



# Marketing at the base of the pyramid: Perspectives for practitioners and academics

Stefanie Beninger<sup>\*</sup>, Karen Robson<sup>\*</sup>

*Beedie School of Business, Simon Fraser University, 500 Granville Street, Vancouver, BC V6C, 1W6, Canada*

## KEYWORDS

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**Abstract** This article argues that there is a strong case as to why marketing practitioners and scholars should be interested in Base of the Pyramid (BoP) markets, and attempts to enhance understanding of marketing in the BoP. We begin by describing the BoP market and reviewing the existing literature on BoP consumer behavior and marketing promotions. We then present a number of current practitioner approaches to marketing in the BoP and highlight disconnects between what occurs in practice and existing academic research. We conclude with four takeaways designed to inform marketing practitioners of potentially effective approaches and missed opportunities; in addition, we inform academics of areas where further research would be beneficial.

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## 1. The case for marketing in the base of the pyramid

Marketing often focuses on targeting and serving wealthy consumers—those consumers who buy cars, luxury goods, and vacations. However, there are estimates that these consumers represent less than half of the world's population, with many people living in absolute poverty (Hammond, Kramer, Tran, Katz, & Walker, 2007). Importantly, major economies such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa have large numbers of people living in poverty. This consumer group, known as the Base of the

Pyramid (Bottom of the Pyramid or BoP), is comprised of the people who occupy the lowest rungs of the global economic pyramid. Those in this context live in poverty; they lack access to affordable products and services and the income with which to purchase them. Ultimately, the result is that the world's poor have little in the way of tangible possessions. BoP consumers also struggle with access to basic resources, such as clean drinking water, affordable energy, and reliable transportation systems, all of which affect their consumption and the marketing opportunities in this context. Finally, as the BoP spans many continents, there is a wide diversity in both culture and language, which further complicates communicating with these consumers. In addition to this diversity in language and culture, low or nonexistent functional literacy also influences marketing efforts in the BoP.

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding authors

E-mail addresses: [sbeninge@sfu.ca](mailto:sbeninge@sfu.ca) (S. Beninger), [krobson@sfu.ca](mailto:krobson@sfu.ca) (K. Robson)

These insights speak to some of the challenges of marketing in the BoP context, and the picture painted of the BoP thus far is, admittedly, bleak. An initial reaction may very well be to brush off the BoP as a market too poor to serve, or at least too poor to serve profitably. However, this is not the case. Despite the challenges in these contexts, the BoP has an estimated market worth of \$5 trillion globally (Hammond et al., 2007). Additionally, this market segment represents more than 50% of the buying power in Asia and more than 70% in Africa (Guesalaga & Marshall, 2008). Given the market size and market worth, and as evidenced by the growing number of companies already operating in the BoP, there is a place for marketing in this context.

The fact is that there is tremendous opportunity to serve BoP consumers—an opportunity companies are gradually realizing. Current research has yet to reflect this growing interest in marketing to the BoP. Although there is a vast body of literature from the perspective of marketing in the developed world, there is limited research focused on marketing aimed at the world's poorer consumers. In order to effectively market to the BoP, we need to forge a deeper understanding of consumers and the promotional activities aimed at them. In what follows, we provide a brief review of what we know about BoP consumers from extant academic literature. This review sets the stage for our findings from practitioners actively promoting to consumers in the BoP.

### 1.1. The uniqueness of BoP consumers

Not surprisingly, BoP consumers have different consumption patterns than consumers in non-BoP markets. Consumers in BoP contexts tend to be highly value-conscious (Pralhad, 2004), and in the face of limited income, purchasing decisions become more complex and are considered more carefully (Chikweche, Stanton, & Fletcher, 2012). For example, habitual and low-involvement purchases considered routine in the developed world, such as purchases of food and personal hygiene products, are not necessarily routine purchases in the BoP. Those in the BoP need assurance that the products and services they buy are reliable and worth their limited funds. Indeed, concerns as to whether an offering will work or not are common, and product performance has the greatest influence on repeat purchases (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2010). Additionally, presenting different possible uses for products can also facilitate adoption (Simanis, 2012).

A prevailing misconception is that BoP consumers simply cannot afford to spend money on anything other than basic survival needs, such as food or shelter. However, BoP consumers can and do spend

money on goods and services other than those essential for survival. Prahalad and Hammond (2002) point out that the world's poorest consumers do, in fact, purchase both expensive and nonessential goods—including televisions sets, telephones, and kitchen appliances. In addition, spending on festivals and family gatherings, such as weddings and funerals, are an extremely important part of the budget of BoP households (Banerjee & Duflo, 2007).

BoP consumers not only spend money on expensive goods, but also often wind up paying higher prices for goods—sometimes as much as 100 times more than consumers not in the BoP (Pralhad & Hammond, 2002). This can be due to factors like an inability to access retailers with lower prices, limited time to compare prices, or reduced or inefficient distribution to poorer neighborhoods. Especially in BoP contexts, where people often live in remote areas, higher prices are simply a reality. Unfortunately, this so-called poverty penalty is not limited to any one geographic region. Poorer consumers in North America, for example, often have to pay higher prices compared to wealthier consumers for the same goods (Hill & Stephens, 1997).

As many BoP consumers are paid daily and do not have the ability to put funds aside for savings, they are constrained in their ability to make large or expensive purchases (Subrahmanyam & Gomez-Arias, 2008). This requires innovative financing options, such as providing layaway or staggered payment plans. However, this aspect is changing rapidly. For example, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, promised a bank account for all households in the country, with hopes that this will foster financial inclusion, facilitate payment of government benefits, and avoid corruption (Kumar, 2014).

Another way in which BoP consumers overcome the higher prices they face on the market is through engaging in creative consumption. Creative consumers in the North American context have been well documented (Berthon, Pitt, McCarthy, & Kates, 2007). However, the adage that 'necessity is the mother of invention' is particularly true in the BoP, making creative consumption commonplace. That is, impoverished consumers may cope with the lack of physical and financial resources necessary by finding creative and alternative uses for the products that are available or are affordable (Beninger & Robson, 2014). As well, through modifying, adapting, or transforming market offerings, consumers are able to take it upon themselves to supply creative and useful market offerings to others in their social networks.

Social networks matter greatly in the BoP. Those in the BoP use their networks as a key means of

accessing resources and as a key source of information when making purchasing decisions. Many of the world's poor operate small-scale businesses (Banerjee & Duflo, 2007), which means that many in the BoP are simultaneously entrepreneurs and consumers within a social network. These dual roles influence each other on a daily basis, when, for example, entrepreneurs lend money to others in their networks (Viswanathan, Rosa, & Ruth, 2010a). Additionally, group savings and borrowing clubs can provide a way for those in the BoP to aggregate their resources (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2010), again reinforcing the importance of social networks in this context. Given this significance of social networks, as well as the challenges associated with low literacy, consumers also rely heavily on social networks for information and tend to trust these one-to-one communications more than mass marketing (Viswanathan, Sridharan, & Ritchie, 2010b). Therefore, word of mouth (WoM) marketing is also extremely important in this context. Though consumers buy from a variety of sellers, including local retailers and door-to-door salespeople in these contexts, there is a preference for purchasing from those that a consumer already has a relationship with (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2010).

The importance of social networks is evident in the quick adoption of connective technologies in these markets, such as cell phones. A widespread misconception is that modern technologies common in the developed world have no place in the BoP. However, BoP consumers, even in rural villages and farms, use mobile phones (Anderson & Billou, 2007). Research suggests that phone ownership in the BoP is as high as 77% in Thailand, 62% in the Philippines, and 41% in Sri Lanka (Zainudeen, Iqbal, & Samarajiva, 2010). BoP consumers using mobile phones leads to a number of social and economic benefits. For example, the use of mobile phones reduces searching costs (and therefore transaction costs) and increases social cohesion (de Silva, Ratnadiwakara, & Zainudeen, 2011). However, beyond the widespread use of mobile phones, many in the BoP remain 'media dark' (Pralhad, 2004). For example, in the rural Indian BoP population, television penetration is under 40% and radio penetration is under 20% due to the combination of low income and poor infrastructure (Sinha, 2008).

The limitations in the ability to connect with consumers through traditional mediums such as television and radio have given rise to the use of other promotional activities. Consumers from Zimbabwe, for example, favor direct marketing, such as roadshows and in-store sampling, over mass marketing, due to the lack of electricity and access to televisions and radios (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2010). Research

also suggests that organizations in the BoP tend to use a mixture of different marketing forms to promote their products and services. These can include messages on moving objects, cardboard cut-outs, wall paintings, point-of-purchase demonstrations and theatre such as puppetry and interactive games (Sinha, 2008), street performers, billboards, word of mouth, radio, and mobile phones (Subrahmanyam & Gomez-Arias, 2008). Companies also seem to adjust their promotional techniques to fit the cultural situation. For example, Smart Communications in the Philippines uses advertisements attached to a local public transportation form, three-wheeled taxis, as well as billboards and point-of-sale marketing materials (Anderson & Billou, 2007).

Because of the unique situations BoP consumers face, marketers need to employ creative methods in order to connect with the BoP. Unfortunately, it is evident that little is actually known about what these promotional activities look like. In what follows, we attempt to facilitate a greater understanding of marketing promotions in the BoP. We provide insight into current approaches based on a survey of practitioners operating in the BoP. We then reveal a number of trends in the approaches to serving BoP customers, as well as a number of conflicting perspectives between academics and practitioners. We conclude with suggestions for both practitioners and academics.

## 2. Approaches to marketing promotions in the BoP: Insights from BoP marketing practitioners

Research paints only part of the picture of marketing in the BoP; another part of the picture is the reality of what efforts BoP marketing practitioners are currently undertaking. In what follows, we provide insight into the practitioner side of marketing in the BoP. To gather these insights, we first conducted a pilot survey online and used the results of this pilot survey to refine our questions. Our final survey included closed answer questions about demographic information followed by a series of closed and open answer questions regarding marketing promotion efforts conducted in the BoP, including chosen mediums, success factors, and challenges faced. The questions encouraged the participants to be as forthcoming as possible to increase the depth and scope of information collected.

After finalizing the survey, we collected responses from 17 marketing practitioners active in the BoP. The practitioners surveyed came from a variety of industries and sectors, including for-profit and non-profit organizations (41%), employees in an

internal marketing department (29%), consultants from a for-profit context (18%), or practitioners who specified themselves as 'other' (12%). Regardless of the industry they came from, respondents primarily focused on selling products and services directly to consumers, more so than to businesses, governments, or NGOs across a diversity of regions. We acknowledge that this sample is not representative of the population of BoP marketing practitioners worldwide. Nevertheless, this method provided a number of interesting insights, as follows.

### 2.1. Offline and non-traditional marketing

Marketers in our survey choose offline and non-traditional forms of marketing more than other forms, including radio, print brochures, in-store displays, and mobile marketing. A main reason cited for choosing offline rather than online and mobile was the lack of access BoP consumers have to information technology and the Internet. This is consistent with academic research suggesting that many living in the BoP have limited or no access to the Internet (Shivarajan & Srinivasan, 2013). However, low Internet penetration rates is not the sole reason practitioners choose offline marketing options: Practitioners also reported that it was a way to leave something tangible behind for the customer—for example, a brochure. One respondent from an internal marketing department operating in Africa indicated that offline marketing was his/her preferred choice. From the consumer perspective, hard copies of brochures were “like a gift.”

Those marketers who reported that they were more likely to use online or mobile forms of marketing discussed the ‘reach’ that mobile or online offers in comparison to offline options. Ultimately, their perspective was that this was more conducive to raising awareness regarding a product or a service. However, mobile marketing was chosen relatively infrequently by respondents, with only 2% of practitioners surveyed using mobile marketing. The most commonly reported forms of online marketing included company websites and online newsletters and brochures.

### 2.2. Pictorial marketing

With one exception, all marketers reported that they were more likely to use images instead of words in their marketing activities. Research indicates that individuals use pictures instead of words to cope with illiteracy (Sridharan & Viswanathan, 2008). This form of coping was indeed part of why practitioners choose to use pictures in their communications: A key reason cited for using images

instead of writing was limited literacy and the diversity of languages spoken in BoP. In fact, a majority of BoP practitioners acknowledged illiteracy as an issue, revealing the consistent nature of this challenge in BoP markets. In the words of one practitioner with more than 10 years of experience in the BoP, “images are more powerful to communicate to the illiterate.”

Beyond issues related to literacy, practitioners reported a number of other reasons for preferring pictorial messaging. A respondent noted, “images reach a large cross-section of groups. They also tend to be more attention getting and interesting.” Others referenced this idea in various ways including the ability of images to “capture more than words.” Additionally, another practitioner noted the importance of clarity, arguing for advertisements with “no tall claims, no false promises, no confusing messages, disclaimers.” Marketing practitioners in the BoP also appear to adjust to cultural and linguistic differences in the BoP market by using pictorial messages. For example, a practitioner noted that the diversity of languages in India made using images more attractive.

### 2.3. Interactive and word of mouth marketing

Practitioners indicated a preference for interactive forms of marketing, and were thus more likely to choose two-way marketing forms rather than one-way forms of marketing such as print or broadcast. Marketers indicated that interaction, such as providing demonstrations and opportunities to ask questions, increased the likelihood of convincing consumers to purchase the products and services and spread positive word of mouth. In the words of one practitioner, “engagement and inclusiveness are key for marketing at the BoP and it is easier to do in . . . interactive settings.” Furthermore, it provides practitioners with an opportunity to increase their understanding of BoP consumers.

In our study, word of mouth was one of the most often selected interactive forms of marketing. For example, a respondent noted his/her use of “key opinion leaders from [the] local area,” while another noted the use of public education sessions in his/her marketing endeavors. As one practitioner pointed out, such forms of marketing lower customer risks and barriers to purchase while providing a way to build trust in the community. This practitioner’s feedback echoes research suggesting the importance of social networks and WoM in the BoP. Ultimately, given the importance of social networks in the BoP, WoM is likely to be more impactful than mass marketing efforts in this context in comparison with

non-BoP contexts. WoM marketing is therefore highly important for marketing promotions in the BoP.

#### 2.4. Types of messages

The types of messages primarily featured in BoP marketing promotions were affordability/low price, product or service features/attributes, and emotional/aspirational. Given the price sensitivity of BoP consumers, the focus on affordability and price is not surprising. Several respondents referenced the BoP as value-conscious or unable to afford high prices. However, a respondent from the internal marketing department in the construction industry cautioned that though price is a key aspect, it would not necessarily be a main deciding criterion for those in the BoP, as quality and eliciting an emotional response to the offering were also important. In the words of that practitioner, “price is key to make it affordable for the BoP, but will not necessarily be the main criteria, just like for people outside the BoP.” Others also saw price as just one aspect. For example, another practitioner cautioned for marketers to “not push too much of the product, promote the solution that the product would solve and the cost benefits to the poor customers by using the product.”

Respondents also felt it necessary to educate consumers about product and service features, much more so than is required in non-BoP markets. The focus on explaining product or service features is not surprising, as BoP consumers carefully consider their purchases. Indeed, several marketers discussed the importance of marketing the products as ‘low risk’ to the consumer, especially given the limited income and limited purchasing power of those in the BoP. One practitioner argued that convincing those in the BoP why they need a product requires more time and effort in comparison with marketing to those outside the BoP. A more surprising finding was the prevalence of emotional and aspirational messaging. Although respondents did not explain why they used emotion in marketing messages, almost 60% of the respondents of this survey used them, indicating its importance in marketing promotions in the BoP.

#### 2.5. Understanding BoP consumers

A key challenge mentioned by marketers was that of thoroughly understanding those in the BoP, and marketing to them in a way that fosters trust. A practitioner noted how important this is, as “one has to understand the local market very well. . .one has to be familiar with the challenges and opportunities of operating in a given market.” The success

of promotions seems to rely on deep knowledge of the consumers, including information about their access to communication technologies and levels of literacy. At the same time, many marketers in our survey mentioned the lack of experience and information available regarding the BoP and its consumers, including challenges understanding their perspectives, cultures, languages, social norms, values, individual aspirations, and desired benefits. Increased understanding of the BoP seems to be essential, and respondents suggested a number of mechanisms to facilitate this: conversing with those in the BoP, sustaining research in the BoP regarding marketing and demographics, performing commercial and product testing in controlled environments to assess the risks of a product or service, connecting with local partners, developing and using case studies, and sharing lessons learned in these markets. Ultimately, increased understanding of the BoP seems to be essential, as, in the words of one respondent, “assumptions at the BoP level can be entirely off from the reality on the ground.”

### 3. Marketing in the BoP: Trends and paradoxes

Through our discussion and investigation of marketing in the BoP, we aim to bridge the gap between academic writing and knowledge and practitioner experience. In doing this, a number of important considerations emerged. Based on our review of the literature and the insights from BoP practitioners, we present four takeaways regarding serving BoP customers. These takeaways are designed to inform marketing practitioners on effective approaches, missed opportunities, and potential issues, and to inform academics of areas where further research would be beneficial.

#### 3.1. Don’t neglect mobile marketing in the BoP

The relative lack of use of mobile marketing shown by feedback from practitioners was striking, given the statistics showing the rate at which those in the BoP use mobile phones. With phone ownership as high as 77% in some areas, mobile marketing seems to be a key opportunity to connect with BoP consumers. The lack of mobile marketing was especially surprising given the importance academic research has placed on opportunities stemming from the growing mobile phone adoption in the BoP. In addition, even those without access to their own mobile phone could potentially use community-owned mobile phones. Furthermore, there are numerous examples

of success in mobile marketing in the BoP. For example, Facebook is leveraging mobile use in Africa and Asia to increase its advertising effectiveness (MacLean, 2014). When consumers click on their advertisements on their mobile phone, it places a 'missed call' to the advertiser, which the advertiser logs and replies to with tailored content such as brand messages and news. This allows the consumers to save money on data and voice minutes, while still allowing advertisers to reach them.

Perhaps the finding that companies are shying away from mobile marketing is a reflection of inexperience in mobile marketing or lack of knowledge about how widespread the adoption of mobile phones in BoP markets is. Alternatively, a challenge of mobile marketing could be in understanding how it changes across different BoP contexts, given the diversity of people and cultures in the BoP. Practitioners may simply not know key information about mobile use across BoP markets. This is especially likely given that practitioners noted the lack of extensive knowledge regarding the BoP in general. What is clear is that the body of research on BoP marketing would benefit from work assessing both the barriers to and the opportunities in mobile marketing in the BoP. Ultimately, mobile marketing could be an important promotional channel for practitioners to connect with individual consumers, especially as mobile phone penetration rates continue to increase.

### 3.2. Embrace non-traditional and diverse forms of marketing

Though there are a number of commonalities within the BoP, the BoP is clearly a diverse market spanning many different groups of people and geographical regions. The BoP encompasses a multitude of different languages, literacy levels, cultures, and social norms, and spans both urban and rural contexts. We believe that this diversity calls for a diversity of approaches in connecting with consumers. As we saw in our survey results, and as past research highlights, the presence of multiple languages and differing literacy levels creates a situation with widespread use of images instead in marketing promotions. Furthermore, all practitioners use more than one type of promotional activity. For example, one respondent used fixed billboards, mobile billboards on private vehicles and public transportation, and brochures and in-store displays. This echoes past research findings noted above about the usefulness of employing a mix of marketing activities spanning traditional and non-traditional forms.

However, a paradox that emerged through our review of BoP literature and our survey of BoP marketing practitioners is the prevalence of traditional forms of marketing. Practitioners indicated that they were more likely to use traditional forms of marketing than non-traditional forms such as guerrilla marketing and marketing involving theater, interactive games, and puppetry. This is in contrast to academic research suggesting that traditional forms of marketing promotions are less effective than in BoP markets. Many factors contribute to the lower effectiveness of traditional marketing approaches in the BoP, including low penetration rates of television and radio (e.g., Sinha, 2008), low literacy rates, and low levels of trust with respect to mass-market communications (Viswanathan, Sridharan, & Ritchie, 2010b).

We find it interesting that the lower cost non-traditional forms of marketing are used less by the practitioners surveyed for this article in comparison with more expensive options. Indeed, low cost methods abound, including the use of chalk, sand, snow, or grass art and sculptures in public places, reverse graffiti that uses waterblasting on pavement, and flash mobs. Markets could pass on savings from these low-cost promotional activities onto consumers in the form of lower prices, thereby increasing the ability for consumers to pay for items and decreasing the poverty penalty they face. As these methods are relatively low cost and avoid issues related to illiteracy or low trust of mass communications, it is surprising that none of the practitioners reported a significant emphasis on these non-traditional forms of marketing. With these benefits, practitioners should consider adding these into their communications mix in the future.

### 3.3. Academics and practitioners agree: Nurturing word of mouth is key

While leveraging non-traditional forms of marketing, fostering word of mouth is also advisable in the BoP. Though it can be more limited in reach in comparison with traditional advertising, it is low cost and uniquely tailored to this market. Academics and practitioners alike seem to agree on the importance of social networks and high levels of social capital within the BoP. That is, while televisions and radios may not be ubiquitous in the BoP, social networks are—and verbal communication between members of a social network bypasses issues related to low literacy. Indeed, WoM was the form of marketing most often referred to by practitioners in our study, an element highlighted as important in numerous academic works. For academics, this suggests that research aimed at further understanding social networks in the BoP and how WoM travels

through them and impacts consumption would be useful. For marketing practitioners, this suggests that it is imperative that WoM become a key aspect of a company's promotion strategy.

One way that practitioners can nurture WoM is through connecting with local entrepreneurs. Given the role that local entrepreneurs have within the BoP communities, companies can work with these entrepreneurs to foster positive word of mouth with an aim of facilitating adoption of the product or service. Some organizations seem to have already begun this—for example, Smart Communications in the Philippines credits strong networks of micro-entrepreneurs for growing both the awareness and sales of their service (Anderson & Billou, 2007). Likewise, Dabur India hired a local actor to promote its Chyawanprash brand in India (Fatma, 2011), and Solae, a producer of soy protein, recruited women to cook and test a Solae product for a month prior to hosting “neighborhood cookery days” (Simanis, 2012) using the food product. Anything aimed at getting people talking about the product or service is essential. Local entrepreneurs display high levels of responsiveness in their local communities (Prahalad & Hart, 2002), which places them in a key position to communicate benefits of market offerings to local communities. Combining this with demonstrations can help convince consumers that the product is worth investing in, as it can help overcome hesitations regarding product performance.

Leveraging the strong social networks of these providers can have additional benefits, such as building trust with those in the BoP and bypassing challenges regarding the diversity of languages present in some markets. In fact, integrating local entrepreneurs into the distribution channel may have benefits beyond fostering WoM. Including local entrepreneurs as suppliers, producers, and employees can potentially improve incomes in the BoP. As such, companies can take action toward creating buying power in the BoP, improving access to resources, and fostering local solutions (Prahalad & Hart, 2002). In this way, marketing practitioners can potentially foster positive word of mouth while also benefitting the local community. Including local entrepreneurs is complementary to Agnihotri's (2013) suggestion that working with the poor as suppliers, producers, and employees can improve standards of living.

### 3.4. Practitioners be aware: Creative consumers exist in the BoP

In the face of limited options and severe resource constraints, BoP consumers engage in creative consumption in order to fulfill their needs (Beninger & Robson, 2014). However, practitioners surveyed for

this research made no indication that they were aware of or interested in these creative consumers. Despite this, research suggests that creative consumption has a number of important implications for managers (Berthon et al., 2007), and that marketing practitioners would do well to bear in mind the presence of creative consumers in BoP markets. For instance, one opportunity for marketing practitioners lies in being proactive in communicating alternative or creative uses for their offerings, as this likely increases the value of an offering to a BoP consumer. In fact, some research has already argued for the merits of doing so, as noted above. For example, showing a multitude of different uses for the product when conducting product demonstrations could help facilitate purchases, as it can help those in the BoP to use their resources more efficiently.

Beyond this, managers need to assess what alternative uses BoP creative consumers have for their offerings, as this may provide insight into potential new offerings. Such insight could contribute to the design of products, for example, leading to lower cost designs, increased durability and robustness, or modification for multiple uses (Sethia, 2005). Additionally, and bearing in mind that creative consumers rarely ask for permission before finding creative uses for market offerings, managers should be aware that there are potentially negative consequences of creative consumption if consumers use market offerings in ways that could be harmful. An example of this is Libyan civil war rebel fighters creating mobile, unmanned weapons adapted from Fisher Price Power Wheel toys (Plangger & Robson, 2014). Ultimately, we argue that managers would benefit from understanding what creative uses BoP consumers have for their market offerings.

## 4. Final thoughts

Many of the practitioner insights and experiences were consistent with theorizing and findings from previous academic research. For example, practitioners surveyed for this article highlighted illiteracy and language diversity as a key challenge when marketing in the BoP, and many reported using images rather than words in their marketing. Practitioners also echoed the important role of WoM in the BoP. Additionally, all respondents indicated the use of multiple forms of promotions in the BoP as described in past academic research. In addition to these consistencies with past research, the practitioner insights highlight a few areas where practitioners may be able to improve the effectiveness of their marketing efforts, including increased

use of non-traditional marketing promotions and mobile marketing.

Increased research on the role of WoM, social networks, and mobile marketing in the BoP, as well as the role of emotion in marketing promotions in the BoP, would increase our understanding of the BoP. In general, empirical studies of the unique and heterogeneous contexts in the BoP, including regional comparisons and longitudinal studies, would be instructive. Future studies can provide the groundwork for creating models and theories about marketing in the BoP, which can aid in providing practitioners with the information they are seeking about the BoP.

The BoP is an increasingly attractive and important potential market for many organizations. There is reason to believe that the BoP will only continue to increase in size and importance for many marketers. However, it is clear that marketers continue to face challenges in understanding BoP consumers and in marketing to them. This article is a step toward gaining greater insights into the BoP, potentially benefiting both academics and practitioners. For academics, this article provides information about the understudied topic of marketing in the BoP. For practitioners, this article provides a number of implications and practical suggestions for marketing efforts in the BoP.

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