

MARKETING INNOVATION: AN ARISTOTELIAN BEGINNING



Aristotle was a person who could argue a case forcefully, thereby developing and growing in influence, and was a recognised independent thinker with power and originality. Aristotle based much of his thinking upon scientific examination from which he formulated the deductive method of reasoning.

In fourth-century Greece, Aristotle and his students identified two types of justice: corrective justice, or the proper punishment of criminal acts, and distributive justice, or the equal sharing of inputs and values or rewards among participating individuals and groups of people.

Aristotle wrote: The Partnership of Integration and Reciprocity... It follows therefore that justice involves at least four terms, namely two persons for whom it is just and two shares which are just. And there will be the same equality between shares as between the persons, since the ratio between the shares will be equal to the ratio between the persons, for if the persons are not equal, they will not have equal shares; it is when equals possess or are allotted unequal shares, or persons not equal shares, that quarrels and complaints arise.

He went on to say:

Justice is therefore a sort of proportion; for proportion is not a property of numerical quantity only, but of quality in general, proportion being equality of ratios, and involving four terms at least.

Aristotle was describing the basic elements of what today might be called buyer-seller relationships, or even better, customer relationships. As long as each party believes the value of their rewards from the relationship are equal to the value of their inputs, both will be satisfied. When there is a perception of unequal input or unequal sharing of rewards, the relationship will break down.

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