

**Marketing Management Reflections**

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This was my third of the three intro courses in the MBA program, after Organizational Theory and Behavior and Financial Management. My strongest impression is how well planned this program is. All three courses fit together to give me the foundation I will need to start a small business.

I am most grateful for the flexibility that has been shown in each of these classes in permitting me to interpret writing prompts "broadly" so as to use them to move closer toward the specific, concrete needs of the cooperative business of which I am a member. For the first time this semester, I took to posting most of these assignments on my website, <https://elkner.net>, so that they could be readily shared with cooperators both in and outside of NOVA Web Development. I would definitely say that this was the most useful for me as I struggle to prepare myself to be able to make our coop function as a viable business.

I was more than a little hesitant when I contemplated the thought of being a socialist in an MBA program, steeped as I imagined it would be in the logic of the present economic system. Indeed the ideological underpinnings of the field of business administration I have been studying have met my expectations, which makes total sense given our present context. Despite my deep seated opposition to relying on "the market" to arbitrate so many interactions among people, all three of my University of the People instructors have permitted me to maintain my stance as an avowed enemy of the system under investigation, from the perspective of Sun Tzu's oft quoted aphorisms that "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles" (1910, p. 6). It is not my fellow humans I oppose, only the inhuman game imposed upon us all by our present circumstances.

After three courses, I have become a huge fan of the format of University of the People courses. The combination of discussion forum, writing assignment, and portfolio reflection, as well as the integrated group project, is a flexible and effective format that allows for real learning to take place asynchronously online while still facilitating significant interaction among classmates. It surprised me at first, back in BUS 5113, how much I liked being asked to evaluate the writing assignments of three of my peers, but by now I have come to rely on this wonderful opportunity to get an in depth analysis from three classmates about the topic of the week. It has often been the case that I did not have a full understanding of the assigned topic until I read what my classmates wrote about it.

Lastly, I keep returning to the definition of "marketing" presented to us by our text in the first unit of our course, "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (The University of Minnesota, 2010). In his book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, historian Yuval Noah Harari describes the "imagined order" that guides human social interactions as being "inter-subjective", and says that, "The inter-subjective is something that exists within the communication network linking the subjective consciousness of many individuals" (2014, p. 110). Given the definition in our text, one could call "marketing" the process of sharing elements of our inter-subjective reality, making it an essential aspect of human social being. For our society to be a just and democratic one, our marketing must be oriented toward people and their well being rather than toward profit, and must be done with transparency and a commitment to humanization.

## References

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