



# Legends in Marketing

SHELBY D. HUNT

Series Editor,  
Jagdish N. Sheth

2

Volume Editor  
Jagdeep Singh



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## SHELBY D. HUNT

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### Volume 2

## MARKETING THEORY PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE FOUNDATIONS OF MARKET



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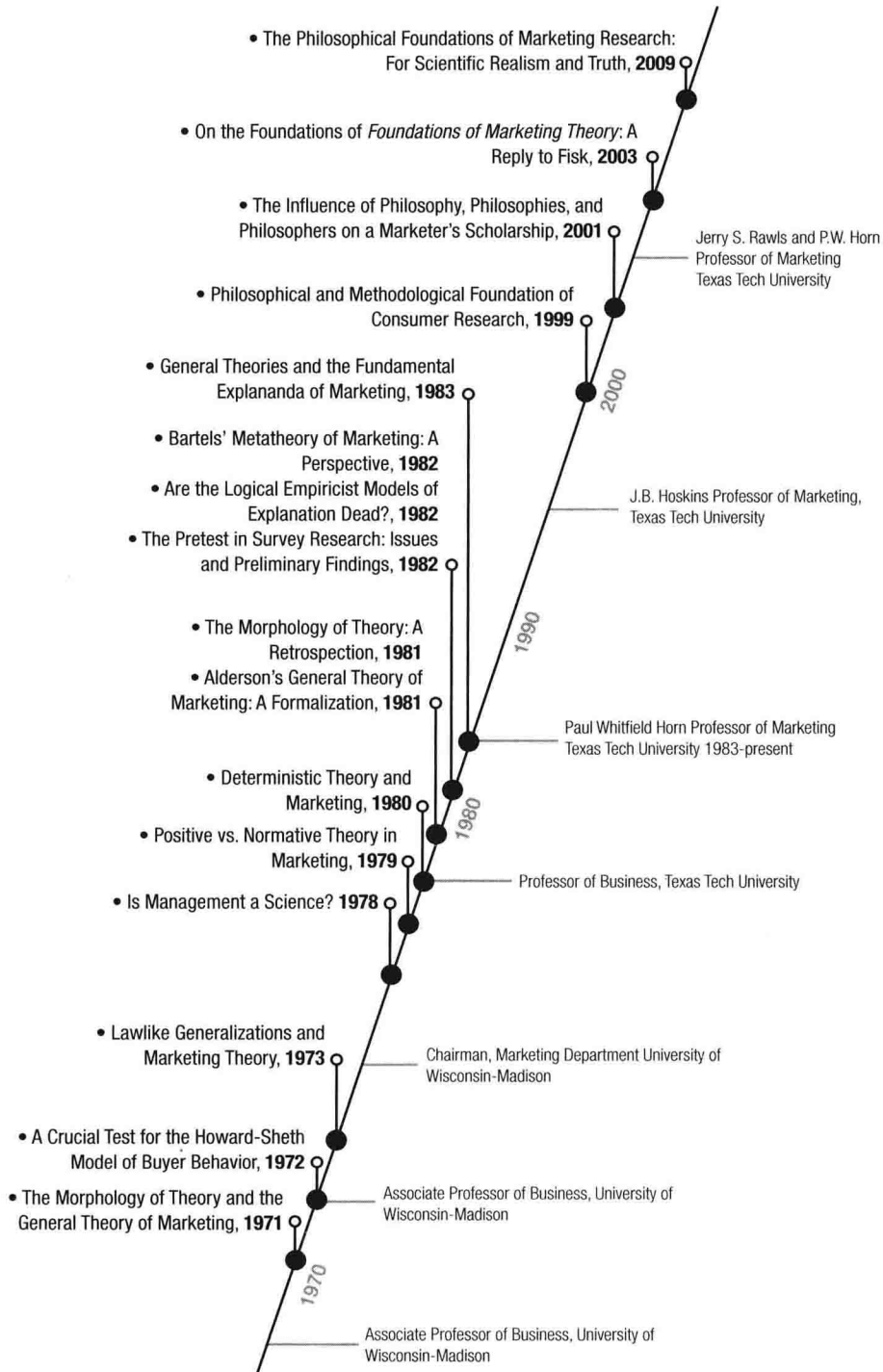


**SHELBY D. HUNT**

Shelby D. Hunt is the Jerry S. Rawls and P.W. Horn Professor of Marketing at the Rawls College of Business, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA. A past editor of the *Journal of Marketing* (1985–87), he is the author of numerous books, including *Foundations of Marketing Theory: Toward a General Theory of Marketing* (2002), *Controversy in Marketing Theory: For Reason, Realism, Truth, and Objectivity* (2003), and *A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competences, Productivity, Economic Growth* (SAGE Publications, 2000). One of the 250 most frequently cited researchers in economics and business (Thomson-ISI), he has written numerous articles on competitive theory, strategy, macromarketing, ethics, relationship marketing, channels of distribution, philosophy of science, and marketing theory. Three of his *Journal of Marketing* articles won the Harold H. Maynard Award for the “best article on marketing theory.” His 1994 *Journal of Marketing* article “Commitment and Trust,” with Robert M. Morgan, was the most highly cited article in economics and business in the 1993–2003 decade (Thomson-ISI). For his contributions to theory and science in marketing, he has received multiple other distinguished awards.



# VOLUME 2 ARTICLE TIMELINE



# Legends in Marketing

As a post doc Research Fellow at Columbia University while writing the book *The Theory of Buyer Behavior* (Wiley, 1969) with my mentor and professor, John A. Howard, I had spent two full years in the stacks of Columbia University Library, reading in awe, classic books in psychology, philosophy, economics, sociology, and anthropology. I was always fascinated with history since my undergraduate days and especially with the biographies of philosophers, scholars and advisors to kings and monarchs. I was curious about how they developed their thoughts; what made them challenge existing wisdom; and the context or circumstances which made them propose alternative perspectives or explanations.

What impressed me the most through this experience was the realization that knowledge is recursive: what we discover today was also discovered yesterday but forgotten just like the ancient civilizations in Machu Picchu, Egypt, India, and China. The old monuments and ruins were overrun by vegetation and buried in forests or swallowed by floods, only to be rediscovered by archeologists and anthropologists. Just as we are in awe of ancient civilizations and marvel at how advanced our ancestors were in organizing civic societies and synthesizing extant knowledge in either scriptures or in mythologies, I am always in awe of insightful concepts, discoveries, experiments and synthesis of knowledge by well respected scholars. Furthermore, often their best writings are not just in top tier journals but also in symposia, monographs and chapters in specialized books. Often their books become textbooks for graduate students because of their unique perspectives or research findings. In fact, most of the best known scholars are more remembered by their books and not for their papers.

The breadth and depth of knowledge I gained in those two years at Columbia University was simply invaluable in writing *The Theory of Buyer Behavior*. This was also the case in my other academic books including *Marketing Theory: Evolution and Evaluation* (Wiley, 1988) and *Consumption Values and Market Choices* (Southwestern, 1991).

I followed that tradition in my doctoral seminars at the University of Illinois in Consumer Behavior, Marketing Theory and Multivariate Methods, by assigning and encouraging doctoral students to read classic writings, many of them out of print and

therefore not easily accessible, unlike today. Similarly, I continue to encourage doctoral students to read and review old literature to gain perspectives for their doctoral dissertations and research papers.

The genesis of *Legends in Marketing* comes from these experiences as a doctoral student, post-doc Fellow and doctoral seminar leader. There are world class thinkers and researchers in marketing, who, over their four to five decades of scholarship, have generated knowledge which is both deep and broad. However, it is scattered in different publications, some of them out of print and not digitized. What if we could assemble and organize this knowledge into volumes and make them available both in print and online? Hence, this series called *Legends in Marketing*.

The mission of *Legends in Marketing* is to:

1. Compile and organize decades of published academic research of a world renowned marketing scholar into six to ten volumes.
2. Ensure that his or her legacy is widely disseminated to the next generation of marketing scholars especially from emerging markets such as Africa, China, and India as well as from the transition economies of ex-Soviet Union including Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.
3. Preserve this knowledge as a Legacy in marketing.

Each Legend selected compiles and organizes his or her published works from academic journals, conference proceedings, chapters of books and any other source of publication. While this is not a census of all the Legend's writings, it includes a vast majority of his or her lifelong contributions over several decades which can be organized into six to ten volumes.

For each volume, the Legend selects a Volume Editor (VE) who is familiar with the Legend's publications in that specific area. The VE in collaboration with the Legend organizes the selected publications into a Table of Contents with thematic sections of the Volume. The VE also writes an Introduction to the Volume which traces the origins of the focal area, how the Legend has impacted that area and how the field is likely to evolve in the future.

The VE also invites three contributors who comment on how the Legend's work has impacted the field and them personally. Finally, the VE interviews the Legend to get his or her latest views and reflections on the published works.

I went through this process for my own writings with the extraordinary assistance from Balaji C. Krishnan, who agreed to be the Set Editor, resulting in eight volumes which SAGE (India) published in early 2010.

The first set of nine Legends who have agreed to be featured are:

Shelby D. Hunt	Kent B. Monroe	Naresh Malhotra
Richard Bagozzi	Philip Kotler	Yoram Wind
Paul Green	V. Kumar	Gerald Zaltman

Both SAGE (India) and I are very pleased with the strong interest and enthusiasm about the Legends in Marketing Series from faculty, doctoral students, and academic libraries, especially from emerging markets. I am especially pleased that each Legend is also passionate about this project. Our plan is to continue the Series each year by adding five to six additional Legends in Marketing. This is a very gratifying labor of love.

**Jagdish N. Sheth, Series Editor**  
**Emory University**

# Legends in Marketing: Shelby D. Hunt

There are very few marketing scholars who are as versatile, precise, and knowledgeable as Shelby Hunt. In marketing theory, you have to study his writings just as in earlier days, we all, as doctoral students, had to study Robert Bartels and Wroe Alderson. Shelby is what I refer to as a deep generalist. He is incredible in his depth of knowledge in philosophy of science and theory construction. At the same time, he is a generalist who can develop and articulate theories across different marketing domains ranging from the nature and scope of marketing to macromarketing to relationship marketing, and most recently, developing a respected and thoughtful general theory of marketing anchored to relative advantage.

Just like other Legends in Marketing, Shelby Hunt is exceptional in three skills. First, it is about what he has to say. It is insightful and thorough. Second, it is about how he says it. His style makes the subject matter easy to understand, concise, and to the point. Third, he knows how to frame the situation or the context. In fact, in my interview, he told me that it takes him several iterations and sheer hard work to write the first two or three paragraphs of an article. Once this is done to his satisfaction, the rest of the content flows naturally.

Shelby decided to become an academic as early as his freshman year in engineering at Ohio State University. One day there was a knock on his door. A fellow student in the 200-plus-student chemistry class that he didn't even know, asked him to be his tutor. He realized right then and there that he had a knack of explaining difficult material in ways that everyone can understand. This made him realize that he may be a good educator. Since then he has never looked back. When I asked him if he had second thoughts about the academic career spanning over four decades, his answer was a definite NO; he has no regrets. He has won virtually every academic award bestowed by the marketing discipline.

His advice to younger scholars: Be very efficient; don't waste time; and write down what works and what does not work for you. He is really puzzled by today's reduced teaching load in order to increase research productivity. For example, when he started

his academic career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he taught five different courses with five different preparations in his first three years. It never occurred to him that it was a lot of teaching. According to him, if you have curiosity to learn new things, you don't think of teaching as a burden. In fact, the best way to learn is to teach!

Shelby has no plans to retire unless some unexpected health-related issue interferes. He truly enjoys what he does. He was born into a family that owned a shoe store business and he learned how to sell in his youth. What may be a loss to the family business has been a great gift to the marketing discipline!

I have known Shelby Hunt for more than 40 years. We usually meet at academic conferences throughout the year. Sometimes we are asked to be on the same panel. I admire his writings and have personally benefited from his books and papers.

**Jagdish N. Sheth, Series Editor**  
**Emory University**

# Volume Introduction: Marketing Theory—Philosophy of Science Foundations of Marketing

Jagdip Singh

H. Clark Ford Professor of Marketing  
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For an enduring period of time, Professor Shelby Hunt has been at the center of controversy and debate around issues of scientific theory in the study of marketing phenomenon. What is it? What is it *not*? Does it have a place in the marketing profession? Will it lead us astray? Is a call for rigor in theory counter-productive? Will it suppress creative and open thinking?

During much of the 1970s and through the 1980s, the marketing discipline struggled to find its keel in waters troubled by such questions. By no stretch were these questions new to marketing when Shelby entered the debate. Professor Paul Dunlavy Converse had already ignited an active dialog and debate with his 1945 *Journal of Marketing* piece that raised the prospect of science in marketing. The novelty of Shelby's contributions lay in the approach he took to address these questions. Starting with the 1971 *Journal of Marketing* article on the morphology of theory and, with a compelling logic that foreshadowed Shelby's hallmark, he outlined its implications for the general theory of marketing (included in this volume).

Scholars of today and of the future may wonder why questions of theory and science in marketing persisted for so long when the answers are patently obvious and the choice of being nonscientific and atheoretical so utterly unattractive to hold even momentary interest. What we take as obvious and uncontested today was not nearly so three decades ago. Much credit goes to Shelby Hunt for embarking on a series of articles since the 1971 *Journal of Marketing* piece. The force of these articles brought clarity and logic from the philosophy of traditional science to provide answers to the fundamental questions in marketing that we today hold with taken-for-granted status.

Readers of this volume will have an opportunity to go back in time to understand how Shelby's contribution challenged the marketing discipline to shed doubt and despair and to, instead, rise to the a new challenge: one of developing and testing marketing theories that do not flinch from rigorous scientific standards. Sixteen articles authored by Shelby Hunt that relate to the philosophy of science in marketing are included here (also see Volume 3). Six leading marketing scholars with contemporaneous experiences and personal interactions with Shelby Hunt provide commentaries that add context and color to included readings. Collectively, the materials of this volume shed light on the story of a young and unsure marketing discipline's quest for identity: What should marketing be when it grows up? What kinds of questions should define the marketing discipline? What *can* marketing as a discipline aspire to be?

In a manner characteristic of Shelby's dialectical style of pitting thesis against antithesis, Shelby did not aim to answer these questions. Rather, the remarkable contribution of Shelby's work is that it aimed to provide the discipline with the philosophy of science tools to answer the questions for itself. Terry Clark, a commentator of this volume, notes that Shelby's morphology of theory "was so compelling, so unassailably obvious, once stated, that it might be viewed as a critical turning point for the philosophy of science revolution in marketing."

Revolution came from the widespread adoption of Shelby's ideas and tools. Equipped with these ideas and tools, the dilemma in the questions facing the marketing discipline dissolved. Marketing is a positive science. Marketing theory is viable, even desirable. Rigorous standards for theory in marketing can be specified and met. In this sense, Shelby's work is revolutionary.

The present volume provides only a glimpse into the full scope of Shelby's revolutionary contributions. Nine other volumes accompany this one, and for a fuller appreciation of Shelby's work, a collective reading of all volumes is recommended. Readers looking for more depth and detail will be rewarded by delving into Shelby Hunt's six books on Marketing Theory, the first published in 1976 by Grid Publishing, and the latest in 2010 published by M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

A central theme in the articles included in this volume is the evolution of Shelby's development of philosophy of science principles for marketing research. From the Morphology piece (1971) to the Scientific Realism and Truth piece (2009) co-authored with Jared Hansen, one can witness the development of depth and precision in Shelby's argument for a "research objective and regulative ideal in marketing research." In the initial piece, Shelby put forth a trinity of conditions that must be satisfied for a status of theory in marketing: systematically related statements, law-like generalizations and empirical testability. Shelby challenged whether definitions, classification schemes or analytical statements, however complex, detailed or mathematical, met the conditions of theory. Along the way, he tackled the "nature of marketing science" in his "Fundamental Explananda of Marketing" piece (1983). Here, Shelby outlines the structure and status of general theories of marketing that satisfies the trinity desiderata developed in the Morphology piece. Shelby challenged the discipline



to recognize that few if any so called theories in marketing actually passed the trinity test to be given the status of theory, and few attempts at developing a general theory of marketing exist. The clarity and persistence of Shelby's challenge aroused the discipline, stirring up controversy and debate about the status of theory in marketing.

As Shelby notes in his personal essay for the *Journal of Marketing* (2001) that is included in this volume, major challenges to his position were published during the 1980s. These challenges questioned the focus on objectivity and law-like generalizations in marketing theory, viewing them outdated and unnecessary. Although both the challenge and the controversy are the subject of Volume 3, this volume includes Shelby's full development of the principles of scientific realism and truth in marketing research (2009), which addresses the various challenges and controversies. Rick Bagozzi, a commentator for this volume, notes that this piece is "probably the clearest and most complete statement of Shelby's point of view on the philosophy of science foundations of marketing." For Ray Fisk, another commentator for this volume, the "most interesting part of the article is the discussion of truth and trust." To me, this piece is a crowning glory to a scholar who has dedicated much of his life to develop a philosophy of science compass for scholars engaged in marketing research.

Readers of this volume will also find it difficult to miss Shelby's passion for disciplined argumentation and writing. Bold questions, clear arguments, and compelling writing have defined Shelby's scholarship, which is amply evident in this volume's collection. Robert Peterson, a commentator of this volume, writes without hesitation that "Shelby Hunt is the most important and influential marketing theorist since Wroe Alderson." Shelby's work is a testament to the adage that to write well is to discipline the mind to think clearly. In the Q&A with Shelby Hunt that appears in this volume, Shelby partly reveals his secret for cultivating a disciplined mind when he expands on his passion for chess based on a remark in Robert Peterson's commentary. Shelby notes that one learns how good one is when one competes against the best. To this, I add what I learned from Shelby: one learns to be better when one engages the best. The dialectical process of thesis-antithesis disciplines the mind, as does critical discourse with peers that is founded on confronting issues of substance and throwing light on conflicting positions and controversies. In recounting an episode from the 1982 AMA Marketing Theory conference, Ray Fisk notes that Shelby's approach "has been to present foundational concepts from the philosophy literature and then use these concepts to masterfully critique other marketing theory literature in a clear and lively style."

Personally, putting this edited volume together has been a gratifying experience. Almost three decades ago, I found myself facing Shelby Hunt in a marketing theory seminar at Texas Tech University, where I enrolled as a Ph.D. student, after several years of engineering field experience. To my mind, conditioned by an engineering approach, the questions Shelby asked us to explore seemed initially light and foreign. What do black ravens have to do with marketing? What is the big deal with "intersubjectively certifiable"? Why are we looking for marketing laws? Encouraged by Shelby's