
A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
GUIDE TO ALDERSONIAN
MARKETING THOUGHT

A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GUIDE TO ALDERSONIAN MARKETING THOUGHT

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Kluwer Academic Publishers
Boston/Dordrecht/London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available
from the Library of Congress.

ISBN-10: 0-387-26175-3

e-ISBN-10: 0-387-28181-9

Printed on acid-free paper.

ISBN-13: 978-0387-26175-1

e-ISBN-13: 978-0387-28181-0

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Printed in the United States of America.

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SPIN 11330455

springeronline.com

*This book is dedicated to the
memory of Wroe Alderson,
the most important figure in
the development of theory of
marketing.*

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Preface

We put this book together for one very simple reason—to familiarize a new generation of marketing scholars with the life, the writings and the intellectual legacy of Wroe Alderson, unquestionably the pre-eminent marketing theorist of the mid-twentieth century. Had a Hall of Fame for marketing academics been established at the time, Alderson might well have been a unanimous choice the first year nominations were accepted. The Editors consider him as important to the marketing discipline as Keynes was to economics or Taylor to early management thought. Nevertheless, Alderson currently receives little or no attention in marketing classes whether these be offered at the BBA, the MBA or the Ph.D. level. There are a number of possible explanations for this neglect, some discussed in the pages that follow. However, our major objective as editors was not to chastise others for their errors of omission but rather to assemble in a single publication a selection of material written by and about Wroe Alderson that would serve as a twenty-first century guide to Aldersonian marketing thought.

The book itself is divided into six Parts each with its own brief introduction. There's a biography in Part I and in Part II a fairly extensive set of what, both now and previously, appeared to be Alderson's most important theoretical contributions. Alderson as consultant is also represented in Part III by practitioner-oriented material on marketing management and on marketing ethics. The fourth Part contains a number of previously published articles that either build on Alderson's work or show the interdisciplinary nature of his thinking by relating it to that of leading academics from other areas. In the fifth Part, six newly written contributions provide additional insights into Wroe Alderson's life, his work, his character and his intellectual impact. Finally, one finds at the end of this volume a complete listing of publications both by Alderson (over a forty year period) and about him.

This information belongs on the historical record both because of its past importance and its current relevance. We believe a careful reading of what follows will show that Alderson's work still continues to provide, decades after it was first published, many important conceptual building blocks. These are components which contemporary marketing scholars can use in their own efforts

to improve both the theory and the practice of marketing. Phrased another way, we believe Wroe Alderson deserves to be recognized both as a seminal thinker and as a still very relevant figure in the intellectual history of the marketing discipline. That's our position and it is an opinion we believe that many others who read the material found in this volume will come to share.

THE EDITORS

Acknowledgments

A great many individuals and organizations assist the editors of any publication but never more than when the volume in question contains material originally published over half a century ago. The accompanying Exhibit identifies the publishing firms and other organizations that kindly gave us permission to reprint material either by or about Wroe Alderson. We are most grateful for this assistance since, literally, without such permission this book could not have been published.

However, that Exhibit merely begins the identification of all those deserving our thanks. Close to half of the material in this book originally appeared in publications by Wroe Alderson on which the Richard D. Irwin Company held the original copyright. The current publisher of the successor organization to Richard D. Irwin, Mr. Andy Winston, Publisher of McGraw-Hill/Irwin, kindly informed us that, given the date of the original publications, the copyrights in question had by now reverted to the Alderson family. Professor Alderson's three children, Asia Alderson Bennett, Maya Alderson Schulze and Evan Alderson, had from the very beginning of the project been supportive of this initiative. They were thus more than willing to allow us to select whatever material we wished from the books their father had originally published with Richard D. Irwin.

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The Editors wish to thank the following organizations for granting us permission to reprint the material identified below:

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 - c Alderson, Wroe (1952). Ethics, Ideologies and Sanctions. In *Report of the Committee on Ethical Standards and Professional Practices*, pages 1-20. American Marketing Association, Chicago.
 - d Amstutz, Arnold (1968). Book Review *Planning and Problem Solving in Marketing*. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 5(February):109-111.

- e Lusch, Robert (1980). Alderson, Sessions and the 1950s Manager. In Lamb, Charles and Dunne, Patrick, editors, *Theoretical Developments in Marketing*, pages 4-6. The American Marketing Association, Chicago.
 - f Hunt, Shelby D., Muncy, James A. and Ray, Nina (1981). Alderson's General Theory of Marketing: A Formalization. In Enis, Ben and Roering K., editors, *Review of Marketing 1981*, pages 314-324. The American Marketing Association, Chicago.
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 - b Dixon, Donald and Wilkinson, Ian (1989). An Alternative Paradigm for Marketing Theory. *European Journal of Marketing*, 23(8):59-69. Available at:
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ejm.htm>.
 - c Priem, Richard, Rasheed, Abdul M. A. and Amirani, Shahrzad (1997). Alderson's transvection and Porter's value system: a comparison of two independently developed theories. *Journal of Management History*, 3(2):145-165. Available at:
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- a Grether, E. T. (1967). Chamberlin's Theory of Monopolistic Competition and the Literature of Marketing. In Kuenne, Robert, editor, *Monopolistic Competition Theories: Studies in Impact*, pages 315-318. Wiley, New York.
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- a Alderson, Wroe (1958). The Analytical Framework for Marketing. In Duncan, Delbert, editor, *Proceedings: Conference of Marketing*

Teachers from Far Western States, pages 15-28. University of California, Berkeley.

6 The Christian Association, the University of Pennsylvania, for permission to reprint:

a Alderson, Wroe. (1964). *The American Economy and Christian Ethics*. A paper first presented to a student group in June of 1964.

The material found in Parts I and V of this volume, in contrast, was newly written for inclusion in it. The editors are most grateful to Mike Halbert, to Shelby Hunt and Dennis Arnett, to Ian Wilkinson and Louise Young and to Alf Walle for finding time in their already crowded schedules to prepare such outstanding contributions. The Editors' own original contributions are also to be found in Parts I and V.

We also wish to thank Jag Sheth for his efforts to help us find a publisher for this important heritage volume. We are grateful, as well, to Len Dawson who kindly shared with us materials assembled for a project, unfortunately aborted in the early 1980s, that would have seen the American Marketing Association publish a complete set of *Cost and Profit Outlooks*. Included in this material from Dr. Dawson, and subsequently drawn upon in this publication, was an unpublished paper by Ed McGarry on the history of the annual Marketing Theory Seminars and the text of the eulogy Orin Burley delivered at Wroe Alderson's funeral.

When thanks are being given out, an especially generous portion belongs on the plates of our Editor, Sean Lorre, and his employer, Springer Science and Business Media. Springer recognized that our proposed publication would be of considerable academic value and shared our belief that it would prove commercially attractive as well.

The initial impetus for this book was the doctoral dissertation on Wroe Alderson that Ben Wooliscroft wrote at the University of Otago under the supervision of Professor Rob Lawson. We are most grateful both to Professor Lawson and to the Business School of the University of Otago for creating an academic climate in which high quality conceptual and theoretical dissertations, as well as methodologically driven ones, are acceptable. Would that this were now the rule and not the exception!

We would also like to thank the interlibrary loan staff at UQAM for their help in locating publications reviewed for the book. Thanks to Raymond Laliberté, research associate at UQAM's Business School, for his assistance.

Finally, we wish to thank two spouses, Roberta Shapiro and Sanna Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, both for the encouragement they provided throughout the project and for the assistance they willingly offered at various stages of this undertaking.

So ends our listing of the “thank you’s” due up to the time of publication. Of course, we are also grateful to each and every reader of this book for taking the time and trouble to become familiar with the work of Wroe Alderson. Professor Alderson was, unquestionably and indisputably, the preeminent marketing theorist of the mid-twentieth century. He provided much of the intellectual foundation of our discipline, a foundation on which so many others, some knowingly but others not, have built. After you have read the book, we trust you will agree that there was indeed intellectual justification for this effort to provide both the current and future generations of marketing scholars with a twenty-first century guide to Aldersonian marketing thought.

Ben Wooliscroft
Robert D. Tamilya
Stanley J. Shapiro

I

WROE ALDERSON: THE MAN

Chapter 1

WROE ALDERSON A LIFE*

Ben Wooliscroft

University of Otago

Abstract Wroe Alderson was a scholar and a man of many talents. A Renaissance man in the truest sense of the term, he was a practitioner, scholar, theorist, philosopher, theologian, mentor, and good friend to many who knew him. Alderson rose from simple beginnings to be one of the leading marketing consultants in America, and the leading marketing theorist and father of modern marketing thought.

1. Who was Wroe Alderson?

Wroe Alderson (see Figure 1.1) was born near St Louis, Missouri September 27, 1898, into a family of limited means. Wroe was the eldest child of a large Southern Methodist family. Unusual for the times, Alderson's mother had attended college and worked as a teacher.

Wroe Alderson's father, Walter Alderson, had been an impressively strong man who was rumoured, likely apocryphally, to have lifted train wheel assemblies for entertainment at a circus (Hollander, 2001). Walter had travelled widely in the United States as a young man. In 1897 he had gone to Alaska to prospect for gold, unsuccessfully. While he had no formal education, he was a voracious reader and strong debater, a pastime his son would also enjoy in the years to come. For a time, Walter Alderson served as U.S. Marshall in a small Missouri town (Bennett and Bennett, 2003).

From these somewhat simple beginnings Wroe Alderson rose to the pinnacle of marketing practice and theory. He has been lauded as the father of the modern

*This biography relies heavily on interviews with Alderson's children, Asia Bennett and Evan Alderson, and those who worked with/for Alderson, particularly Stanley J. Shapiro, Michael Halbert, Patrick J. Robinson, and Robert Rothberg, who all generously gave their time. It was a pleasure to meet so many people who share a passion for a great marketing thinker.



Figure 1.1. Wroe Alderson circa 1899

era of marketing (Jones and Shaw, 2002). Smith (1966) considered Alderson's four contributions to the marketing discipline to be:

- He brought an interdisciplinary approach to marketing theory formation which attracted many scientists from other fields to the study of marketing.
- His work provides an illustration of the “importance and usefulness of marketing theory” (p. 65).
- He bridged the gap between practitioner and academic communities.
- He stimulated the minds of others while his “own specific contributions to marketing were monumental” (p. 65).

There is no doubt that Alderson is a very influential figure in the history of marketing thought (Bartels, 1988, Holbrook, 1998, Holbrook, 2001, Hollander, 1998, Jones and Shaw, 2002, Sheth et al., 1988). In spite of his importance to the marketing discipline, and unlike other disciplines' approach to their leaders, his life has received relatively little attention.

This biography follows Alderson's life through a number of themes, arranged in chronological order based on their starting date, but overlapping due to some of the themes continuing their importance through Alderson's life.

2. Alderson: the Early Years

Wroe Alderson graduated eighth grade and left school at the age of 15 (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). As a young man, he left home in Missouri and took to the rails, living as a hobo¹ and travelling as far as Washington State (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). Pre-World War I he held many manual and menial jobs, including a job in a tannery (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). While he travelled around the country working, he would send money home to help support the family each month (Alderson, nd). He then taught school for a while in backwoods Missouri, where he would have to fight his, often considerably larger, pupils to get their attention (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). Alderson was an able fighter and was involved in a number of prize fights. Later he would regale his family and friends with stories of him outwitting larger opponents in the ring (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). He was to continue to do a number of predominantly manual jobs until World War I broke out, when he enlisted in the army.

¹A *hobo* is defined as “a wandering workman or tramp” (Brown, 1993, p. 1243). In America they often rode the railways illegally to get between places, facing the wrath of rail police, who were known to exact vicious beatings on those caught riding the rails for free.

3. Alderson: World War I

In 1919, while Alderson was in the army his father, 16 year old sister and 3 year old brother died in the influenza epidemic, which is estimated to have taken 675 000 American lives, more than the combined combat casualties of World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam for America (Crosby, 1989). Alderson had not seen them since leaving home, to seek his fortune, and he felt terribly guilty (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). As the eldest son, Wroe took on the mantle of man of the house, looking after his mother and siblings financially — which he was to continue to do for many years.

Being “severely left-handed” during his time in the army, Alderson was not suited to using a rifle with a sight designed for right-handed soldiers and was posted to Washington State where he was trained as a typist and journalist and given the job of clerk/typist for the army (Bennett, 2001). It was probably the last time that Alderson ever typed — he always hand wrote his papers, books and reports and then had a typist translate his generously flowing hand writing into a readable form.

4. Alderson: Studying between the Wars

After leaving the armed services, Alderson worked in a number of casual jobs in the Washington area, including as a lumberjack. It was during this time while working in Washington that Alderson met Professor Selden Smyser of Ellensburg Teachers College (currently, after a number of different names, called Central Washington University) (Bennett, 2001). Smyser noticed in Alderson an able mind and encouraged him to undertake study. Alderson was to later repay Smyser’s support by sponsoring the Smyser Award, a \$50 award for the “best paper in some phase of social communication or relationship” each year (Hogan, 2003). Alderson played college football while at Ellensburg Teacher College, in spite of being only 5 foot 6 inches tall. He was very proud of his ability to tackle and outplay players considerably larger than himself (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). The post war years were a tumultuous time for Alderson, including a brief marriage, of which little is known. He did not complete his studies at the Ellensburg Teachers College (Bennett, 2001).

In 1923 Alderson enrolled at George Washington University, in Washington D.C. — bringing with him credits from his previous studies — where he graduated in 1925, aged 27, with a degree in economics and statistics. While at George Washington University, Wroe courted Elsie Star Wright. Elsie was born in 1898 in Bedford County, Virginia (Philadelphia Inquirer, 1989). Before meeting Wroe, she taught at rural schools in Virginia and Oklahoma. An enthusiastic suitor and a devoted husband, Alderson wrote books of love poems to his wife, whom he called “Star”. They were married while Alderson worked on a project for the Department of Commerce in the Southern States (his influential

study into the efficiency of drug store purchasing policies, among others). He was so busy that Christmas Day 1927 was the only day he could be sure to have off for the wedding. They married in a church, with the Alderson crest on it, in the town of Alderson, West Virginia.

Wroe was busy working, studying and supporting his mother and siblings. He worked for the Department of Commerce, originally under Herbert Hoover, from 1925 until 1934, producing a number of important reports (i.e. Alderson, 1928, Alderson and Miller, 1930, Alderson and Bromell, 1930, Alderson and Haag, 1931, Alderson and Aiken, 1932, Alderson and Meserole, 1932, Alderson and Miller, 1934). Wroe Alderson is listed on the editorial board of the *American Marketing Magazine*² as a representative of a federal agency, which can be assumed to be the Department of Commerce (Tamilia, 2002). He was also on the editorial board of the *Journal of Marketing* in later years.

His wife, Elsie, continued her studies and eventually was only one course in German, which she struggled with, and a thesis short of completing her doctorate in genetics and embryology at Johns Hopkins University. She undertook research at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts on two separate occasions. He may have been not entirely regretful that she didn't finish — “there was room for one professional in the Alderson household” (Bennett, 2001).

Each time Elsie returned to her doctoral studies seems to coincide with her falling pregnant with another child and abandoning study once more (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). Alderson struggled with the liberation of women at a personal level, while being in favour of it at a societal level (Bennett, 2001). He was the dominant figure in his household and his wife provided the stability and moderation for the family (Alderson, 2001). In 1933 Asia Alderson, later Asia Bennett, was born to the couple — the first of three children: Maya, 1936, later Maya Schulze; and Evan, 1938.

Wroe was a dedicated and loving father and husband, but was not always patient with his family, having very firm views about how things should be done and when they should be done. He was very interested in people and delighted in discussing and philosophising, but, when he was finished with someone, he was completely finished with them. An ex-friend would be dead to him and his family would be expected not to mention the name again (Alderson, 2001).

5. Quakerism

In 1936 Alderson joined Curtis Publishing Company, leaders in marketing research (Sheth et al., 1988). In August 1939 the Aldersons moved to Haverford Pennsylvania for Alderson's work. A colleague found a house for them and

²established in 1934 and merged to become the *Journal of Marketing* in 1936.

introduced them to the Friends school for Asia. It was the start of their interest in Quakerism. Wroe and Elsie wanted their children to be brought up in a church and this Quaker meeting, with its intellectually lively congregation, suited the Aldersons. They became involved in the life of the Haverford Friends Meeting. Wroe really took to Quakerism and was made a member of the congregation in 1940 — very swiftly, when most members have gone through long periods of contemplation and consideration that typically take over a year. Elsie was not released by her Southern Baptist church to join the Quakers and was required to “enter on her own recognisance” (Bennett, 2001). Attracted to the Quaker church because of its emphasis on nature and equality — as Wroe was — she was active in the church, including teaching in First School (the Quaker Sunday school). Alderson took his commitment as a Friend very seriously and often spent considerable time preparing for worship so that he could make a meaningful contribution. He was very quickly to become a well respected and influential member of the Meeting (Bennett, 2001).

Wroe Alderson was very aware of being an imperfect human being and trying to improve himself through the *inward teacher* — the Quaker practice of finding guidance from God within themselves (Bennett, 2001).

In 1948, Alderson visited Mexico as a delegate of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) to survey the service projects there as a part of the AFSC’s peace work (Bennett, 2001). Apart from visits to Canada during his travels as a youth, it was his first international travel and he relished his experiences with Mexicans and their culture (Bennett, 2001).

In 1955 Alderson joined a delegation of Friends to the Soviet Union as an economist, in an attempt to open a productive dialogue with the Cold War enemy and to find different ways of considering the relationship between the two superpowers. Alderson’s passport of the time includes the special permit allowing him to enter the USSR, a country that America banned its citizens from visiting. The delegation included Clarence Pickett, emeritus AFSC Executive Secretary and friend of Eleanor Roosevelt. Alderson was very proud of being asked to go and was the lead author of a booklet published by the AFSC (Alderson et al., 1956). On returning to the United States, Alderson had a full schedule of speaking engagements to share his experiences in the Soviet Union. Unfortunately his health gave out and not for the last time (Bennett, 2001).

Though he was physically vigorous and athletic as a young man, with brown hair and blue eyes, by the mid 1950s he was seriously overweight and was often short of breath (Bennett, 2001). During 1955 he suffered his first heart attack. A man who liked his food and drink (Robinson, 2001, Robinson, 2003, Shapiro, 2001), Alderson tried to moderate his diet, with limited success (Bennett, 2001). He ate a lot of meat and had very high cholesterol and blocked arteries.

During the height of McCarthyism the Aldersons campaigned, ultimately unsuccessfully, for a noted Chinese actress, who had become a family friend

when a graduate student at Bryn Mawr College, and her journalist husband who were being deported to China. They were arrested and imprisoned on return to Communist China and died in prison (Bennett and Bennett, 2003).

Wroe Alderson was very involved in the AFSC — which had been formed in 1917 to promote peace and justice — and served for some time on its Board of Directors. The AFSC received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1947 for its work during World War II. The award was accepted on behalf of the organisation by Professor Henry J. Cadbury, renowned Harvard University theologian and friend of Wroe Alderson. Wroe's daughter, Asia was later to work as executive secretary of the AFSC and the Friends World Committee. Alderson was also active in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Social Order Committee, a group concerned with racial issues, housing, industrial relations and opportunities for the poor. Alderson's two daughters often spent weekends in the Philadelphia slums painting and renovating.

Quakerism was important to Alderson and to his marketing theory. His concept of double searching, he suggested, came to him while in worship contemplating man's search for God and God's search for man (Bennett, 2001). Wroe was capable of beautiful turns of phrase, as was evident when he spoke in a Friends' Meeting and then wrote of the beauty in the Chesapeake Bay, see Figure 1.2.

6. Alderson and World War II

Before and during the early days of the the United States' entry into World War II, the Aldersons had refugees from Germany and Austria staying with them. Both Wroe and Elsie were active in Quaker efforts to assist refugees from Nazism (Bennett, 2001, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1989).

In 1943 Alderson took leave from Curtis Publishing to work in Washington, as a part of the war effort. It is somewhat ironic that Alderson a Quaker, and thus a pacifist, was a member of the American war effort. There is, however, a suggestion from his daughter that his strong Quaker beliefs would have required him to be a conscientious objector had he been of an age to fight (Bennett, 2001). During World War II Alderson worked for the Office of Price Administration (OPA), lead by John Kenneth Galbraith, as well as the Bureau of Economic Warfare and the Foreign Economic Administration, based in Washington D.C. (Bennett, 2001, Galbraith, 2002, *The New York Times*, 1965).

There were several hundred economists and other scholars working in the OPA and it is unclear what Alderson's duties were (Galbraith, 2002). Given his previous government employment and expertise in market research — particularly the fact that he set up Alderson Consulting immediately after the war, with its primary focus on market research, pricing and distribution — it is likely that he was involved in market research for the OPA.

We have just had a week of golden October days beside the Chesapeake, with Heaven waiting in every sunset.

The hoarse cry of the wild goose is like a brute reaction to beauty too bright to be borne. A world in flames, over land and water, re-enacts the ancient and tragic mystery of Death-in-Life and Life-in-Death.

The dogwood leaves are dying in a burst of battle red. Oak and maple strew the lane with the vivid hues of passion and the soft shades of memory. And soaring there on a high stark limb is the scarlet banner of ivy.

On the water, where life first found its home, life is still harvesting life: a fisherman out in the chilly dawn; the sails of the oystermen at noon; a belated woman crabber poling her skiff through the ripples along the shore. Underneath the surface the living still feeds on the living — or faces death in the stab of the heron or the swoop of the osprey.

A philosopher speaking for the pantheism of the East has said that life is perpetual perishing. What we see now shall never be seen again. What we love most, even now is slipping away. We weep for beauty vanishing but beauty is its heir. The flower fading on its stalk will cast its seed for flowers to scent tomorrow.

A poet once prayed to be released from too much love of living. Let us rather pay to love life freely and to spend it freely. Time is our sovereign currency but let us not grasp it with a miser's hand.

And let no puny man fancy himself an Atlas, bearing the world on his shoulders. The world will not fall apart without us because God holds it together. Individually we are held and jointly we endure within the magnificent fabric of his grand design. The notes are transient — the symphony eternal. Our faith in a loving and eternal God is faith in the abundance of life.

Figure 1.2. Alderson's Letter to the Haverford Meeting

As well as being concerned with price controls (Galbraith, 2003), the OPA was involved in advertising campaigns aimed at keeping inflation in check during and after the war. The OPA was successful in its mission and inflation was kept under control during and after the war, in stark contrast to the rampant inflation after World War I (Galbraith, 2002).

It is likely that while working for the OPA Alderson spent time with E. T. Grether, who was a special consultant to the OPA in 1944. Certainly Alderson and Grether were to remain fast friends until Alderson's death (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). While working in Washington, Alderson stayed away from the family for long periods of time, coming back to Haverford infrequently (Bennett, 2001).

In 1944 the Pabst Brewing Company Postwar Employment Awards for maintaining full employment were decided. Almost 36 000 papers had been sent in on the topic of how to maintain full employment after the war (Fitch and Taylor, 1946). Herbert Stein won the first prize and Alderson received one of 17 awards, being given a grant of \$1000.00 and a medal in recognition of the value of his entry.

7. Alderson: The Consultant

In 1944 Alderson set up a consulting business, which was to become the Alderson and Sessions consulting company in 1945, with the addition of Robert E. Sessions, who he had met at the OPA, as a partner. In 1949 the firm was known briefly as Alderson, Simons and Sessions (Alexander et al., 1949). Alderson was not, particularly, interested in money and used the company to sponsor the development of theory and his social concerns. While employed by Alderson and Sessions, William Baumol developed the ideas which he published in *Business Behavior, Value and Growth* (Shapiro, 2001). Baumol wrote in his foreword, "I owe profound gratitude to Wroe Alderson. . ." (Baumol, 1959, p. viii). Charles Sevin also further developed his earlier work on distribution cost accounting while employed by Alderson and Sessions (Shapiro, 2001).

The consulting company published the *Cost and Profit Outlook* periodical which was to contain many of the ideas that then appeared in Alderson's books and articles. *Cost and Profit Outlook*, and *Growth and Profit Planner*, a similar newsletter produced by Behavior Systems (Alderson, 1964b), had a major impact on the relationship between academia and practising marketers (Lusch, 1980) and are, if not frequently, significantly referenced.

Because of, or in spite of this, Alderson and Sessions was to grow into an internationally successful consulting company with many important clients (see Table 1.1). Alderson was imaginative, idealistic and a risk taker, which occasionally lead to tight finances for the family, such as when in 1948 the firm's office moved to Lewis Tower in the commercial heart of Philadelphia.

He did, though, earn more money than it may have appeared by looking at him, typically dressed in a suit which had seen better days (Bennett, 2001). Alderson also spent a great deal of time travelling, giving speeches and writing. Alderson and Sessions grew the company and its reputation for excellence can be seen in the quote from Crisp in 1957, when discussing marketing research in the United States (see Figure 1.3).

E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Inc.	Smith, Kline & French Laboratories
Standard Oil Company of New Jersey	National Dairy Products Corporation
The York Corporation	Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company, Inc.
Bendix Aviation Corporation	The Publicker Industries
The United States Rubber Company	The National Association of Retail Grocers
Zellerbach Paper Company	The American National Retail Jewellers Association
Sharp and Dohme, Inc.	Paraffined Carton Association
Laminated Bakery Package Association	Farm Journal, Pathfinder, Inc.
Curtis Publishing Company	The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin
The Traffic Audit Bureau	The Advertising Research Foundation
J. Walter Thompson Co.	McKee and Albright, Inc.
Lamb, Smith and Keen, Inc.	The Rockefeller Foundation
Haverford College	The Western Saving Fund Society
The Real Estate Trust Company	John Wanamaker, Philadelphia
Bailey, Banks and Biddle Co.	Sixty-ninth Street Merchants Association
White and Case	Morgan, Lewis and Bockius
Blenko, Hoopes, Leonard & Glenn	Carl Seiler & Co.
Joseph E. Lewis & Co.	Scripto, Inc.

Table 1.1. Clients of the Alderson and Sessions Consulting Company
(Alderson and Sessions, 1955, pp. 6-7)

When Robert E. Sessions left the company, it became Alderson Associates. Alderson felt betrayed by Sessions leaving the firm at a time which put considerable pressure on the firm and Alderson financially (Bennett and Bennett, 2003).

Alderson enjoyed the high life and made sure that those friends, colleagues and clients who were with him were having a good time (Robinson, 2001). He enjoyed fine drink and food and entertained generously. Alderson knew the best restaurants in major cities around America and the world. He was proud to be known to the owners and chefs of these establishments (Robinson, 2003). Alderson is frequently described by those close to him as combining the attributes of a *gourmet* and a *gourmand* (Alderson, 2003, Halbert, 2003, Robinson, 2001, Robinson, 2003, Shapiro, 2001). He was a notoriously fast eater, downing his whole meal before his first time meal companion, Michael H. Halbert, had finished adjusting his serviette (Halbert, 2003), but that is not to say that he did not greatly enjoy his food.

Major Types of Consulting Organizations in the Marketing Research Field

Here are the major types of consulting organizations active in the marketing research field:

Complete Marketing Research Service Organizations

These are organizations headed by one or more individuals with broad experience in the marketing research field. Their activities, like the marketing research field itself, are problem-oriented. They are called in for aid with a marketing and/or marketing research problem. They recommend the approach which, in the light of their experience, seems to offer the client the greatest promise of making a profit contribution far in excess of its cost. They work in a world in which the three dimensions of the problem—the time dimension, the profit dimension, and the facilities dimension—are extremely important guides in their day-to-day activities.

Within this category there is a size distinction to be noted. A very few relatively large organizations belong in this grouping, along with a much larger number of middle-sized firms. In the case of the very large organizations—such as Alfred Politz Research, Inc. in New York or Alderson & Sessions in Philadelphia—a single assignment is likely to be handled on a team basis. The team will be under the guidance of one of the principals or partners in the firm but will represent the allocation to a single client or client's problem of only a moderate proportion of the organization's total personnel.

Figure 1.3. Description of Alderson and Sessions Consulting Company (Crisp, 1957, pp. 765-766)

The consulting company was later sold to John Diebold and Associates, when Alderson was advised by his doctor to leave the stressful life of consultancy (Middleton, 1964, Sass, 1982). Alderson joined the staff of the Wharton Business School, but the academic life was not enough for Alderson and he set up Behavior Systems Research Company, in 1963 (Alderson, 1964a, Robinson, 2001). It was “a vehicle for his research and consulting interests” (Middleton, 1964, p. 2). Behavior Systems was run using functionalism as the basis for its consulting and research (Middleton, 1964). Upon Alderson’s death, Behavior Systems was taken over by his partners and eventually sold (Alderson, 1965a).

One Hand Clapping

When times were good in the late 1950s, Wroe and Elsie built their home, *One Hand Clapping* in Royal Oak, Maryland, on Chesapeake Bay. The house on Chesapeake Bay was a special place for Wroe and his family, connecting them to nature. It was here that Wroe wrote much of his poetry. Alderson was heavily involved in designing the changes to the building and extensions to the meagre house and two cottages that were on the grounds at Royal Oak when he bought them (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). Alderson also had a boat channel dredged and a harbour shored up for his boats. He was not a particularly practical man and tools never lasted long around him, being neglected and falling into disuse (Bennett and Bennett, 2003).

There had been some tension in the Alderson house as Wroe had earlier purchased a farm for his mother and brothers to live on, before providing Elsie with a home that they owned, initially in Haverford (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). When his son Evan read Packard’s *The Hidden Persuaders* (1958), it led to many arguments, with Wroe defending business against what he saw as slurs (Alderson, 2001). Evan had the same moral strength as his father and, while studying at Berkeley, was involved in the free speech movement, to his father’s discomfort. Evan spent a year in Vienna, Austria during his undergraduate studies, funded by Wroe, with whom he had an at times difficult relationship.

Wroe and Elsie sold their family home in Haverford in 1962 and commuted between an apartment close to Wharton, and the Maryland home, where Wroe had a boat, which was his pride and joy. It was a sign of having reached Alderson’s inner sanctum to be invited on to the ‘yacht’ — a rather unspectacular 26 foot Trojan motor boat named *3rd Haven*, which allowed Alderson to live out his desire to be a ‘country gentleman’ (Bennett, 2001). Those who were invited onto the boat were his closest friends and colleagues (Fisk, 2001). He owned a number of other smaller yachts and boats, but his lack of maintenance led to them rotting or falling into general disrepair (Bennett and Bennett, 2003). Alderson enjoyed entertaining and his students and colleagues were frequent guests to *One Hand Clapping*. Russell Ackoff, one of Alderson’s colleagues,