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**UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF
MARKETERS' CREDIBILITY BY NZ SENIOR
MANAGERS: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY.**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Management Studies
at
The University of Waikato
by
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2012

Abstract

Academics report that marketers are losing their influence in the boardroom due in part to serious challenges to marketing's credibility. Although the credibility of marketing sources has received much attention since the early 1950s, research into how individuals in business organisations construct the credibility of marketers is scarce. This study, using in-depth interviews, describes how seven senior managers from different New Zealand businesses construct the credibility of marketers. For these senior managers, the credibility of marketers is grounded in their performance in delivering commercial outcomes. The findings also suggest that senior managers construct credibility in terms of a work aspect and a social aspect of a marketer's performance, and that both these aspects have to be present if the marketer is to be considered credible.

The work aspect of performance is made up of a marketer's Pedigree, Projects, and Pervasive Influence. The Pedigree of a marketer includes their qualifications, skills and background. A degree is usually the minimum qualification required, particularly for more senior marketing roles. Skills expected from marketers include leadership, management, sales and intuition. With regard to background, the marketer needs to demonstrate they have achieved commercial outcomes in previous employment to be considered credible.

Projects describes how marketers must design and implement cogent marketing plans, work effectively without supervision, achieve commercial outcomes in a clever or creative way, and provide evidence that their projects have contributed to commercial outcomes. Pervasive Influence describes how marketers influence others in the organisation toward customer-centricity. Marketers can lose credibility in the work aspect of their performance when they have no structured purpose to their marketing research, are unable to execute marketing plans or are unable to demonstrate the results of a marketing project.

The social aspect of a marketer's performance is made up of Personal Integrity and Professional Conduct. Personal Integrity describes marketers who are respected, take pride in their work, strive to improve themselves and are not precious. Professional Conduct describes a marketer who relates and collaborates competently and professionally with others, and is a team fit. Marketers lose credibility in the social aspect of their performance when they are precious, flighty, argumentative, and only out for themselves.

This paper contributes a framework that describes the construction of a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective. It also introduces a new understanding of credibility, grounded in performance terms, which is distinct from past conceptualisations of credibility found in the literature, which is based on expertise and trustworthiness. These findings demonstrate that while a marketer might be considered an expert and trustworthy, if they are not delivering commercial outcomes then they may not be considered credible, from a senior manager's perspective.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Lord Jesus Christ, my family, my supervisors, the participants and the University of Waikato. I would like to thank Anne for her encouragement, support, and cheerfulness, and my amazing daughters who I deeply cherish. I would like to thank my wonderful supervisors Lorraine Friend and Janet Davey who have provided such great direction, advice and material, and have made the research process educational, rewarding and enjoyable. I also thank the participants who volunteered their time and expertise and without whom this research would not have been possible, or as stimulating; their contribution to this research is gratefully acknowledged. My sincere thanks to the University of Waikato for the Masters Research Scholarship that provided valuable financial support during this paper.

I would like to also dedicate this to my mother-in-law Mrs Libby Morris, a truly remarkable woman. God bless you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

While marketing holds great potential for the continual profit of organisations and ongoing improvements to living standards in society, its credibility within organisations has diminished, manifesting in loss of position and influence of marketers in boardrooms around the world (Davidson, 2009; Kotler, 2009; Seth & Sisodia, 2005). Despite the high-ranking position of marketing in organisations in the 1950s and 1960s, researchers are concerned that marketing's credibility is declining, and its responsibilities are being consigned to other departments in the organisation (Brooksbank, Davey, & McIntosh, 2010; Brown, 2005; Davidson, 2009; Deloitte & Touch, 2008; Kerin, 2005; Reibstein, Day & Wind, 2009; Varcoe, 2009; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; Webster, 2005).

Recent studies regarding the decline of marketing's role in organisations recommend that research into what makes a marketer credible should be conducted (Brooksbank et al., 2010; Grigg, 2007). A great deal of research into the credibility of marketing sources has been published in the past 60 years (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969; Chu & Kamal, 2008; Eisend, 2006; Forbes, 2010; Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Malshe, 2010; Newel & Goldsmith, 2001; Ohanian, 1990; Pornpitakpan 2004, Rieh & Danielson, 2007). However, very little research has been done on what makes a marketer credible (Grigg, 2007; Malshe, 2010); and nothing with regard to the credibility of a marketer from the perspective of a senior manager.

The purpose of this study is to understand the construction of a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective, using a general inductive approach. Senior managers hire, promote (or not), and fire marketers, as well as allow the marketer access and influence in the boardroom. As this access is based, in part, on whether or not the input from the marketer might be beneficial for the organisation, an understanding how senior managers construct the credibility of marketers is essential if marketers are to be perceived as being irreplaceable (Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Sawhney, 2009).

A general interpretive approach is used so that data regarding the role, value and credibility of marketers may provide rich insight of the construction of the credibility of a marketer, from the perspective of a senior manager.

This research intends to contribute to the credibility literature by understanding the construction of a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective. The findings of this research are compared and contrasted with current conceptualisations of credibility found in the literature. As such, a new understanding of credibility, which is grounded in performance terms, appears to be distinct from past conceptualisations of credibility found in the literature, which is based on expertise and trustworthiness.

This research is divided into seven chapters. The next chapter is a review of the seminal and past credibility literature, and includes the definition and conceptualisations of credibility. The third chapter introduces the participants and describes the method used to elicit, arrange and present the data. The fourth chapter consists of the findings from the interviews and provides a discussion of those findings. In the fifth chapter, the research is summarised in a conclusion, and the limitations of the research are discussed and suggestions are also made regarding further study of this topic. The sixth and seventh chapters provide the references and the appendices respectively.

Chapter 2: Literature review

An examination of credibility

The topic of credibility has been extensively researched in marketing literature since the 1950s, particularly with regard to the credibility of marketing sources. However, literature regarding the credibility of marketers is scarce, with only one study (that I can find) that constructs the credibility of marketers from the perspective of a salesperson. The purpose of this study is to understand the construction of a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective. This section aims to define credibility, discuss the seminal research and describe the development of current conceptualisations of credibility found in existing marketing literature.

Credibility defined

Credibility is defined in marketing literature as the perception that a source of information is believable, trustworthy, reliable, accurate, fair, and objective and refers to the willingness of a person to attribute believability to, or assess the quality of a source (Eisend 2006; Hilligoss et al., 2007; Malshe, 2010; Rieh et al., 2007). Source is a term used in credibility literature to signify someone or something that communicates. Examples of marketing sources include salespersons, spokespersons or celebrities; a piece of information such as billboard poster or a brochure; or a medium such as radio or Internet (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001; Rieh et al., 2007). Source credibility is therefore the perception and assessment a receiver has toward an actor or medium as being believable, plausible, and ultimately persuasive (Rieh et al., 2007; Tseng & Fogg, 1999).

The origin of credibility as a perceived characteristic is widely attributed to Aristotle in his discourse on ethos, in which he describes his observations of the ability of a speaker to persuade an audience (Rieh et al., 2007). Aristotle's conceptualisation of credibility, "persuasion by character" (p. 314) underlines the persuasiveness of credibility and its ability to cause an audience to accept a person or a message. This is the crux of the matter concerning source credibility; when a marketing source is perceived as credible, it is argued that an audience may relinquish the effort of

scrutinising it, and accept it as being valid and truthful. Whereas when information received from a marketing source is perceived not to be credible, the information is prone to being rejected (Chu et al., 2008; Ohanian, 1990; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Therefore, if marketers are to become influential in an organisation, understanding the construction of a marketer's credibility is essential.

The literature argues that an audience takes into account a host of qualities, characteristics, or perceptions when assessing the credibility of someone (Berlo et al., 1969; Chu et al., 2008; Eisend, 2006; Forbes, 2010; Hilligoss et al., 2008; Hovland et al., 1951; Hovland et al., 1953; Malshe, 2010; Newel & Goldsmith, 2001; Ohanian, 1990; Pornpitakpan 2004, Rieh et al., 2007). Shimp and Delozier (1986, as cited in Newel & Goldsmith, 2001) conceptualise credibility with regard to a person, as the entire set of perceptual dimensions an audience holds toward someone. These perceptions may include impressions of their prestige, power, intentions, age, expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (Newel & Goldsmith, 2001). Eisend (2006) explains that credibility is a multi-dimensional concept that allows the receiver to rate the source of communication. This rating, in turn, relates to the willingness of the receiver to attribute believability to the information.

Developments of the construction of credibility in literature

Research shows that credibility is a major cause of persuasion and the acceptance of a message by an audience. Therefore, researchers have further sought to understand what makes a source or a person credible. Research that demonstrates the current understanding of the construction of credibility in a marketing context has continued from the early 1950s. Table 1 provides a chronological outline of major studies on the construction of credibility. This is followed by a description of these studies and their contribution to our current conceptualisation of credibility.

Table 1 An outline of major studies of credibility

Research	Sources	Results			Method
		1 st dimension & elements	2 nd dimension & elements	3 rd dimension & elements	
Hovland & Weiss (1951)	Communicator	Expertise	Trustworthiness	---	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"> Quantitative studies </div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 10px; text-align: center;"> The 3 dimensions of these studies could be generalised as: Expertise – Trustworthiness - Presentation </div> </div>
Ohanian (1990)	Celebrity spokesperson	Expertise <i>Expert, experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, skilled</i>	Trustworthiness <i>Dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, trustworthy</i>	Attractiveness <i>Attractive, classy, beautiful, elegant, sexy</i>	
Eisend's (2006) generalised themes of credibility	28 factor model studies on various sources of credibility	Potential of truth (Knows the truth)	Inclination toward truth (Will tell the truth)	Presentation of truth (Appears to tell the truth)	
Eisend (2006)	Spokesperson Credibility	Professionalism <i>Accurate/inaccurate Informative/uninformative Successful/unsuccessful Skilled/unskilled Trained/untrained Professional/unprofessional</i>	Sincerity <i>Honest/dishonest Sincere/insincere Believable/unbelievable</i>	Attraction <i>Dynamic/static Expressive/inexpressive Appealing/unappealing Attractive/unattractive Exciting/dull</i>	
	Company Credibility	Competence <i>Expert/inexpert Professional/unprofessional Competent/incompetent Organised/chaotic Useful/useless</i>	Trustworthiness <i>Sincere/insincere Honest/dishonest Believable/unbelievable True/false Fair/unfair</i>	Dynamism <i>Active/passive Dynamic/static</i>	
	Salesperson Credibility	Competence <i>Trained/untrained Competent/incompetent Professional/unprofessional Experienced/inexperienced</i>	Trustworthiness <i>Honest/dishonest Sincere/insincere Realistic/unrealistic Right/wrong Trustworthy/not trustworthy</i>	Attraction <i>Attractive/unattractive Appealing/unappealing Nice/awful Expressive/inexpressive Dynamic/static</i>	
Malshe (2010)	Credibility of marketers as perceived by salespersons	Expertise <i>Value creation/addition Business savvy Trench experience</i>	Trustworthy <i>Keeping promises Common fate Sales advocacy Leadership and resource commitment</i>	Interpersonal proximity <i>Social distinction Reverence and understanding</i>	Qualitative study

Two dimensions of source credibility

Academics widely concur with Hovland et al., (1951) seminal research of source credibility and its two dimensions, expertise and trustworthiness (Chu et al., 2008; Forbes, 2010; Hilligoss et al., 2008; Malshe, 2010; Newel & Goldsmith, 2001; Pornpitakpan 2004). Research has consequently shown that expertise and trustworthiness play a critical role influencing and persuading the attitudes of customers toward buy-in (Chu et al, 2008).

Expertise

Hovland et al., (1953) defines expertise as “the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions” (as cited in Ohanian, 1990, p. 46). McCracken (1989) describes expertise as “the perceived *ability* of the source to make valid assertions” (p. 311, emphasis added). The expertise of a source is attributed to the perceived skill, knowledge and experience of a source, and their ability to provide information that is accurate and valid (Hilligoss et al., 2008). An audience may rate the expertise of a source from having firsthand experience, or hearing of the source’s expertise from other people, or by recognising the qualifications or credentials of the source (Rieh, 2002).

Trustworthiness

While Hovland et al. (1951 & 1953) do not provide a definition of trustworthiness, McCracken (1989) describes it as “the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions. This indicates the receiver’s belief that the person communicating provides information in a fair, truthful, frank and principled manner, or the degree with which the receiver perceives that the assertions made by the person are considered, or perceived to be valid (Chu et al., 2008; Pornpitakpan, 2004). A truthful communicator is perceived as more credible than one who is untruthful, whether they are an expert or not (Pornpitakpan 2004). A person is considered trustworthy when they are honest, and careful in their choice of words (Hilligoss et al., 2008).

The literature also describes a relationship between expertise and trustworthiness. Research suggests that the more expertise a source is perceived to have, the more trustworthy they are; in other words, the higher

the levels of contextually relevant knowledge someone has, the more believable they are in a person's eyes (Moorman, Deshpande, Zaltman, 1993; Palmatier, Dant, Grewal & Evans, 2006).

Presentation – the third dimension of source credibility

Expertise and trustworthiness are frequently cited as major elements of credibility, however, a third dimension, attractiveness, was added to these credibility dimensions by Ohanian (1990) in her study of celebrity spokespersons. This third dimension is herein renamed presentation, as this term adequately summarises the variety of characteristics and synonyms attributed to this dimension in subsequent studies (Eisend, 2006).

Presentation is also considered another important element that has gained acceptance in a variety of marketing communication contexts (Eisend, 2006; Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell, 2000; Ohanian, 1990). Presentation includes elements such as attractiveness, personality, physical appearance, social status, or similarity to the receiver (Chu et al., 2008).

The third dimension presentation differs from the first two dimensions in that it may not be a psychologically independent dimension but rather an intensifying function (Eisend, 2006). That is, the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of a source may be intensified through their quality presentation. Presentation may be augmented by the similarity of a source to the receiver, their excitement, expressive, attractive, or formal appearance (Eisend, 2006; Lightstone, Francis & Kocum, 2011).

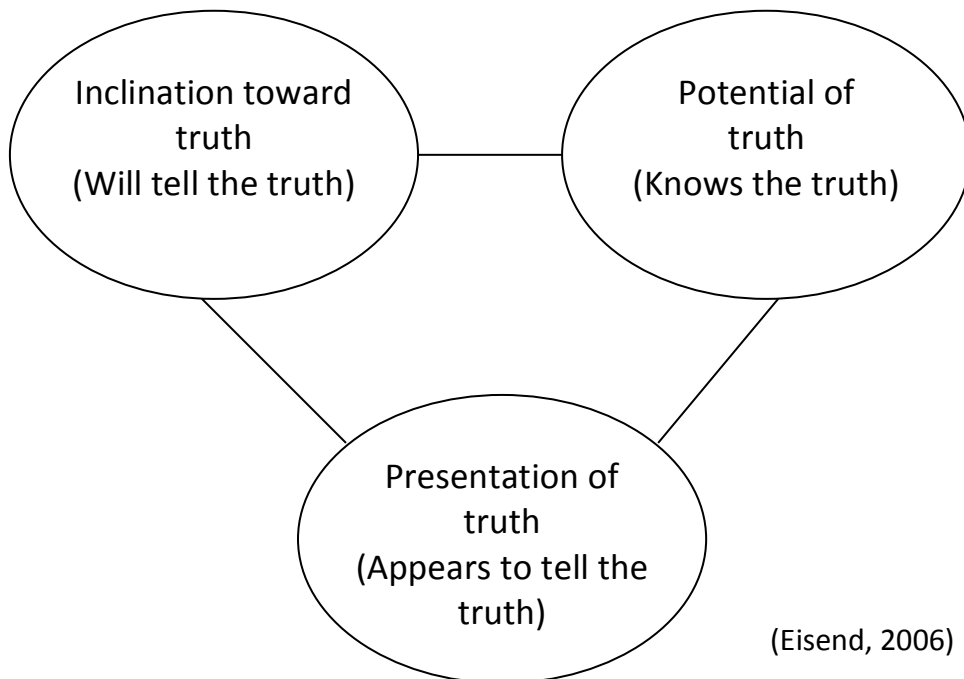
An interesting example of this third dimension is a study of university professors' credibility based on their style of dress. In this study, students were shown photos of professors, with their faces obscured, wearing casual, semi-casual, and formal attire (Lightstone et al., 2011). When asked of their impressions, students indicated that professors wearing formal attire were considered more credible than their counterparts wearing more informal attire (Lightstone et al., 2011). Therefore, while professors already had a degree of credibility (by holding recognised qualifications, publications, and a position at the university) the wearing of formal attire served to intensify the

student's perception of a professor's credibility (Eisend, 2006; Lightstone et al., 2011).

A generalisation from source credibility studies

Eisend (2006) reanalysed 28 credibility studies from 1966 to 2001 in order to see if a generalised conceptualisation of credibility in marketing communications existed. In summary, Eisend (2006), using reliability and validity checks to evaluate the results of the previous studies, surmises that there are generally three dimensions of credibility: *the inclination toward truth*, represented by dimensions such as expertise, professionalism, and competence; *the potential of truth*, which is represented by dimensions such as truthfulness, sincerity and genuineness; and *presentation of truth*, which is represented by dimensions such as attractiveness and dynamism. His findings are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Components of source credibility in marketing communications



Eisend (2006) also conducted further study to find dimensions that make up the credibility of three marketing communication sources: a salesperson, a company, and a spokesperson. Eisend's (2006) results fit within the generalised dimensions he proposed. In other words, salespersons, companies and spokespersons were considered credible when they were

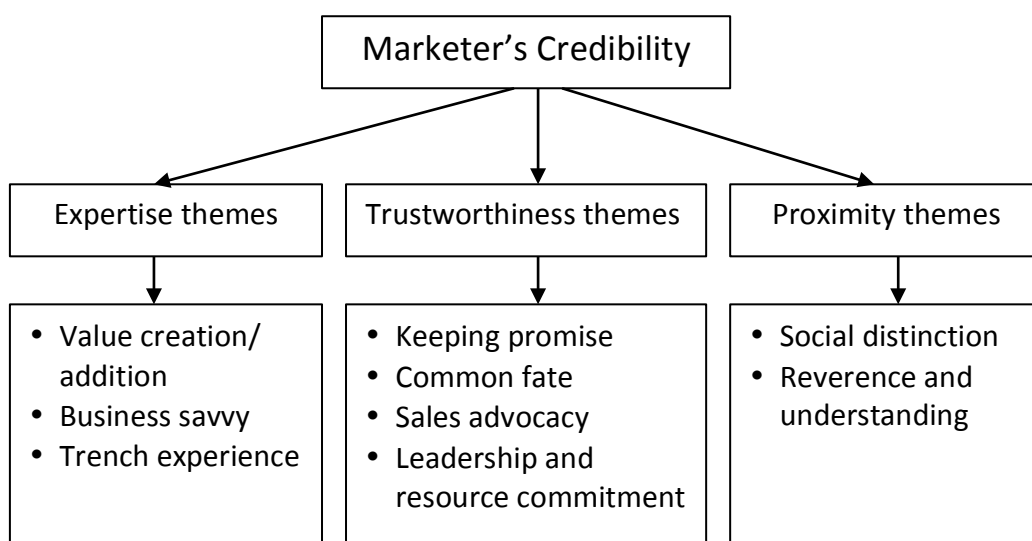
perceived to have the potential to know the truth (expertise), the inclination to tell the truth (trustworthiness), and appear to tell the truth (presentation).

The credibility of marketers from a salesperson’s perspective

Hovland et al., (1951 & 1953), Ohanian’s (1990) and Eisend’s (2006) quantitative research centred on source credibility. These studies constructed credibility in three dimensions generalised as expertise, trustworthiness, and presentation. Following these, Malshe’s (2010) research sought to construct a marketer’s credibility from a salesperson’s perspective. In his research, in which a qualitative method was employed, three dimensions constructing a marketer’s credibility were found: expertise, trustworthiness, and interpersonal proximity.

Expertise and trustworthiness were found to be dimensions of both marketing communications research (Eisend, 2006) and Malshe’s (2010) research of a marketer’s credibility from a salesperson’s perspective. In fact, Malshe (2010) argues that expertise and trustworthiness are “the two important mainstays of this concept (of credibility).” However, Malshe’s (2010) third dimension interpersonal proximity differed appreciably from the third dimension presentation (Eisend, 2006; Ohanian, 1990). An overview of these themes is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Components of marketing credibility from a salesperson perspective.



(Malshe, 2010)

Marketer's expertise theme

Marketer's expertise, as perceived by salespeople, is constructed as the ability of the marketer to add value to the salespeople's activities, as well as being an available source of product and customer knowledge. Second, being able to explicate relevant information about the product, pricing and broader strategic marketing issues (business savvy). Last, salespersons believe marketers have expertise when they have "trench experience" (p. 15), that is, relevant sales experience as well as a finger on the pulse of customers and the current marketplace.

Marketer's trustworthiness theme

Malshe's (2010) constructs trustworthiness as keeping promises, leadership and resource commitment, common fate, and sales advocacy. Keeping promises meant that marketers, in the eyes of salespersons, lost credibility when they failed to honour a pledge regarding deadline or a special campaign that the marketer had promised to make. They also lost credibility when they failed to show leadership in projects and strategies they had formulated, as well as failing to marshal the resources required to implement their strategies. Salespersons also felt marketers lost credibility when they failed to advocate, or get things done for the sales staff as well as share common fate with the salespeople; meaning marketers lost credibility because they did not align their compensation with the success of the marketing campaign, as the salespersons do.

Marketer's interpersonal proximity theme

Malshe's (2010) third dimension, *interpersonal proximity*, encompasses relational characteristics salespersons identified as necessary to the credibility of a marketing colleague, and refers to whether or not marketers and salespeople are "able to establish and nurture personal rapport based on appreciation of each other's work" (Malshe, 2010, p. 16). The third dimension of a marketer's credibility, from a sales person's perspective, *interpersonal proximity*, is distinct from the generalised third dimension *presentation* described in previous constructions of credibility in marketing literature. Presentation consists of elements such as dynamism and physical attractiveness (Berlo et al., 1969; Eisend, 2006, Forbes, 2010). However both

dynamism, which encompasses variables such as animation and showmanship (Rieh et al., 2007) and physical attractiveness, refer to celebrities and salespersons or other marketing communication sources. Interpersonal proximity differs from presentation arguably because of the more collegial nature of the salesperson/ marketer relationship versus the customer/ marketing source relationship (Malshe, 2010).

Differences between marketers' and marketing sources' credibility

Marketing literature has undertaken a plethora of source credibility research in the past 60 years. These studies have demonstrated the perception of expertise and trustworthiness as being mainstay dimensions of credibility, with the third dimension, presentation, being an intensifying dimension in certain source credibility contexts (Eisend, 2006; Ohanian, 1990; Lightstone, et al., 2011; Malshe, 2010), and interpersonal proximity as being a third dimension of a marketer's credibility from a salesperson's perspective.

Source credibility seeks to understand how a messenger or medium persuades or dissuades an audience, as the perception of someone's credibility drives an audience to either accept or reject the message of that source (Newell et al., 2001; Rieh et al., 2007). Therefore the implications for marketers being perceived as credible by senior managers are quite clear; if marketers understand how credibility for their discipline is constructed by senior managers, as well as how it is damaged, marketers and marketing academics might have a framework from which they could rebuild a place of influence in boardrooms (Grigg, 2007; Malshe, 2010).

Conclusion

Since the 1950s, the construction of credibility in marketing literature has focused mainly on marketing sources, with only recent attention given to the credibility of marketers. Three generalised dimensions construct the credibility of a marketing source: expertise, trustworthiness and presentation. Whereas a marketer's credibility from a salesperson's perspective was made up of expertise, trustworthiness and interpersonal proximity, with Malshe (2010) indicating that expertise and trustworthiness are "two important mainstays" (p. 14) in constructing and understanding

credibility. When a marketing source or a marketer understands the construction of credibility, it provides a framework that informs as to how they can be more influential and less likely to be rejected.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes the qualitative method and procedures I used to collect, assimilate, analyse, and present the data. As the purpose of this study is to understand what constructs a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective, a general interpretive approach was employed so that the personal responses of senior managers could be elicited, interpreted and presented in a way that might contribute to marketing theory.

I conducted in-depth interviews (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011; Stokes & Bergin, 2006; Webb, 1995) lasting on average 1 hour and 15 minutes with seven senior managers from manufacturing, retail, or services organisations in New Zealand's private sector. These industries were chosen as the scope of the retail, services and manufacturing organisations represents the majority of industry in New Zealand, not only in terms of the number of enterprises but also the number of employees (Statistics New Zealand, 2010).

The senior managers came from organisations that ranged from a small business that had 11 employees, to a multi-national corporate that has approximately 80,000 employees around the world. Participants had been senior managers between two and 12 years, the average service time being almost six years. While every participant had a university degree, five of the participants either had a marketing degree or post-graduate marketing qualification. (See Table 2 for overview of participants).

Table 2 Participants in brief

Pseudonym	General information
Barry	Executive director of an Australasian service organisation that has over 1100 employees in New Zealand. He has been in this company for almost 20 years and has served in his current position for the past several years. Barry was advertising for a marketing assistant to join his team of over a dozen other marketers.
Sonia	New Zealand general manager of a publically listed multinational manufacturing company. She oversees around 25 staff and has served in this role for several years. Sonia has a degree and a PGDip in marketing. Sonia was advertising for a marketing specialist to join the three other marketers in her team.
Adam	New Zealand general manager of a publically listed multinational company. This company has over a dozen retail outlets nationally. Adam has worked with this company for about 10 years and has served in this role for a couple of years. He has an honours degree in business. Adam was advertising for a marketing coordinator. His marketing team was in the process of restructuring and two other marketers were leaving.
Steve	Chief executive of a New Zealand service company that has over several hundred employees. He has served in this role for 3 years and has spent most of his career in the same industry as a marketer. He has a marketing degree. Steve was advertising for a new marketing manager as his current one was performing inadequately. He also employs a marketing assistant.
Joan	Part owner and managing director of a service company that has almost a dozen staff. Joan has a degree. Joan was advertising for an Online Marketer at the time, which is a new role for her company
James	General manager of a publically listed manufacturing and retail company for almost 20 years. His company has around several hundred employees nationwide. James was advertising for a marketing advisor to work with his marketing manager. James has a degree.
Dave	General manager of a manufacturing company for over 5 years. The company has several hundred employees nationwide. Dave has a marketing degree. He was advertising for a marketing coordinator to join his growing marketing team.

The size of the organisations required for this research was not stipulated; however, each organisation was required to have a senior manager who is an employer, or is about to employ at least one full-time marketer. These organisations, from the Auckland, Bay of Plenty, and Waikato regions of New Zealand, advertised to fill a marketing position in www.seek.co.nz, a popular job advertising website, in May and June 2011. Participants were selected by convenience (Patton, 2002). I gained ethical approval from the Waikato Management School's Ethics Committee before commencing the interviews, and provided participants with a participant information sheet (see Appendix I) before the interview.

The interviews were conversational (Patton, 2002) and an interview guide was used so that important aspects of the selection, role, value, and credibility of marketers might not remain unaddressed. The interview guide is included in Appendix II. The interview questions were designed to funnel down through the roles and value of marketers and lead to the senior manager's view on what makes marketers credible in their organisation and in today's world. I began the interview by asking the participant about their own journey toward becoming a senior manager and about the marketing job they were advertising; the qualifications, experience, skills, and any other characteristics they considered important when employing a marketer.

I asked each senior manager about the marketers' responsibilities and roles in their organisation, and to provide descriptions of the work marketers had conducted. I then inquired about the decision-making and influential aspects of the marketing role in their organisation. As I wanted the senior managers to be completely focused on the marketing function in their organisation, discussing the role and value of marketers in-depth for around the first half of the interview was purposive. Once I believed the senior managers had described a broad range of qualities of marketers, both positive and negative, and were focused on the role of marketers, I asked them what they believed made a marketer credible. I finished the interview by asking if they had any beliefs or opinions about marketers they would like to discuss, but had not yet been talked about. Throughout the interview, when a participant

provided a response, I encouraged him or her to offer additional examples to explain their answers and clarify ambiguities.

After five interviews I noticed that the answer to the question most directly aimed at the research purpose, "What makes a marketer credible in your organisation?" invariably related to the marketers' performance at delivering commercial outcomes. At this point I believed that the saturation point had been reached. I conducted another two interviews and found that again the participant's answers related that the credibility of their marketers was based on their performance. The extra interviews, however, helped to illustrate further the performance theme as well as provide additional examples and clarity for each of the sub-themes.

Each interview was recorded using two digital recording devices and transcribed verbatim (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bird, 2005; Kvale, 2007). I printed the transcriptions and read them to gain an overall familiarity with the data (Thomas, 2006). To gain an understanding of the research objective, I looked at each senior manager's reply to the interview question, "What makes a marketer credible?" This procedure confirmed the main theme of the research findings (performance in delivering commercial outcomes) (Thomas, 2006).

While the main theme was immediately apparent, the upper-level sub-themes and lower level sub-themes were not. To construct these themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) I re-read the data and wrote some general category titles on paper that I believed were appropriate and pinned them to a wall. I then went through each interview and cut out what I thought were relevant quotations, and pinned them on the wall in the appropriate categories. I recreated these categories and their quotations with mind-mapping software on my computer. Finally, I was able to revise and refine each theme heading using an interpretive process by combining or rearranging quotes on my mind-mapping software until the core essence of the research, its theme, sub-themes, and secondary sub-themes became clear (Boyatzis, 1998; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Thomas, 2006). The main theme,

sub-themes, and secondary sub-themes are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings and discussion

Seven New Zealand senior managers participated in interviews to help me understand the construction of a marketer's credibility. Their perspectives have been synthesised and presented in this chapter. The central theme of the findings, called Performance in delivering commercial outcomes, is discussed first. This is followed by a discussion on the work aspect of performance and its subthemes Pedigree, Projects, and Pervasive Influence. Next, the social aspect of credibility is discussed followed by its subthemes Personal Integrity and Professional Conduct. This chapter then concludes with a discussion of how both the work and social aspects of performance are required if a marketer is to be considered credible, followed by a discussion comparing and contrasting the findings of this research with past credibility literature.

A marketer's credibility is grounded on performance

According to responses provided by the senior managers, a marketer's credibility is grounded in their performance in delivering commercial outcomes. The following quotes are the responses participants made toward the end of their interview, when asked directly what they believe makes a marketer credible:

Barry - The credibility of anyone in their role is in their performance. Whether you're a sportsman or a businessman or... a priest in a church.

Sonia - It's delivery of results. Whatever your target you're trying to meet from a marketing perspective is, if it's certain units of a product, certain sales of a product, or opening up certain distribution channels or penetration, or competitive share, no matter what that is, it's delivery against that.

Steve - So you (the marketer) need to be able to walk the talk... It's all about credibility... you live and die by people's belief in your competence and ability. So you need to prove your competence by delivering good quality stuff that is reliable. It doesn't sound sexy, but you have to consistently, reliably, deliver on time. And not stuff it up. 'Cause as soon as you stuff it up, "yeah, b*****y marketer, no b*****y idea"

Adam - You can tell within a team who has the greater level of credibility just based on where the phone calls end up being directed.

So you can tell whose working on what and who hears from which dealers more, which relationships are working and which dealerships are avoiding certain staff members because they have better results dealing with someone else.

Dave - Someone that has good technical marketing skills, and someone that can build rapport and develop communications with all these different stakeholders, because if they can do that well, they gain credibility; and not only from their own teams, internal teams, but, you know, from customers and channel.

James - Commercial outcomes at the end of the day

Joan - It will be really getting results for us, but also for our clients.

The senior managers I interviewed construct the credibility of marketers based on marketers:

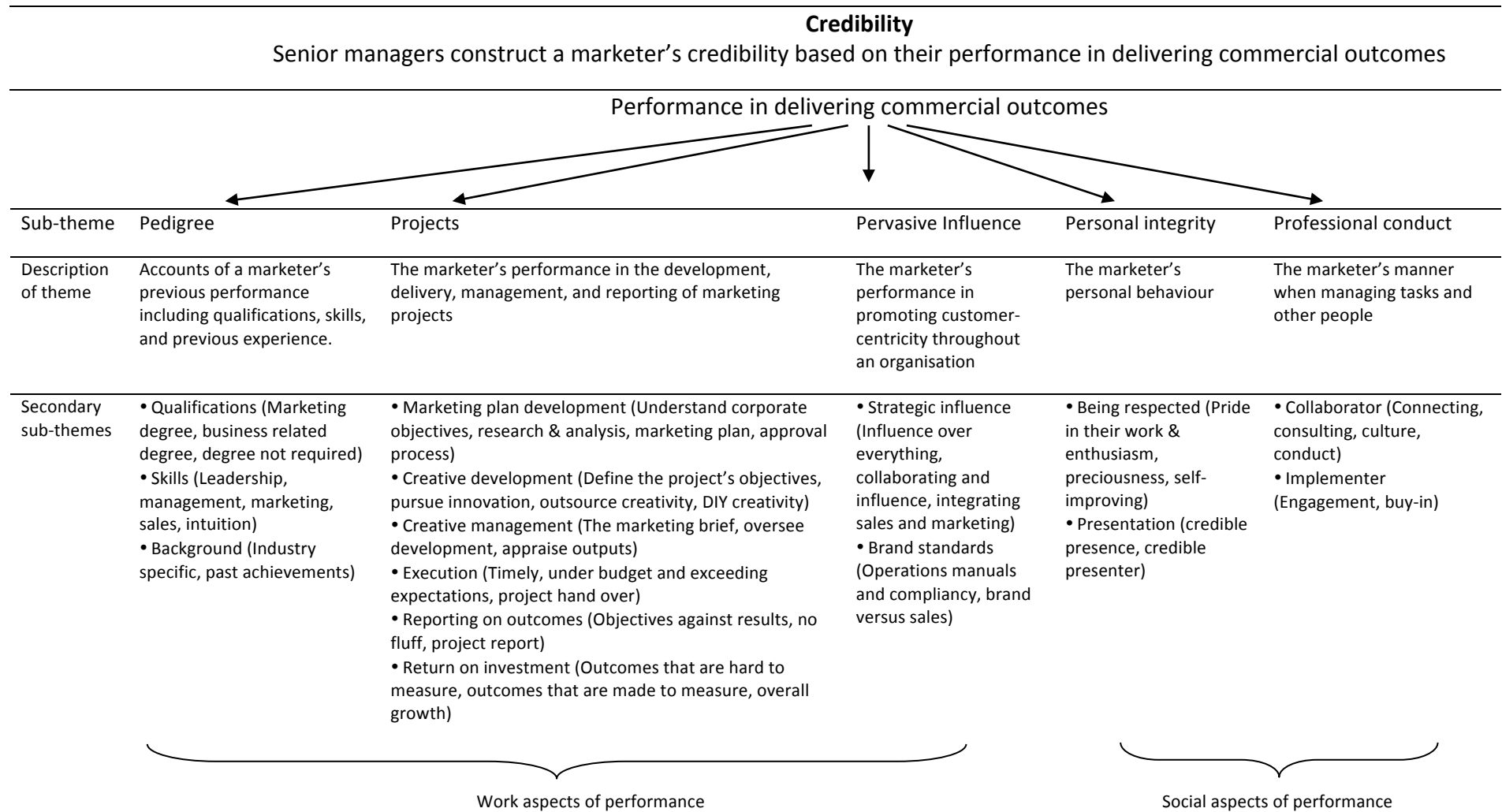
- Delivering results
- Proving their competence and ability
- Walking the talk
- Constantly, reliably delivering on time
- Not “stuffing up”
- Producing commercial outcomes
- Demonstrating marketing and social skills

The construction of a marketer’s credibility by senior managers appears to be determined overall by a marketer’s performance, a term used by Barry, and their performance is judged by the delivery of commercial outcomes or, put another way, the revenue generated by their activity. It stands to reason that the participants, as senior managers, construct the credibility of marketers based on performance as, according to Bertrand and Schoar (2003) and Sawhney (2009), CEOs are primarily concerned with revenue growth, and the performance of the company as a whole. CEOs are hired to take responsibility for the organisation’s strategy, which includes overseeing the organisation’s financing, operating, and marketing policies and are accountable for the performance of their departments in causing the organisation to increase revenue or achieve the organisation’s strategy (Sawhney, 2009). Senior managers are outcomes driven; therefore a marketer’s performance, in terms of delivering commercial outcomes, is the

central theme senior managers identified when constructing a marketer's credibility.

Performance means different things to different people. To the participants, performance is results-based (the delivery of commercial outcomes) and is constructed, as shall be demonstrated further on, through both the marketer's work and social aspect of their performance. The findings contain the sub-themes Pedigree, Projects, and Pervasive influence, which relate to the work aspect of performance, while Personal Integrity and Professional Conduct sub-themes relate to the social aspect of a marketer's performance. Each of these sub-themes has secondary sub-themes that construct a holistic understanding of a marketer's performance and credibility, from a senior manager's perspective. These findings are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Construction of a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective.



Work aspect of performance

The work aspect of performance describes the task-oriented knowledge, ability and activity a marketer employs in their marketing role. The work aspect of performance is the sum of the Pedigree, Projects, and Pervasive Influence subthemes of a marketer's performance. Pedigree encompasses the qualifications, skills and background a marketer brings to the organisation. The subtheme Projects includes the marketer's performance in designing, implementing, and executing marketing plans, as well as the demonstrating each project's commercial outcomes. Pervasive influence describes how a marketer influences others in the organisation to be customer-centric.

Instances where senior managers assert that marketers are credible in the work aspect of their performance include having a university degree, relevant marketing skills and experience, seeing that the marketer is hard working and wanting to improve his or herself. Also, that they will serve in menial tasks, are effective in their work without supervision, and will complete projects on time, under budget, and within the timeframe. They will also achieve corporate objectives in a clever or creative way, report on a project's performance without being fluffy, and influence others in the organisation to think about customers. Senior managers assert that marketers damage the work aspect of their performance when they have no structured purpose to their marketing research, are unable to execute marketing plans, and are unable to quantify the results of marketing projects. The following is a more detailed discussion of these sub-themes.

Pedigree

Barry - He's smart, don't worry about that. He's a very good marketer. He's got a very good marketing pedigree from a background. He was with (other organisations known for their marketing success).

Steve - I had my doubts (about hiring him as a marketing manager) at the beginning, but I had an external consultant with me, she thought he was great. I had my doubts, I thought "I have a background in marketing, maybe I can help him along a bit". Big mistake. I now know a good vacancy is better than a bad hire.

A marketer's past performance at university, or as an employee in other organisations, is vital in the construction of a marketer's credibility, from a

senior manager’s perspective. Barry describes his marketing manager as having a marketing “pedigree”, and goes on to describe in positive terms the qualifications and skills his marketing manager has, and the background he came from. In contrast, Steve, who is in the process of replacing his existing marketing manager, describes his concerns about the lack of experience his marketing manager had during the job interview but hired him anyway; an action he now describes as a mistake. Other participants, while they did not use the term pedigree, also described how historical information about a marketer’s performance provided them with either confidence or uncertainty regarding the marketer’s credibility.

Senior managers, when selecting marketer’s to work for them, describe how they look for evidence of a marketer’s past performance to indicate how the marketer may perform in their organisation. Pedigree is constructed by the marketers’ qualifications, skills, and background.

Table 3 The pedigree sub-theme - Qualifications

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Pedigree
Description of theme	Accounts of a marketer’s previous performance including qualifications, skills, and previous experience.
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications (Marketing degree, business related degree, degree not required) • Skills (Leadership, management, marketing, sales, intuition) • Background (Industry specific, past achievements)

Qualifications

Dave - It’s important that they have a grounding you know, at tertiary level I think, of marketing skills... Just so they understand the concepts behind marketing, you know, I wouldn’t necessarily employ a marketing coordinator that hasn’t been through some marketing course or marketing degree, because they just wouldn’t have the basic fundamentals.

Most participants were sceptical that a marketer would be able to perform their role effectively, and therefore be credible, without a business degree. Qualifications provide the senior manager an assurance that the marketer has an academic grounding in business principles and practices, and that

they understand fundamental marketing concepts. The highest qualification required by the senior managers interviewed was a degree, as masters or honours degrees were not specified as necessary. However, senior managers varied on what qualifications would indicate how well a marketer would perform in their organisation; whether it be a marketing degree, or just business degree with another major, or whether a degree was necessary at all.

Marketing degree

Some of the senior managers assert that having a marketing qualification is essential for applicants to be considered employable. These senior managers, when hiring for a marketing position, look for assurance that the applicant has been exposed to relevant academic business training with marketing being the ideal major:

Adam - We still, as a matter of course, look for business qualifications, and then, at a greater level of detail, look at majors of the degree like marketing. But certainly commerce is the first degree that we look for. They'd ideally have a marketing degree, some kind of marketing degree... We are looking for reassurance that the applicant has been through that process and has been a few years studying.

Sonia - Tertiary. We don't specify any more than that but, particularly in marketing we are wanting to only have qualified marketers. And that's a global directive, to make sure we're not left behind.

Sonia asserts employing marketers with a marketing degree is a policy her company has adopted so that they may not be "left behind." This indicates some faith in academia; that senior managers believe graduates may not only be grounded in marketing principles, but also aware of the latest advances in marketing processes and techniques. This implies that the marketer should be able to perform their role by contributing not only the fundamental concepts marketing brings to an organisation, but an understanding of specialised and modern marketing knowledge. Specialised marketing knowledge might include the latest consumer behaviour, market research, or perhaps knowledge of some future marketing techniques that are currently being developed. Evidence of a marketing degree provides some assurance to senior managers that a marketer may be able to perform their role more effectively than a non-marketing degree candidate.

Adam suggests that candidates that have graduated with a marketing degree have “been through a process”. This may indicate that as well as specialist marketing knowledge, senior managers may also require a level of general skills such as a willingness to learn, social and communication skills, or other skills common to university graduates. A marketing graduate might also bring qualities such as self-confidence, which may be essential for the marketer if they are to perform in their role effectively.

Gray, Ottesen, Bell, Chapman, and Whiten (2007) believe senior managers expect universities to provide curricula that provide graduates with an optimal balance of generic skills such as written, oral and teamwork skills, and marketing-specific skills such as strategic marketing, services marketing, and internet marketing. However, due to the variety of organisations, as well as the variety of perceptions students have of essential marketing skills, this balance is difficult to find (Walker et al., 2009).

New Zealand employers claim skills such as problem identification, and research and analytical skills are essential skills for marketing graduates to be employable (Gray et al., 2007). Research also suggests marketing graduates require marketing knowledge and a range of analytical skills as well as soft skills, such as friendliness and optimism, if they are going to have a successful marketing career (Kelley & Bridges, 2005). Most senior managers in this research believe that a degree is a strong indicator that marketing applicants have had exposure and some practice in these skills and areas and are therefore better equipped to perform in their role.

Business-related degree

Some senior managers believe that while a degree is mandatory, the marketer, or marketing manager, may not need to have a marketing degree to qualify for the position. Having a business degree can be sufficient for a marketing role if the prospect has sufficient experience. The following example demonstrates experience in an industry might be a greater assurance to senior managers of how a marketer may perform:

Steve - I still want tertiary qualifications, yeah, but you could be a b*****y accountant, qualified tertiary accountant who has 5 years experience in marketing... I'm sweet with that. The guy who took over

my role in marketing had a double degree in economics and accounting. And he ended up in a marketing role!

Sometimes employees who have a non-marketing degree “find” themselves working as a marketer in their organisation for one reason or another. After several years in a marketing position their performance indicates they are ideal candidates for a more senior marketing role despite not majoring in marketing. While having a marketing qualification provides some senior managers an assurance of how the marketer may perform in their role, other senior managers are satisfied with a business related degree and marketing experience. As described above, there are generic skills taught in universities that business graduates use to transfer across disciplines. Indeed, many business programs are known for providing or introducing students to a broad range of business subjects; as Johns (2008) asserts, graduates, regardless of discipline, should have problem solving and decision making skills, both of which are required for marketers.

Degree not required

One senior manager describes how their marketing manager does not have a marketing degree, but only a qualification in direct marketing. The senior manager explains that the marketing manager had been with the organisation for 20 years and during this time they had progressed from a secretarial position to a marketing assistant to a marketing manager. As the marketing manager’s core focus, apart from implementing projects, is direct marketing, she took a direct marketing course. According to her senior manager, although she does not have a degree, she demonstrates a great deal of credibility as she has intuitive marketing abilities along with organisational skills, and had acquired a direct marketing qualification to assist her in her role:

James - She has a qualification in direct marketing. She has a good understanding of what works and doesn’t work in direct marketing and a lot of what we do is direct.

It should be noted, however, from the above example, that the senior manager saw himself as the creative director of this organisation (though he also did not have a marketing degree). The researcher understands that the current role of marketing manager in this organisation is primarily

implementing marketing directives from the senior manager, and does not generally include developing marketing initiatives. Nor does the role involve brand management, which suggests the marketing manager role of this organisation is somewhat limited compared to others.

Another senior manager's preference was for experience rather than qualifications. When asked about what sort of experience he replied:

Barry - Depends on the role. If someone's into media placement, we want to know they've dealt with the (newspaper) before. If they're into sorting out publications, what other publications they've done? So it depends on the role.

However, when asked, in a different context, about his marketing manager, he comments that he's impressed with the marketing manager, in part, because of the knowledge he brought with him from university:

Barry - He's (the marketing manager) got really good structure. He's probably learnt a bit of that through university, he's learnt it on the road with some very... I mean (companies the marketing manager had previously worked for) are good marketing companies. So he's learnt about products, and about different levels and cost budgets and everything else. I mean he's got some very good knowledge.

Therefore it appears that qualifications are not required for low-level marketing positions in this organisation, but are required at higher-level marketing positions. Indeed, this senior manager is impressed with the organisations his marketing manager had worked for and the skills he's brought from these organisations. Therefore, within this marketing team of around a dozen, low-level marketing roles do not require a degree to perform effectively in their role. However, the more senior marketing positions in this organisation require both experience and qualifications.

In summary, senior managers interviewed hold a variety of views regarding the necessity of a qualification to be employed as a marketer, generally though both qualifications and experience appear to be essential, especially for more senior marketing roles. This indicates that qualifications and experience provide the senior manager some confidence that the marketer will perform effectively in their role. In other research, only 29% of employers agreed or strongly agreed that university prepared marketing

graduates for work within their organisation, however preference for experience over qualifications was the exception rather than the norm (Johns, 2008; Walker et al. 2009). These studies agree with this research in that a marketer is more able to convince a senior manager of their credibility if they have a degree and can verify their contribution to commercial outcomes in previous employment.

Skills

Senior manager’s look for skills that demonstrate that the marketer understands, values and can attract and retain customers as well as an ability to successfully complete projects. An account of the marketer’s skills is vital, as the senior manager may want to know how the marketer might perform in the particular role and challenges of their organisation. The skills that participants described as vital for marketers to gain credibility were leadership, management, marketing, sales, and intuition.

Table 4 The pedigree sub-theme - Skills

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Pedigree
Description of theme	Accounts of a marketer’s previous performance including qualifications, skills, and previous experience.
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications (Marketing degree, business related degree, degree not required) • Skills (Leadership, management, marketing, sales, intuition) • Background (Industry specific, past achievements)

Leadership

Participants identified leadership as an important skill marketers need to perform well and described it in two ways: leadership competencies and team leadership. First, Sonia describes how one of her marketers demonstrated leadership competencies during a crucial project:

Sonia - It’s his overall leadership competencies. So the way he approaches problem solving, the um, amount of... did he need supervision? You know, people that can make their own decisions – sound business decisions on a sound basis, and then go forward and put together plans or recommendations to their manager. He didn’t manage people, so he was at the next level down, so that really didn’t come into it, but it was seen as a potential that he could manage a

team in the future, so those were the sorts of things we're looking for... It could be a low job grade person who's reasonably new to the company but is displaying quite broad leadership competencies as opposed to more narrow functional competencies. So you can easily progress right up the marketing ladder and not be HPE (high performing employee) from (our company's) point of view.

This mid-level marketer distinguished himself as a high performing employee and was promoted to a higher position overseas by demonstrating leadership skills. Also, this marketer's performance in initiating a marketing campaign was hugely successful for the company, and earned him and several of this marketer's team a prize to attend a training program overseas. While he demonstrated many skills in putting the campaign together, including creative, innovation, research, and teamwork skills, it was his leadership skill that was attributed to the success of his performance. However, other marketers in the same company, while they have progressed up the marketing ladder, have not been considered as high performance employees; Sonia argues that this is because they do not demonstrate leadership skills.

The second example of leadership skill describes a marketing manager who demonstrated team leadership:

Barry - See, there's a lot of that (leadership) that comes into it. Because you've got a team of twelve... fifteen... You've got projects to do under budget, within a timeframe and exceeding people's expectations. To get people to do that, to make each magazine, four times a year, better than the last one, on time, under budget and exceeding people's expectations, takes leadership. Takes tough leadership... There's no compromise, it's got to be done. If somebody gets sick, or somebody's not performing, or... you just gotta go for it, you gotta get it done. It's a leadership role. All leadership's tough, but that's... you get paid money, you get \$50 grand for being a marketer, you get \$200 grand a year for being a leader. There's lots of marketers around, there's not a lot of leaders that have marketing skill.

Dave - Leadership... of a team, someone who has the ability to take our business strategy and develop marketing strategy from our business strategy. In other words... take that marketing strategy and really pull that down into tactical, yearly, or 18 month time frame goal. To have contribution to the development of the business strategy. To oversee, obviously the marketing team, and to develop that team as our business develops, in terms of obtaining the right skills, appointing the right skills in the right places, so, a combination of strategic input,

and managing a team basically... Any good leader... someone that articulates the vision for a team, and then can utilise the skills of the people that they've got underneath them to align them with the strategy that they've put in place. But again, a leader is about bringing the best out in your people, sort of thing, so that's the key part.

Barry makes the point that while there are many marketers, there are not many marketers with leadership skills. It is marketers that lead others whose pay grade increases dramatically. One assumes it is because an effective leader is meeting or exceeding corporate objectives, thereby a valuable asset to the organisation. Both Barry and Dave provide examples of how marketers with leadership skill perform in their organisations. This includes articulating vision, both short and long term, to the team, and demonstrating uncompromising commitment to the vision and to the team, so together they may achieve corporate goals on time, below budget, and above expectation. Leadership skills are crucial if the marketer's responsibility includes developing and utilising a team to achieve commercial outcomes. According to Yukl (2008) effective leaders have an understanding of the complexity of relationships and performance determinants and recognise how to influence them to achieve goals. While debate continues regarding leadership being genetic, learned or both, some companies take the initiative to train their employees in leadership skills.

James - The company has done, for I guess five or six years now, had a number of leadership development programs internally. And (our marketing manager has) been engaged in those and they've been about self-awareness and specific skills around, you know, managing self to manage others. And through me as well, we have monthly one-on-ones, nonoperational one-on-ones with all my staff, where we talk about individual development and individual behaviour and leadership in team related issues.

James provides leadership development training to his employees as an investment in human capital. Marketers taking advantage of this training have an opportunity to develop or hone their leadership skills, to be equipped to perform their role more effectively. While marketers can develop and maintain credibility from a senior manager's perspective without leadership skills, marketers who demonstrate leadership competencies may get earmarked for promotion and higher pay-grades.

From a senior manager's perspective, an investment in leadership training for marketers should translate into an improved performance by them.

Management

Management skills as described by the senior managers include communication, delegation, knowledge of organisation's structure, an understanding of how actions implicate throughout the organisation and the roles and lines of authority in the organisation. With regard to being an effective manager, El-Sabaa, (2001) elaborates on three essential skills: human skills, conceptual skills and technical skills (refer to Table 5). Senior managers provided examples of these management skills during the interview.

Table 5 Comparing management skills from the literature to the data.

Management skills	Marketer's management skills as described by senior managers
<p>Human skill requires the manager to work as a group member to build a cooperative effort from other members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Good delegator, good manager of others (James). ◀ They have an empathy and understanding of people and clients and expectations... so that they're able to adjust style to different people (Joan). ◀ How's a marketer judged, other than performance? Just on social skills (Barry). ◀ So it's about some of the soft skills rather than some of the hard technical skills (Dave).
<p>Conceptual (or organisational) skill is the manager's ability to visualise a project and how it impacts on all areas of the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Understand what the components of that look like from an implementation point of view (James). ◀ Understanding that right across the business, in terms of, what part the service centre needs to play, where the sales function fits in, where an external agency might fit in, what tasks need to be performed internally (James).
<p>Technical skill requires an understanding of methods, procedures, systems and techniques specific to each task</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ If someone's into media placement, we want to know they've dealt with the (newspaper) before. If they're into sorting out publications, what other publications they've done (Barry)? ◀ We want them to be familiar with websites... social media things like LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, all those sorts of things (Joan). ◀ Someone that has good technical marketing skills... We look for specific skills in specific areas. So you know if we're looking for social media, or online web skills, then we, you know obviously, someone that's had some experience in that (Dave).

(Adapted from El-Sabaa, 2001)

Time management is another skill senior managers insist a marketer requires if they are to perform their role effectively. As the marketer is the "go-to-guy" for front-line staff and other departments in terms of implementing consumer-centric activities, they often have many projects "on the go" at any one time. Time management skills help the marketer prioritise their time and movements, as they complete projects:

Steve - You'll get stuff coming out your backside: A manager will come to you and say, "Can you do a little mailer here?" and you say, "No worries". I'll come over and say, "I just bought this electronic photo frame... I want you to trial a couple of PDFs on a (shop) desk, saying 'why don't you try our (product)?'" Then someone says, "We want a marquee." And someone else says, "S**t, the brochures need reprinting, we want you to review the brochures and we don't like the picture on the front of the brochure, can you change that?" Meanwhile, you've got your big TVC (television commercial) coming up, where you're got to do the staff launch and staff comms (communications), you've got to do the launch of the TVC, you've got to do all the brand changing and all the scheduling around that big ticket one. You've got six or seven things on your list already, and it's Monday. And you've got a... meeting and your b*****y boss is asking you for a pricing positioning paper 6 weeks ago and it's due on Friday. Then you've got whatever else, you've got to do the tracking on the campaign, and we were silly enough to offer vouchers on that campaign, so everyone who takes it up we have got to buy that many vouchers this week and distribute them out to (our other locations), then we've got to reconcile on that. So, you've just got a list of things and it doesn't stop. You've just got to keep going and going and going. You've got three phone calls a day asking us, "Can you sponsor us?" ... or whatever else there is.

Time management enables the marketer to list their work-in-progress in order of urgency and importance, due to a heavy workload and variety of tasks entrusted to them. Time management may also help the marketer consider ways in which to develop a project that might require less upkeep than the voucher system example given above. Walker et al., (2009) also asserts that marketers need to develop time management skills to "adjust to the pace of work life and workplace interactions."

The senior managers distinguished between marketers that are leaders and managers. Marketing managers in at least two organisations were described as more manager than leadership orientated by their senior manager:

Dave - So... she's more of a manager than a leader. You know... it's a management role at the moment because there's a lot of managing to do, in terms of all the brand stuff, you know that sort of stuff. So it's not a full leadership role sort of thing, in terms of what you expect from a marketing director.

The senior manager, in these companies, provided the leadership in terms of thought leadership, creativity and the conceptualisation of project developments for the marketing department. The senior managers who

provided leadership in marketing either came from a sales and marketing role, or had demonstrated an intuitive marketing disposition discussed previously.

Marketing skills

The following examples from senior managers express their desire for marketers with general marketing knowledge and for marketers to have specific expertise in a particular marketing discipline; in this case online marketing. These general and specific marketing skills are required by senior managers so that marketers are able to perform a role senior managers have identified as essential to commercial growth:

Sonia - Marketers at (our organisation) tend to be extraordinarily generalist, they're not focused like they are in many other divisions where you might have a communications person, you might have an e-person, you might have a promotional person, we don't have that kind of separation. So our marketers are responsible for the entire marketing function.

Joan - There's a lot more people that are marketers and have degrees, than there are online, that have online experience.

Dave - We look for specific skills in specific areas. So you know if we're looking for social media, or online web skills, then we, you know obviously, someone that's had some experience in that. Those are the technical sort of skills we're talking about.

The skills James requires from his marketing manager include buyer behaviour, organisational conceptualisation, strategic thinking, project development and execution, research analysis, and promotions. These skills are required so that the marketer can demonstrate they are able to deploy projects that might achieve corporate goals:

James - Can demonstrate their ability to understand customer experience within a service business. Understand what the key buttons are to push, from a customer perspective... demonstrate an ability to develop and execute retention of loyalty programs, and also demonstrate the ability to create the opportunity for customer acquisition, so not necessarily the sales function per se... you know, the ability to identify by... through market segmentation, the right customers, understand customer value to the organisation. Understand commercial value of customer acquisition and retention and... show they've been able to develop the appropriate strategy and tactics to actually deploy and execute that.

Marketers need to be up front with which skills they have and which skills they might need to develop or outsource. Steve describes a marketing manager who was given a task to complete, but kept putting it off because he lacked the ability to accomplish the task. While Steve realised he should have drawn out which skills the marketing manager lacked, he was disappointed that the project was delayed primarily because the marketer was not upfront, perhaps even insecure, about his shortcoming:

Steve - You know, I want someone to just tell me. We don't want someone to, 'cause in the good ol' days you just baffled them with b*****t, you just talked to them until their eyes glazed over, and then they say, "Ok, off you go then". Nowadays, there's none of that, basically you're better off as a marketing manager if you're going to do well, just say, "Here's what I can do, here's what I can't do. I've got five tasks, you want me to do these two, that's above the line, which of these tasks that fall below the line, if you want me to do this one". Nice and clear, very precise, and needs to be made clear, "These are the resources I've got, this is what I'm capable of, this is what I'm not capable of, this is where we need some help."

Steve also alludes to a "skill" where marketers in the past have bewildered or confused their senior manager in such a way that the senior manager believes that the marketer has certain skills when in fact they do not. Being manipulative, unethical, and outright deceitful were "skills" attributed to past marketers by other participants also. However, in today's business environment, Steve considers marketing skills as being more ethical and scientific. With regard to misalignment of skills, Steve also provides an anecdote of how organisations typically promoted salespersons into a marketing role because of their exceptional sales skills; however sales skills have not equipped them for marketing. As a consequence of this practice, the senior manager believed the credibility of marketers globally had been tarnished:

Steve - Back in the day they were, "Bob's good at sales, whack him into a marketing role". They didn't know that marketing was not sales. Those sales people lived it large, and they knew how to throw a party, and they just didn't know how to do marketing, to a great degree. They didn't do a bad job, but again that's caused a perception.

In a study conducted in New Zealand regarding the essential skills of marketers, the participants comprising of marketing managers, senior students and academics listed:

- An ability and willingness to learn about product-markets.
- To solve marketing problems.
- To communicate with internal and external stakeholders.
- To work in teams.
- The knowledge of a wide range of marketing subject areas needed to set these skills in context. (Gray et al., 2007).

The study also revealed that for a junior marketer to progress to a senior position that they would need to develop these skills as well:

- Strategic thinking.
- Leadership and management skills.
- Product and brand management
- Communication and promotion.
- Consumer behaviour. (Gray et al., 2007).

Gray's et al. (2007) research had not asked participants if marketers needed budgeting or financial skills. Whereas data from these senior managers indicates budgeting and financial skills are required, particularly at a senior marketer's level, due to the financial accountability needed for projects:

Barry - They generally have to be quite good at finance to be in marketing, because you talk about budgeting... And so they don't have to be brilliant financiers and know about derivatives, but they have to know how to get things under budget.

Lack of financial skills in the marketing skill mix has contributed significantly to the decline of marketer's credibility. This is due to marketer's inability to provide senior managers and CFOs evidence of marketing's contribution to the bottom-line (Davidson, 2009; The Fournaise Marketing Group, 2011; Sawhney, 2009).

Sales skills

The participants assert that sales skills provide the marketer with a more holistic view of the customer experience, as well as the sales department's

challenges and capabilities. Marketers should be able to leverage off sales experience to greatly enhance relations between sales and marketing and ultimately, the customer experience:

Steve - Sales is very, very important for a (marketer) to understand, and the buyer behaviour behind sales, the drivers behind what generates the sales. Because, marketing, in fact, brings them to the door, the sales people convert them. But if the sales people do a rubbish job, and the member experience is poor, all the marketing work is undone... Now, if you drag them in the front door, but the back door is wide open and they're walking through and out the back door, we're stuffed! So you need to make sure you shut the back door, and member experience to me is all around sales and whenever they touch the entity they have a positive experience, so, if anything, we are probably making this more sales orientated than it ever has been before. In that we're saying "You need to look at the experience the member has when they walk in that door, and see if it's satisfactory.

(Would sales experience make for a better marketer?) Barry - S**t yes. And it's amazing how determined they are in the marketing job and when they're out there they realise those rules are b*****t. They want to put rules around salespeople, but nothing in life's linear... (Our marketing manager) has a background in sales, which is good. He was in radio and sales and DB and sales, before he went into marketing, so he understands sales very well. That's why he has good empathy with the salespeople, because he's not telling them how to do their job.

Steve and Barry agree that sales experience may improve a marketer's performance with regard to attracting and retaining customers, creating customer satisfaction and optimising relationships with sales colleagues. Senior managers affirm that without sales experience, the credibility the marketer has with salespeople lessens. Walker et al., (2009) also argues that sales experience, while not expected from marketing graduates, was required by marketers in a range of industries, and that sales and marketing are considered in many instances as a mixed role. This skill not only related to B2C selling, but also the ability to sell ideas internally (Walker et al., 2009). Gray et al., (2007) found that marketing managers and academics rate selling skills higher than marketing students. One concern is that while selling skills are vital in the construction of marketer's credibility, marketing students in Gray's et al., (2007) research, showed a lack of motivation in studying it.

Intuition

Senior managers identified intuitiveness as another important ability marketers may exhibit. James describes his marketing manager's intuition in terms of her experience and knowing which marketing messages customers might respond to:

James - (My marketing manager) has a very good feel for, and good experience in understanding what messages customers will respond to, and what messages customers will regard as corporate b*****t.

Intuitiveness was described in various ways in the data: "a feel", "an understanding", "a gut-feeling", to name some. One senior manager finds intuitiveness hard to explain but describes it in terms of good marketers "have an eye" for what might work:

Barry - Through client feedback and through their own expertise of looking at the eye. It's like you looking at a woman, you know a bad one and a good looking one. But if you ask me to write it down, you probably couldn't. You got an eye for it. It's like a horse breeder, he'll tell you a good stallion from a poor stallion, like a guy who sells boats. When you're in marketing you can see it looks good.

Whenever intuition, in its various forms, was mentioned in the data, it was never mentioned on its own, but with some forms of expertise or experiences alongside it. One example is in the above quote; the thing mentioned *before* "having an eye" is having client feedback and expertise. These statements agree with the literature that a "gut-feeling" by itself may not provide enough substantiation for a marketer to take action, and that other, more tangible evidences such as long-term memory and associative learning are required to corroborate the accuracy of intuition (Salas et al., 2010). Intuitiveness is defined as:

A process of thinking. The input to this process is mostly provided by knowledge stored in long-term memory that has been primarily acquired via associative learning. The input is processed automatically and without conscious awareness. The output of the process is a feeling that can serve as a basis for judgments and decisions (Salas, Rosen, & DiazGranados, 2010, p. 943).

Senior managers recognise that marketers use intuition and that it makes up only part of their package as marketing experts. Sonia, however, when contrasting the strengths of two of her marketing employees, regarded one as more intuitive, whereas the other, “is a lot more collaborative, questions a lot more, thinks more scientifically to make a decision, rather than a quick, gut-feel kind of decision, yeah her approach is more analytical.” Therefore intuition, as well as the other skills senior managers listed about their marketers, may not all be present in every marketer, but when they are they are likely to corroborate with other skills, in helping the marketer deliver commercial outcomes.

Background

From a senior manager’s perspective, a marketer’s background is significant indicator of how they might perform in their organisation, whether the marketer has the right experience and has demonstrated that they have achieved meaningful outcomes in the past. The participants agree that a marketer’s background or work experience is more important than their qualification; however, a qualification is usually mandatory. Information regarding a marketer’s background is usually supplied in the their résumé and shared during the job interview process. A marketer’s background is outlined here in two parts: industry specific and past achievements:

Dave – (A marketing job candidate must have) a marketing qualification of some description, probably tertiary qualified, um, who has two to three, three to four years of experience, um, has a reasonably broad base of experience and one that we could use a few skills in.

Table 6 The pedigree sub-theme - Background

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Pedigree
Description of theme	Accounts of a marketer’s previous performance including qualifications, skills, and previous experience.
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications (Marketing degree, business related degree, degree not required) • Skills (Leadership, management, marketing, sales, intuition) • Background (Industry specific, past achievements)

Industry specific

Senior managers had a variety of preferences on whether they would hire marketers from their industry, or someone from a different industry. Steve's preference is for a marketing manager to come from the same industry due to the complexities of the legislative regulations, the industry's culture, and the exacting standards of reporting and project development in this sector. Whereas Sonja preferred marketers to come from outside the industry as she was after fresh ideas and perspectives. In fact, due to their competitor's practice of specifically hiring people from within the industry, Sonia believes her policy of hiring marketers from outside the industry provides a competitive advantage:

Steve - The work experience to me is more important than the qualification... Now, we're in financial services, it's a complicated, messy little game. So I, for me... I would want at least at least three years experience in financial services, and retail financial services right now. Because they take a year to learn their way around it, if they're lucky. This guy's taken 19 - 20 months, still hasn't figured it out to my satisfaction.

Sonia - We've got completely diverse, totally different backgrounds. And that adds, once again, to the diversity and the free-thinking, and being able to think outside the box... because, you get too insular, and it doesn't let you think outside the square and maybe relationships that you've had in the past might colour your way of thinking or marketing in the future. So it's fantastic to have people with a totally different industry experience coming in and looking at things with a fresh set of eyes... For example, (one industry we work in) in NZ is very... um... incestuous, and suppliers, marketing people and sales people will quite often transfer to large channel partners... (A competitor) populates suppliers with their people and... very purposefully... um, we haven't wanted to engage in any of that because, you get too insular, and it doesn't let you think outside the square and maybe relationships that you've had in the past might colour your way of thinking or marketing in the future. So it's fantastic to have people with a totally different industry experience coming in and looking at things with a fresh set of eyes... This particular person we're discussing here... had come from a marketing services background so once again quite... different background, to bring into the company, different set of experiences that she had in her marketing... history.

Barry's main concern, given below, was how his marketing manager had performed in past roles, rather than what industry he had come from; what were his successes, which companies did he work for, how did he rank in

these companies? While senior managers realise that marketers from other industries might not understand the complexities and nuances of their organisation, such as Dave describes below, they did understand that marketing skills are transferrable and marketers who had risen throughout the ranks of other companies had therefore demonstrated an ability to adapt quickly and be successful in delivering commercial outcomes:

Barry - He's got a very good marketing... background... He's ranked himself pretty highly amongst those three or four organisations he's worked for.

Dave - She didn't come from (the same) background, so she had a lot of learning to do. So she hasn't been able to contribute as strongly to our strategic discussions. She's been involved in them but, you know, taking a back seat in developing a marketing voice to that. But (she) can't really say, "Well, this is what (our) industry needs, and this is what we're thinking we should be doing."

Past achievements

When hiring or headhunting marketers at a mid to senior level, senior managers want to know what they have achieved in the past, as an indication of how successful their performance might be in their organisation. Some senior managers interviewed considered the past performance of the marketer as an indication of their credibility. During a job interview, for example, senior managers want examples of successes, achievements and mistakes marketers made in previous positions:

Steve - (In a job interview I would ask) "Tell me an example of, take me through a project you worked on, where you had to do a business case on dah de dah. Tell me what happened, what went wrong? Was it launched, what happened, what could you have done better?" So you talk about some good examples. "When you were at (another financial institution), tell me about that time you did that." ... These days if you go for a role like this, you can expect some experiential questions that will come in and say "tell me about...?", I'd go for a business case, a project they managed. What was the biggest disaster you've ever been involved with? Why was it a disaster? And a few things like that.

James - I'd be looking for somebody with proven ability to develop and execute marketing strategy with a very strong sales focus.

Barry - I think experience has a lot to do with credibility.

Evidence of qualifications and examples of previous experience, and skills, provide the senior manager with a reassurance of a marketers' credibility.

However, not all senior managers agreed that experience was in itself was an indication of a marketer's performance. Sonia was so impressed when a marketer displayed enthusiasm for the position he was applying for, after checking his background she gave him the job.

Sonia - At the time he wasn't very experienced, but he brought enthusiasm, integrity, real desire to be successful and to achieve the goals that he was set, and strong marketing skills. It was illustrated by the work that he brought along with him to show at the interview, and also his reference checks... and of course we checked on that.

This particular applicant went on to be identified as a high performing employee (HPE) for that organisation. However, as described by Steve, an applicant lacking experience in a senior marketing position, particularly in his organisation, might not succeed.

Steve - A lot of it comes from experience; you don't get a fresh person out of a degree and go straight to marketing manager. Because you wouldn't succeed, you'd bomb. You don't know how to do a business case, a project, a consultation, you don't know how to listen properly... Sit down and shut up and do some analytical analysis in the corner for a while.

Experience and enthusiasm provides an indication to the senior manager regarding how well that marketer may perform in their organisation. For a marketing graduate, enthusiasm may win them a job based on the perception that enthusiasm may translate into performance. However, Walker et al., (2009) argues that it takes up to two years to develop proficiency in a graduate's first marketing role, and around three years to be considered competent by the employer.

Projects

Whatever position the marketer has in an organisation, from graduate to marketing manager, their performance during a marketing project is a significant contributor to the construction of their credibility, from a senior manager's perspective. The findings show that marketers are constantly working on projects, and these projects are critical in achieving commercial outcomes:

Barry - You've got projects to do under budget, within a timeframe and exceeding people's expectations. ... So a lot of what (our marketers) do is projects. Projects, projects projects.

Steve - So his responsibility is all aspects around (projects), which is quite wide ranging.

Dave - Obviously (our marketing team are) quite projects focused, so "We need to finish this in 6 months time, we got a product launch coming out in 6 months time, how do we plan for that? There's large trade shows, how do we plan for that?" ... A big brand project that requires a lot of tactical project based... collateral... They need... good communication skills and an ability to adapt your communication for the market you're trying to target. So whether that's a different way of messaging, a different language, a different message... at least have an understanding that those things change, you can't be the same. You've got to target your message and target your marketing... for your specific sectors and niche markets that you're trying to target. Globally, internationally a willingness to understand and be flexible, and adapt to the local market... Understand your market, that's what marketing is, understand your market and tailor your product and message and pricing to that market.

The projects theme describes the marketer's performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects. Projects are represented by: marketing plan development, creative development, creative management, execution, reporting on outcomes, and return on investment.

Table 7 The projects sub-theme – Marketing plan development

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Projects
Description of theme	The marketer's performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan development (Understand corporate objectives, research & analysis, marketing plan, approval process) • Creative development (Define the project's objectives, pursue innovation, outsource creativity, DIY creativity) • Creative management (The marketing brief, oversee development, appraise outputs) • Execution (Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations, project hand over) • Reporting on outcomes (Objectives against results, no fluff, project report) • Return on investment (Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure, overall growth)

Marketing plan development

For marketers who are involved in this role, developing a marketing plan is a crucial aspect of a marketer's performance. Marketing plan development requires a marketer to analyse the market and produce a marketing plan that includes recommendations the marketer believes may achieve corporate objectives. The marketer is therefore required to have a skill set that enables them to research a wide range of factors regarding the internal and external market environment, and to put in place a strategic proposal that might employ or mitigate these factors to maximise the likelihood of achieving, or exceeding corporate objectives. This skill set enables marketers to arrange the marketing plan in a logical and structured way, and to ensure it is correctly implemented:

James - We would look for someone with a more strategic marketing focus. So someone who can offer marketing strategy development, creative development and so on.

Steve - (When writing up a marketing plan) you need to figure out it's going to cost this much, this much benefit. Basically, how many accounts are we going to open for how many dollars? How much margin will it generate? So they basically need to say, cost/benefit, how it fits into strategic portfolio of products... But it needs to be a nice, logical structured approach. It can't be all over the place. It's got to be a good, logical structure where you can say doim, doim, doim, end, recommendation, done.

Sonia - So he took a look at that and thought, "Ok, we've got all the industrial type of (a certain product) and yet we (kind of) understand those customers, I can do some more standard, more regular type promotional activity with them, but looking at the (product's) licensing, hey that's an opportunity to think completely differently". So what he did was... he did some market research here, small, local, he did it himself. Identified, of the entire range, what was the most liked by the Kiwi market portfolio. He only brought in that portfolio, he didn't bring in the entire lot. So he kept it quite narrow. He market priced the product, he developed point of sale materials that didn't exist anywhere else in the world. Lockable retaining stands, um, he focussed quite heavily on the branding. Um we did in-store promotions... and stuff like that... So basically, because he had fantastic point of sale materials, and the brand was quite well liked, (this) brand is quite well liked in NZ, um we were able to get penetration into the DIY channel, and we were able to get placement and we were able to kick off some of our competitors in that area... Who, yes they have quite good brands, but they didn't have the cool factor of (this brand).

Dave - Develop marketing strategy from our business strategy. In other words, marketing strategy is part of it, but to take that marketing strategy and really pull that down into tactical, yearly, or 18-month time frame goal.

Barry describes a current marketing project where marketing plans must factor in pressure, timing, expense, risk analysis and management, and logistics in its construction:

Barry - They're (the marketers are) under huge pressure sometimes, and other times they're not. It goes on lumps, which is good... Whenever the publications come out. So your spring and autumn are traditionally the busiest, you've got... it's about four or five times a year. We're sending stuff up to the UK today, we got people leaving today, tomorrow we got a publication, we've just pulled together, it's at the print now. We won't know until the guys get to London whether it's printed, whether it looks good. We get it printed in London because it's too expensive to send it up from here. We don't know what it's going to look like. That's pressure! So we gotta girl that's left last night to make sure that publication's ready for Monday, when the other guys arrive. And then you've got to get on the road and make sure you got people who are visiting it. You got seminars, and you got all that ready, and you can capture the inquiry. Then you got to have post-trip systems to make sure... you got a whole list of people, what have you got to do about it to convert it into money. Because we don't go out there for fun! So, that's marketing. It's much wider than putting an ad in the paper, you know.

In research completed in New Zealand, Gray et al., (2007) assert that essential knowledge for marketing graduates includes: marketing communications, market research and analysis, consumer behaviour, product and brand management, and strategic marketing. Topics described by senior managers regarding marketing plan development include: understanding corporate objectives, research analysis, and the marketing plan and approval process.

Understand corporate objectives

Marketing plan development begins with a corporate goal; to perform well the marketer must be clear on the strategic objectives the corporation wishes to attain. Objectives might include the selling of certain amount of units of a product, opening up certain distribution channels, market penetration, or a certain percentage of market-share. One example of corporate goals from the data was a one-off project challenge that required 25% of sales to consist of products from newly acquisitioned companies. This objective was designed

to encourage new products to be integrated into the company's marketing plan. Other goals might be annual or seasonal objectives, such as the goals of another organisation that wanted to outdo the results of a previous campaign. These goals cause the marketer to consider whom they might have to engage, what channels they might employ to ensure success, and the timeframe of the project.

James - So it's who we're going after... how do we get to them, what's the value proposition... what do we expect to achieve from a commercial perspective? So being really clear about that from a planning perspective. And then how am I going to go about it. So who am I going to need to engage. Am I going to use an external agency, is there a brand component to this, is it just a sales thing? If it is just a sales thing, what's my communication channel? Is it direct mail, what's the media mix?

Dave - Delivering the marketing strategy against the business strategy. In other words, you know, we've got this business strategy, which includes a marketing component. The business strategy is around developing new markets or entering... new products areas, and the marketing strategy supports that, and we have a marketing strategy, it's not written down, it's a continually changing thing, because our business evolves quite quickly. It's making sure we've got some key drivers, in terms, ok we got product launches, key milestones that might be 18 months, two years out. We need to develop a strategy for this product launch in two years time. Or we're going to go into the cloud for example. You know, everybody is talking about the cloud. So, we're in the process of looking at that sort of thing. So, in a marketing sense, what does that mean for our business? What are the key elements that we have to identify? And so we put these, I guess, objectives in place and measure against those.

Senior managers expect their marketers to be a responsible intermediary of corporate goals and the means to reach them. In developing a marketing plan, the marketer must also take into account disruptive innovations (such as "the cloud", an online data storage and retrieval facility) that may have been introduced into the market, as well as factoring in relevant business environmental factors. This all precedes marketers creating clear and logical decisions on how to proceed with developing a convincing marketing plan.

Research and analysis

Marketers may be responsible for carrying out market research that provides direction on how to achieve objectives. Some of their marketing research procedures include using a mystery shopping service, developing case

studies, and interviewing focus groups. One senior manager also identified census data as an important source of research data used by their marketing team. By using research tools, the marketers might try to analyse:

- The market's "pain points" or areas where current products and services are not meeting consumers' needs or wants. The product or service may not completely solve the consumers' needs or wants, but a message may be developed to say, as Dave puts it, "This is what we do to solve your problems, this is how we do it better than everyone else."
- How to create a "value proposition". A value proposition could be defined as the coupling of a product or service to incentivise the consumer to buy due to the perceived benefits it would bring. Example from the data includes offering a product that had a "cool factor", or the availability (for a limited time) of a special service for customers who have a good profile and credit history.
- How demographics are segmented. Segmenting demographics indicates which demographic should be targeted and which demographics are best left alone. Customer quality was very important to one senior manager, as they are a niche player in their industry and are happy for customers who do not pay their bills to become customers of other companies.
- How to target the message to reach a specific market. One participant's company has a product that has a totally different purpose depending on the industry they are in. Customers in one industry use their product to comply with health and safety legislation, whereas another industry uses the same product for security purposes. Therefore targeted messages are also needed for specific demographic and geographic regions.
- Measuring 'cost to serve'. This research provides a marketer details on how profitable existing customers are. For example, the frequency a customer phones the call centre where staff have to intervene on their account costs time and money. Research in this area enables a company to focus on specific customers during customer retention campaigns.

James - I think it's very strong analytics, being very, very clear about what the objective is, having done the classical marketing analysis, whether it's existing customer or external customer, in terms of segmentation demographics, what buttons the market is trying to

push, and how that aligns with the objective of whatever it is the marketer is trying to do... Being really clear about goals, doing really good analysis to support what then is the marketing plan that is going to be executed to support those goals.

Dave - We do some research, we go and talk to some of these customers, we might do some case studies on what we've done, projects we've done in other areas, other sectors that relate, or other geographic markets we've been in that sector, and we tailor that message... Yeah, because no one out here has the answers to all the issues that are out in each market. So they have to go and gather that information, collate it, um, talk about it. They have to talk with our product managers, who manage the product development process and the product strategy, and gather information about what we're doing with our product, and merge that into our marketing strategy and marketing message.

As discussed, research must have an aim and its results have to be properly analysed. Walker et al., (2009) describes how employers expect marketers to understand data, direct market research, determine which analytical tools would be appropriate for their organisation, and analyse problems in light of the resources and functions of their organisation. Steve argues that while a deal of time, effort and expense goes into the project development process, the valuable data research yields can fail to be developed into a purposeful marketing plan. Marketers are responsible for creating purposeful marketing research that might be properly utilised:

Steve - Some of the biggest mistakes I've seen is money spent on research that has no structured purpose, and you don't think of question 1, "what am I going to do if it says 1 out of 5 or 5 out of 5?" And the other failure on that is failure to do the action, you actually do the research and file it. What a waste of b*****y money!

Sonia however, believes there are occasions where there is not enough time to research and analyse opportunities when they present themselves. She gives an example where marketers might be required to make snap decisions and provide an answer in a prompt manner. This action, she explains, is preferable to keeping a customer, or a keen salesperson waiting or frustrated. This senior manager understood that timely decisions may negate marketers doing research, cost/benefit analysis, and the development of a marketing plan, and may even be unprofitable; however she believed that marketers, based on their expertise and experience, should make the right

decisions most of the time, which is better than being perceived as cumbersome by the customer:

Sonia - Say for example, if a sales person goes to a marketer and says "I want to do a swap out program, this customer has the competitor's (product), I want to swap out theirs for ours, um... can I do it?" So you want a marketer who can then say, on the basis of a little bit of information, make a very quick decision, so that the salesperson can go off and complete that sale and that trial. Um, we have had situations where the person needs way too much information to make a decision, and then it ends up that the person asking the question just says, "Forget it. Don't worry." So that has happened, and that is something that has been identified and is being addressed... (The marketer is) requesting too much information, to make a decision. If somebody comes, if I come to you and say "I want your help, I want to blah blah blah," and you say to me, "Well I want you to go away and find out this, this, this, this and this," and you've got to go back to the customer and you're like... it's not a good look. You just want to be able to go back with a "Yes we're doing it, and we're doing it here, or we're not able to do that at this time." ... It's wanting to be right, in every decision. And therefore you end up in a feedback loop. You request far too much information to make sure that the decision outcome will be the correct one, when what we're trying to do in the environment we're in is say, make more decisions more quickly – you'll make more mistakes but it doesn't matter. Do much more stuff at 70% correctness, than few stuff at 100% correctness.

While snap decisions by marketers may be turn out to be unprofitable at times, Sonia anticipates that the overall perception of the company's quick response and service might turn out to be favourable in the long run. An understanding of the "snap decision required" policy, and its intent toward commercial based outcomes would be vital between the senior manager and the marketer, if the marketer is to maintain their credibility, as some decisions may turn out to be wrong.

Marketing plan

The marketing plan describes how the marketer intends to achieve specific corporate objectives and is a key means marketers employ to achieve commercial outcomes. Apart from research analysis and recommendations, a marketing plan must also include information relating to time, budget and milestones of the project. The plan must run along a timeline, including pre-campaign build-up and out-take time. It must also run within budget and have milestones or indicators of progress during the campaign. This

information, placed in a marketing plan, frames the project and is used to assess its success when the project is completed. The marketing plan also describes how a marketer will collaborate with other agents and departments with the purpose of achieving company objectives. The marketing plan is presented to the senior manager and management team for sign off:

Sonia - So the business plans are written by the marketers... the output out the end is what are your key programs for the next year, and what are the tactics that you're going to employ to achieve the goals that you want to do from those key projects.

Steve - You need to know how to do a scope document, for a project. You know, what's in scope, what's out of scope, what are the deliverables, timeline, budget, risks? The standard stuff of the project.

The marketing plan, whether in written or presentation form, must be well thought through and be very clear on its objectives and action points. A marketing campaign can directly or indirectly affect a range of departments in its implementation, so almost all aspects of how the campaign might influence the organisation has to be considered if the marketing plan is to be considered credible. The marketing plan must also be relevant to the audience, that is, it communicates the relevant implications of the marketing campaign to the appropriate people:

So... it needs to be relevant for the key parts of that audience... "Here's what we're trying to do, this is the way we're going to go about it," can be presented. So it is communication, the marketing manager needs to be able to verbally sit down with first the key people who are going to support the outcomes, so whether that's sales, service, whatever; in our case it is primarily is those two functions. And say. "This is what we're gonna try to do, this is the way we're going to go about it, this is where you fit into it, this is what we're going to achieve".

Mistakes, lack of foresight, or unintended consequences may present themselves however thoughtfully a marketing plan is put together. One purpose of the marketing plan is for the senior manager and others in the organisation to constructively criticise the marketing project, anticipate and mitigate problems, and to make sure it is implemented into the organisation in a coordinated and controlled manner:

James - Initially it's feedback from the person who's in control of key functions that are going to support the success of the outcome, which for us is sales and service. So if the service operations manager isn't on board, if the national sales manager is not on board, then your s*****d. So it's not going to work. So it's making sure those individuals have the opportunity to contribute to the plan. Understand what their role in the plan is, so that they are prepared to lead their people to support the initiative.

Steve - If they send out a DM campaign, and they send out a 15,000 mailer in one big hit, the branches might get swamped, and can't deal with 15,000 people walking in the door. So you need to make sure the offer is right, it's technically right, that you stagger the mailer of 2000 every second day so that instead of getting swamped in the first 10 days you progressively stagger it through, just making sure you don't do five things at once and stuff them all up. So they need to make sure it's all coordinated.

The marketing plan assists the marketer to research and develop a project that will maximise the potential to achieve positive commercial outcomes. However, marketers usually do not have the authority to simply proceed with the execution of their plan. Instead it is usually submitted to the senior manager and their team for revision and approval.

Approval process

While marketers may design a marketing plan, its implementation is not usually automatic. A vital stage of strategic development is the plan's presentation to the senior manager and the senior management team for approval. This step is important, as the senior manager, who signs off on the budget and direction of marketing initiatives, needs to understand and be convinced of the basis and logic behind the project, as demonstrated by the research analysis and the plan's alignment with corporate objectives.

Steve - Once we've got the strategic plan in place, they've got their imperatives and their objectives to obtain, they then tell me (and the SMT) how they're going to do that. To get their validation... they'll get wheeled in, "we've got your papers, we've got your proposals for the upcoming year, for the whole marketing, and communications...let's talk about it" and at the end of that we'll be satisfied.

Adam - Because you knew you had an advocate (the GM) that could get involved and make some of those bigger decisions and often it was budgetary related, so if you've got a GM that signs off on a \$400,000 dollar event, then you know you've got that level of support that's important... I think a lot of it depends on the GM too, so it's about that support network they've got around them. It's very hard for

marketers to achieve credibility without a sufficient level of autonomy or support.

The senior manager is also able to support the marketer once the research and analysis has provided direction for the project. They are also able to contribute ideas and directions the marketer had not considered, as well as encourage others in the organisation to get behind the project. Marketers often do not have the authority to approve incentives such as a reduction in interest rates, waiving fees or price propositions, and need the senior manager, legal advice, or other members of the senior management team, to sign them off. Adam describes how the marketer gains credibility when the senior manager provides them with a level of autonomy or support. Without approval, the marketer is very restricted in what they can achieve and usually has to revise the marketing plan.

Creative development

The project's creative development is crucial if a marketer is to be perceived as performing in their role effectively. The senior managers require the marketer to, "think laterally", "out of the box", and, "(take) what is the paradigm and (blow) it out." But if the marketer has no creative ideas, the Steve suggests, "find them, steal them or plagiarise them..." Otherwise, "we can buy creative, hopefully."

Steve - (Our competition) can kick our a**e on price and product, branch locations, promotional products, kick our a***s all over the country... but if we come up with a you-beaut idea, we'll grab it, and put it up, and take an advantage for a while.

While some senior managers saw themselves providing the thought leadership on creating initiatives, others looked to their marketing team to develop the creativity around a project, either in-house or by outsourcing it. Creative development is crucial if projects are to deliver commercial outcomes and is described here in four topics a) define the project objective, b) pursue innovation c) outsource creativity, and/or d) DIY creativity.

Table 8 The projects sub-theme – Creative development

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Projects
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan development (Understand corporate objectives, research & analysis, marketing plan, approval process) • Creative development (Define the project’s objectives, pursue innovation, outsource creativity, DIY creativity) • Creative management (The marketing brief, oversee development, appraise outputs) • Execution (Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations, project hand over) • Reporting on outcomes (Objectives against results, no fluff, project report) • Return on investment (Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure, overall growth)

Define the project’s objectives

The marketer is generally responsible for defining the objective of the marketing project. The corporate objective, the research analysis, the marketing plan and the approval process, should clarify the objective of the marketing project for the marketer. The project objective is not the corporate objective in that the corporate objective provides the strategic direction of the marketing plan, while the project objective provides tactical direction. The marketer has to be very clear on issues such as: the audience they are targeting, the relevance of the message, and the merits of the medium, such as billboards, television commercials, or mailer they might use, when defining the project objective:

Dave - You know, we’re just too small to break in to the (US) government sector, so we’ve got to do something different, and differentiate ourselves. We can do that on a product level, we ain’t got the budgets to do it on a marketing level, you know, we haven’t got the millions and millions of marketing spend. And so you differentiate your product but then you’ve got to take that differentiation and really focus your message at the right targets, so that they understand that your product is different, and is a clear, and it's unique. Because then you don't have to be so loud. You target the right people, the right thing with the right message and the right... if they get it, you know, if it’s crafted correctly they will... then your credibility goes through – pow. Sky-rockets. And... starts snowballing... All of a sudden, you’re on the map. So then you can start utilising your brand, and leveraging off that into new markets.

Dave comments that if the marketer produces a marketing message that is correctly framed and accurately targeted, it does not need to be as loud (big

and expensive) to be effective. Whereas James describes how a marketing message can be misaligned with corporate objectives due to targeting the wrong audience:

James - It's a marketer that clearly had an objective, and then has gone about achieving that objective, in a clever or creative way... One of our sister companies... their website has... all the images are of young people, sort of sub-20, big smiles on their faces. And clearly some dumb agency, (has) a 23-year-old graduate working for them... Their audience is actually, or the audience they should be focussing on are people who have stable jobs, pay their bills, are 35 plus. So that's just... completely got it wrong. So I think marketing is undermined when the objective really wasn't well thought through, and so you get a bunch of creative that's just c**p.

James argues that creativity without focus on the relevant objective or audience is wasteful. James later suggests that marketers who find ways to leverage creativity to maximise the marketing dollar, or save the marketing dollar, in achieving corporate objectives are respected, "I mean for me it's the cleverness and, you know, the thought – not cunning necessarily, but it's something that's clearly well contrived and well constructed."

Pursue innovation

Innovation in this context relates to new marketing techniques or initiatives that have been developed, rather than artistic creativity. Often an innovative initiative is already being employed by competitors or other companies and can be imitated, adapted, and used. Senior managers assert that marketers need to keep tabs on what their competitors are offering as well as new marketing techniques being used around the world, especially if the organisation is not in a position to pursue innovation. Watching the marketplace keeps the organisation abreast of current marketing developments and may minimise the advantages a first-mover may have. It is also a source of innovative inspiration for the marketer. Below is an example of pursuing innovation and describes an innovative product that competitors in the industry were forced to adopt to retain customers:

It depends where you are. In (our organisation) we don't see ourselves as innovative leaders. We see ourselves as fast followers, maybe. Or followers generally, but not innovators. For example, (we found an innovative product that a competitor had produced) I was in product development and we were looking at it many years ago, and

went overseas and googled it in places, well, we didn't have Google back then, and you find the stuff and you think, that's a b*****y good idea, and you see what works in other places and try and do that, and see what works in other places, and try and so that, and see how it fits in to your own portfolio... Within about 6 months every (competitor) had one. By then (the innovator), had stolen the march... you've got to be right on to that sort of stuff.

Outsource creativity

While marketers understand the four P's of marketing and other marketing principles, they have often never studied, trained or worked with such things as graphic or web design, media placement, or jingle writing. As Steve suggests, "I don't care if you're not the most creative person in the universe. We can buy creative, hopefully."

Adam - We were working very closely with an agency, at the time, that understood what we were trying to achieve, both a creative agency and an event agency. And it (a particular campaign) all fell into place.

Verhoef et al., (2009) assert that while a marketing department's innovation is an antecedent to its influence, its creative ability is not. Where a marketing department's creativity is lacking, an external creative agency is employed to bridge the gap. Creative agencies include both advertising and event agency expertise as both may work together with the marketer to produce an intended result – such as attracting and retaining customers.

DIY creativity

Part of a marketers' responsibility may be coming up with a creative initiatives. This may be a prerequisite skill a marketer needs as a part of their employment, or a skill the marketer develops as they gain experience within the organisation. Sonja describes one of her marketer's abilities to use his creativity to generate commercial outcomes, "He thought much more creatively and much more marketing focussed to drive sales where he could." This skill is important for the marketer to have in the construction of marketing projects, as they develop an understanding of the history, functions, and intricacies of an organisation that a creative agency may lack:

Steve - You need innovation at times; an advertising agency will not come up with an innovative product... So you need the ability to think laterally, and think up ideas... That will be one of your deliverables; go and find something innovative, and you can deliver it for me.

Joan - So just creating an online plan and strategy, that's one thing. And being able to actually come up with campaigns to actually implement that plan as well, so come up with activities and initiatives to support the plan.

Barry - I mean they (the marketing department) are pouring everything creative that they can to give us an edge.

Dave - We get the ideas from end users themselves. And also they tell us what they want in terms of product development and things like that. So, it's a good method of getting in touch with your customers.

One of the most important pieces of information a marketer can use to develop the creative theme of the project is from analysis of the research data. As promotional designs are becoming more consumer driven (as opposed to artistically driven) being aware of consumer needs and sensibilities is crucial in building an effective creative project (Garber Jr., Hyatt, & Boya, 2009). However a marketer, due to technical or artistic limitations, may have to combine their innovative ideas, as well as their knowledge and experience of the organisation and their customers, with a creative agency to develop a marketing campaign.

Creative management

A vital part of a marketer's performance, from a senior manager's perspective, is managing creativity. It is described here as having the ability to articulate, implement and oversee creative initiatives given to creative agencies or developed in-house. While innovation and creative talent is required for most marketing projects, problems can arise when a marketing innovation is not clearly articulated, or has limited buy-in with the creative agency, frontline staff, or others in the organisation. Managing creativity is often a two-way street handled through extensive consultation with those designing and implementing the marketing project in an effort to maximise its effectiveness in delivering commercial outcomes:

Steve - So the consultation is part of the communication, and because it was a failure to consult, it led to stuff ups. They (our marketers) got feedback on a debrief after a (direct mail-out) and didn't take into the next mailer. So again...listening to what's being said and learning from it, and then rolling it out. And then telling them you've learnt, "Hey from the last campaign you said this, we learnt that, and we've listened, and we're now changing it to that. So that's really, really important, because their credibility just falls to the floor.

The marketer’s vigilant management of the outputs of creative agencies is crucial, not only for the success of the project but also for the credibility of the marketer. Creative management is where the marketer is required to articulate the marketing brief, oversee development, and appraise outputs.

Table 9 The projects sub-theme – Creative management

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Projects
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan development (Understand corporate objectives, research & analysis, marketing plan, approval process) • Creative development (Define the project’s objectives, pursue innovation, outsource creativity, DIY creativity) • Creative management (The marketing brief, oversee development, appraise outputs) • Execution (Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations, project hand over) • Reporting on outcomes (Objectives against results, no fluff, project report) • Return on investment (Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure, overall growth)

The marketing brief

The marketing brief contains the creative concept of the marketing project and describes the relevant areas of the marketing plan to the creative agency. This brief includes the project objective and describes what the project needs to communicate to the target audience as well as who the audience is and what goals are to be achieved. The marketing brief is usually written or articulated clearly so the creative agency understands the objectives, such as volume, penetration or customer retention, the project is trying to meet.

The briefing process is crucial to the development of the marketing project as misinterpretations at this point flow on throughout the project. An example is when Adam wanted to “Kiwi-fy” the international marketing collateral his head office had issued. In this instance his marketing team hired a creative agency to adapt the global campaign with a New Zealand look, the objective being to attract a certain number of existing customers to an event. His marketer provided the marketing brief to two creative agencies, an event agency and an advertising agency. Adam explains their experience:

I think at that point in time there was growing frustration between the marketer who was most closely involved... and the (creative) agency. So I think there were issues around the briefing process... The (creative) agency's interpretation of the brief, while it was in the parameters of the brief, wasn't necessarily what we were looking for. Right from the very start, that was going to be a risk. So essentially what we ended up doing was trying to tweak a concept that wasn't right from the outset, all the way through the process... Event agency was another issue all together. And it was more... I don't think they bought into what we were trying to achieve. The event was actually very successful, it was phenomenal, but there were steps in the process that weren't managed as well as they should've been.... The invitation process wasn't managed that well, it was all geared around the fact the event agency were again heading off on a tangent that we weren't comfortable with, so we kept having to pull them back into line and it was a line that they didn't believe in, and the whole time that cost us time.

A marketer is required to manage the briefing process appropriately to minimise miscommunications that may affect the project's performance. Dave acknowledges that being able to manage the briefing process is a skill in itself, when he says, "In terms of the (creative) ideas and the ability to articulate those clearly to people who can do the work, (that's) what we're after as well." Verhoef et al., (2009) describe what they call the "intangibility" (p. 28) of creativity, inferring it is very difficult to measure and analyse, which further infers it may also difficult to articulate.

Oversee development

If a marketer outsources parts of, or all of the creative aspect of the marketing project, they are obliged to oversee its development, as its performance will reflect on their credibility. The marketer may track developments and clarify any aspect of the project the creative agencies are not familiar with, or have misunderstood. Whenever more than one agency is involved, a creative agency and an event agency for example, the marketer should ensure that both parties are in sync with each other as well as the project brief. Adam explains that a marketer's responsibility in overseeing an agency's work as being a coordinating rather than a creative role:

Adam - You've got advertising agencies all over the place, so you essentially still bring in those experts, and it's more having an awareness of what they are doing without being an expert of it yourself. It's more about coordinating all the parties rather than having to be that agency. Certainly in our world... making sure there is

an element of creativity, and that your using the agency to do what they do best, but also maintaining that degree of professionalism.

As an aside, some organisations do not use creative or event agencies for certain cyclical marketing projects (for example annual or seasonal promotions) because experience accumulated by the company has shown that these projects just need to be re-run but “tweaked” every year. In these situations a marketer may make minor creative decisions themselves and follow their immediate commercial outcomes for progress. Senior managers may take into account the marketer’s performance in being able to oversee these kinds of projects and how their alterations maximise the potential for commercial outcomes:

Steve - A lot of this stuff is just standard stuff that flows through (the communications) plan so (our marketing manager) has this general idea of what pattern of offers would generally be, then he slots some other ones in based on what the strategic imperative is. Where he has more freehand is around the creative side of the offer... If it doesn’t work, try plan B, if it works spectacularly well, use it again with a couple of variants, and see if it can do any better.

Appraise outputs

The marketer is responsible for the ultimate outputs of the creative agencies. If these outputs do not meet the specifications of the brief, it is the marketers who must feedback to the agencies about where the project has missed the mark and require them to take appropriate action.

Adam - We’ve tended to have one or two marketers within the organisation, that really more than anything, managing agency relationships. Because it's the agencies that the outputs are coming from.

James - So if an agency doesn’t get it, and provides us with something which is a pile of c**p, then my involvement will be, tell them “It’s a pile of c**p for these reasons.” Tell them, “Go back say this, that, the other.” Get them to redo it, so (our marketing manager will) manage that and make sure that they do.

While senior managers assert the purpose of creating marketing projects is the commercial outcomes, creative agencies also have an interest in meeting their client’s objectives as their credibility is also on the line. Some creative agencies offer their clients a discount if their performance fails to produce the desired commercial outcomes:

Steve - I've seen advertising agencies... saying "Let's achieve some targets, if we don't achieve them together, we'll knock 10% off your bill, if we beat them, we'll add 10% on the bill. Eating your own cooking, so that's quite good.

Execution

The successful execution, or delivery of a marketing project is a crucial stage in a marketer's performance. A marketing project's planning and development is usually behind the scenes; however the marketer's performance in executing a project is usually very public and a significant contributor to a marketer's credibility, from a senior manager's perspective.

Steve - Able to execute, or driven to execute. Some people just can't finish it off... You need to prove your competence by delivering good quality stuff that is reliable.

Barry - I think that for them (marketers) to be able to deliver a product that exceeds expectation, under budget, and within time frame. Whether it's designing an ad for somebody, responding to someone, putting together a personal profile, whether it's doing a database mail-out, whether it's putting a magazine together. That's what our people have got to do all the time.

Marketing projects vary greatly among organisations. One senior manager described the designing and printing of marketing collateral that superseded their old "speeds and feeds" brochures as an important marketing project. Another described how their marketing manager and a small team were travelling around the UK for two weeks doing presentations to attract overseas buyers. Yet another described the development of television commercials and corporate events. Whatever the marketing project, marketers are responsible for how, when, where and by whom, they are executed. As James puts it, "It's their ability to execute really."

Difficulties beyond the marketer's sphere of influence can derail a carefully constructed project. Slater, Hult, and Olson (2010) describe that many companies struggle creating innovative marketing strategies and implementing them due to cultural tensions and scarcity of business resources among departments. O'Reilly and Tushman (2004), believe some organisations are successful at both achieving creative marketing strategies as well as implementing them, and have termed these "ambidextrous organisations" (p.75), however, they believe not many companies do this

well. Therefore executing a marketing project can be testing for the marketer but is vital for their credibility.

Table 10 The projects sub-theme – Execution

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Projects
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan development (Understand corporate objectives, research & analysis, marketing plan, approval process) • Creative development (Define the project’s objectives, pursue innovation, outsource creativity, DIY creativity) • Creative management (The marketing brief, oversee development, appraise outputs) • Execution (Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations, project hand over) • Reporting on outcomes (Objectives against results, no fluff, project report) • Return on investment (Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure, overall growth)

Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations

Execution is described here as the delivery of the project into the marketplace. The senior managers expect that the project should be delivered on time, under budget and should go on to exceed expectations in terms of commercial outcomes. Timeliness is crucial in the execution of a project as an organisation is a complex system of people’s schedules and activity, and failure to deliver a marketing project at an agreed time or date only frustrates those affected, causing commercial outcomes and marketers’ credibility to suffer. As Adam puts it, “I think following through with what’s been promised is pretty obvious (to being credible).”

Steve - Delivery and execution, I think, in a timely manner, and high quality. Consistency, communication... That’s why he’s leaving; he’s not delivering on key things. The frustration!

Project handover

The senior managers consider marketers to be service providers to their frontline staff, as marketers are often not the ones selling the product or service. While marketers concentrate most of their time and resources in the development of a market project, the point of execution is when most marketers withdraw to allow others to take up the project. At this point the project is handed over to those for whom it was intended, usually the

frontline staff or sales people. However, follow-up consultations keep the marketer in touch with those entrusted with the project and its developments.

Adam - (At corporate events) they're (the marketers are) more behind the scenes, in a lot of respects the busiest part of that marketing role, in terms of the events, is the build up to it, rather than being on the ground on the day. Because it's often at those events that the (salespeople) becomes the hero, if you like, especially in our world... So we typically put the (salespeople) in front of customers whenever we can, because ultimately it's up to them to create sales... (There needs to be) a willingness to support what the (salespeople) are there to do. Because the (salespeople) aren't appropriately geared from a marketing point of view, so they will draw on us for support, no matter how trivial.

Completed projects such as television or newspaper advertisements, marketing collateral, or company events are usually on public display, in the hands of frontline staff or employed by other in the organisation in the pursuit of attaining commercial outcomes. As such senior managers often receive feedback from frontline staff or salespeople as to the quality or effectiveness of each project. This feedback provides a vital part of the overall assessment a senior manager has of a marketer's performance.

Reporting on outcomes

Reporting on outcomes describes the marketer's responsibility to provide an accurate report of the performance of their marketing project in terms of meeting the predetermined objectives outlined in the marketing plan. A senior manager requires the marketer to report back on the outcomes of a project as well as describe the determinants that contributed to a project's outcomes, whether or not the project was a success or failure. Reporting on outcomes is characterised by comparing objectives against results, no fluff, and the project report.

James - Conveying outcomes at the end is really important...that I did what I set out to do.

Table 11 The projects sub-theme – Reporting on outcomes

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Projects
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan development (Understand corporate objectives, research & analysis, marketing plan, approval process) • Creative development (Define the project’s objectives, pursue innovation, outsource creativity, DIY creativity) • Creative management (The marketing brief, oversee development, appraise outputs) • Execution (Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations, project hand over) • Reporting on outcomes (Objectives against results, no fluff, project report) • Return on investment (Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure, overall growth)

Objectives against results

Whenever a report of a marketing project is required (there are instances or organisations where this does not happen), a senior manager’s first concern appears to be the bottom-line; did the project meet or exceed targets? The project success against the objectives may provide the senior manager and marketer with valuable information regarding the organisation, the marketplace, and the competence of the marketing department. However, projects such as the publishing of flyers, brochures, magazines, or other collateral, often have objectives around modernisation and deadlines rather than revenue. Projects such as direct mail campaigns and television commercials, which have volume or market penetration targets, usually require outcome related feedback.

If the project results fall below expectations, questions may arise regarding the performance of the marketing team. If the project meets or exceeds expectations, Steve jokes, “I don’t care who’s responsible, as long as we grow!... (But) ultimately yeah (I do care). Who really delivered on this?” Senior managers provided several examples of short and long-term marketing outcomes.

Sonja - We had a project challenge, um, last year from the head, the global head of that division, basically saying that she wanted subsidiaries to achieve a certain ratio of our sales coming from these acquisitions, because that meant we were doing a really good job of pulling them in, integrating them and on-selling to our customers. So we had a program around that, we had a global target of 25% of our

portfolio sales to come from this particular acquisition and we achieved 32(%).

Adam - One of the things we've never been good at is measuring the success of campaigns, so I guess, in the most traditional sense, um... your classic indicator of success in the marketing sense is, "Look what I've generated for you in terms of inquiry. Look where we are as a brand. Look at all the examples of what we've done." So the output of campaigns and what that's translated into.

Barry - (What makes him credible?) Because it works! He's good at it. We get repeat business. We get 83% of our commercial people come back and use us again. That's all you need to know!

Senior managers assert that they want to achieve results and see the results; results are "all you need to know!" However Adam admits that they have never been good at measuring the success of campaigns. One of marketing's failings is its lack of metrics and measurements to be able to accurately report on results (Brooksbank et al., 2010; Davidson, 2009; Kotler, 2009; Seth et al., 2005; Verhoef et al., 2009). While metrics such as sales figures are often used in the measurement of marketing success, they fail to take into account cumulative influences marketing may have on future sales (Varcoe, 2009). One reason for marketing's decline in credibility is that it has been unable to quantify, demonstrate and communicate its link to commercial outcomes (Davidson, 2009; Deloitte et al., 2008; Seth et al., 2005; The Fournaise Marketing Group, 2011). If, from a senior manager's perspective, results are "all you need to know", then it is understandable that marketers are losing credibility if they are unable to provide an accurate report of outcomes in terms of results.

No fluff

As senior managers are responsible for the organisation's revenue growth, they require the marketer to debrief them on a project's outcome in an objective and analytical way. Sometimes marketer's descriptions of the outcomes of their marketing project sound "fluffy", as there are no measurements or metrics to back their assertions (or excuses) up. Instead, the marketer should investigate what the contributing factors to the result were, and include them in the report.

Steve - I expect them to report on that and determine if it's a success. Now, our current incumbent, I had to give him a pretty serious talking

too at one point, when he did his first campaign debrief. And it's all fluffy, and jolly hockey sticks and positive, positive, positive. And I said, "Mate, this campaign was a dog, you can't tell me it's all jolly hockey sticks when we didn't meet our objectives, and you only sold X number of this... Now the more analytical marketing people are coming through, they've got to undo that airy-fairy, fluffy, precious image that has sort of come through.

Project report

The project report provides valuable feedback to the marketer and the senior manager. Results of a project that fall below targets can be disappointing, however, it is in the interests of the marketer to describe what was learnt from the experience and how to mitigate the causes of the poor result next time. Poor results, however, might not reflect badly on a marketer who generally performs well. Despite the marketing project being developed and executed well, poor results may occur. Senior managers realise that a project's result is sometimes not an indictment on a marketer's efforts and that external influences may be to blame. As Barry argues, "marketing is not an exact science".

Sonia - Sometimes that happens right? I mean now is a good example. So the person is doing... ticking all the boxes, doing all their activities, and unfortunately, for reasons beyond their control, they're just not going to meet the sales target. So that person can be not delivering if you like, against their KPI's, but still be exhibiting really strong leadership attributes and not be penalised, in a performance review kind of process.

Return on investment

Performance, as described by the senior managers, is determined by the delivery of commercial outcomes. The participants were primarily concerned with the return on investment from a marketing project. Return on investment differs from the reporting on outcomes because its focus is on outlay and revenue, rather than reaching marketing objectives. The return on investment demonstrates that the commercial result of the marketing spend is tangible, profitable, and justifies the resources supplied. This report is crucial if marketers are to be perceived as credible, rather than a cost centre.

Barry questions whether he believes marketing plays a significant role toward his organisation's commercial outcomes, as it is "very difficult to quantify". He describes marketing as a "necessary evil" and then questions

marketing's effectiveness because it lacks measurement and metrics to justify itself. Other senior managers believe marketing results are becoming more tangible.

Steve - Now we seem to be getting into more accountability, more analytical with the work around marketing. You have to account for your spend. The money is a lot tighter now. I know as a (chief executive) that if someone spends \$20k on a campaign, I expect a return on that investment. And I expect them to report on that and determine if it's a success... Operations delivers sales, IT delivers computer stuff, HR delivers HR stuff - it's tangible; marketing spends money! There is a lot more accountability and a lot more measures coming through now.

Dave - Marketing has been seen as a cost centre, rather than a strategic investment, you know, that's how it's been seen in the past. It's changing now.

The Fournaise Marketing Group (2011) recently published a report in which over 600 CEO's from large corporations and SMEs from the US, Europe, Asia, and Australia, were interviewed regarding a marketer's credibility. The report states that 73% of CEO's believe marketers lack business credibility, as they cannot prove they generate business growth for an organisation (The Fournaise Marketing Group, 2011). Jerome Fontaine, CEO and chief tracker of Fournaise states:

Until Marketers start speaking the P&L language of their CEOs and stakeholders, and until they start tracking the business effectiveness of all their strategies and campaigns to prove they generate incremental customer demand, they will continue to lack credibility in the eyes of their CEOs and will continue to be seen more as a cost centre than an asset (n.p).

Recent literature agrees with the senior manager's perception that marketing is seen more as a cost centre than an investment and profit contributor (Kotler, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009). Sawhney (2009) argues that marketers need to speak the same language as their senior managers, which is revenue growth. If marketers are unable to demonstrate the value of marketing regarding non-promotional activities then, "marketing budgets will inevitably get cut, and marketing spending will gravitate toward short-term demand generation initiatives at the expense of brand and relationship-building initiatives" (Sawhney, 2009, n.p.) Return on investment is described

in three topics: Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure and overall growth.

Table 12 The projects sub-theme – Return on investment

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Projects
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in the development, delivery, management, and reporting of marketing projects
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan development (Understand corporate objectives, research & analysis, marketing plan, approval process) • Creative development (Define the project’s objectives, pursue innovation, outsource creativity, DIY creativity) • Creative management (The marketing brief, oversee development, appraise outputs) • Execution (Timely, under budget and exceeding expectations, project hand over) • Reporting on outcomes (Objectives against results, no fluff, project report) • Return on investment (Outcomes that are hard to measure, outcomes that are made to measure, overall growth)

Outcomes that are hard to measure

The return on investment of some marketing projects, particularly relating to brand management and sponsorship can be very difficult to determine.

However, marketers are responsible to find the means to qualify the money spent on hard to measure marketing projects. Some methods that participants identified to quantify hard to measure marketing initiatives included using surveys and focus groups. When asked if their community sponsorship/branding project was worth the money, this senior manager responded:

James - Ahh... b*****d if I know, I think so. It’s really hard to measure, the effect of sponsorship. The only thing we can measure, and we do it every month is count the number of mentions and the number of column inches we get essentially, associated with the (community sponsorship/branding project), um... Look at the relative cost of that from an advertising perspective, so we know what that would have cost us if we’d been paying for it. And through customer surveys, which we run two major surveys, one of which is a brand monitor, we run annually. We do them separately for (one of our service’s) brand and for (another service’s)... brand, and then twice yearly we do a service monitor, which is about... it’s based on qualitative research, so focus groups that we’ve done previously, and we do on an ongoing basis, to get customers to identify what things they care about, and then we measure ourselves against those things. And one of the things is community involvement. So for the (community sponsorship/branding project), we, well not just the (community

sponsorship/branding project), but community involvement generally, we rate really highly, because in addition to the (community sponsorship/branding project) we do community awards right through New Zealand and so on. But for a (local) customer base we get a lot of specific mention on the verbatims that come through the research to say, you know, “Love the (community sponsorship/branding project), keep doing the (community sponsorship/branding project).” So... does it work? I think so.

Outcomes that are made to measure

Marketing projects developed to meet specific commercial outcomes are expected to provide a return on investment in the short to medium term. This is because many marketing projects of this type run for a specific period, aim for a specific audience, and offer a specific value proposition. In other words, customers may either take the offer, or leave it; and their responses are measured. These projects determine if the research and analysis uncovered pertinent consumer needs, or developed relevant products and services, and crafted persuasive marketing messages and/or value propositions:

Steve - You do a DM campaign and you actually say, “here’s the result, let’s calculate the advertising value of that and see if its got a positive net present value.” ... If you’re going to spend \$20k of our money, you need to deliver this return. And there is a lot more around that now.

Overall growth

Senior managers argue that a marketer’s primary responsibilities are reaching commercial outcomes relating to long-term growth as well as meeting or exceeding expectations in the short-term. It is generally in long term growth that marketers can justify the marketing spend in hard to measure and made to measure projects:

Steve - Marketing’s job is to see net growth in the membership base, net growth in our portfolio.

Dave - Ohhh, we’ve been growing at 30% a year for 5 years, sort of thing.

Pervasive Influence

Pervasive influence describes the marketer’s performance in promoting customer-centricity throughout their organisation and is an important aspect of a marketer’s performance, from a senior manager’s perspective. A marketer’s function, while being a service provider to the organisation, is

also to influence their organisation into thinking more about how to serve customers and their needs. This influence can be manifested in many forms, for example, the marketer may make comments in a meeting that advocate a customer's point of view, or the marketer may be instrumental in drawing up the organisation's service standards designed to keep customer satisfaction high.

Having pervasive influence can sometimes require the marketer to involve him or herself in areas seemingly unrelated to marketing, as this senior manager explains:

Steve - You've got to make sure you (the marketer) see across all aspects of the organisation, because you are the representative of the customer...they (marketing managers) should have an opinion because they're marketing, they have the wider, global awareness of the ultimate impact of the customer. If IT wants to do X, they should think through what that does to the customer. If HR wants to do Y, on the IEA (individual employment agreement), that will affect leave, that will affect service uptime (which affects the customer).

When marketers have a pervasive influence in an organisation, it indicates to the senior manager that the marketer is performing an important aspect of their job as building a customer-centric mindset in their organisation is clearly in the commercial interest of the company. Webster (2005) asserts that organisations that have downsized or eliminated the marketing department have decreased or lost their marketing competence in the marketplace, even when marketing responsibilities have been assigned to other departments. This is often because managers in other departments do not have the necessary marketing skills; what is required by organisations that want to be effective in marketing is a marketing manager who has "a clear mandate to build marketing competence and strategic thinking throughout the organization" (Webster, 2005, p. 5). Having pervasive influence is represented by two factors: strategic influence and brand standards.

Table 13 The pervasive influence sub-theme – Strategic influence

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Pervasive Influence
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in promoting customer-centricity throughout an organisation
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic influence (Influence over everything, collaborating and influence, integrating sales and marketing) • Brand standards (Operations manuals and compliancy, brand versus sales)

Strategic influence

According to some of the participants, having a strategic influence is a vital aspect of a marketer’s performance. Strategic influence describes the role marketers perform that provides the organisation, particularly frontline staff, with information, tools, and a customer-centric mindset that equips the organisation to provide customer satisfaction. Senior managers describe how they would like to see marketers encourage every department to consider the customer or end user’s satisfaction when making internal departmental decisions:

Steve - You need to think through the ramifications, or implications of a change on a customer. So it’s really important that these guys (marketers) are the (customer’s) representatives, everyone else should be aware as well, but these guys (marketers) are particularly responsible, from my perspective... Influence these guys (other departments) to start thinking about customers, so the credibility of marketing will go up ultimately. But these guys (marketers) have to think across the board, so the senior manager is thinking s***t, that guy there, he’s on to it. He’s always keeping these guys honest, which is great.

Influence over everything

Steve describes his role as “the keeper of the values... (of) the organisational vision and strategy”, and while HR hires and fires, IT develops and maintains computer systems and so on, accordingly a marketer is responsible to keep the customer top of mind across all organisational matters. Marketers may be required to have influence on areas that seemingly do not relate to marketing, for example, the individual employment agreements for new staff, or the organisation’s website interface; because these areas may affect the customer experience.

Steve believes his marketing manager should have an opinion on almost every aspect of the organisation because their opinion may influence departments to consider the customer's satisfaction when making any kind of policy or operational change. Steve provides an example where HR might consider drawing up an individual employment agreement that allows certain staff to go home at four pm instead of five pm. A competent marketer, he argues, should ask how might this operational change affect customer wait times and service:

Steve - So if it's a good, competent marketing manager, they could have the most influence, almost, in the (senior management team), of anybody... You're here to understand all aspects of the organisation and have a view... A good marketing manager should have an opinion on (the decisions of other departments), and if they didn't have an opinion, they'd have to look at themselves and say, "Why don't I have an opinion?" Because it influences the (customer's) experience.

Marketing literature describes the loss of this particular influential role, and attributes it partly to an identity crisis (Brooksbank et al., 2010; Kotler, 2009; Sawhey, 2009). This identity crisis describes marketing's difficulty in defining its role in an organisation. Steve recognises marketing's potential to develop a customer-centric organisation, while Barry argues "Marketing is just projects, projects, projects", indicating that senior managers do not all agree that a marketer should have an influential role in an organisation, outside of doing projects. Sheth and Sisodia (2005) argue, "Marketing claims to be about representing the customer to the company, but it remains mostly about representing the company to the customer, using every trick in its bag to make customers behave in the company's best interests." (p. 12).

Verhoef et al., (2009) assert that the marketing department benefits organisations because its influence on the organisation's market orientation is related to an organisation's performance. According to Webster (2005), marketing should have tactical, strategic, and cultural dimensions; the senior manager's assertion that marketer's sole function is, "projects, projects, projects" without specific grounding in strategic analysis and organisational culture may not equate to business growth. Barry may dismiss Webster's (2005) assertions however, as he provides evidence that innovative projects that his marketing team have produced have in fact equated to business

growth, despite his marketers not having pervasive influence over his organisation. This may indicate that Barry's organisation already operates with consumer-centrally, or that Barry sees the responsibility of being a pervasive influencer as his, rather than the marketing department's.

Collaborating and influence

Marketers need to be thoughtful about how to exert their influence over their other colleagues. Senior managers argue that marketers can expect to gather more buy-in to the marketing project by collaborating with other departments, particularly those who might be implementing the marketing project, rather than dictating to them. The marketer, the marketing project and marketing objectives may achieve acceptance from others by working closely with them. On the other hand, by trying to command others to implement a marketing project or do things their way, marketers may only cause disfavour for themselves and the project:

Barry - The one thing I have, I detested when I was a franchise was a marketing manager saying, "Well you guys should have 10 (things to sell) here, and I know its b*****y easy to get in - and you need...!" And I'd say to him, "Why don't you p**s off, and get out of my office, otherwise I'll rip your head off. You wouldn't have the faintest clue what the salespeople are going through." So one of the things I told (our current marketing manager), is that, "You never tell a salesperson what to do. You're a service provider, giving them tools, helping them to sell. He's not a marketer, he's a salesperson."

Malshe (2010) describes how sales people appreciate it when marketers try to build meaningful relationships with the sales people. Sales people, for instance, appreciated it when marketers openly admitted to their mistakes have assured them that that mistake might not happen again. Actions like this "brings (marketers) closer to the sales force and enhances their credibility" (Malshe, 2010). Marketers may increase their influence over salespeople, rather than distance themselves from them, by being relational.

Marketers can enhance their credibility when they relate well and are approachable to others in the organisation. Frontline staff, for instance, may provide valuable marketing data and ideas that might help implement and improve marketing projects. A marketer, by understanding a customer's perspective as described by frontline staff, can save time and money at the

research and analysis stage. Valuable information in the form of customer feedback and anecdotes gathered from these sources can often be quickly assimilated and presented to a senior manager as a marketing project proposal:

Steve - A good example... is (a particular new product on the market)... we don't have that. I wasn't aware that we had a problem, no one had told me we were losing members through lack of this (new product). None of the (franchises) told me. I go out to the (franchises) and they don't say anything, I must be too scary or something, I don't know? The marketing people hadn't told me anything. I went to a steering committee in Auckland and they were banging the table saying, "We gotta get (this new product!)" And I was like, "We don't need that, it's a load of b*****t." And I came back to talk to them (our franchises) and they say, "We need that!" Why the hell didn't they tell me?

Integrating sales and marketing

The senior managers discussed the importance of integrating sales and marketing by describing how they encourage the relationship between the two, or lamenting that managers more senior than them have positioned the departments as separate silos, perpetuating the animosity between sales and marketing to the detriment of the organisation. Adam believes that his superiors have effectively scuttled any strategic marketing influence his company might have due to the separation of the sales and marketing function:

Adam - That's another challenge. They (my bosses overseas) essentially separated the sales and marketing silos. So rather than having a sales personality and a marketing personality report to me as GM, which is how we were once set up, I now report to the head of sales, and the marketing coordinator will report to a campaign manager in Australia. So it's not about anything strategic, the marketing role, it's about implementing the Australian campaign. So we've lost that sort of level of strategic influence really.

James - Because of the niche position that we take, and the fact that we're very focused on getting the right customers, keeping the right customers, strong integration between sales and marketing is really important to make that work. Um, because I've seen in previous lives, in other companies, where marketing and sales are separated and it doesn't work. Because marketing is doing a bunch of c**p which does nothing. Sales think marketing are a pack of idiots, um... so the more tightly integrated that can be in my view the better it works. (Our marketing manager) not only manages marketing implementation, she also runs our outbound sales function. So there is strong

integration between marketing execution and sales management for customer acquisition within our mass-market customer base.

James describes his previous experiences where marketers are perceived as irrelevant and idiots because of their lack of contact with sales. However, he believes a strong relationship between sales and marketing is essential in achieving commercial outcomes. The relationship between the sales and marketing team, though traditionally an acrimonious one due to conflict and mutual negative stereotyping, needs to be interdependent if corporations are to achieve the desired commercial outcomes (Malshe, 2010).

Brand standards

A marketer may be required to develop and maintain sections of an operations manual, which is designed to prescribe an organisation’s policies, procedures and brand standards. A marketer’s contribution to operations manuals helps ensure brand standards will be maintained throughout the organisation. The level of enforcement of brand standards differs from organisation to organisation. Brand standards are described in two topics: operations manual and compliancy, and brand versus sales.

The pervasive influence sub-theme – Brand standards

Credibility

	Performance in delivering commercial outcomes
Sub-theme	Pervasive Influence
Description of theme	The marketer’s performance in promoting customer-centricity throughout an organisation
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic influence (Influence over everything, collaborating and influence, integrating sales and marketing) • Brand standards (Operations manuals and compliancy, brand versus sales)

Operation manuals and compliancy

Operations manuals serve these organisations as either guides or templates in the design of marketing collateral or promotion work. Senior managers affirm that the intention of these manuals is to ensure the standard of an organisation’s marketing is uniform and consistent with the organisation branding. Operations manuals were developed by marketers to ensure homogenous branding standards are diffused throughout the organisation.

They require occasional development and refinement so that the guidelines in the manual are being updated to satisfy the contemporary marketplace:

Barry - We have brand standards... and there's certain categories and how we present it. We've got a massive (operations manual), of everything for everyone, from a business card, how you can do an email, how you can do a sign, how you can do a window display... What influence do we have over (our franchise owners)? We have 100% influence. I mean if they don't do what we want them to do, I'll turn them off. And they won't be able to have access... they just don't appear. I haven't had to do it, but I've threatened to do it a month ago. Said to a guy, "You've got 24 hours to fix that or you're turned off, you'll have access to nothing. You're out of business." ... And their contracts reflect that. We have the ability to do that, franchise agreements reflect that. And we're pretty strong on (that).

Adam - With everything from point of sales sign off to signing off their own retail advertising, to things like print templates for newspapers and magazines and website activity. I guess on the one hand it's supporting them in what they do and on the other hand it's managing what they do to achieve a degree of consistency, um... and that's improved over the last few years, but it's not... I don't think it's great still.

Senior managers acknowledge the operator's manual is only effective when operators employ it in developing their marketing collateral. In organisations that strictly enforce the brand standards prescribed in the operation's manual, the influence marketer's have on the organisation is very high. In organisations where the operations manual is not enforced, the degree of marketing influence is decreased, and therefore a marketer's performance is marred:

Adam - We've got a some very structured programs in place around um... dealer standards, approval processes through here so making sure that we're seeing ads, knocking them back if they don't meet brand guidelines, and all those sorts of things. It isn't rocket science, but again it's, it's subject to the (franchise owners) playing the game, and providing those proofs for approval, and involving us in the process. Some do, some don't.

Brand versus sales

A marketer's idea of generating commercial outcomes, and a senior manager's idea of commercial outcomes may sometimes disagree. Adam expressed concern regarding how a marketer's perception of brand standards may come into conflict with commercial outcomes. He described

how their brand, known for its prestige and upmarket clientele, is required to engage in marketing techniques reserved for volume brands to meet sales objectives. In this instance, Adam believed that his marketers were concerned that marketing techniques around discounting may dilute their luxury brand. However, due to market related pressures, i.e. the recession, luxury brands often resort to “sales” as wealthy consumers tighten their belts. He believed that marketers, instead of being staunch brand advocates, must responsibly weigh-up organisational goals:

Adam - Having been round for 10 years or so I've always been pretty protective of (our) brand as well. But then in terms of targets, and the push for volume around the world, all of a sudden we're fighting this battle around what's more important, is it more important that we beat (our competitors), this month or this year, or is it more important that we manage the brand appropriately, even if it means we sell couple of 100 less (products) this year? Um... and the reality is if you ask our regional head office, or even ask (our head office overseas) that question, they would say, "Look the 200 units is more important." So you have marketers (who) think it's all about the brand, like (our brand) doesn't discount and wheel and deal to the same extent as the volume brands, and it's not about discounting, it's about holding up the brand, and the fact that (our brand) has pretty special experiences and events which is true, but on the flip side we do run (discounted product) campaigns, we do run-out campaigns, and those sorts of things, because we have to.

Therefore, this senior manager advises marketers that they might have to relinquish some of their marketing ideology at times, in order to comply with corporate objectives. This must surely leave the marketer in a quandary; marketers may feel that compromising on brand standards, while producing short-term gains, may negate a great deal of past marketing effort in brand building. This situation may appear as a credibility issue to marketers as they may believe compromising on brand perception will ultimately be detrimental to commercial outcomes.

Social aspect of performance

The social aspect of performance is distinguished from the work aspect of performance, as it encompasses the marketer's behaviour and attitude when relating, collaborating with, and presenting to others. The social aspect of performance in the construction of a marketer's credibility, from a senior manager's perspective is made up of the sub-themes Personal Integrity and Professional Conduct.

Personal Integrity describes marketers who are respected, take pride in their work, are enthusiastic, strive to improve themselves and are not precious. Professional Conduct describes a marketer who relates and collaborates competently and professionally with others, and is a team fit. Marketers lose credibility in the social aspect of their performance when they are flighty, abrasive, argumentative, and only out for themselves. As a consequence of the correct behaviour and attitude of the marketer, senior managers notice that others in the organisation will seek out the marketer for help and advice. The following is a more detailed discussion of Personal Integrity and Professional Conduct.

Personal Integrity

Barry - It's about sincerity, it's about being very honest.

Personal integrity makes up part of the social aspect of performance and is a crucial characteristic of a marketer's credibility, from a senior manager's perspective. Marketers engage in many activities and interact with a large sphere of people both within and outside the organisation and are required to protect the organisation against moral or ethical misrepresentation. "The spirit of Marketing demands legal, decent and truthful behaviour" (Brooksbank et al., 2010, p. 93). Personal integrity is represented by two factors: Being respected and presentation.

Table 14 The Personal Integrity sub-theme – Being respected

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Personal Integrity
Description of theme	The marketer’s personal behaviour
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being respected (Pride in their work & enthusiasm, preciousness, self-improving) • Presentation (credible presence, credible presenter)

Being respected

Being respected describes how admired or esteemed (or not) a marketer is by others. Participants identify behavioural attributes in the marketer that build respect such as honesty, sincerity, enthusiasm, pride in their work, and a desire to improve. Marketers lose respect by being precious, aggressive, lazy, and “fluffy”:

Steve - If you don't have the respect of your peers, it's going to be a hard road. You need their respect. That's where a bit of this fell down. Once they start to damage their own personal brand, so to speak, that's really, really, tough.

Pride in their work & enthusiasm

Marketers who taking pride in their work and are enthusiastic demonstrate that their esteem, reputation, and future prospects are tied up in the commercial outcomes of their work. As Barry puts it, “These guys reputations are linked to these projects. So they’re passionate!” James describes how attitudes of pride and enthusiasm toward their performance contribute significantly toward the marketer’s credibility

James - (Our marketing manager) is one of those people that, once we’ve agreed what it is we’re going to do, I can leave it with her and I know it’s going to be done. And not only done, but done to a really high quality, so she has a tremendous amount of pride in what she does and in achieving outcomes so she’s very, very outcome focused. So that’s a real strength:

James describes how, due to his marketing manager taking pride in her work, he knows that once he has delegated the work to her, it would be completed to a high standard. This aspect of a marketer’s performance is crucial if a marketer is to be considered credible by their senior manager. Pride and

enthusiasm in their work appear to be an important attribute of a marketer due to its effect on progress toward commercial outcomes:

Adam - So he came in pretty keen to turn his hand at anything, he wasn't precious about um... some of the grunt work, so he wasn't afraid to roll his sleeves up and pack up brochures and send them to (our franchises) and that sort of thing... So (he) was a great example of that in that respect, in that he worked long hours, he was keen to get involved in every aspect of the business um... and he was a very personable character, so he got on well with (our franchises). So he became the go-to guy for the stuff he was working on, rather than me or someone else in the team.

Steve - The marketing people are pretty motivated, pretty keen to get things done. I have never, until recently, come across a marketing manager, also a marketing assistant, who doesn't do a fifty-hour week. They're so keen! They're not asked to do those hours, "Let's do 'em." Because they love it, they want to do it, they want to advance. The one we've got at the moment, b*****s off at 4.30pm, and I'm thinking, "What's wrong with that

Barry - Because there's not that many people who want to be a slob, or a sloth, or seen as lazy, or as a low standard performer.

According to Adam, an enthusiastic marketer is happy to do any kind of work in any part of the organisation to see a project completed. Enthusiasm may be identified by how cheerful and motivated a marketer is, and is partly measured in terms of hours spent at work each week. One senior manager described how the enthusiasm of a marketing graduate distinguished him above other marketers, which caused him to become sort after by frontline staff, which in turn relieved pressure from other senior members. This indicates that pride in one's work and enthusiasm affects not only the performance of the marketer, but perhaps others in the organisation.

Preciousness

Signs of arrogance such as showiness, pretentiousness and snobbery are characteristics of a marketer's "preciousness." Preciousness in marketers undermines their credibility because it adversely affects relationships, which in turn reduces a marketer's ability to work or network effectively and perform well. Senior managers provide these examples of preciousness:

Steve - At times a bit precious, what's the word for it... yeah precious is as close as it comes. It's changing a bit. Back in the day, in the eighties, at the peak of marketing, they did themselves a lot of damage, they're out p****g it up and out on junkets, lots of cash, and ended up

with no accountability. That sort of stuck. Now the more analytical marketing people are coming through, they've got to undo that airy-fairy, fluffy, precious image that has sort of come through... You get to talk to the advertising agency and do all these lovely, fluffy things, but you didn't have to deliver on stuff too much. Or if you did, it was all very highbrow stuff and it was "my way or the highway" – quite precious.

Adam - There have been others that in some respects were the opposite. They were a bit more precious, they were a bit more specific about what they wanted to be doing and what they think they didn't want to be involved in because it was below them - and that's dangerous... look I get it and we've seen some marketers that are happy to get amongst it, and there are others that see themselves a little bit too pure, probably... The reality is the marketers in our organisation have to do a little of everything. There will be elements of that, but there will also be elements of delivering (our product) to journalists and packing up brochures to be sent to dealerships and taking what seem like trivial calls. And I think in some respects it's a measure of how they manage those trivial requests that ... will have a big influence on their reputation with the dealer network... (A) broad enough focus to not look at certain campaigns or certain approaches as being beneath them is pretty key... I think that it's a risk for those real purist marketers, umm... would see a (our company) employment opportunity as all about the brand and no grunt work and all the flash fashion-week events and the champagne drinking and wining and dining and customer hospitality. The reality is the marketers in our organisation have to do a little of everything.

The findings suggest that being precious may have evolved from two separate sources: First, the majority of marketers have degrees, while the majority of frontline staff and sales people do not. Marketers have perhaps tended to have a sense of superiority over other colleagues, and a tendency to try and dominate them. Perhaps precious marketers believe that having a degree may provide a license excluding them from the "grunt work", such as folding brochures, while they concentrated on the "airy-fairy" or creative aspects of a project. Second, an opposite view was presented from the data; when a marketer was ill equipped to do their role effectively, being precious was a front to mask their inadequacies. Either way, preciousness is deleterious to a marketer's credibility.

Self-improving

Participants cited an aspirational attitude as a driver in marketers that causes them to continually improve. They argue that as marketers improve

their skills-base, both professionally and personally, then progress in their performance and in the attainment of commercial outcomes can be expected:

Sonia - I'd say wanting to continue their education, or their own personal development in some way, shape or form. And that's showing a desire to continue to deliver value, a) personally and b) to the organisation, by keeping up to date with what's going on, by building networks, um, outside the company, so I think a desire to always be learning and networking is really important.

Barry - The fact is when guys want to improve, and he's a continual improver, then you can put resource into them, and time into them, and energy. They come with you; you're not fighting them. You know, he's just a good team player.

Marketers ambitious to move up the corporate rankings are motivated to learn and develop their skills and knowledge, and may thereby be equipped for greater challenges. In the meantime, their development of projects and networking skills are constantly improving. However James believes marketers are motivated to improve because of "a desire to be successful for success itself, and to see commercial outcomes." Willingness to learn was cited by marketing managers as the highest skill a marketing graduate could have when they entered the workforce (Gray et al., 2007).

Presentation

A marketer's presentation relates to how a marketer comes across in not only their grooming, but in giving people an intangible reassurance that they are believable, upright, reliable, knowledgeable, and relatable. Presentation is made up of two topics: credible presence and credible presenter:

Barry - You've got to have a flair for it you know. He sees colours, he dresses well, um... He's a good presenter, he'll do a lot of presenting. I mean he's up to the UK and flying out on Saturday. He'll do 6 presentations, in 2 weeks. So he's got to be able to present well. Have integrity, believability.

Table 15 The personal integrity sub-theme – Presentation

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Personal Integrity
Description of theme	The marketer's personal behaviour
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being respected (Pride in their work & enthusiasm, preciousness, self-improving) • Presentation (credible presence, credible presenter)

Credible presence

Senior marketers believe that marketers need a credible presence not only to secure the trust and respect of relevant stakeholders, but to also undo damage to the marketers' brand. The damage in this instance has been attributed to the past performance of previous marketers. Participants described some specific characteristics of a credible presence: a marketer's appearance, their demeanour, their attitude, their competence, communication skills, and having an appropriate manner for the audience they are addressing:

Steve - The first thing is they need to have a credible presence, I need to be careful because I talk too fast and can tend to stutter from time to time. You need to be passionate, convincing and credible in your position... Well if you don't come across as knowledgeable and competent, and that can come across in the way you present yourself, no matter how well you do or how hard you try, you've almost shot yourself in the foot before you start. People out in the traps and in the branches, have never been keen on people in marketing, those guys that drink the chardonnay, go out for lattes and stuff, so they're looking for you to trip up, in some ways, so you need to come across that you know your stuff, you don't make stuff ups, and you can talk the talk and walk the walk in the end. So the whole communication is a) you need to talk at all levels to people, and get on with them. But you also need to be convincing, not arguing and talking people around, but actually talk intelligently to them; so they think, "that makes sense".

Adam - We'd never put anyone from [a particular advertising agency] in front of the dealer network, on the basis that, as soon as you put a pink shirted ad/sales guy, in front of a dealer network, they'd get absolutely beaten up. Because it's just so far away from the world that the dealer network operates in.

Steve's argument agrees with the academics that are concerned with the decline in the credibility of marketers partly due to a lack of knowledge, competence, identity and communication skills (Brooksbank et al., 2010, Davidson, 2009, Kotler, 2009). Marketers are required to provide an argument in a relevant, intelligible and persuasive manner to their audience, and present themselves in a credible way.

Credible presenter

Senior managers require marketers to perform presentations to achieve internal buy-in for marketing projects and to promote organisational goods and services to their channels or potential customers. While presenting is a skill in its own right, being a credible presenter is based on having a credible presence, i.e. being believable, and having integrity. Senior managers affirm that marketers may be selected for employment or promotion, because they are a credible presenter:

Adam - What struck me the most was that I was looking for (while interviewing marketing job candidates was)... not so much the work experience, but how they came across. I was looking for the polish, and the communication and the fact you would be able to put them in front of our (franchise owners), or put them in front of senior people within this organisation, and for them to come across...very well, and for them to be presentable.

Senior managers realise that whoever is presenting any facet of the organisation needs to perform this function well; and that an audience is likely to evaluate the entire organisation by its spokesperson. Not only that, the credibility of the presenter is also a basis for the presenter to be persuasive and therefore effective in attaining commercial outcomes (Eisend, 2006; Hovland et al., 1953).

Professional Conduct

Professional conduct is a significant contributor to a marketer's performance and credibility according to the senior managers interviewed. Several of the participants argue that the credibility of marketers has been marred by a history of unprofessional behaviour. While marketing is not officially a profession, this should not mean marketers are not under any obligation to act professionally. In fact, due to their dependence on relational interactions,

marketers are obligated to work in a professional manner as they represent their projects, their department, organisation, senior manager, and their profession:

Steve - I think marketers are their own worst enemy sometimes in that they're not...they're too opinionated at times, or too self obsessed, and think they are marketing, and marketing is king and queen of everything... it's a stigma that's attached to the flighty, marketing people.

If an organisation is to meet its corporate goals, it is crucial that marketers' conduct themselves in a professional manner. Marketers may put into operation many projects and interact with most levels of the organisation in the execution of each project. This requires marketers to have a high standard of people skills and organisational ability to ensure projects are completed efficiently and effectively. Professional conduct describes the marketer's manner in relation to managing tasks and other people:

Dave - Someone that has good technical marketing skills, and someone that can build rapport and develop communications with all these different stakeholders, because if they can do that well, they gain credibility. And not only from their own teams, internal teams, but, you know, from customers and channel.

Professional conduct is separate from personal conduct because it describes how marketers manage others and tasks, rather than how he or she manages him or herself. Professional conduct is represented by two factors: collaborator and implementer.

Table 16 The Professional Conduct sub-theme – Collaborator

Credibility	
	Performance in delivering commercial outcomes
Sub-theme	Professional Conduct
Description of theme	The marketer's manner when managing tasks and other people
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborator (Connecting, consulting, culture, conduct) • Implementer (Engagement, buy-in)

Collaborator

A marketer conducting him or herself in a professional manner when collaborating with others is essential for successful outcomes, according to

the senior managers. “Collaborator” describes the constructive co-productive activity senior managers expect to see from marketers as they work with others. Whom the marketer builds relationships with and how these relationships are maintained is key to the performance success of the marketer, as important information and perspectives are shared when collaboration takes place. Collaboration means the marketer works together with others to ensure a project is implemented successfully. In the following example, Steve describes how collaboration with the operations and frontline staff helped successfully coordinate and integrate a marketing project.

Steve - Staff are saying, “give us more, change things, give us more.” So we gave it to them. They say “whoa! Not all at once”. The flow of...not just marketing campaigns, you need to look at marketing campaigns and integrate them into – what’s the advertising and what’s (on the) posters? So you need to make sure they’re all coordinated, but if this (policy) change is coming in, and there’s some compliance requirements and we’re going through performance appraisals at the same time, you can’t do too much. You need to make sure that you agree with the operations manager “What’s happening in July, how much more can they take? No more. Ok, what about August? Can we squeeze it in here? Yep we can do August.” And if you say “we’ve got a massive campaign in November, from early November to 12 December, how about that?” and he’ll say “No, getting too close to Christmas, pull it back a week”. So all of that sort of stuff.

Collaboration with people in an appropriate, professional manner is crucial to a project’s performance as launching marketing projects often disturbs workflows and schedules within an organisations, which can be stressful for those concerned. Collaboration here is a combination of connecting, consulting, culture and conduct.

Connecting

Connecting is described here as the ability of the marketer to communicate and network successfully with others. It is about the intentional building and maintaining of key relationships with whoever is involved in the delivery of commercial outcomes, whether internal or external to the organisation. From the hiring process onward, senior managers are looking to see if the marketer is “a team fit”. Senior managers recognise when newly employed marketers can develop relationships with those around them quickly and effectively, the organisation is able to return to being productive quickly. If

the marketer is to build credibility, building rapport, confidence and empathy with others is crucial.

Barry - I mean, this morning he ran a phone conference with 20 of our franchisees this morning, and he can facilitate that... It's just the way he's dealing with people; he's very good interacting with people.

Adam - One of the things we are quite conscious of is getting new staff members, marketing and other roles, in front of dealers at every opportunity. Just to help move their processes along. Because when you employ new staff members, the sooner those relationships are in play, the more value they can add. And the more confident dealers are at contacting the new staff member, the more load it takes off everyone else... you can tell within a team who has the greater level of credibility just based on where the phone calls end up being directed. So you can tell whose working on what and who hears from which dealers more, which relationships are working and which dealerships are avoiding certain staff members because they have better results dealing with someone else.

In a recent Australian study, employers asserted that the most important skill for marketing graduates to demonstrate was communication (Johns, 2008). The ability to connect with others, and connect others with others, is a skill crucial for a marketer's performance, from a senior manager's perspective.

Dave provides an example of how his marketing team connected key people to boost commercial outcomes. However it is important to note that the main driving force behind his company's success in new market penetration and volume sales is their product development team, rather than the marketing team. The product development team produce innovative and highly technical products that are, in the eyes of the leading expert in the US, "the best thing he's seen from anything globally." Due to the complexity of these products and their ever-evolving nature, marketers in the organisation do not understand key technical specifications of the product and are therefore unable to engage on a technical level with potential channels and markets. Therefore marketers, who were hired for their marketing abilities not their technical background, are placed in a challenging environment.

Dave argues that it is the marketers' professional conduct in connecting key people that is ultimately building the marketing team's credibility and overcoming these challenges. In this example, Dave describes how marketers

connected product developers, end users, and themselves into user group forums where technical and marketing aspects of the products, as well as customer feedback could be shared, and where products would be sold:

You do it (build credibility in your organisation) by bite-sized chunks... We had these um, user group meetings... That's a form of direct marketing essentially, um talk to these user groups and they go away and say, "Wow." We've talked about our brand, "we've got a strategy for our brand, we're going to take our customers with our brand, we're gonna support them globally." ... We're engaging with end users, understand their needs better...and then as a result you hear these customers saying, "Well, we've just listened to this, we've had 2 days, 3 days in NZ talking with (they don't call it the marketing team)... and... we're going to buy a million bucks worth of product... I'm there and we've got some product people there, but it's a marketing function, a marketing activity, um, and we have to involve other, you know, different functions, but ultimately performing a marketing activity.

The marketing team connected product developers and key clients in essentially a marketing activity. This not only provides clients access to the information they require to make a purchasing decision, but it also lifts the marketers' profile within the organisation as team-players who know how to develop projects that effectively connect buyers with the organisation.

Consulting

Consulting is defined here as connecting with key people with the purpose of exchanging views, schedules, and expertise, with the intention of producing a successful a project. Consulting is a step beyond connecting with people, as this stage requires the convergence of views regarding the implementation of a particular project.

Steve - But it's telling people, in enough time, what's going to happen, when it's going to happen, why it's going to happen. The "why" is very important. What's in it for them, or how it affects their job, and what they might need to do. Give them a chance to digest that, before it happens... So the consultation is part of the communication, and because it was a failure to consult, it led to stuff ups... Because if they had consulted a couple of key users or stakeholders in the branch network ahead of time, and said, "We're thinking of doing this so what do you think? They'll come back and say "I wouldn't do that, because of this and this."

Dave - So our teams here are developing... collateral in conjunction, and the sales tools, in conjunction with the sales teams, they need

feedback from them, and in conjunction with the product team, because (there are) inputs from both sides. They develop these sales tools, deploy them into the market, and if they work and people say, "Yeah ok, we understand we're your coming from, you're providing thought leadership in this area".

Consultation requires marketers to involve other people's key perspectives in project development and implementation to minimise unnecessary disruptions to the organisation's work flow, and maximise the opportunity for the project to perform successfully. Once the consultation process has been completed, and agreement on how details of the project might be executed has been reached, marketers may damage their credibility by failing to follow through on what had been decided, without further consultation.

Steve - Actually, that's another requirement...attention to detail. It's really, really important. If I say to you 1,2,3,4 - you don't go 1,2,4,3. It's 1,2,3,4. If we've agreed 1,2,3,4, that's what you b****y do, you don't p**s about and change it around, you don't forget or do it later, once we've agreed, that's it. If you want to change it, you come back.

Culture

Sonia and other participants describe the importance of marketers understanding, conforming, and working within their organisation's culture. Dave describes how a previous marketing manager, while a talented and respected marketer, did not understand the company culture and was unable to develop buy-in for her ideas in the organisation. If a marketer is not going to conform to the organisation's culture, their position may become untenable.

Dave - So you sort of see, you know when you meet someone, and you talk to them for a while, that person's the right fit. And they may not have all the technical skills you want, but you know they'll fit the culture and they'll fit the, you know, the way we work.

Sonia - You can get people who are delivering on their results and everybody thinks s**t I'd love to have that person on my team, because I think the way they're doing things is the right way... Can you deliver on your results? How are you gonna behave when you're delivering those results, and are you a team fit?

Dave - (She was a) very smart woman apparently, um... very good understanding, pick up stuff very well, quite technical, technically marketing very good. Just tried to push, you know, "We need to spend all this money in marketing, we need to do this and do that in each market and five people here..." and it didn't fit this company culture.

So she had technical skills, but she couldn't build the... Because the culture of the company, which is an important thing, the culture of the company was a manufacturing company, a lot of NZ companies are like this, they're not a marketing... and we're still not there yet. We're still... product focused.

Barry - Well, to get things to happen, on time, under budget and exceeding expectations, takes good culture. And if people aren't going to work in that culture, that timeframe, be abrasive, be argumentative, be non-conciliatory... they're not in the team... I think (the marketing manager's) got to lead the team to do that, and we've got to monitor how they interact. So there's rules on both sides. We have a saying around here "Good, hard, honest debate mixed with respect". We don't mind a good stoush, but there's nothing personal about it. You get it out on the table, you don't play politics, you don't p**s around, you deal with it now. And if you don't like the answer, bad luck! Move on! And you just get it done. That's what families do around the kitchen table. That's what we do as a company. We're a family company. Corporates tend to send emails and p**s around, and politic, and try and get people fired and blamed.

Barry describes the importance of the team environment and the conflict resolution aspect of their company's culture and how it differs from the culture of other organisations. He believes his marketing manager is responsible to lead his marketing team into conforming into the culture of their organisation. The culture of an organisation is described as "The way we do things around here" (Martin, 2006, n.p.). Culture is also described as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 2004, p.17)

These definitions of organisational culture agree with how senior managers see marketers fitting into their organisation. Webster (2005) states, "organizational culture is a system of values and beliefs that guide the actions of an organization's members" (p. 5). However, this influence is the hardest to observe and measure (Webster, 2005). Taking responsibility for the organisation's culture, with regard to satisfying customer's needs, is supposed to be one of marketing's core dimensions (Webster, 2005).

Conduct

While senior managers may look for particular personality types or evidence of behavioural tendencies during job interviews, they also look for marketers

who act appropriately in a given situation. The examples given below demonstrate how a senior manager appreciates how their marketer is calm when dealing with others while another senior manager appreciates the aggression of his marketing manager (at times), as each demanded these appropriate responses.

Barry - When I'm looking to employ someone, I'm looking for an understanding of... how do they interact with clients? 'Cause our clients are our franchisees, but unlike most people, my clients are signed up for 10 years at a time. So they can't go anywhere, so we've got to have a very symbiotic relationship, very early on... So, part of having a relationship (with franchisees and salespeople), (the marketers) here, although they are under pressure, don't bark or growl, or fold into, you know, because sales people are hard to work with. Very demanding. Their world is the only world that exists... We've got a girl here that worked for me 4 years ago... I know she can deal with grumpy male salesperson, or a really tricky Asian salesperson. She's got a good personality. She's calm.

James - (Our marketing manager) as a personality is highly directive and can be aggressive, so she's learnt over time to mitigate that. Manage that effectively so that um... it's delegation with coaching rather than delegation with a big stick. So, she's become an effective delegator and coach, but still has distinct ability to foul up and get grumpy as appropriate to make sure things get done.

Appropriate responses, behaviour, or conduct, is essential if the marketer is going to perform their role effectively and build credibility. Projects may place huge amounts of pressure on people at times and inappropriate conduct by marketers may scuttle a project. However, if marketers have good manners and are able to handle the inappropriate conduct of others in a professional manner, there is an improved probability that marketing projects may succeed. Sonia describes how inappropriate conduct or behaviour is lethal to a marketer's credibility, even if they are reaching corporate objectives:

Sonia - We're very much a "greater good" company rather than an aggressive um individual... some industries attract much more aggressive behaviour, (Our company) isn't like that at all. So if you have somebody achieving the results, exhibiting those behaviours, they won't be credible, in the broader marketplace.

Implementer

A marketer is required to have a high level of relational and logistic skills to ensure a project's successful implementation due to the disruptive nature projects may have in an organisation. A marketer needs to be organised and empathetic as they have to integrate the marketing initiative in a coordinated way throughout the organisation if it is to be successful. They need to understand how the changes a project brings might impact on the current organisational paradigm and what implications it might impose on affected departments or people, and how to mitigate unnecessary disruptions. A project inevitably brings changes on aspects of the organisation; therefore marketers need to understand how to mitigate disruption.

The marketer is required to articulate the project brief in a way that whoever they are dealing with understands what he or she is trying to achieve. The implementer should engage key people and develop buy-in for the project before implementation to have the best chance of launching a marketing project successfully.

Table 17 The professional conduct sub-theme – Implementer

Credibility	
Performance in delivering commercial outcomes	
Sub-theme	Professional Conduct
Description of theme	The marketer's manner when managing tasks and other people
Secondary sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborator (Connecting, consulting, culture, conduct)• Implementer (Engagement, buy-in)

Engagement

Engagement is a step after consultation, in that the marketer has feedback from relevant people on the way forward and is now in the process of implementing the marketing project. What is crucial is that marketers at this stage have engaged with those involved to describe what the project requires and how the project will deliver commercial outcomes. The purpose of engagement is to persuade others in the organisation to involve themselves and their teams to support and help implement the marketing project. James

describes how his marketing manager engages with others who are needed to implement the project.

James - I mean for us it's all about how more money will we make. So, and that's what, in this organisation, any marketing manager has to communicate, "This is what we're gonna do, this is how we're gonna go about it, this is how much more money we're gonna make." If it is like I said before, "We're going to lift brand awareness by 10%," then that won't go well... if the service operations manager isn't on board, if the national sales manager is not on board, then your s*****d. So it's not going to work. Um... so it's making sure those individuals have the opportunity to contribute to the plan. Understand what their role in the plan is, so that they are prepared to lead their people to support the initiative... It's that sort of engagement that's relevant. That everybody's on the same page in terms of what the outcome is, that they believe the outcome, that it's a commercial outcome, and that they therefore support it, and they understand what it means for them, and they understand that the marketing function is actually thinking about them.

Marketers, when engaging others to support projects, need to present it to relevant staff in such a way that those who are affected by the project understand the purpose, the timing and the changes the project might bring. Part of their professional conduct at this stage is empathising with those whose routine may change and help them to see it should be for the better, in terms of achieving commercial outcomes as other departments often do not appreciate a marketer steamrolling in with a marketing project. A marketer should know they have been successful in the engagement stage if they receive buy-in.

Buy-in

When marketers have the allegiance and backing of others in implementing and executing a project, it is said that the marketer has achieved buy-in. As described above, the marketing manager who did not understand and conform to the organisation's culture, did not get project buy-in from her workmates. Steve believes, "She didn't realise that she had to build internal buy-in." In contrast, another senior manager reported that, due to their marketing manager and marketing assistant visiting every branch to discuss an upcoming project, project buy-in was "huge" and the project was a success.

Steve - The most successful campaign was straight after our biggest c**k-up we've ever had, because the (marketing manager) and the marketing assistant went around every branch... (to) talk to them about the campaign. What they were going to do, why they were going to do it, what they would suggest as good ideas, have a bit of a chit-chat with each person. And that campaign just went off. Branches redecorated their entire branches, they got right behind it. It was just a real winner.

However, Steve stated that it took two weeks of travel to visit every branch, making that particular implementation process unsustainable. The principle remains; marketers should engage and collaborate with their stakeholders in a professional manner, with the purpose of developing marketing projects that will achieve buy-in.

Professional conduct is an essential skill for a marketer's successful performance, particularly when engaging others with the intent of achieving buy-in for marketing projects. Whether it is conforming to organisational culture, connecting with others within or outside the organisation, or any other aspect of professional conduct the participants described, senior managers assert that it is vital to a marketer's performance and credibility. Walker et al., (2009) argues that while employers regard generic communications skills as important, communication skills specific to the marketing role are also essential. These communication skills include communications to customers and presentations of marketing projects to achieve buy-in from people in the organisation (Walker et al., 2009).

A credible marketer exhibits both aspects of performance

The research demonstrates that for a marketer to be considered credible, from a senior manager's perspective, it is necessary that they exhibit both the work and social aspect in their performance. As Barry argues, "To get things to happen, on time, under budget and exceeding expectations, takes good culture." Culture, in this context, may relate to the marketer performing in both their work and social performance. As demonstrated in previous examples, "to get things to happen" i.e. projects, requires among other things communication and collaboration with others (social aspects), as well as a good marketing plan and execution (work aspects) if they are to succeed.

The following three examples illustrate times when senior managers see an imbalance with regard to the work aspect and the social aspect of performance, and how detrimental this imbalance is to the marketer's credibility.

1. Sonia - I mean you can be... you can have people being successful and delivering, and very poorly thought of in the organisation. Because of the way they approach their job. It could be they are only out for themselves and they seem to be exhibiting certain undesirable behaviours.
2. Barry - I could have the smartest creative person in here that's an a****e, they're out! ... To get things to happen, on time, under budget and exceeding expectations, takes good culture. And if people aren't going to work in that culture, that timeframe, be abrasive, be argumentative, be non-conciliatory, because their idea isn't there, they're not in the team.
3. Steve - He's the most enthusiastic, positive guy, and really wanted to please. If you could use an analogy of a puppy dog, you got a nice little puppy dog, whose eager to please and loves you very much and wants to do everything, but he keeps on weeing on the b****y floor. So attitude – wonderful, execution – variable.

The first two quotes illustrate a marketer who demonstrates expertise in the work aspect of their performance “being successful and delivering; the most creative person here”, but lacks qualities in their social performance “only out for themselves; not working in the culture, abrasive, non-conciliatory”. The third quote illustrates a marketer who demonstrates enthusiasm (a social aspect of performance), but lacks consistency in executing projects (a work aspect of performance). While a marketer may demonstrate exemplary skills or behaviours on one side of the performance ledger, senior managers argue that marketers need to demonstrate both the work aspect and the social aspect of performance if they are to be perceived as credible (or indeed, remain employed).

Comparison of these findings with past credibility literature

Although credibility literature constructs credibility from expertise and trustworthiness, the senior managers constructed the credibility of marketers based on their performance in delivering commercial outcomes. This is perhaps because senior managers are hired to develop and increase the performance of their organisations (Bertrand et al., 2003; Sawhney

2009). However, this does not negate that marketers require expertise and trustworthiness.

While the participants rarely used the term “expert”, Steve asserts, “You (the marketer) live and die by people’s belief in your competence and ability.” Competence and ability may refer to expertise as competence has been used to describe expertise in past credibility literature (Eisend, 2006). Experts are described as “specialists having specialised knowledge” (Mieg, 2001, p. 4), the “person who is responsible for the development, implementation, or control of solutions / strategies / policies” as well as the “person who has privileged access to information about groups of persons or decision processes” (Meuser & Nagel, 2002, cited in Audenhove, 2007, p. 6). The senior managers expressed a desire for their marketers to have expertise as a resource their organisations can draw from; as experts have a greater ability to determine what information is relevant for a given situation (Garrett, Caldwell, Harris, & Gonzalez, 2009).

With regard to trustworthiness, Sonia describes their employees’ behavioural traits in terms of being ethical, having integrity and conforming to certain values.

Sonia - (Each of our employees have a) very, very strong ethical values set, and will not tolerate anybody not fitting within that aspect of the corporate values. So ethical leadership is absolutely crucial to us globally... It’s business conduct, and personal integrity.

Sonia argues that while a marketer may have exemplary marketing ability and skills, if they do not conform to the ethos and behavioural standards of the organisation they will not be tolerated. Barry describes trust within his organisation as “when you got very, very little friction and a common goal.” He goes on to provide this illustration.

If Richie McCaw and Dan Carter know each other well, and it’s 5 minutes before the end of the World Cup, and he says “Mate I think we should kick it down the blind side.” Dan’s not going “Oh you’re a new captain, and don’t play that well, and I think you’re a bit s***t, and I’m not going to do that because I’ll lose my job.” He say’s “I trust you, let’s go for it” ... that’s about the culture of trust.

Barry argues that a "culture of trust" is an essential ingredient to the marketer's performance, as co-workers rely on each other so that things can get done. Trust has been described as the "confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct" (Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006, p. 1002). Schöbel (2009) asserts trustworthiness improves the effectiveness of an organisation in cooperation and communication, network relations, the exchange of resources between units, and by attracting promotion and empowerment from management.

Expertise and trustworthiness have been regarded as "mainstay" dimensions of credibility (Malshe, 2010). This study however, finds a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective, is determined by their performance in the delivery of commercial outcomes. This suggests that while a marketer may be considered both expert and trustworthy, that they may not be considered credible by a senior manager if they are not delivering real outcomes and real results, particularly in the form of revenue growth. An example comes from Sonia; her recently employed mid-level marketer was promoted before other more qualified and experienced marketers. He was promoted primarily because of his performance in achieving commercial outcomes, not his expertise or trustworthiness. Therefore, while senior managers may acknowledge the importance of expertise and trustworthiness in marketers, they do not assume their appearance will generate a performance that delivers commercial outcomes.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to understand the construction of a marketer's credibility, from a senior manager's perspective, using a general inductive approach. The participants described a marketer's credibility as being grounded in their performance in delivering commercial outcomes. This perspective is likely because senior managers are hired to maximise revenue growth for their organisation. The findings suggest that the marketer's performance in delivering commercial outcomes has two aspects: a work aspect and a social aspect, and that both aspects are required if a marketer is to be considered credible by a senior manager.

The work aspect of performance consists of a marketer's Pedigree, Projects, and Pervasive Influence. The Pedigree of a marketer is made up of their qualifications, skills and background. The minimum qualification required from senior managers is usually a degree, particularly for the more senior marketing roles. Skills that marketers are expected to have included leadership, management, sales and intuition. Most senior managers asserted that the marketer's background does not necessarily have to be in the same industry, unless the marketer cannot function in that industry without an extensive knowledge of its workings. However, based on the argument senior managers make that marketing skills are generally transferable, the marketer needs to demonstrate they have delivered commercial outcomes in previous employment, in whatever industry, to be considered credible.

The Projects sub-theme describes marketers designing and implementing cogent marketing plans based on good research, working effectively without supervision, and achieving commercial outcomes in a clever or creative way, on time, under budget, and above expectations. Marketers must also provide evidence that their projects are contributing to commercial outcomes. If the project has not delivered commercial outcomes, the marketer should be able to explain why, without being "fluffy," and how they intend to use their experience to improve their performance in the future. The Pervasive Influence sub-theme describes how marketers influence others in the organisation toward customer-centricity. Marketers demonstrate Pervasive

Influence when they share their opinion regarding how a department's policies might affect customers. Pervasive Influence is also demonstrated when the marketer contributes to the organisation's operations manual, intending to diffuse policies that contribute to customer satisfaction. The participants asserted that marketers can lose credibility in the work aspect of performance when they have no structured purpose to their marketing research, are unable to execute marketing plans or are unable to quantify the commercial outcomes of a marketing project.

The social aspect of a marketer's performance is made up of Personal Integrity and Professional Conduct. Personal Integrity describes marketers who are respected, take pride in their work, strive to improve themselves and are not precious. As one senior manager puts it, his marketers' reputations are riding on their performance, so they are passionate! Professional Conduct describes a marketer who relates and collaborates competently and professionally with others, and is a team fit. Marketers lose credibility in the social aspect of their performance when they are precious, flighty, argumentative, and only out for themselves.

This research contributes to the literature by providing a framework; see Figure 3, which describes the construction of a marketer's credibility from a senior manager's perspective. In doing so, it introduces a different perspective of credibility, one that is grounded in the marketer's performance in delivering commercial outcomes. This finding is distinct from the literature's past conceptualisation of credibility, which is based on expertise and trustworthiness. While the marketing literature constructs credibility from two "mainstay" dimensions, expertise and trustworthiness (Malshe, 2010, p. 14), the findings of this research argue that while a marketer may be considered an expert and trustworthy, if they are not delivering positive results to the revenue growth of the organisation, they will not be considered credible, from a senior manager's perspective.

Limitations and further study

This research has several limitations that must be addressed. First, the research was carried out in only one country; as marketers are found all over

the world, this calls for a large-scale study that includes several countries. Second, the sample was not representative of all types of organisations; a larger sample size may have uncovered further nuances of a marketer's performance. While participants were chosen from a variety of industries in New Zealand, each industry had its own differences and challenges in which marketers have to build credibility. For example, the senior manager from a manufacturing company commented that marketing plays second fiddle to the product development department in many regards. This scenario, he believes, is common in the manufacturing industry and presents an environment with a unique set of challenges in which marketers have to build credibility. Another organisation, whose business model is franchising, also presents the marketer a unique and challenging environment to build credibility. Further research on the credibility of marketers in specific industries (manufacturing or retail for example), or within specific business models (franchises or direct sales for example), would shed more light on the specific performance aspects of marketers in these situations.

Third, the data related to a variety of marketing roles, describing entry-level marketing roles through to marketing manager roles, and included some of the marketing roles the senior manager took on from time to time. Further study into a particular marketing role; i.e. marketing manager or marketing graduate, may yield results relating specifically to each role.

Last, the construction of a marketer's credibility appears to vary based on the perspective of the participant. Malshe (2010) describes how sales colleagues construct a marketer's credibility and his findings differ from this research. Other literature identifies tensions between the finance and marketing departments as well as anecdotal evidence of how marketers could improve their credibility with CFOs and others in the organisation (Davidson, 2009; Deloitte et al., 2008; Sawney, 2009; The Fournaise Marketing Group, 2011). Therefore, to provide a more holistic perspective of a marketer's credibility, further study regarding how people in other departments of an organisation such as HR, Finance, or perhaps board members, construct the credibility of marketers may be warranted.

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Chapter 7: Appendices

Appendix I

Participant information sheet

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Research Topic: The role and value of marketers in your organisation

Marketing is a functional department in many organisations and we need to understand more about the role and value marketing plays in organisations today. There is a wide range of tasks that are commonly associated with being a marketer. I want to investigate the role marketers play and their value in an organisation such as yours. This study is my thesis (MKTG 593-11) and is part of the Masters of Management Studies at Waikato University.

The interview should take approximately one hour and conducted in your organisation. The interviews will be digitally recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password-protected computer. Only my supervisors, and the external examiner will see the transcripts.

Your interview responses will be synthesised with other managers' answers to understand the current role and value of marketers in NZ organisations. The transcripts, thesis, presentations, and publications will not include information or names that would identify you or your organisation. They will provide only a general description of your organisation's industry along with your age, gender, position and years of experience as a manager. Upon completion of the research all transcripts and recordings will be destroyed.

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study by August 12, 2011; and
- Ask further questions about the study throughout the research.

Upon completion of the thesis, I will provide you with a summary of the research.

If you have any questions about this research please email me at leejohnharrison@gmail.com. Alternatively, phone 022 055 1969.

Please contact my supervisors Associate Professor Lorraine Friend (07 838-4466 ext 8982) and or Janet Davey, (07 838-4466 ext. 7909) for other comments you wish to discuss regarding this research.

Thank you for considering participating in this research.

Regards

Lee Harrison BMS(Hons)

Appendix II

Interview guide

Interview title – The role of marketers in your organisation

Intro

1. Introduce myself and the project
2. Ethics approval: participation information sheet
 - a. Get verbal consent
3. General background information of manager
 - a. How long have you been in management?
 - b. Tell me briefly about how you came to be manager
 - c. Describe your role as manager

Topic 1: Hiring a marketer

1. Can you tell me the sort of qualities you look for when hiring a marketer?
 - a. What qualifications?
 - b. What experience?
 - c. What skills?
 - i. Communication skills?
 - ii. Media or software skills?
 - iii. Analysing data?
 - iv. Creative or innovative?
 - v. Advertising?
 - vi. People or selling skills?
 - d. If skills, qualifications and experience of job applicants were ok, what other characteristics of the applicant would you be looking for?
 - e. Who would you expect your shortlist to consist of?

Topic 2: The role of marketing in your organisation

1. Lead me through the steps of what a marketer would do in your organisation
 - a. Tasks, functions, and responsibilities?
 - b. What kind of non-marketing tasks or functions might marketers do in your organisation? (explain)
 - c. What kind of information are marketers required to provide for the organisation (examples)
2. Could you give me an example(s) of a recent or current project where marketers played a crucial role?
 - a. How did the marketers relate to the other departments? (examples)
 - i. Can you tell me how are marketers held accountable in your organisation?
 - ii. Describe how is their progress followed?

- b. What function/tasks did the marketer play compare to other departments?

Topic 3: The marketer's value in the organisation

1. What capacity do marketers have in making decisions for the organisation?
 - a. Give me some examples of how marketers help make decisions
2. Tell me what sort of influence do marketers have
 - a. How many people do they control?
 - b. Who do they report to?
 - c. Who reports to them?
 - d. What do they do that adds value to your organisation
 - e. Have marketers' influence grown or receded in recent years
3. When would you disestablish a marketer's position from your organisation? (examples)
4. When would you add a marketer's position?

Topic 4: Marketers credibility in your company

1. What do you think helps a marketer be more credible in your company?
 - a. Examples
2. What makes marketers credible in today's world (in general)?
3. Tell me what you believe undermines a marketer's credibility
 - a. Examples

Topic 5: Summing up

1. Is there anything you would like to tell me about marketers, your beliefs or opinions about marketers that we have not talked about?
2. Thank you for your time