

Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins

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Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins

Abstract

A review of *Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins*, by Mark Schaefer.

Keywords

marketing, communications, advertising

***Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins*. Mark Schaefer. (Schaefer Marketing Solutions, 2019). 310 pp.**

Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins was published in 2019. Mark Schaefer is a marketing expert and author of six other books. He focuses on the need to humanize marketing to reach audiences and customers. Schaefer admits that trends such as values-based marketing have been around for 25 years, but not all marketers have embraced the concepts. Companies that fail to adopt human marketing strategies will not survive.

Marketers, program leaders and business owners will find the content applicable. Using human marketing tactics helps universities and Extension programs increase audience size and engagement. Schaefer describes the latest marketing rebellion and how human oriented marketing is the new normal. The premise is treating audiences and consumers as humans and not as part of the algorithm.

The book's strength is case studies that demonstrate how to humanize marketing strategies. I had a wealth of ideas while reading this book that I will refer back to as we develop more human marketing strategies. For example, we are implementing the faces of Extension campaign to introduce people to our educators and provide human connection to the online information Extension provides. A secondary goal is making the university more accessible and human by building a sense of community.

Communication professionals in land-grant universities are marketing the services we provide, our programs, research and academic degrees. We need to humanize our messages to reach audiences and remain relevant. The information provided can help us better communicate our mission and services. Most of us already incorporate human marketing strategies, however Schaefer's book provides an important reminder and stimulates creativity through examples.

He seeks to inspire marketers to change strategies and become more effective by using the word rebellion. The book has four parts:

1. The Third Rebellion
2. The Constant Human Truths
3. Reaching The Unreachable
4. Marketing Re-Imagined

Within each part there are sub-sections and anecdotes from companies that were either able to humanize their marketing, or that failed to change tactics and suffered a marketing defeat. JetBlue has humanized their marketing and thrived, while Ivory lost market share.

Schaefer repeatedly states customers are no longer loyal, but many universities have a loyal audience that positions us to further develop those relationships. Universities are not a typical brand, but there are still ways for us to improve our marketing strategies. Schaefer's point is that human marketing strategies add value and build trust with audiences.

Schaefer begins the book by discussing previous rebellions against marketing tactics – the end of lies was the first rebellion and the end of secrets was the second. The current, third rebellion is the end of control. Next he covers constant human truths including belonging, self-interest, values and respect. He states that human truths should drive marketing strategies. Schaefer details his reasons to humanize marketing in the third part with a personal manifesto that states customers have become the marketers.

Face-to-face interactions are stressed as a key marketing strategy and case studies such as the free climbing events offered by The North Face provide concrete examples for using live experiences. In person programming is part of Extension's foundation although we are all adding

more online options. One key principle I gathered from the book is that we must not sacrifice the connection and word-of-mouth marketing that in-person programs offer.

The third part of the book includes coverage of content marketing and social media. Both are necessary and part of Schaefer's personal marketing efforts. However, adjusting what we do on social media and with content marketing could yield better results. Content can be part of the sales force and our product is the story; YETI is one example provided where they used the product as the story in content and social media. Content needs the same level of respect that the products receive and YETI seamlessly does this. Shifting the mindset about content and social media helps humanize marketing.

In the fourth part of the book, Schaefer introduces strategies that marketers can use to act on their ideas to humanize their marketing efforts and company. Consumer-driven marketing tactics, values and transparency are key themes discussed in this section of the book. Tony's Chocolonely, a sustainable chocolate company, is an example provided where values and transparency drive marketing efforts. Examples provided further inspire the reader to incorporate these ideas into their own marketing practices. Artisanal marketing is a recommended strategy to build audience connection. Artisanal marketing must be authentic, provide an experience and a benefit. This is not a new concept for Extension, but perhaps another where we can refine our strategies.

Schaefer offers steps to change the marketing culture at a company and address organizational structure issues that are blocking human marketing techniques. He outlines the three primary functions of a chief marketing officer: to educate, analyze and collaborate. Every decision made has the customer as the priority and in the education function the role of the marketer is to protect the customer's interests. Analyzing incorporates data and research and plays an important role in making human decisions, however cannot be the only factor used. Collaboration is critical to marketing success, but as Schaefer points out, often overlooked. The marketing officer must inspire others in the company to work towards the customer's best interest.

He ends the book by discussing a potential fourth marketing rebellion that humanizes marketing and includes a quote from Dr. Robert Cialdini who predicted the third and fourth marketing rebellions. Although I appreciate Dr. Cialdini's insights, the ending was comparatively flat.

Marketers will continue using data and algorithms to inform decisions, but we must account for human qualities in our marketing strategy. Our audiences are tired of marketing tactics and have learned to ignore messages. Human marketing strategies are the only way we will reach these audiences. Schaefer wants marketers to make dramatic shifts in their strategy and tactics and this is not always practical or possible. Readers should remember that change is possible, even if it is gradual. His purpose is to instill hope and uplift us to humanize our marketing.