

Profitable Marketing Communications: A Guide to Marketing Return on Investment

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A.Young, and L. Aitken (2007). Profitable marketing communications: A guide to marketing return on investment (New Delhi: Kogan Page India), pp. 212. Rs. 325.

I chose this book for the review because of its application in the future research I am planning to do. The title of the book "Profitable Marketing Communications: A guide to marketing return on investment" is interesting as it talks about the return on investment (ROI), a financial term in the marketing context. Another reason why the title is attractive is that the expenditure on marketing is often considered to be not quantifiable and hence difficult to measure. Also marketing is considered to be a cost rather than an investment. The title of the book suggests that the book will consist of some thumb rules or strategies to make marketing a profitable investment.

The authors of the book are Antony Young and Lucy Aitken. Antony Young is President of a media agency Optimedia International in the United States. This agency specialises in integrated marketing communication strategies. Moreover, Antony Young has worked with global brands such as Sony, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, HSBC, Procter & Gamble, Toyota and Nokia. His intense experience in the field can be felt with the examples he has used in the book. Lucy Aitken, the second author, is a freelance writer specialising in media and marketing.

The book starts by exhibiting the present scenario in the field of marketing communication. The first chapter talks about why the effectiveness of the mass advertising is declining. This chapter gives a brief history of the advertising industry. The information is useful, and it is put in a very interesting way. Also, the chapter emphasises the changing tastes of the consumer and hence the need for reforms in the marketing communication. The succeeding chapters of the book are dedicated to the definition of Marketing-ROI and related terms. The book also gives many case studies exhibiting how different companies used and calculated the marketing ROI correctly and made enormous profits. The following chapters give some tools to establish relevance of the marketing communication for the profitability of the organisation. Finally the book gives a check whether an organisation is marketing ROI-fit or not.

A book on ROI is expected to have very difficult jargons and calculations. However, this book deals with the ROI in a very practical way, giving examples and cases demonstrating how managers react to a challenge and calculate situational stability of a marketing initiative. There is no mathematics in the book; not even a single calculation is there. The book frankly and strictly says that brand equity and awareness are not much related with the return on investment. What matters ultimately is: whether marketing result in sale and whether the results can & measured and calculated for a marketing campaign. Thus the book gives a practitioner's approach to the marketing. Also the book suggests marketers

not to get confined into theoretical boundaries. This part of the book explaining the mistakes which marketers often do is interesting and is written lucidly. The language used makes comprehension easier to the reader. Even a reader having no marketing background can understand the problems stated in these chapters.

The cases used in the book give different problem situations which are solved by proper marketing strategies. All the cases clearly specify the background, challenge and the solution. Thus not much intellectual effort is expected from the reader's side. The reader can appreciate the work done by Toyota, P&G, O2 or the organisation about which the case study talks.

The book discusses eight tips to profitable marketing communications, and the chapters afterwards deal with implementation guidelines and elaboration of these tips. Each of these tips is illustrated using case studies again where convergent evidence is adduced. Thus the book gives exposure to different real-life situations where marketers made profit out of their marketing strategies. The reader gets a good exposure and an insight to all these situations and how organisations dealt with them.

Finally the book once again comes back to the eight points for managing a profitable marketing communication. Again the importance of ROI is emphasised. Bringing culture supporting Marketing ROI in the organisation and other reforms are suggested.

There is no concrete formulation given in the book to calculate the marketing ROI, but the book demonstrates the various methods used by different successful organisations. The book is written from a practitioner's or marketer's perspective, and hence, despite clear and understandable language marketing students may find the book steering away from their conventional theoretical language. Some concepts given in the book are very difficult to implement and the case studies are situation specific, so generalisation is difficult.

Overall the book presents a well-informed criticism of conventional marketing practices. It recommends frame-breaking, innovative techniques of marketing, exploring new media. The examples and case studies are perfectly placed within the theory and are relevant. The theme of book 'How to bring tangible financial benefits results' is successfully delivered by the book. The book adds value to the skill set of a practitioner and provides better understanding of the contemporary marketing industry to a learner.

Author's Profile

Aditya Billore is currently a Doctoral Student in the area of Marketing Management at Indian Institute of Management Indore. His areas of interest are Integrated Marketing Communication, Corporate Branding and Marketing Accountability. He holds an M.Tech degree in Microelectronics and VLSI Design and has about four years of teaching experience.