

It's not the Economy, It's Us



Article: It's not the Economy, It's Us

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Summary: Drawing on a tool marketers have used for decades—market segmentation—we might discover some wisdom about fixing the economy. Market segmentation may help us gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and how our behavior affects the economy.

"This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we know what to do with it."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Let's face it; the economy is sucking wind right now around the world. Tension over war, terrorism, and impassioned diplomatic relationships has had a dampening effect on the world economy, business investment, and consumer confidence. It is causing people to do things today that they may one day ask themselves, "Why did I behave that way?"

Drawing on a tool marketers have used for decades—market segmentation—we might discover some wisdom about fixing the economy. Market segmentation may help us gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and how our behavior affects the economy. A look at the world suggests that people could be segmented as **Takers, Waiters, Pleasers, and Sharers.**

The Takers were prevalent in the news during the Internet boom and recent corporate scandals. Takers aren't worried about the economy, just their next angle or scheme to make a buck off of others, even those who may be suffering. They raided and mismanaged their companies for their own personal gains without regard for anyone else or the consequences of their actions. Fallout from the Takers' behaviors included failed corporations, executive scandals, doomed employee retirements, wiped-out savings, and shattered dreams. But, can we categorize executives only as Takers?

Whatever our status in life, each of us is a Taker when our own self-interests dominate our decisions and behaviors without regard for the consequences to others. ***Consider others before taking again.***

The Waiters are those who will sit back and wait and wait until everything is right before they do anything. Waiters wait for a better job, for retirement, and for the economy to turn around. Waiters prefer to wait for someone else to do something to make things better; they wonder why the government doesn't do something about the economy! Sure, there are times when waiting makes sense. When information is spotty, unclear, misleading, or ambiguous, it may be best to wait. But let's face reality: Rarely will there be the perfect answers to our questions to guide our actions. At some point we must stop waiting and do something to make things better not only for ourselves but for those around us. ***Dare to do and feel life flow again.***

The Pleasers are the workhorses of the Takers and Waiters. Pleasers work very hard to do whatever they can to please others, often with little regard for themselves. They are obedient in following rules and policies of others. They convince themselves they are doing their part to make the world better because they do what others want or need. Yet the Pleasers can become so pleasing to others that they will do almost anything without first thinking about the consequences to themselves or others. The boss wants something, and the Pleasers are going to do their best to get it for him or her. Questioning what they're doing isn't important to Pleasers. Their passion is in pleasing, and not even adverse economic consequences will deter them. A Pleaser abdicates responsibility for his or her actions to the person he or she is trying to please. Whether willingly or blindly, they become the patsies for what should never have occurred in the first place. **Reflect deeply to make good work create good deeds.**

The Sharers are those who are already changing the economy no matter what happens tomorrow. They are the ones who believe life isn't about getting the most, waiting the longest, or blindly serving others. They act with character and integrity, making things better for themselves, with open eyes and caring hearts for others. Sharers have the strength to be Waiters when it means deferring some of their income so one less person is laid off. Sharers have the courage not to measure their successes by money or status but by the differences they are making in the world, even when no one else recognizes it. Sharers have an inherent respect for other people's needs, goals, and ambitions, helping them find pleasing outlets for their talents and gifts, even when it overshadows their own pleasures. **Keep sharing—you will be the power that changes the world.**

The answer for improving the world economy is not taking from, waiting for, or merely pleasing those around us. The solution is recognizing who we are and sharing more of ourselves to make the world economy just a little bit better for everyone.

About Author

Eric Balinski is president of Synection (www.synection.net). He is coauthor with Phil Allen and Nicholas DeBonis of the recent AMA/McGraw-Hill book, *Value Based Marketing for Bottom-Line Success*. Eric's expertise is in helping companies achieve profitable growth through the implementation of customer value practices. For twenty years Eric held management roles at GE, Dow Chemical, and AlliedSignal. He can be reached at ebalinski@synection.net.

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