Preface

This book adventure started 6 years ago when I became intrigued by the potentially fruitful applications of the new discipline of neuroscience to studies of consumer behavior and marketing. Such a nexus is the foundation of the field of neuromarketing\(^1\) which investigates the brain and neural reactions to stimuli related to market exchanges. It was my long-time friend – Professor Nestor Braidot of Grupo Braidot in Buenos Aires – who then through his own work inspired my curiosity. It took me a lot of reading of virtually thousands of pages to grasp the foundations of the brain anatomy and physiology and their role in the emotion processing and decision making. In that task, I was graciously assisted by Professor Perry Renshaw, formerly of Harvard’s McLean Hospital, who took time to introduce this layman to the fMRI methodology and related research framework. I also had a privilege of being coached by the wonderful husband-and-wife team of Professors Ursula Dicke and Gerhard Roth of the University of Bremen. They not only helped to clarify my many questions about the mysteries of the brain and the central nervous system but also challenged me to think about the epistemological consequences of the advances in the mind research.

Among the international academic conferences and practitioners’ meetings I attended, two proved particularly influential. The first one was the Conference on Neuroeconomics which in May of 2008 brought to Copenhagen some leading researchers in the field of neuromarketing. The second one with a more applied focus – dubbed Neuroconnections – took place in Cracow in February of 2009. Needless to say, I learned a lot from listening to and discussing with numerous engaging presenters. In fact so many, that it is rather difficult to mention them all. However, I cannot stress strongly enough how illuminating proved the insights generously shared with me by Professors Gemma Calvert of the University of Warwick (UK), Tim Ambler of the London Business School and Richad Silberstein

\(^{1}\)Gerald Zaltman and Stephen Kosslyn of Harvard University first patented in 2000 the neuroimaging method to gauge the impact of marketing signals on consumer emotions, preferences and memories. This is what comprises the essence of neuromarketing.
of Swinburne University of Technology (Australia). Not only did they prove valuable academic mentors but at the same time revealed some of the tricks of trade pertaining to their practical studies executed for various business clients. At Neuroconnections, I also had a good fortune to meet a terrific speaker – Dean DeBiase of TNS Media – who was very generous in offering his comments on my preliminary ideas. Having Dean to write an Introduction is a real honor to me.

In broadening the practitioners’ perspective, my understanding of how things are being done was further enhanced by the comments offered by Jakob de Lemos – the inventor of the Emotion Tool and cofounder of iMotion, and Siemon Scamell-Katz of TNS Magazin. In that same category, Dr. Rafal Ohme – the CEO of the Warsaw headquartered LABoratory and Co. – gave me a personal tour of the state of the art facility where the commissioned advertising studies are being conducted.

The purpose of the present book was to integrate findings of countless experiments and generalizations in order to develop a new yet possibly coherent interpretation of the behavior of the consumer – the one which highlights the natural predispositions conditioned by human biology. This proved a difficult task. First, to the author’s best knowledge the present account may be the first of its kind with no specific model to follow in terms of the structure and the main foci. Second, beyond the neural studies pertaining to consumption per se which are not plenty yet, it seemed appropriate to adopt a wider perspective and look at the literature from the vast array of domains beyond the brain and neuronal studies. The range proved broad indeed: from decision science to food and nutrition to computer gaming to social psychology. Combing through the maze of abundant contributions turned out to be a real hunting experience and merely keeping up with the prolific publications of so many bright scholars designing ever more imaginative experiments proved a demanding job. It is best possible, then, that some valuable contributions escaped my attention. Even so, hopefully, the picture of the emerging discipline of neuromarketing did not get too distorted.

When facing many challenges, I had at the same time the comfort of selecting which studies and approaches best complete the panorama. While advised by my marketing colleagues, I still take the responsibility for the inclusion of certain themes and downplaying some others. In doing so, I attempted to follow the traditional format of consumer behavior analysis with its focus on attitudes and preferences, determinants of choice and purchase, usage habits and post purchase behavior, and loyalty. In that respect, it is telling to realize how people’s perception of the world, of other people, products and communications about them is flawed with the sensory illusions and the imperfect mental processing. The value of neuromarketing lies in the fact that not only it describes the less publicized phenomena (for example, the commonality of senses) but also helps explain them with the knowledge of neuronal processes. In addition, however, neuroscience provides compelling evidence to review the emotional side of consumption, its hedonistic aspect and related desires. Even if difficult to accept, understanding that the irrational component of the consumers’ judgments and behavior is not a deviation from a norm but rather the norm itself bears important theoretical implications. Further, in view of the recent research it stands to reason that not
only are human beings hard wired to react subconsciously and consciously in a
certain fashion but also that the differences in neuroanatomy and physiology
account for significant lasting differences in the individual decision-making and
buying styles. Consequently, the models used so far by the marketers to describe the
buyer behavior call for revision as they come across as too simplistic. The problem
is that scholastically it proves much easier to justify a perfectly logical albeit
detached from reality normative explanation of the consumer conduct than the
one which is far less consistent yet describes the phenomena in question more
accurately. In that context, it behooves the researchers to concentrate less on the
otherwise elegant analytical models portraying the archetyped consumer. In turn,
paying more attention to the less coherent default and shortcut emotional and
intellectual routines and their less deterministic impact upon the people’s valua-
tions and decisions opens new perspectives for marketing research.

The objective of the book is to further the development of the research area with
the possibility of spawning applications which relate directly to business efforts
to enhance the customer satisfaction. In attempting to organize the knowledge of
the discipline one can hopefully better identify the uncharted territories of consum-
er studies. It is with that intention that I pass this work to the reader and thank
Dr. Niels Thomas and Ms. Alice Blanck both of Springer for their help in this
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