

Book Reviews

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Handbook of Marketing
edited by Barton Weitz and Robin Wensley (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002, 582 pp., \$99.95)

Most dictionaries or encyclopedias of marketing are hardly worth reading. At best, they are intended for practitioners who lack B-school training and believe themselves deficient in common usage jargon; at worst, they are intended for a general public that knows little about marketing. The *Handbook of Marketing* is different; that Barton Weitz and Robin Wensley are its editors should suggest something out of the ordinary. A glance at the contributors (e.g., Wilkie, Webster, Day, Shocker, Keller, Hauser, Winer, Stewart, Parasuraman, Zeithaml) puts the matter to rest. The *Handbook* is an extraordinary effort. The blurb on the dust jacket is an understatement—the “*Handbook* will be invaluable to advanced undergraduates, graduate students, academics, and thoughtful practitioners in marketing”—the book is far more than that. The editors put it better when they say (p. 1) the “chapters in the *Handbook* ... summarize research in the substantive domain of marketing.” They go on (p. 1) to tell the reader that each chapter “provides an overview of academic research ... [in a] particular substantive area of marketing, ... offers a bibliography of important research in the topic area, ... [and] identifies productive areas for future research.” Although some of the chapters have been previously published in journals, enough of the material is new, and what is old is bundled in such a way that the book itself can essentially be considered a new work. In short, the *Handbook* is probably invaluable to all academic researchers.

What are the substantive areas the chapters cover? Does the book cover enough of marketing’s domain to make it universally appealing? Is there something for everyone? The short answer to all of these questions is yes. The *Handbook* has 21 chapters organized in five sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Marketing Strategy, (3) Marketing Activities, (4) Marketing Management, and (5) Special Topics.

Introduction

The three introductory chapters in the first section—“Marketing’s Relationship to Society” (Wilkie and Moore), “A History of Marketing Thought” (Jones and Shaw), and “The Role of Marketing and the Firm” (Webster)—are all masterful essays in their own right and will no doubt be used extensively in doctoral seminars. More important, they set the tone for the entire book; they are sweeping, scholarly, and eminently readable.

Wilkie and Moore open the introductory section with “Marketing’s Relationship to Society,” an abridged version of their insightful 1999 *Journal of Marketing* article “Marketing’s Contributions to Society,” which provides an unusually broad historical panorama and critique of marketing’s place (pros and cons) in society. This chapter provides a much needed view for a discipline that rarely looks at itself from an outside perspective.

The evolution of research about marketing as a discipline over the past 100 years is examined in Jones and Shaw’s “History of Marketing Thought.” The review is chronologically organized; it begins with studies of marketing ideas in the ancient world and moves on through the writings of late-nineteenth-century economists. The description of the emergence of marketing as a distinct discipline in the first half of the twentieth century and of the subsequent rise of modern schools of thought (marketing management, consumer behavior, macromarketing) is enlightening and instructive.

The introduction concludes with Webster’s examination of marketing’s place in the firm. In his chapter, Webster considers the changing place of marketing in the firm—marketing as exchange, selling, demand stimulation, market creator, tactics (4Ps), organizational culture, and business philosophy. This morphing/evolving of the discipline has had profound consequences both for practicing managers (not only has “what they do” changed, but the value placed on what they do has changed as marketing has been both more and less central to the received wisdom of how a firm should be constituted) and for scholars, who have wrestled with the whys, hows, and oughts of marketing. Webster’s view is that in an era characterized by extensive relationships with other firms, marketing’s role in the firm should simultaneously encompass culture (at the corporate level), strategy (at the business unit level), and tactics (at the functional level).

Marketing Strategy

The second section of the *Handbook*, “Marketing Strategy,” is somewhat broader than its title suggests, and it sweeps deeply into related theoretical areas such as the theory of the firm and market evolution. Indeed, the section title might well stand for the balance of the book.

Day and Wensley’s “Market Strategies and Theories of the Firm” relates research on marketing strategies to three theories of the firm: (1) the resource-based perspective, (2) the positioning perspective, and (3) the configuration perspective. They also present an extensive review of research

on marketing strategy issues associated with each perspective.

In “Determining the Structure of Product Markets: Practices, Issues, and Suggestions” (an updated version of Shocker, Stewart, and Zahorik’s [1990] article), Shocker reviews research approaches used to analyze market structures.

Gatignon and Soberman round out the section with “Competitive Response and Market Evolution,” an impressive review of major issues and research on competitive response and market evolution. They develop a conceptual framework that considers the interactions between these constructs and present the impact that environmental (exogenous) factors can have on both competitive response and market evolution.

Marketing Activities

The eight chapters in the third section of the book focus on the marketing mix and related issues—branding and brand equity, product development, channel management, sales force management, pricing, promotion, and service quality.

The branding guru Keller gives a tour of branding’s theoretical foundations in “Branding and Brand Equity” and touches on brand personality, relationships, experiences, communities, and corporate images. He emphasizes factors that affect the choice and design of brand names and logos, legal issues, brand extension, and leverage of brand equity through brand alliances.

Dahan and Hauser overview new product development in “Product Development—Managing a Dispersed Process.” The chapter is particularly valuable for its examination of product development issues in highly competitive, dynamic environments. Presenting new product development as an integrated end-to-end process, Dahan and Hauser identify research challenges unique to the times.

Anderson and Coughlan’s “Channel Management—Structure, Governance, and Relationship Management” examines issues and research related to the number of separate firms and levels that constitute the distribution channel, the frameworks used to coordinate and control the activities of channel members, and the management of daily activities by channel members.

Albers’s “Sales Force Management—Compensation, Motivation, Selection, and Training” discusses the problems encountered in measuring the performance of salespeople and examines the research directed toward improving sales force performance.

Ofir and Winer’s wide-ranging chapter, “Pricing—Economic and Behavioral Models,” explores issues and research as diverse as the measurement of customer response to price changes, customer price-information processing, interactions between price and price promotions and brand-choice models, competitive pricing models, and the impact of the Internet on price.

Considered together, Stewart and Kamins’s “Marketing Communications” and Neslin’s “Sales Promotion” constitute a thoughtful, state-of-the-art examination of the implications of the firm’s communications, broadly construed—including their influence on primary and secondary demand, awareness, and attitudes and their effects over time; the

behavioral and economic bases for sales promotion; and customer responses to sales promotion.

The section ends with the masterly “Understanding and Improving Service Quality: A Literature Review and Research Agenda,” by the service experts Parasuraman and Zeithaml. Building on their work with Berry, the authors explain the concepts of service quality, touching on its role in customer loyalty and profitability, and perceived value. They discuss paths to improving service quality in the context of the development and application of the SERVQUAL model and the implementation and measurement of customer service in technology-mediated consumer-to-business interactions. Their research agenda points the way to addressing unresolved and emerging issues on service quality.

Marketing Management

The three chapters in this section review issues related to how marketing managers actually make decisions, the relative importance of different types of decisions, and how decision support systems are used. Russo and Carlson’s “Individual Decision Making” begins the section with a summary of work on the process and phases of decision making. Building on this, Mantrala’s “Allocating Marketing Resources” surveys selected normative-theoretical and decision models and related insights for allocating marketing resources directly controlled by the decision maker. Eisenstein and Lodish cap off the section with “Marketing Decision Support and Intelligent Systems: Precisely Worthwhile or Vaguely Worthless?” a review of marketing decision support systems aimed at providing guidance to researchers and practitioners. The taxonomy of decision support systems they lay out is useful in developing additional research.

Special Topics

The last section is a potpourri of various subjects that do not fit well elsewhere, including surveys of global, services, and business-to-business marketing and an assessment of the impact of the Internet on marketing activities. With the exception of the final chapter, the authors provide competent but conventional treatments: Johansson’s review of foreign entry, local marketing, and global management is a competent, if cursory, starting point for those doing research in the area; Shugan’s “Services Marketing and Management: Capacity As a Strategic Marketing Variable” is of interest for its discussion of the relationship between capacity and service strategy; and Hakansson and Snehota’s “Marketing in Business Markets” presents a conventional but useful overview of the business-to-business universe.

The final chapter, Barwise, Elberse, and Hammond’s “Marketing and the Internet,” is a fascinating exploration of the still emerging, partly understood phenomenon that is reshaping all of our lives: the Internet. No one will come away from this chapter without some new insight. With the inclusion of discussions of Internet adoption, the exploration of usage and consumers’ experiences, consumers’ online purchasing behavior, Internet advertising practices, the economics of technology and pricing, the impact on channels of distribution, emerging strategies and business models, and

future prospects for technology and research opportunities, the chapter is a tour de force.

That a book of some 580 pages devotes approximately 15% of its pages to a bibliography makes it all the more valuable. *Handbook of Marketing* will prove an efficient place for doctoral students to start rummaging for dissertation topics. The book is a considerable one-stop resource for scholarly marketing; however, it will have enduring value only if it is updated regularly.

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