



Internet for Everyone

By Alexis Leon and Matthews Leon, Vikas Publishing House, 1997, Price : Rs 128

This book is addressed to the general users of the Internet in India through the public Internet access provider VSNL. It is a well written and well organised book that meets the needs of general users admirably well. The language used is simple and straight, making it accessible to readers with varying ability.

Internet being a vast subject that is continuously changing, all that any book can give is an introduction. Once a reader gets on to the Internet, he/she will pick up many more details, programs and skills by accessing it often. Moreover, the book under review provides pointers to many such resources.

The self-contained chapters have been thoughtfully organised. The glossary clarifies acronyms which qualify as Internet jargon.

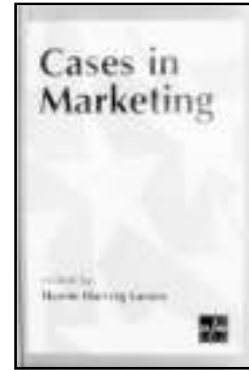
Any book intended for a wide audience suffers from its consequent inability to do justice to all areas. This book is no exception. Again, the ordering of the subject and the introduction of the terminology is not always consistent. For instance, a lay person will find terms like *TCP/IP* used in several places in the first five chapters and will get to know what it means only in the sixth chapter. The authors could have talked about other Internet access providers, particularly ERNET (Educational & Research Network) that brought Internet access to India way back in 1986. VSNL's Internet operation started only in 1995. Even in the appendix on Internet evolution, the growth of Internet in India has not been addressed. Similarly, the Internet explosion among corporate users, software developers and so on could have been discussed.

However, such shortcomings are inevitable when dealing with a vast subject and addressing a general audience.

On the whole, the book is a welcome addition to the range of easily available books on the Internet, for an average user in India.

— S Sadagopan

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Cases in Marketing

Edited by Hanne Hartvig Larsen, Sage publications, 1998, pp : 205, Price : £ 45 (cloth), £ 16.99 (paper)

Enhanced technologies, changing consumer behaviour, liberalised policies of nations and the commonality of needs and wants across several countries are just some of the factors which have given an impetus to globalisation. Coca Cola, McDonald's, Mercedes Benz and Rayban are some of the global brands which have found acceptance in several markets. The concept of globalisation has been viewed differently by different experts in the field. Theodore Levitt of Harvard University is of the view that the world is becoming a common marketplace in which consumers, regardless of the country they live in, aspire for the same products and lifestyles. Gillette sells over 800 products in 200 countries. It uses different brand names for the same product in different countries. This view is different from the conventional belief that multinationals target the differ-

ences across specific markets. Kenichi Ohmae, former head of McKinsey, Tokyo, in his *Triad Power* expresses that the triad of Japan, USA and Europe not only represents the major and fastest growing markets for a number of products but also a homogeneous one. Given this backdrop on globalisation, any book on cases in international marketing should represent the following aspects to provide a comprehensive perspective to the reader:

- planning and application of synergistic marketing mix elements in a variety of international markets
- a broad coverage of products and market situations which would deal with the distinguishing features of the market chosen for the case study
- issues relating to global standardisation and localisation aspects (whether a company should follow standardisation of production, distribution, advertising and marketing practices in order to achieve scales of economy or localise its products and marketing mix according to the needs of specific countries)
- the role of cultural aspects in a situation of changing consumer behaviour across countries
- adapting innovative products to 'local' conditions (specific markets) and monitoring how these innovative products get diffused in the respective markets over a period of time

- the advantages of state-of-the-art production in certain markets (the advantage could be economies of scale or economies of scope)

- the linkages of several functional areas of management for achieving strategic advantages in global markets (for example, the case of ACER)

- topical issues which may be important in the context of globalisation.

Given the above mentioned framework of benchmarking *Cases in Marketing* — a compilation edited by Hanne Hartvig Larsen—fails to pass muster (the title *European cases in Marketing* would have been more appropriate). The eleven case studies presented are limited in their focus on marketing mix elements though the book covers a wide spectrum of products ranging from consumer products like chocolates and coffee to industrial products like thermostatic radiator valves, chemicals and cellular technologies. The major limitation of the book is that it does not include current topical issues like the use of marketing strategies to enter blocked international markets or a few case studies on how the Japanese have been successful in their attempts to globalise.

Given the distinctive differences in strategic orientation between the approaches of the western and eastern marketers towards internationalisation, such case studies would have enabled a

reader to appreciate the best of both worlds in terms of global strategies. A few cases cover retailing/distribution strategies comprehensively, highlighting issues involving the management of suppliers in a globalised scenario. The other topical aspects covered in some of the cases are the choice of entry mode in foreign markets, importance of segmentation as a prerequisite for enhancing operations in overseas markets, the finer aspects of formulating marketing communications strategy and localisation vs globalisation aspects. Certain case studies which have a focus on software interface for data analysis and methodology of research do not seem to fit in with the broader theme of globalisation. The reader will find that there is a change of focus in these cases (when compared with the other cases). In order to understand European markets, the author recommends that this book should be used in conjunction with *Marketing in Europe : Case Studies* by Jordi Montana.

As a compilation of cases, the book lacks a comprehensive framework. However, a newcomer to the area of international marketing, interested in European markets, will find it informative.

— S Ramesh Kumar

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