



A diagram is worth a thousand words

HAMISH PRINGLE

THERE ARE too many business books, and too little time to read them, yet we all need help and advice. So the number of options needs to be reduced and a recommendation made. *The Diagrams Book* is a little gem, or rather a collection of them, which deserves to make the cut.

Like many of Kevin Duncan's books, this is largely a collection of other people's ideas synthesised, summarised, and served up with a lightness of touch in a user-friendly format, which makes the content much more accessible and, therefore, applicable.

This one contains 50 graphics in five sections: Triangles & Pyramids; Squares & Axes; Circles & Pies; Timelines & Year Views; and Flows & Concepts. Multiple ideas for improving current and future presentations are sparked off by leafing through while reading Duncan's commentary. Most diagrams are good practical additions to a marketer's PowerPoint toolkit, but some provide really useful new ways of looking at things, such as 'The Bargaining Arena' and 'The Less-Than-Twelve-Month Year'. As Duncan says: "Having trained thousands of people, it is apparent that many find it hard to express ideas and solve problems purely with words. They find it easier to use diagrams. It's a form of visual thinking."

So often we use PowerPoint and start with sentences. Reading *The Diagrams Book* suggests

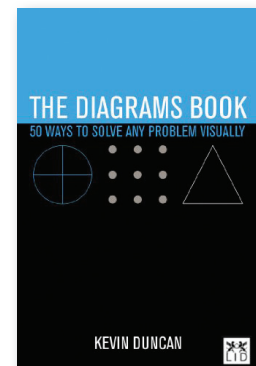
beginning with graphics and storyboarding the argument with just a few words and titles, adding more detailed bullet points afterwards.

In another of his books, *What You Need to Know About Starting a Business*, Duncan advocates 'pitching on a postcard': "If you can't explain in one sentence what the business will do, (the 'elevator pitch'), then it's probably too complicated. Keep it simple." And as he points out, many people are better communicated with by visual rather than written means.

In *The Dictionary of Business Bullshit*, Duncan proposes his concept of 'Drawing board, back to': 1. Return to the original design or blueprint. 2. Begin again, having got nowhere; complete rethink; start from scratch; write off millions in investment money having made the wrong choice; plaintive cry of new product development managers from Penzance to Preston, as in, 'Right guys, it's back to the drawing board'. Maybe starting with a diagram would reduce the prevalence of this cry?

My only complaint? Having to go back to the drawing board in using the lessons learned from *The Diagrams Book* – I wish Duncan had a way to provide the graphics without undermining his intellectual property.

The Diagrams Book, by Kevin Duncan. Published by LID Publishing, March 2013, hard cover £6.99



How marketing's 4Ps have multiplied

KERRIS BRIGHT

IN TRUTH, I wasn't entirely looking forward to reading this book – marketing strategy can be a dry subject at times. Still, embarking on a short flight I packed David Pearson's book *The 20 Ps of Marketing* with the view that at least it could kill time during the digital dead zone that the BA cabin crew demand during take-off and landing. In fact, I was still immersed in the book when we touched down two hours later.

The book is subtitled 'A complete guide to marketing strategy', and Pearson's thesis is that the landscape for marketing has transformed since the concept of the four Ps was introduced in the 1960s and so marketers need a new framework for the modern age. The traditional 4Ps of Product, Price, Place and Promotion are still critical but the author has identified an additional 16Ps which describe marketing actions, measurements of success and behaviours. This is a uniquely comprehensive view of what it takes to succeed and recognises that modern marketers need to be strategically and commercially savvy and possess strong behavioural skills.

The section on 'behaviours', which focuses on the how as opposed to the what, is particularly useful as, in my experience, mastery of this skill set often identifies the true marketing leaders.

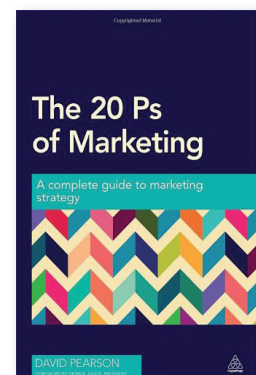
It's an interesting and easy read, blending theory

and some fascinating history lessons with practical applications. Pearson writes in a light style and the text is peppered with mini case studies drawn from his experience spanning four decades with companies such as Procter & Gamble, Mars, Sony, Pillsbury and Pentland. He writes honestly and openly about his successes and failures in equal measure.

The breadth of the book is a strength and a weakness as some concepts are covered a little superficially (but there are suggested reading lists for those who wish to delve deeper). For students or those embarking on their marketing careers, such a list will be invaluable. For the experienced practitioners it is a powerful reminder that making an impact is a mix of what you do and how you do it.

The 20 Ps of Marketing is more than a book about marketing strategy – it's essentially a lesson in leadership and how to grow businesses. I would like it to be required reading for CEOs to challenge them on whether they are providing the right conditions for marketing to thrive and make the most meaningful contribution to their businesses – which, let's face it, we all need now more than ever.

The 20 Ps of Marketing: A Complete Guide to Marketing Strategy, by David Pearson. Published by Kogan Page, December 2013, paperback £16.99 >



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