Chapter 15
Technology in Marketing Education: Insights from Sales Training

Eileen Bridges
Kent State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Company training programs provide insights for university classrooms, particularly those in schools and colleges of business. This research shows an increase in usage of technology based training among successful firms, but it is not growing as quickly as consumer use of self-service technologies because some firm goals require more personal training modes. The present findings regarding business adoption of training technology are consistent with consumer research that suggests satisfaction increases with experience in use. Also, selected technology must be congruent with learning goals—technological tools are more effective when students are learning related material—and results of training suggest increased efficacy when this is true. In this regard, university learning environments focused on business should utilize technology as appropriate to learning goals, but should not gratuitously replace traditional classroom learning activities.

INTRODUCTION

Many people believe that technology is becoming increasingly important as it impacts greater portions of their time; both at work and at home. Certainly the use of technology is increasing among households – for instance, findings from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that online consumer retail purchases increased by 22.0% as compared to overall consumer retail purchases, which increased by only 5.4% during the most recent year for which complete data are available (E-Stats, 2008). Building on the idea that comfort levels with online environments are increasing, Shin and Kim (2008) suggest that as consumers use the Internet more, it becomes more enjoyable to them. It may even offer network externalities, in that as online social networking sites become

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-4014-6.ch015
more popular, they are increasingly desirable to 
join. In regard to classroom environments preferred 
by student consumers, Gibson, Harris, and Co- 
laric (2008) find that technology based learning 
improves with greater acceptance of technology. 
But, is the desirability of technology in education 
growing as it is among consumers more generally? 
For schools and colleges of business, one place to 
look for answers is in the companies where stu- 
dents are preparing to work. The present research 
considers the use of technology in education, from 
the point of view of decision makers at large firms 
who must determine how to provide training for 
employees. Their decisions and satisfaction with 
learning outcomes are addressed.

Many firms provide training to employees, 
and as their industries change more rapidly, these 
educational experiences must also change to keep 
pace and allow employees to retain an edge in the 
marketplace. To assess technology’s contribution 
to a relevant learning experience, this research 
examines sales force training within representative 
samples of Fortune 500 firms. (The Fortune 500 
was selected for study because large firms tend to 
provide in-house training for employees, whereas 
smaller firms tend to outsource this activity.) 
Because the study design observes representa- 
tive samples of this specific population in 2001 
and in 2006, changes in use of technology can 
be measured between these two points in time. 
Some of the findings are fairly predictable (for 
instance, the share of firms using technology as 
a replacement for traditional classroom based 
teaching methods increased by 20% over the 
five-year period) whereas others are surprising 
(companies continue to report that well over half 
of their training is in person and classroom based).

BACKGROUND

To position the present study relative to research 
regarding technology use in learning situations, 
relevant literature is reviewed and research ques-
tions are developed. Technology is clearly gaining 
use in daily lives of consumers, as evidenced by 
the growing body of research in service market-
ing that considers the impact of the availability of 
self-service technology on customer buy-in and 
satisfaction. Therefore, use of technology and its 
acceptance by consumers is examined first. Next, 
research on technology use in specific situations 
where customers are students is discussed, par-
ticularly the role of technology in university based 
marketing education. Finally, the use of technology 
in corporate training is reviewed. Although still 
for the purpose of education, the latter involves 
moving from the consumer learning situation to 
the business learning environment. Following the 
conceptual development, research questions are 
presented to extend published work.

Technology in Service Marketing

Consumer acceptance of self-service technologies 
is increasing rapidly, as noted above. Seminal 
work by Davis (1989) and by Davis, Bagozzi, 
and Warshaw (1989) describes a measurement 
tool for investigating the impact of consumer ac-
ceptance on technology adoption. The technology 
acceptance model (TAM), developed and tested 
in the context of adoption of software tools, has 
since been applied to numerous other services 
to describe how information technology and 
self-service technologies may improve customer 
experiences and outcomes. Findings suggest that 
whereas ease of use may be a factor in initial 
adoption of technology, its perceived usefulness 
is crucial to both initial implementation and sus-
tained usage.

Koufaris (2002) considers the adoption of 
technology by retail consumers who choose to 
shop online. The TAM applies to this self-service 
situation, and results are similar to those of Davis 
et al. (1989) in that perceived usefulness is found 
to be a significant predictor of technology adop-
tion and continued use; ease of use, although 
positive, is not significant. Similar results are
Related Content

Developing a Research Framework to Assess Online Consumer Behaviour Using Netnography in India: A Review of Related Research
www.igi-global.com/chapter/developing-a-research-framework-to-assess-online-consumer-behaviour-using-netnography-in-india/136725?camid=4v1a

Incentives & Freebies as a Moderator for Opt-In E-Mail Acceptability
www.igi-global.com/article/incentives-freebies-moderator-opt-mail/75197?camid=4v1a

Electronic Word-of-Mouth: An Industry Tailored Application for Tourism Promotion
www.igi-global.com/chapter/electronic-word-of-mouth/136718?camid=4v1a

Exploring Marketing Theories to Model Business Web Service Procurement Behavior
www.igi-global.com/chapter/exploring-marketing-theories-to-model-business-web-service-procurement-behavior/123042?camid=4v1a