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Introduction

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“Anybody here work in Marketing? ...kill yourself, seriously!”

Bill Hicks, 1994

Since this book is about different perspectives on the marketing concept, this first chapter lays down the broad foundations of marketing as a subject. It is not exhaustive, but the foundational concepts of marketing such as brand, consumer behaviour and the marketing mix are presented in order to give a reference point for the discussions that will take place in the rest of the book.

The quotation used to introduce this chapter, and indeed this book, is a provocative one. It certainly is not resoundingly positive and it betrays a cynical and suspicious perspective on the enigmatic concept of marketing. We should, make it clear at this point, that the quotation comes from a live comedy show and it was said entirely in a sarcastic and symbolic way – it is not intended to represent support or empathy with self-harm. Marketing is simultaneously both vague and precise; it is abundantly evident around us, yet it is also mysterious and hidden. As we write this sentence, a quick glance around reveals the evidence of over 20 examples of marketing endeavour, from the branding on the computer to the carcass of an Amazon parcel torn-up this morning ... think of all the different stages that had to be brilliantly understood and resolved in order for someone to go from finding a book on Amazon.com to having it delivered to their door on a Saturday morning! Marketing activities infiltrate every facet of our lives, and ironically enough Bill Hicks himself relied on marketing activities to build his career and bring the audience into the theatre, where he delivered the above quote at his comedy gig in the 1990s.

‘Marketing’ is an umbrella term for a vast range of organisational activities, linked by one simple idea: understanding and providing appropriate value for the end users (or stakeholders). Marketing is therefore not just the

TV advert for a cosmetics brand broadcast deliberately during a programme known to be watched by a predominantly middle-aged female audience, it is also the reason behind that parcel being delivered on a Saturday and it is the reason why there are no words on the instruction manuals for IKEA furniture. It is a significant reason behind constant innovation in the things that make our lives better, healthier, easier, more productive, longer...

What is marketing?

A study on brand recognition by Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005) found that children as young as two could identify popular brands such as Mercedes-Benz, McDonald's and Nike. This simple study demonstrates the power of marketing activities – the essence of a business proposition can be distilled so effectively into a brand that children who can barely talk can recognise it.

This book is called *Marketing Perspectives* for a reason; it gives you a tour through some different perspectives on the marketing challenge that many of you reading this may face later in your careers. Some of the chapters give you a perspective on marketing from concrete, specific points of view, such as the chapter on money or the one on customers. Others are more niche, such as the chapter on celebrities or the one that looks specifically at services. This book will help you understand how marketing fits into most aspects of our lives and helps everything from hospitals to chip shops to international DJs connect to their customers/users and maximise the value that everyone gains. In every chapter you will find a case study that gives you a focussed, real life example of the concepts discussed in that chapter.

Marketing as a business philosophy (Value)

In recent times we have evolved away from thinking of marketing as a purely cultural production. This was the mindset that created the 4 Ps framework and encouraged us to understand marketing as a basic formula for considering these ideas (McCarthy, 1960). These are important but we have to appreciate that our understanding has moved beyond this to include attention towards the organic and fluxing world of consumer use and meaning. It includes the production that takes place amongst the consumer population and indeed the consumption that takes place within the producer population, as Peñaloza and Venkatesh (2006) discuss.

This relates to Lusch and Vargo's (2006) notions of co-creation and network theory, which place marketing as a more loosely defined concept, which Peñaloza and Venkatesh (2006) state is a 'socially-constructed' phenomenon. They support the idea of moving towards a hybrid interpretation of marketing that accommodates the interpretation of value in exchange and value in use.

What do we mean by this? Let's look at mobile smartphones, one of the most fundamentally disruptive developments of the last 10 years. We can conceptualise smartphones from many different perspectives. We can look at them from a value in exchange perspective, the tradeable commodity that is the phone itself and the measurable values of phone bills, data costs, app purchases. But we can also look at the use of smartphones; the way markets are being shaped by the social evolution that smartphones create. Some of you will be using a smartphone right now. They change the way we communicate, expect to interact and value items.

In 1941, Turner Morris stated that "The emphasis...is upon the services of goods, not upon the goods themselves...Goods are wanted because they are capable of performing services." (Holbrook, 1995: 116), and Abbott (1955) asserted that "People want products because they want the experience-bringing services which they hope the products will render." (ibid., 116)

The contemporary economy has evolved through the development of services and experiences, and this has been significantly supported by the Internet and digital technology. One of the things for which marketing is often criticised is 'disease-mongering'. This phrase comes from the pharmaceutical industry, where companies are accused of researching diseases in order to create treatments that they can sell to consumers, sometimes inflating the threat or severity of a disease in order to achieve greater sales of the treatment they've developed. Disease-mongering extends to all areas of the economy, and if we take a critical look at some contemporary business propositions, then we can see how marketing can act to package and promote certain needs in order to achieve profitability.

A powerful example of marketing packaging a product in a way that amplifies and changes our perceptions of how much we need it is the health and fitness industry. It is likely that many of the people reading this book will pay a subscription to a gym. Without realising it, over the last twenty years, membership of a gym has become synonymous with maintaining a healthy lifestyle: it feels like the only way to stay fit is to make sure you have a gym membership. But gyms for the masses are a recent development. In the recent past, gyms were reserved only for elite athletes and members of subcultures