The wants and the needs may differ slightly, but the basics of human behaviour do not change. It is important that some ground rules be created in the continuing study of marketing and in the implementation of marketing ideas.

A good ‘job’ is no longer just a matter of opinion, hearsay or guesswork – much work has to be done to analyze, calculate and predict and eventually measure the results and effectiveness of a marketing effort. There is a clear need for this especially now that the business world has become so much more complex. With clearly calculated and thought out marketing plans and activities, businesses will be able to push themselves to greater commercial heights in the face of increasing global competition and increasingly hostile and demanding customers. List of References

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