

WEB 2.0 AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Technology and Marketing are linked (Brady, Fellenz & Brookes, 2008; Song, Droge, Hanvanich & Calantone, 2005), as are technology and marketing education (Krentler & Willis-Flurry, 2005; Paladino, 2008; Young, Klemz & Murphy, 2003). Web 2.0 is a second generation of web-based applications and services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, and blogs, which aim to facilitate creativity, collaboration, and sharing among users. Recognizing the business potential of Web 2.0, organizations have created Web 2.0 business and marketing models. While there is some evidence of marketing faculty using these new applications (Cronin, 2009; Spiller & Scovatti, 2008), anecdotal information indicates that teaching about and with Web 2.0 is limited.

In a separate development, over the last 15 years, an experiential learning paradigm has strongly emerged in marketing education (Daly, 2001; Li, Greenberg & Nichols, 2007; Wright, Bitner & Zeithaml, 1994). In this context, Web 2.0 can advance experiential learning. The purpose of this research is to explicate Web 2.0 concepts and their relation to experiential learning; and to determine how Web 2.0 principles can be applied to marketing education.

How does Web 2.0 relate to experiential learning? Web 2.0 is a hyper-extension of experiential learning where collaboration and sharing go beyond the classroom. There are several ways it alters how marketing educators view experiential learning.

First, marketing education materials and knowledge can become open. Similar to the MIT Open Courseware Model, textbooks, exams and lectures can be offered for free online. Faculty can create or be involved in the creation of spaces where knowledge is open. Unlike the MIT Open Courseware Model, these materials can be open for editing by anyone in the network (which can be limited as required). Thus knowledge may be open to faculty, students, practitioners and the Web 2.0 community interested in marketing.

Second, Web 2.0 enables student collaboration beyond the classroom. While students still collaborate

personally and virtually with one another and faculty in their classes, they may also collaborate virtually with students outside their classes, including practitioners, and other members of the Web 2.0 community interested in marketing. These first two changes will lead to a wider creation of and collaboration on materials and the transformation of everyone's knowledge (not just students' knowledge).

Third, while faculty can still develop students' competencies, skills and talents, there are new roles they must adopt. Faculty must evaluate the information that the students are reading and composing – there are no guarantees that any information that appears on Web 2.0 is correct. Faculty must also instruct students on how to evaluate the information. Finally, faculty must teach students the basic abilities of networking online and sharing information online. In turn, faculty must have in-depth knowledge of Web 2.0 tools and practices - which are constantly in flux.

Fourth, while the focus is still on collaboration, a new degree of competitiveness is introduced. Crowdsourcing implies that ideas come bottom-up with the best ones rising to the surface (i.e., winning the most votes). Most social networking sites allow users to rate the usefulness of an entry. For example, Digg allows users to determine the value of an entry by giving it a Digg (positive vote). In the context of the classroom, if students are contributing materials to a Web 2.0 environment, other users can rate the usefulness of this content, thereby stimulating competition.

Fifth, a higher degree of creativity is introduced. As remix and mashup technologies are used by students, individual work, as well as the synergies that may arise from collaboration will stimulate student creativity in new ways. For example, for a class project, many faculty require students to submit ideas for new products or services. If all ideas were submitted to a public domain, students could remix or mash them up to create even more innovative

References Available on Request