

Marketing Society

Let's begin B2B dialogue

Justin Basini, Deutsche Bank



Looking back at this column over the past 18 months, it struck me that no one has written about B2B marketing and the issues facing the sector. I think there is a perception that it is the poor relation of B2C marketing and therefore less sexy, thus attracting lower budgets. On the other hand, the complex world of consumers would appear to be more

deserving of space and perhaps this contributes to a sense that B2B marketers are less talented.

Of course, there are real differences between the roles of B2B and B2C marketers. Many of the former have less direct control of the brand than their B2C peers. Also, B2B marketers often have a broader range of marketing and communications responsibilities, which suggests that they are jacks of all trades and masters of none.

Yet the reality is that 35% of all global ad spend is either corporate or B2B. The marketing budgets set aside by the global banks for B2B run into billions of dollars. Admittedly, much of this is spent on high-end corporate sponsorships, branding and client schmoozing, as well as all the usual marketing tools, but a serious attempt to develop techniques that address the issues of B2B is essential.

All brands are B2B to some degree and can be viewed on three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary B2B brands sell their products and services to businesses direct, such as investment banks, law firms and big software houses. Secondary B2B brands sell to consumers through other businesses; for example, selling Ariel in Tesco. If you are an FMCG marketer, there will be some interaction between your consumer brand and corporate brand to create your B2B proposition. Understanding and manipulating this can gain marketers a competitive advantage. Finally, tertiary B2B brands are sold or co-created with partners – selling Michelin tyres with Ford cars, for example.

Getting to the heart of B2B marketing is important for businesses. Many ad agencies and consultancies claim to understand it, but it is rare to find true insight into things such as managing group purchasing, five-year sales cycles or client entertaining on-brand. Even the literature shows a paucity of good B2B thinking.

My challenge to my colleagues in B2B marketing – and the wider marketing industry – is to instigate a more proactive, thoughtful dialogue about B2B issues. We need to share our experiences, successes and mistakes for the betterment of our profession. It will help my business and career, and I'm sure it will help yours.



Justin Basini is global head of marketing & communications, global banking, at Deutsche Bank and a member of The Marketing Society

Editor Craig Smith (020 8267 4341). **Deputy Editor** Lucy Barrett (4048). **Associate Editors** Poppy Brech (4082). **Bi**
Features Editor Drew Barrand (4382). **Special Reports Editor** David Tiltman (4434). **Production Editor** Robert Epste
Cornelius (4208). **Assistant Art Editor** David Robinson (4074). **Library** (4202). **Library Manager** Jenny Holgate, **Pict**
Graham Warren (4215). **Group Production Manager** Laura McClennon (4289). **Publishing Manager** Antony Hawmar
Martin Durham. Published by Haymarket Business Publications Ltd, 174 Hammersmith Road, London W6 7JP. No part c
Trade/ distribution enquiries Seymour Distribution 020 7396 8000. **Subscription enquiries** Marketing subscriptions
£119 pa. UK student subscription at £59.50 pa. Overseas air mail rates: Europe/Eire £160; worldwide £220. **Back I**
Marketing Recruitment 020 8267 4579. Services 020 8267 4258. **List Rental** tel: 020 8267 4654 Repro by Icon Re