

# Preface

I started my earlier book with a quotation that must be reconsidered (Samli 1995). Nwachukwu and Dant (1990, p. 40) asserted that “consumers in many different societies and cultures in the world are similar in more ways than we presently suspect.” Now, I question this statement. Levitt (1983, p. 20) had gone one step further earlier in discussing the new commercial reality, which he described as “the explosive emergence of global markets for globally standardized products, world-scale markets of previously unimagined magnitudes.” Perhaps some 30 years later, today we are somewhat closer to Levitt’s position. However, at the same time, there are pockets of emerging traditional markets. In both cases the position that must be taken is that the similarities and differences in the world markets must be carefully analyzed. In almost all cases, an international company must know how different its target market is, how similar or different its products must be to those of the competition, and when and where the changes must be made available. This orientation is the crux of success in the twenty-first century international marketing. Excessive competition combined with dramatically varying consumers in some markets necessitates better understanding of target markets by international companies.

If I were to discuss what happened to world consumers during the past two decades, what I would articulate may sound like Alice in Wonderland, but it is actually a reality. In short, progress has been borderline phenomenal. Although some details are presented in the introduction of this book, it is important to look at the general picture. Certain key points of the general picture are pointed out here.

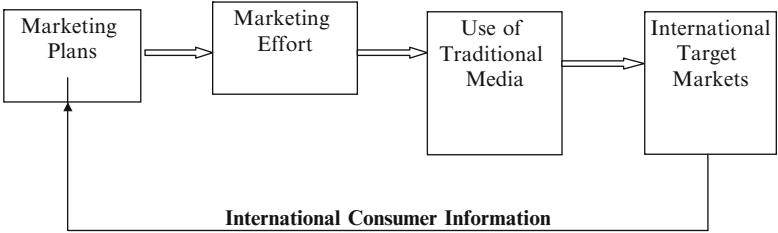
- The availability of goods and services has been spectacular. More and better products and services have become available in world markets.
- Information regarding products and services has become plentiful and much more informative than ever before.
- The ability to buy any product anywhere in the world has become a total possibility.
- Informed decision making has become predominant in the world markets. Such decision making presumably improves the quality of life of those who are

fortunate enough to enjoy these constantly accelerating positive conditions. In the meantime, a number of companies and countries have become very successful. All of these points and others are facilitating international marketing, which is more active today than ever before.

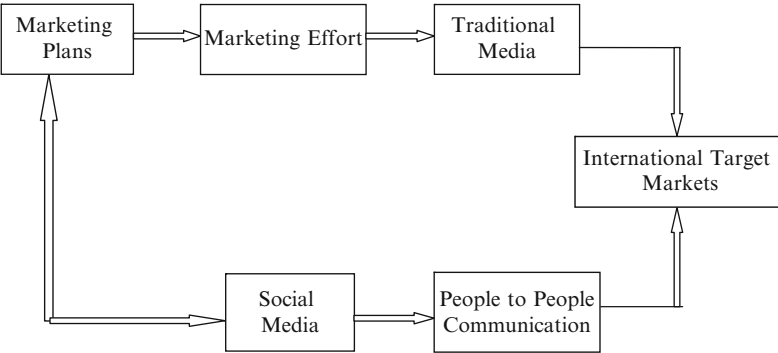
First and foremost, the conditions cited above are very forceful in necessitating and accelerating more and better international marketing, which is happening in a progressive manner. With increasing opportunities comes increasing responsibilities. In the twenty-first century, international marketing is at a crossroads. While international marketing is facing a tremendous emergence and the expansion of a global culture is demanding more and better products and services with greater variety, there is a constant enquiry as to marketing's capability to accomplish these requirements. International marketing is not only forced to develop better products and service mixes but is also providing better information about them and making sure that they can be delivered. Thus, the responsibilities and opportunities of international marketing in the twenty-first century are tremendous. This book deals with the details of these challenges and performance alternatives. At the outset, it must be posited that the modern international marketer will have to consider providing greater opportunities for enhancement of the quality of life of consumers and as a reward for this to make a profit rather than thinking purely of profit upfront. The world at the writing of this book is composed of haves and have-nots. Part of the responsibilities of modern international marketing is narrowing the gap between these two groups and raising the overall levels of existing quality of life standards throughout the world. Certainly we hope that this book may make a modest contribution in these directions.

## Information Needs and Information Use

Samli in 1995 posited that international marketing is based on information generation and information use (Exhibit P.1). This position is even more prominent today. As indicated in Exhibit P.1, without having proper information about target markets and consumers in these markets, there cannot be sufficient progress in international marketing efforts. These processes, after almost two decades, are much more complex and involved. One of the most critical and most interesting factors here is the emergence of international social media. International companies, in addition to using traditional media, are also obligated to use social media, i.e., the Internet, YouTube, iPads, iPods, and the like. International companies simply have to use these social media to understand and communicate with their target markets. However, with international social media one additional dimension in this area has emerged, that is, people-to-people communication. Through social media, consumers are communicating with each other perhaps more than with mass media (Exhibit P.2). This new dimension may be more powerful than the conventional media and its outreach. The successful marketing practitioners of the twenty-



**Exhibit P.1** The need for international information



**Exhibit P.2** The modern communication picture

first century will have to master the most effective use of social media, since this most powerful communication system develops its most effective networks and disseminates information people-to-people without being influenced by mass media.

**The Communication Challenge**

At the writing this book, the emergence and extensive widespread utilization of social media are both a tremendous challenge and also a great opportunity for international marketers. At the outset of this book, it is critical to explore the parameters of this new challenge, which did not even exist about two decades ago. The communication challenge that is facing the twenty-first century international marketer is depicted in Exhibit P.3. Based on the modern communication picture presented in Exhibits P.2 and P.3, some six critical points are raised. Any company dealing with international marketing which cannot cope with these challenges will not be able to survive in the twenty-first century. The six critical points for the successful international marketing practitioner are:

**Exhibit P.3** The communication challenge

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Ability to communicate with the target market

Provide important information about the products and so on

Make sure that the information imparted with is consistent with people-to-people information

The information transmitted must be more important and attractive than those of competition

Consumers' ability to acquire additional information

A control mechanism to ensure that the system is functioning

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- Above all, the ability to communicate with the target market is required. If the target market is northwest Turkey, it is necessary to make sure that this market is being connected with.
- If the first major requirement is satisfied, then the international marketer must disseminate important information.
- Since consumers are communicating among themselves through social media, the international marketers must make sure that they are not providing contradictory information about its products and services.
- Information disseminated must also be more important and attractive than what competitors are doing.
- At this point, it is necessary to make sure those consumers and prospective consumers have access to additional and reliable information.
- Finally, every international marketing professional must be able to evaluate if this whole challenging process is working.

This preface illustrates the tremendous challenge modern international marketers are facing. Many of these challenges are explored carefully and in detail throughout this book. It is certainly hoped that this book will shed light on the most complex conditions of international marketing.

## References

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