

# I-MARKETING 3.0

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THIS ARTICLE CARRIES ON FROM MY AUGUST PIECE, 'MARKETING – THE NEW CORE SKILL FOR ALL?' IT IS A FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE MARKETING 3.0 CONCEPT IN THE BOOK BY PHILIP KOTLER, HERMAWAN KARTAJAYA, AND IWAN SETIAWAN. HERE I PRESENT A NEW CONCEPTUAL MODEL: I-MARKETING 3.0, WHICH IS ABOUT HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGING GEOGRAPHIES OF 'COLLECTIVE INDIVIDUALISM' AND 'INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIVISM' – INFLUENTIAL OFFERINGS EMBEDDED IN CULTURE, WITH DISTINCT YET FLUID IDENTITIES AND PERSONALITIES; WHICH ARE INTUITIVE, SHARING, AND ACCESSIBLE.

### Introducing I-Marketing 3.0

21<sup>st</sup> century marketing is the dawn of an age that embraces and celebrates more human traits - beyond simple industrialisation, commerce and structuralism. Financial and economic transactions are the culmination of human transactions in the widest sense. These begin with transactional exchanges of thoughts, emotions, experiences and social activities. This is marketing that accepts and harnesses the paradoxical, oxymoronic, allegorical, metaphorical, and esoteric tensions in culture, emotion and spirituality. Plus, more non-marketing professionals, and increasingly collaborating

consumers are becoming an integral part of this movement.

In short – it's complicated out there and we marketers need to mirror that complexity with practical, diverse, layered and integrated propositions. For those of you that have watched the movie *Inception*, then you'll know what I mean. It's about entering dreams and creating dreams within dreams.

Following these guiding principles and the idea of championing cultural imperatives, I would like to drill down further on the role of the individual within marketing geographies – as collaborative creators, architects, agents and facilitators. Figure 1 presents the attributes, skills and activities of individuals within this marketing landscape.

'I' as a letter, prefix, and word has been brought to the forefront of our psyches more so than ever in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – thanks to the Internet, Apple, and our increased expressions of personal opinion on social media. And so I feel that presenting an *I-Marketing 3.0* model is timely, and mirrors such change. Furthermore, my use of an 'I'

is an attempt to expand its usage beyond the technology sector – as Internet and technology usage have now become intertwined and embedded within all spheres.

So with the blurring of boundaries, partly due to the desires to follow more customer-centric approaches, a wider acceptance of cultural differences, and the social impact of the Internet: I want to reflect the true nature of collaboration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – from genesis to its logical culmination. When investigating modern phenomenon of branded creativity and creative consumption, Wilson (2011) highlights what has been termed by Krotoski (2010) as *The Great Levelling* of the digital revolution – where access to knowledge capital and social networking has the ability to empower and drive cosmopolitanism. Johnson (2007) also charts a change in mind-set among corporations when engaging with consumers: *“Today's media is evolving beyond monetising audiences and more towards fostering dialogue and community – and monetising these interactions directly or indirectly”*.



## I-MARKETING 3.0



In-keeping with the arguments presented in Marketing 3.0 (Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan; 2010), and extending them further; I've chosen not to separate the role of individuals into one or two-way polar diagrams of the 'marketer' and 'consumer'. Instead, I've decoupled roles from formal job titles. Conventional thinking, associated with job titles, suggests that a job is an obligation governed by a formal contract. Within the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), it is widely accepted that psychological contracts fast overtake formal contractual obligations in day-to-day practices. Legally binding contracts tend to

feature at the beginning of a relationship and later on when things go wrong.

Therefore in harmony with HRM thinking: marketing is becoming less about the dogma of enshrined definitions and legally defensible positions; and more about socio-cultural psychological contracts of meaning-making and doing. Laws are there to be used through embracing interpretive practises, which refine and set new precedents. If understood and practised fully, collaboration, customization, innovation and ultimately harmonization stand a better chance.

### **I(slamic)-Marketing 3.0**

My other intended use of the 'I' is designed to link and reposition the role and understanding of Islam. Islam, for many reasons, is a hot topic (Wilson et al, 2013; Wilson and Grant, 2013).

However, it would be wrong to say that Islamic marketing per se is something new. From an Islamic perspective: The best of Islamic marketers is the Prophet Muhammad; Islamic marketing's origins can be traced back to the Prophet Adam at the start of humanity; and the father of the Abrahamic faiths is the Prophet Ibrahim (peace and blessings on them all). This in many ways points

to the 'Intel argument': a processor that's been there running away, with little prominence, until it was recently branded, labelled and stuck on the outside. The Prophet Muhammad was a messenger, reformer, and a businessman. He sought to establish new ties based upon a meritocracy - challenging concepts of hierarchy, according to race, age, wealth, class, and tribe. Purification of the self and helping others, were the path to well-being, salvation and enlightenment.

Therefore my argument is that Islamic marketing will benefit from not only linking back to its rich cultural heritage; but also through creating a new culture of empowered individuals, equipped for the 21st century. This work should continue to follow in the old traditions of attempting to engage with the wider community - and not just marketing

to 'them' (Muslim or non-Muslim); but also with them and showing them how to market. Islamic marketing shouldn't be isolationist; exclusive; weighed down by technical terms that only a few educated scholars can understand; or settle for being a subset of Marketing. It has to feed into the bigger debate and narrative in a way that can be understood by many types of people regardless of their faith. This is *da'wah* in the truest sense - An Arabic word meaning an invitation to an Islamic way of life.

Furthermore, with Islamic marketing, the focus should be on the person, not the object. My observations find that much is made about the compliance of products and services, through Halal certification, whilst less can be said about impressing the importance of management issues and the character of individuals (Wilson and Liu, 2010; Wilson and Liu, 2011). So for example, truly Islamic finance and Halal offerings should first and foremost be about the professional; and only then will their products and services remain pure, true and authentic. If the reverse is attempted, then matters are open to abuse. This is perhaps potentially a key contribution that Islamic marketing can make - in supporting the rising agendas of ethics, best practice, sustainability, and social responsibility. Of course, these ideals are not unique to Islam - but Islam has been successful in raising a flag for the importance, role and necessity of faith in business (Liu and Wilson, 2011; Wilson and Hollensen, 2013).

So with more consumer-centric, social, collaborative, and relational approaches being called for, I argue that there is an inherent shortfall in many marketing models. Current marketing approaches and models do little to analyse and segment marketers, to the same level and depth as they dissect consumers; or to join the two parties together - which makes little sense to me. Also, there is the idea of marketing; and then there is marketing management. From an Islamic perspective, the overlap has to be much greater - as Islamic marketers (Muslim or non-Muslim) have to practice what they preach, through their consumption.

Also, despite orientalist literature that exoticizes, peculiarizes, and objectifies Muslims, and by extension alienates them: Muslims are not aliens or a different species; the majority of their lives share a commonality with other groups - more binds them than separates them from 'others'. Therefore it could be argued



that there is no reason why a separate subject discipline should be created. In response, I assert that to paint a veneer over differences would be folly. Rather, a focus should be maintained that details, celebrates, and shares differences on a level playing field and within a bigger picture. Only then can things move forward, in the same way that feminist and race studies have.

As illustrative examples, it would now seem odious to suggest that only black musicians can really play the blues; Hip hop is a 'black thing'; you have to be Japanese to practice the martial arts; or the reason that there are fewer female managers is because they are less able. These myths have been debunked. Yet, for a variety of reasons, a greater proportion of erroneous and unproductive myths still exist concerning the understanding of Islam and its faithful - inside and outside of the Muslim community (which are too complicated to do justice within the confines of this article). I feel more work is needed here, in theory and practice; and that this is a collective obligation and necessity - part of 21<sup>st</sup> century living, regardless of faith.

### Conclusions

Marketing continues to move, evolve and grow at a rapid speed. Marketing activities have to be both timely and timeless – quick, dynamic, diverse, integrated, and viral communication, through the tangible and intangible, that's there forever. For it to remain competitive and fit for purpose,

marketing has to be about more than the creation of products and services, which are designed to create or respond to the needs and wants of consumers and businesses. There needs to be a focus also on the wider values and practices of individuals – and especially those of marketing practitioners. Marketers should practice what they preach, in a way that is visible to all - seeing the path to professionalism

and perfection as being able to walk in the shoes of their audiences, as companions. This shared understanding will help to forge a moral compass and practices able to preserve values and relevance; whilst safeguarding against exploitation and isolation, which could erode the authenticity, credibility and ultimately viability of marketing activities over the long-term.



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