

## TRACKING THE COVERAGE OF DIRECT MARKETING IN INTRODUCTORY MARKETING TEXTS

Helena Czepiec, Patricia Hopkins, and Juanita Roxas  
California State Polytechnic University, School of Business Administration, Pomona, CA 91968  
(909) 869-4532 Fax (909) 869-3647

### ABSTRACT

Twenty three Principles of Marketing textbooks from 1966 to 1998 are content analyzed to measure how direct marketing is covered and whether its treatment has increased over time. There is a wide variation among current authors in the definition of and the amount of space devoted to the topic. However, generally speaking most of the authors of multi-edition texts have increased their coverage of the topic.

### BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

How completely are the introductory marketing textbooks covering the principles in the field? In particular, there is concern that the field of direct marketing has been neglected in the past. Direct marketing is an area that has evolved theoretically from an emphasis on channels to interactive relationship-building and direct response management. The field also provides a large and increasing amount of career opportunities for newly minted marketing majors.

The amount of money spent on direct marketing has increased dramatically over the last decade. According to the Direct Marketing Association study on *The Economic Impact of Direct Marketing in the United States*, "in 1992, U.S. direct marketing expenditures was 57.2 percent of total advertising expenditures." In 1997, they were 57.8 percent indicating that direct marketing is increasing its share of total advertising expenditures. Direct marketing sales in both consumer and business to business markets consistently outpaced total U.S. sales growth.

The explosion in direct marketing activities and resulting employment growth among companies engaged in these activities raises interesting questions. The most important of which is whether the treatment of direct marketing and related topics have increased in Principles of Marketing textbooks so that it reflects the growth in importance of direct marketing to the economy as well as students' employment opportunities.

### METHODOLOGY

This paper will present a content analysis of selected textbooks in Principles of Marketing published between 1966 to 1998. The textbooks selected were from among the market leaders. According to the sales representative from Irwin/McGraw-Hill, the total market size is 350,000 units for the first year sales. Unfortunately, the publishers do not have an exact figure for the market because they can not track used-book sales. Of this market, Perreault and McCarthy has approximately 18% of the market while Boone and Kurtz has a slightly higher share. Market share information was not available for the other texts included.

Content analysis allows for the objective, systematic, and quantified analysis of message characteristics of one or more communications (Kasarjian 1977). This study will analyze how direct marketing is defined, which topics within direct marketing are included, and how much space is devoted to these topics. The analysis will include: 1) the definition of direct marketing and how it has changed over time, 2) which direct marketing media categories are included and if there were changes over time, 3) how much space is given to topics in direct marketing, and 4) how direct marketing is integrated into marketing mix discussions.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Thus far, twenty-three textbooks were examined. The authors concentrated on textbooks that succeeded in publishing more than one edition with the exception of two textbooks published in 1967 which were included for purposes of providing a benchmark. At this initial stage, the authors have not yet designed a taxonomy that could compare treatments across different authors. Preliminary findings involving different editions from the same authors are provided.

Don Schultz (1995) declared that defining direct marketing is very important because "it

defines what we are and what we do. Let's start trying to define what we mean by direct marketing. If we don't, I fear we will find that what you are talking about when you say direct marketing may have absolutely no relationship to what I consider direct marketing. And for an academic discipline that is the worst of all possible worlds."

Figure 1 shows the definitions of Direct Marketing across the different authors as well as the date that these were included in the respective texts. The definition provided by the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) is also included for purposes of comparison. The DMA definition included three components, namely: 1) interactive, 2) uses one or more advertising medium, and 3) measurable response. The other definitions tend to include one or two components and not all three with the possible exception of Kotler and Armstrong (1996).

Table 1 shows the extent of direct marketing coverage found in McCarthy and Perreault's *Basic Marketing, A Managerial Approach* textbook. It indicates the total number of column inches devoted to direct marketing topics found in four of the twelve editions, the number of pages indicated in the index. The table shows marginal increase from 6 ½ inches in 1984 to 7 in 1990, then a drastic increase to 22 ½ inches in 1996. The number of pages cited in the index also increased from 2 in 1984 to 5 in 1996.

**FIGURE 1**

**Definitions of Direct Marketing (Latest Editions)**

- "An interactive system of marketing which uses one or more advertising media to effect a measurable response and/or transaction at any location" (DMA)
- "Direct communication between a seller and an individual customer using a promotion method other than face to face personal selling" (Perreault and McCarthy, 1996)
- "Exposing a consumer to information about a good or services through a nonpersonal medium and convincing the consumer to respond with an order" (Solomon and Stuart, 1997)

- "Techniques used to get customers to buy from their homes, including direct mail, catalogs and mail order, telemarketing and electronic retailing" (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, 1996)

- "Marketing through various advertising media that interact directly with consumers, generally calling for consumers to make a direct response" (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996)

- "Occurs when a consumer is first exposed to a good or service by a nonpersonal medium (such as direct mail, TV, radio, magazine, newspaper or PC) and then orders by mail, phone, PC" (Evans and Berman, 1997)

- "Marketing that uses advertising telephone sales or other communications to elicit a direct response from consumers" (Zikmund and d'Amico, 1996)

- "Direct communications other than personal sales contacts between buyer and seller" (Boone and Kurtz, 1998)

**TABLE 1**

**DM Coverage - McCarthy and Perreault**

Year	No. of Inches	Pages in Index
1996	22 ½	5
1990	7	3
1987	7 ¼	3
1984	6 ½	2

**TABLE 2**

**DM Coverage - Lamb, Hair, McDaniel**

Year	No. of Inches	Pages in Index
1996	53	16
1994	34 ½	16
1992	20 ¾	9

Table 2 shows the gradual increase in the coverage of direct marketing in the Lamb, Hair, McDaniel *Principles of Marketing* text from its first

edition in 1992 to its third edition in 1996. Topics were found in both the chapter on retailing and the chapter on advertising, sales promotion and publicity. The amount of total coverage increased gradually from 20 ¾ inches in 1992 to 34 ½ in 1994 and then to 53 inches in 1996.

**TABLE 3**

**DM Coverage - Kotler and Armstrong**

Year	No. of Inches	Pages in Index
1996	87	18
1991	39 ¼	16
1989	24 ½	12
1986*		4

\* this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Kotler with no co-author

Table 3 shows the coverage in the Kotler and Armstrong *Principles of Marketing* text. The third edition with only Kotler as the author did not contain references to direct marketing. After the addition of the co-author, Armstrong, more and more coverage of direct marketing was included to total 87 column inches in the latest edition examined.

**TABLE 4**

**DM Coverage - Evans and Berman**

Year	No. of Inches	Pages in Index
1997	29 ½	17
1994	35 ¼	16
1987	10 ¼	20

Table 4 has the data for three editions of Evans and Berman. The data shows some decrease in number of column inches devoted to direct marketing from 34 ¼ in 1994 to 29 ½ in the 1997 edition.

Table 5 contained data for three editions of Zikmund and D'Amico. The editions reviewed consisted of two from the 1980s and the most current one. Thus, the contrast is much more dramatic because editions between 1989 and 1996 are yet to be reviewed. It is however, useful to compare 8 column inches on direct marketing in 1989 to 43 ½ column inches for 1996.

**TABLE 5**

**DM Coverage - Zikmund and D'Amico**

Year	No. of Inches	Pages in Index
1996	43 ½	22
1989	8	5
1986	3 ¼	3

Table 6 may be even more drastic. The latest edition obtained for Boone and Kurtz is published in 1998 and this edition contained 253 ¾ column inches, the most ever found. In contrast, only 20 ½ was found for 1986. On the other hand, the 20 ½ inches in 1986 was still the highest recorded for the period. With 15 column inches of coverage in 1980, these authors seem to have led the others in the extent of its treatment of the topic of direct marketing.

**TABLE 6**

**DM Coverage - Boone and Kurtz**

Year	No. of Inches	Pages in Index
1998	253 ¾	127
1986	20 ½	13
1980	15	8

**CONCLUSION**

Clearly, more analysis must be done on the data already gathered. By combing through the various texts, the authors have found a wide variation in terminology and methods of treating the various topics of direct marketing. There has been a dramatic increase in coverage of direct marketing in the last few years. Table 7 shows a comparison of the amount of coverage of direct marketing topics across the current editions of the textbooks examined. The table shows a wide disparity in amount of space devoted to direct marketing ranging from 22 1/2 inches for the Perreault and McCarthy text of 1996 to 87 inches for Kotler and Armstrong of 1996 to 253 3/4 inches for the Boone and Kurtz text of 1998. This latest edition showed considerable integration of topics throughout the text.

TABLE 7

Amount of Coverage - Current Editions

Author	Inches
Boone & Kurtz (1998)	253 3/4
Evans & Berman (1997)	29 1/2
Kotler & Armstrong (1996)	87
Lamb Hair McDaniel (1996)	53
Perreault & McCarthy	22 1/2
Zikmund & d'Amico	43 1/2

Some texts merely describe various media used. Others have greatly expanded their treatment largely because of the explosion in the use of the PC and the internet. Some consensus among authors will have to be reached about what direct marketing is and what it includes. It is expected that new editions will provide a more integrated approach similar to that of Boone and Kurtz.

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