

THE ANGELS TAKE ATLANTA

ABSTRACT

This paper takes a novel approach to looking at network theory. Using the BBC long running television series Doctor Who we explain many of the concepts and definitions used throughout IMP theory. It provides examples from the TV series which allow students to see the practical application of many of the concepts and definitions. It provides an innovative and entertaining way to introduce these concepts to students (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels). This approach is useful since network theory is an area that students often find overwhelming and using a TV series not only gets their attention, engages them more deeply in learning, but enhances their learning outcomes by making it a much more approachable subject area.

The paper (and presentation) will include clips from the TV show that allow certain key areas to be explained in detail, practical applications like this have proven very successful in marketing education, specifically in improving students' learning outcomes by creating a more relaxed learning environment.

KEYWORDS: Dr Who, teaching aid, business-to-business marketing,

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEMS STUDENTS HAVE WITH BUSINESS TO BUSINESS MARKETING

Business-to-business marketing is both an elective on undergraduate and on postgraduate marketing courses worldwide. In our experience some electives are consistently popular and receive high numbers of students such as Strategic Brand Management and Advertising, Business-to-Business Marketing is a module which is consistently relatively unpopular and many students will only take it if it suits their timetable better than others. There are potentially a number of reasons for business-to-business marketing's lack of popularity.

- 1) Lack of experience in the business-to-business context – Undergraduate and postgraduate students' consumption experiences are mainly in the business to consumer context. They are familiar with the concepts of branding products, the communications mix and the use of advertising, social media etc, the retail environment, the service encounter and various other aspects of marketing through firsthand experience. They may have limited or no experience of how marketing operates in a business-to-business context.
- 2) Lack of familiarity with business-to-business products and services – Students may find it difficult to be enthusiastic and motivated about products or services which they may not understand such as steel bearings, springs, components of engines etc. Students tend to be interested in areas which are directly relevant to them or immediately attractive to them such as computers, mobile phones, fashion and designer products.
- 3) Lack of familiarity with business to business brands – Students tend to be unfamiliar with pure business-to-business brands across various industrial sectors. These industrial brands do not have the same appeal as a consumer brand which is directly relevant to them such as Apple.
- 4) Lack of familiarity with company processes – Students may be unfamiliar with the wide range of processes and how they link together to create the final product or service. They find it difficult to understand how different departments in the same company interlink.
- 5) Lack of familiarity with dyadic and network interactions - Students have little understanding of how companies deal with each other when conducting business or how other stakeholders they may or not be involved with influence the company.
- 6) The commonality of work in a business-to-business context. – Many of the students want to obtain a job in a fast moving consumer good environment. However there is a lack of understanding on the students' part that even if they work in such an environment there will be business-to-business interactions.

These problems mean that students may not even want to take a business-to-business marketing module and if they do it can be difficult for them to engage fully with the topic, understand its importance and become enthused about it. An innovative if rather radical approach to increasing the engagement and understanding of students with business-to-business marketing would be to introduce them to it through applying it a totally different context but one which they will find easier to understand and one which they are immediately familiar with.

WHY USE DR WHO AS A PEDAGOGICAL AID?

Dr Who is a science fiction television series initially shown by the BBC in the UK on 23rd November 1963 (<http://www.drwho-online.co.uk/guides/beginners/series.aspx>, 2013). It ran from 1963 to 1989 with viewing figures periodically fluctuating. In the early 1960's episodes featuring the Daleks drew in between 9 and 14 million viewers, and in the late 1970's it regularly received 12 million viewers. However, in the 1980's declining figures of around 5million lead to it not being recommisioned. It returned to the screens in 2005 and a further seven series have been produced with the Christmas specials receiving viewing figures between 9 and 13 million (<http://doctorwhotv.co.uk/most-viewed-xmas-special-2005-12-43956.htm>, 2013). Its popularity is not restricted to the UK and it has been is being shown in 48 countries worldwide from France and Romania in Europe to Taiwan and Thailand and Australia. This worldwide popularity means that most students are likely to be familiar with Dr Who. Although it could be argued that many Chinese students would not be familiar with it as it does not appear to have been shown there (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_Who, 2013), familiarity is not a necessary element of it being used as a pedagogical tool.

TV AS A TEACHING RESOURCE

One aim of introducing the use of Doctor Who as a teaching resource was to create a more active learning environment. Being active learners not only is more enjoyable for the students but clearly improves their learning outcomes (Stegemann & Sutton-Brady, 2010). The importance of active learning and students as active learners is well documented. It calls for us to move away from the traditional lecture format which is purely passive and encourages students to become involved with the content (Hamer 2000). While active learning challenges educators and often takes many educators away from their comfort zone, the benefits are two-fold more enjoyable classes for lecturers and students and improved learning outcomes for students. Many authors have found that students prefer active learning and that it promotes deeper understanding of course material and increased logical thinking skills (McConnell et al, 2003).

Other authors concentrate on the fact that the passive student is the greatest challenge facing educators and finding ways to engage them is vital to teaching and learning success (Cohen 1991). It is clear from the literature that consensus is on the fact that actively participating in the learning process allows students to learn more (Weaver and Qi 2005).

Film and TV have long been used as an active approach to learning in Sociology and in recent times it has found favour in Management Education. Misra (2000) rightly points out that students these days are very visually orientated and have experience and exposure in watching TV. This allows them to become more engaged in the material and therefore more interested in the rest of the course material.

Champoux (1999) highlights how using film clips can allow students to hone their analytical skills by analyzing the scenes using the theories and concepts they have studied in Organizational Behavior. He also discusses how it can provoke good class discussion. Scanlan and Feinberg (2000) found that using the Simpsons TV show in teaching sociology helped illustrate concepts, complement class lectures and help students think critically about course material. They found it to be a valuable resource in engaging students in discussion and allowed them to better grasp material. Authors have shown that using media is an "effective way to engage students' attention, inspire and motivate their feelings" (Hobbs 1998).

Overall it is clear that many academics have successfully used film and TV to engage students in the classroom and bring theory to life for them. Thereby ensuring a more active learning environment and improved learning outcomes.

DR WHO ?

Dr Who is a Time Lord, one of the oldest races in the universe and originates from the planet Gallifrey. He is the only surviving Time Lord due to a future war with the Daleks and he travels through time and space exploring and simultaneously battling injustice (<http://www.thedoctorwhosite.co.uk/doctorwho/information-about-doctor-who/>, 2013).

The intention was for Dr Who to be an educational show exploring science and history. Dr Who's original companions were a science and a history teacher (<http://www.thedoctorwhosite.co.uk/doctorwho/information-about-doctor-who/> 2013). However, gradually the stories focused less on history and more on aliens.

Dr Who has had a number of companions who have accompanied him on his travels in the TARDIS (Time and Relative Dimension in Space), his time machine and spacecraft. They are predominantly human or humanoid and they are companions for varying periods of time, some for whole series e.g. Rose Tyler (Billie Piper) and others for only one or two episodes e.g. River Song (Alex Kingston). Initially the Doctor travelled with his granddaughter, Sarah Foreman. During their time on earth two of the teachers, at his granddaughter's school, Barbara Wright and Ian Chesterton, became suspicious and found the TARDIS. The Doctor, worried that they would reveal this to others, kidnapped them and they became his companions (<http://www.thedoctorwhosite.co.uk/doctorwho/information-about-doctor-who/>, 2013). The companions of Dr Who either return to earth, take on a cause or even on occasions they die. Whilst the Doctor at the beginning of the series was suspicious of people, he has become more trusting over time.

The Doctor has a number of enemies some make only one appearance but many reappear throughout the series, these include the Master, the Daleks, the Weeping Angels and the Cybermen amongst others. The Master, like the Doctor, is a Time Lord who survived the last war, however he is a renegade and an arch enemy of Doctor Who's (<http://www.thedoctorwhosite.co.uk/master/>, 2013). Whilst Doctor Who does spend a considerable amount of time tackling alien races he does also spend time trying to extract himself and his companions from problems with time travel.

THE INTERACTION APPROACH AND RELATIONSHIPS

One of the key concepts of business-to-business marketing is an understanding of the interaction approach (Hakansson, 1982). It is crucial for students to understand the components of the interaction approach and how relationships can develop.

In relationships between suppliers and buyer there is the interaction process which is made up of episodes. The episodes involve exchange between the parties. There are four types of exchange which may occur - product, financial, information and/or social exchange. The product or service is central to the exchange and may have an influence on the relationship overall. The money exchanged is a reflection of the economic importance of the relationship. The type of

information exchange that occurs may vary in the degree to which it is technical, financial, or organizational. It may vary in its formality and in the channels used for exchange. Social exchange is vital for reducing uncertainties between the parties and reducing distance, both social and cultural. Social exchange is important for short-term relationships and for long term relationships where they lock the parties together (Hakansson, 1982). Social exchanges are critical in the development of long term relationships (Hakansson, 1982). Whilst in Dr Who there is generally no financial exchange, there are service exchanges in the form of saving his companions or planet earth and there are numerous information and social exchanges. Dr Who exchanges information with the collective conscience of the Autons (Series 1, Episode 1) and the Gelfs (Series 1, Episode 3) to try and reason with them and save the earth.

Through the information exchanges the companies are learning about each other. The interactions between the companies will be influenced by how much they need to learn from each other. The degree of uncertainty in a purchasing situation will influence how much the parties need to learn from each other. Each party's willingness to learn will also influence the interaction. The information exchanged between the parties will reduce the degree of uncertainty. Rose the Doctor's companion (Series 1) initially does not know anything about the Doctor and has no knowledge about travelling through time and space but she is open to obtaining knowledge through interacting with the Doctor.

Social exchange is useful for reducing the distance between the parties in a relationship. The distance between the parties can take many forms it be a, social, cultural, technological or time. The ability of the parties to learn from each other through information exchange and the degree of social exchange will affect the distance between the parties.

Social distance refers to the degree of familiarity there is between the interacting parties. This encompasses their knowledge of how the parties think and work together. With successive social exchange parties become increasingly familiar with each other thinks. Dr Who and his companions initially are not very familiar with each other. Dr Who turns up at Harrods where Rose works and she becomes caught up with him as he tries to stop the plastic based creatures invading. Rose remains with the Doctor and through their interactions they become more familiar with how each other think and operate. Rose learns about time and space travel from the Doctor.

Cultural distance refers to the difference between the parties due to the norms and values of the organisation and/or due to the national origin of the organisation. Companies with very different organisational cultures or from countries with very different national cultures will find their interactions more problematic. One way the Doctor overcomes cultural distance is through utilizing the telepathically based universal translation system in the TARDIS which automatically allows him and his companions to be heard by those they are speaking to as speaking in the same language.

In the Dr Who series cultural distance is operating between the Doctor and his companions, the Doctor and other races in the universe and the Doctor's companions and other races in the universe. Rose, one of Dr Who's companions, is initially shocked when she goes into the TARDIS and finds it bigger on the inside than it appears from the outside (Series 1, Episode1).

The Doctor often has very different perceptions of the value of humans and earth in comparison to his adversaries for example the Slitheen want to make a profit by selling the earth off in pieces; the Daleks want to destroy everything that is different from their own race. The Doctor generally has a more positive perception of the human race; he feels that the race is only at the beginning of their development and could achieve great things.

Technological distance is related to the disparity in the organisations' technical understanding within the relationship. There is quite a significant technological distance between the Doctor's and his companions but they find it impressive and readily accept it. The Doctor adapts Rose's mobile phone so that she can call her mother across time and space (Series 1). Adam is impressed at the humans' ability to download information directly into their brains on Satellite 5 in the future and readily undertakes surgery so that he can do the same (Series 1, Episode 7).

The time distance between the parties relates to their perceptions of when tasks need to be performed. The perceptions of time may differ most at the beginning of the relationship when there is little sense of what the parties want from each and when they require it.

All of these distances can generally be reduced by the parties interacting with each other. Dr Who can be used to demonstrate how these differences can be reduced.

In purchasing situation between two parties there is often uncertainty. Customers may experience need, market and/or transaction uncertainty. With regard to need uncertainty customers may not know exactly what they require to resolve their problem. In these situations the buyers may need to interact frequently with a supplier, and they may favour that relationship. Customers may be unclear about the nature of the supply market and how they should meet their own requirements. Transaction uncertainty is present when the customer may be unsure about whether the suppliers is going to deliver what they require (Ford et al. 2006). The Doctor and his companions are often in uncertain situations and like suppliers the Doctor has reduce uncertainty in any situation through his problem solving skills and transfer ability i.e. how well he can deliver on his promises. Consistently Dr Who is faced with problematic situations, in which alien races are attempting to take over or destroy another race, or there is a problem with the time space continuum or his companion is in need of assistance. These situations require him to quickly assess the situation and determine a course of action to resolve the problem. Dr Who is reliable in that he predominantly manages to successfully resolve the issues.

In a dyadic relationship the parties will both want to benefit from dealing with each other. Each party needs to be aware that benefits can only be obtained through both parties agreeing to the arrangements and accepting them. In reaching their goals the companies have to decide what relationships they wish to invest in. They will need to agree on what form any investment will take whether it will be time, adaptations to the product or process etc. Dr Who chooses his companions and who he wants to invests time in. In Series 1 the Doctor chooses Rose as a travel companion but he chooses not to invest time in Adam who would like to accompany them in the TARDIS (Episode 7). Companies in achieving their objectives may require the other party to make some kind of adaptations to the product, service or to processes (Hakansson, 1982). Companies need to make and control adaptations in a relationship. A company may make adaptations to a product for a buyer which may be formalised through incorporation into a

contract, a legal document. Alternatively adaptations may be performed on a more informal basis through the buyer making a request. Informal adaptations could have repercussions for other relationships which may not have been considered, for example if a supplier reduces the price of a product for a buyer it might will have implications for the profits and may influence other buyers actions if they are aware of the price being reduced.

The relationship atmosphere that occurs between the parties is the result of the individual episodes and other variables including the characteristics of the parties involved, the technology involved and the environment (Hakansson, 1982). The relationship atmosphere will differ between the parties (Leek and Mason, 2010). Each of the episodes will contribute to the development and change of the relationship atmosphere between the parties. The atmospheres may consist of cooperation, conflict, selfishness, mutual benefit, coercion, persuasion, trust and deceit, taking and giving, benign and willful neglect, good management and mismanagement (Ford et. al, 2006).

Commitment and trust are vital in long term dyadic relationship. The parties need to demonstrate commitment and trust. One of the ways that can demonstrate trust is the willingness of a supplier to make adaptations of some kind. The fulfillment of such promises made between customers and suppliers demonstrates commitment and trust. Dr Who initially is quite wary of others which results in him kidnapping his granddaughter's teachers in the very first series in the 1960's. He does become more trusting, in Series 1 he gradually builds up trust with his companion Rose Tyler. When the Doctor is held by Autons whilst talking to the Nestene Consciousness, Rose comes to his rescue by swinging in and kicking the guard allowing the Doctor to escape. However not all companions manage to gain the Dr's trust. In Series 1 Episode 7, Adam joins Dr Who and Rose on their journey in to the future but Adam tries to exploit the situation by downloading information from the future and as a result the Dr leaves Adam at home on planet earth. The selfishness of a party can be demonstrated by the (Series 1, Episode 3) Gelfs whose bodies were wasting. They wanted to use Gwyneth as a bridge the rift and use dead bodies on earth to save their race. The Doctor encouraged the servant to do this. However, when the Gelfs were in the bodies they used them to kill the Undertaker and were going to kill more humans until all of the Gelfs had bodies. The Gelfs betrayed the Doctor's trust.

Dependence and power exist within B2B relationship and need to be managed. A party's dependence may be readily apparent. A supplier for example may rely on the buyer for a large proportion of sales or profits. A customer may rely on a supplier for a component. The dependence of the parties on each other may not be even, one party may be more reliant on the other. In Dr Who power and dependence exist between the Dr and his companions and his enemies. Initially Dr Who's might be perceived as more powerful and less dependent on his companions as he has knowledge and experience gained from his previous travels. However on occasions he is dependent on his companions. For example Rose saved the Doctor when he was being held down by two Autons controlled by the Nestene Consciousness (Series 1, Episode 1). The interaction approach recognizes that the customer or suppliers are dependent on each other and that they have to work with the opportunities that occur and within the constraints of the relationship. The Gelfs (Series1, Episode 3) have been involved in a Time War and as their own bodies have wasted away they appear in 1869 on earth in order to take possession of human dead

bodies. A war between two races in the universe has repercussions for other races who were not involved.

Another of Dr. Who's enemies who can help explain the idea of dependence are the Weeping Angels. They first appeared in Series 3 in 2007 and were last seen in 2012 in an episode entitled *The Angels take Manhattan* (inspiration for our paper title). They are considered the scariest of all the Dr. Who monsters. They have the ability with just one touch to send people into the past allowing them to then feed off the potential time energy of what would have been the rest of the person's life. They are however quantum locked which means they can only move when no one else sees them, once observed they turn to stone and can't be killed. They are totally dependent on interactions with humans for their very survival because they need the time energy to survive.

Conflict may occur in business-to-business relationships to varying degrees. It can be manifest conflict which can be overt between the parties or it can be underlying. The parties can disagree over various aspects which might include differences in objectives, inadequate performance etc. Conflict needs to be managed to enable the parties to work together in a relationship and achieve their agreed needs. Conflict can be very destructive if mutual goals and agreements are not reached. Many of Dr Who's enemies have very different ideas to Dr Who on their goals which leads to conflict and often death. Dr Who destroys the Daleks, Cybermen, the Editor-in-Chief amongst others.

In the interaction approach relationships between parties develop from the first exchange episode between the customer and the supplier. Even the first time the customer and supplier meet they are gathering information about each other and partaking in social exchange. Similarly in the relationship between the Doctor and his companions, the companions want to obtain information. Rose joins the Doctor on his travels at the end of Episode 1(Series7) and it is only in the Episode 2 that she begins to ask him questions as she realizes she has left earth with a complete stranger. Interestingly the Dr is not very forthcoming on details and she probes no further saying "don't argue with the designated driver".

Generally episodes and transactions are not isolated events. Each interaction between the buyer and supplier will be affected by the previous experiences between them. The current interaction between the parties will also affect any future episodes between them. Dr Who has multiple interactions not only with his companions but also with his enemies. He has encountered a number of his enemies including the Daleks, the Cybermen, the Ice Warriors more than once and from his previous interactions he has gained knowledge and experience in how to deal with them which will influence his future encounters.

Relationships between suppliers and buyers may not continue indefinitely and they may become inert i.e. an active relationship becomes dormant due to a change in purchasing requirements, they may decline or they may breakdown and fail (Halinen and Tahtinen, 2002). With regard to the Doctor's companions they may leave him to return to earth, they may leave him to take up a cause on another planet or on occasions they essentially die or become completely lost to him e.g. Amy Pond in *The Angels take Manhattan* (Series7) when she was returned to the past by the weeping angels.

NETWORKS

Although relationships are the basis for exchange and it's through these that companies achieve their objectives. The decisions about relationships are not necessarily only decided in the context of that relationship. A company has a number of relationships and how it behaves in one relationship will affect the others. Other agencies may also have an impact such as governments, banks, universities and industry associations.

Companies have different perspectives of the network. The supplier will have a different perspective to a customer or a wholesaler. Similarly, Dr Who, his companions and adversaries will all have different perspectives on the universe. Rose as a human may have considered the possibility of other races in the universe but there is we no evidence to suggest only there are other races. The Doctor has a whole different perspective of the universe, he is aware of the numerous other races and their dealings with each other. He also has a completely different perspective through his ability to travel through time. The various alien races have their own perspectives of what exists in the universe they inhabit.

Within any network companies will have different objectives that they wish to achieve, which may vary in their degree of compatibility with other companies objectives. Similarly in Dr Who alien races have different aims and different perspectives of the value of each other in achieving their own aims. The Doctor sees value in the human race, whereas in contrast the Daleks want to destroy everything, the Slitheens want to sell the earth as scrap, the Gelfs want to regenerate their race through killing humans and taking the bodies and the Editor in Chief wants to retard the development of the human race by manipulating data.

The connectedness of relationships in the wider network means they will influence each other. The company needs to take a different perspective from the traditional one which perceives the company as independent and determining its own strategy. The network view means that the company has to accept that it is interdependent and embedded and this limits its ability to think and act independently. The company needs to analyse its position in the network and engage in behaviour that will enhance its position. It will involve working within existing relationships and forging new relationships. The Gelfs were the victims of a time war which lead to their physical bodies wasting leaving only incorporeal forms. They wanted to be allowed to used the dead bodies of humans to regenerate their race. The Doctor agreed as they told him there were only a limited number of Gelfs left. However when they bridged the rift there were numerous Gelfs who then killed human beings. Their dealings in a time war potentially could have potentially had a negative affect on the human race.

As in any network it is not just the company at the centre of the network that changes but competitors and customers evolve. Competitors evolve and develop their product and service offerings. Companies have to obtain information on their customers' needs so that they can continue to satisfy them and maintain their success. It is also important to be aware of how competitors are developing their products services so that the company can stay ahead of them and maintain their success. A number of Dr Who's adversaries appear in more than one series of Dr Who. The Daleks appeared initially in 1963, they are Kaleds from the planet Skaro mutated by Davros and they are housed in a conical mechanical armour and they were unable to make it down stairs due to their construction. However they reappeared in 2012 and were able to hover

and overcome flights of stairs. Similarly the cybermen appeared in early series of Dr Who (date?). The cyber men who originate from Mondas planet earths twin plane, were humanoid but began implanting more artificial body parts eventually becoming unemotional and coldly calculating. The early cyber men were only killed by gold dust whereas in later series a new variation of Cybermen appeared who were engineered by the character John Lumic who was transplanting human brains into Cybermen in order to protect the human race. A mobile phone was used to control these Cybermen and a microchip was used to inhibit their emotions. With the enemies evolving Dr Who cannot rely on past strategies for defeating them instead he has to adapt in order to succeed.

CONCLUSION

This work-in-progress paper has shown how you can use a popular TV show to explain many of the concepts and definitions used throughout IMP theory. It provides examples from the TV series which allow students to see the practical application of many of the concepts and definitions. It provides an innovative and entertaining way to introduce these concepts to students (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels). Clearly while there is literature to show that engaging students in this way may lead to improved learning outcomes, it is too early for us to say if it that has happened. The next stage in our research will be to investigate the impact of this approach on student learning. So stay tuned for the next episode.

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