
'Internet marketing'

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Internet Marketing comprises a collection of 21 articles drawn from both business professionals and academic scholars. It is a compilation of thought provoking articles on how the Internet is influencing the automation and integration of marketing functions. The contributing authors focus on how the Internet can improve marketing efficiency (cost reduction) and marketing effectiveness (customer loyalty), although discussion often ranges beyond these topics. The implications for brand management are not always made explicit, but the reader should have little difficulty in drawing appropriate inferences by reading between the lines.

Divided into four parts, Part One comprises papers discussing possible changes to existing marketing functions. For example, in the article *The Internet and International Marketing*, some of the challenges facing multinationals are discussed, including the implications for global branding of the development of localised Internet sites and localised marketing campaigns. A further challenge — according to the authors — is the erosion of the advantages of size for companies marketing on the Internet, as technology surpasses size as a more important source of competitive advantage. If true, this would raise questions about our understanding of the structure of markets (as embodied in Double Jeopardy for instance). But, in the

longer run, will size and technology unite? Will we see a re-run of the history of MicroSoft, IBM and AT&T, or is the Internet fundamentally different?

The emphasis of Part Two is on some of the implications of the Internet for existing 'bricks and mortar' marketing. The initial articles here provide a brief review of the implications for consumer marketing, retailing and channel management. The coverage is fairly familiar and the articles are somewhat disappointing, although they may be of interest to someone new to the area. The real merit of Part Two comes with the latter articles on data mining and database marketing. These articles present a basic review of 'Why' a surge in data mining has occurred — due in the main to data proliferation and network connectivity. Then the 'How' of the process of knowledge discovery in databases is explained from a managerial perspective. The Internet is seen as an invaluable means of customer tracking and customer measurement, with the potential to give brand managers powerful new insights into their customers. The implications of database marketing and customer tracking technologies are further addressed in Part Three of *Internet Marketing*.

Part Three comprises 11 articles, divided into five sections, which provide insight into how marketing

productivity can be improved in the Internet age. The five sections are:

- A: Product Innovation in the Internet Age
- B: Reintermediation and Disintermediation in the Internet Age
- C: Pricing in the Internet Age
- D: Advertising in the Internet Age
- E: Sales and Customer Service in the Internet Age.

Many of the points raised here will directly interest both brand managers and scholars in the area of brand management. These points address the use of analytical marketing models and database marketing, the foundations of flexible product development processes, the role of 'info' and 'cyber' intermediaries, the facilitation of effective customer service and also the impact that network connectivity has and will continue to have on product pricing strategies. Although very broad in its coverage, this section provides a very useful overview of how core marketing functions are being affected by the Internet.

A study by business professionals in Section D offers an illustration. This industry study sought to measure whether or not banner advertising has the potential to build brands without click-through. The authors start by comparing the 'click-through' from banner ads to established measures of recall and awareness for the evaluation of television commercials. They then consider the notion of evaluating television or print advertising merely on the basis of store traffic following ad-exposure — this, they argue, being akin to having banner ads without click-through. For the two types of goods studied, the author's document

increases in advertising awareness and in brand perceptions to web banner ads without click-through. This paper is worth reading for both the results and the overview of the conduct of the experiment on the Internet. However, as with so much Internet research, replication is required. Also, further information about the conduct and motivation for the study would have been useful.

The final part of *Internet Marketing*, Part Four, focuses on the ethical, legal and societal impact of these developments on marketing professionals and scholars. The latter articles in this section address two particularly important issues facing brand managers: intellectual property and privacy. As the electronic capturing of data increases, so concerns arise about the ethicacy and legality of practices undertaken in the name of marketing. A paper describing the case of the British National Health Service exemplifies some of the conflicts that can arise between the interests and values of different stakeholders.

Overall, *Internet Marketing* comprises a number of poignant papers that would repay reading by business professionals and academics. Many key questions, across marketing functions, are raised. For instance, the reader is left in no doubt about the basic implications of an increase in electronic data capturing, network connectivity and system integration. As the editors themselves point out, these are also topics that need to find their way into introductory Internet Marketing courses. In fact the material in some of the papers would benefit from integration into our traditional marketing courses, perhaps as supplementary readings.

This book avoids some of the problems that beset other texts in the area. First, it is not purely descriptive of the technology or, for that matter, of basic marketing. Secondly, it does not promise a quick-fix guide or simplistically suggest that there are ten easy steps to 'Internet Marketing Success'. Thirdly, this book does not attempt to cover all the tools of 'Electronic Marketing' — instead it works within some reasonable boundaries. That said, a few of the papers are disappointing because they make unsubstantiated claims or lack empirical support for the arguments presented. This is something

of a generic problem — in part this arises from the newness of the field, but it may also reflect an unwillingness to share commercially sensitive material. Hopefully, with the passage of time, more in-depth cases and experiences will become available and provide a platform for better understanding of the full potential of the Internet.

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