 College of Business book Review by Julie Johnson-Busbin

Title: "The New Rules of Marketing & PR"

Author: David Meerman Scott

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Length: 279 pages

Price: $19.95 (paperback)

Reading time: 6 hours

Reading rating: 7(1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

David Meerman Scott brings marketing and public relations into the 21st century in his book, "The New Rules of Marketing & PR." While the playing field for attracting customers has changed dramatically as a result of the wide-spread acceptance and use of the internet, most marketing and public relations professionals are playing the by old rules. The author makes a compelling case that a new playing field requires the players to adapt to new rules. Scott’s overarching theme is that marketing and public relations should focus on the individual buyer. While this doesn’t sound like a novel concept, in practice, the focus has been to engage in one-way mass communication to fairly large target audiences. The reader is encouraged to find ways to engage in one-to-one marketing. The book does not advocate abandoning all traditional methods of promotion; rather it encourages the reader to broaden the nature and scope to include avenues such as the internet and social networking.

Scott makes the analogy that the Web is a city and social media is a cocktail party in the city. The virtual cocktail party of social media provides a way for people share ideas, content, thoughts and relationships online. The book discusses a variety of avenues to create effective social networking. It explains the importance of using current platforms including blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Digg Video and podcasting. This book provides a great overview for people who are not familiar with these platforms and will help them to develop a clear understanding of the tools available. It also provides thought provoking content that will help individuals who are familiar with the technology be more effective in its use.

Most books like this are either strong on strategy but short on tactics or weak on strategy but solid on tactics. Amazingly, Scott’s book is strong in both areas. The first part of the book makes the case for why the concepts he espouses are important. The second part of the book provides practical examples and tips to effectively implement the concepts. For example the author makes the case for designing an appropriate website as part of your marketing strategy. However, homepages, though important, should not necessarily be the place a business directs all of their traffic to from a search engine advertising or keyword search. Rather, a landing page is better suited to provide the information the consumer wants based on the keyword searches. A landing page that is appropriate for the target audience should be viewed as a vehicle for communicating valuable information, whereas advertising is what gets people to click to your landing page. Scott also provides guidelines for effective landing pages, including keeping copy simple, provide quotes from happy customers, and having multiple calls to action.

The author also provides actual website addresses for the reader to get a feel for how real firms effectively utilize the concepts he is advocating. Looking at the strengths of other websites can be useful when thinking about designing or redesigning your own website. In summary, “The New Rules of Marketing & PR” is a great read, whether you a newbie to the Web-city of the internet and social marketing, or if you are a seasoned professional that is looking to pick up a few new ideas.

Julie Johnson-Busbin is a professor of marketing in the College of Business at Western Carolina University. Her interests include consultative selling, buyer-seller relationships, and integrated marketing communications. For previously reviewed books, visit us at our website at www.wcu.edu/cob/.