

# The war of words over the definition of marketing in the 21st century assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



The War of Words over the Definition of Marketing in the 21st Century The definition of marketing has been a strongly debated topic in the new Millenium. For more than 70 years the American Marketer Association's (AMA) definition has been the guideline for academics and scholars alike. A number of academics have been unsatisfied with the AMA's 2004 marketing definition , and it has stirred many debates (Gronroos, 2006, Dann 2008). Christian Gronroos in particular focuses on four elements of the AMA 2004 definition he does not approve of.

Firstly on the creation of customer value, secondly on managing customer relationships, thirdly on marketing as an organizational function and finally on how marketing is done. The key focus of this paper is to to analyse the problems Gronroos encountered and show that his critique is mostly adequate. Gronroos believes that ' Customers should get value from the actions and activities of marketing' (Gronroos 2006, p. 398). The AMA 2004 definition states that value is delivered to customers, which implies that value creation must take place in the production process.

It is more commonly believed that the value of a product is created by the customers themselves and not by the organization producing the good (Vandermerwe 1996, cited in Gronroos 2006, p. 399). Marketing is always centred around the consumers and the producers are in a constant struggle to improve their products to cater for the consumers' needs by learning more about them (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p. 6). Value creation is part of the marketing process; it is not being delivered (Gronroos 2006, pp. 400-1). ... It is not advisable [...] to include the phrase managing customer relationships in a generic marketing definition" (Gronroos, 2006, p. 402) since there is no <https://assignbuster.com/the-war-of-words-over-the-definition-of-marketing-in-the-21st-century-assignment/>

widely recognised definition of what a relationship is (Harker 1999 cited in Gronroos, 2006, p. 401). Although the terminology of the word is not clear, it is fair to say that in the definition every non-relational marketing process is being disregarded. Trying to force customers into a relationship (no matter what a relationship is being interpreted as to be) could lead to a marketing form that is not efficient because of not targeting all potential customers (Gronroos 2006, p. 03). The word “ relationship” should be removed entirely from a generic marketing definition. Another idea that should not be implemented in a marketing definition as done by the AMA (2004) is marketing being one organizational function (Gronroos, 2006, p. 405). It is true that the marketing department has a strong influence on the customers’ value creation, however there are many other departments that are partially involved in this process (Gronroos 2008, pp. 403-5).

Marketing should be focused on as being a business process and not just one function (Webster, 2005, p. 121). Saying that marketing is one organisational function is simply not true. Furthermore, Gronroos believes that the AMA 2004 definition lacks an explanation of how marketing is actually done in an organization. Whether or not a definition needs to elaborate on how something is done is a highly philosophical question as it depends greatly on how one defines the terminology of the word “ definition” itself.

In general a definition is a delimitation that indicates the ends and limits of any object with respect to all others (Pozzi 2001, cited in Mayer 2001, p. 272). Finding out how a task is exactly performed would be the endeavour of greater research and does not need to be elaborated on in a definition. The

American Marketers Association sets standards for universities and businesses alike and finding such big loopholes in their 2004 definition of marketing could lead to more criticism by their peers.

Therefore Gronroos rightly criticised the AMA's 2004 definition of marketing. AMA needs to rewrite their definition and come up with a more generic definition that does not exclude as many aspects of marketing as the 2004 definition does. List of references Dann, S 2008, 'Adaptation and Adoption of the American Marketing Association (2007) Definition for Social Marketing', *Social Marketing Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 92-100, viewed 17 August 2008, Proquest database Gronroos, C 2006, 'On defining marketing: finding a new roadmap for marketing', *Marketing theory*, vol. , no. 4, pp. 395-417, viewed 28 July 2008, Proquest database, item: 10. 1177/1470593106069930 Harker, M. J. 1999, *Relationship Marketing Defined? An Examination of Current Relationship Marketing Definitions*, cited in Gronroos, C 2006 'On defining marketing: finding a new roadmap for marketing', *Marketing theory*, vol. 6, p. 401 Pozzi, M 2001 *The Terminological Definition: Conflicts between Theory and Practice*, cited in Mayer, F 2001 'Language for Special Purposes: Perspectives for the New Millenium', published by Gunter Narr Verlag, 2001 Vandermerwe, S 1996, *Becoming a Customer "Owning" Company*, cited in Gronroos, C 2006 'On defining marketing: finding a new roadmap for marketing', *Marketing theory*, vol. 6, p. 399 Vargo, S & Lusch, R 2004, 'Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 68, pp. 1-17, viewed 3 August 2008, Proquest database Webster, F 2005, 'A

Perspective on the Evolution of Marketing Management', Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 121-126, viewed 17 August 2008