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Book Review

## **Marketing Nutrition Soy, Functional Foods, Biotechnology, and obesity by Brian Wansink**

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In this issue we have included reviews of a few books that we thought are important in the field of food, agriculture, nutrition and development. Please read and tell us what you think

**Title:** Marketing Nutrition Soy, Functional Foods, Biotechnology, and obesity

**Author:** Brian Wansink

**Publisher:** University of Illinois Press

**Reviewer:** Kennedy M. Shiundu and Hon. Prof. Ruth K. Oniang'o

Marketing in its classical form is normally defined with the three P's, namely Product, Price and Promotion. Marketing principles are thought to work in conformity with tangible goods and services. In Marketing Nutrition, the author reveals that marketing nutrition is sociological in context, and focuses on all efforts to encourage and enable people to eat more nutritiously.

Marketing nutrition could be subtle in some aspects; many people involved in nutrition marketing might call it education, public service, or simply good parenting. Sometimes it takes the form of education programmes or innovative distribution programmes, and in other instances, takes the form of more direct efforts.

The book singles out four aspects of nutrition namely Soy, Functional foods, Biotechnology, and Obesity in illustrating possible protocols when correcting the misconceptions and inadequacies that have been observed in marketing related nutrition products and practices.

A confirmation this book makes - probably not new to a lot other people - which many people have alluded to before, is that nutrition knowledge parse cannot sufficiently change people's views with regards to what they eat, and generally how to improve their nutritional status. In the end, what matters more is the information consumers are given, and not so much, how much nutrition information is given

Marketing Nutrition comes out strongly to support the idea that a change in consumer behavior is most easily accepted when the change is gradual. In particular, to be widely accepted, foods must be selected, available, familiar, and expected (SAFE). Also, the book underscores the work previously undertaken by the Committee on Food Habits, which emphasized the importance of removing barriers to consumption before trying to change food habits.

The concept of describing foods to make them better, is based on the understanding that whereas the wrong words can unfavorably bias a person's taste ratings of a product, the right words can favorably bias them also. The book argues that the suggestive power of labeling has some immediate applications for helping increase the acceptance and consumption of nutritious foods.

Understanding consumers of nutrition information is very essential in influencing their behaviour.

Community members, naturally are not homogenous. As such, some individuals or groups are more predisposed to changing their consumption behaviour in a particular direction.

It is, therefore, important that nutrition marketing must go beyond the notion of people knowing that food is nutritious. A good dietician or health care professionals understands that nutrition education will solve nutrition problems, only when it is relevant to one's personal circumstances and appealing to ones' individual tastes. Similarly, the author explains that public policy officials must confront the issue of food scares. In these cases, the risks of the unknown are more important than benefits. Even if attitudes can be changed about the risks of biotechnology, people will avoid risks long before they see the benefits of biotechnology.

There has been a misconception that marketing nutrition is the same as marketing any other attribute of a product, whether it is fluoride for toothpaste, passenger-side airbags for cars, or a fresh scent in a detergent. However, when trying to encourage changes in habits, it is easier to encourage small, infrequent substitutions when introducing new foods. It is also easier to target opinion leaders and nutritional gatekeepers than to target everyone. Good cooks have a tremendous influence over the eating behaviors of their families. If they buy it, it stands a good chance of being eaten.

In nutrition, just like any other science, scientists whose work receive the respect of their peers, has an impact on practice. What this means is that one cannot simply deliver the data and leave. Instead, one must make certain that it is disseminated in an easily understandable way through the media, or through papers that are widely available. Also, it means that academics must develop partnerships with social scientists who focus on consumer adoption, or professionals who specialize in implementation.

In retrospect, the book identifies the role of hygiene in saving lives, especially in the nineteenth century, while the twentieth century could reasonably be called the century of medicine. Medicine was responsible for saving and extending lives as never before. At the moment though, many of the changes that will further contribute most to extending and adding quality to people's lives are based on behavioral changes. They entail reducing risky behavior and improving on physical exercise and nutrition.

This is a great book that each and every person working in food, nutrition and related policy organizations need to read. It is written in an easy to read format, simple and interesting style, devoid of scientific jargon. The issues Wansink is addressing have been tackled before, yet the approach is captivating as it is practical and illuminating.

The book could do with some slight improvement on the title though. The title as it currently reads can be misunderstood, in reference to the sub-title 'Soy, Functional Foods, Biotechnology, and Obesity'. Some readers might confuse the book to be promoting soy or biotechnology products. This might compromise the readership coverage. It would be wise to omit the sub-title, because the issues addressed by the book are truly fundamental and need serious consideration, thus should not be bogged down by fairly controversial issues such as biotechnology.

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Buy a cheap copy of Marketing Nutrition: Soy, Functional book by Brian Wansink. Although encouraging people to eat more nutritiously can promote better health, most efforts by companies, health professionals, and even parents are Free Shipping on all orders over \$10.Â Marketing Nutrition : Soy, Functional Foods, Biotechnology, and Obesity. by Brian Wansink. No Customer Reviews. Select Format. Hardcover. Books. Marketing nutrition : soy, functional foods, biotechnology, and obesity. Wansink, Brian. Date. [2005], Â©2005.Â Wansink, Brian. Bibliographic information. Includes bibliographical references (p. [197]-204) and index. Language. English. Editorial Reviews. Review. "Marketing Nutrition moves theory and research into practice. There are enormous economic dividends for health care providers, public health institutions, and commercial food companies if we are successful in doing this."--Dr. David Mela, Expertise Group Leader, Unilever Health Institute.Â About the Author. Brian Wansink is a professor of applied economics of marketing and of nutritional science at Cornell University. He is the director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab and the author of Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More than We Think. Product details.Â I have been a follower of Professor Brian Wansink's brilliant work since studying as a dietitian from 2002, and Brian's book - Marketing Nutrition has been like my bible for my nutrition consulting.