

INTRODUCTION

The new consumption paradigms are increasingly characterised by consumer ‘crushes’, passivity (resulting from confusion in the face of too many choices) and a huge proliferation of stimuli. From this perspective, the utilitarian value derived from the experience of purchase and consumption is only one of the components which affect satisfaction, and it is no longer sufficient to capture the desires of the post-modern consumer. In so liquid a context, firms find it more and more difficult to codify, manage and react with a coherent strategy.

The ‘crushes’ and passivity induce the consumer to choose by following emotional ‘logics’. In this context, the behavioural models that define the journey of the consumer as a linear process, including techniques for measuring rational perceptions (marketing research), are increasingly accompanied by, or even replaced by, neuromarketing methods. While traditional survey-based marketing research can capture what people say, this is often different from what they think and do and feel.

Neuromarketing, though, facilitates the understanding and interpretation of an individual’s sensorimotor, cognitive and emotional responses to marketing stimuli; it applies the methods of neuroscience to analyse and understand why often what we think we want has little or no impact on the choices we actually make.

This perspective produces qualitative insights that can guide firms, as it can capture the behaviours and perceptions of consumers in a way that conventional surveys and even ‘big data’ cannot. Firms need to analyse complex consumer behaviours by combining traditional with neuromarketing methodologies, in order to manage the customer experience successfully.

This book offers a comprehensive overview of the challenges that marketing faces in understanding, measuring and managing the dynamics of modern consumer behaviours and successfully managing the customer experience. The reader will gain a deeper knowledge of the approaches to consumer behaviour and learn about the theoretical and empirical challenges of studying the management of the customer experience.

The book also considers the post-modern consumer, which requires a move beyond the purely the rationalist perspective of traditional marketing and provides methodological support for firms and scholars who wish to measure cognitive, emotional and behavioural consumer reactions. More specifically, the book explores the changes in consumer behaviours, the

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limitations of traditional measurement approaches and the importance of capturing small insights with neuromarketing metrics. A new three-point perspective on consumer behaviours is set out that combines behaviour (what people do) with the declared (what people say) and the perceived (what people feel). This approach acknowledges the complexity of consumer behaviours and the methodological bias derived from the use of traditional techniques (principally the survey) or from big data. Only a holistic perspective can capture the heterogeneous nature of consumer behaviour.

The book thereby takes up the theoretical debate about the definition, the measurement and the management of the customer experience. It also examines measurement methodologies, an area that has received little attention elsewhere. Besides addressing the academic community, this book will also be a valuable practical resource for marketing managers, entrepreneurs and consultants who want to implement innovative strategies to manage the customer experience.

The book offers a broad understanding of the definition, the monitoring and the management of customer behaviours. In particular, the last chapter illustrates the state-of-the-art implementation of customer experience management and provides an original model that can map customer experience management, which produces interesting empirical evidences and useful implications for researchers and managers alike.

This integrated perspective combines a theoretical framework with practical solutions and benchmarking. Moreover, in an innovative way, the book adopts a new multi-layered perspective on the measurement of consumer behaviours: the behavioural layer (what people do) can account for the strengths and the limitations of big data; the declared layer (what people say) is related to the limits of surveys; and the perceived layer (what people feel) can be accessed through the use of neuromarketing tools. All three layers need to be combined in order to define marketing problems and capture consumer insights.

This innovative approach is useful to understand the complexity of the consumer experience and the challenges of managing it.

Thus, the book reviews the literature on research methodologies and then describes some best practices to demonstrate the validity of the theoretical assumptions revealed in the review

The final chapter provides a state-of-the-art review of business responses to complex consumer behaviours and outlines the uncertainty over the definition and implementation of the management of the consumer experience.

From this analysis, a first, albeit exploratory, attempt to systematise a customer-oriented approach is offered and the application of the model is

illustrated in the last chapter. The model offers a mapping of the three different approaches to the customer: customer-centred, experience-oriented and customer experience management.

The analysis of best practices is supported by the model and describes the particular but also the representative evidence from the approaches presented and offers interesting theoretical as well as managerial implications.

The work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter addresses consumer behaviour from the rational and the experiential perspective. It covers the determinants of consumer behaviours and the role of experience. The chapter offers an understanding of consumer behavioural changes, focusing on the design of the customer journey. It looks in detail at the role of emotions in the post-modern era and the need for firms to create memorable consumer experiences to be competitive.

Starting from an understanding of consumer behaviour, the second chapter focuses on how a successful customer experience can be designed, created and managed. To achieve this, the chapter introduces the concept of human-based experience and customer experience management. These concepts allow the traditional limitations of customer relationship management to be overcome. Moreover, the chapter describes the elements from which the customer experience may be built (physical and digital).

The second chapter reviews the need to use eclectic approaches to measure consumers response starting from the method bias of the traditional methods. So, it describes the strengths and the limitations of big data and surveys (*the declared layer – what people say*) in order to underline the need to measure behaviours in a more integrated way, by combining traditional approaches with neuromarketing techniques.

The third chapter addresses the application of neuroscience to consumer behaviour (*the perceived layer – what people feel*) through neuromarketing tools. It offers an overview of tools that are able to capture consumers' unconscious reactions to marketing stimuli. It underlines the importance of combining these innovative techniques with the traditional approaches (big data and surveys) in order to better capture marketing problems and consumer insights.

The fourth chapter, provided by Myriam Caratù, outlines the topic of the customer-centric approach and the method to cover the bias derived from a traditional marketing approach.

The last chapter, after addressing the state-of-the-art theory of the customer experience management, presents a series of case studies demonstrating best practice in how the customer experience is approached, measured and managed in different contexts, thereby providing interesting insights for theory and practice.

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Overall, the book shows how the customer experience-oriented business models are key to survive in the current competitive scenario and suggest a method to address a new approach to the experience management based starting from the consumer analysis to set the right experience by combining the right mix of monitoring methods. As an exploration of the consumer experience management, it aims to offer interesting ideas for reflection for future research.

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The author is to be considered, of course, the only person responsible for the contents.

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