Editorial

Marketing JRM can be regarded as a vehicle for outstanding research. The growing number of submissions as well as the fact that many articles are published and reviewed by leading international researchers document that the excellent reputation of Marketing JRM goes far beyond Germany.

Last year, I called on experienced colleagues to submit their newest projects to Marketing JRM and I also encouraged younger scholars to submit their work based on doctoral or post-doctoral theses to the journal. Marketing JRM is particularly interested in publishing the results of empirical investigations and experiments. However, I am also very pleased to receive state-of-the-art articles focusing on specific topics and presenting an overview of recent work in the field. This edition of Marketing JRM includes a fascinating mix of papers published by both, already established and up-and-coming younger colleagues. The papers themselves are of empirical, theoretical and resumptive nature. Furthermore, all articles of this issue show the necessity of investigating Marketing instruments that probably will have an impact on future reputation and enduring success of companies.

Lothar Knüppel and Oliver Hermsen ask in their article “Is Rogers’ Adopter Categorization Optimal?” and are thus investigating the relevance and validity of one of the most important theories on the diffusion of innovations. This is not only from a theoretical perspective a beneficial work since without the successful diffusion of innovative products companies will not survive in the future.

Oliver Schnittka, in his paper on “Drivers of Sponsor Image in Sponsorships: What We Know from Prior Research.” conducts a very thorough and systematic literature review of 30 empirical studies and classifies 20 drivers of sponsor image in sponsorships. So, this state-of-the-art overview identifies significant factors of success for sponsoring activities based on validated empirical findings, and also discloses open research questions for further studies.

The paper “The Effects of Cause-Related Marketing Campaign Characteristics” by Anne J. Fries is an extensive literature review, too. As the author explains, cause-related marketing is a rapidly growing marketing tool to improve a company’s reputation, or in other words this instrument is “en vogue”. Cause-related marketing pertains to the purchase of a product by a consumer, which triggers a donation to a charitable cause. However, such as strategy can also have negative effects for companies. Anne Fries’ paper presents a framework that organizes campaign characteristics affecting cause-related marketing success that appear in previous literature, it derives implications for managers to help them design successful cause-related marketing campaigns, as well as it identifies gaps in existing research.

Last but not least the fascinating paper by Sandra Pocsay and Joachim Zentes “The Effects of Structural Bonds in Wholesalers’ Customer Relationships – Do They Really Benefit Relationship Stability and Customer Penetration?” deals with a very important, but unjustifiable neglected branch of trade: the wholesalers. In this empirical study, the authors introduce a new perception of wholesalers as dominant players in the value chain that establish and manage large nets of associated customers. In order to tie customers more closely to the relationship, wholesalers implement a variety of bonding strategies. The authors investigate in the efficiency and effectiveness of different relationship marketing instruments by using partial least squares analysis.

I hope all subscribers of Marketing JRM enjoy this edition. I also wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy, creative and productive year 2011. Stay with us!

Andrea Gröppel-Klein
Für reibungslose Geschäfte.

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Overview

Is Rogers’ Adopter Categorization Optimal?

by Lothar Knüppel and Oliver Hermsen
pp. 107–123

Keywords
Categorization Methods, Rogers’ Categorization, Adopter Populations

One of the classic landmarks in marketing, and particularly in the diffusion of new products, is Rogers’ adopter categorization. In spite of its empirically rich content, it is a univariate formal, almost technical concept of prior segmentation. Immediate criticism and further research into the adoption process provoked debate on the meaning, underlying variables and measurement devices of the notion of innovativeness. This paper investigates two defining properties of Rogers’ concept of adopter categorization, namely the number of categories and the assumed symmetric adopter population. By theory and applications, it is demonstrated that Rogers’ adopter categorization, based on the widely accepted concept of innovativeness as relative time of adoption, is nearly optimal with respect to a nearby information criterion for symmetric adopter populations. Sub-optimality, however, causes a significant information loss, which leads to a suboptimal marketing policy, particularly for skewed adopter populations. A number of recommendations for optimal categorization are provided.

Drivers of Sponsor Image in Sponsorships
What We Know from Prior Research

by Oliver Schnittka
pp. 124–144

Keywords
Sponsoring, Sponsor Image, Sponsor-Specific Drivers, Sponsee-Specific Drivers, Sponsor-Sponsee Linkage, Sponsorship Management

Various studies identify drivers of sponsor image in sponsorships. This paper is first to compile these direct drivers and their direction of influence on sponsor image as well as relevant moderating and mediating effects. A systematic literature review of 30 empirical studies identifies 20 drivers of sponsor image in sponsorships that represent (1) sponsor-specific, (2) sponsee-specific, (3) linked sponsor–sponsee, and (4) sponsorship management dimensions and affect the magnitude of direct sponsorship effects on sponsor image. The literature analysis reveals somewhat congruent results and suggests recommendations for how managers can improve favourable effects on sponsor image through sponsorships. In addition, the results highlight some directions for further research.

The Effects of Cause-Related Marketing
Campaign Characteristics
A Literature Review

by Anne J. Fries
pp. 145–157

Keywords
Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Responsibility, Campaign Characteristics

Cause-Related Marketing (CM) is a rapidly growing marketing tool. CM pertains to the purchase of a product by a consumer, which triggers a donation to a charitable cause. This instrument can have positive and negative effects for the for-profit organization. To avoid negative effects and enhance positive ones, firms must understand the different campaign characteristics of CM in detail. The present research (1) presents a framework that organizes campaign characteristics affecting CM success that appear in previous literature, (2) reports on existing findings with regard to these campaign characteristics, (3) derives implications for managers to help them design successful CM campaigns, and (4) identifies gaps in existing research that may offer guidance for further research. The study is based on an extensive literature review to give a comprehensive overview on CM. The main empirical findings indicate that managers should choose causes that are relevant to the consumer, that have a local reference and that fit well to the company. Hedonic products work better with CM than utilitarian products. With regard to all design characteristics, companies should make sure to convey the sincerity in their CM activities.

The Effects of Structural Bonds in Whole-
salers’ Customer Relationships
Do They Really Benefit Relationship Stability and Customer Penetration?

by Sandra Pocsay and Joachim Zentes
pp. 158–170

Keywords
Wholesale, Relationship Marketing, Customer Bonds

This study seeks to introduce a new perception of wholesalers as dominant players in the value chain who establish and manage large nets of associated customers. In order to tie customers more closely to the relationship, wholesalers implement a variety of bonding strategies. Using a PLS structural equation modelling approach, we analyse the effects of structural bonds on relationship quality, customer dependence and customer penetration as well as the effect of the competitive advantage that
customers gain through this relationship. We assess different dimensions of structural bonds (relationship-specific investments, operational linkages, information exchange and contractual bonds) and analyse their respective impact. Our results imply that the effects of the four dimensions of structural bonds on relationship quality, dependence and customer penetration differ considerably and therefore need to be addressed accordingly by researchers as well as by practitioners.