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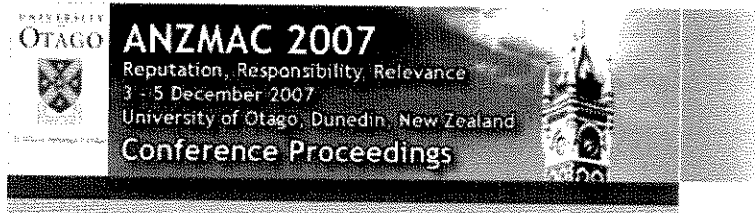
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Welcome to the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy (ANZMAC) Conference 2007

Hosted by:	Department of Marketing, School of Business, University of Otago
Date:	3-5 December 2007 (Monday - Wednesday)
Venue:	University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand
Conference Chair:	Dr. Kenneth R. Deans.
Conference Proceedings Chair:	Dr Maree Thyne
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The ANZMAC 2007 theme 3Rs - Reputation, Responsibility & Relevance seeks to bring to the fore a lively discussion on a number of issues and challenges facing our discipline. These challenges and issues were highlighted in a recent collection of essays published in the October 2005 Journal of Marketing. The issues brought to light include:

- Marketing's status and relevance within the modern organisation;
- More boundary spanning in research and practice, and taking advantage of cross-functional opportunities;
- More emphasis on strategy implementation;
- Broadening vision and goals;
- Ethics and social responsibility;
- Encouraging research that is relevant to society; and
- Researching markets outside the USA, UK and Europe.

In short, through addressing these issues, the Marketing discipline will maintain its reputation, responsibility and relevance. Through the conference we hope that delegates have developed valuable insights, a deeper understanding and a sense of how to advance our discipline.



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The Life and Death of Marketing

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Abstract

Born the child of Necessity and Invention in 1935¹, marketing has had a tumultuous life. Declared dead on multiple occasions, it has been simultaneously buried and praised in a manner befitting of hybrid of Schrödinger's Cat and Shakespeare's Caesar. Utilising a Whovian² construct of death as a means to resurrection (and career enhancement), marketing has been able to die as frequently as has been required to support authoritative statements by senior figures in the academy yet still show up for work on Monday. This paper finds that marketing is indeed dead, insofar as dead means alive and alive means we have a discipline and a day job come Monday. As far as a eulogy for marketing goes, this time around, marketing itself gets to deliver its own epitaph in the form of the American Marketing Association (2007) definition of marketing.

Marketing and a Side Order of Phoenix

Marketing has a habit of dying, and when not dying, holding its breath and lying very still (Holbrook and Hulbert, 2002), a position supported by the death notice published by Schultz (2005) in the Marketing News. In the same year, this author had the privilege of hearing the legendary marketing coroner speak at length about the post mortem of the discipline. Unfortunately, the corpse of marketing appears to have once again missed the memo. For a dead discipline, it seems remarkably fresh, and has an unnerving habit of sitting up and asking for a glass of water. Indeed, certain marketing morgue attendants have cited the body of work as "still twitching". In 2007, in announcing the planned revision of the American Marketing Association definition, the traditional custodians of the discipline have either reconstituted it from the ashes of the most recent funeral pyre, or assisted the regenerated discipline off the mortuary slab and back to the office.

Marketing and Immortality: Regenerating the Marketer

Marketing has been defined and redefined four times in the official history of the American Marketing Association. Each time, the regeneration has taken some, but not all, of the characteristics of the predecessor creating an evolution of business understanding and marketing practice. With each regenerated life comes the necessity of the prerequisite death, and these deaths are examined later in the paper. First, the four generations of marketing definitions are outlined.

Marketing 1.0: 1935-1984 "Death by Stereo"³

¹ The first official definition of marketing published by the AMA was released in 1935.

² A method of death and reincarnation popularized by the BBC Series "Dr Who" and is used to considerable financial gain by Marvel and DC Comics with the frequent returns of formerly deceased characters.

³ Uttered in Lost Boys by the character Sam Emerson (Corey Haim)

The first official definition of commercial marketing in 1935 defined the concept as *“the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers”* (Keefe, 2004). In light of contemporary marketing practice, this early definition was restricted to concentrating marketing effort and thought on distribution and product, with little consideration to either pricing or promotion. However, for the most part, this definition was also sufficiently robust to handle the uses of marketing theory for goods and services marketing.

Marketing 2.0: 1985 – 2003 “A Good Soldier”⁴

The rise of social marketing, non profit marketing and political marketing, coupled with increasing interest in the power brands as a source of value in their own right led to the support for the broadening of the marketing definition. In 1985, the AMA (1985) released a revised definition of marketing as *“the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives”*. The definition incorporated “pricing, promotion, distribution and product” explicitly in the definition, and broadened the base of “product” to include the marketing of ideas. Bagozzi’s (1975) exchange theory concept was embedded into the definition to indicate that marketing relied on the transference of value from consumer to organisation, and organisation to consumer. This notion of reciprocity was further reinforced with the recognition that marketing was customer focused rather than customer dominated – the exchange had to meet both the needs of the individual, and satisfy organizational objectives.

Marketing 3.0: 2004-2007 “Lived fast, Died Young, Left a Confused Looking Corpse”⁵

In 2004, after a period of public consultation, the AMA released a further updated definition of marketing as *“an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders”*. This definition represented a large conceptual shift as to the nature of marketing, moving from the incremental development of “goods, services and ideas” of AMA (1935) and AMA (1985) to relatively radical shift of implementing the “value concept”. Value, although undefined within the context of the definition, was generally understood to consist of the intangible benefits the consumer derived from the marketer’s offering. AMA (2004) can be seen to have been influenced by the rise of services dominant logic, the growing adoption of the internet and e-marketing, along with the rapid developments in computation firepower that made database marketing a practical and affordable reality for customer relationship marketing.

Marketing 4.0: 2007 – “Rumors of my Death have been Greatly Exaggerated”⁶

As of May 2007, the AMA had created an updated version of the marketing definition, and conducted a poll of the AMA members to determine if AMA (2007) would supersede AMA (2004). At the time of writing, the final version of the AMA definition was undecided

⁴ Reference to the death of Robin II (Jason Todd), where the Batcave features a memorial to the temporarily deceased Robin with the inscription “A Good Soldier”.

⁵ Misquotation of the classic line “Live fast, die young and leave a good-looking corpse “ spoken by John Derek in the 1949 film “Knock on Any Door”.

⁶ Mark Twain may have been right at the time of uttering this classic line, but I think those rumors have now been confirmed.

however, exit polling showed an ANZMAC paperesque performance of “accepted subject to minor revisions”. The proposed 2007 definition regards marketing as “*the activity, conducted by organizations and individuals that operate through a set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging market offerings that have value for customers, clients, marketers, and society at large.*” The speed of change is noteworthy – marketing has remained reasonably constant in the definition over time. The first official definition of commercial marketing in 1935 held sway for fifty years, surviving two reviews, until it was revised and updated in 1985, to until 2004, after a period of public consultation, the AMA released an updated definition which lasted less than three years.

This isn’t a Definition, it’s an Arms Race⁷

To some extent, the movement of commercial marketing definitions represents an arms race between the formal definitions of the American Marketing Association and the frontlines of marketing theory and practice. The shift between the 1935 and 1985 definitions incorporated a broader understanding of marketing as strategic and tactical process of planning and execution, moving marketing into a dual role of managerial guide and frontline application. Similarly, the shift from 1985 to 2004 reflected the growing movement away from 4Ps into the rise of relationship marketing⁸, and services dominant logic concept (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). However, incorporated in the arms race is the death and regeneration of the marketing discipline. The question is, are the definitional eras of marketing akin the death and regeneration of marketing?

Burying Marketing in Pet Sematary⁹

The death of marketing been surprisingly frequent - first rumors of death surfaced in 1980s, then again in the 1990s and even more recently, in the new millennium. Marketing suffered a horror run from 1996-1999 where it was seemingly killed in every other issue of the European Journal of Marketing, only to bounce back at the opening credits of the following edition. Although King (1983) and Ramone and Rey (1989) warn against the reputation and character effects of returning from the dead, Whedon (1997) posits death can be more of a career move than a permanent impediment, a position supported by posthumous success of Presley (1977), Cobain (1994) and Shakur (1996). *Rigor marketus*¹⁰ may be considered more of a temporary aliment than a terminal condition, and one which seems to have only increased the reputation of the discipline, rather than ending its relevance to the marketplace.

Marketing CSI

At the abstract level, proclamations of the death of marketing share very few common grounds, although quite often, that common ground is Stephen Brown, a man who will need a

⁷ It’s also proof that the author is quite a fan of Fall Out Boy

⁸ Relationship marketing in this paper is the European school (eg Gronroos, 1994) where RM is as an ongoing series of exchanges that form relationships between customer and supplier rather than the American school (eg Berry, 1983) which views RM as a more of database / direct mail driven customer retention technique.

⁹ Stephen King novel and movie of the same name. The Ramones did a fabulous title track for the film.

¹⁰ The anonymous reviewer’s remark of “One can only wonder whether more rigor in the marketing discipline might lead to less *rigor marketus*” needs to be recorded for posterity here.

watertight alibi if marketing is ever actually found dead. No discussion of the death (past, present or future) of marketing is complete without mentioning Brown in some context or another, and when last interviewed in the study, Brown was seen to have a plausible alibi taped to the surface of a lead pipe. No further questions on the matter were deemed necessary. Instead, attention is hastily turned to the historical eras of marketing and the proclamations of deaths with these periods.

Death of Marketing (1935-1985) – Peaceful, Tranquil and Entirely without Incident

For a discipline that has a death mark on it, this period was without incident. Marketing died quietly in its sleep in 1984, and was regenerated by the AMA (1985) definition. Repeated searches of the literature have failed to produce a body of criticism leading to the 1985 update, although simple evolutionary progression of marketing practice would lead to the 1935 definition having been too restrictive to continue serving as a useful parameter following the rise of idea products in the social marketing and non profit marketing movement.

Death of Marketing (1985-2004) – Blaming the Butler

Between 1985 and 2004, marketing's survival odds took a turn for the worse. Death notices became increasingly frequent as the posthumous redefinition of the discipline attracted a collection of philosophers, thinkers, vampire hunters and undertakers to the discipline. This era marks the first appearance of Brown (1995, 2001, 2003) as a professional marketing mortician. Proclamations of the death of the discipline were supported by statements of the death of the 4Ps of marketing (MacStravic, 2000; English, 2000; Gronroos, 1994), the death of niche marketing to women (Grande, 2003); mortal wounding of brands, and brand ownership (Lax, 2000, Earl (2000 in Valentine, 2002). Others took a more biblical apocalyptic version of the end times of marketing (Robson and Rowe, 1997), cited post modernism (McDonald, 1992; Brown, 1995), or generally pinned the blame on the Internet (Holbrook and Hulbert, 2002). Even macromarketing was killed in action, battling the foes of fast food, obesity and McDonalds (Holbrook, 1999).

In outright declarations of the death of marketing, Holbrook and Hulbert's (2002) eloquent mix of metaphor and poetry presented the most detailed autopsy. They argued for the death of marketing (or the cause, it was often hard to tell) would have come from the post-marketing universe (this could explain the past-present-future tense of the analysis). Holbrook and Hulbert detailed the pre-marketing barter economy, and envisioned a future post-marketing era of mass customization which, in conjunction with the enhanced information exchange of electronic commerce would do to marketing what CD players did to turntables¹¹. However, a funny thing happened on the way to the funeral. McCole (2004a, 2004b) disputed the coroners' verdict. Arguing against the Holbrook and Hulbert (2002) verdict, McCole (2004a, 2004b) puts forward a case for the continued existence of marketing, issues a clean bill of health, and acknowledges that the need for marketing is present in the market – even if academics seem bent on killing it (prematurely or not).

¹¹ For the author, this means turning marketing into a DJ accessory and ushering in an era of highly danceable business hits. A reviewer suggests that marketing would become a special, non-commodity, possession that would drive a market of re-issues and niche products. Either way, the basic marketing platform survives as a specialist product, rather than becoming extinct.

Deaths of Marketing (2004-2007) – Drive by Schultzing

The period of 2000-2004 heralded the death, wounding or middle ageing of marketing at a pace hitherto unseen in the business discipline. The 2004 regeneration of the marketing definition brought forth the new era of relationship management, and the communication, delivery and creation of value. It also delivered the first marketing death from unnatural causes – the revision of the definition included responses to the criticisms raised from 2001-2003 that marketing was irrelevant, lacked rigor and was too focused on the 4Ps. However, despite the regeneration, and strong arguments by McCole (2004b), marketing once more found its way to the autopsy table. In contrast to the usual declarations of death, Schultz (2005) pointed to a time (2004) a place (the marketing department) and a suspect (marketing research). Prof Schultz's coroner's report puts it bluntly – "marketing research is in a death spiral and it's taking marketing down with it" in murder-suicide pact without the murder. While waiting for marketing to die, the market research autopsy reported terminal cases methodology being valued ahead of insight; journals emphasizing data ahead of interpretation; marketing research degenerating into an overused set of tools and techniques; and, marketing, itself having moved away from being about solutions and being the use of techniques on data to create results.

Alternate interpretations of the death of marketing came from The Market Research Society Event (2005) suggesting a fatal case of the 21st century with technology and communication advances rendering marketing obsolete (Miles, 2005). Stern (2006) declared the death of marketing later, attributing the revival of classic brands, and the return of nostalgia based product as the "proof of death". Dev and Schultz (2005) introduced SIVA as the replacement for the missing, presumed deceased, four pillars of marketing. Brown (2005), building on the work of Hook and Snee (2003), argued that marketing only works if the marketers themselves believe that it will work. Unless marketers chant "I do believe in marketing, I do, I do", all hope in marketing will be lost and marketing itself will die. As the regeneration of marketing in 2004 was quickly followed by a second regeneration in 2007, the strain of constantly being autopsied is beginning to wear down the discipline. Given the most recent proposed definition reintroduced the exchange concept after its exclusion in 2004, marketing academics working on the autopsies may wish to better label the jars, and ensure all parts are returned once the work is over. Much like car repairs, disassembling and reassembling a definition does frequently result in a part left over – in 2004, the exchange paradigm went missing.

Addendum – McCracken's Line in the Sand

Never one to miss out on a good thing, McCracken (2007) declares marketing to be dead, or at least, posits that the fatal wound that will (possibly) kill marketing was inflicted upon it by Piers Fawkes and the PSFK Conference. Although, it must be said that Fawkes (2007)'s prepared statements regarding the dropping of the word "marketing" from the conference reads more like a break up letter than a confession, citing marketing's reduced relevance to the youth, the crowd marketing's been keeping with the associations of the m-word with things that are not marketing such urban spam, and the idea that marketing doesn't encompass everything businesses produce as solutions. As marketing never has been the universal socket wrench of business solutions, the last part sounds like blaming chemistry for not being economics. However, for a conference that won't be using the m-word, it appears no less than three times in the promotional materials for the event (PSFK 2007).

Marketing. Dead or Alive. Possibly Schrödinger's Cat¹².

If not dead, then marketing certainly could be presumed to be considerably unwell or at least rather grumpy. Even the staunchest advocates of the ongoing life of marketing position it as a crisis ridden middle aged discipline (McCole, 2004b). Perhaps, uncharitably, the middle aged crisis of marketing is more the paunch of intellectual dissatisfaction of similarly middle aged scholars seeking a meaningful place in the annals of the discipline? Legitimate criticisms can be seen in coroner's reports of Holbrook and Hulbert (2002), Brown (any era), and others – yet, with the positive certainty of the declarations of marketing's death being false, what weight can be given to the legitimate criticisms? Consistency in the cause of the death of marketing is illusory at worst, and illusive at best. Blaming Holbrook and Brown would be simplistic, if not semi-accurate, even with Schultz attempting a coup d'état in the marketing mix, Vargo and Lusch (2004) presenting services dominant logic as the new marketing, and numerous other presumptions that the upgrading of concepts, paradigms or technologies is automatically fatal to the marketing discipline.

However, despite the many deaths of marketing as forecast or reported, the discipline continues to flourish, survive and thrive in the conditions deemed most likely to kill it. Journals supporting academic research into marketing continue to expand, subdisciplinary fields in marketing have developed, and matured, and continue to expand. The rise of the internet can be credited with the development of e-marketing, which led to the m-marketing, rather than be seen as the end of "just plain old"-marketing. The Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy conference has seen relatively consistent growth in the number of papers submitted. Incremental growth in the number and volume of marketing subjects available in higher education in Australia indicates continued market demand by students to learn marketing, and employers to hire marketers. In short, given the number of papers listed in the references for this paper that say marketing is dead, the number of papers that continue to talk about marketing, and research, develop and enhance marketing theory and practice vastly outnumber the few death notices. If the discipline is dead, it's doing a bang up job of living large and making money for publishers, academics, conference organizers and the private sector. If must continue declaring marketing dead, it's time to call the discipline Bernie and head out for the weekend.¹³

Declaring Marketing Dead in 2007 (for a given definition of dead)

That said, wishing not to appear inconsistent with Schultz (2005), Holbrook and Hubert (2002), Earls (2002) and others, I will declare that marketing is dead. In writing this paper during the regeneration phase of the AMA marketing definition, the author is acutely aware of the reign of AMA (2004) being over, and the future of AMA (2007) being unwritten. It is a period of limbo, uncertainty, and without doubt, an ideal time to declare marketing dead.

¹² The thought experiment involving a cat, a box, and unknown status of the cat being alive and/or dead which is only resolved by observation of the state of the cat. How come nobody asks about the practical business application and managerial relevance of sticking a cat in a box in the name of science?

¹³ If you don't get that reference, you were watching better movies that I was in the late 1980s.

Declaring marketing alive in 2007 (for a given definition of not dead)

With the planned release of a new definition of marketing in 2007, perhaps the Whovian¹⁴ nature of the discipline is finally proving invaluable to its genuine survival. As Eccleston (2005)¹⁵ is to Tennant (2006-2007)¹⁶, AMA (2004) is to AMA (2007) - a short lived, but vital transition that bridged the gaps in continuity, and allowed an opportunity to explore a new era with the fallback of regeneration to recapture the elements lost in transition¹⁷. With AMA (2007) retrieving the exchange concept from the discard pile and reversing the movement from “relationship management for benefit” back to “value for society, business and consumer”, the latest death and rebirth has strengthened the discipline.

Marketing has had fatal weaknesses in the infrastructure – a reliance on a marketplace of fickle consumers, evolving and changing tastes, standards and legislative frameworks, and a dependency on economic variables well beyond the control of the individual or collective marketing practitioner and academic sphere. With the rise of the AMA (2007) definition of marketing, the discipline is adapting to the changing marketplace concerned with long term impacts, environmental sustainability and social justice issues. Moving from direct benefit to benefit for consumer, society and organization lengthens the lifespan of marketing, and potentially allows the new regeneration of marketing to avoid the risk of fatal irrelevancy to the socially aware consumer market.

Conclusion

Marketing is dead.

Long live the marketing definition.

¹⁴ Yes, the BBC show about the Timelord with the TARDIS that looks like a blue police box.

¹⁵ The ninth actor to play the title role of Doctor Who in the eponymous BBC drama series².

¹⁶ The tenth actor to play Dr Who.

¹⁷ And allow for the actor playing the AMA (2004) to pursue other projects without having to wrap up the discipline of marketing.

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