

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 12, 1985

INTEGRATING MICROCOMPUTERS IN THE MARKETING CURRICULUM THROUGH THE USE OF MARKETING COMPUPROBS*

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Two years of work have gone into developing software and problems designed to introduce microcomputer usage in the marketing classroom. The result is the creation of software designed for use on the IBM PC and the apple IIC. The software is a menu-driven marketing decision analysis system. By completing the exercises a marketing student can enhance decision making skills by using the microcomputer. The fourteen techniques/models included are:

1. Linear Programming
2. Profit Volume Analysis
3. Decision Analysis
4. Sales Forecasting
5. Evaluating Market Potential
6. Psychological Price and Advertising Decisions
7. Statistical Decision Making
8. New Product/Service Idea Generation
9. Service Marketing Evaluation Techniques
10. Pricing Decisions
11. Sales Force Decisions
12. Location Techniques
13. Inventory Decisions
14. Marketing Ratio Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The integration of the computer in the university marketing curriculum is an idea whose time has come. Increased computer literacy among today's students at every level - elementary school, high school and college or university - is undeniable. Today's marketing students are better prepared than any of their predecessors to apply the computer as a text in their marketing classes. COMPUPROBS are designed to allow instructors and students to utilize personal computers to address scientific marketing topics, while minimizing class time losses.

The Rationale for Integrating Computers in Marketing Courses

The busy instructor, faced with the tasks of covering all of the course subject matter and adequately testing student knowledge within the limited time frame of a quarter or semester, may raise the question of the value of attempting to add one more dimension to the marketing course. This concern can be addressed in several ways:

1. Computer literacy has reached a new level of importance in our society. The influence of computers on business education continues to accelerate despite

tight academic budgets. In addition, computer literacy is increasingly learning a required employment credential. Computer literacy should be a component of every business school experience.

1. Utilization of computers in marketing courses should encourage higher learning levels, more creativity, and exciting learning experiences for their students.
2. The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has recognized the importance of computer integration in today's college and university programs by requiring tangible evidence of such integration by all member institutions.
3. Perhaps the most important reason of all is the fact that the marketing world, at every level, is fast learning a science of information collection and analysis for the purpose of decision making. Increasingly, the computer is learning the tool that uses available information to assist marketers in making reasoned, informed decisions. To use a management term, it is a decision support system. College and university graduates of the 1980s must be able to adapt to this new technology.

What is COMPUPROBS?

COMPUPROBS is a menu driven marketing decision analysis system. All of the explanations, data entry, analytical programs and user instructions are maintained on a single diskette. The accompanying sourcebook includes explanations of the programs; their use and operation. Also included in the sourcebook are test problems and additional exercises. By completing the exercises a marketing student can enhance his or her decision making skills by using the microcomputer.

The Computers for Which COMPUPROBS Were Designed

No programming skills are required to use COMPUPROBS. The programs are extremely interactive and menu driven. The programs are selected from a master list (menu) which makes access and use easier for the student. Fourteen techniques/models are developed in the master list. The programs are stored on a 5½ inch floppy diskette which supplements the written text. The computer programs are written for the Apple IIC with at least 48K memory (3.3 DOS) the IBM PC with at least 64K memory (IBM version DOS 1.1). Detailed instructions regarding the use of

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Wither of these common educational computers can be found in the specific computer user's manual or in the brief set of instructions supplied with the diskette.

How Much Instructor Computer Expertise is Assumed?

In a word, "none." A primary characteristic of COMPUPROBS is ease of use. The instructions allow the beginning student to quickly and easily learn techniques and apply them. The descriptions avoid computer jargon, and obtuse language and build student confidence through step-by-step explanations of worked-out problems for each technique. Although most instructors are likely to experiment with the actual problems and eventually develop additional problems relating university-specific or regional issues to the text material, the self-contained COMPUPROBS can be assigned as student homework in the same manner that professors used workbook assignments in previous years. The simply operating procedures and the user-friendly language of COMPUPROBS are designed to remove any student concerns and to focus their efforts on analyzing and solving marketing problems – not on learning how to program.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

Chapter 1 briefly describes the evolution of computer technology and its increasing impact upon marketing decisions. It is designed to provide perspective concerning the current state of the art in integrating computers and marketing. Chapter 2 is entitled "Getting Acquainted With COMPUPROBS." All of the specifics including the menu, data entry/editing conventions, procedures, error checks, printing, etc. will be covered in this chapter.

Chapters 3 thru 16 will represent the major components of the text. Each of these chapters is organized using the following format:

1. Description of the concept(s) / technique (s).
2. The procedure for using the aspect of COMPUPROBS.
3. A self test.
4. A single test problem worked out and explained briefly.
5. Additional input/output information (using other problems to illustrate the features of the program).
6. Student problems and exercises for class assignments.

Finally, Chapter 17 will illustrate the use of COMPUPROBS for detailed case study analysis (as an aid in evaluating alternatives, and evaluating data in the case to make better decisions).