



*Book Review by Cydney Koukol*

## ***Enterprise One to One - Tools for Competing in the Interactive Age***

by Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, Ph.D., Currency Doubleday, 1997.

I first learned of Don Peppers ten years ago. He was working at a New York City advertising agency and was embarking on a series of speaking engagements which would take him to his own consulting group, One to One, a “boutique” management consulting firm specializing in marketing technology and relationship management. At the conference I attended, he spoke of a way of thinking and reaching customers which seemed revolutionary. I thought of him then as a visionary and because I was in a position in a company where we were embarking on new activities, he framed for me many of the approaches that I used then with consumers and continue to use as a core of my communication philosophy today. He spoke at the time of media, his children, boomers and the aging of America. His philosophy espoused that of approaching people in a strategy that involved building relationships -- not of mass media advertising.

When I read *The One to One Future*, Pepper and Martha Rogers’ first book (his business partner), I continued to feel the same way. Today however, more and more consultants and authors are espousing these philosophies. In the early 1990s Peppers and Rogers became increasingly aware that mass marketing was coming to an end. The theory of the *One to One Future* is that of building markets one customer at a time. The team interviewed hundreds of people for their first book. The principles and paradigm shift acclaimed in this first book are more strikingly posed against the Interactive Age in their new book *Enterprise One to One - Tools for Competing in the Interactive Age*.

Peppers and Rogers define anyone with a customer as an enterprise. In the preface they define their previous book as a “wake-up call” for business and organizations of all kinds --a “why to” book. They define their new book as a “how to” book -- a tool kit.

“The tools in this particular kit will enable any enterprise to assess its own situation realistically, gauge the benefits of the kind of change that will be necessary, and then plan rationally how to make that change . . . Treating different customers differently is not a strategy that can be grafted simply onto any firm’s existing systems and operations. Instead, it represents a completely unique, even daring, orientation for the enterprise, and requires an integrated approach, with a variety of enterprise functions all working together.”

The style of this book is direct and easy to read. It utilizes solid, identifiable examples. While some descriptions of the future world, evoke images of the Jetsons -- the imagery seems conceivable knowing where we have been. The world *is* truly speeding up. The entire premise of the book is no matter the technology, one can learn more from one’s own customers. For example, Peppers and Rogers, along with others, are predicting that nearly all the news and information we receive today will be delivered to us increasingly through more electronic and interactive means. Marketing dollars are truly wasted if one does not know their current customers. Peppers and Rogers help the reader step to that platform.

The One to One Enterprise is built on three premises:

1. Information management
2. Interactive communication
3. Customized production

These two authors' approach is simple, straight forward and appears to be quite simple. While their process is detailed and time-consuming it absolutely makes sense! Their method of creating a blueprint and a vision for 1:1 marketing entails:

- gathering information
- planning and
- embarking on a process of building relationships.

Peppers and Rogers also address the issue of retention which is an age old problem. *Their approach uses offers real situations and real solutions.* For many Peppers and Rogers are saying what may have been said before -- but make it readily acceptable and understandable.

Their concept of mass customization, however, is a little more difficult to grasp and may even for some be an oxymoron. Peppers and Rogers point to the desire of people to have simplicity and choice. "Customers want you to know them."

The evolution of communication methods is also discussed and the importance through all of these to stay connected to the customer (IBM is a case in point with its absence in the home PC environment -- having focused only on the business customer). For those entering the Interactive Age for the first time, the authors offer some excellent insight.

I found this book to be one of drawing from my own experiences as a communicator, marketer and as a consumer. "Give your customer the opportunity to teach you what he wants. Remember it, give it back to him and keep his business forever." A seemingly simple premise -- but one which is easy to lose sight of.



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