Book Review

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Multi-screen Marketing: The Seven Things You Need to Know to Reach Your Customers Across TVs, Computers, Tablets, and Mobile Phones
by: Natasha Hritzuk and Kelly Jones
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The book *Multi-screen Marketing: The Seven Things You Need to Know to Reach Your Customers Across TVs, Computers, Tablets, and Mobile Phones*, by Natasha Hritzuk and Kelly Jones talks about a new world, where customers and technology are perfectly blended from the viewpoint of marketers. It also becomes pertinent to mention that this book is not about technology and it is not going to talk about the technical functions of devices or anything like that. This book is all about the customers, their needs, their ways of fulfilling those needs, the role of technological devices in carrying out the customer needs and the role which marketers need to play for meeting the needs of the customers.

Authors reinforce the universal phenomenon of customer centricity in the business world. When all the activities related to business revolve around the customer, then the same should also stand true for approaching customers through technology and its devices. In the last two decades, technology changed at a fast pace and it has significantly affected the ways in which a customer can be approached by a marketer. Devices like TV, computer, tablet and mobile has changed the very basics of marketing. This book sheds light on how to communicate with a customer and the related aspects.

Another important area touched upon by the book is based upon the concept "One size doesn't fit all." These days communication with customers has changed altogether. Gone are the days when reaching out to the masses was the strategy. Today, all the customers are viewed to be different in their requirements and are motivated to acquire different products due to various reasons. The need of the hour is to understand the underlying motivations of the customers and to provide them with customized solutions.. The environment for sharing information with customers becomes utterly complex when we take into account devices used by them to connect with the world. Consumers are using mobiles, tablets, computers and TV extensively, simultaneously and interchangeably. Even if two customers are using the same set of devices, viewing the same type of content, spending an equal amount of time on the devices, it is not advisable to approach them with same advertising content. Each customer is different and the underlying motives of the customer are unique. It is important to understand the customer before he is approached on any of the available devices. If we take into account the number of devices and the number of ways to approach on a single device, we will be lost

in the permutation and combination. We will have a long list of options in which a customer can be targeted and it will be impossible to figure out which option to choose. Whichever option we might go for, the chances are very high that it will be a wasted effort. This book is based on the argument that first, we need to understand the customer and then customise the marketing approach accordingly.

The first author of this book, Ms. Natasha Hritzuk has very relevant experience in context with the idea discussed in the book. She is working as the Global Senior Insights Director, Microsoft Advertising since November 2010. Before this assignment, she was heading the Category and Consumer Insights (UK and Ireland) at General Mills from 2005 to 2009. She also has a one year experience as a researcher after the completion of her PhD from the Columbia University. The co-author of this book, Kelly Jones is working as the Head, Thought Leadership and Product Insights, Microsoft Advertising and Consumer Monetization from last one year. She is a researcher and a marketer, having a total work experience of 15 years in driving strategic growth for leading technology and media organisations. Firsthand experience of both the authors with the customer and technology driven advertising has remarkably contributed to this book. One of the quotes in the book says, "Arguably, we have not even mastered the art of digital advertising on single devices, yet now we are confronted with the even bigger challenge of how to create campaigns that flow across multiple screens. Marketers typically default to simply taking their strategy for advertising on a single screen and applying it everywhere." Such finer observations are difficult for a person, who is not having experience in the same field. Authors deftly leveraged their experience to come up with the actual underlying problems faced in the process of reaching out to customers through technology-enabled devices.

The very purpose of authors writing this book stems from three reasons. One, with the advent of digital technology, marketers are losing focus on customers in their communications. The focus is on the devices and their capabilities rather than the customer. All the advertisements and communications are based on the functions of devices. Two, technological changes were augmenting the capabilities of devices like mobiles, computers and tablets, which in turn lead to challenges for marketers in advertising through these devices. Any new technology brought more challenges for marketers in the way they can approach a customer. Three, for advertising, the number of options, in terms of devices, have increased many folds. The usage of limited resources for communicating with consumers through many devices is a big question when one is unable to measure the results. Typical user come across many devices in a single day and businesses keep on wondering about the promotion budget they should have.

Multi-screen Marketing is written keeping in mind all the stakeholders involved in the marketing of products and services. Other than marketers, it can be of great interest to senior managers assisting communications with customers, investors, technocrats and innovators. It rarely happens that a book is of interest to so many people from different industries and different roles. However, this book is an exception from this viewpoint. Its relevance to a large set of the audience is its strength. The use of simple language and less of jargon has made it easy for a reader to connect immediately with the basic concept. It provides solutions for effective communication in a complex scenario. Another good part is that these solutions may apply to organisations irrespective of their size, location or industry. It is hard to find books that are equally relevant to companies in different industries.

The practical applicability of the things shared in this book is very high due to two reasons. Firstly, most of the findings are supported by real-life research. Secondly, the authors shared many frameworks, using which organisations can look for solutions to their problems. Frameworks are better than models, as they increase the scope of application in different industries, different countries and different time periods.

The contents of the book are divided into nine chapters. The first chapter talks about the present scenario in marketing through multiple screens. The next seven chapters discuss the seven ways to implement *Multi-screen Marketing* effectively. Each chapter discusses one way in detail. The last chapter is a summary of the learnings from the book. The problem that is addressed by the book can be better understood by certain questions posed in the first chapter.

> "Are you genuinely and effectively connecting consumers to your brands, products, and services by simultaneously driving social, mobile, television, and search campaigns? How does it all work together? And most important, how does one know any of this new media is even working? How do you create content and find the time, money, and resources to build different campaigns that hit all the varying media channels? How do you begin to understand the aggregate impact and return on investment of these campaigns?"

It is difficult for an author to have such a long list of questions at the beginning of a book and then to answer each of those questions. All these questions are very basic but encountered by all the organisations on a daily basis, and most of them do not have the answers. This style of writing is very demanding and very few authors go for this way of writing. If the author put forward some questions in the starting of a book, then it becomes pertinent that all of them are answered by the time a reader completes the book. In this book, the answers to all the questions above come on their own as one move towards the last chapter.

Further, in the book, the author talks about seven ways of reaching the customer. It is a very practical book and adds value to the existing body of knowledge. It shares, how people who use devices are more important than devices. It emphasised in discovering the relationship of a device with its user, which is a new way of looking at technology. It is surprising to find out how users look at their devices. People view their TV as a good friend with whom they like to spend time and enjoy. However, these relationships are also affected by the factors like age and country. So, for marketers, it becomes necessary to look at the all the dimensions of this relationship. A computer is considered to be a sage, who can provide all kind of answers to the user. It is a very reliable source of information. Users consider the mobile phone to be a private and personal device. Its physical proximity to the user gives it the status of a lover in the life of a user. A tablet is used for making a search in times of leisure. It acts like an explorer to the user and also shares a different relationship. This book makes us understand that devices carry human-like relationships with its users and marketers need to look into the finer details of that relationship to leverage it. Authors go a step ahead in this direction by explicating the role of devices in the decision-making journey of the customer. Everybody knows that consumers go through certain stages before making a decision. *Multi-screen Marketing* recommends the kind of device to be used and the type of information to be shared at each stage of consumer decision making..

Another contribution of this book is in terms of adequately capturing the current trends of customer's interaction with online social media and the tendency to avoid excessive information. Customer these days are short of time; they look for precise and quick solutions to their information needs. The concept of targeting the right segment of customers and supporting the same by a conceptual framework is a great contribution of this book. This book also discusses integration of information provided on different screens and smooth transition of user from one screen to another. The recommendations of the authors give useful insights into the needs of the customers and make a relevant contribution in terms of knowledge and universality of concepts.

All these suggested strategies for reaching out to the customer in this device enabled consumer world are supported by real case studies. Case studies shared in the book range from small companies to multinationals, service-oriented companies to the product-based organisation, from developed countries to developing countries. When examples of organisations from diverse backgrounds are shared with readers, the feeling of relatedness makes the reader feel the moment shared in the case. Usage of real-life cases is a strength of this book. Much effort has gone into writing these cases. It is not easy to construct a real-life case and collect all the relevant data.

Both real-life and hypothetical examples are used extensively to make things more understandable. In some cases, examples are shared before discussing a concept and in other instances, after sharing the concept.. The story shared in one part of the book is carried forward to the other part of the book to save the reader's time and create linkages for easy understanding.

Authors in the book have based their arguments on certain assumptions about human behaviour. If those assumptions go wrong, then the whole idea constructed in the book goes wrong, e.g., they talk about stages in the decision journey of a customer and based on which they make some recommendations. However, a customer is not bound to follow all the stages as his behaviour is affected by many external factors like type of decision, availability of time, state of mind and location. So, the findings in the book are to be understood with caution. Moreover, the content of the chapters is overlapping to some extent. The chapters could have been framed in a better way to avoid any confusion to readers.

The book *Multi-screen Marketing: The Seven Things You Need to Know to Reach Your Customers Across TVs, Computers, Tablets, and Mobile Phones* has revealed the secret of implementing multi-screen marketing effectively. All the recommendations are highly reliable as they are based on actual research. Real-life examples follow discussions and make it easy for the reader to understand the context. The authors added more value by including relevant case studies at the end of each discussion on a topic. Most of the frameworks and concepts have universal applicability and they contribute to the body of knowledge. The customer-driven approach followed in the book will keep it relevant even in case of future technological changes.