

Paradoxical Thinking as a Marketing Capability

Gisela Otto

Wageningen University

Bas Hillebrand

Radboud University

Paul Driessen

Institute for Management Research, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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Abstract

In the current marketplace, marketers need to navigate conflicting stakeholder demands, from customers, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders. Therefore, this study explores a new marketing capability, paradoxical thinking, a firm's ability to accept and learn from competing stakeholder demands. A single case study was conducted in the context of sustainable tourism, a tension-loaden context with many stakeholders involved. We identify three main tensions and findings reveal four building blocks of paradoxical thinking: stakeholder expertise, stakeholder engagement systems, stakeholder transparency systems, and responsibility towards stakeholders that jointly enable the firm to deal with competing stakeholder demands. The norms and values that are comprised in the firm's responsibility towards stakeholders play a key role in leveraging the remaining building blocks.

Keywords: marketing capabilities, paradox, tourism

Track: Marketing Strategy & Theory

