

A Constructivist Approach to Marketing Education

Carlos Brito (University of Porto, Portugal)

2021

Abstract

This chapter offers a constructivist approach to marketing education aimed at coping with some of the most significant challenges faced by the marketing profession: the globalization of business, the growing digitalization of economy and society, and the increasing consumer expectations on being treated as unique and distinctive. To deal successfully with these challenges, marketing education must foster students' development at three levels: more knowledge, new skills, and an attitude of commitment towards the learning process. In other words, it is not only about promoting "knowledge" and "know-how" but also about stimulating "how to be," preparing future professionals for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. This means that the success of marketing education does not depend exclusively on the contents of the courses and teachers' scientific skills but also on what students are encouraged to collectively do.

Marketing Skills

In the light of the present marketing challenges, it is imperative for marketers to have skills that go well beyond a mere accumulation of theoretical and conceptual knowledge (cf. Lemon, 2016; Carter & Yeo, 2017; Tho, Phong & Quan, 2018). Such skills are vast and can be divided into five main categories: analytical and decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, creativity and resilience, and digital skills.

- **Analytical and Decision-Making Skills:** Firstly, marketing professionals are expected to be able to understand companies' situation based on a set of marketing tools that allow them to make decisions considering pros and cons, as well as potential benefits and risks. This means that marketers need to master business concepts, models, and tools appropriate to respond to complex and unpredictable challenges that companies and other organizations face in a context of growing business globalization and economy digitalization.

- **Interpersonal Skills:** Secondly, marketing professionals need to manage relationships effectively and efficiently. Managing resources – whether material, financial or human – is not enough. In fact marketers must be able of managing relationships not only with customers but also with other stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, investors, regulatory bodies and public opinion.
- **Communication Skills:** Marketing has always been about communication. However, nowadays marketing professionals are expected to develop storytelling skills that allow them to create, develop and maintain close and lasting relationships with the main stakeholders. This is a critical competence to manage relationships. Therefore, it is crucial to develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills, both in online and offline settings.
- **Creativity and Resilience:** In a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, the challenges that marketing professionals are dealing with are increasingly less predictable. Hence, it is paramount to respond to unexpected situations creatively and, in particular, to face adversity with resilience.
- **Digital Skills:** Due to the growing digitalization of economy and society, marketers must master web and mobile tools, namely as far as social media management is concerned. The rising importance of Big Data, the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence means that marketing professionals need to know how to draw on these new technologies and how to integrate them with human skills – creativity, emotional intelligence, motivation, loyalty, transparency, leadership, ethics, and sense of justice.

In this context, the next section addresses marketing teaching and learning approaches that are in line with the soft and hard skills that marketing professionals need to have to cope with the increasingly challenging world faced by companies.

From Teaching To Learning

The success of Marketing Education lies in several factors such as the content of the courses, the scientific background of the teachers and the physical conditions in which the programs take place. However, above all it depends on the relationship established between teacher and students.