

A STUDY ON PIONEER MARKETING THOUGHTS

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Abstract

The study reviews the works of pioneers in marketing thought, appreciating their contributions to the marketing place. It is aimed at reviving the interest for historical marketing, which has been on the steady decline in the 21st century. The history of marketing thought includes not only the ideas, theories, and schools of thought, but also the centre of influence upon marketing thought. The study worked with secondary data. The publications of the marketing scholars provided the literature base for this review. The search included all of the major marketing journals, business and economic history periodicals, and an internet bibliographic search. The search was a thorough, yet not exhaustive review, of the literature. The finding of the study showed the humble conception of marketing, the available early courses in marketing, the emergence of earlier teachers in marketing, and early contributors to marketing thought. The implication of the study suggests that today marketing must be understood not in the old sense of making, a sale, but in the new sense of satisfying customer needs. This means that if the marketer does a good job of understanding consumer needs; develop products that provide superior value; and prices, distributes and promotes them effectively, these products will sell very easily.

Introduction

According to Bartel (1962: 3- 4), if marketing thought is an expression of what is known about *marketing*, it follows that the beginnings of marketing thought would be traceable to the beginnings of marketing. If, as is commonly claimed, the beginnings of marketing are lost in antiquity, the beginnings of marketing thought would be equally ancient. That this cannot be taken for granted, however, is clear from the fact that the beginnings of marketing are associated with events following the turn of the 20th century. It is, therefore, of concern in this study to review the efforts of the pioneers in marketing thought in order to appreciate the contribution of those who were concerned with solving problems of the market place. Also, the study is intended to revive interest for historical marketing, which has been on the decline in this 21st century.

New market problems at the beginning of the 21st century did not of themselves produce a body of marketing thought. They impelled inquiry, resulting in teaching and writing and in gradual evolution of thought, involving new concepts, literature, educational programmes, and business practices. Neither did the information provided by early studies constitute a body of thought. That developed only as thought about marketing attained structure, breadth, and maturity. Nevertheless, from the new circumstances, and from men's endeavour to make the best of them, has arisen in the name of marketing thought a significant body of social and economic knowledge.

As this accumulation of information and knowledge has been viewed objectively in recent years, interest in its origin and character has increased. There has been speculation as to whether the study of marketing has attained the status of a science, and why it has developed in the particular way that it has. Such questions relate to facts about the beginnings of the study of marketing that passing time is increasingly making obscure. They are facts, however, that are important to understand if one is to gain a correct appreciation of the influences that shaped marketing thought.

Research method

This study worked with secondary data. Related works were used to examine the development of the literatures, biographies of the pioneer scholars, the role played by important organisations and institutions, the history of university teaching, and of course, the development of concepts, theories and schools of thoughts. If one were looking for a single publication which signalled the emergence (or rather, the revival) of history as a “legitimate” field within the marketing discipline, it might either be Ronald Savitt’s (1980) *Historical Research in Marketing* published in the Journal of Marketing or Robert Bartel’s (1962) *The Development of Marketing Thought*. These works were very helpful for this study. Other historical and development research by marketing scholars published primarily in marketing or marketing-related publications, also provided the literature base for this study. The search included all the major marketing journals, business and economic history periodicals, and an internet bibliographic search. It was a thorough, yet not exhaustive review of the literature.

Literature Search

From the early 1930s to the late 1950s historical research in marketing was dominated by the study of marketing thought. During this period, attention was focused on tracing the earliest literature and marketing courses taught in American Universities (Converse, 1959: 76-88). Other early historical studies focused on the individuals and organisations that pioneered the development of the marketing thought (Coolseens, 1936: 120-130), and a series of 23 biographical sketches published in the Journal of Marketing between 1956 and 1962 was later compiled in a book (Wright and Dimsdale, 1974: 23-26).

Bartels’ (1951: 1-17) article entitled “Influences on the development of marketing thought,1900-1923” was seminal in that it was an early attempt to go beyond a simple chronicle of “firsts.” It drew upon numerous interviews of pioneer scholars in order to examine some of the sources of early marketing ideas. Bartels’ article

was also the most ambitious historical analysis at that time based, as it was, on his 1941 doctoral dissertation at Ohio State University.

During the 1950s, a trend began towards focusing on (the history of marketing concepts, theories, and schools of thought. Cassels (1936: 129-133) had earlier examined the influence of significant schools of economic thought on marketing, but it was not until the 1950s that marketing ideas were developed enough to warrant a retrospective. An important collection of such articles was published in 1951 under the title *Changing Perspective in Marketing*. It claimed to be “one of the few, if not the only one, in which a series of papers has been compiled to give historical treatment and perspective to the development of marketing thought” (Wales, 1951: 72-81). This includes topics, such as retailing, sales management, marketing research and marketing theory.

Converse (1959: 27-34) noted remarkably a transition point, both in time and in depth of analysis, in the history of marketing thought. On his own, Bartels (1962: 29-45) noted the major events that played role in the development of marketing thought since 1990. Schwartze (1982: 23- 27) was more concerned with specific theories in marketing. In addition to examining the historical development of well recognised marketing theories, such as retail gravitation, regionale theory, marketing functions and fundamentalist theory, he included chapters examining the potential contribution of fields, such as social physics and game theory.

During the 1960s, some researchers began to integrate marketing history with the history of marketing thought. Such work went beyond the simplistic approach to earlier writings by using the history of marketing practice to interpret the development of marketing thought (Jones, 1992: 126-138). As the marketing discipline moved away from the institutional and commodity schools of thought, and began to popularise marketing functions through managerial approach, research in marketing history reflected that trend (Savitt, 1980: 53-54).

Ironically, as the 1960s drew to a close, there seemed to be a decline of interest in historical research in marketing. The marketing

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discipline had been moving during the 1960s in a more quantitative, scientific direction and perhaps historical research seemed less rigorous (Schwartzc, 1982: 48-49). The quantity and quality of historical research in marketing have grown enormously since the early 1980s. Of course, much of this work is accounted for by the marketing history conferences.

Findings and Discussion

As might be expected in the development of a body of scientific knowledge, universities and men engaged in academic pursuits have played a major role in the evolving of marketing thought. It was in response to social issues more than to business urgency that schools first began to offer courses in the distributive trades, for businessmen and others early in the 20th century viewed dimly the profitability of such study (Bartels, 1976: 12-19). In keeping with programme, however, universities and academicians did foresee new lines, along which the business economy was developing, and they gave expression to what they knew.

Pioneer Teachers of Marketing

An early impulse to the formation of marketing thought lay in the decisions, by whomever they were made, to provide at several universities courses that dealt with what was then known as the *distributive industries*. According to Bartels (1962: 29), the first of such courses on record were given between 1900 and 1910 as follows:

- 1902 — University of Michigan, by B.D. Jones*
- 1902 — University of California, by Simon Litman*
- 1902 — University of Illinois, by George M. Fisk*
- 1903 — University of Pennsylvania, by W.B. Kreusi*
- 1904— University Pennsylvania, by H.S. Person*
- 1905 — The Ohio State University. by James B. Hagerty*
- 1908 — Northwestern University*
- 1909 — University of Pittsburgh*

1909 — Harvard University, by P.T. Cherington
1910 — University of Wisconsin

The background of all those courses is not known (Hagerty, 1936: 20), but it appears that the idea for such a course did not always originate with the individual who taught. Some were assigned to teach a course; others undertook it as a product of their research interest. In any case, the beginnings of thought were original, and there is no indication that any teacher prior to 1910 had any knowledge of anyone else working in this field (Bartels, 1962: 29).

According to Hagerty (1936: 48), inductive research and descriptive findings characterized the studies he made among businessmen in Philadelphia, who were amazed that anyone should be objectively interested in their practices and curious as to what use could possibly be made of such information. He used for text purpose, after 1905, volume 6 of the *Industrial Commission Reports* dealing with the distribution of farm products. He also had businessmen speak to his classes, but found that he had to spend several hours with them showing what he wanted them to tell the class (Weld, 1941: 380-381).

When Simon Litman was asked to teach a course called *The Technique of Trade and Commerce*, he had never heard of such a subject. Moreover, he was unfamiliar with American business, for he had lived and been educated in Russia, France and Germany. He assumed that the “problem and methods do not differ in essentials from country to country” and that “fundamentals are the same irrespective of boundaries within which they are being applied” (Litman, 1950: 220). For help in planning and organizing his course, he relied upon material obtained from treaties by three German writers: Cohn, Grunzel, and Van de Borgt. Thus, Litman brought to the study of marketing a viewpoint probably unlike that of anyone else that time. He may have been justified in emphasizing similarities rather than differences among practices of various countries more than that later, for the practice of marketing had not yet wrought changes in American

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business that during ensuing years were to differentiate it from business elsewhere.

Pioneer Courses in Marketing

Notwithstanding the immaturity of concepts and thought during those early years, the content of courses offered showed that they have dealt substantially with the subject that was later called *marketing*. At that time, the course titles usually identified them with *distribution* rather than *marketing* (Maynard, 1941: 382). Bulletins from two universities reveal the following content of their courses during the first years in which they were offered:

- i. *University of Michigan — 1902 (Distributive and Regulative Industries of the United States — Course Content and Description). This course will include a description of the various methods of marketing goods, of the classification, grades, brands employed, and of wholesale and retail trade. Attention will also be given to those private organisations, not connected with money and banking, which guide and control the industrial process, such as trade associations, boards of trade and chambers of commerce, etc. (Bartels, 1962: 30,).*

- ii. *The Ohio State University — 1906 (Distribution of Products - Course Content and Description). This course considers mercantile organisations from points and views: (1) the evolution of mercantile organisations in the United States and their relation to each other; the origin and development of the various mercantile institutions with special reference to economic conditions which brought them into existence and perpetuated them. The various methods of marketing goods, and the functions of the various distributors, manufacturers, manufacturers' agents, brokers, jobbers, traveling salesmen, etc. Advertising, its*

psychological laws, its economic importance and the changes it has introduced in selling goods. The work of stock and produce exchanges. (2) The internal or administrative organisation in mercantile concerns. A study of the divisions and subdivisions of mercantile concerns amid the relation of the various departments to each other and to the whole. The systems in use of recording and preserving data (Bartels, 1962: 32).

Following the initial offering of courses in distribution, marketing thought developed in specialized areas as courses and writings grew simultaneously. Frequently, the necessity to teach a course in a particular subject impelled research and writing by the teacher; at other times the availability of writings encouraged the multiplication of courses in some phase of marketing. As an example of the growth of thought expressed in course offerings, the additions to the curriculum in marketing at the Ohio State University are cited in Bartels (1962:31-32) as follows:

- 1905 Spring— Distribution of products offered for the first time.*
- 1905-1906 — The course was expanded into a year's work, two terms (Fall, 1905; Winter, 1906). It was titled Distribution and Regulative Institutions; in the Spring term, 1906, Commercial Credit was offered.*
- 1906 — Title of Distributive and Regulative Institutions was changed to Mercantile Institutions.*
- 1909-1910 - Commercial Credit was dropped, but the subject was absorbed in the international course. Two courses were then in effect: Mercantile Institutions in Domestic Trade,*

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- and Foreign Markets and the Consular System.*
- 1911 — *Principles of Advertising was added and it has been offered Continuously since that time.*
- 1915-1916 - *Title of Mercantile Institutions was changed to Marketing.*
- 1916-1917- *Salesmanship was added.*
- 1920-1921 - *Wholesaling and Retailing were added.*
- 1921 - *The curriculum consisted of the following courses: Business Communications, Marketing; Marketing Problems; Wholesaling; Retailings; Credits and Collections; Salesmanship; Advertising; Advertising Practice; Importing; Research in Marketing.*
- 1925 — *Sales Management was combined with Salesmanship*
- 1927 — *Marketing Problems was omitted.*
- 1940 — *Credit Problems was introduced.*
- 1940 — *Business Research and Market Research became two courses.*
- 1941 - *Salesmanship and Sales Management became two courses.*

Conception of Marketing by a Pioneer

During the earliest years of the study and teaching of distributive trade practices, no use was made of the word Marketing. Instead, trade, commerce and distribution were the most common designations of the area to which thought was being given. Between 1900 and 1910, conceptual changes occurred that resulted in the adoption of the term marketing to identify this field. As the study of distribution began simultaneously in several places, it is reasonable to think that several people may also have felt the necessity of finding a new term to

designate the subject with which they were dealing. Ralph Starr Butler, then a professor at the University of Wisconsin, has told how he, for one, conceived Marketing.

In considering the whole field of selling, I developed the idea that personal salesmanship and advertising had to do simply with the final expression of the selling idea. My experience with the Procter and Gamble company had convinced me that a manufacturer seeking to market a product had to consider and solve a large number of problems before he ever gave expression to the selling idea of sending a salesman on the road or inserting an advertisement in a publication.

I surveyed the very meager literature of business which was available at that time and was astonished to find that the particular field that I have very briefly described above had never been treated by any writer. I decided to prepare a correspondence course covering this phase of business activity.

*In brief the subject that I intended to treat was to include a study of everything that the promoter of a product has to do prior to his actual use of salesman and of advertising. A name was needed for this field of business activity. I remember the difficulties I had in finding a suitable name, but I finally decided on the phrase **MARKETING METHODS** (Bands, 1962: 32).*

Recognising that the subject with which they were dealing was different from that designated by distribution or trade, other men also used the term marketing, and gradually it became accepted in both course and book titles, as is indicated in Bartels (1962: 33) by the following:

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- 1902 — *Universities of Michigan Bulletin* used the phrase *Various Methods of Marketing Goods in the description of the course entitled The Distribution and Regulative Industries of the United States.*
- 1905 — *University of Pennsylvania* offered a course entitled *The Marketing of Product*, taught by *W. E. Kreusi.*
- 1909 - *University of Pittsburgh* offered a course entitled *Marketing of Products.*
- 1910 - *University of Wisconsin* offered a course entitled *Marketing Methods*, taught by *Ralph Starr Butler*, who also that year published six pamphlets, with the same title.
- 1913 - *University of Wisconsin* offered a course entitled *The Marketing of Farm Products*, taught by *Louis D.H. Weld.*
- 1916 - *Louis D.H. Weld* published *The Marketing of Farm Products.*
- 1917 - *Ralph Starr Butler* published *Marketing Methods.*

Pioneer Contributors to Marketing thought

In comparison to the number of men who were engaged in marketing practice early in the 20th century, or even of those who taught and wrote on the subject, the number who made significant contributions to the development of marketing thought was small. Contributions consisted of a variety of undertakings: original research, new conceptions, fresh viewpoints, innovative writing or teaching, unprecedented analysis or synthesis of thought. Judged by their works and by consensus of men making contributions to marketing thought, the following men in Bartels (1962: 33-34) were leaders in the development of marketing (Table 6.1). The number of teachers contributing to marketing thought increased as the study of the subject gained momentum and scope. Among them there was remarkable stability of devotion to advancing knowledge of marketing. Having

once taught in this field, most men remained in that occupation, and of those who were so engaged in teaching before 1920 a great many remained in that work into the 1930s.

Period	Pioneer	Period	Pioneer
1902	E.D. Jones	1914	P.W. Ivey
1902	S. Litman	1914	W.C. Weilder
1902	G.M. Fisk	1915	N.H. Comish
1904	W.E. Kreusi	1915	P.D. Converse
1905	J.E. Hagerty	1915	C.S. Duncan
1905	B.H. Hibbard	1919	F.L. Vaughan
1908	P.T. Cherington	1920	R.S. Alexander
1909	P.H. Nystrom	1920	H.H. Maynard
1910	R.S. Butler	1920	M.P. McNair
1910	A.W. Shaw	1920	H.R. Tosdal
1911	T. Macklin	1921	F.N. Beckman
1912	M.T. Copeland	1922	C.W. Barker
1913	H.E. Agnew	1922	N.H. Borden
1913	L.D.H. Weld	1923	R.S. Vaile
1914	F.W. Clark	1924	R.F. Breyer

Some early teachers were drawn from marketing to other interests. Others left teaching entirely; but the majority continued in that work. Few men remained long in their first teaching assignment. On the other hand, when once well established, they were little inclined to change schools, for they bore responsibilities for developing courses and programme upon which their reputations were to rest (Bartels, 1962: 34; Bartels, 1988: 66-68; Savitt, 1980: 52-58; Converse, 1959; 73-77).

Implications and Conclusion

As writers, those pioneers were very impressive. To them may be traced roots not only of general writings on marketing but also of such specialized fields as agricultural marketing, advertising, retailing, commercial research, salesmanship, wholesaling, credits and

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collection, marketing of manufactured goods and compilations of case and problem materials. It would be difficult to find elsewhere such a small group to whom so much credit is due for the development of an important segment of human knowledge.

As knowledge of marketing increased, it was influenced by the characteristics of the men who produced it and by the environments in which they worked. The schools where the first four or five marketing courses were taught were not the ones whence emanated the foremost marketing scholars of the first two decades of the study of marketing. Preparation for original thought in that area was best achieved at established, advanced, and liberal centres of learning at that time.

The works of the pioneers laid the foundation for the growth of marketing as a discipline. With the founding in 1915 of the National Association of Teachers of Advertising (NATA) leading to the formation of the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1937, there emerged an important impetus for historical work (Agnew, 1941: 374-379). These first attempts formally to organize marketing scholars led naturally to reflections about the origins and development of this emerging discipline. At the same time, these events provided specialised outlets for the publication of such historical reflection. Thus, there were a number of attempts to put things on the record.

Today, marketing must be understood not in the old sense of marketing a sale –“telling and selling” - but in the new sense of satisfying customer needs. If the marketer does a good job of understanding consumer needs; develops products that provide superior value; and prices, distributes, promotes them effectively, these products will sell very easily. Thus, selling and advertising are only part of a larger “marketing mix” - a set of marketing tools that work together to satisfy customer needs and build customer relationship.

Broadly defined in this century, marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging values with others. In a narrower business context, marketing involves building profitable value-ladder exchange relationships with customers. Hence, we define

marketing as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006: 5).

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