

Preface

This work focuses on the subject of customer loyalty and develops around the following research question:

“Is it possible to create/provide a product/service and at the same time make customers loyal by acting on the *delivered mix*?”

The research identifies an approach/model (TES marketing), which is particularly valid for the service sector, and enables the firm’s offer (*delivered mix*) to be reoriented by taking “The Extra Step” in this direction, thus having an impact on customer loyalty as well.

Consequently, loyalty becomes the final output of TES as a result variable in addition to the product/service that is created or provided and, in this sense, it represents the extra step as it allows the measures taken by the company to achieve customer loyalty to be made more effective.

This approach is put into practice by means of the TES marketing mix, which is implemented by means of a greater involvement of the customer during the production and fine tuning phase of the product/service.

A first version of the concept of TES marketing was identified by the author in 2008; to reach the result presented here, the existing literature was reviewed and analysed and the steps leading to loyalty were identified. The conditions were then formulated for the new model that represents the final aim of the research to create/provide a product/service and at the same time make the customer loyal. For this purpose, empirical research was carried out, especially on the elements of the TES marketing mix in order to verify the statements made previously.

This book is based on the analysis of the definitions of marketing formulated by colleagues over its first sixty-five years of life to identify some gaps and schisms between what is reported in the literature and what firms actually do in practice. The first part of this book deals with the steps of the buying process and the importance of the practices connected with customer loyalty, together with some suggestions linked to offer differentiation. Finally, a presentation is made of the elements to be monitored in order to identify the new approach of marketing, to which reference was made previously. The new approach is based on the concept of *strategic action*, an apparent oxymoron, which takes shape in the new approach of the TES

marketing mix and its variables: the product understood as *co-design*, the price as a *holistic value* created for the customer, advertising as an instrument of *cross-cultural communication* and distribution with the presentation of the figure of the *TES retail specialist* and of *e-tailing*.

In this way, TES marketing materialises as a new way of creating the offer and enables the elements of the existing marketing mix to be examined to pinpoint the appropriate lever on which to intervene (one or more “Ps”). The purpose is to make the buying experience such as to combine the provision of goods or services with loyalty, especially in those sectors in which the offer of the direct competitor is similar or comparable to that of the firm.

The examples given in this book are the results of observations and empirical experiments involving the firms of different types and sizes with greater reference to those dealing in the service sector especially in Italy as well as in Europe and the USA.

TES marketing presents a path, an approach, a way of working. To be effective on today’s market means making a significant and different type of effort in financial, intellectual and personal terms compared with the past. Making an effort involves hard work, but as Vince Lombardi¹ affirmed, “The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary”.

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Mauro Cavallone

¹Vince Lombardi American football coach, New York, 11 June 1913—Washington, 3 September 1970 source <http://www.miglioriaforismi.com/2012/09/vince-lombardi-frasi-aforismi.html>.

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The Extra Step Approach

Cavallone, M.

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