



MARKETING STAR



Philip Kotler: World-Renowned Marketing Guru

[By Anique Gonzalez]

“Marketing is not the art of finding clever ways to dispose of what you make. It is the art of creating genuine customer value. It is the art of helping your customers become better off. The marketer’s watchwords are quality, service, and value,” Philip Kotler says.

Kotler, 77, is considered by many to be the preeminent marketing mind in business today. He is widely regarded as a leading expert on strategic marketing and the forefather of social marketing. Currently serving as the S. C. Johnson Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at Northwestern University, a position he has held since 1962, Kotler obtained his master’s from the University of Chicago and his Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, both in economics.

Although Kotler never earned a degree in marketing, his success in the field may be tied to the fact that in his estimation economics is the foundation upon which all marketing activities are based. As he states in *According to Kotler: The World’s Foremost Authority on Marketing Answers Your Questions*, “...economics is the mother science of marketing. Many of us are essentially ‘market economists.’”

Kotler, who has earned numerous accolades throughout the years, ranging from his selection as fourth on the *Financial Times*’ all-time list of management gurus to being named the “Distinguished Marketing Educator of the Year” when the American Marketing Association first created the award in 1985, has impacted the field in three significant ways.

First, he has advocated for the advancement of marketing from an ancillary activity to a primary company function that is an integral part of every business. As he explains, “Companies think that marketing exists to support manufacturing, to get rid of the company’s products. The truth is the reverse, that manufacturing exists to support marketing. The company can always outsource its manufacturing. What makes a company is its marketing offerings and ideas.”

Second, Kotler has continually touted the importance of customers and their impact on the success of the product, the brand, and the company. Moreover, he stresses that the biggest consideration to be taken into account for all marketing activities is how best to demonstrate that customer needs and/or wants will be met. “Marketing’s role is to sense the unfulfilled needs of people and create new and attractive solutions,” he states.

Third, Kotler has argued that marketing is a concept and application that involves far more than selling alone. Kotler believes that “marketing is too often confused with selling. Selling is only the tip of the marketing iceberg.” According to Kotler, the majority of marketing activities, which are conducted in order to facilitate the act of selling, are often unseen by consumers. Moreover, whereas

marketing is a long-term effort that begins before there even is a product to buy, selling is a short-term effort that takes place only after a product has been created.

Ensuring that all of these principles are satisfied, however, is not always an easy task, especially considering the ever-present challenges of this technological age. Globalization, hyper-competition, and the Internet have redefined the manner in which companies — and marketers — interact with consumers. Prices have not only been forced down, but consumers now have the ability to access information about products and compare prices from numerous companies across the country and around the world.

Consequently, “Companies must pay attention to the fact that customers are getting more educated and have better tools, such as the Internet, at their disposal to buy with more discrimination. Power has been passing from the manufacturer to the distributor, and now is passing to the customer. The customer is king,” Kotler asserts. Thus, now more than ever before, it is vital that marketers continually strive to meet customers’ needs, because that is the only way they will succeed in this increasingly competitive marketplace.

In addition to publishing more than 30 books on the topic of marketing,



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including *Marketing Management*, used on college campuses around the country and considered the best-selling textbook on marketing, Kotler has also authored numerous articles in journals such the *Harvard Business Review* and the *Journal of*

Marketing, and continues to operate his own consulting firm, Kotler Marketing Group.

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According to Kotler: The World's Foremost Authority on Marketing Answers Your Questions

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