
Introduction

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Biographical notes: Ronald J. Doherty has a 30-year business career, much of it in Silicon Valley, California. Completing a Masters in Innovation provided an opportunity to blend a long-standing interest in Islam and the Muslim people with the completion of a thesis. The thesis, which was a study of the Muslim consumer worldwide, led to the realisation that Islamic marketing provides a framework for a values-based approach to new product development and marketing. His work with the International Islamic Marketing Association is focused on expanding the reach and accessibility of the Islamic marketing creating informed consumers, and marketing that respects consumer values.

Our philosophy is captured by the following quotation for the book *The Principles of Islamic Marketing*: “*Beyond worship, the duty of people in Islam is to build Emaar (the earth). The exact meaning of the Arabic term Emaaratu Alardh (building of the earth) means to make it full of life or, to make it better in every sense. A term intrinsically related to Emaar is Ifsad (ruination). The Islamic teaching states that the duty of man is to build without causing ruination before, during or after the building. If cutting a tree to make pencils – the greatest invention of mankind – leads to soil erosion then cutting the tree becomes classified as ruination to the earth and as such becomes forbidden. A pencil manufacturer, thus, needs to think of more innovative and less harmful ways to make pencils.*”

The purpose of the journal of Islamic marketing and branding is to make the world better. This purpose will be realised through the promotion of research, both basic and applied, that is consistent with Islamic values and contributes to Emaaratu Alardh. The guideline offered to researchers wishing to submit or consider research for this journal is to be able to articulate how the paper can help drive a force for positive change in the world.

Salam Aleikum, welcome to the inaugural edition of the *International Journal of Islamic Marketing and Branding (IJIMB)*, an important and inspiring event in the development of two vital disciplines. The establishment of the journal represents a coming-of-age for these two distinct but overlapping fields. This inaugural publication is the fruit of the labour of all those who have worked tirelessly over many years to conceptualise and formalise a new approach to the marketing and branding of goods and services to the Muslim community. The global ‘launch’ of this new product was formalised at the 1st Global Islamic Marketing Conference in Dubai in 2011. However, like all great products the ideation, creation and development stages stretch back many, many, years. Years when people laboured tirelessly for no earthly reward because they saw a wrong and took personal responsibility to work to right it.

Many on the editorial board and in the journal’s global readership will regard this moment as would proud parents watching a child step into the world knowing their hard

work has been worth it; knowing that this new arrival on the international stage will be a force for positive change in the world. A change inspired by Islam that will benefit Muslim and non-Muslim alike. This truly is Emaaratu Alardh.

This journal will attract leading scholars, researchers and thought leaders from all over the world. The market demand for a dedicated focus on Islam-guided research is evidenced by the large number of papers submitted to each of the five global Islamic marketing conferences. Since the first conference in Dubai in 2011 to today, we have seen more than a thousand research papers reach a global audience and stimulate millions of conversations that otherwise would not have happened. A small catalyst has created a wave of interest and application to an area which just a few short years ago was but a dream. Through your dedication and ongoing support the dream of an Islamic marketing and branding discipline has become a reality and today the concept of marketing informed by Islamic values is accepted world-wide. Your continued support and hard work is creating day by day a new reality that can be enjoyed by more than 1.6 billion Muslim people worldwide. Just as clean water and fresh air is needed and appreciated by all living creatures the benefits of marketing and branding that conform to Islamic beliefs and values are not however restricted to Muslims, all life can benefit. Less exploitation, less dishonesty, more truth benefits us all.

The challenge today for Islamic marketing and its adherents is that to remain relevant it must move past a promising birth and grow into a worldwide movement that delivers concrete improvements in the lives of people. In doing this the Ummah can be guided by duty, focused on innovation and mindful to do no harm to Earth or to others. The great Ibn Khaldûn who wrote almost seven hundred years ago and is still so relevant today encourages us not to take things at face value but to analyse and question the perceived wisdom of the day. Therefore, it is appropriate to ask about the opening claim of this section: Why, and to whom, are Islamic marketing and branding vital?

Why are Islamic marketing and branding vital? They are vital because the marketing of goods and services to Muslim consumers is too often conducted in a manner that is inconsistent with Muslim values and beliefs. Such practises, in addition to being offensive, can have a corrosive effect on societal values. They seek to create societal norms that are advantageous to the sellers of products but may be detrimental to the spiritual, mental, or physical wellbeing of the consumer. A simple but important example to illustrate this point is the sale and marketing of high sugar and salt content breakfast cereals, products that are linked to poor diet and obesity. Many of these products are targeted at children but they are purchased by normally responsible adults, why is this? It is because after years of being subjected to marketing and branding efforts society has integrated these products into their view of what is normal, what is both desired and acceptable. Marketing and branding work, they work for breakfast cereals, they work for cars, and they work for all consumer-oriented products. They are extremely effective tools and over time, they will even work on adjusting moral and social values. The persuasive process of marketing and branding is most effective on young minds that are still in the process of establishing their moral, ethical and social norms. Though most effective on the young they are shown to work on people of all ages, simply by using different techniques.

Islamic marketing and branding are vital because they are the counter balance to an ongoing effort to sell products, services and ideas that are inconsistent with Muslim values. Knowing that marketing and branding are effective tools we cannot sit by our TV sets, computer screens, and mobile phones as passive consumers and allow ourselves, our

children, our societies to be manipulated for the financial gain of others while our physical mental and spiritual health is under threat. We must instead mobilise as a people, unite in common cause with like-minded individuals, and use the tools of our trade – marketing and branding – to change the way goods and services are sold to Muslim consumers. This however must be just a first step, as the logical conclusion if you do not like the products and how they are marketed is ultimately to change the actual products. This last point is crucial, it is not sufficient to have informed marketing practises, the actual product its self must conform; it must be Tayyib in all regards, physical, mental and spiritual. This can be achieved in a number of ways. It can be achieved through becoming deeply involved in the new product development processes of existing companies or through becoming involved in new Islamic enterprises that are Shariah compliant. Either approach has merit, the latter has the added benefit of providing not just Tayyib output but also provides much needed employment and stimulus to further innovation and enterprise in the Muslim community.

Islamic marketing and branding is not a destination but an unending journey. A journey that each day and each year requires us to continue to develop our discipline and to create demonstrable benefits to the lives of the Ummah, and in fact all humanity. This is our duty. This duty extends beyond worship, beyond immediate family and especially beyond the simple profit and loss analysis of typical business.

After almost 700 years, we are still reading and guided by the work of Ibn Khaldûn, now we must create new names and new leaders that will show us a way forward in dealing with today's challenges. Today's challenges stretch from the University gates to the corner of the poorest hovel in one of the world's shantytowns. They are social, economic, political and moral and while it can be engaging to dwell on vague and lofty notions of improving the earth, insight into the pitfalls of lofty messages not tied to the realities of people's lives can be found in the widely reported comments of Suhail Nakhouda. Writing in *Islamica Magazine* in relation to the Amman Message, "There is no water, no pavements; the economy is bad, and many young people are out of work. Peoples' lives, as well as the images they see, stay the same." (2009)¹

One particularly corrosive problem in the Muslim world is youth unemployment. Youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa is estimated by the World Economic Forum (WEF) at 28% for males and up to 43% for females². The quality of employment is reported by the WEF as being both critical and in crisis with more and more young people in low paying and ultimately unrewarding employment. All of this is viewed as causing a growing crisis worldwide in social cohesion and economic sustainability.

Do not under estimate the power you have as a leading academic and as a consumer to help address such challenges. In addition to creating research that helps educate, that can stimulate enterprise and employment, the power of the Muslim consumer can, if focused as a single voice, obtain from others the changes that we desire. Changes that can enrich the earth and at the same time provide livelihoods to young people, Muslim consumers, expected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030³, can choose to purchase garments made from sustainable resources in factories staffed by adults. Paying adults a living wage enables their children to attend school, receive a greater education than their parents, and breaks the cycle of generational poverty.

The complexities of the Muslim consumer market can be viewed as presenting a challenge to uniting as a single voice. Participants include middle class families and

desert nomads; broadly dispersed across fifty-seven Muslim-Majority countries of the Middle East, North Africa, South East Asia, Central Asia, and non-majority population worldwide. Levels of economic development and per capita GDP figures are from the lowest in the world to the highest. Qatar has the highest per capita GDP in the world at \$102,100 (⁴2013 est.), while Somalia is ranked at 227 with a per capita GDP of just \$600 (⁵2010 est.) Many markets are complex, many enterprises are fraught with risk and uncertainty. From drilling for oil to introducing any disruptive innovation, some will fail and some will succeed. Guided by the values of Islam and energised by the principles of Islamic marketing and branding you are much more likely to succeed.

By building on the foundation provided by Islam and focusing our efforts through the discipline of Islamic marketing and branding, we can project our voice and our values to a mass audience. We can stand on the shoulders of giants to reach the stars. Together we can strive for excellence and provide a shoulder for future generations to stand on. When we do reach the stars it is polite and appropriate to thank those who went before us, and before them, until we reach the Original and only everlasting source of help in the universe, Allah, Al-'Awwal, Al-Hādī, God, you can chose the name.

Duty, innovative, and less harmful – let these words guide you and you will help change the world – *Emaaratu Alardh* and change it in a way that delivers concrete results in employment, environmental sustainability and equality of opportunity... all key Islamic values. The question for all of us is what steps will I take today to ensure my student has a better future tomorrow? So that instead of throwing bricks at windows they are using those bricks to create a window to a better world.

Notes

- 1 <http://www.ammanmessage.com/>
- 2 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/WEF_GAC_Employment_UnemploymentRisingGlobalChallenge_Report_2014.pdf
- 3 <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2011/01/FutureGlobalMuslimPopulation-WebPDF-Feb10.pdf>
- 4 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/qa.html>
- 5 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>