

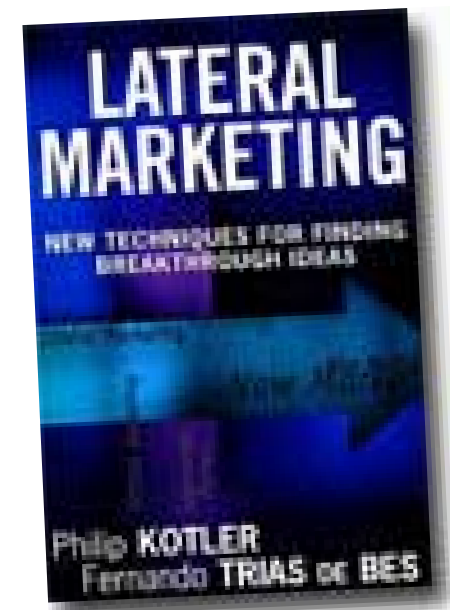
Lateral Marketing: New Techniques for Finding Breakthrough Ideas

Digital Book Club

Philip Kotler and Fernando Trias de Bes Wiley
John Wiley & Sons 2003

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“Lateral marketing lets marketers develop an entirely new product that finds a much wider audience”



When traditional marketing thinking fails it's high time for change. Innovation is key. How to bring fresh thoughts into your marketing strategy? Philip Kotler and Fernando Trias de Bes Wiley came up with the guide.

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Clear roadmap into digital marketing

Before we start; indulge me. I do not feel worthy to review Kotler. I'm excited when the package arrives from my editor and I unwrap the hardback with childlike revelry. What's new? What's next? What's he developed? Kotler's texts are anchors in the increasingly complex seas of marketing. And his work displays a dynamism that has mirrored the ever-changing cultures and social structures marketers are working in.

Lateral Marketing did not disappoint. This time he has teamed up with Fernando Trias de Bes for a new journey, and, in the supersaturated consumer markets, one that is long overdue. He is challenging the conventions; coaching marketers to broaden our horizons; delivering a new set of solutions; thinking the unthinkable. At its essence he is teaching us to shrug of years of linear discipline and think laterally. And to help us get there he provides the most detailed of roadmaps with the clearest of signposts. The text is highly practical and designed to be easy to implement: clear, crisp, concise and instructive. It is indexed in the way the reader needs and can double as a reference book, an atlas that instantly traces our path and highlights the junctions and route options coming up.

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Now many marketers would pride themselves on their lateral thinking already; indeed, marketing remains one of the most creative of all business disciplines; however Kotler takes us onto a new level by providing a meta-framework for applying lateral thinking across the whole of marketing. The result is a set of tools that are about, “covering needs, uses, situations, or targets not currently covered and, therefore, [deliver] a process that offers a high chance of creating new categories or markets.”

Answers to difficult questions

Although all marketers will enjoy the wake-up call, Lateral Marketing gears itself primarily to strategic marketers in the driving seat of product development, target market strategy or marketing mix control. The roadmap includes a choice of paths: new product development, market reassessment, rebuilding the marketing mix. It helps answer such questions as: which nonpotential customers could be reached, what else could a product be used for, which other needs could be satisfied.

About the Digital Book Club series

In times of huge economic and social change, knowledge becomes a critical success factor. We created the Digital Book Club reviews to bring you closer to the people and ideas shaping the digital networked economy. They are short reviews of texts we'd recommend, and are published monthly. We also publish similar Digital Thought Leadership interviews and Digital Insight Reports to accompany our own talks and training workshops. Knowledge and training can unlock the potential of your team.

But why do we need it? And why now? Kotler's argument is that marketing is running into the very problems of its own success. I'm paraphrasing crudely, and by no means does he disregard the 25 weighty tomes of theory he's already given us, but in a world of hypersatisfied customers he is adamant that, "Companies today need a new way of thinking about creating meaningful market offerings. We have reached a turning point in which marketing needs a new framework for generating ideas". Stressing the complementary nature of vertical and lateral approaches, his arguments are that compelling; breakthrough success is now only achievable through the lateral.

With the average urban citizen exposed to a staggering 2,000 commercial messages a day he fears that we've moved into a culture in which "consumers have learned to look without seeing, to hear without listening", and only by breaking convention will messages achieve stand-out and register in what he sees as the closed consumer's mind. The road for marketers will unquestionably become tougher and this new roadmap is a welcome addition for those wanting to escape the vertical and the hierarchies we have grown up with and to do something outstanding.

Actions

Think about your own marketing strategy and find ways for introducing some innovations in reaching your consumers

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About the author

Danny Meadows-Klue has been a commentator on the digital networked industries since 1995. He managed the UK's first online newspaper and has helped run web businesses ranging from mass market portals and consumer magazines, to online stores, search and email services. Among his industry roles he is the co-founder and former chairman of the UK and European Internet and Interactive Advertising Bureau, and has been lecturing on digital marketing for more than a decade. He set up Digital Strategy Consulting in 2000 to help firms accelerate their businesses through digital networks.



Making sense of a digital world

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