Special Session

**The Habits of Highly Effective Marketers: An Analysis of Marketing through Analogy**

R Wixel Barnwell, Longwood University, USA

Kevin Shanahan, Mississippi State University, USA

Bob McDonald, Texas Tech University, USA

Kenneth Graham, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, USA

Mark Pelletier, University of North Carolina-Wilmington, USA

Alisha Horky, Columbus State University, USA

Michael Levin, Otterbein University, USA

*In their seventh annual special session, the panelists will use the lens of the Covey’s habit of highly effective people offer fresh perspectives on marketing. Creativity inspired by the intersection of disparate disciplines and the relevance of analysis through analogy are well documented. Applying the revered self-management principles to the larger marketing world, additional insight might be gained. This special session extends the well-received panel discussions of going back to 2014.*

**Think Win-Win & Synergize**

Just as win-win summarizes a spirit of mutual benefit, synergy focuses on cooperation with open-mindedness. These principles have both be embraced to great benefit and ignored to extreme detriment. With concepts like coopetition [sic] (Brandenburger & Nalebuff 1996), collaborative licensing, the breaking down of silos, and value co-creation outstanding result have been achieved. For even with competition there are still opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

**Be Proactive**

Hunt (2000) differentiates between proactive and reactive innovation in achieving or maintaining positions of competitive advantage. Atuahen-Gima et al. (2005) find that proactive market orientation has a positive impact on new product development. Blocker et al. (2011) find proactive market orientation can help create customer value. Finally, Wallenburg (2009) look at proactive improvements in the supply chain field.

**Begin with the End in Mind**

The allocation of resources remains a key competent in the process of competition because this decision reflects the organization’s understanding of both the competitive position of the firm and competitors and the corresponding financial condition. While all firms in the market have access to the same set of resources, the amount or condition of these resources varies by firm. To help managers better allocate these scarce resources, it is suggested that managers Begin with the End in Mind. By focusing on organizational performance in the form of strategic goals, managers can then allocate resources with purpose.

**Put First Things First**

Prioritization is not an easy things to do. Advertisements and other forms of marketing that bury what should be the primary message are both ineffective (Sullivan & Bennett, 2012) and potentially harmful, resulting in brand confusion (Poiesz & Verhallen, 2015). This prioritization and determination of what is significant and what is not is the key to success or failure.

**Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood**

Covey (1989) insists that emphatic listening is the key to understanding people and building meaningful relationships. Indeed, the Marketing Science Institute (2020) prioritizes understanding and mapping of the customer journey to identify benefits that the firm can provide. But, in the age of big data where marketers increasingly turn to opinion mining, social listening, and sentiment analysis to understand the mind of the consumer, are we seeking to emphatically understand our customers, or merely seeking ways to improve brand positioning?

**Sharpen the Saw**

As firms rely on engagement from users on social media, they often look to the fringes of social media to stay relevant. Whereas a brand engaging in behaviors like insulting other brands, leveling sarcasm towards consumers, and even outright rudeness and contempt might seem egregious, these tactics are now often used as strategies to stand out in social media. How do these destructive behaviors align with firms attempting to sharpen the saw to improve mental, physical, and spiritual health?

**Find Your Voice and Help Others to Find Theirs**

Firms have been using their platforms to speak out on various issues for decades, and the effects of this advocacy has been recognized.  However, given the dynamic political and social environment of the first half of 2020, it is worth exploring the impact of firm activism (or lack thereof) and firms’ ability to inspire (or not inspire) consumers to follow suit in the context of social media strategies.

**References**

Atuahene-Gima, Kwaku, Stanley F. Slater, & Eric M. Olson (2005). The Contingent Value of Responsive and Proactive Market Orientations for New Product Program Performance. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 22, 464-482.