

## Stakeholder engagement and Marketing: a challenge to be grasped or already won?

**Submission Deadlines:** Abstract: 31/10/2018- Full Paper: 30/4/2019

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The extensive changes taking place for decades have forced a rethinking of the theoretical principles and models of marketing (Achrol and Kotler, 2012). More specifically, the distinctive features of consumption behaviour in the new Millennium (Fabris, 2009) – the centrality of emotional aspects, the involvement of the senses, the search for new forms of aggregation and sharing of experiences, the greater sensitivity towards sustainability and ethics issues – imposed a review of the basic principles of market orientation (Kohli and Jaworsky, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990) and extended the scope of marketing beyond the ability to contribute to the generation of value for customers (Fabris, 2009; Hult et al., 2011; Laczniak and Murphy, 2012; Napolitano et al., 2018).

For over four decades, scholars have been hoping for an expansion of the nature and scope of marketing that has long focused attention just on the relationship with the client (e.g., Kotler, 1972; Bagozzi, 1975; Grönroos, 1997; Gummesson, 2008; Fabris, 2009; Hult et al., 2011; Lusch and Webster, 2011; Arvidsson and Giordano, 2013). However, it is rather recent the introduction of the concept of **stakeholder marketing** (Bhattacharya and Korschun, 2008). Taking its cue from stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995), stakeholder marketing refers to «activities within a system of social institutions and processes for facilitating and maintaining value through exchange relationships with multiple stakeholders» (Hult et al. 2011, p. 57). By extending the relevant audience to all subjects (individuals and organizations) who are interested in the company (Freeman, 1984), marketing has extended its boundaries within organizations, has been enriched of new content, and has expanded its sphere of application well beyond the company (Laczniak and Murphy, 2012; Napolitano et al., 2018).

In the post-industrial society, marketing has therefore broadened its scope, not only with reference to the target audience – no longer identified with the customers but the stakeholders of the company – but also in relation to the nature of the produced value – no longer exclusively economic value but also social and cultural value. By focusing on the opportunities of value co-creation within stakeholder networks rather than just within dyadic relationships (Hillerbrand et al., 2015), **stakeholder marketing** recognizes that relationships with customers can be influenced by relationships with other subjects that can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives and policies (Grönroos, 1997; Gummesson, 2008).

Despite recent developments, the literature on stakeholders does not seem to have yet provided adequate support to managers and entrepreneurs interested in meeting the needs of these subjects (Laplume, Sonpar, & Litz, 2008; Kull et al., 2016). Furthermore,

marketing research is still limited in its ability to consider relationships with stakeholders according to a holistic approach (Hillebrand et al., 2015).

On the contrary, practice has long shown the new role assumed by companies in the society – in particular «the social and widespread nature of the processes of value creation» (Arvidsson and Giordano, 2013, p. 11) – and the centrality of stakeholders in the scope of these processes, highlighting the pressing need for companies to move from a market orientation (Kohli and Jaworsky, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990) to a stakeholder orientation (e.g., Maignan and Ferrell, 2004; Ferrell et al. ., 2010).

Despite the growing interest towards stakeholder marketing, the contribution of empirical research is still scant (Mena and Chabovsky, 2015). For instance, not much is known about how organizations learn about stakeholders needs or how the knowledge gained on stakeholders may influence marketing decisions and actions. In order to understand if and how empirical research can guide the implementation of stakeholders engagement strategies (Hillerbrand et al., 2015), the contribution that marketing can offer to constructing a positive and lasting dialogue with company interlocutors is noteworthy: for instance, it would be interesting to understand how marketing managers promote the involvement of different stakeholders in the processes of economic and social value creation; to investigate which assets to use in order to strengthen relations with these subjects (Napolitano et al., 2018; Riviezzo et al., 2018); to explore which effective practices can assign to stakeholders a concrete role in the value creation processes. And, above all, it would be important to check if in this way it is possible to give marketing a strategic dimension again (Webster e Lusch, 2013; Napolitano et al., 2018).

With this Special Issue, **Micro & Macro Marketing** intends to stimulate scholars and marketing experts to propose contributions aimed at investigating, from different perspectives of analysis, the challenges related to the expansion of the role and scope of the marketing function, with the main aim of identifying new ways to include the interests of the various categories of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the marketing strategy. Some of the topics on which authors are invited to contribute to the present Special Issue, both with conceptual and empirical studies, are:

- The enhancement of the historical and cultural heritage of the organization for the promotion of engagement processes of relevant stakeholders, through **heritage marketing** strategies.
- The management of the social and ethical impact of organizational activity in order to create and distribute value for stakeholders, through **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) strategies.
- The use of digital corporate communication to convey information and create engagement with the various categories of stakeholders, through **digital marketing** strategies (from social media marketing to digital investor relations).
- The organization of events and other meetings to promote direct dialogue with stakeholders, through **event marketing** strategies.
- The promotion of horizontal collaboration mechanisms, inside and outside the organization, with and among all the stakeholders, through strategies of **value co-creation**.

- The construction and management of a long-term relationship with the main interlocutors of the organization, through **relationship marketing** strategies.
- The implementation of methodologies and tools for systematic analysis and management of different stakeholders, through the generation, dissemination and appropriate use of **stakeholder intelligence**.
- The creation of an adequate monitoring system of the interaction with all the stakeholders, through the control of the results obtained (**result control**) and the actions during the implementation (**driving control**).

### Important notes and dates for submission

All submissions, in Italian or English, will be evaluated through a double blind review process. Those accepted will be published in the number 3/2019 of the Journal that will go to press in September of the same year.

Interested authors can submit a brief abstract of their contribution to the Editors of the Special Issue ([napolitano@unisannio.it](mailto:napolitano@unisannio.it); [angelo.riviezzo@unisannio.it](mailto:angelo.riviezzo@unisannio.it)) by October 31, 2018. Candidates will receive a feedback on the proposed abstracts by November 15, 2018. The full paper is due by April 30, 2019. Candidates will receive an anonymous referral feedback by June 15, 2018 and will have to deliver the final paper by August 10, 2019.

The guide for authors for submission of abstracts and full papers is available on the Journal website, at the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IksDvFSCNWX5DF76K8KsKRU1qiVzrViK/view>

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