

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance”



Are you educated in direct marketing? And what is a good education worth to you? Plus a fun quiz you will learn from

The title you just read is the reply given by the President of Harvard University some years ago to some parents who were complaining about the high fees.

When you read it, it makes perfect sense

But it is amazing how few people in marketing are educated, and even more amazing how costly it can be if you make mistakes as a result.

Here is a quiz for you. The right answers, except in one case, can make (or save) you a lot of money.

1. What happens if you follow up a mailing or e-mail a week later with exactly the same proposition – even the same copy?
2. How likely to reply is someone who has entered a contest you have run, compared to someone similar, but with whom you have had no contact?
3. When is personalisation important - and when not?
4. Which headlines work better, long or short?
5. Which kinds of pictures gain most attention?
6. Which factors make people most likely to respond to a mailing?
7. What is a yes/no option? And why does it matter?
8. Who coined the phrase “Direct Marketing”?

9. What is a Personalised URL?

10. Which kind of e-mails usually work best – plain text or HTML with pictures?

11. Can research predict results?

5. What is member-get-a-member called on the internet?

Could you answer all those questions? Well, in a minute I will tell you where you can find the answers. And I will tell you how much money they are worth.

But first let us consider two things that are very important to you – your business and your career.

First, what happens if you don't know the answers to such questions? And second, what happens if you do know the answers?

What will happen to your business, and your career?

It is very simple.

If you get such questions wrong, your business will fail, because it runs on the anarchy of guesswork rather than the discipline of knowledge. And while others overtake you, your career will never thrive as much as your talents deserve

If you get such questions right, your business flourishes while others fail, because you know what you are doing, and why.

And your career takes off, leaving behind people who may be just as clever and hardworking – but don't know the answers.

The English essayist Sir Francis Bacon put this very well 400 years ago, when he said “Knowledge itself is power.”

If you have met and worked - as I have done – with some of the most successful entrepreneurs in the world, you would know that they all differ, but they tend to have common characteristics.

They work harder than other people, are very curious and enquiring and they know more. Why? They never cease wanting to know more.

In a moment I will tell you how you can meet people like that, but first here are some more important facts

The first is that firms that invest more money in training do better than those that don't. For years I ran a training programme for American Express. They devoted much more effort to training than most other firms. This is also true of the Netherlands Post Bank.

“The most successful entrepreneurs in the world have three things in common: they work harder than other people, are very curious and enquiring and they know more”

A “genius” – but still learning



David Ogilvy, a true genius

All firms reflect the characters of the people who run them and the people who work for them.

For eight years I did training for Ogilvy & Mather. I was also on the O & M world wide board. At my first board

meeting I was astonished that David Ogilvy, often called a genius, and then in his late '70's took more notes than anyone else.

Some years later I did a seminar for the big Californian wine firm, Kendall-Jackson. This time I was not so surprised that Jess Jackson, the CEO, also in his '70's, attended and took copious notes.

The best people and the best firms always want to learn more. The best firms always have people working for them who know more. That is why they succeed when others fail.

But they also tend to have good timing. As Victor Hugo put it, “All the forces in the world are not as powerful as an idea whose time has come.”

Well, your time has come if you are in direct marketing. I envy you.

A few months ago an old colleague of mine, Shelley Lazarus, was the keynote speaker at the annual DMA conference in Chicago. She began by saying: “I am here to tell you that today, all marketing is direct marketing.”

She went on to suggest that this was because of the internet, which is essentially a medium where all transactions are direct. But she is not a direct marketer. Her background is in advertising packaged goods – soaps, foods and so on. So what she said was very significant indeed

What's missing – and the solution

Direct marketing is pretty mature in markets like the UK, U.S. or Germany. But in many other markets it is still in its infancy – and

growing fast. This is particularly true in Central and Eastern Europe. In the last two years some of my colleagues and I visited many of these countries. We were astonished by the growth in them and the talented people in the industry.

We were equally astonished by the enthusiasm and interest in direct marketing wherever we went. You have vast markets, new money – and people with the desire and ability to make the most of the opportunity.

The many conferences and seminars reflect the vibrant health of the industry. There is no shortage of talent and imagination. But there is a gap in one critical area. There is no formal, accepted way to learn.

People gain knowledge from doing – but they cannot get a recognised academic and practical qualification without going abroad.

This means there are not enough trained, qualified, competent people.

Organisations are frustrated because they can't get enough good people. It is holding them back. Employees are frustrated because they can't get better jobs. That is holding them back, too.

The benefits of proper training for all who work in the industry, all businesses that rely on direct marketing, all media and suppliers of postal services, telephony, software, list and database providers are clear.

That is why we have created something to remedy this.

It is the new European Academy of Direct and Interactive Marketing (EADIM) which my colleagues and I have been working on for the past nine months.

A new Certificate in Direct and Interactive Marketing

EADIM's first offering is a European Certificate in Direct and Interactive Marketing, a year long course which kicks off with a week of live training in Brussels in September.

The numbers for this first course are strictly limited, and you need to be able to speak English – and have either a degree or

experience in marketing.

Those who pass the final exam at the end of the year will gain a European qualification, officially recognised by the Federation of European Direct Marketing Associations – FEDMA. And so far ten of the DMAs throughout Europe are backing this initiative.

But more importantly, as an individual this qualification will be recognised not just in your own country but everywhere in Europe, the Certificate will give you recognition as a qualified direct marketer.

And of course, it will supply organisations with a stream of properly qualified individuals. And since better people are one of the great secrets of competitive advantage, the value of this is hard to overstate.

“The best people and the best firms always want to learn more. The best firms always have people working for them who know more. That is why they succeed when others fail”

It is not for me to praise myself, but over the years I have taught in 43 countries and my books have been translated into 14 languages. I will be the Dean of the Academy. But I am not an academic or theorist. I am a practicing marketer – I still write copy and advise clients every day.

Leading business thinkers, teachers and practitioners taking part include Professor Srikumar Rao whose pioneering work has been praised in The Wall Street Journal, Time, Fortune and many other publications.

Others include Ales Lisac, leading Slovenian teacher and entrepreneur, who has worked successfully in six European countries, Steve Harrison, winner of more Cannes direct creative awards than anyone in the world, Rowan Gormley, co-founder with Sir Richard Branson of three successful Virgin companies.

Frankly, I do not know of any course of this kind with such a calibre of teachers. But if what you have read interests you, can I suggest you go to www.eadim.com now? At the same time, you can get the answers to the questions I began this piece with.

- Drayton Bird



EADIM
THE EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DIRECT & INTERACTIVE MARKETING