

THE ROLE, CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF MARKETING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ABUBAKAR, IBRAHIM & MUSTAPHA MADU
Department Of Marketing
Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, Nasarawa State
Petroleum Equalisation Fund Management Board, Abuja

Abstract

The main objective of this research work is to develop an academic discussion on the critical functions and essence of Marketing to man, human civilization, global integration, standard of living of nations, and the world in general. This study made descriptive/content analyses of the role and challenges of marketing in the 21st century to determine its future prospects. The study relies on secondary sources, which consists of journals publications, seminars/conference papers, text books, and internet documents. The paper concludes that Marketing is a fact of life. The thinking in the field has now shifted from marketing being a mere managerial tool for the attainment of commercial goals toward socio-economic development perspectives. Though there have been controversies and criticisms on the practice of marketing, the societal benefits are crucial for the civilization of man which cannot be subjected to quantification. Man by nature is social, economic, political and psychological being that must co-exist, interact and engage in mutual exchange relationships for the attainment of his needs and wants.

Keywords: *Marketing, challenges, exchange relationships, human civilization, global integration, standard of living, needs and wants.*

Introduction

Marketing as a practice is as old as human civilization. For the biological and physiological texture of man is embedded with needs and wants which must be satisfied as basic for higher level needs. The essence of Marketing since time immemorial is the identification of the societal needs and wants, demand management and tailoring the marketing ingredients to meet the identified wants. Though the emergence of Marketing as a distinct academic discipline is a recent history, it had been part and parcel of Economics. The main objective of Economics is the efficient and effective utilization of scarce resources to achieve individual and societal goals. The emergence of Marketing as a separate entity could be attributed to the surplus and boom of the Post Industrial Revolution and the landmark in efficiency

occasioned by the Scientific Management of the early 19th Century which led to Mass Production and hence the imperative of efficient distribution of the surplus produced to meet the needs and wants of the post industrial era.

The Nature and Scope of Marketing has been expanding as the complexity and changes in human societies are unfolding. From the earliest view, Marketing was regarded as agent of the channels of distribution for the creation of place, time, and possession utilities. Thereafter, Marketing has been variously viewed as an encompassing endeavour which focus on at the micro-level, societal approach (The Macro), profit/non-profit sector focus, positive and normative paradigms and the systems and contingency perspectives, the societal marketing approaches and the environmental marketing perspective. The

divergent perspectives only reveal the reinforcing and mutually sustaining paradigms reflecting the different aspects of Marketing. Fundamental to the divergent approaches to the field of Marketing is the Societal Marketing perspective with emphasis on the role of marketing beyond the micro-firm level with emphasis on profitable marketing operations to the vital role Marketing plays in identification, promotion and satisfaction of societal needs and wants, namely Marketing and Society.

Marketing as a human endeavor is committed to the satisfaction of the needs and wants of the people through the instrumentality of the exchange process thereby managing the various dimensions of demand, improving the standards of living, enhancing mutual inter-dependence and comparative advantage all for a better world. Be that as it is, the field of Marketing in the Social and Management Sciences has been assailed with criticisms from within and outside bringing to the fore ethical issues surrounding the practice of Marketing. However, critical examinations of these controversies could be explained away by the myopic view of equating marketing with sales. Marketing as a social process is grounded in the utilitarian philosophy of providing good, better satisfaction for the greater people.

The main preoccupation of this research is to develop an academic discussion on the critical functions and essence of Marketing to man, human civilization and global integration, and standard of living of individual nations in particular and the world in general.

Methodology

This study made descriptive/content analyses of the role of the role and challenges of marketing in the 21st century to determine its future prospects. The study relies on secondary sources, which consists of journals publications, seminars/conference papers,

text books, and internet documents.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review
The field of marketing is so diverse and constantly changing that giving a single definition has not only defied the academics and practitioners alike, but has been elusive and difficult. Hence, the field of marketing is not amenable to getting a universally acceptable definition of the subject (Rewoldt et al: 1993) & Lusch (2007). The American Marketing Association (AMA) being the most recognized global marketing professional body has since its inception in the 1930s been reviewing the definitions of marketing to reflect the ever changing marketing tasks, nature and environment. Be that as it is, we can present some few authoritative definitions of marketing and give a brief review of them and thereafter adopt what we feel as the operational definition that will give us a sound conceptual framework of the topic of discussion.

1. Kotler (2003:9) defines marketing as “a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others”. This definition gives the social perspective of marketing hinged on mutual exchange of valuable products and services for the satisfaction of needs. This definition enlarges the application of marketing principles and tools to the non-business areas for the benefits of the society.
2. Star et al (1997: 5) defines marketing as “the process through which a business enterprise, institution, or organization 1. Selects target customers or constituents, 2. Assesses the needs or wants of such target customers, and 3. Manages its wants of such target customers, and 4. Manages its resources to satisfy those customers' needs or wants”.

This is a managerial dimension of marketing semantics with business organizational role of the organizations to demand management, tailoring the marketing mix to provide for the desired needs of the target market with a touch of marketing orientation.

3. AMA (2008:2) defines marketing as “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”. Although by no means exhaustive, this definition is comprehensive enough to be adopted as the operational definition of this discussion. It views marketing not only as an activity but processes and institutions that conceives, promotes, and delivers market offerings for the benefit of everybody, the consumer, clients, partners and the society as a whole. It incorporates the societal, business and systems dimensions of the conceptualization of the subject hinged on mutual beneficial exchanges for the benefit of everybody. This definition de-emphasises the use of the term product and services but consciously employed the term offering playing down the product-service dichotomy and controversies in the field of marketing as marketing delivers “bundle of satisfaction” to the target market, partners, clients or the society as a whole.

The Nature and Scope of Marketing

The field of marketing has been characterized by changes to reflect the complexity of the society. As Kotler (1972) opines, one of the evidence of the vibrancy and resilience of a discipline is the willingness to re-evaluate its essence, tools and missions within the contexts of societal changes and challenges for meaningful development. Management theorist Drucker (1973) succinctly captures the basic nature of marketing by diametrically contrasting the essence of marketing from selling by asserting that the purpose of marketing is to make selling superfluous by

knowing and appreciating the customer so that the product or service is tailored to the satisfaction of the consumer. Elsewhere, Drucker defines business as “if you want to know what business is, you have to start with its purpose: to create a customer”. We can logically extend this definition to capture the essence of marketing which is the delivery of goods and services or market offering for the satisfaction of the customer. In essence, the application of marketing principles and tools cut across diverse organizations whether profit or not for profit organisation, private or public, at micro or macro level as it has been canvassed by Kotler and Levy (1969) where they argue that marketing is a relevant field that is applicable to all organisations and institutions in as much as all organisations/institutions have products and services to offer to the customers, clients or partners.

There is no doubt that the nature and scope of marketing is as diverse as the universe. The diverse subject areas of consumer behavior, pricing, purchasing sales management, product management, marketing communications, comparative marketing, social marketing, the efficiency and productivity of marketing systems, the role of marketing in economic development, packaging, channels of distribution, marketing research, retailing, wholesaling, the societal social responsibility, international marketing, commodity marketing and physical distribution to mention a few. Since the emergence of the concept of the 4ps developed by McCarthy in the early 1960s with the consumer at the centre and the controllable variable as one component with the uncontrollable variables as the other, many of the different aspects of marketing like social marketing, comparative marketing could not be localised with the traditional 4ps. Hence, for the sake of this paper we shall diagrammatically present the marketing schema adopted by Hunt (1976:20) to present

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		Positive	Normative
Micro-Sector	Profit	1. Problems, issues, theories, and research concerning: a. Individual consumer buyer behavior b. How firms determine prices c. How firms determine products d. How firms determine promotion e. How firms determine channels of distribution f. Case studies of marketing practices	2. Problems, issues, normative models, and research concerning how firms should: a. Determine the marketing mix b. Make pricing decisions c. Make product decisions d. Make promotion decisions e. Make packaging decisions f. Make international marketing decisions g. Organise their marketing departments h. Control their Marketing efforts i. Plan their marketing strategy j. Apply systems theory to marketing problems k. Manage retail establishments l. Implement the marketing concepts
Macro-Sector	Profit	3. Problems, issues, theories and research concerning: a. Aggregate consumption patterns b. Institutional approach to marketing c. Commodity approach to marketing d. Legal aspects of marketing e. Comparative marketing f. The efficiency of marketing systems g. Whether the poor pay more h. Whether marketing spurs or retards economic development i. Power and conflict relationships in channels of distribution j. Whether the marketing functions are universal k. Whether the marketing concept is consistent with consumer interests	4. Problems issues, normative models, and research concerning: a. How marketing can be made more efficient b. Whether distribution costs much c. Whether advertising is socially desirable d. Whether consumer sovereignty is desirable e. Whether stimulating demand is desirable f. Whether the poor should pay more g. What kinds of laws regulating marketing are optimal h. Whether vertical marketing systems are socially desirable i. Whether marketing should have special responsibilities
Micro-Nonprofit sector		5. Problems, issues, theories, and research concerning: a. Consumers' purchasing of public goods b. How nonprofit organisations determine prices c. How nonprofit organisations determine products d. How nonprofit organisations determine promotion e. How nonprofit organisations determine channels of distribution f. Case studies of public goods marketing	6. Problems, issues, normative models, and research concerning how nonprofit organisations should: a. Determine the marketing mix (social marketing). b. Make pricing decisions c. Make product decisions d. Make promotions decisions e. Make packaging decisions f. Make purchasing decisions g. Make international marketing decisions(e.g. CARE) h. Organise their marketing efforts i. Control their marketing efforts j. Plan their marketing strategy k. Apply systems theory to marketing problems.
Macro- Nonprofit sector		7. Problems, issues, theories, and research concerning: a. The institutional framework for public goods b. Whether television advertising influences elections c. Whether public service advertising influences behavior(e.g. "Smoky the Bear") d. Whether existing distribution systems for public goods are efficient. e. How public goods are recycled	8. Problems, issues, normative models, and research concerning: a. Whether society should allow politicians to be "sold" like toothpaste b. Whether the demand for public goods should be stimulated c. Whether "low informational content" political advertising is socially desirable(e.g. ten second "spot" commercials) d. Whether the U.S Army should be allowed to advertise for recruits

Table 1. The Scope of Marketing culled from The Nature and Scope of Marketing by Shelby D. Hunt; Journal of Marketing. Vol. 40 (July 1996) pp. 17-28.

The evolution of marketing thought Marketing as a separate field of study is a recent development but as a human endeavour it has been with man since time immemorial. Perhaps marketing dates back to thousands of years with archeological excavations of caves of the earliest civilizations like the Mesopotamia, Assyrian

and Egyptian civilizations with evidences of 'advertising' to communicate to other members of communal events and issues and the perils of life. Customers/ consumers have been as old as human existence as mutual exchange and transactions had been as old as first transaction between two people (Cooke et al. 1992). The earnest study of marketing

which was treated as a subsidiary of Economics centered on the distribution of physical products to the ultimate consumer or user; the organisation of marketing exchange, attention later changed to marketing institutions that made goods available and arranged for possession utilities and the functions/activities performed for facilitating the exchange of goods through the marketing institutions Vargo & Lusch (2004).

Lusch (2007) gives a logical development of the evolution of marketing thought and practice after a painstaking review of three phases of the evolution over a century ago when marketing has been firmly established as a distinct discipline. These stages are the to market stage, market(ing) to stage, and market(ing) with stage which are briefly summarized hereunder;

To Market: The major preoccupation of this era was the insufficient supplies of goods and hence the main task of the marketing function was how to bring these goods to the marketplace. The main features of this marketing philosophy was spatial separation between the goods produced with the point of consumption, limitation of the productive base with the role of marketing as closing these gaps to create time, place and possession utilities. With the emergence of the principle of division of labour and specialization as practiced in the industrial society, raw materials used in the production processes and the subsequent finished products had to be channeled to the consumers and users so as to fill in the gap between production and consumption.

The above marketing thought perhaps influenced the AMA earliest definition of marketing as the performance of activities which channels the flow of goods and services from the point of production to that of consumption. The main emphasis was the product dominant logic which considered the tangible aspects of the products that

possessed time, place and possession utilities. This era has been criticised as defective as marketing could be wasteful endeavour if utilities were an attachment to tangible products.

Market(ing) To: This marketing philosophy emerged after the developments in the industrial and distribution sectors of the industrial society. The breakthrough made in mass production and efficient methods of production and distribution resulted in surplus economy. The focus of the marketer was to identify the needs and wants of the customer and the target markets so that profitable market offering could be designed and continuously shaped to outwit the competition so as to serve the target market effectively. This philosophy became prominent with the contributions of marketing experts in the late 1950s up to the middle of the 1970s. The dominant logic here is that marketing was viewed as a managerial activity dedicated to demand management within the context of customer orientation.

This philosophy represents an improvement of the previous thinking. The popular market orientation of business entities to the needs and wants of the consumer made it appealing. But soon many controversies and criticisms were leveled against marketing, like disregard to the rights of consumers and mounting unrest on some aspects of marketing practices.

Market(ing) With: The two previous philosophies considered the customer as an external entity in the exchange relationship. This orientation views the customer as an endogenous and necessary partner in the creation of value. Lusch (2007) considers this orientation as the most enduring one that all innovative enterprises should adopt to excel in the modern business world. In contrast with the product dominant logic of the first philosophy, Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that this philosophy is in tune with the

service-dominant (S-D) logic of Marketing. This philosophy gives a deservedly expanding role to the customer who is viewed as a co-creator of value from the conception to the delivery of the market offering to the desired satisfaction of the consumer.

Theoretical framework

Though there has been raging debate as to whether marketing is a science among the academia, the fact that there has been growing body of knowledge day in day out in marketing since it has emerged over a century as a distinct area of study from the domain of Economics indicates that marketing is some sort of science with theoretical models and prepositions that help its development. The original model of marketing inherited from Economics was the product dominant logic which recognized exchange of tangible goods from manufactured output of the producer to be marketed by the marketer against the background of tangible resources, embedded value and transactions. The new paradigm is premised on the emerging perspective of the Service Dominant Logic (SDL) which focuses on the intangible resources and co creation of value and network relationships which gives premium to the position of the consumer as an endogenous factor predicated on service provision as fundamental to economic exchange.

Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that the service logic model views resources as intangible and dynamic functions of human ingenuity as the basis of this model. Since the last decade of the last century and beyond, the service-dominant logic of marketing emerged with orientation of continuous social and economic process in which new thinking in marketing has focused on market orientation, services marketing, relationship marketing, quality management, value and supply chain management, resources management and network analysis. The choice of this model

could be justified on the compelling reasons given by Vargo and Lusch (2004) to include emphasis on knowledge management as the basis of unit exchange, the dominance of indirect exchange over fundamental unit exchange, goods represents the medium of service provision, competitive advantage in business world today being determined by knowledge, the prominence of services sector in all economies, consideration of the customer as co-producer with the enterprise role reduced to making value proposition and a service-centered orientation grounded on customer orientation and relationship marketing. Consequently, it is the considered opinion of this paper that the service-dominant logic is not only the global model of marketing but is in consonance with the topic of discussion.

The Role of Marketing in the 21st Century

Man has been described as not only a social but economic being. Though the emergence of the societal marketing concept is a recent development in marketing thought, social marketing in practice is as old as human civilization. Service activities manifested as the fundamental ingredients of the economic interdependence and exchange giving rise to civilization and progress (Vargo & Morgan, 2005).

The managerial perspective of marketing has been described as myopic in nature without strict external consideration and appraisal because organizational marketing is important which represents only an aspect of the field. The broadening of marketing movement has been viewed to liberate marketing paradigm from the narrow confines of commercial marketing to demonstrate its application in the context of macro-level marketing which forms the basis of exchange and relationship marketing (Kotler, 1969). To cap it all, Wilkie and Moore (2003) assert that enquiry into the economic, social and political dimensions of marketing

impacts on the society represents the new thinking as distinct from the micro-level appraisal of marketing with emphasis on performance of the enterprise.

The followings are some of the compelling reasons why marketing is not only necessary for the challenges of human existence, but the crucial role marketing plays in every community, society and the world in general:

Marketing as exchange: This is the most important single reason the society and the world in general cannot do without marketing. Economic exchange is the essence of marketing. From the primitive societies to the trade by barter driven societies to the modern monetary based economies, the exchange of goods and services is a common denominator. The science of marketing argue Vargo & Morgan (2005) whether in the product-dominant logic of consummating exchange processes of tangible goods to the now service-dominant logic which has shifted emphasis from the tangibles to the intangible exchange of activities and transactions namely service provision.

The centrality of exchange in marketing has been given credence and recognition by Alderson (1957), Bagozzi (1975) & Kotler (1984). Bagozzi (1975) in his celebrated contribution underscores the fact that an exchange relationship is the nucleus of marketing with universal application of the discipline of exchange behaviour. Kotler (2003) sees exchange as the process of getting a preferred product from someone by offering something in return emphasizing the mutual benefits of exchange in marketing. The main preoccupation of marketing is to facilitate transactions in an exchange economy which forms the basis for the understanding of the domain of marketing Dowling (1983).

The crucial role of the field of marketing as exchange in the society has been given premium under the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D-L) in the post-industrial societies. Vargo & Morgan (2005) argue that the reality

of division of labour and specialization create inter-dependency with attendant interactions and economic exchanges that give meaning to society and civilization whereby service and only service is exchanged. The S-D-L model signifies mutual exchange of service for the benefit of the society. Veludo-de-olivera (2006:27) encapsulates the essence of marketing as exchange in the following:

“The bridge between firms and society is created and maintained by Marketing tasks involving the establishment of re

Marketing as a Vehicle for demand management: Marketing is an agent of demand management in the society. Kotler (2003) argues that marketing has the responsibility of influencing the level, timing and composition of demand to meet organizational objective. The various demand states may be negative demand, no demand, latent demand, declining demand, irregular demand, full demand, overfull demand and unwholesome demand. Extending this proposition to the societal marketing concept, demand management in respect of negative demand in particular may spur patronage of socially disliked products and services by careful marketing investigation and analysis to determine why a target market dislikes a product or service with a view to re-designing marketing programmes to engender change in consumer attitude and adoption. For example, parents of newly born babies dislike vaccinations and employers dislike engaging alcoholics. The use of marketing tools and principles will appropriately manage any of the demand state to achieve societal goals.

Marketing as a vehicle for the delivery of standard of living: There is no doubt that the standard of living is an index of the “wellness” of the people and an equally how abundant and prosperous life of the populace is. Traditionally, marketing task has been the creation of utility (time, place and possession) thereby adding value to societal needs. That is

why a marketing authority McNair (1968:2) defines marketing as “the creation and delivery of a standard of living”. Lusch (2007) argues that marketing adds value through the instrumentality of marketing innovation which made it possible for the breakthrough of the industrial revolution to crystallise. The success recorded by the assembly-line mass production and the ensuing efficiency created by Scientific Management could not had been possible without the far-reaching revolution in marketing and distribution thereby closing the gaps between production and consumption. Cox (1965) suggested two functions of Macro marketing system: 1. Delivery of the standard of living of the people. 2. Creating a marketplace that fosters and supports communal innovation and improvement that allows the standard of living to be enhanced and sustained over time.

Marketing as a Vehicle for Economic Development: Marketing plays a pivotal role in the global economic agenda. Economic Development simply means economic growth accompanied by structural changes in the economy. Wood and Vitell (1986:28) define economic development as “improvement in economic welfare, eradication of mass poverty, and shifts in the underlying structure of production away from agricultural toward industrial activities”. Ballantyne and Varey (2008) argue that marketing is a potent constructive agent in any society which serves as a developmental mechanism playing integral, transformative and enrichment roles that result in social and economic wellbeing and societal development.

The celebrated contribution of the Management Theorists, Peter Drucker (1958) described marketing as a societal organ for the promotion of economic development by filling the gap between production and consumption and anticipating, meeting customer requirements profitably and entrepreneurially. Marketing activities make

economic integration and full capacity utilization of nations possible through the innovation of the entrepreneurs. He asserted that marketing rather than production, manufacturing or construction rendered the greatest challenges and payback to the developing world.

Marketing as an agent of promoting sustainable development: The question of sustainable development is a topical issue in the global arena. Sustainable development issues like environmental degradation, pollution, natural resources depletion, the “greenhouse effect”, desertification and emphasis on renewable energy uses are issues of global concern. The evolution of Societal Marketing Concept and its adjunct the environmental marketing deal with these issues from the marketing perspectives. Sheth et al. (2006) argues that sustainable development could be achieved by a strategic systems marketing orientation complemented by active regulatory interventions. While environmental marketing may proactively use the strategies of redirecting customer needs, re-consumption, re-orientation of the marketing mix and re-organisation, the governmental intervention could use regulation, reformation, promotion and participation. The aim of this partnership which we may call Marketing Government Partnership (MGP) is to engender a new perspective from consumption to sustainable marketing and from the invisible hand of the government to a more visible hand of the government.

Marketing as a Vehicle for the attainment of Social Policy: The Macro/Nonprofit Societal Marketing paradigm of marketing is hinged on the satisfaction of societal needs through the application of marketing tools and principles. Koshy and Joseph (2007) argue that the goal of the societal marketing philosophy is to align individual social conducts to be in

tune with societal values and regulations for the overall good of the society. As canvassed by Kotler and Zaltman (1971), the societal marketing concept seeks to promote merit goods and de-market the demerit goods so that societal values and order will be attained.

Some Controversies and Ethical Issues on Marketing as a Practice

The field of marketing has perhaps generated much controversies and criticisms than the other functional areas of management from within the profession and from without. The basis of these controversies has been described as grounded in the myopic view of the subject areas of marketing and more importantly lack of sound understanding of what marketing stands for Nantel (1996:9). Some of these criticisms are;

- Marketing and distribution cost too much and therefore passes the additional costs to the consumer.
- Advertisement sometimes leads to false and misleading information.
- The bill boards strategically placed in towns and cities deface our environment.
- The question of obesity has been associated with unhealthful foods being heavily and attractively advertised.
- Marketing and environmental issues
- Marketing and the sales and promotion of dangerous products like tobacco and guns

Critique of the Criticisms

To provide a blanket critique of some of the controversies and criticism, marketing as exchange provides a utilitarian service to the society and the world at large by providing mutual beneficial exchanges that will lead to individual and societal needs and satisfaction. As Moorman & Rust (1999) put it, the value of the marketing function goes beyond

organisation-wide context to the critical roles of promotion of societal needs and wants. Marketing philosophy has now changed from regarding it as a function and more as a set of values and processes becoming everybody's job which diffuses marketing functions and increasing its influence in the society. To cap it all McKenna (1991: 68) asserts that "Marketing is everything and everything is marketing"

Challenges and the Future Prospects of Marketing in the 21st Century

There is no doubt that the global and local environments of marketing are in a state of flux, uncertainty and complexity that impose challenges to the practice of marketing. The economic, social, political and technological changes of the last century has shaped the place of marketing in human history with a corresponding dramatic change in the marketing of goods and services within the context of the dynamic environment.

The 21st century unfolds more radical innovations and changes with tremendous growth of some business lines, contraction of others, stiff competition, more enlightened consumer, societal changes and geopolitical turmoil. The recent global financial crises has created more challenges to the field of marketing with dwindling consumer income, financial squeeze, dwindling trade among nations, rising poverty levels, unemployment and falling standards of living especially in the developing world.

The accelerating pace of changes in the global economy, make current marketing strategies risky thereby turning to new strategy on continuous basis as crucial. Marketing practitioners must be proactive enough to identify at least three developments in their operating environment like the unending pace of globalization, advancement in technology and the continuing push and sustenance of deregulation of the business sector sweeping

all the countries of the global economy. The future of marketing is guaranteed as viewed from the micro or macro perspectives, it has played and will certainly continue to play crucial role in the society. Haeckle (1997: ix) puts it succinctly as "Marketing future is not a function of business, but it is the function of business".

Conclusion

Marketing is a fact of life. The thinking in the field now has shifted from marketing being a mere managerial tool for the attainment of commercial goals toward a social development perspective. Though there have been controversies and criticisms on the practice of marketing, the societal benefits are crucial for the civilization of man which cannot be subjected to quantification. Man by nature is a social, economic, political and psychological in nature that must co-exist, interact and engage in mutual exchange relationships for the attainment of his needs and wants. Obviously, I wonder how the challenges of living in a world without marketing can be. Marketing is a sine qua non social agent without which there will be no meaningful life. "The future of Man is the future of Marketing".

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