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**Reinventing
the Basics**

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ing Igor Nowé

**Lannoo
Campus**

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Introduction: Marketing... Reinventing the basics

The world of marketing has changed – radically, and at an unprecedented speed. The old frameworks that dominated the marketing landscape for decades simply no longer fit the realities of today's marketplace. We live in an era where digital tools are exploding, customer behaviour is increasingly complex, and B2B companies are more economically important than B2C companies. The traditional models, rooted in the 4Ps or the 6Cs, were designed for a different age. Today, these models no longer reflect the interconnected, fast-paced, and value-driven world in which we operate. In a time where product is far too limiting a concept and where price has taken a back seat to the idea of value, marketing must evolve.

This book, *Marketing... Reinventing the Basics*, invites you to step away from the old ways of thinking and embrace a more contemporary, dynamic approach to marketing. This is not just about tweaking existing models; it's about rethinking the entire foundation of how we approach marketing in today's world. The models and strategies we'll explore in this book are designed to reflect the rapid changes in technology, the shift in how customers make decisions, and the increasing importance of long-term relationships over short-term transactions.

The digital shift and the changing role of B2B

The rise of digital technology has created a world where information is abundant, access is immediate, and customer expectations are higher than ever. The boundaries between products and services are becoming increasingly blurred, as businesses leverage digital tools to deliver unique customer experiences, personalised offers, and interactive engagements. This shift has led to a fundamental change in how we think about the marketing function itself.

In today's business environment, B2B companies – especially those in industries such as technology, healthcare, and professional services – are playing a more significant role than ever before. In fact, B2B companies are economically more important than their B2C counterparts, driving innovation, fuelling economies, and shaping global markets. Yet, even in these traditionally “business-to-busi-

ness” sectors, the customer experience is now just as critical as in B2C settings. The challenge for marketers today is to redefine their value proposition in ways that resonate with the evolving expectations of business clients who demand personalised, value-driven solutions rather than just generic products.

The limitations of traditional models

For years, marketers have relied on frameworks like the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) and the 6Cs (Customer, Cost, Convenience, Communication, Content, Community) to guide their strategies. These models were groundbreaking in their time, but they were designed for a different era – one of mass production, limited communication channels, and static customer relationships. In today’s digital-first world, these models don’t fully capture the complexity of customer behaviour or the intricate dynamics of the modern marketplace.

The focus on Value... leading to trust

In this book, we’ll explore how to move away from the traditional focus and shift towards creating value. It’s no longer simply about offering the lowest price or the most convenient point of purchase; it’s about delivering solutions that genuinely meet customer needs, solve their problems, and enhance their lives in ways that feel meaningful. This shift is rooted in a deeper understanding of customer behaviour – today’s consumers are not just looking for transactions, but for experiences that make them feel valued, informed, and empowered. As businesses focus on providing value, they cultivate trust – an essential ingredient in the customer journey. Trust, built through consistent value delivery, forms the foundation for deeper customer relationships and becomes the key to driving engagement, loyalty, and advocacy over time.

The digital revolution has created a level of competition and transparency that has forever changed the dynamics between businesses and customers. Digital tools like artificial intelligence, big data, social media, and automation have radically altered the way companies engage with their customers. Marketers now have more access to customer data and insights than before, and with that comes the responsibility to craft marketing strategies that are not just reactive but proactive, anticipatory, and hyper-relevant to customers’ ever-changing needs.

Two core parts of the book: operational and strategic marketing

This book is structured into two key parts, each focusing on a different but equally important aspect of modern marketing: **operational marketing** and **strategic marketing**. The first part of the book delves into the operational side of marketing, where we'll explore two critical models that align with the current digital and customer-driven landscape: the **SAVE Model** and the **Customer Decision Journey**.

The SAVE Model, developed by Harvard Business School, offers a contemporary alternative to traditional marketing frameworks. The model focuses on creating **solutions** for customers, providing them with **access** to your offerings, emphasising the **value** customers derive from your brand, and **educating** them throughout their journey. These four pillars are essential in today's marketplace, where customers are looking for more than just a product – they're looking for comprehensive solutions that add real value to their lives.

In parallel, we will explore the **Customer Decision Journey**, which moves away from the old, linear purchase funnel and embraces the complexity of today's buying process. The decision-making journey is no longer a simple path from awareness to purchase; it's a fluid, dynamic process in which customers continually interact with brands, reassess their needs, and engage in multiple stages before finally making a decision. Understanding this new customer journey is critical for marketers who want to stay ahead of the curve and engage customers at every touchpoint.

The second part of the book focuses on **strategic marketing**, where we explore how to develop comprehensive, long-term marketing plans. Here, we dive into the importance of conducting both external and internal analyses to identify opportunities, threats, and gaps in the marketplace. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both your company and the broader market, you can craft strategic plans that align with customer needs and organisational goals.

Through the lens of **SWOT analysis**, you'll learn how to identify where your organisation stands in relation to the competition and how to pivot or adapt your strategies accordingly. While the operational elements of marketing focus on the tactical and immediate, strategic marketing ensures that those actions align with

long-term objectives, building sustainable growth and value for both the company and its customers.

Why reinventing marketing matters now more than ever

The rapid pace of change in the marketing world means that what worked in the past simply doesn't work today. Digital tools, shifting customer expectations, and the increasing prominence of B2B companies have made the old marketing models obsolete. The market is no longer defined by static products, set prices, and fixed customer segments. Instead, it's driven by a dynamic interplay of value creation, personalised experiences, and long-term relationships.

As you read through the chapters ahead, this book will challenge you to rethink the very foundation of marketing – to shift from old paradigms to new, more flexible, and more relevant ways of engaging with customers. By reinventing the basics, you'll be better equipped to navigate the complexities of today's marketing landscape and create strategies that deliver real value to your customers and your business.

I wish you a very pleasant journey into the inspiring world called "marketing".

Part 1:

Operational marketing

Chapter 1: The basics of “operational marketing”: Kotler’s 4P

As described above, marketing as a "science" really started to develop from the second half of the last century once people switched to a consumer society, leading to the development of brands. A useful tool here was **Philip Kotler's 4P model**, also called the "**marketing mix**".¹

This model was introduced in the 1960s. This timeless framework has become a cornerstone in the field of marketing, providing a comprehensive guide for businesses to formulate and implement successful marketing strategies.

The 4Ps represent the key elements of a marketing strategy, each playing a crucial role in achieving a company's objectives:

- a. Product:** At the core of the 4P model is the product itself. Kotler emphasised the importance of understanding and developing a product that meets the needs and desires of the target market. This involves not only the physical attributes of the product but also its design, packaging, branding, and overall value proposition. A well-conceived product is the foundation upon which successful marketing strategies are built.
- b. Price:** The pricing element of the model focuses on determining the right price for the product or service. Kotler emphasised the need to strike a balance between setting a price that reflects the product's value and aligning with the financial expectations of the target market. Pricing strategies may involve cost-based, value-based or competitive pricing and the chosen approach directly influences consumer perceptions and market positioning.
- c. Place:** The “Place” component of the 4Ps addresses the distribution channels and methods by which the product reaches the consumer. Kotler stressed the importance of selecting the most effective channels to ensure the product is readily available to the target audience. This involves considerations such as the choice of retail outlets, online platforms, logistics and supply chain management. A strategic placement enhances accessibility and contributes to overall customer satisfaction.
- d. Promotion:** Promotion encompasses all the activities a company undertakes to communicate and promote its product to the target market. This in-

cludes advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and personal selling. Kotler highlighted the significance of creating a compelling and consistent message that resonates with the target audience. Successful promotion builds brand awareness, generates interest and ultimately drives sales.

The Kotler's 4P model offers a structured and versatile approach to marketing, aiding businesses in developing effective strategies that are customer-focused, adaptable and aligned with organisational objectives. It is simple, structured and easy to use... and millions of marketers have used it (or perhaps are still using it) to frame their marketing activities and plans.

But from the 1990s, the world experienced an accelerated degree of digitalisation that completely changed commercial needs and everything linked to them, such as communication and consumer behaviour. Kotler's 4P model wasn't adapted to this revolution in marketing:

- a. The model may not fully address the complexities of digital marketing and online platforms prevalent in today's landscape.
- b. The model was primarily designed for tangible products, making it less adaptable to service-oriented businesses.
- c. The model is transaction-focused and may not sufficiently address the modern marketing emphasis on building strong, lasting customer relationships.
- d. The model oversimplifies marketing decisions, potentially overlooking the interconnected nature of modern marketing and with a higher emphasis on the "pricing" element.
- e. In fast-paced markets, the model may lack the agility needed to adapt quickly to changing consumer behaviours.

It's clear that the 4P model as such needs some updating to be useful for the modern marketer.