

Reviews

"Welcome to the 1:1 Future," by Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, in *Marketing Tools*, April/May 1994, American Demographics, Inc. 127 West State Street, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850, pp. 4-7.

The first article in the "premier issue" of *Marketing Tools* magazine is aimed at for-profit companies, but it is equally of value to agricultural communicators involved in marketing educational products (programs and materials).

The authors quickly catch your attention: "Take everything you have ever known about mass marketing and market share. Assemble it neatly. Now put it through a mental shredder; you don't need it any more. We are stepping through a marketing paradigm shift of epic proportions." What they are getting at is that "as good products are offered by lots of competitors, the best sales go to those who develop good relationships with individual customers."

The authors provide several examples to illustrate what they mean by one-to-one (1:1) marketing. One involves a man who called a florist in another town and asked to have flowers delivered to his mother for her birthday. The next year, three weeks before her birthday, the man received a postcard from the florist reminding him of the specific floral arrangement he had ordered last year, and suggesting that a telephone call would put an equally beautiful birthday surprise on his mother's doorstep this year. He bought a \$55 arrangement. The key to this success lies in using specific information about an individual customer "to get a greater share of that customer's business."

In another example cited by the authors, a hotel chain keeps computerized records of regular customers' preferences so they can provide individualized service. If a customer places a room service order for white wine with ice in it, the next time he or she stays at the hotel and orders wine it will come with ice, because that is the way the customer likes it. The hotel uses the information it gets about a particular individual customer to enhance its relationship with that customer, and thus gains customer loyalty.

Emphasizing the difference between 1:1 marketing and traditional marketing, the authors welcome you "to the 1:1 future: a new paradigm of competition based on share of customer, not market share. Traditional mass marketers find customers for their products. One-to-one (1:1) marketers find products for their customers. The most valuable thing any company produces is its customers."

From my upbringing, I was led to believe that sound marketing meant learning what your customers want, and providing it. Selling, on the other hand, was finding customers for your product. So what the authors are suggesting is that, in cases where the value of the product allows, one-to-one marketing can be effective. However, that does not translate to products where market share is more critical—hand soap, for example.

The authors do an effective job of differentiating between mass marketing and one-to-one marketing. What they fail to include is the commonalities between the two, segmenting and targeting their markets, for example. Within Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station circles, a form of one-to-one marketing has been advocated for some time by Bill Boldt (Cornell) and Bruce DeYoung (Oregon State University) in what they refer to as "relationship marketing."¹ In their book on the subject, they tout the value of cementing relationships with key people "who will influence Cooperative Extension's future." The success of these relationships involves finding out more about individuals and what they value.

One-to-one marketing has worked well for some ag communication staffs around the country. At Oregon State University we maintain certain Extension publications. People who purchased an animal health publication, for example, would be notified by postcard when we produced another publication relating to that subject.

This publication is valuable reading for ag communicators. Although the references are to "companies" and "profits," the implications for Extension and AES are obvious.

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¹Boldt, William, *Creative Marketing*. Cornell Cooperative Extension (1986)