

## **Book Review:**

### **Essentials of Marketing**

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#### ***Book Information***

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## **BOOK REVIEW**

'Essentials of Marketing' is a condensed version of the same two authors' hugely popular book entitled 'Principles of Marketing'. Although 'Essentials of Marketing' is a condensed version, it comprises all the key topics at an appropriate depth necessary for an introductory marketing student to grasp the knowledge of the subject. These key topics cover, among others, buyer behaviour, market segmentation, marketing research, product, price, place, promotion, marketing planning, management and control.

The book is well structured and the tone of writing is clear, and thus the reader should not find it difficult at all to follow. There are a number of pedagogical features, such as corporate social responsibility cases, end-of-chapter questions and the eye-catching text design (e.g. Spiderman) on the book, as well as student companion websites off the book. These features, which are all well designed and well equipped with corresponding materials, provide additional support for the readers to enhance their learning effectiveness. For example, the corporate social responsibility cases, including counterfeit drugs in the Place chapter and product recycling in the Advertising and Personal Selling chapter, helps readers to taste the flavour of the emerging ethical trend in marketing. However, among all the characteristics and features of this book, we believe that the two of them are crucial in helping the book to stand out against so many competing books in the market.

First, Brassington and Pettitt have used numerous real-life examples throughout the book to support their explanation of specific marketing concepts. For example, in the Price chapter, they used altogether 15 real-life examples, ranging from Andrex toilet tissue to the hotel accommodation sector. These examples, all interesting, concise and well-presented, are derived predominantly from the UK and European market context and therefore a reader in the UK or continental Europe would find them familiar and even emotionally attached. We feel that these well-selected examples, which readers may have prior knowledge, experience or attitude, can promote deep learning. In addition, the case studies at the end of each chapter, which can be regarded as conclusive examples of bigger proportion and greater pedagogical importance, provide an explicit link to the knowledge contained in corresponding chapters through the questions at the end of the case studies. For example, in the Product chapter, the author put forward the Mini case study and posed questions for students to answer. These questions, such as 'What is the core product that the Mini offers compared with the mainstream BMW range?' and 'How could the Mini's core product be translated into tangible, augmented and potential products?', serve well the purpose of linking theory to practice.

Second, the book has been written in a very lively manner. The academic knowledge of introductory marketing has been well developed. There is little room for extra knowledge not yet provided in the current publishing market that a new author can fill. Nevertheless, Brassington and Pettitt managed to organise the book in a way that some topics of marketing, which have been usually covered less than adequately among current introductory marketing textbooks, or have received strong interest among academicians and practitioners, are presented in a designated substantial part of a chapter or a separate chapter. For example, business-to-business marketing, which has been usually much less covered than business-to-consumer marketing in a typical introductory marketing textbook, has been covered in appropriate depth. Service and non-profit marketing, as well as e-marketing and new media, have witnessed increasing importance, and the authors have rightly assigned two separate chapters to deal with these two topics. This organisation of contents is definitely a bonus for the quality and appeal of the book. However, we believe it is the style in presenting the contents, rather than the contents themselves, that becomes a more important success factor of the book. The style of writing is not only well-structured and clear, but also hugely lively. For a reader who has very little prior knowledge of marketing, the book, for its attractive writing style, can become the magnetic gateway through which the reader is happily interested in exploring the sea of knowledge of introductory marketing.

In view of the popularity of Brassington and Pettitt's authorship in introductory marketing, 'Essentials of Marketing' is likely to have an updated third edition in a few years' time. For this, we suggest the following points that the authors could consider for further improving their work:

1. The authors introduced a number of important branches of introductory marketing in the first chapter, and have provided designated space for discussing most of them, including business-to-business marketing, service and non-profit marketing as well as e-marketing and new media, in greater depth. If book space allows, the updated edition can assign two additional chapters to discuss small business marketing and international marketing, whose importance has been noted in the first chapter but which have not been adequately covered in the current edition.

2. In the chapter of buyer behaviour, the terms 'buyer', 'consumer' and 'customer' are not clearly and consistently used. In our opinion, all three should mean differently from each other. If the authors believe that they can mean the same, they should clarify prior to the wide use of the terms. Besides, in the same chapter, the use of the term 'consumer customers' looks a bit odd.
3. We believe that the four Ps should be nearly equally important, with no one of them being significantly more important than the other. In the book, there are three chapters for promotion, and one chapter for each of the other Ps. This may convey an implicit message to readers that promotion is the most important element in the marketing mix.
4. Segmentation has been discussed in depth in a designated chapter. On the contrary, targeting and positioning seem to be inadequately covered.