

“Segmentation in Practice: an Historical Overview of the 18th and 19th Centuries”

Ronald A. Fullerton
California State University
Northridge, California, U.S.A.

Abstract

Purpose: To show that segmentation was widely practiced by businesspeople in many businesses centuries ago.

Methodology: Standard historical method: reliance upon primary sources when possible, good secondary sources in other cases; avoidance of anachronisms, emphasis on interpretation of factual information.

Findings: Long before marketing thought dealt with it, segmentation was practiced by a wide range of businesspeople in Britain, Germany, and the United States. These include publishers in both centuries; producers of clothing fashions, ceramics and pottery, brass ware, and silverware in the 18th century; gun manufacturers, bicycle manufacturers, and fountain pen manufacturers in the 19th century. Only an illustrative fraction of possible businesses are discussed.

The segmentation policies in use earlier in the 19th century were based on observation and practical business sense; there is no evidence of formal market research. Research would have been less useful than it is today since the trade and its markets were small. Most businesses were small, enabling their owners to gain the first-hand experience with consumers which their present-day counterparts, isolated in large bureaucracies, must experience vicariously through market research. As the 19th century went on, and markets grew dramatically, astute publishers saw the need for more formal and systematic market planning. Formal planning was common in the larger firms by the 1890's.

Originality: Earlier work dealt with individual industries, this deals with many.

Keywords: Josiah Wedgewood, Remington, Book Publishing, Books for Teenage Girls, Segmentation in Practice.

Type of Paper: Case studies+ Research Paper

The full paper will appear as a chapter in the upcoming "Routledge Companion to Marketing History". The Companion's publisher has required that the chapter not be published elsewhere. Therefore, only an abstract can be included in the CHARM 2015 Proceedings.