

On Teaching Marketing Strategy: Looking to the Future

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The future is here and we are still in shock [1]. Wave after wave of global social changes continue to accelerate. Toffler categorized these large scale shifts in his sequel to Future Shock with [2]. His description of the three waves of history starts with the post Neolithic Agricultural Revolution through to the Industrial Revolution, and finally into the present day post-industrial society of the Information Age. His prognosis begs the question. What is the fourth wave to be? Ohmae [3] responds to this question with the proposition that a shift will occur, from the present dominance of left-brained rational thinking to more inclusion of right-brained intuitive thinking. This shift will constitute the fourth wave.

Ohmae's opening address to the Human Resource Forum in Korea addresses the rapid economic changes occurring in the world and coined as Globalization. Ohmae's proposition, coming from a nuclear physicist, MIT graduate, with additional international management consulting credentials, causes one to stop and take notice. His right-brained proposition comes early on in his presentation and reflects his own research as well as the research of others; see [3-8]. His conclusion addresses the need for harnessing the full power of the rational and intuitive resources of human capability. Humanity will creatively adapt to the dynamic complexity and massive fast moving changes occurring in our world [9].

If Ohmae's prediction comes to pass, we need to begin paying more attention to what this might mean for research and the methods we use to explain Marketing Strategy [10]. It also suggests a shift within the Marketing Discipline can bridge the academic/practitioner divide [11]. Hopefully the modernist/post-modernist, etic/emic, quantitative/qualitative method dichotomies may merge yet closer together [12,13].

Ultimately we may find two opposed ideas can function better when they are together:

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Marriage of Two Opposed Ideas

Their wedding was in the spring, after the honeymoon he wanted his expectations met, but she wanted hers;

Their quest became to find the genius of the AND, but on their journey had to overcome the tyranny of the OR [13];

He was rational about it, but she recognised their rationality was bounded [14];

His quantitative methodology helped, but her qualitative methodology added still more to their knowledge;

His deductive logic contributed to truth, but her inductive theory became a good partner in their quest;

Decision-making was his training, but her wisdom was revealed by overcoming disruption through sense making [15].

Knowledge was acquired continuously, but wisdom was only attained by dropping their expectations [16];

In the beginning value was created for him OR her, but they adapted to creating value for him AND her [13].

Today, they are still two; but mysteriously have become one (Ephesians 5:3)

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Received March 03, 2012; Accepted March 09, 2012; Published March 12, 2012

Citation: Spanier N (2012) On Teaching Marketing Strategy: Looking to the Future. J Acct Market 1:e101. doi: 10.4172/2168-9601.1000e101

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