

# 16 A Radical Agenda for Marketing Science: Represent the Marketing Concept!

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The agenda for marketing science that I discuss in this chapter is radical in two senses: It is rooted in marketing's essential contributions to society and to business, and it excludes from consideration—indeed, rejects as a legitimate part of marketing—what is probably the most prevalent notion of marketing outside the profession. Accordingly, this chapter is about two things: (1) marketing's essential function, contrasted where appropriate with popular misconceptions, and (2) implications of that function for marketing science.

## **Why Have Regard for Our Roots?**

There are many different reasons why it is good from time to time to examine who we are, from whence we come, where we are going, and how what we are doing today may appear when viewed from some broader perspective. In the context of needed development in marketing theory, examining our roots may be especially fruitful by raising neglected issues that are, in fact, central to our very existence. More broadly, people return to their roots to refresh the spirit and then reenter the daily fray, renewed and invigorated.

The present chapter is motivated by such considerations and by one other. I want to express the perspective of a professional marketer who confronts the daily tasks of doing marketing in real-world organizations and, in particular, in the profit-making context of business enterprises. The pressures we face, or have faced in the past and may again, are not often reflected in the academic literature where, untouched by first-hand appreciation of our circumstances, authors discuss matters that concern us. Day-to-day, one's main function as a marketing practitioner is to represent the substantive, real-world, component

of decision making. That means that if, in our professional opinion, the firm's information about the real world is seriously deficient, we recommend postponing a decision until better information has been obtained. In any case, we make clear that the decision, if taken at that point, is not grounded in good information, but is a pure judgment call. As a practical matter, one never has all the information one wishes for, and the pressures on management to "do something" readily turn into pressures to "do anything." Political considerations (specifically, who in the firm's power structure is known to support what kinds of direction) may carry more weight than does the information we provide or recommend obtaining about the state of the relevant universe. Moreover, the time frame within which the wisdom (or lack thereof) of particular decisions becomes apparent may be quite distant, while in the meantime, rewards (in the form of being promoted out of the decision context or out of the firm) may go to those who simply "acted." In a word, the pressures in business today favoring short-term rather than long-term horizons are well known, but their implications for the status of the marketing function have not been articulated.

In those organizations where conditions are favorable for making our professional contribution, it is largely because top management is supportive as a matter of policy. It understands the stresses that arise in a competitive environment and it sees professional marketers as a positive counterforce, raising tough questions at the opportune time, namely, before productive resources are committed. The challenge that we face as professional marketers is a twofold one: In the short run, to extend the number of organizational environments where the significance of our professional contribution is appreciated and has become institutionalized; for the longer haul, to develop the conceptual and scientific underpinning of our discipline so that, in the difficult real-world circumstances that comprise, among other elements, interdepartmental rivalries and personal ambitions, we are not as dependent as we now are on having been legitimated from above, but have in our professional toolkit concepts and data bases that help us to speak for ourselves as professionals. We search the literature of marketing and find little that is helpful to us in the circumstances we confront. In particular, marketing authors give little attention to developing conceptualizations that flow from a clear statement of marketing's function in society and in business organizations. Accordingly, practitioners may seek in a book such as this on radical and philosophical thought in marketing a grounding for our discipline that furthers our professional contribution.

### **Marketing's Function**

The reasons for marketing's existence in society and in individual firms flow from two features of our current arrangements for the production of goods and

services: The separation of the user and producer functions that occurred when society evolved a system of division of labor, and the producer's need for a strategy of survival in the competitive conditions of a free market.

*The Societal View*

Because it leads to more efficient production, division of labor creates a surplus but, in doing so, entails a difficulty that makes marketing an essential societal function. If I am the cobbler and you are the tailor, each of us may become efficient at our tasks. But if I do not make for you the shoes you would want to make for yourself and you do not make for me the coat I would want to make for myself, each of us is less well served than we wish.

When users and producers are in direct contact with each other, face-to-face communication may overcome the problem that flows from assigning the roles of user and producer to separate individuals. That problem must be addressed explicitly when mass manufacturing and mass media of communications result in impersonal exchange-at-a-distance between users and producers. Society needs an institution that returns to users control over what is produced, which they give up for the efficiency that results from specialization. When society opted for division of labor, it made marketing an essential function. Goods/services have no claim on existence except to serve the circumstances of prospective users, and society requires marketers to stand where users stand, appreciate the influences they experience, and act for them. It charges marketers with ensuring (1) that the productive enterprise reflects the influences, psychological and nonpsychological, that users experience, and (2) that the enterprise is made to be, in effect, an extension of the user's mind and body.

*The Business View*

Whether one has in mind a centrally planned economy or one that espouses free enterprise, division of labor means that individuals other than prospective users decide what is produced. In either case, if the productive enterprise is truly an extension of the user's mind and body, user-circumstances (the conditions that allocate people's resources to doing the things they do) are the conditions to which producers must be responsive. A centrally planned economy lacks a built-in mechanism for giving effect to user-circumstances. People may choose not to use some or all of the output that central planners provide but, in a closed economy, they have only two means of recourse-become their own producers or go without. Neither option is likely to bring pressure to bear that would make planners more responsive to users' wishes. In a closed system, to ensure a productive output that is responsive to users' wants, it would be necessary deliberately to design a mechanism that leads to unpleasant consequences for

planners when users remain unsatisfied. In a free enterprise economy, the marketplace performs such a function by penalizing producers whose offerings users find to be less than desirable or useful, relative to the competition. A competitive market means that, for their survival, producers are dependent on users' finding their offerings valuable relative to the alternatives. Herein lies the rationale for the marketing concept: Do not sell what you happen to make; make what the customer wants to buy. Since producers must in any case choose the specifications of what they produce, why not guide that choice by information about the contexts of use for which the offerings are intended? In urging producers to take guidance from users' circumstances at the time when such information has value, namely, before deciding what to produce, the marketing concept capitalizes on what is a fact of competitive life in any case. Choosing the design and ingredients of your offering is directly under your control as producer. Making people buy what you "happen to make" is not, especially with your competitors bent on outsmarting you in pleasing your prospective customers.

### *The Essence of Marketing*

In sum, the argument from division of labor shows that society must find a way to reestablish user-producer communication, which division of labor severs. The argument from competition sees reestablishing that communicative link as the producer's strategy for survival. The two arguments give similar direction to the marketing scientist. As intermediaries between users and producers, the essential exchange that interests marketers is an *interrole* exchange (one that occurs within an individual who is both user and producer, who recognizes that some adjustment must be made, and who exchanges resources for an improved state of being). Above all, marketers need to understand the natural process of want-occurrence and want-satisfaction; in particular, we need to be conversant with the kinds of condition that allocate an individual's resources to effecting change and with the means of making appropriate adjustments.

Considering micromarketing, then, the primary professional domain of marketers is to answer the question: What shall we produce or, more broadly, what shall we offer? Since the 1950s, guided by the "marketing concept," practitioners have been directed to find the answer to that question in the use-contexts of their prospective users. Accordingly, in the substantive domains that are of interest to individual firms, it is marketers' task to speak for the wants of prospective users and to ensure that the firm's productive output is responsive to some specific subset of want-creating conditions. Various implications follow that run counter to popular wisdom: The marketing concept was never intended to be an altruistic doctrine. Selling is not a part of marketing. Marketers do not create demand. If, as some have suggested, the essential subject matter of our discipline is exchange or exchange relationships,

marketing and selling implicate distinctly different models of exchange. Finally, the marketer's behavioral objective is different in nature from that which advocates of social causes hope to achieve. Marketers seek to participate in behavior that is underway; advocates of social causes seek to change behavioral direction as they find it.

*Altruism a Nonissue*

In light of marketing's groundings in the fact of division of labor and the exigencies of competition, it is unclear how some authors have come to construe the marketing concept as an "altruistic doctrine" (Houston 1986). Certainly, marketing practitioners are not likely to think of it in this way and the error seems to arise from confusing the notions of *perspective and benefit* (taking the customer's perspective versus considering what benefits the customer). Considerations of efficiency and competitive advantage are more than adequate to explain why producers would want to stand in the shoes of prospective users in order to appreciate the use-context from the customer's perspective. The notion of altruism is superfluous.

A different set of issues is raised by inquiring whether or not customers benefit from having goods/services produced that are responsive to their wants. The answer to that question is not an unqualified yes, particularly when due to mass production, distribution, and media-want-satisfaction is the public and intrusive process we know it to be today. The negative aspects of our current arrangements for want-satisfaction warrant consideration in their own right, as an issue distinct from the reasons for according primacy to the *use-context* in deciding what to produce.

Adopting the customer's perspective is analogous to the value-free posture of the scientist. In each case, one is guided by what one finds and, within the law, follows wherever the trail may lead. In each case, critical reflection on the ethical implications of taking such a value-free posture is warranted and raises, among other thorny issues, the question of whose values are to prevail, should scientists or marketers abandon a value-free posture (Fennel( 1986a, 1986b). Speculating about the altruism or otherwise of the individuals involved is of secondary interest.

*Marketing is not selling.*

The essential difference between marketing and selling is this: *Marketers want to engage in exchanges* (usually on an ongoing basis', and, within broad limits, are open-minded with regard to the specifications of their offering. Sellers have ready-made offerings for which they want something in exchange-tangible (for *example, money* or real goods/services) or intangible ( in the case of social cause advocacy, for example, information that others have complied with their

recommendations). Misusing the term *marketing* to refer to the activity of selling is a widespread practice which may be excusable among the general public but is regrettable, nonetheless. For a number of reasons, selling as an activity has a place in the public's consciousness, while marketing does not. Having something to sell and trying to sell it appears to be the prototypical case. As laypeople, we tend to accept existing goods and services as givens, forgetting that each is the result of human decision. Then, to the layperson's actual experience that goods/services arrive ready-made is added confusion from the widespread practice of sellers, persons, and organizations, who, anxious to avoid the negative connotations of "selling," describing themselves as marketers and use *to market as* a euphemism for *to sell*. In consequence, used as a verb, *to market* has acquired pejorative connotations similar to those associated with high-pressure sales tactics; more sinisterly, for some, it may even connote using a special expertise held within the profession to manipulate the trusting and the unsuspecting. It is worth noting that marketing practitioners and a very few authors who understand the marketing-selling distinction do not use *market as* a transitive verb, for the excellent reason that, once the object exists, the opportunity to engage in marketing is severely restricted. Moreover, many other words are available (e.g., *promote, advertise, publicize, sell*) to refer to activities that may occur when the characteristics of an offering are regarded as fixed.

In distinguishing marketing from selling, I have in mind two notions of "selling," from each of which marketing is distinguished. First, there is what I shall call the strong notion of selling. I refer to the stereotype of a high-pressure salesperson, including the enterprising youths who, uninvited, clean your windshield while you are stuck in traffic. There is a coercive element in strong selling. In contrast, *weak* selling is any noncoercive attempt to induce an individual to adapt to some ready-made offering-good, service, or idea. Much social cause advocacy belongs here (e.g., stop smoking, it is bad for you; start exercising, it is good for you). Contrary to popular misconception, the promotion of goods and services that is conducted under the aegis of professional marketers is distinguished from selling in either sense. Specifically, since marketers view the characteristics of the offering as variable, promoting for marketers is the targeted dissemination of relevant information (i.e., communicating to those prospective users selected as targets the availability of offerings designed for their use). In marketing, persuasion or behavioral influence is achieved by adapting the characteristics of offerings to those of the targets' use-context. *Coercive measures* and the suggestion that a prospective purchaser should adapt to fit the seller's specifications are foreign to the notion of marketing.

Potentially damaging to our discipline has been the practice of many contributors to the academic literature who have in mind a model of selling when they write about marketing. In a vast amount of "marketing" writing,

examining the text leaves no doubt that the author assumes that an offering exists and that its attributes are no longer modifiable. When this happens, the key marketing question of what shall we make and all its attendant issues are assumed away. Discussion of structural rigidities arising, for example, from productive decisions at other levels or times (e.g., Dholakia, Dholakia, and Firat 1983; appear all too rarely.

Certain considerations may extenuate what would otherwise be an extraordinarily reprehensible example of dereliction by marketing scholars and scientists. Scholars trained in other disciplines, such as operations research and the social sciences, have contributed to our literature. Not having experienced the tasks and responsibilities of marketing practitioners, some of these scholars have brought their science and their scholarship to bear in regard to a misconception of marketing, which they hold as members of the general public. It is, of course, true that the marketing concept is prominently featured in most, probably all, textbooks in marketing and that it unambiguously distinguishes marketing and selling: "Do not sell what you happen to make: make what the customer wants to buy." It is similarly true that, having paid lip service to the marketing concept in their first chapters, textbook authors fail to follow up with systematic treatments of the marketing--selling distinction or with conceptualizations that marketing warrants. We may search the literature of marketing for representations of the marketing concept and find virtually none. "Make what the customer wants to buy" demands, above all, that marketing scientists represent the conditions that dispose people to exchange their resources for an unproved state. It requires a model of marketing to include terms reflecting the influences on customers that occur outside the marketplace, which imbue a marketplace offering with value--the premarketplace elements that marketers must investigate in order to "make what the customer wants." When marketing's grounding in division of labor and competitive pressures is understood, it is unnecessary to argue the importance of the customer- the idea that is already embodied in the marketing concept-as Howard (1983) does, for example. His interesting conceptualization lacks, as does that of Wind and Robertson (1983;), a representation of the premarketplace elements, personal and environmental, that it is marketing's function to investigate and serve. As I discuss later, a marketing orientation influences the design of empirical research in characteristic ways, as yet seldom present in the literature.

*Marketers do not create demand.*

It follows that marketers do not "create demand." One must marvel that, suggesting that marketers do create demand, otherwise reasonable people have come to accept a notion so alien to marketing thinking. The reason why such a notion has gained any currency appears to lie in the economist's use of the term *demand* to equal *goods/services sold*. In other words, demand in any year is

equal to the goods/services sold in that year. One may, then, increase demand by increasing the goods/services sold. Doubtless, the convention of equating demand with goods/services sold is useful for the economist's purposes, but it is of no value to a marketer charged with the task of identifying the characteristics of goods/services that people will want to buy. Producers (and the marketers who assist them) are concerned with demand that *preexists* goods/services-the core notion of the marketing concept: Make what the customer wants to buy. Most assuredly, we are not doing our job if we produce goods/services at random and wait until year's end to learn if demand exists. Marketers need a concept of demand that is independent of the goods/services that satisfy demand. For us, demand is already there in the conditions that allocate people's resources to doing what they do, and it is marketers' task to describe it in a way that guides the production of saleable products.

Finding new uses for existing goods/services is sometimes mentioned as an example of creating demand-new uses for Arm & Hammer baking soda is a classic example. Except possibly in the economist's peculiar sense, this is not an example of creating demand. Smelly drains and refrigerators, reactions of distaste, and the expenditure of human resources of time and effort to eliminate these nasties all preexisted Arm & Hammer's identifying new uses for baking soda. Originally, Arm & Hammer erred in limiting its definition to baking, when it identified a focal behavioral domain corresponding to a product it could produce (baking soda). Some years later, it corrected that error when it included the activity of odor control as well as baking. Circumstances over which Arm & Hammer has no control (e.g., the conditions that lead to smelly refrigerators and drains plus reactions of disgust in humans) were already leading to human resource allocations in a particular way (i.e., to take countermeasures), thus laying the ground for Arm & Hammer to offer to participate in ongoing exchanges relating to odor control; belatedly, the firm took heed. Such behavioral demand preexists and is the basis for the economist's "demand."

#### *Two Contexts for Exchange*

The proper domain for our discipline may well be exchange relationships or transactions, as some have suggested (e.g., Bagozzi 1979; Kotler 1972), but we must distinguish at least two contexts for exchange: marketing and selling. In table 16-1, four main bases for distinguishing the two contexts are shown as row headings; the corresponding marketing or selling assumption is entered in the appropriate column. The entries in the marketing column follow readily from marketing's groundings in division of labor and competitive pressures. Claiming no expertise in selling, let me say that in constructing table 6-1, my entries in the selling column are somewhat tentative. As I will discuss, they suggest that the selling model runs into difficulties at the points indicated by

Table 16-1

**Two Contexts for Exchange**

	<i>Marketing model</i>	<i>Selling model</i>
<i>Societal perspective</i>		
Task regarding surplus	Create (surplus planned)	Dispose of: surplus given)
Origin of surplus	Within system, for example, produced by division of labor	Outside system, for example bountiful nature
Role of exchange	Permit access to otherwise unavailable goods/services	Dispose of unplanned surplus
Productive task	Produce/offer what users would make for selves	Produce what you can
Focus on	Context of use	Production and trade
Waste/unmet wants due to	Error in ascertaining! realizing users' wants	Poorly grounded 'flawed' system,
<i>Business perspective</i>		
Entrepreneurial task	Engage repeatedly in exchanges	Dispose of goods services
Strategic planning enters	Preproduction	Postproduction
Responsible for output	Marketing management	Production, management
Entrepreneurial strategy	Make appropriate productive/purchasing decisions	induce purchase
<i>Behavioral implications</i>		
Implicit model of exchange	Interrole---exchange resources for improved state of being	Interpersonal, for example, swapping, bartering, advocacy, inducing compliance ;;
Relevant dyad	User-producer	Seller-buyer
Persuasive task	Create-announce availability of instrumental offerings	induce compliance/perception of value ;?)
<b>Persuasive strategy</b>	"What are your circumstances?"	"This serves your purposes" !??"
<i>Basic science</i>		
Substance	Conditions of want-occurrence and satisfaction	Interpersonal influence
Discipline(s)	Behavioral, physical, biological sciences	Social science

question marks in the figure-it seems to have nothing of interest to say about the productive enterprise, and its behavioral underpinning is unclear.

Taking a societal perspective first, while *abundance* in some sense (a surplus over what you can use) is a prerequisite to engaging in exchange, the marketing and selling contexts differ in regard to whether the surplus is considered to be created and planned within the system (marketing) or to arise outside the system, a given to be disposed of (selling). Exchange may be viewed

as providing access to goods/services one cannot make for oneself (marketing; or as a means of disposing of unplanned surpluses (selling). Society's charge to the productive enterprise is clear in marketing (make what people would make for themselves), but unclear in the context of selling. Absent explicit indication, the selling model seems to mandate: produce what you can. Society's locus of interest may be focused on using resources in a way that is responsive to the circumstances of people's lives (marketing; or on production and trade (sell- In marketing, wasted resources and unmet wants occur when producers err in ascertaining users' circumstances or in translating those circumstances into appropriate (kind, quantity, price) output; in selling, error results from a flawed system that permits goods/services to be produced without regard for the use contexts that are their justification and destination.

As regards business, in marketing, the entrepreneurial task is to engage repeatedly in exchanges; strategic planning enters before the point at which management decides what to produce (or order, in the case of retail outlets) and takes the form of trying to make productive/purchasing decisions that reflect the characteristics of contexts of use. In selling, strategic planning enters after deciding what to produce/order, when the task is to dispose of goods/services; strategy takes the form of trying to induce purchase.

Considering behavioral influence, in marketing, the implicit model of exchange is *interrole*, i.e., individuals (who are both producer and user allocating resources to improving their current state; the relevant dyad is user-producer; and the persuasive task is to create and announce the availability of goods/services that are responsive to the circumstances of prospective users (the psychological and nonpsychological conditions that dispose people to spend their resources); the strategy for doing so is to investigate and understand those conditions. In selling, the implicit model of exchange is *interpersonal* and the relevant dyad is seller--buyer. There seems to have been some confusion about the way this dyadic exchange is to be construed. An economic perspective (one having regard to resource allocation) suggests the appropriate model is the activities of swapping or bartering, where individuals desire another's surplus and offer their surplus in exchange. A social psychological model (in the tradition of persuasion, advocacy, or attitude change! suggests the activity of trying to win acceptance for an offering that is promoted primarily because of its significance to the would-be persuader. In such an advocacy model, the task is to show that something whose existence is independent of a prospective buyer's circumstances is congruent with or even essential to the prospect's purposes. Alternatively, perhaps "mere compliance" is the appropriate model. (See, for example, much of Cialdini's 1985 discussion.) In the version of selling that permeates "marketing" writing, the economic model appears to have been overshadowed by the social psychological model.

Considering the domains of basic science to which students of exchange

would turn for help, having regard to the conditions of want-occurrence and want-satisfaction, marketers would favor behavioral, physical, and biological sciences. It is not at all clear where sellers would turn for help. The activities of swapping or bartering may not be well simulated in advocacy or compliance models and appear to have been somewhat neglected by social scientists.'

*Behavioral Objective: Participate versus Change*

As the preceding analysis suggests, the behavioral implications of marketing are very different from those associated with attitude change or advocacy of social causes. The marketer's objective, which is to participate in behavior that is underway (e.g., "when you are thinking of controlling unpleasant odors, think of using our baking soda";, is readily distinguished from that of inducing behavioral change 'e.g., "stop smoking," "start voting").

The differing behavioral objectives of marketers and advocates of social causes parallel discussions of the possible or proper sphere of strategic action by business firms (i.e., to achieve their ends business organizations may, change themselves/their own actions or try to change their environments). There are at least three issues here that should be treated separately, namely, what aspect of the environment-prospective customers versus other aspects is intended, the circumstances in which it may be efficient, and the extent to which it is possible to adapt to/try to change one's environment. The only environmental aspect at issue here is customer circumstances. By and large, it is going to be more efficient for a business firm, operating under competitive pressures, to adapt to, rather than try to change, customer circumstances as it finds them. For that reason, the experience of business firms is a poor parallel for those trying to change the direction of others' behavior "e.g., induce smokers to stop smoking; induce nonvoters to vote;". Certainly, the success of business firms in adapting to their customers' circumstances is not evidence of the ease with which one may change one's environment. Marketers are in a position, to offer some help to persons who want to promote social causes such as reducing littering, animal trapping, or smoking, or increasing voting, wearing seat belts, or fitness. We can be helpful by describing the dimensions of a persuasive task (i.e., characterizing a naturally occurring population in terms of the likely, difficulty of securing the persuasive objective). Practitioners do this all the time in the realm of goods/services. But note how management uses the information our analysis generates. We use our analysis to focus attention on those occasions of use for which our firm can offer a competitive brand. As marketers, we have no experience in effecting the kind of fundamental change that social cause advocates hope to realize. Moreover, consider the dismal record of a 20 percent success rate for new product entries, in a context where we are trying to adapt to our customers and not, as in the social advocates'

more demanding persuasive task) trying to have people adapt to recommendations.

Let me be clear about what I am saying here. Consider the prototypical marketing case where, based on our study of prospects' circumstances, we have recommended the design of a new brand, which is being test-marketed. Consumer research has been conducted before, during, and after a thirteen- or twenty-six-week period during which the brand has been advertised and available for purchase. If the research shows among prospects/targets that predetermined levels of brand awareness, correct awareness of the brand's attributes, and actual brand trial have been achieved, but that repeat purchase of the brand is low, neither our science nor our practice permits us to claim that we know how to make that brand a winner, other than by identifying already- circumstances with which it is (competitively) compatible. Is there any formulation in social science that legitimately provides hope, let alone assurance, to mass marketers operating in a competitive environment, that they may bank on selling what they have produced in disregard of user circumstances? The main message found in the basic literature is that, with the possible exception of captive targets, little is known about changing behavior in fundamental ways.

Let me summarize to this point. When society opted for division of labor, it severed the natural connection between user and producer that is found when individuals play both roles-producing what they use or consume. It needed a mechanism by which users could control what is produced in their name. One such mechanism is the free-market economy, where people may choose among the offerings of competing producers. For the mechanism to do the job society intends, at least two things must happen: (1) The consequences of disregarding the circumstances of prospective users (e.g., competitive disadvantage, wasted resources, threat to one's survival) must be salient for producers as they answer the question: What shall we produce? (2) Given that a reason for committing society's resources to the production of goods/services is to help people make adjustments that their circumstances dictate, producers must understand those circumstances. In individual firms, it is marketers' responsibility to provide the information that leads to such understanding. It is the responsibility of marketing scientists to create the representations that help practitioners to do their job. Clearly, the confusion that has existed up to now between marketing and selling militates against giving effect to users' circumstances. Nothing is more likely to prevent producers from paying heed to users' circumstances than the mistaken notion that actions taken after the productive decision has been made can save the day for unwanted output.

Given the current state of the art, the best service marketing scientists and educators can perform in the short run is to help the public and emerging generations of business people to understand that producers' reason for existing and strategy for success involve becoming acquainted with the circum

stances in which a proposed output will be used. Once offerings exist, marketers' contribution is limited. Relying on mass media of communications, we are not equipped to claim that we know how to engender reasons for using an offering where such reasons do not already exist in our prospects' circumstances.

Conceptual progress is impeded by failing to treat marketing and selling separately as two distinct and mutually incompatible forms of exchange. Whether one has regard to society's interest in ensuring that producers are responsive to users' circumstances or that the resources society allocates to the pursuit of knowledge are used to good advantage, keeping distinct the activities of marketing and selling and their attendant strengths, weaknesses, and ethical and political ramifications can only be beneficial. Within the profession and in the public at large, understanding of each activity is bound to grow if we succeed in disentangling them in our minds, writing, and client relations.

#### **Implications for Marketing Science**

What difference would it make were marketing scientists to adopt a thoroughgoing marketing perspective--one that is grounded in division of labor and competitive pressures and that clearly distinguishes marketing from selling'. What would it look like--a science whose domain comprises phenomena relevant to using resources for human satisfaction, to facilitating producers' response to users' circumstances', I shall mention here just a few characteristics of the behavioral components of such a domain, which can be discussed at the levels of the universe as well as the individual. But first, I should mention an interesting feature of a science that would give formal expression to the marketing concept. When the marketing concept directs producers to adapt to the circumstances of prospective users, it merely extends to the behavioral domain the essential genius humans have shown in putting the natural world to work for their purposes. We have not put waterfalls to work by first requiring the water to reverse its direction; our windmills are designed to respond to the wind's characteristics. We have not learnt to use the sources of energy found in nature by first requiring them to change their ways. It has been the genius of the marketing concept to capture the same idea. It is time for marketing scientists to take the marketing concept seriously, see it as extending to the behavioral realm the tradition that has informed the natural sciences, and make its strategy explicit in a formal representational system.

#### *Representing the Universe Of Interest*

With regard to marketing's grounding in division of labor; one implication is that we would view the productive enterprise as being systematically related to

aspects of a naturally occurring population. It becomes apparent that a population is not optimally represented as a universe of individuals, but, minimally, must be viewed as a universe of occasions for all of the activities in which human beings engage. We must then find ways to represent the fact that individual producers do not try to respond to all the circumstances that allocate human resources. A first cut through a universe of activity-occasions is needed in order to exclude the portion for which a producer's domain of expertise is likely to be irrelevant (nonprospects). Within the remainder (prospects), circumstances are likely to be varied. (Behavioral demand is segmented.) From the totality of the producer's domain of expertise, only a portion may be deployed in producing an offering, which likely responds to a subset of the circumstances of prospective users (targeted circumstances).

In sum, marketing scientists must conceptualize populations in ways that reflect the systematic relationships between producers and the circumstances of prospective users. An immediate benefit will accrue in that the practitioner's two-stage analysis of naturally occurring populations will be recognized in marketing theory—a first cut that defines a market of interest (the portion of a universe of activity-occasions to which the producer's domain of expertise is likely to be relevant), followed by analysis of the nature of segmented demand within that market (market segmentation), leading to the producer's selecting some region of that demand to respond to (i.e. the positioning decision).

#### *Representing Individual Processes Of Interest*

Having regard to marketing's grounding in division of labor, society assigns marketers the task of helping producers to participate in behavior that is underway. It follows that one of the first tasks that becomes the lot of marketing scientists is to represent the natural processes of want-occurrence and want-satisfaction-to develop, in fact, a general model of instrumental action with particular attention to representing the conditions that allocate people's resources. If the productive enterprise is helping users to do what they wish to do for themselves, then it must be possible to show how the attributes of individual goods/services are responsive to the conditions that allocate people's resources to making adjustments.

#### *Characteristics Of Marketing Studies*

Authors who claim that their studies are relevant to the discipline of marketing are expected to ensure that their research designs embody elements that are characteristic of marketing. At present, academic authors appear to consider that the mere inclusion therein of something about goods/services qualifies a study as an example of work in marketing, even though the conceptualization and research design are otherwise indistinguishable from work in, say, psy-

chology or sociology. Not only do such studies fail to do justice to marketing, but the authors miss an opportunity to develop marketing's distinctive contribution to behavioral science.

In contrast, in a thoroughgoing marketing study, authors would state the systematic status of audience members in relation (1) to the message domain (e.g., the audience comprises prospects and nonprospects) and (2) to the message (e.g., some—which?—or all prospects have been selected as targets). Similarly, one would expect that a characteristic of studies of reactions to product attributes would be the inclusion therein of operations and discussion relevant to the systematic relationship between the attributes and prospects' circumstances. Authors would be expected to state the considerations that led them to predict that some (which?) prospects would regard some (which, attributes as possessing instrumental value.

Typically, such features are not found in studies that purport to be relevant to marketing. For example, much research that marketing authors conduct within the social psychological communications paradigm fails to qualify as appropriate to marketing. Specifically, the status of audience members as nonprospects, prospects, and targets is not stated. Similarly, research in the tradition of multiattribute attitude studies often begins, conceptually and empirically, with a set of attributes. Scholarly interest appears not to reach to the theoretical source of the attributes. In contrast, one would expect marketers to be interested in the model that represents the attributes' origins. Much academic research in the domain of conjoint analysis could be cited to illustrate both deficiencies. The systematic source of the attribute set is not a focus of concern and subjects are not characterized in a manner that permits studying systematic relations with utilities.

### **Science ;for Marketing**

For too long now, our marketing scholars and scientists have neglected to do the basic science that society's charge to marketing requires. Moreover, failing to appreciate and act upon the distinction between marketing and selling, they have launched generations of students on "marketing" careers imbued with an orientation, concepts, and techniques appropriate to selling, to the neglect of concepts and techniques appropriate to marketing. Marketing scholars and scientists have abdicated their legitimate claim to the essential marketing question: What shall we produce, They have left marketing's proper domain of scholarship to the chance ministrations of other disciplines. They have left the real-world decisions to engineers, technocrats, and practitioners who, absent systematic treatment of marketing's core question, rely on common sense, trial and error, and professional practice.

In the world in which marketing scholars and scientists exist, there is no

perceptible trace of the activity of marketing. Marketing academics have no direct responsibility for the existence of goods/services, as practitioners do. Collectively, we have not found a way to render marketing activity, properly understood, perceptible in the form of models and other representations; in a very real sense, the marketing concept is mere rhetoric to the marketing academic. It receives ritualist-acknowledgement at certain points in marketing textbooks and is, thereafter, ignored. Perhaps because it is thus imperceptible to them, marketing scientists have not realized their responsibility to create the conceptual devices that would make the marketer's task a perceptible presence in their world.

Aside from intellectual challenge and satisfaction for those who would undertake the task, let me mention a few other benefits that will follow from articulating marketing as a formal system. Marketing educators will be in a position to sensitize future marketers to the significance for their professional status of being handed some *ready-made good*, service, or idea and being asked (or told) to make a go of it. They will have provided them with diplomatic ways of educating their clients or bosses to the kind of contribution marketers are trained to provide. Marketing scientists will have equipped those same students with conceptualizations of the circumstances of prospective users so that, later, when the question of what to offer is on the table in some corporate conference room, they may take their proper leadership role as marketing professionals. No longer will their contribution be restricted to reacting to productive options that originate who knows where. Instead, they will lead the strategic planning team in reviewing the ramifications of responding to each of a series of systematically specified user-circumstances.

Moreover, notwithstanding the best efforts of our business schools to produce professional marketers, critics will still claim to observe opportunist actions or practices, and those concerned to advance the human condition will still have recommendations for marketers' ears. Marketing authors will be in a position to examine the charges and recommendations in the context of marketing science, properly understood. For example, analyzing the situation within a systematic framework, they can ask (1) How can it be that individuals, prompted by nothing more compelling than the words and images of one in a veritable blizzard of promotional claims (some from directly competing sources) would repeatedly execute a marketer's wishes rather than their own? (2) How can it be that competitive pressures appear not to exert their regulating effect? (3) By what mechanism can individual marketers, operating in a competitive environment, effect some recommended social policy? or (4) What are the details of realistic alternatives to, or modifications of, present arrangements for producing our goods and services?

Once our scientists address the task of representing the marketing concept, they will articulate a framework that permits us to consider such questions in a coherent and systematic manner. Then, we may both view aberrations as

failures of a system and realistically review the feasibility of praiseworthy recommendations. Taking instruction from our failures and inspiration from those who would improve the human condition, we may extend our understanding and do better in the future. Such has always been the promise of science. It is time for marketing science to deliver.

### Notes

1. Depending on whether one adopts a macro or micro marketing perspective, "we" may refer to society or to individual producers. My remarks herein refer exclusively to micromarketing, unless otherwise stated.

2. Some years ago, an academic colleague said to me, as though in confidence: "You know, of course, that the marketing concept is nothing more than rhetoric." His words were totally baffling to me at the time. The distinction between marketing and selling is plain in the daily experience of practitioners where retaining hegemony over one's proper domain as marketer is a significant issue of professional status. The professor's words were fruitful. Trying to understand how one so respected could be so mistaken, I came to realize that they are literally true, if one is a marketing academic.

3. From the present analysis of behavioral implications, I have excluded discussion of strong (i.e., coercive) selling. In doing so, I am following a practice in the literature on persuasion where authors may exclude coercion as, by definition, outside the scope of their subject. As noted, I am not offering a complete treatment of selling. I trust that those who find a selling model congenial will address the anomalies in its grounding suggested here.

4. In line with the present micromarketing perspective, the phrase *naturally occurring* refers to the state of the world as any one marketer finds it when studying whether or not to try to participate in some ongoing behavior.

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