

Only ten years have gone by since publication of the first edition of Business to Business Marketing and yet so much has changed since then.

### **Market changes**

The business environment has changed and in particular, business to business markets have been affected by four main trends:

-Globalization has spread to all sectors of activity. Whatever its size, today it is impossible for a company to reason uniquely on the scale of a country or continent. It must be able to import and export globally to remain competitive.

-Market liberalization continues to expand into different zones, independently of political options. Public sector players have gradually realized that they need to open their capital to be able to finance investments in R&D. In addition, the need for trans-national agreements has very quickly become apparent in order to stand up to competing multinationals. State-owned status often slows down international partnerships. For all of these reasons, liberalization has spread to formerly protected sectors such as air or rail transportation as well as energy sectors or services.

-The generalization of the effects of the Internet and information technologies has on the one hand reduced differences between firms in developed and developing countries. In addition, the purchasing process, in particular in the business to business context, has been shortened resulting in the incorporeal nature of buying procedures in particular on public markets.

-The fact that companies in technological and sometimes state-owned sectors have increasingly adopted a customer-oriented approach has gradually expanded the use of business to business marketing concepts and tools.

Today, all sectors must face global competition. To protect their margins, firms must reduce their operating costs including for marketing and sales departments.

### **Evolutions in the marketing approach**

In the light of these changes, marketing has had to evolve and develop new operating modes. Closer to the field, it must first of all shorten cycles from design to going to market. Ensuring current customer loyalty is now a priority over finding new outlets. The goal is to optimize expenses relative to studies and communication actions by regularly controlling how effectively money is spent. Finally, decisions must be made faster, often by reducing hierarchical levels and using functional and operational people on customer-oriented cross disciplinary projects. Gradually, the customer dimension has inevitably penetrated different departments, from human resources management to organization of production and including R&D.

### **The third edition**

The first two editions of Business to Business Marketing were written to provide a complete, pragmatic marketing resource for companies selling products or services to other companies or public organizations. Thanks to their success, we have produced a third edition based on the same principles: providing an accessible, lively, illustrated resource guide with examples from the main activity sectors: office automation and information technology, computer engineering services, telecoms, the building industry, the automotive sector, aeronautics, packaging and business services from consulting to corporate food services.

This book is organized to allow the reader to go directly to the chapter that interests him or her without necessarily respecting the chapter order. Without being exhaustive, each chapter contains an overview of the latest developments in any one area. There are traditional marketing chapters such as the different aspects of the mix (market studies, segmentation, positioning, marketing planning, product and services management, price policy, the distribution policy, managing the sales force and B2B communication).

In addition, other chapters address more specific issues such as alliance strategies, the brand strategy in business to business, ethical issues and sustainable development, lobbying techniques as well as tools for developing customer loyalty.

The Internet has obviously had a considerable impact on all aspects of marketing and consequently has been deliberately integrated throughout the book from its role in market studies to its use in communication and sales, in particular via marketplaces and e-procurement.

### **Innovations in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition**

The structure of the book has been entirely revised and is now divided into five parts:

- \*The first part deals with the specific aspects and different contexts of business to business marketing.

- \*The second part deals with marketing studies – scanning, innovation management, market segmentation which allows the company to understand where it is relative to the market.

- \*The third part deals with strategic marketing and offers an in-depth analysis of positioning concepts as well as the order of the phases in the strategic approach, alliance strategies, brand planning and strategies aimed at occupying a particular position in a near future

- \*The fourth part explains, in an operational manner, how the company must develop the product and service offering to occupy the position it desires. Issues dealt with include the product/service policies, pricing, distribution and sales.

- \*The fifth part explains how to valorize this offering using communication and business to business media, the role of ethics, the environment and sustainable development, and the growing use of lobbying techniques, promotion and business to business customer loyalty strategies.

Throughout the book a double perspective has been maintained depending on whether recurring business to business markets are being discussed or one-off business/projects. This double approach is used both for marketing upstream represented by market studies and for the strategic approach and for the downstream commercialization and communication phase. To make reading easier, each chapter begins with an overview of aims and concludes with a short summary.

New themes – The immaterialization of trade is analyzed with all of its consequences, in particular in terms of public markets. The evolution in the latter has offered the opportunity to present public-private partnerships, a considerable source of new business in sectors as diverse as transportation, healthcare, education, energy and urban planning.

The positioning concept needed to be de-mystified. There are two independent levels of positioning, one for products or services offered and one for the company analyzed globally relative to its competitors. Starting from this premise, the strategic approach can be clarified by distinguishing the firm's strategic positioning and perceptual positioning.

The different types of partnerships and alliances must be integrated into marketing approaches, whether these agreements are one-off or on the contrary, result in a new common structure dedicated to a specific target market.

The logical next step to environmentally respectful marketing policies, has been the development of ethical standards relative to suppliers, employees and customers as an integral aspect of operational marketing practices. At the same time, certain formerly controversial aspects of lobbying have gained legitimacy in so long as the general public interest is in phase with the interest of the company. Originally aimed at consumers, sales promotion techniques have been perfected and now involve direct marketing, public relations and sponsoring. Finally, maintenance, customer training, quality management and norms are presented and analyzed as tools for earning the loyalty of trade customers.

### **Numerous up-to-date case studies**

The companies analyzed are all leaders in their activity sectors. Their very different stories and experiences illustrate the main marketing concepts in specific contexts. All of these firms operate at the international level. Throughout the different chapters, focus points illustrate and shed new light on the different concepts presented. At the end of each chapter, questions, exercises and mini-case studies allow the reader to better understand the concepts and tools presented.