Chapter 1
Mindful Marketing:
A Key Antecedent for Positive Marketing Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Mindful marketing, a customer-centric approach, is an increasingly significant concept in marketing literature that considers both sellers' and buyers' interests at the same time. Considering the mindfulness concept as a form of marketing approach along with its conceptualization and meaning, this chapter introduces the importance of "mindful marketing approach" for positive marketing by discussing how mindful marketing contributes to firms' social responsibility, environmental concern, and consumer and societal well-being. In other words, it discusses how mindful marketing leads to ideal marketing by helping an organization improve individual and societal well-being while at the same time helping the organization and its stakeholders enjoy profits or increased business.

INTRODUCTION

Although there has been an increasing interest in social responsibility, environmental concern and consumer-well being for enhancing consumer and public perceptions of profit-seeking enterprises, the practice of marketing cannot be conceptualized as a positive notion in society due to the historical marketing practices of many firms that clearly have no interest in improving the lives of customers and societal well-being. The acrimonious public perception of marketers and the historical state of marketing field have motivated many researchers and practitioners to take actions in order to push

the marketing discipline back towards its ideals to benefit individual citizens and societies as well as businesses. Despite the growing interest among researchers and practitioners in how marketing might be more positively conceptualized and practiced, the "positive marketing" concept has not yet been explicitly defined. After all, most modern textbooks acknowledge that marketing leads to beneficial outcomes for both customers and marketers. The relationship school of thought has been founded on this notion. Several other scholars extend the perceived benefits of marketing potentially to all stakeholders. Marketing serves to co-create value, improves the quality of life,

and benefits communities and society at large (Drucker, 1958; Sheth & Sisodia, 2006; Sheth & Uslay, 2007). Therefore, much of the meaning of positive marketing is confused in translation. After all, is not marketing supposed to be positive to be effective? And how can it recur and lead to relationships if it is not positive to key stakeholders?

This study introduces and conceptualizes "mindful marketing," which is considered an essential antecedent for positive marketing outcomes. It introduces the importance of "mindful marketing approach" for positive marketing by discussing how mindful marketing contributes to firms' performance and social responsibility, environmental concern and individual and societal well-being. It attempts to define positive marketing based on mindful marketing approach and develops propositions based on mindfulness and marketing literature.

The organization of the rest of the book chapter is as follows: first, it provides a review of the emerging literature on mindfulness, organizational mindfulness and mindful marketing. Second, it introduces the concept of positive marketing and discusses how mindful marketing leads to positive marketing outcomes, introducing a conceptual framework and propositions. Finally, it concludes with managerial and practical implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mindfulness

Although the concept "mindfulness" has emerged as a prominent topic in social psychology, it has also been widely adopted by various academic disciplines and theorized to have significant and diverse effects on human functioning and behavior from mental and physical health and well-being, to self-regulation, interpersonal relationships, and value co-creation (Malhotra, Lee & Uslay, 2012; Brown & Kasser, 2005; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown, Ryan & Creswell, 2007a). The research

on mindfulness in business contexts has been mostly seen in organization and management disciplines. Due to its potential business outcomes, researchers and managers have been interested in techniques that can increase individual and organizational mindfulness in the work environment, which is expected to be associated with increased creativity and decreased burnout (Malhotra, Lee & Uslay, 2012).

Mindfulness has been defined as "a receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience" (Brown et al., 2007a, pp. 212). According to another definition, mindfulness is "the quality of bearing in mind or bringing to mind; it is the state of recollecting, the state of remembering, the state of nonfading, the state of non-forgetting" (Christopher & Gilbert, 2010, pp. 11). It is "a way of working marked by a focus on the present, attention to operational details, willingness to consider alternative perspectives, and an interest in investing and understanding failures" (Ndubisi, 2012, pp. 628). It includes efforts "to focus one's attention on the concrete aspects of one's behavior, thereby eliminating the abstract, deliberative, high-level self-thoughts that can interfere with enacting automatic and complex behaviors" (Leary et al., 2006, pp. 1827). Thus, mindfulness captures a quality of consciousness characterized by clarity and vividness of present experience and functioning, and stands in contrast to the mindless states of habitual or automatic functioning (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Therefore, it plays a significant role in preventing individuals from engaging in automatic thoughts, habits and unhealthy behaviors, and fostering behavioral regulation and self-control (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The literature review suggests that a mindful individual has the following main traits: greater sensitivity to his/her environment, greater attention to details, more openness to new information, greater skills in cognitive categorization, advanced awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving (Langer, 1989), greater attention to the participation in the ongoing process of living

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