

Strictly **MARKETING** MAGAZINE

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Lessons from the
Digital Trenches:
A Sales
Transformation

Google+
Changes that
Can Help You
Market Your
Brand and
Business!

Future Marketing:
Becoming Big
Social Mobile

Marsha Doll
Dishes on Promotions

A close-up portrait of Marsha Doll, a woman with short, voluminous blonde hair and bangs. She has blue eyes, is wearing red lipstick, and is smiling slightly. She is wearing a black turtleneck sweater with a silver necklace. The background is blurred.

Future Marketing: Become Big Social Mobile

Readers should prepare to swim in deep water in 2016. Author, speaker and practitioner David F. Giannetto's column, *Future Marketing: Becoming Big Social Mobile*, reflects the diverse, eclectic nature of his experience and the unusual, often controversial perspective he's known for. We sat down to pull the covers back and give readers a glimpse into the mind and background of the thought-leader who has driven major initiatives in organizations ranging from the United Nations, Coke, Pepsi, and JP Morgan to American Express, Scholastics and many more.

SMM: We try to bring together an interesting mix of experts for our readers and you come to marketing from an unusual background. Can you give us a glimpse into how it happened?

DFG: My work in the marketing space is really a reflection of the executive mindset these days. There are a lot of different skill sets coming together in the marketing space right now. I was fully committed to the information space—business intelligence and analytics, what you would think of as a very practical application of data science before it was cool enough to be called that—working mostly with fortune 2000 brands. I was designing everything from transactional system data capture to overarching management blueprints; real enterprise performance management stuff. Then social media hit, then mobile and companies started racking up expense. Eventually executives got tired of asking their social experts about ROI and getting answers that involved friends, fans and followers, sentiment and engagement. I was talking to them about using data to drive revenue and profitability, so it really shouldn't be a shock that they would turn to me and say: can you use this data too?



I was already working with these companies to help them become truly customer-centric. Gaining access to “big data” just allowed me to paint a more complete picture about their customer base and how to use them in new ways. I was still talking revenue and profit, and that connects with them. Once I showed them an ROI was possible on social they were hooked. It just made too much sense and marketers need to jump on that bandwagon. For me that's where the whole concept of *Big Social Mobile* started, how they are all really part of one larger movement and how they can be used in an integrated fashion to drive performance. It did take ten more years to make it a real methodology anyone can follow.

SMM: It seems pretty clear your experience with clients has shaped your perspective. Is this what readers can expect in your *Future Marketing* column?

DFG: I hope so. There's a lot of great social and mobile experts out there; a lot of people with a deeper data science background than I have. I am usually working collaboratively with these experts. When we work together it's very powerful. Good social practices are really mainstream in most companies. They're ready for more; ready to take it to the next level. That's usually where I come in.

I'm talking about using these initiatives at an enterprise level to support strategic objectives, to improve the customer experience and ultimately drive revenue and profitability. To me methods, all types of technology, diverse data stores and organizational behavior and physiology are all just different tools in the toolbox to get the organization to connect more closely with consumers, win their hearts and minds—and wallets.

I also hope the column will be very practical. That's something I pride myself on. Someone once said to me "you take complex theory and make it very practical." It might be a bigger compliment than I desire but I took great pride in it. Too much of what's put out there today isn't actionable—too much of what marketers deliver to the business isn't actionable. I am relentlessly driven towards practicality in the use of technology, data and methods that are real and actionable. If you can't measure success it doesn't count. Success is measured in dollars. That rule of business has not changed.

SMM: Which came first, the chicken or the egg—you were a Rutgers University professor and an operations manager earlier in your career, did the theory or your real world experience drive you towards these beliefs?

DFG: It all started with a very simple report when I was an operation's manager at Airborne Express. We were battling a very tough union and this report had some extra columns tagged on the right-hand side of it. No one knew what they were. Corporate couldn't tell me. It was curiosity as much as anything else, because there was clearly a pattern in the data. I had taught myself to program in middle school so I could figure out that the report was showing when route drivers used the new barcode scanner or were entering information manually—which they weren't supposed to do. It allowed me to discipline and fire a lot of bad or even corrupt

route drivers. I don't think the other managers ever figured out how I knew so much—it gave me a competitive advantage so to speak, that was the spark. Once I became a consultant it was really just a natural extension of that.

SMM: You once keynoted a leadership conference and the title was "How Steve Jobs Killed American Leadership..." Some of your ideas have been labelled as controversial. Have you always thought about these topics differently?

DFG: Yes, I'm glad I made it out of that conference alive, but it is my favorite topic to talk about because it gets people fired up. You need people to hear you through the noise. Social has actually had a negative impact: it has made the mainstream more entrenched. It's easy for someone to write a blog post that essentially says what everyone already believes. Psychology states people actually like reading affirmations of what they already know (translate that as "likes" which makes a post popular) so it's actually harder to get them to think differently because there are so many people jumping on the easy idea and not challenging easy beliefs. I'm really a marketer at heart—selling to customers, getting them to adopt your approach, getting them to change—those are really all about marketing. So you have to get them to stop and listen. It isn't easy in today's climate. This is what marketers are up against.

SMM: That doesn't answer the question. But let me rephrase it then: so have you always thought differently about things or is this just marketing?

DFG: Does it really matter? This is capitalism. Perceived value has just as much value as real value does (don't let me get on that bandwagon). Honestly, when I became a consultant I didn't know much about the theory and today's marketers don't need to either.

It is the expert's job to make it practical and actionable for you. If they don't then get a new expert.

When I started I asked operations managers what information would be helpful and then I figured out how to get the data in the easiest and simplest way possible. I created the most actionable reports I could, and then I had them use it every day to drive performance—performance in areas that were directly tied to financial goals because that's what the firm I was working for was known for. I didn't realize I wasn't supposed to use this new "business intelligence" technology for such a practical application. It wasn't until several major accounts later—the first time a client of mine won the Business Finance Vision Award—that I realized I was doing things much differently than other consults. That method became my first book. I had to learn a lot of theory to write it and I became really fascinated with that too. That led to teaching. Today's marketing leaders can create practical applications for the other departments they need support from and they'll get support.

But the readers will see the answer to that question. I can't really avoid what I believe—I'm too much like my father. I believe in the practical application of theory—like Malcolm Gladwell if he really had to work with clients for a living. That comes out in every aspect of my life, whether I want it to or not.

SMM: So that's it? You are just relentlessly practical in all things?

DFG: I'm actually a dreamer at heart—doesn't marketing really require that? I just can't earn a living that way.

SMM: How does your new book, *Big Social Mobile*, fit into this?

DFG: It was the next logical step for me after the *Power Grid*. I took a break off to write a nonfiction novel as my second release, but this is the book my readers wanted. When Palgrave Macmillan calls you, you don't say no. I think the book is well done and ahead of its time. A mix of theory and practical application and something that readers can take to their office and use to make a real impact the very next day. I hope that the column is that same thing. Something that will make them stop and think about their company and their role within it and how they can make an impact.

David F. Giannetto helps organizations leverage technology—providing both the technical and business insight necessary to create, understand and utilize it to improve performance.



He is SVP of Services at Astea International, the leader in service management and mobile workforce technology.

*He is author of *Big Social Mobile: How Digital Initiatives can Reshape the Enterprise and Create Business Value* (Palgrave Macmillan 2014), the first enterprise-level methodology that helps organizations integrate social media, mobile technology and big data into their core people, processes, technology, information and strategy to create tangible improvements in revenue and profit. This work builds upon his first book, the award winning management methodology, *The Performance Power Grid, The Proven Method To Create and Sustain Superior Organizational Performance* (Wiley, 2006), that defined how organizations use internal information to improve performance. Visit his site at www.giannetto.com*