

ENHANCING MARKETING EDUCATION USING ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING

Franck Vigneron, California State University, Northridge
Catherine Cummins, California State University, Long Beach

Marketing faculty and marketing students may have different perceptions of what constitutes entrepreneurship and its importance over business education (Peltier and Scovotti 2010). While many colleges of business are starting to integrate entrepreneurship education in the curriculum, entrepreneurship education is also moving towards a mainstream interest across departments and colleges in universities. Despite this 'opening-up' of universities to the entrepreneurship idea, many academicians still see entrepreneurship as a rather "made-up" sub-discipline of business schools and are skeptical as they feel this is not a legitimate discipline (Katz 2008), perhaps because it is perceived that it can only be learned through experience (Haase 2011).

The marketing field and the entrepreneurship field have co-existed within business schools as two independent disciplines but there is increasing evidence of overlap in the two subjects. For instance, they both cover new product development, market analysis, communication, distribution or pricing. The relationship between entrepreneurship and marketing has generated the concept of "entrepreneurial marketing" to be developed in contrast to "traditional" marketing (Carter and Jones-Evans 2006).

Conceptual Foundations of Entrepreneurship

There are many competing views of what entrepreneurship stands for depending on different sources being educators, researchers, practitioners or students. Essentially, entrepreneurship using a Schumpeterian view is the creation of economic growth based on the activities of innovation and opportunity identification. Entrepreneurship is often associated with smaller companies and start-up companies but it does not have to be (Mwasalwiba 2010).

The context of entrepreneurship education depends on the focus of the domain of education and its purpose: for instance, small business creation, high-technology, family business, or international venture, etc. This focus is contingent on the entrepreneurship processes being either centered on the activities such as writing a report versus a structural process to create societal changes, i.e., eco-entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

Comparing Entrepreneurial Marketing to Classic Marketing

The research question is “are there any differences between entrepreneurial marketing and standard classic marketing offered in textbooks?” Marketing, as defined by the American Marketing Association, is “the creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging of offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large.” Entrepreneurs do in fact create, communicate and deliver. This could be applicable to defining not only marketing but also entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship focuses on sources of opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities, and the individuals who act on them. So blending marketing and entrepreneurship is about being more specific to the needs of everyday business owners.

Entrepreneurial Marketing is considered the interface of the two research fields. Until recently, the two fields had long been regarded as two entirely independent scholarly domains (Jones and Hegerty 2011). However, research on the interface of marketing and entrepreneurship seeks to bring the two disciplines together, treating them as one, with some researchers speaking of the emergence of a new paradigm (Collinson and Shaw 2001). Consequently, entrepreneurs appear to have a wider holistic view of business and its practices when compared to marketers. Empirical evidence suggests that a significant relationship exists between an enterprise’s marketing and entrepreneurial orientations, both of which directly impact organizational success (Van Praag and Versloot 2007). Successful entrepreneurs practice marketing, and the better marketers are entrepreneurial (Martin 2009).

Methodology

From secondary data we were able to identify the amount of existing entrepreneurship education in marketing curriculum. The assumption was that marketing educators for the most part did not address the concept of entrepreneurship and that entrepreneurial marketing was under represented.

The second part of the research examined the perceived importance of entrepreneurship for marketing educators and marketing students. We collected qualitative data to add depth and provide a fuller understanding of what marketing instructors (N=8) and students (N=18) perceived entrepreneurship to be, and its relationship with marketing education. The interviews included open-ended questions such as:

- Can you explain, what is entrepreneurship?

- What do successful businesses do to be successful?
- Can you think of a successful business and tell us why you think it is successful?
- What makes an entrepreneur different than a marketer?

The research methodology included 4 studies:

Study 1: Content Analysis of Marketing Textbooks

Study 2: Content Analysis of MEA Conference Proceedings

Study 3: Content Analysis of Journal of Marketing Education (JME)

Study 4: Interviews with Marketing Educators and Students

Results

This research revealed that there is a growing interest in the field of entrepreneurship and that marketing educators through the concept of entrepreneurial marketing can take a leading role in educating students. However, it appears that there are misconceptions and even misunderstandings of what is entrepreneurship, and that people may not be interested in it mostly because they do not know what it offers or consists of.

Business owners in the early stages of starting a business or operating a smaller firm, may find that it is difficult to use marketing principles specifically derived from large corporations as offered in standard textbooks. Hence, one may ask: are the often cited '4Ps' appropriate for the everyday business owners? In 2009, Martin suggested they were not appropriate and proposed an entrepreneurial marketing mix. In today's economy and need for job creation, the contribution of entrepreneurship has increased tremendously around the world. Marketing may be the concepts that could generate revenues whereas entrepreneurship may be the activities that would describe how one would go about generating these revenues.

Consequently, entrepreneurial Marketing in education may be an essential part in improving the marketing education by offering practical solutions to business students and employers.

References available upon request