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Messianic eschatology

Some redemptive reflections on marketing and the benefits of a process approach

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An eschatological conundrum

In the popular mind, eschatology is generally associated with notions and prophecies of doom, final ending or apocalypse. In the Judeo-Christian tradition there is a long history of such forebodings from Biblical to modern times. Renaissance Europe witnessed the often doom-laden prophecies of Nostradamus, the French astrologer and physician, becoming extraordinarily influential. A century ago, the "miraculous" appearance of the Blessed Virgin at Fatima in Portugal gave rise to the so-called three secrets of Fatima, which forewarned the end of the world to all Roman Catholics. In our own postmodern epoque, Faith Popcorn, doyenne of Madison Avenue soothsayers, has forecast frame-breaking changes in consumer behaviour.

A first and obvious point about such eschatological example is that the prophets usually, if not always, get it wrong – doom does not materialize as forecast. Few of Nostradamus' predictions appeared to have come through, even allowing that his cryptic style and content made it almost impossible to ascertain precisely what was being foretold. Roman Catholic-kind, if also humankind, has survived the public revelation of two of the three secrets of Fatima, though the second forewarned the end of the world during the 1960s. Faith Popcorn may have been right about "cocooning" – stay-at-home, nest-building instincts exhibited increasingly in the face of an overpowering world – but she was wrong about "the vigilante consumer", where the consumer manipulates the marketplace through politics, protest and pressure – "we're mad as hell and we're not going to buy it anymore" (*The Popcorn Report*, 1989).

If the prophets appear to get it wrong so often, why is there a continuing concern and fascination with matters eschatological? If doom fails to materialize so often, why is there a consuming interest about its prediction? First, there will always be a human fascination about forecasts of the species' demise or impoverishment. Second, comprehending eschatology in a narrow concern about the exactitude of predicted outcomes is to misunderstand the complexity and richness of eschatological thought.

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Apocalypticism or Messianism?

Historical, as distinct from mythical, eschatology is basic to Judeo-Christian thinking. Old Testament eschatology consists in the conviction that the catastrophes that beset the people of Israel and threatened their destruction were due to the Jewish people's disobedience to the laws and will of God. Subsequent conformity to the will of God would result in a return for the Jews to a condition of righteousness and moral and material renewal in which God's purpose would at last be fulfilled. Such eschatology is closely bound to the concept of a redemptive history in which the Jewish people are viewed as God's chosen instrument for the carrying out of his purpose and in which, on fulfilment of God's promises, the Jewish people would be the vehicle for their own salvation and that of the rest of the world.

If for Judaism the peculiar eschatological event lies in the future, this future of God, according to the New Testament, has already begun with Christ. Christian eschatology is centred in the figure of Christ as the anticipation of the future Kingdom of God. Jesus is viewed as the Messiah of God, through whom and by whom the new age of God's redemption has at last been opened. Thus in both Testaments, eschatology is intrinsically linked to the notion of redemption. Despite the apocalyptic context, salvation rather than hell, renewal rather than destruction, are possible contingent on new attitudes, behaviours and actions. Such a messianic view of eschatology – one that directs its hopes to a salvatory or vindicating figure, event or philosophy – underpins the argument in this article.

In exploring one area of material and, on occasion moral, human endeavour, the argument is proffered that marketing, while showing many signs of illness and possible demise, has the possibility to redeem and renew itself. In applying the eschatology metaphor to marketing, we seek to make the case that, despite apocalyptic forebodings about its shortcomings, marketing's salvatory prospects are much improved by the adoption of some new concepts and practices – in particular, a process orientation to its management.

Marketing's malaise

Marketing scholars seem in broad agreement that the discipline is undergoing a period of deep soul-searching, is losing its status and may well be on a route towards demise. Leading authors speak of "marketing's mid-life crisis" (Brady and Davis, 1993). An influential UK publication heralds "the death of the brand manager", a traditionally pivotal role in marketing thinking (*The Economist*, 1994). The widely quoted *Marketing at the Crossroads* study finds many marketing departments trying to find a new role and relevance within the organization: "Marketing departments appear out of place in the more demanding business environment of the 1990s. They are essentially a spending function. Caught in a period of cost savings and redundancies they have few roles that are uniquely their own or decisions which fall clearly within their remit" (Coopers & Lybrand, 1993). To understand the causes as well as

symptoms of this apparent malaise, it is useful to explore aspects of marketing's development over a number of decades.

As a professional discipline it crystallized in the early post-war period and the seminal attempts at codifying it for transmission to generations of managers were made by McCarthy (1960) and others, starting in 1960. Its best attempt at a general conceptual framework of practice was the categorization of decisions into the ubiquitous 4Ps. It was a product of its time. Its concerns were rooted in the managerial necessities of an era of growth, of burgeoning disposable income, of interest in consumer rather than business-to-business markets, of sellers' markets, of mass production and of the very first signs that competition might result in customers having to be "won" rather than "supplied". Organizationally it was rooted in an era of organizational growth based on principles laid down by that most influential of practitioners, Alfred Sloan (1963). As a result it took shape with a set of implicit assumptions about functional structure and strong hierarchy – assumptions which have seldom been challenged in the debate between marketers about their vocation. Managerial marketing owes its roots, its underlying genetic code, to market and organizational assumptions and realities of the 1950s and 1960s.

It also owes its genetic code to its overwhelmingly American birth. From that birth and adolescence it has carried inbuilt cultural and market assumptions that have shaped its performance. Its cultural assumptions reflect a strong but implicit value about, and commitment to, free markets and its market assumptions have more to do with homogeneity than with heterogeneity. When its practice confronts other political and national structures and philosophies in Europe or Asia it often has difficulty in adapting.

It has traditionally been "low on implementation", assuming that if the marketing department got the big ideas right, as it must surely do, other people would take care of the more boring aspects of turning ideas and strategies into workaday reality. These "others" are of course the folks who develop and make products and services, finance them and provide human resources to staff the attendant processes. Marketing was constructed in the image of the hierarchical organization, specialized by function. But even within its own function, marketing all too often saw itself as closer to top management – who did the thinking, and distanced from sales – who should undertake the "doing".

Allied to this latter point, marketing has been low on organization – on engagement with the organizational design and development issues inherent in its role of building and managing organizations dedicated to performance through serving customers. That role demands engagement with the behaviour of the whole organization, but practice has more often seen marketing departments managed as chimney stacks or silos and with a style that the military call "foxhole" management. Such an approach is one in which communication and vision are vertical – but we are now in an era where horizontal co-ordination and cross-disciplinary activity are at a premium.

Another shortcoming, indeed failure, of marketing is that the operations management area has essentially "stolen its clothes". Production and

operations management went through a remarkable renaissance in the early 1980s, driven by the near collapse of western production systems when put to the test by Asian cost-based and quality oriented competition. From this renaissance, manufacturing and operations management emerged carrying the banner of customer service and client partnership. Who led and fought the campaigns for quality, for time-based competition, for customer and supply chain management, for quality at lower cost, for redesigning organizations around process instead of hierarchy, task instead of heterarchy? Operations management did, and marketing has been a bystander – a puzzled observer, as its rhetoric and its organizational mission has been assumed by the very department that it often cast as the *bête noire* of organizational life during its heyday of the 1960s!

Icarus or the Phoenix?

The result for many companies has been unfulfilled promise. For too many organizations, marketing represents a core competence which qualifies them for the competitive game but not a distinctive competence which creates a winning edge and a unique strategic knowledge asset. Too often it has an unredeeming competitive sameness and an inability to shake free from its founding assumptions about context, values and organization. In many regards, marketing's current inadequacies derive from its very success over a number of decades.

We suggest that marketing's current position might be represented by the metaphor of Icarus. Icarus flew too close to the sun, borne on the excess and the hubris engendered by the possession of wings. Marketing's difficulties, like so many business problems are the fruit of success which has turned to excess. Marketing's underlying assumptions and ways of working, established in the 1950s and 1960s, served it well into the 1970s. It was truly the child prodigy of business, temporarily putting older disciplines such as those concerned with how things are made and financed and how organizations are structured as social and political systems, into the shade. But in success lies the danger of believing in the one true way, of believing that things need never be fixed until broken, and of fixed beliefs and assumptions that lie unchallenged by a dominant orthodoxy. It is all too possible that marketing's wings are melting.

Mixing metaphors is a dangerous business, but there is a contrasting legend to that of Icarus – that of the phoenix. The phoenix burned itself on a funeral pyre to rise from its ashes with renewed youth and vigour in repeated cycles of death and rebirth. The phoenix is very much the embodiment of mythical eschatology. So let us examine some reasons why we may be seeing the beginnings of self-immolation rather than the melting of Icarus' wings.

In 1994, the Boston Consulting Group reported that 90 per cent of American consumer foods companies claimed to have restructured their marketing departments. In that same year Procter & Gamble, the original "inventor" of the brand management system in the USA in the 1930s, switched from brand to category management, i.e. all shampoos or diapers managed as a unit, and

evolved multidisciplinary customer business development teams with managers from production and sales as well as marketing (George *et al.*, 1994). The brand management model had worked spectacularly well during the era of high consumer trust, effective mass advertising, growing prosperity, homogeneous demand and standardized distribution channels. P&G now perceives brand managers to be too junior and inexperienced in the managerial hierarchy, too narrowly centred on marketing itself, to provide the cross-functional leadership to cope with a more complex marketing environment. Lever Brothers has abolished the job of marketing director, and Elida Gibbs likewise. Pillsbury recently folded its marketing department and created multidisciplinary teams around product groups.

By the mid-1990s the Cott Corporation, originally a low key Nova Scotia-based firm, had capitalized on the decade's growth in retailer power and distributor own brands (DOBs) to dramatically become a global company manufacturing and canning cola under own label brands for hundreds of retailers in North America, Europe and Asia. Its success dealt a striking blow to the two players which dominated the cola industry, Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola, prompting one academic to write about "slaying the giants" (Sparks, 1995). Such new product offerings are being developed increasingly by multifunctional groups of which marketing is just one component. Process-based restructuring is placing marketing firmly in partnership with manufacturing, accounting, personnel, training and R&D. In better companies the walls around the marketing department are gone and there is no functional foxhole in which to hide.

If you are a pessimist you may see Icarus. If you are an optimist you may suspect the phoenix. Despite oft-exaggerated comments of the approaching senility – if not death – of marketing, these companies provide illustration of adaptation, resilience and imagination in a challenging competitive environment. Not only are such firms coping but also they are discovering new ways of transacting business, organizing themselves and winning strategic advantage.

Renewing marketing: benefits of a process approach

It is clear that winning and retaining a satisfied customer not only requires continually reshaping and redefining what each department and function contributes, but also demands high levels of interdepartmental and cross-functional co-operation. How is this best achieved? We argue that what is required is a more integrated and holistic approach to understanding marketing activity and suggest that is now productive to add a strongly process-based view of marketing to more traditional perspectives.

Many subdisciplines in management and organizational behaviour have in recent years embraced a process perspective to assist in understanding how organizations might work better and enterprise be managed more effectively in the challenging circumstances of the late 1990s. Concepts like core business processes and re-engineering (see, for example, Hall *et al.*, 1993; Hammer and Champey, 1993; Kaplan and Murdock, 1991) reflect a belief that traditional

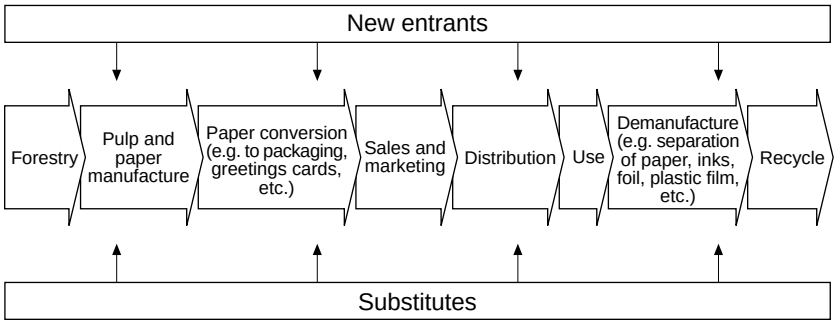
functional organization has limitations and will benefit from a process approach. In essence, it is worthwhile to overlay function and hierarchy with task and heterarchy.

A process perspective encourages the manager to reassess existing modes of doing business. It assumes that firms are likely to be underperforming if they adhere only to conventional beliefs about what each function should do and how work should be organized. Instead it suggests a focus on the key tasks and activities involved in bringing products and services to market in a way that ensures satisfied customers and firm profitability. Starting with the customer, it "unbundles" performance in order to reconfigure it more effectively. Considering its relentless customer focus, it is surprising how tardy marketing itself has been to consider these ideas. Such interest currently appears limited to brand management, distribution and aspects of services marketing.

If marketing is to embrace a process perspective in a Gestalt fashion, three sets of ideas need to be taken on board. First, marketing's strategic roots lie in a deep understanding of how industries and markets operate. Viewing an industry as a business system enriches this understanding. Second, the firm itself represents a microcosm of the larger business system. This micro business system maps the key tasks involved in bringing products and services to market to yield a loyal customer – what needs to get done and who does it? Third, marketing activity itself is best comprehended and managed in the context of four core marketing processes.

The business system

A firm competes at some stage(s) along a business system which may be viewed as a chain of linked value-adding activities – input-output transformations – from primary raw material activity through manufacturing and distribution to final buyer. Figure 1 represents such a general business system for paper products – it may also be referred to as a macro business system, as it encompasses a whole industry. It is vital to comprehend this system in terms of its dynamics and driving forces, how and why added value is "captured" at each link.



Source: Murray and O'Driscoll (1993)

Figure 1. A macro business system for paper products

Each step in the business system involves an economic and technological transformation – inputs are transformed into a new output with the objective of adding value in the process. Each transformation undertaken within an industry demands a market from which to source inputs and a market in which to sell outputs. These markets may be open, classically competitive, markets on occasion, or in-house managed markets if the transforming activity has been vertically integrated. Between these two opposites in terms of market organization lie a variety of increasingly common hybrid forms. Some of the alternative ways of organizing the markets in a business system, and managing the transaction therein, are suggested in Figure 2.

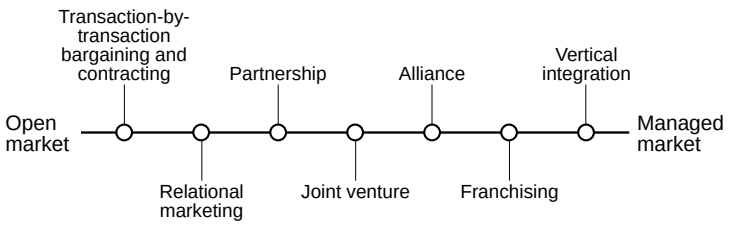


Figure 2.
Alternative ways of managing transactions

It can be observed that as one moves along this spectrum towards the "managed market" end, the nature of the exchange and transaction involves relationships and supporting structures which become deeper, more long-term and more codified. It is thus important to understand the manner in which all the participants in the system have decided to deal with the matter of ownership of the links – the governance of the transactions. Further, it should be noted that the characteristics of marketing activity evolve as one moves from upstream to downstream. In general, as value is added along the business system and one moves downstream, the product will evolve from standardized commodity form generating low margins towards more differentiated, heterogeneous and higher margin form.

Understanding an industry or industry sector in terms of an identifiable dominant set of horizontal value-adding activities, with linking vertical inputs, represents a substantive difference to the conventional economist's definition of an industry in terms of substitutability of goods and services. A business system perspective, however, involves a much broader and deeper systemic comprehension of where a firm "fits in" in its industry – and allows the imaginative firm the possibility to identify frame-breaking strategies which restructure the chain of activities to its advantage and change the rules of the game. The Cott Corporation changed deeply the business system of the cola industry, right through from concentrate manufacture to final purchase, and provides a good example of how frame-breaking strategies derive from an understanding of the workings, relationships and value adding steps along the whole business system.

The firm's micro business system

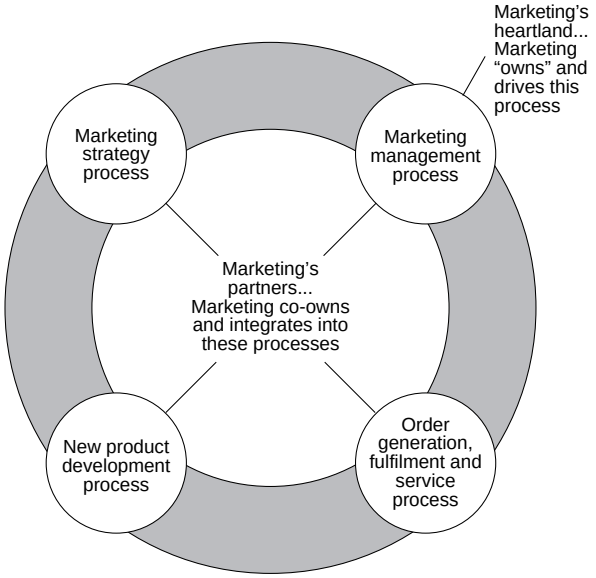
The individual firm or organization may be viewed as a microcosm of the industry business system within which it lives. Each organization necessarily sources raw materials and other inputs, such as labour and capital, from its input markets. It then converts these inputs into products or services and sells them in its output market in the hope that customers will pay more than the combined cost of all the inputs, thus generating a margin of profitability and a return on investment. The organization may therefore be visualized as an organized chain or series of activities in the same way that an industry may be viewed as a long chain of production and distribution. The micro business system maps the input-transformation-output process at the firm, that is the micro, level of analysis.

The concept of a micro business system has its provenance in Porterian value chain analysis with its identification of key primary and support activities which must be executed in a superior way to win positional advantage. Recent literature on business process re-engineering and redesign has deepened substantially knowledge of what are these key tasks. Such activities often extend beyond the boundaries of conventional functional expertise and increasingly require interdisciplinary multidepartmental organization. They are thus best conceived and managed with a process orientation, employing process teams and integrators to complement conventional functional organization.

Marketing's input to process redesign is vital to both the specifically marketing processes and to the successful design of all of a company's core processes. Much of the effort in re-engineering has been invested in processes that have quite tangible materials flows – especially in manufacturing and in the paper trails of service activities. Marketing processes have many features that are based in human interfacing, communication and decision making, and have perhaps for this reason been less exposed to redesign and re-engineering efforts. Davenport (1993) notes that what he calls the "customer-facing processes" are less structured than many others, but that they are perhaps the most critical to an organization's success and that "opportunities for innovation in marketing and sales management, order management, and service processes, are manifold".

Core marketing processes

Marketing activity is best managed in terms of four core processes – a marketing strategy process, a marketing management process, an order generation, fulfilment and service process, and a new product development process (see Figure 3). As a process approach challenges conventional notions about hierarchical/functional "ownership" of task, a first important point to be made about these four marketing processes is that only one, marketing management, is owned and managed exclusively by the marketing department. Marketing has a driving role in the other three, but they must be shared and co-managed with many other functions and departments in the firm.



Source: Murray and O'Driscoll (1996)

Figure 3.
The core marketing processes

This becomes clear when the first process, the marketing strategy process, is considered. The marketing manager and team work closely with the chief executive and other top managers at the corporate level in conceptualizing and developing overall company objectives, mission and strategy. Marketing is an important catalyst here in ensuring that the company maintains an outward perspective on markets, needs and customers. But there can also be a danger of marketing seeking to "grab ownership" of corporate strategy and direction – an issue which some current thinking and textbooks on marketing strategy either fail to caution against or obfuscate. The roots of sustainable competitive advantage permeate the whole organization, and strategic marketing is enveloped in, and derives from, the overall strategic management of the firm.

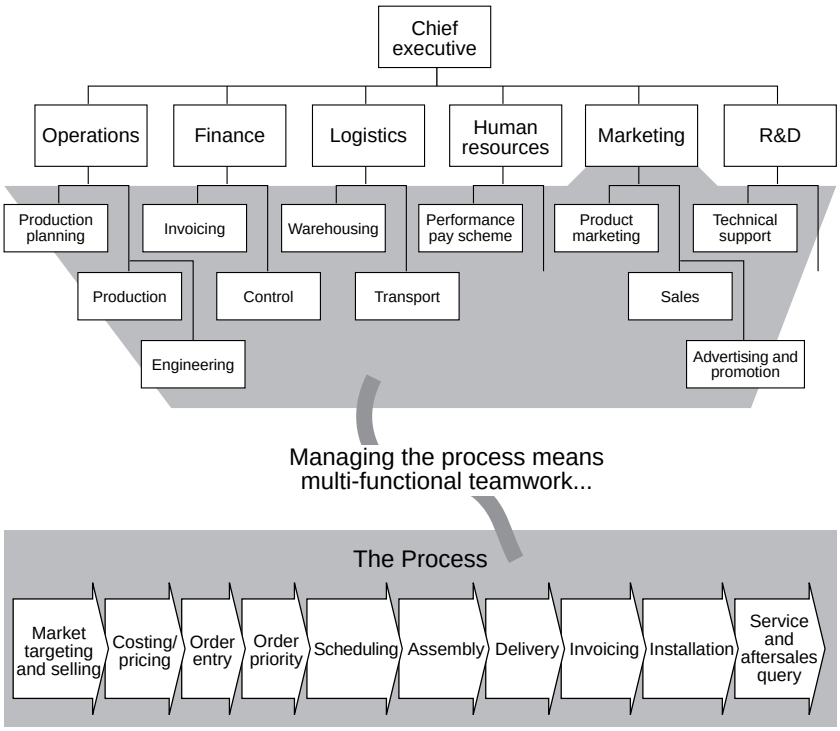
The marketing strategy process determines the choice of market in which the firm intends to compete. It involves scrutiny of customer need, assessment of marketing assets and liabilities, and the development of marketing objectives and a broad strategy to serve the chosen market, all within the wider context of the firm's strategic management. Issues of organizing for marketing, balancing specialists and integrators and nurturing a supportive company culture arise in this process. Managing performance and programming action lead to the next.

The marketing management process addresses the competitive positioning of the product or service within its target market, product choice, pricing, communication and selling, distribution, as well as the development of performance management systems and measures to monitor and adapt execution. The marketing management process is the heartland of the professional discipline, dealing with the acquisition, deployment and

enhancement of specialist marketing knowledge and contributing through its interaction with the other core processes to the successful management of the market relationships of the firm. In so far as this is done particularly well, those in the function can build a distinctive competence for the organization.

The order generation, fulfilment and service (OGFS) process operationalizes the day-to-day business of achieving customer satisfaction in a manner profitable to the firm. It includes activities, often multidisciplinary, such as costing, order entry and prioritization, scheduling, delivery, invoicing, installation, service and aftersales query. This cross-functionality is suggested in Figure 4 which illustrates the overlaying of process on hierarchy, task on function. In a generic sense, order generation, fulfilment and service involve a series of steps or procedures from an order being won from a customer to a point, subsequent to any after-sales sales service or query, where the customer may be deemed to be satisfied with the exchange. The exact steps involved and the precise nature of the process vary from industry to industry and from product to service. But managing this order process shares broadly the same activities and characteristics in every firm.

Research at Harvard Business School has sought to unbundle this process and explore areas of conflict and inefficiency, in particular as order



Source: Murray and O'Driscoll (1996)

Figure 4. The order generation, fulfilment and service (OGFS) process

management moves across the firm (Shapiro *et al.*, 1992). What the researchers observed was inefficiency, frustration, missed opportunities, dissatisfied customers, and underperforming companies. Four key problems emerged:

(1) Most firms never view OGFS as a whole process or system. People in sales think that someone in production scheduling understands the entire system; people in production scheduling thinks customer reps do. No one really does, and everyone can only provide a partial description.

(2) Each stage in the OGFS process necessitates an at times confusing array of overlapping functional responsibilities. Each step is considered the primary responsibility of a specific department, and no step is the exclusive responsibility of any department. Given the reality of overlapping roles, orders "fall through the cracks" and customers are disappointed.

(3) To top management, the specifics of the OGFS process are vague if not invisible. Senior managers in all but the smallest operating units simply do not understand its finer operating points. Further, the personnel with the most crucial information, such as customer service specialists, are at the bottom of the organization and cannot communicate with the top. Thus there are vertical gaps in the system as well as horizontal.

(4) The customer remains as remote from order generation, fulfilment and service as senior management. During the process, the customer's main tasks are to negotiate price, place the order, wait, receive delivery, possibly complain, and pay. In the middle stages of the process, he does not figure at all.

The focus of order generation, fulfilment and service is relentlessly on the customer. Getting it right is key. The marketing strategy process enables the customer to be identified in a "ballpark" context – where he is in the market and what his characteristics and requirements are. The marketing management process sets the agenda for delivering to that customer – the type of product, its broad price level, promotion and feasible distribution outlets. But the OGFS process actually reaches the customer. It reifies him. It thus brings marketing activity full circle and closes the loop between strategic intent and final customer satisfaction.

The new product development (NPD) process concerns itself with renewing the firm's portfolio of goods and services. While rooted in the firm's overall strategy, it explores idea generation, concept screening and development, product development and launch. Considering the greater speed with which firms must come to market with new products and services, a process orientation enables simultaneity in new product development to be handled effectively. A process approach also facilitates a broadened definition of design in marketing – one which encompasses design at its core product or service level, at its augmented product level and at the corporate level.

Redeeming marketing

These four processes, while forming the basis for marketing practice, might best be thought of as the technology of marketing. The marketing manager has a role in both the architecture and task management of this technology. Parts of it he owns and "drives" exclusively; this is essentially the marketing management process. In others parts he shares ownership and must integrate his competence with that of others and other departments in the firm; this is in the case of the other three marketing processes. He is an expert in the specialized knowledge of marketing and in the integration of that competence with that of other disciplines.

Comprehending marketing activity in this way builds on existing concepts and theory to provide a deepened bedrock of understanding about "how marketing works" in the challenging environment of the late 1990s. This broadened explanation diminishes pessimistic eschatological concern about marketing's ability to cope with these difficult circumstances. It also enables the "plan-do" time gap or formulation/implementation dichotomy to be revisited with new insight; leads to a greater knowledge about leadership, teamwork and organizational behaviour in successful marketing practice; and encourages divergent and introspective trends in marketing to be replaced by more integrative and cross-disciplinary approaches. Each of these issues is considered briefly.

Real-time implementation of strategy

An important benefit of the process approach is that it enables a real-time implementation of strategic intent. The traditional approach to managing strategy has been to categorize it into two sequential parts – formulation and implementation. A manager drew up a strategy, and then set about putting it in place at a later, often unclearly specified, occasion. A process orientation offers a greater simultaneity of intent and operation, of plan and implementation. It does so because, as a manager conceives a plan or strategy, he must almost simultaneously consider its execution – what are the structures and systems, skills and resources, style and shared values necessary to action the strategy? So conception is quickly followed by delivery of product or service. Process overlays strategy. Strategy represents the choice of direction, while process is the force which implicitly or explicitly propels the organization in that direction.

Understanding teams and teamwork

While teamwork is important within each function and specialism, the distinguishing feature of the market-focused organization is cross-functional teamwork, aligned with key business processes, which cuts across departmental and, on occasion, business unit barriers – the "silos" which get in the way of serving the customer in a superior manner. A fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firm, for example, might organize marketing activity into teams, each led by a consumer or product integrator and staffed with specialists on pricing, promotions, distribution, manufacturing, R&D and database

marketing. Here, teams are the linchpin of the marketing organization, because their combination of expertise, experience, and judgement inevitably achieves better results than individuals, no matter how talented, working on their own. Genuine teams share a number of characteristics that contribute towards their effectiveness, and genuine teamwork allows for the "double solid line" organizational structure – where members report to both the team leader and functional head – and ensures that resultant activity transcends the conventional matrix management mode (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

Organizations are complex and organic. The organization chart and its boxes with titles are only one representation. The organization is also a web or network of relationships, formal and informal, both within the firm itself and without with other parties. It also has an amoeba-like dimension – it continuously changes shapes with fuzzy boundaries around core competences (Gummesson, 1994). It must be understood, shaped and managed. Marketing has a crucial role to play if organizational assets and competences are to be directed successfully to customer need. Marketing's necessary role is to divine customer behaviour. But unless marketing also understands more deeply organizational behaviour, such a role is not sufficient.

Disciplinary integration

The concept of the business system helps to illustrate the fact that all consumer products are usually the outcome of many business-to-business marketing activities and that both consumer and business-to-business markets usually depend on services markets if business is to take place. Marketing does differ as one moves from consumer to business-to-business and on to services marketing, but the differences are in matters of degree rather than fundamental principle. In managing the four core processes, and in particular the marketing strategy process, the marketing team must be able to integrate and synthesize these various viewpoints. Indeed, having to do so should be taken as a signal to the subdisciplines within marketing to pay special attention to developing integrating frameworks and concepts rather than unduly divergent ones.

Messianic eschatology

Eschatology, both in its historical and mythical forms, represents a rich vein in humankind's canon of learning. It is also a diverse vein. The historical development of Christianity has been marked by widely differing interpretations and degrees of acceptance of eschatological concepts. Distinctions can made between the hopes of Messianism (directed towards a salvatory or vindicating figure or philosophy), millennarianism (directed towards the prophesied 1,000 year Kingdom of Christ), and apocalypticism (directed towards the cataclysmic intervention of God in history). The diverse strands of twentieth century Christian theology are in agreement perhaps only in that they regard faith itself, in its ultimate anticipation of God's redemption of creation, as being innately eschatological.

This latter point must be echoed in our consideration of the eschatological metaphor in marketing. Keeping faith in marketing and continuing to believe in

its intrinsic worth as a discipline and practice is paramount. As a new millennium approaches, it is perhaps not surprising that thoughts of an apocalyptic nature multiply. Marketing is a relatively young academic discipline and theoretical development may not move in the same smooth progression as in more established ones. Concerns about its usefulness are understandable, given the very challenging marketing landscape of the late 1990s. Yet marketing does not appear to be dying in the marketplace. The evidence of leading companies in not only coping with changing circumstances but also turning them imaginatively to their competitive advantage indicates that marketing is redefining and reshaping itself in its nature and activities. Theoretical development in marketing will follow suit. In so doing, marketing will most likely take on board ideas and concepts – like business process redesign – from other disciplines and business functions.

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