



HOW THE MARKETING PHILOSOPHY WAS TRANSPOSED TO THE NET? REVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE MARKETING-INTERNET RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

Internet or the 20th century most controversial revolution that has influenced all the business sectors as well as the humans' lifestyles. Internet has tightened the distances between the brands and their actual and potential clients. Its adoption by marketers has evolved at the same level with the marketing philosophy evolution. Marketing was first based on momentous transactions that migrated to the relationship creation and development. This evolution of marketing from positivism, where the company dictates its rules, to constructivism, where consumers have become real stakeholders, was transposed clearly to the way companies look at the web. This latter has also migrated from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 where customers are henceforth considered as partners in content creation and products development. The current article exposes a review of this simultaneous evolutions of the marketing science and the net starting from transactional marketing reflected in the Web 1.0 to the relational marketing seen in Web 2.0 and Web 3.0. The paper hands out that at the beginning of the net adoption by marketing managers, the offline transactional strategies were applied but since the marketing is by nature an evolutive and continuous changing science and art it moved to an era of relationship creation and development, this era was then transposed to

the way managers deal with the net; a way in which the customers are considered as friends and partners in a long-lasting bond.

Keywords: web1.0, web2.0, web 3.0, relationship marketing, interactivity, monologue

INTRODUCTION

The Internet is a very powerful, hyper-revolutionary medium that has been able to disrupt interpersonal relationships as well as the relationship between consumers and businesses. It has cut with traditional communication techniques by valuing the role of the consumer in the creation, development and promotion of goods and services. However, the outcome of such an interactive, horizontal and fair relationship between the consumer-user and the brand took a long time and was done in stages. Indeed, the aforementioned features related to interactivity, continuous dialogue, co-creation of communicational content as well as democratization of speech making a passive receiver an active publisher (Neti, 2011) were missing from early Internet branding strategies, "Strategies of the Web1.0 Era".

Web 1.0 and the associated marketing

Web 1.0 revisits an era of unidirectional and vertical communication and pyramidal, standardized and non-binding relationships, it is the era of static and rarely updated websites or pages, e-mailing, banner ads, spam, instant messages and company-driven word of mouth (Orihuela, 2003; Tillinac, 2006, Wright, 2006; Meadows Klue, 2008; Mayol, 2009).

According to Gzerwinski et al (2011) and in an analysis of the different techniques of Web 1.0, they state that the Web 1.0 is only the projection of the transactional paradigm of Internet marketing, a simple copy and paste or a replication of offline communication content (Meadows-Klue, 2008), this is the extension of the logic oriented towards the result and the product or the "Output oriented model". A short-term focus on the instantaneity of trade, increasing market shares and sales volumes as well as discrete and purely commerce (Kotler, 1995; Kotler and Dubois 1997; Cova and Reny 2001; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Mavion 2006; Sebai et al 2007; Merz et al 2009). In this perspective, the company creates, alone, the value and incorporates it to the brand through its physical attributes, a value that will be destroyed during consumption (Gzerwinski et al, 2011; Gharbi 2006). Therefore, the consumer is designed only as a passive receiver, a material source of profit that it is vital for the company not to retain but to meet his needs well in order to face the competitors. In this context, the relationship is worthless, its benefits are difficult to quantify,

as well as its results that are generally long-term have made it non-priority for marketing managers concerned about “marketing to”, “one-way communication” and “media hype”.

In summary, the techniques of web 1.0, presenting no means of fresh and continuous discussion with the consumer, reproduced identical the offline techniques of the transactional paradigm evangelizing the discreet exchange, the independence of the actors, the authoritarian and opportunistic spirit of brand managers, the narrow and valuing vision of the “consumer-target” (Gzerwinski et al, 2011), the conquest of customers (Cova and Reny, 2001), the discontinuous and moderate contact with them (Peck et al 1999; Sebai et al 2007).

In short, the Internet was both a mirror and an extension of the transactional and imperialist ideology of marketing. It is a process of enslavement of the media undertaken by brand managers to use it as a propaganda machine to establish their traditional dictatorship.

The relationship approach and the new place of the client

Changes in the market, social, economic and regulatory environment, and consumer “complex, contradictory, volatile and chaotic” behaviour (Addis and Podesta, 2005) have pushed marketing toward a relational philosophy which is social and interactive. It has made dialogue a necessity to better understand this consumer (Levi, 2005). A philosophy that recognizes that “creating customer relationships is a scarce and difficult resource to emulate and a source of differentiation and thus competitive advantage” (Hoffmann, 2000).

Consumers have thus been able to teach marketers that a new chapter in the history of marketing where “markets are conversations” (Levin et al, 2001) and “a dialogue between equals” (Consoli and Musso, 2010, p324) has begun. A chapter where the proximity between the brand and the consumer is the sole guarantee of survival and where dialogue takes precedence. Marketers are well informed today that “people don’t want to be talked at, but they want to be talked with” (Wright, 2006, p...). All these theoretical and practical developments have enabled a «paradigmatic shift» (Kotler 1995; Sheth and Parvatyor 1995, Sebai et al 2007) in marketing and have given rise to the «relational paradigm» or the «service-dominant logic» or even the “process-oriented logic”. It is an orientation that capitalizes on the connections and the notion of the network where the relationship with the customer is at the heart of any decision within the company, a relationship that is based on trust and commitment (Morgan 1934; Hunt 1996; Dwyer and Singh 1998).

Contrary to the transactional orientation, in a relational context, the value of the brand resides in its consumption, it is a “value-in-use optic” where the company only presents “value proposals” and then instructs the consumer to infuse the brand with a set of values in line with

his lifestyle, ideology, social position, taste... (Gzerwinski et al, 2011) , this is the era of consumer co-creating value.

In addition, as the acquisition of a new customer is expensive (Lehu, 2003), companies are increasingly adopting a loyalty and retention strategy that promotes an ongoing relationship exchange. According to Hakansson (1982), these exchanges are not the result of opportunistic behaviour based on the individual interest of an independent actor seeking short-term satisfaction through access to the resources that the transaction allows. On the contrary, these exchanges are based on the mutual interests of interdependent actors, "but also of the prevailing climate and atmosphere" (p9). In other words, the goal of each brand, wishing to survive and prosper, is to create, maintain and develop relations with its fans, to always listen, to take into consideration their opinions and complaints... In short, to demonstrate a strong desire for federation and cooperation with its most valuable assets, namely its consumers (Bruce and Langdon, 2002, p5)

The relational approach transposed to the online world: Web 2.0 and Web 3.0

These philosophical and practical changes in marketing, orienting the discipline towards a relational logic, have been transferred to the online world in the form of marketing 2.0 for web 2.0 as well as Web 3.0. Indeed, according to Vargo and Lusch (2004), "the web 2.0 approach aligns with an emerging, dominant logic in marketing: value is defined by collaboration and co-creation with customers and learning from them." This transfer was realized through the adoption of new techniques grouped under the name of web2.0 and Web 3.0 that changed the perception and the purpose of using the Internet. As Tim O'Reilly (2005) points out, web 2.0 refers to a new design of websites, a design that values collective intelligence, the exchange of information and experiences as well as data published by users or co-creators of content. These are indeed websites where updates are more and more regular with light programming models facilitating access and use.

In this context, the Internet is no longer used solely for its informational input but is now assimilated to a place of encounter, of creating relationships between individuals or/and between individuals and brands, of sharing opinions, of cooperation in content creation, recommendation, social influence and the development of networks and exchanges (Orihuela, 2003; Tillinac, 2006; Wright, 2006; Meadous Klue, 2008; Mayol, 2009; Parise and Guinan, 2008; Mellet, 2009; Florès et al 2008). According to Parise and Guinan (2008), web 2.0 allows the brand to converse with its fans, get their feedback in real time, develop communities, engage consumers and generate product ideas through online brainstorming sessions. These social media channels have been able to meet a range of human needs,

including the need for transparency, the need to be treated equally with others, and the need to be listened to and especially kept in mind when making decisions (Meadows Klue, 2008). Supporting the idea of perceived transparency and value for the Internet-consumer, Sipper (2009) argues that social media has the merit of deepening the “notion of brand transparency and changed the historical master/servant relationship between brand and consumers to one of equality.”

In order to better understand the differences between the two phases of incorporating the Internet tool into brand promotion and management, Singh et al (2008, p. 282) argue that the “web 2.0 differs from web 1.0 in the logic of customer-centric, user-generated, interactive and dynamic relation that fosters community participation and builds collective community intelligence”. Shan (2011, p9) adds that “traditional marketing is about having a monologue with your customers and prospects. Social media, on the other hand, is about having a dialogue. When you have a dialogue with a customer or prospect, the communication is much more fulfilling and more profitable”. In other words, traditionally, when marketers wanted to create a certain emotional proximity between the brand and consumers, they treated them as small children, passive and receptive. However, today and thanks to web 2.0 and web 3.0, brand managers must understand that these children have grown up (Meadows Klue, 2008).

It is noted henceforth that “information technologies affect marketing orientation” (Sebai et al; 2007; p6). Supported by some researchers who also assert that the interactive nature and unlimited “always on” availability of the Internet (Florès et al, 2008), the proliferation of “infomediary” websites (Muller, 2000). The power of the consumer over the net, embodied by the influence of his voice and the collective character of the exit (Kucuk, 2008) has pushed marketing towards this social orientation. In the same vein, Mayol (2009, p14) states that “the company was overwhelmed by the situation. Wanting to master the web.... its back stuck to the wall, forced to react, regain control.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the scientific literature asserts that consumers and brands must collaborate and help each other to ensure the sustainability of their partnership relationship. In the following table (Table 1), a summary of the main differences between transactional marketing (web1.0 marketing) and relational marketing (web 2.0 or social marketing) is presented.

Table 1: Marketing philosophies transposed to the Web

Marketing associated to web1.0	Relational Marketing associated to web2.0 and Web 3.0
Monologue : unilateral and always vertical communication.	Dialogue : bi, multilateral and horizontal communication.
Message created, controlled by the brand and transmitted by the advertisers or the creator of the website.	Message diverted, modified by users and transmitted by "evangelizers".
Design is the most prominent factor in the brand's digital space: the one that spends the most wins more	Interactivity is the sine que none condition of the success of the consumer-brand relationship on the net: the one that interacts the most wins more
The content is created by the brand	Content is co-created and "user-generated"
The digital space of the brand is only a source of information	The virtual space of the brand has become a meeting place and relational exchange, full of life and entertaining and memorable experiences.
Undifferentiated communication designed for a mass of customers	Internet as a personalization vehicle: Interactive communication allowing the creation of a single advertisement and customized messages targeted by consumption style, region and generation. « <i>the power of the Internet is its ability to tailor itself for each of its users</i> » (Simmons 2007, p549)
« Along the journey of marketing, the skill to listen has weakened » (Meadows-Klue, 2008, p245)	Listening makes a difference

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