

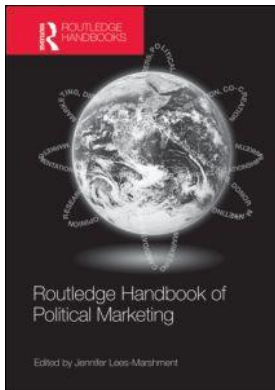
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Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



## Routledge Handbook of Political Marketing

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### Conclusion

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203349908.ch28>

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**Published online on: 10 Nov 2011**

**How to cite :-** Jennifer Lees-Marshment. 10 Nov 2011, *Conclusion from:* Routledge Handbook of Political Marketing Routledge

Accessed on: 28 Nov 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203349908.ch28>

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## Conclusion

### New directions in political marketing practice, political marketing and democracy, and future trends

*Jennifer Lees-Marshment*

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This chapter will draw together main findings from this *Handbook*. Drawing on the material presented in each chapter, it will set out new directions in political marketing practice, discuss political marketing and democracy, and outline future trends in political marketing research and practice.

#### **New directions in political marketing practice**

The *Handbook* has discussed a range of tools and concepts that politicians and advisors can use when formulating a strategy, developing a product or brand, organising volunteers, managing staff, communicating to the public and marketing in government.

#### *From researching voter demands to co-creation of the political product*

Understanding the market is the first step in political marketing. This includes market research and more innovative forms of listening to, and working with, the public. Opinion research is obviously the starting point for a campaign or political strategy. However, for it to be valuable, the research must be high quality, generate ideas for action not just data, and be interpreted carefully. Different research is done at different stages of the campaign, with the initial benchmark poll assessing the current situation, and subsequent research developing or updating positioning and messaging, timing, sequencing, intensity and the means of its communications.

Segmentation needs to be used strategically and respond to changes in the market. One of the examples in this *Handbook* was segmenting by age by understanding the role of differing generational characteristics and the influence of an individual's progress through the life cycle, as in each stage individuals have different experiences, social interactions, relationships, networks and economic circumstances. Practitioners need to understand the importance of older voters as not only is this segment expanding, but older voters are more active and likely to vote. Detailed segmentation of this group is necessary because they still make their own decisions as opposed

to voting en masse, and hold a range of views and values. A long-term relationship with seniors that allows for their development during this time will be more effective, such as understanding that their internet and social media usage is growing and expectations go beyond simple old-age benefits. The segment has widely varying resources in terms of health, money and family support, so segmentation needs to combine data on lifestyle, social attitudes, local political intelligence, life stage, generational identities and aspirations, and not just focus on age. More generally, although targeting is a tactical tool, to make it most effective voters should be selected strategically – considering the specific situation and context, to create a customised strategy. Voter selection needs to consider what segments are politically meaningful, and then choose targets on the basis of what will be most cost-effective to achieve the overall goals.

In addition to these formal methods which tend to research voters' existing views on a political product, elites can bring the political consumer into the production process. Deliberative forms of consultation can be used for a decision which has not already been made, to create new solutions to political problems. Deliberative marketing needs a clear leader to give it strategic importance, but it also needs to fit in with the strategy of the party or politician, and it needs to be communicated effectively. Most importantly, practitioners need to plan for managing the output, to ensure that people who deliberate know the time they are investing in a deliberative governance arena is worthwhile. The leadership will need to explain their final decision, so that stakeholders can understand why the leader prefers one possible solution over another.

Similarly, co-creation offers a range of techniques that involve the voter in creating the solution to the problem, rather than simply voicing their demands. As with deliberative marketing, there needs to be a plan made for what will happen to the results. Voters know politicians listen at election time, but co-creation exercises, if executed effectively, could reassure the public that politicians will listen once in power. Different methods are used during the actual process to ensure participant comfort, including discussion, sharing of perspectives in large and small groups, individual reflection, games, and using verbal but also visual expression. Exercises are employed to open up selfish and social sides of human beings, encourage awareness of other people's perspectives, and allow room for different opinions and divisions, but groups then work to explore their consequences and find ways to work around them. Exercises are also carried out to identify where past experience is restricting consideration of future options, and create a clearing to allow space for new information and creativity. This is particularly important in politics where cynicism about politicians can prevent new possibilities emerging. Action from there on is concerned with developing creative – but realistic – solutions that take into account conflicts and restrictions, but move outside the box without being pie in the sky. Ideas can come in different forms: visionary, process, doing things and small improvements that make a big difference. People are given permission and made to feel safe to contribute. The goal is that everyone learns together and that all knowledge is combined to become a resource for the entire group. Structuring them into an action plan comes later, as it is a very different process to creation. Even here, listening is one of the most important activities, and helps to create consensus instead of conflict, even between experts and ordinary individuals. The findings are then written up to provide different options for elites to consider.

*From 'market-oriented party wins all' to situation-dependent strategic options to build long-term relationships with voters and supporters*

Previously, literature argued that major parties needed to adopt a market orientation – which put at it simplest means designing the political product to satisfy voter demands – in order to win

elections. However, this *Handbook* suggests that practitioners, politicians and parties have a choice: they can and do choose to retain a sales-oriented strategy that focuses marketing efforts on communicating elite-driven decisions. Moreover, sales-oriented parties do still win and maintain power against other non-market-oriented parties – so the effectiveness of a particular orientation is situation-dependent rather than universal. Whilst a market orientation can aid electoral success, and be adopted in any country/political system, the leadership must drive the process and manage internal markets effectively otherwise they risk being thwarted by party figures and members. Once in power, if parties want to maintain support they need to maintain a market orientation or try to reconnect – but as yet, few succeed at this. Thus whilst we may see market-oriented parties develop around the world in every country at some stage, it is not the case that all parties will become market oriented in order to win.

Strategy is therefore much more unique to the particular situation. Niche marketing is another option for parties. A niche market-oriented party focuses its products on a particular segment of the electorate, rather than the whole market. Parties can market the leader rather than the whole party, win support in lower levels of government to gain credibility at a national level, and utilise rules of the electoral system – such as regional list voting and proportional systems – to gain support, rather than trying to compete head-to-head with mainstream parties. However, this is more likely to be successful for a minor rather than a major party.

Branding is another approach that can help the politician to develop a positive relationship with the voter. It also allows more flexibility than designing a specific product to suit voter demands, as a market orientation suggests political elites need to do. Nevertheless, practitioners need to ensure that the brand is built around a strong product, is used consistently, and that it is used to build a long-term relationship with voters. The product may change from one election to the next, but the brand can work beyond the vote at election time. It connects with people's values and emotions rather than simply offering tangible benefits. Political brands can also encourage volunteers and members to be more active. Furthermore, branding can and should involve the political party, not just a candidate or leader. Party branding requires responsiveness to internal stakeholders as well as voters, seeking to build a long-term relationship that involves the internal market. This also reflects the research findings that market-oriented strategies only succeed if the internal market is on board. Effective party branding ensures that volunteers support the new brand and interact with the public through this prism. Thus, strategy is complex, involving consideration of different markets to develop and maintain productive long-term relationships.

*From ignoring members to viewing the internal stakeholders and staff as integral to successful political marketing, and building a relationship that not only recruits volunteers but donors – and ultimately voters*

Relationship marketing offers important tools for parties to increase the activism amongst their volunteers, involving consideration of the incentives on offer to supporters. However, there are costs and benefits involved in offering incentives, and a balance to be struck between meeting internal and external demands. To make the right choice, and build an effective relationship with supporters, parties and campaigns need to research the concerns and views of their internal market, not just voters, so that they can make informed decisions about meeting often conflicting demands. As with branding and party orientation, choices need to be strategic and suit the particular situation and circumstances facing the party.

Despite these challenges, party members and party staff can become helpful 'part-time marketers'. Research also shows that in some parties, members may actually be more representative

of voters and not exhibit diverging views. In this case, volunteers can play an important role in being active in the interests of the party or campaign. They can also provide effective but cheap market intelligence if parties set up structures to gather their views regularly. This is what the Democrats did in the US under the chairmanship of Howard Dean, training volunteers to speak to the party brand in a unified manner, and build up face-to-face contact with voters before the presidential nominee – Barack Obama – was selected. Furthermore, it creates a long-term relationship between parties and voters which can work after an election, through government and beyond the campaign of a single candidate. Similarly, the growing importance and duties of party staff means that they also commission market research, influence strategy and policy development, commission communication consultants, and recruit and manage volunteers. Parties therefore need to train them in political marketing so that they can use it expertly.

Direct marketing can be used to motivate supporters, not just voters. It can target not just the usual floating voter but potential party sympathisers who would be open not just to vote but to volunteer for a party's candidate. This merges get out the vote (GOTV) initiatives with membership marketing, or the external with the internal market. Online communication should be designed to allow supporters to connect with likeminded individuals and create their own campaign materials. A mentorship scheme should be created to deepen volunteers' relationship with the party and turn them into party advocates, offering training and support. Additionally, direct marketing can link new supporters into networks and thus increase the solidary benefits. Effective fundraising also builds on internal marketing efforts. Active and satisfied volunteers who already have a positive relationship with their party or campaign are also more likely to respond favourably to calls for donations. However, both the concept and mechanics of donor marketing have to be adapted to suit divergent volunteer and donor cultures and regulatory frameworks within each political system.

### *From short-term sales to long-term, mutual, interactive communication relationships*

Trends in campaigning methods have changed in obvious ways, with the increased use of technology, but the same principle applies: integrate all communications methods with the overall strategy. When marketing candidates, the brand needs to work for both presidential and vice-presidential candidates and the party, and communications need to support existing brand strengths. Whilst personal characteristics such as authenticity and the common touch are important, communication of leadership and governing skills remains crucial. The market leader candidate will always be subject to greater attack and scrutiny, and female candidates, whilst able to create distinctiveness, can face problematic coverage. Campaigns need to ensure that the target markets will produce actual votes, otherwise segmentation can just risk alienating mainstream support. Populist marketing enables short-term products utilising new media to attract significant support quickly. To turn immediate success from a populist approach into a more stable position, politicians need to reflect and respond to market research and thus readjust the product over time to build up positive relationships in the long term.

Communication is becoming more participatory and interactive. Using new technology, politicians can engage in local and national dialogue to encourage civil engagement and political participation. Leaders need to convey that they are open to a meaningful interaction with people, not just being seen to relate to but care for the public, and capable of holding a positive – if mediated – relationship that develops over time. Thus leadership communication needs to be managed beyond the election as part of a long-term process, not one-off events or

singular use of tools. Like individual relationships, leader-public relationships can't be completely controlled, and voters are alienated by signs of over-management – better to let the odd gaffe occur than erode any potential for authenticity.

Political public relations need to be developed to suit the particular context and purpose. It should involve long-term and two-way dialogue which builds relationships. In government, relational and dialogic approaches help to build up support for policies. Governments can encourage, listen and respond to public feedback, but more persuasion and hype is appropriate when governments are seeking to implement agreed policies.

In online or e-marketing, as with all global knowledge transfer, practitioners need to adapt ideas from other countries – such as Obama in the US – to suit the local context, rather than import it wholesale. They also need to understand the potential of applying political marketing principles to online communications, understanding the advantages it brings such as flexibility to be used as a broadcast and narrowcast tool at the same time; offer different marketing styles to suit each audience; and develop either a transactional or relationship marketing approach depending on the goals. A persuasive and information-based transactional approach will help to reach untapped markets who know little about the party or candidate, whereas relationship marketing suits members or stakeholders.

### *From campaigning to governing: the expansion of political marketing into policy delivery and leadership*

For political marketing to succeed in the long term, politicians need to think about delivery before election, creating promises in the campaign that can be easily achieved once in power, which should be communicated in memorable ways to help to establish credibility with voters. Creating a central unit focused on delivery can help to lead progress, especially in a coalition government, along with efforts to create positive relationships that work with coalition partners, lower levels of government and government staff. Promises made in a campaign may need to be repackaged in power to help increase public support and make it harder for the opposition to oppose them.

Interest groups who seek influence over government decisions can take a market-oriented approach to make their advocacy more effective. They need to use market intelligence (segmenting, targeting and positioning) to assess their strengths and weaknesses, identify their allies and enemies and help to create the most attractive message to gain public support for their cause. Organisationally they need to create a focused leadership team that can make strategic decisions and keep everyone on board, to avoid reducing resource effectiveness through internal disagreements. They should utilise expertise when devising the message, drawing on networks, and generalise the argument to expand the potential impact of any government decision. Communication should be continual and unified, to promote national media coverage.

Policies themselves can be branded to widen their influence within one country but also abroad, but several steps need to be taken to make this process successful. Stakeholders affected by the potential brand need to be consulted and involved before rebranding takes place, and a brand assurance team created to help this process. Comprehensive documentation provided about the brand, especially where franchising will be allowed, and the government department involved need to show continued commitment to the brand. Government should also plan a review of the policy brand which can enable adaptation over time to suit changing circumstances, new knowledge and policy learning, with franchisees free to adapt the brand within the parameters set at the outset of the branding process.

Returning full circle to market research, once in government, politicians have access to government public opinion research, which provides highly specialised knowledge about the beliefs, attitudes, opinions and behaviours of the general public as well as the specific groups targeted by any given policy. They can therefore use this knowledge to improve the potential of a policy to achieve the desired outcomes when implemented, arguably helping achieve delivery of those initial promises – such as cutting crime – made in the campaign. Such research can also be used to monitor the effectiveness of policies once implemented, making the overall policy process more responsive. However, it can also be used to help politicians show leadership and make decisions that are not so reflective of voter preferences whilst maintaining support, by helping them explain why they have chosen a different option. Additionally, it can identify the space for leadership by exploring citizens' preferences and their thresholds or comfort zones for government decisions. Market research, both partisan and governmental, is only part of the decision-making process, however, and politicians should not simply follow the results of research. Research needs to be used carefully, to guide leaders to make decisions that will both maintain support and achieve policy change, by identifying how to change opinion and manage unpopular decisions.

## Summary

Political marketing is clearly taking different directions in the early period of the 21st century, compared with the end of the 20th century. Whilst market research in politics was previously seen as being all about polls and focus groups to find out what people wanted, this *Handbook* shows that a more varied range of research tools are used, for different purposes, and not just to identify existing demands, but to involve the political consumer in creating the solution to how to meet those demands. This elevates citizens further in the political decision-making process, but doesn't simply mean that elites pay more attention to what they want out of elections. Instead, the public is asked to step into the decision-makers' shoes and help to solve the problems. Whilst deliberative political marketing and co-creation will of course need further research, not least to explore how they fit into existing government institutions and campaign practices, this means that we need to be open to new parameters when debating the impact of market analysis on citizenship and democracy.

Political marketing strategy is more varied, and focused on long-term relationships that may be both internally and externally oriented. Internal marketing is developing and expanding, and is concerned with building positive and mutually beneficial relationships that show respect for, and offer support to, volunteers and staff to help them become effective political marketers in their own right.

Communication is becoming more relationship-focused with interaction, connectivity, emotions and authenticity helping to create success for politicians. However, that does not remove the need for traditional communication of leadership skills and product offerings, or the success of short-term populist and persuasive communication to gain quick voters or pass legislation. Instead, it depends on the particular goals and context. Practitioners should choose carefully, opting for more dialogical and transformational approaches to achieve and maintain relationships with political consumers over the long term.

In government, political marketing is not just about doing what the media voter wants; it is a much more mutualistic, organic, nuanced process, which aims to build a constructive relationship between the public and government, and which can potentially improve policy-making and debate within the political system.

Building on this knowledge, Table 28.1 provides a list of lessons for practitioners when using political marketing.

Table 28.1 Lessons for practitioners using political marketing

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*Understanding the market*

1. Be aware of the wide range of market research tools available and choose them to suit your goals and purposes.
2. Political marketing research is not just about researching what people want; consider viewing the political market as a co-producer of solutions to problems rather than just a course of demands.

*Strategy*

3. Political marketing strategy is about building long-term, internal and external relationships.
4. Choose the right strategy to suit your party/politician and unique circumstances. A sales-oriented party might not win against other market-oriented competitors, but if your goal is not to win, or the opposition is sales oriented or product oriented, then you do not need to adopt a market orientation.
5. Choose a niche marketing approach for a minor party seeking initial support and influence.
6. Develop not just the product but an effective brand that allows more flexibility than designing a specific product to suit voter demands as a market orientation suggests that political elites need to do, focusing on connecting with voters rather than just promising tangible benefits.
7. Ensure that branding and market-oriented strategies respond to and involve the internal market to build effective loyal relationships and support with volunteers.
8. Maintain and deliver the brand and market orientation in government.

*Internal marketing*

9. Parties need to research the internal market of volunteers, supporters and members.
10. Where internal and external market views differ, make careful trade-offs between involving the internal market to gain their valuable support and meeting conflicting demands from voters.
11. Where members are more representative of voters, engage them as part-time marketers, to both provide useful market intelligence and campaign on behalf of the party, and build long-term relationships that outlast the campaigns – and governments – of political candidates and leaders.
12. Train party staff in political marketing as they have increasing influence on marketing activities.
13. Use direct marketing to encourage party sympathisers to be involved in a party, designing e-marketing to enable them to campaign for the party.
14. Offer mentors and training to volunteers to support them in becoming long-term advocates for the party, and plug them into networks to increase their solidary benefits from volunteering.
15. Target online fundraising messages to suit the audience to make them more effective, and aim fundraising at active and satisfied volunteers.
16. Adapt both the concept and mechanics of donor marketing to suit the volunteer and donor cultures and regulatory frameworks within the political system.

*Communication*

17. Utilise online methods of campaigning in the same way that you would for non-online methods, and ensure that all forms of communication fit the overall strategy.
  18. Identify initial brand strengths and ensure that campaign activities protect these.
  19. Short-term branding of political candidates needs to be interwoven with long-term party brands.
  20. Don't convey 'the common touch' at the neglect of leadership and governing skills; both are important.
  21. When targeting market segments, ensure that this will generate voters, rather than just alienate cross-segment support.
  22. If populist marketing achieves initial success, more reflective, market-oriented responses to adjust the product over time are needed to secure more long-term support.
  23. Use technology to engage in local and national dialogue with voters in campaigns.
  24. Ensure that communication and PR becomes more relationship-focused, which enables two-way dialogue and interaction over the long term, avoiding over-control in favour of authenticity and developed understanding of the challenges facing political leaders.
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Table 28.1 (continued)

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25. In government choose the PR strategy to suit the goals; whilst listening and responding to feedback helps to build positive relationships, if the goal is to implement chosen policies, persuasive and hype approaches are more suitable to help maintain support and avoid crisis.
  26. Design e-marketing to suit communication goals, the market and environment. Do not just copy Obama's use of technology. Use more traditional transactional styles to reach new voters, but a relationship approach to maintain existing relationships with internal marketers.

#### *Governing*

27. Even in the campaign, create promises that can be delivered easily once in power to help build initial support to help mitigate more difficult delivery.
  28. Once in power, build positive relationships that support delivery and attract positive public evaluation for initial success through delivery units, effective communication and re-framing of promises if necessary.
  29. Interest groups can influence government decisions – they need to create market-researched, unified and effectively resourced campaigns which make the general impact of any decision beyond particular segments clear, and use continual communication to generate national media coverage.
  30. Brand public policy to increase the chances of implementation both nationally and internationally, ensuring success by consulting and involving stakeholders, creating a brand assurance team, providing effective documentation about the brand, showing continued commitment to the brand at government department level, and leaving room for review and adaption of the brand over time.
  31. Use government public opinion research to understand the needs of groups at which the policy is targeted, explore general public support for proposed policies, scope out potential for change, improve policy development and monitor implementation to ensure that it meets original aims, and make adjustments over time if necessary.
  32. In government, use market analysis proactively to inform, not dictate decisions, and create room for leadership that balances leading and following the public to ensure that politicians can still take a proactive, visionary position.
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## **Political marketing and democracy**

It is clear from the discussion above that political marketing is moving in new directions: from researching voter demands to co-creation of the political product; from 'market-oriented party wins all' to situation-dependent strategic options to build long-term relationships with voters and supporters; from ignoring members to viewing the internal stakeholders and staff as integral to successful political marketing and building a relationship that not only recruits volunteers but donors – and ultimately voters; from short-term sales to long-term, mutual, interactive communication relationships; and from campaigning to governing with the expansion of political marketing into policy delivery and leadership. We therefore need to revisit the democratic implications of political marketing.

### *Previous research on political marketing and democracy*

Previous research critiqued political marketing for potentially causing damage to democracy on several fronts. Savigny asserted that:

politics, as both elite-level activity and the dissemination of this to the public, has predominantly become a process of marketing ... this use of marketing has played a key role

in contributing to the existence of a political malaise as marketing subverts the democratic process and disconnects the public from politics.

*(Savigny 2008a: 1)*

Academics debate whether politicians should collect voters' views at all, as well as whether market research is a good way to identify those views. For example, Coleman takes issue with the suggestion:

that voters' views and preferences are sufficiently consistent to be suited to strategic reasoning. Most of the empirical evidence suggests that voters are promiscuous and rationally irresponsible in the range of inconsistent views they hold at any one time, and rarely think about long-term policy consequences in ways that politicians and their advisors are required to do.

*(Coleman 2007: 181)*

A range of literature criticises voters for being changeable in their opinions; selfish, acting in their own interests and not those of the whole country; highly emotional, prejudiced and irrational; short-term in focus; lacking the necessary experience, knowledge and capacity to make appropriate judgements, and led by media. There is, of course, the potential for elites to shape preferences and thus control the opinions they are listening to. Savigny (2008a: 38–40) notes how political marketing theory seems to omit consideration of preference shaping that can be carried out by elites, whether by politicians or the media or politicians influencing the media (see also Temple 2010; Savigny and Temple 2010).

Segmentation and targeting are also criticised for leading elites to only listen to some consumers and not others, disenfranchising the electorate. Savigny (2008a: 57) argued that 'the "product" is only targeted towards those groups who are in marginal seats, those groups for whom it is necessary to win the election' (see also Temple 2010: 271). Similarly Steger (1999: 680) argues that in the US, 'legislators are disproportionately attentive and responsive to those subsets of society that contribute most heavily to their re-election'. This threatens the democratic ideal of egalitarianism. Lilleker (2005a: 23) claimed that segmentation and targeting 'are to some extent responsible for causing a division in society: those to whom politics belongs and those whom politics has abandoned'. Savigny (2008a: 54–55) argues that focus groups are not conducted 'in accordance with standard sampling techniques, which seek to ensure some kind of demographic equality, rather focus groups comprise tactically significant voters', meaning that any responsiveness is only to 'selected members of the electorate' (see also Savigny 2007 and Wring 2007). Segmentation and targeting can also enable parties to concentrate their efforts and can help smaller parties and new candidates to gain support and power. This may help to reduce the effect of incumbency. The negative side is that extremist parties might use it. McGough detailed that Sinn Fein used research, segmentation, profiling and sales-oriented communication. He suggested from this that:

there is clearly an opportunity here for extremists to achieve a 'fair' advantage but use it in an undemocratic manner ... the same tactics have the potential to allow groups like Al Qaeda to gain a democratic position ... the extremists may gain far more advantages through democracy than they ever did through the bomb and the bullet.

*(McGough 2009: 190)*

More broadly, consumerism seems to threaten traditional notions of citizenship. Lilleker and Scullion (2008: 4) explain how 'voting is implicitly an act with ethical values and morals

attached as any individual choice will also take into account the broader impact on others of that choice'. In contrast, consumerism encourages people 'to be selfish, vain and individualistic' (ibid.). Needham (2003: 7) argued it has 'turned democracy into a marketplace' and downgraded citizenship, and Savigny (2008b) stated that it encourages self-interest (see also Walsh 1994: 67; Slocum 2004: 744). Consumer and customer concepts ignore the big issues of politics such as distribution of power, fairness and social justice (Aberbach and Christensen 2005: 236).

The emphasis on professionalism which seems to accompany the use of marketing in communications can also reduce the importance of internal members whilst increasing that of unselected advisors (see Sackman 1996). Lilleker (2005b: 573) argues that political marketing can change internal power: as strategists together with the leadership determine policy direction in relation to market intelligence, this 'can leave ordinary members feeling alienated' if they see no response to their demands within that product development process.

There are a number of potential problems with marketing-informed communication. Academics argue that political marketing communication can increase distrust depending on how it is used. It can be seen as manipulative, as research enables political elites to get inside the heads of voters. Scammell (2008: 111) noted 'the danger of misleading the public through an increasingly sophisticated understanding of consumer psychology' in branding. Dermody and Hamner-Lloyd (2006: 128) suggested that 'the way in which promotional marketing tools and concepts are being used in election campaigns, with the emphasis on creating distrust and suspicion of the competing parties, does not bode well for the future of democracy in Britain'. Branding can also simplify discourse, so the public relies on the brand without detailed scrutiny of elite behaviour and play on emotion, reducing debate (see Scammell 2008; Needham 2005; Barberio 2006).

Academics have also argued that market analysis causes declining turnout and participation in the public sphere. Lees-Marshment and Lilleker (2005) argued that the sudden fall in turn-out in the UK 2001 election suggested that the greater the use of targeted marketing techniques, such as voter segmentation, the more likely it is that non-target groups are demobilised, so political marketing could cause the problem. Washbourne (2005) argued that political marketing could reduce debate within the public sphere: 'what is missed out is the idea of public discussion and debate being central to, even representative of, politics ... replacement of (some part of) public discussion by polls and focus groups bypasses democratic politics rather than engages it', but whilst the more varied market analysis methods are acknowledging this.

Other discussion focuses on the concern that politicians' use of market analysis threatens leadership and could undermine creativity and new ideas. Jacobs and Shapiro (2000: 11) observed that 'the proliferation and visibility of public opinion polling during the Clinton administration ... led many critics of American politics to fear that poll taking, focus groups and the like has permanently replaced political leaders' (see also Slocum 2004: 770; Newman 1999: 41). Paleologos (1997: 1184) argues that 'a poll-driven society ... ignores creativity. It overlooks new ideas. It prohibits change and true reform'. In political marketing research, Paré and Berger's (2008: 58) conclusion from analysing how the Conservative Party of Canada was elected in 2006 as a minority government after using marketing, was that in doing so they strategically chose to avoid 'engagement with contentious policy considerations that appeal directly to contending social values'. Coleman (2007) contended that 'a culture of mutual trust between parties and citizens is not achievable (and certainly not sustainable) by simply repeating to voters what they already think'. Smith and Saunders (1990: 298) conclude that 'pandering to the prejudices of the majority might herald a tyranny of the ill-formed. Capital punishment, forced

repatriation and other lowest common denominator issues could become important if marketing research showed a short-term benefit in courting them'. Watt argued that:

treating democratic elections as if they were akin to purchases, the culmination of a marketing exercise, mistakes the function and purpose of elections. Elections are designed to provide the country with a government to represent the public will for a period of up to five years. Not many commercial transactions are designed to last for that length of time in the face of changing circumstances and it may well be that a government which starts out with one set of political priorities is obliged to change them in the face of ensuing events ... The government may well have to adopt unpopular and painful policies to deal with these problems.

(Watt 2006: 19–23)

However, other research has suggested that political marketing techniques and tools can be used for more positive effect. Segmentation can be used positively to help politicians identify and understand the concerns of smaller groups which might otherwise be neglected, such as those less likely to vote, and those who don't normally participate in consultation and mechanisms and services developed to target them and help their involvement in the political process. As Davidson (2005: 1190) noted, there is an argument that 'where levels of party identification and trust in the political system as a whole are in decline, simplistic categorizations of voters is an inadequate response'. Segmentation of the pensioner or retiree market has shown significant variation in the needs of those who have retired. Emerging minorities may be found earlier because of organisations using market segmentation than if they were just left to grow over time until they were powerful and established enough to get their issues placed on the agenda.

Academics have also conceded that citizenship-type values can be integrated within consumerist behaviour. Consumers of commercial goods have integrated ethical and environmental factors when making purchasing decisions: as Slocum (2004: 767) notes, 'personal wellbeing may be at the heart of much consumer action, but it is doubtful that people only think of themselves when they consider the safety of food, water, and other goods: they think of kids, family, and even community'. Similarly, Scullion (2008) suggested that citizenship and consumerisation can work alongside each other. People can take on 'citizenly roles' whilst in the market as consumers and retain responsibility (see also Lane 1991, 1996, 2000; Lilleker and Scullion 2008). Lees-Marshment's (2011) interviews with practitioners suggest that there are ways to overcome the potential problems and that politicians can choose to use marketing with positive impact on democracy.

Whilst the traditional sources of the public sphere may be in decline, it is developing elsewhere and run by the consumers themselves. Jackson (2008: 154–57) explored how a more consumerised media combined with technological tools such as texting and RSS feeds enables the public to have 'a more personalised experience of news and current affairs'. E-marketing supports interactive and two-way communication, consultation and citizen involvement. This may lift the citizen from passive consumer to active participant not just in political communication, but political decision-making. Geiselhart *et al.* (2003: 216–17) argue that it could be developed to create a 'truly user-driven interactive democratic model that offers multiple modes for feedback, civic dialogue and participation'. Similarly, Morison and Newman (2001: 177) argued that 'the possibilities that a more thoughtful engagement with the new technologies on offer accord very well with a range of approaches within recent political theory which suggest ways in which traditional democracy can be renewed'. Whilst this area has to be developed

further in political practice, it is an area for potential growth. Henneberg *et al.* note the use of such tools in the London mayoral campaign that Boris Johnson won, and argue that:

while none of this really amounts to political relationship marketing in any finished sense, and it may be seen as fostering the illusion of participation, it nevertheless establishes the trajectory along which we are being driven towards relational interactions in politics.

(Henneberg *et al.* 2009: 170)

Pragmatically as well as normatively elites should consider their internal market. Positioning and branding requires differentiation and therefore enhances public choice (see Scammell 2008; Needham 2005; Barberio 2006; Lilleker 2005a). Although some academics were concerned that party branding was removing the freedom of candidates to respond to local voter needs, with Needham (2005: 356) recalling how Freedland (1999) noted that ‘Number 10 officials insist that Labour is a “brand” and they cannot let just anybody go into the marketplace with that precious label’, more recently parties have learnt the importance of allowing diversification at local level.

Political marketing can also be used by elites to exercise leadership, as research helps understand and move opinion to overcome the problem. Goot argued that market intelligence:

may be just as effective as a means of working out how to galvanise support, neutralise opposition or convert those who might otherwise be reluctant to see things the party’s way ... it is not true that on every issue, or even on all the important ones, polling necessarily commits politicians to the position of the median voter.

(Goot 1999: 237)

Murray’s (2006: 495) study of the Reagan presidency concluded that whilst some party-driven issues were sidelined, and changes were made if too much opposition was encountered, survey data were also used to find potential ‘overlap’ between the leadership goals and public opinion, ‘to thereby identify political opportunities where it could accomplish some of its ideological goals and satisfy some of its partisan constituents, while staying within broad constraints established by majority opinion’. The Promise work on reconnecting Tony Blair for the 2005 election suggested that there should be a ‘Mature Tony’ including both conviction and reflection. Mortimore and Gill (2010: 255) thus argue that ‘leadership judgment is also indispensable’ to a party using marketing: ‘even a party with no ideological principles would need sometimes to defy public opinion’, and marketing can help to ‘create appropriate communication to make them more tolerated’.

Thus, whilst acknowledging the potential problems in the way political marketing is used, the reality is more varied and there is room for it to have a positive impact. We also need to take account of the realities of politics. Savigny (2008a: 3–5) conceded that problems have to be reconciled ‘more practically, within contemporary politics’, and Henneberg *et al.* (2009: 166) caution that ‘political marketing should not be judged against ideal and impossible standards of a perfectly informed, knowledgeable and participating electorate, but rather against the real world of relatively low interest and knowledge in politics’. Henneberg and O’Shaughnessy (2009: 13) argue that a political relationship marketing approach would lead to positive implications for democracy, whereby ‘voters would be consulted more often (and not only for election purposes), party members turned into stakeholders’. Scullion (2008) suggested that political consumers will also expect ‘a share of responsibility and blame when things go wrong, if they appreciate a link between their own choice and the resultant conclusion’. This suggests support

for the development of a more mutual, interactive, dually responsible, long-term relationship between voter and politicians. Many chapters in this *Handbook* suggest a changing relationship, with the chapters on deliberative marketing and co-creation supporting a link between political marketing and deliberative democracy, already suggested by Lees-Marshment and Winter (2009) and Henneberg *et al.* (2009: 176–79), and Lees-Marshment's (2011) notion of a partnership democracy. As Henneberg *et al.* (2009: 166) conclude, we may see in the future a new genre of political marketing 'which focuses on the goals of information, persuasion and reciprocity, rather than attack and defence', heralding a very different future for political marketing and democracy.

### *New possibilities – the results of this Handbook*

Reflecting the debate in the literature, the research presented in this *Handbook* suggests the need to reflect further on our understanding of how marketing is used in politics, sometimes confirming problems previously raised but in other instances challenging the extent of that problem in practice.

A lot of the criticism about opinion research can be rebutted for being misinformed about the reality of practice. Despite the importance of market research, politicians retain the right to choose how they use it, and it does not always lead to a change in position or policy, but just how pre-determined decisions are communicated, to a range of contrasting market segments. There are democratic benefits from research informing political elites about what people think, and if there remains debate about this, it is not whether research should be used in politics, but how politicians in the 21st century can achieve both progress-initiating principled leadership and responsiveness to people's needs.

Segmentation can be used to reach under-represented groups. When applied to older voters, it has helped to ensure that elected representatives are conscious of the increasingly diverse needs of this growing section of society. This helps to correct inaccurate assumptions, such as older voters only caring about pensions and healthcare and how well they will be looked after by the state, instead of wider issues and opportunities for them to continue to contribute to society. Segmentation helps to promote more effective dialogue and debate between government and this changing section, and prevent neglect of a minority group. Of course, like any other marketing tool, segmentation can be abused. Political elites need to avoid preferencing – or being seen to preference – one segment over others, particularly important when the interests of seniors may need to be met by long-term solutions paid for by younger or future older generations. However, it can be used to inform policy and governing decisions, rather than simply the targeting of direct mail in election campaigns.

Strategic voter selection can be criticised for causing exclusion of large numbers of voters from political communications and thus political debate. This could erode the legitimacy of elections. On the other hand, targeting voters who have not yet made up their mind whether or how to vote maximises the potential benefits of political information, and GOTV on both floating and core voters increases participation amongst those who might otherwise not participate in elections.

Deliberative consultation can help to improve the value of voter opinion gathered by market research. Deliberative marketing could potentially lead to the development of a new leadership style, merging market research with governance, but it would require new collaborative skills employed within new arenas that can be reconciled with existing decision-making processes. Deliberative political marketing is not just about a market research tool, but is almost a new philosophy. It could increase trust between politicians and the public and thus have a very

positive impact on democracy, but it would not be easy to implement deliberative marketing within the current reality of politics and government.

Co-creation similarly suggests that there could be a change in the relationship between government and the people. It is a very different approach to market research, asking the public to play a constructive role in solution creation, instead of simply letting them voice their demands. It opens up politicians to a broader range of possibilities. Politicians are no longer set up to fail – because they are not expected to find the answer to everything. They become judges and managers of solutions suggested by the market itself, thus increasing trust between the citizen and state. This moves traditional politics away from the ‘elites know best’ idea, but also political marketing from ‘the market is king’ approach to ‘we need to work together to figure this out’. Politicians and public are both creators of the solution.

When choosing how to approach elections, politicians can choose a range of strategies. Political marketing is a global activity, which may seem to threaten ideology and value by treating elections like a commercial transaction. However, politicians still have room to choose how they are going to respond to the electorate, which leaves room for leadership and creativity. Minor parties can adopt niche market-oriented behaviours without destroying their identity, thus retaining more choice for voters and continuing debate. Marketing can encourage niche parties to gain a better understanding of their voters and thus provide a more effective representation of minority interests.

Branding has the potential to help politicians communicate more effectively with citizens, and works well to introduce a new political candidate, movement or policy, but is less helpful in government or for re-branding. It can undermine trust if it is shown to be inauthentic or used manipulatively, but a positive brand can maintain long-term ties between the citizen and the politician. Effectively branded parties can help generate and maintain support for individual candidates when internal supporters are included in the process, but if ignored, centralised branding can alienate volunteers.

Relationship and direct marketing can be used to mobilise volunteers, activists and members, which can increase participation in the political system, and challenges the usual ‘party and participation decline’ thesis in non-political marketing literature. When used internally, political marketing can increase engagement with the public either as voters or as party activists at local and national level, improving party ties with civil society. For this benefit to be realised, internal relationship marketing needs to be carried out effectively and carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the balance between party responsiveness to its external voter and internal supporter market. A strategy that prioritises maximising the activism of volunteers could lead to a product that repels many voters and thus results in a highly participatory but entirely unelectable party. Instead, parties need to create a more emotional relationship with their supporters that can survive varying product formations over the long term. If parties involve supporters in product design, making them aware of what is required to create a product that is electorally attractive, and noting the potential value of influence in government for idealist ends, this could mobilise both members and voters, creating a lasting positive relationship. Where members are more in line with voters anyway, they can be employed as part-time marketers and be involved not so much as foot soldiers but as co-producers of the campaign. This fits both with the theoretical ideals of a participatory democracy and the pragmatism of political marketing. Political marketing is not necessarily in conflict with traditional party activism, and a centralised organisation can help coordinate members’ work as part-time marketers have little chance of being truly effective. Similarly, direct marketing can be used to identify and mobilise supporters if aimed not just at floating voters but party sympathisers, thus stimulating participation.

Recognising the party official as a part-time marketer as well can ensure that they receive appropriate training in political marketing and are thus more effective. However, this could encourage the centralisation of marketing in politics and thus reduce levels of engagement and participation by members and activists. The growth in use of market research by party HQ may threaten the role not just of members but elected politicians. It also emphasises instrumental goals of victory rather than ideological aims such as policy influence, and instead of leadership, organisational resources in terms of skills, staffing and money.

In fundraising, marketing can be used ethically but practitioners have to balance high ethical ideals with the practical need to gather funds to pay for all other marketing activities, and achieve a strategy that collects donations within what is broadly acceptable both ethically and legally. Using e-marketing for fundraising purposes can ensure that ordinary people are involved in donating to political parties and campaigns instead of obscured back room deals between monied and political elites, and thus increase civic involvement. This does not prevent fraud or abuse, or donor fatigue, due to the ease and low cost of executing online fundraising, or prevent high-level donor marketing. Equally, though, it does not prevent practitioners aiming to provide donor satisfaction in a way which has beneficial societal implications and thus fits within the social marketing concept, encouraging a positive relationship between donor and recipient rather than alienating citizens from contributing financially towards the political process.

In communications there have been significant changes that open debate as to the democratic consequences of political marketing in the early 21st century. First, changes in campaigning in turn affect participation. Whilst political consultants still play a profound role in campaigns, organisationally they will become more flexible, with greater volunteer involvement but also influence and self-mobilisation. Voters are partners in campaigns, rather than foot soldiers. This can help parties and candidates connect more with supporters, and increase participation, but could also make campaigns harder to control and thus open politicians to crisis and attack. Campaigns communicate with voters via multiple media, which could help to reach voters in new ways and thus increase engagement between politicians and the public. However, the instant nature of communications exposes politicians to unexpected critique, encouraging a focus on tactics which makes it harder to stick to more nuanced and thought-out strategies. The greater availability of market research and data means that campaign decisions are more informed, but could restrict the ability of candidates to make high-impacting leadership decisions. Online forms of campaigning open up volunteering, as voters can contribute more easily in a way that suits them, and this both increases and diversifies political participation.

Communicating with individual candidates and political leaders is not easy, but this has positive implications for democracy. Micro-management by advisors can cause problems, and voters desire and reward authenticity, so politicians need to be capable of forming a relationship with ordinary voters. However, they also need to exhibit traditional leadership skills and connect with a range of support groups, not just one target market. Whilst branding can be used to gain initial support and media attention for a new candidate, politicians remain subject to serious scrutiny over their knowledge and policies and fit with the party brand during a campaign, and thus cannot assume to attract votes in the final election. Leaders need to be as interactive as possible, offering a long-term relationship to voters, with less emphasis on lower-level attributes such as their hair colour and media appearance, and more on their performance within a political and governmental context.

When politicians succeed with more populist marketing, whilst they enjoy short-term success, if they want to maintain support in the long term they also have to revert to more traditional forms of political marketing, adjusting their product in a reflective and market-oriented manner.



Thus, whilst the immediate effectiveness of populist marketing raises democratic concerns because it threatens constructive dialogue, it ultimately results in adaptation by either the populists themselves or established parties who create a more mainstream response to the previously ignored demands.

Election communication needs to suit the recipient, not just the producer, to be effective, and thus start with the voter not the politician. This means keeping it 'real' and relevant, such as averting not ignoring voter fears, and linking a national issue with the local context. Communication should also allow feedback and dialogue, and ensure the creation of avenues that allow the electorate to engage with the electoral process in a way that suits them and is two-way, so that they are part of the conversation instead of just being a passive recipient. This can then increase public participation and engagement with politics.

Political public relations used in elections to gain power, and to sell policy once in government, tends to be persuasive and thus open to the usual criticism of marketing communications as being manipulative. However, over the long term – and once politicians are in power – it can help representatives reach and interact with citizens and voters including those not normally interested in politics, making political communication more human, responsive and dialogic. This can help to build trust in politics and government.

Online marketing can similarly be used both to sell a message and a product without media interference, and more profoundly to engage in a more transformational relationship form of two-way communication. The potential interactivity of online and other forms of communication means that political marketing now holds the potential to create more positive relationships between political actors and citizens, especially if a long-term relationship marketing approach is applied between elections which encourages an ongoing dialogue.

The rise of delivery marketing has encouraged politicians to place more focus on action rather than just promise. Failure to deliver impacts re-election prospects; success improves citizen confidence in their government. This can have a positive impact on democratic government. However, it could also lead to over-centralisation with delivery units being placed under the prime minister's office, and therefore increasing top-down decision-making. Such offices also tend to be staffed by partisan appointments, increasing the role of unelected advisors which could limit democracy.

Interest group marketing encourages organisations to reach out beyond their narrow segment and think about how their proposals influence the rest of society, to create a broader support group. They try to gain greater legitimacy for their actions and thus become more responsive to society as a whole. However, an effective marketing strategy can then increase the influence of what are, at heart, special interests rather than the public good, and could hinder the implementation of market-driven policies.

The branding of public policy reflects an overall change in governance, whereby branding is needed in politics to convey to citizens that the product produced by governments is valuable because political parties are no longer seen as effective representative channels. Branding helps to justify policy decisions taken by elites, which whilst helpful to those in power, could undermine traditional representative democracy. Rather than involving citizens, used in this way branding gives elites more control over the public. Whilst it could help citizens to make a choice, branding of policy by government occurs after that choice – the vote – has been made. Branding thus narrows choice, and constricts debate, requiring uniformity. The alternative argument is that branding of government policy is about branding to elites within government and thus securing support for the implementation of policies that politicians have offered and received a mandate for in elections, which could be good for democracy. The branding of public policy, such as that on AIDS, can make the policy easier to implement and achieve

public good. Simply getting elites to think of politics as a brand can encourage them to connect more effectively and create a more authentic offering built on core values of relevance to the public. Perhaps, as with many areas, it is a case whereby there is the potential for political marketing to extend and expand democracy, but practice has not yet realised this possibility.

Lastly, returning again to the use of research, but in government, there is an acknowledgement that it can be used with negative impact. However, there are also positive options: government opinion research can improve the information used to design and implement policies so that they achieve the desired output, enhancing the link between citizen choices in an election and government action. Despite the use of research by politicians in power, there is still room for politicians to take a range of policy decisions in relation to market research. Whilst political marketing is clearly a prevalent force in politics, it need not be a constraining force in democracy that prevents politicians taking up certain policies. Yes, they do need to stay in touch and they do need to listen, but that does not mean that they need to do everything the public wants. It is about nuance – leaders can take a range of positions in response to research, and research can be used to find a way to create public support for change as well as stop politicians doing something that is deeply against the public will. There may be a maturing of political leadership which could help to create a more positive relationship between government and citizens, but this positive impact will only happen in practice if politicians choose to use political marketing more effectively. Ultimately the decision rests with them.

### *Summary: the potential, if not the reality, of political marketing*

Whilst there are clearly problems with political marketing's impact on democracy, this *Handbook* has also noted examples of positive effects and the overall evidence suggests that the change in direction also leads to a change in impact on democracy, at least potentially if not yet in reality. This leads us to discuss where next, and thus future trends for research and practice in political marketing.

## **The way forward: future trends in political marketing research and practice**

### *Research*

This *Handbook* has presented new ideas and conclusions about political marketing. Like all good research, it also suggests many avenues for future research. Below is a list that highlights a selected summary of those found in individual chapters.

- The impact that research-based campaigns have both on political practice and on voter behaviour;
- How research-based strategies are actually used in reality;
- Which voter selection procedures tend to be most useful across campaign timing and jurisdictions;
- How to work with large groups in deliberative governance arenas and build decision-making processes in which participatory action is possible with a fully engaged leadership group that can still make effective decisions;
- How more innovative research tools, especially co-creation, are used in politics;

- Use of a broader range of methods when studying comparative political marketing-orientation research, including quantitative analysis using standardised research instruments that can be applied in different settings rather than just qualitative case studies;
- Applying a version of the Long Tail model to niche parties;
- How party and candidate branding interconnect, whether in presidential elections or in coalition government;
- Gender branding – whether differing expectations of brands across male and female candidates are generated by the candidates themselves, the media or the voter, and opportunities for female candidates;
- Which incentive and recruitment strategies build long-lasting relationships with local activists beyond a single campaign – after ‘yes we can’, what next?
- Bringing volunteers into helping campaign in government, not just for an election (e.g. Organizing for America);
- To what extent new recruits attracted through direct and network marketing remain politically active after a campaign;
- Comparative studies of the role of party organisations and party officials in political marketing, including in government and opposition;
- What actually works in campaigning – the cost and benefits of different techniques such as micro-targeting, online and telemarketing research, new technologies and online communication tools that hold out the most promise for connecting with voters;
- Longitudinal or cross-sectional comparisons of populist marketing to enable informed theoretical, ethical and normative discussions about the practical relevance of populists and their marketers’ actions;
- Applying the political PR model to different political situations such as policy development and implementation, in different countries and at different levels;
- A larger study of the use of Web 2.0 with a wider sample of countries and actors for not just the election but routine politics;
- Delivery by minority governments such as the UK coalition government elected in 2010 and the Australian federal government elected in 2010, and the consequences of non-delivery;
- The use of political marketing by advocacy coalitions opposing – or supporting – other types of political decisions in different fields such as health, economy and education, and the impact on their survival;
- The different uses of branding in public policy, why we have seen a growth in its use, the effectiveness of policy branding, its potential benefits and drawbacks for the public sector, and impact on governance;
- The appropriate use of government opinion research and how it might contribute to better policy-making;
- Discussion about political leadership and sustainable relationships especially once a leader is in power; and
- How we can create space for leadership within a political marketing environment.

### *Practice*

A number of areas of development were also identified for practice:

- Become more informed about the strengths and weaknesses of voter research and understand how to conduct it properly;

- Use segmentation to discover the political needs and aspirations of the aging electorate, and provide the evidence base for the communicative and policy responses from governments and parties;
- Consider using research and processes that are co-creative and move beyond the simple focus group or poll, and develop more positive long-term relationships with the public;
- Continue to share ideas through global knowledge transfer, but adapt techniques and strategies to suit not even just the particular country, but the particular election;
- Green parties in particular need to consider marrying a market-oriented mindset with more pragmatic electoral strategies to improve the niche parties' ability to tap into existing supporters and gain their vote;
- Take the brand premise more seriously – design a party brand story that responds to and reflects the concerns, issues and aspirations gleaned from potential target audiences;
- Transparently inform donors about how their funds will be used and offer civic engagement as benefits for donating. Ask for money to support the promotion of specific policy proposals that funding can help implement which outlines how the money will be used and engages them in the policy campaign;
- Obtain a deeper understanding of the people you seek to govern; understand their issues and concerns and create a meaningful dialogue;
- Use communication to convey the complexities and challenges faced in government and the actual choice on offer given to voters;
- Prepare for further predicted technological changes such as 3D or holographic in-home media display systems, which will lessen the physical distance between politician and citizen and make the relationship on offer more important;
- Make greater use of political PR between elections and in government;
- Use the internet to enhance democratic participation within a relationship marketing approach rather than just at election time;
- Take the branding of public policy more seriously;
- Require that public opinion research (POR) becomes a compulsory policy input; develop expertise for its use amongst the bureaucracy (such as developing and using applied courses on POR as a tool of governance and management), and allocate funding for research; and
- Be aware of the need to utilise market research in a pro-active way to help create the room for leadership, and spend time reflecting on how to respond to the public.

The *Routledge Handbook of Political Marketing* therefore provides us with a sense of where the field is moving in the future. Political marketing offers modern insights into the age-old question of how political elites listen, respond to and deliver for the public. At the turn of the century, political marketing moved from being focused on communication to a strategic orientation that puts the voter at the heart of political decisions to produce market-led products. Currently, it is going through further change as practitioners and politicians seek to modify their behaviour to maximise its potential benefit not just to winning elections but to ensuring societal progress and positive democratic impact. Politics needs to use marketing methods to understand an increasingly diverse and unpredictable electorate and market research and segmentation offer new tools to do this, but it is not easy to satisfy market demands. Politicians are now realising that voters want a more nuanced and reflective leader who will consider the realities, constraints and long-term needs of the country, rather than just public desires identified by focus groups. In this case, politicians also need conceptual tools such as branding to help develop not just a product but a sense of direction and vision, and more mature conversational market research tools such as co-creation and deliberation. There is also more emphasis on marketing in

government and delivery. If politicians focus on delivery, this holds the potential to create longer-term trust between politicians and the public. Political marketing is now more about relationships and mass–elite interaction through organisational development. In communications, the focus is now on interactive online communication and longer-term relations with the public: in party organisation avenues for participation are being created to suit the volunteer; and in strategy politicians are exploring the room to both lead and follow. Without denying that political marketing can be used problematically, this *Handbook* has explored and projected a more mature and reflective form of political marketing which holds the potential to create a more positive relationship between citizen and state. It is up to practitioners to turn this vision into reality.

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