

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CHAOS THEORY IN MARKETING

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When examining more closely the reasons why marketing is an increasingly complex discipline, the concept of "chaos" in the scientific sense may be attributed: one thinks immediately of the distortion of results that is observed between the initial conditions of a product test conducted in a focus group for example and the actual results of sales a few weeks or months after the effective launch of the product and its marketing.

Indeed, this equation cannot appear that the findings of a customer study are equal to consumer events predictive of the "chaotic" Marketing". Because the change of initial states (here the variation and inaccurate responses of panelists for example) will cause an opposite reaction and very serious consequences for the subsequent events that are normally "predictable" (launch failure of a new product on the market following a study by the declarative bias of participants who say the opposite of what they think), but "not achieved" within the meaning of the term probability.

This complexity can become totally chaotic and erratic and generate a deterministic noise. It is in this sense that marketing gets into trouble when there is an extremely sensitive dependence on initial conditions. A very small initial change can impact in very important and unexpected ways. This is what is called «the chaotic behavior». The transition from stable to chaotic dynamics depends on the combination and the relative strength of different elements. Therefore, the impact of a minimal change in the initial state of a chaotic system is unpredictable and can cause changes dramatically different with considerable differences in outcomes. Consequently, one can doubt the ability to model a prediction in marketing: it is indeed a problem of the method and a paradigm shift required to make marketing become a form of predictive science.