

## **CULTIVATING “RIGHT-BRAIN THINKING” IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CLASSROOM: A HEMISPHERIC APPROACH TO ACTIVE LEARNING**

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Marketing processes and functions have dramatically changed in the last decade due to the growing prevalence and increasing preference for technologically driven customer interaction. Social media in particular have dramatically altered the ways in which companies and brands interact with consumers (Labrecque, Vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, & Hofacker, 2013). The increasing dominance of two-way, push-pull communication facilitated by such technology has required marketing departments to rethink the ways in which they identify, approach and respond to customers (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skier, Wege, & Zhang, 2013). The importance of attributes like creativity, intuition, and empathy as a basis for capturing the attention of consumers and engaging them in such an environment cannot be disputed and indeed provides the basis for much of the work for which marketing departments and personnel are traditionally valued by the larger enterprise (Engelen & Brettel, 2011). This session will look at the cognitive dissonance implied by right-brain compared to left-brain thinking when applied to marketing curriculum and practice. And while this notion of a hemispheric approach to understanding thinking and brain science is largely outdated and debunked, the dichotomy represents a useful structure to facilitate discussion, understanding and cataloguing of the skills and cognition required for the successful study and practice of marketing (Kay, 2003).

The proposed session will examine right-brain compared to left-brain thinking and consider which types of cognition are relied upon and required for typical marketing functions in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context. It will further consider cognition in the marketing curriculum generally with an emphasis on the role of right-brain thinking in the social media marketing classroom specifically. At its core, the session will consider the need to balance curriculum between right and left-brain thinking as demonstrated by student learning outcomes and active learning exercises. Finally, due to the content building aspect of creating two-way, push-pull marketing communication environments implied by social media, it is critical that future professionals build and hone creativity and other forms of right-brain thinking during the time they study marketing (Belch & Belch, 2013).

In doing the above, the presenters will further examine the ways in which right-brained thinking are tied traditionally to desired qualities like creativity, intuition, risk taking, and empathy. All of these are critical mindsets tied to cognitive processes that need to be developed and honed as opposed to innate qualities that simply exist. The presenters will further posit the notion that developing such cognitive abilities in the social media marketing classroom is dependent upon active engagement and active learning activities that improve higher order thinking like creating and evaluating. The session will necessarily look at the presenters' experiences developing active learning exercises and activities for the social media marketing classroom that enhance and develop “right-brain thinking.”

References Available upon Request