

WHAT WILL THE CUSTOMERS *DO*? **That is the (only) relevant question**

The success of any business strategy, of any business decision, of any business plan should be predicated *not* on what the target market, customers or audience, *say* they will do or on what they *think* they will do, but *on what they will actually DO*.

Customers and prospective customers make decisions also. Decisions of whether to buy or not to buy, decisions of whether to evaluate one product or another, all are based on an often complex set of factors. Some are easy to understand, such as budget considerations or acknowledged needs, while others are much more difficult to capture and to measure, such as mindset, perceptions, and memories of past experiences.

In reality, more often than not, customers find it difficult to make decisions. Many decisions involve conflicts of priorities and are impossible to make without some tradeoffs: benefits vs. costs, investing now or investing later, short-term cost of money vs. long-term operational savings, risks of technological obsolescence, etc.

The conflicts involved are precisely what corporate executives need to know and understand in order to target their strategy with the maximum chance of success. The knowledge of how those conflicts are resolved in the minds of the target customers is what should guide the corporate decision maker.

To be of use to the decision maker, the correct business model for the decision has to include not only those factors that are quantitative, objective, rational and explicit, but also those that are qualitative, subjective, irrational and implicit in the minds of the customers

Anything less is wholly insufficient and makes it difficult to take the proper action or to undertake the steps that will yield maximum success with minimum risk.

This is why the best approach to any business decision model is really to develop two separate parts, the quantitative model and the qualitative model, both of which have a specific reality which will affect the customers' decisions. Once retrieved, the two models must be fused together and integrated into a clear picture of what has to be done to achieve the desired results.