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The organizational roles of marketing and marketing managers

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Organizational
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marketing

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to design a comprehensive responsibilities inventory for today's marketing managers, from which it develops factual inferences for the role of marketing in corporations.

Design/methodology/approach – A content analysis on online job announcements is used to define the role inventory of the marketing manager.

Findings – The findings reveal that marketing managers are responsible for six role dimensions in the organization. The marketing manager's assigned roles are for the management of promotion-related activities of the company, rather than for managing other marketing mix elements. Communicational and relational (internal and external) role clusters are the most frequently addressed of marketing managers' responsibilities. Knowledge development and injection of market and marketing knowledge into the company's value network is another of the major role dimensions. Increasing financial pressures on companies mean that the outcomes of marketing actions must be measurable, so developing and reporting performance analysis and financial metrics for marketing activities has become an important part of the manager's agenda.

Originality/value – The paper is the first attempt to develop a role inventory for the marketing manager that embraces proofs, signals, and insights from the practice.

Keywords Marketing, Marketing management

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Marketing management has undergone significant changes over the past three decades (Webster, 2005). Accelerating changes in external environments and internal developments in organizations raise many important questions related to the survival and the future forms of the marketing organization and to the implementation of the marketing process (Thomas and Gupta, 2005; Piercy and Cravens, 1995). Many well-understood forces, such as globalization, technology, fierce competition, and increasing complexity in customer demand, have led to changes in marketing concepts and their related activities in practice. Marketing activities have become more diverse and are often carried out by several companies and/or in several functional areas, all of which use information as a key raw material of marketing (Wyner, 2008).

Over the past two decades, marketing scholars' and practitioners' discussions, conceptual arguments and intellectual inferences on the role of marketing and marketing managers have suggested several emergent roles (Achrol and Kotler, 1999; Webster, 1992; Morgan, 1996; Day and Montgomery, 1999; Doyle, 1995). The conceptual debate on issues in marketing, where marketing activities were organized



as part of the marketing department has been well established in the literature, but more studies are required embracing proofs, signals, and insights from the practice (Piercy, 1986; Tull *et al.*, 1991; Moorman and Rust, 1999; Harris and Ogbonna, 2003). Such research has the potential to provide a significant framework in terms of which marketing tasks are assigned to the marketing function and which are not. The outcomes may serve as a base for discussions on the eroding status and efficiency of the function in organizations and may influence the way of thinking in marketing theory, practice, and education.

The objective of this research is twofold: to design a comprehensive role inventory for today's marketing manager and clarify marketing roles in a coherent and methodological way, and to make inferences about the role of the marketing function in corporations. The study may lead to better understanding of the changing roles of marketing managers and marketing in organizations and reveal whether there has been a significant change in the responsibilities pool of the marketing function, considering the emerging new approaches and methods in the domains of, for example, relationship marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), customer value, knowledge management, social responsibility, and accountability.

The relevant literature is reviewed for discussions of the role of marketing and marketing managers in corporations, and online job announcements are examined through the content analysis method in order to design a role inventory for the marketing manager. The list of responsibilities found is an indicator of the role and status of the function, which findings allow the study to arrive at valuable evaluations of the role of marketing in corporations.

2. The role of marketing in corporations

The past two decades have given rise to an intellectual debate on the marketing discipline, primarily based on conceptual inferences. Authors have discussed the shrinking of the function (Greyser, 1997), outsourcing of marketing activities (McGovern and Quelch, 2005; Ueltschy *et al.*, 2006) and dispersion of marketing roles throughout the organization (Webster *et al.*, 2005; Krohmer *et al.*, 2002; Harris and Ogbonna, 2003). Some authors have furthered the discussion by addressing topics such as marketing's "midlife crisis" (Brady and Davis, 1993; Brown, 1995; Brownlie, 2007), representation crisis of the concept (Brown, 2003), and even the death of the function (Holbrook and Hulbert, 2002; Layton, 1998; Smithee, 1997). The key rationale for raising such serious discussions on the *raison d'être* of marketing is the lack of clear proof about the role of marketing in corporations and its contribution to business performance (Moorman and Rust, 1999; Srivastava *et al.*, 1999). From a macro point of view, marketing is struggling to respond to criticisms raised about its contribution to society as a whole. Critical marketing and social marketing domains have generated knowledge on marketing-society interactions and have provided solutions to conflicts of interest between business and the public (Hastings and Saren, 2003; Domegan, 2008).

The classic management myth of recent history is that marketing involves nothing more than advertising (Morgan, 1996), communication (Grönroos, 2006), and selling (Woodall, 2007). Even Webster (2002) suggested that "the relationship between marketing and selling has never been resolved," implying that marketers themselves may be historically hard-wired to the hard sell and that only an expedient interpretation of the marketing concept can apply (Woodall, 2007). Only limited formal

research has been done on marketing's role in the organization, and many of the empirical conclusions in this area have been contingent in nature and limited to specific industries or organizational circumstances (Morgan, 1996). Piercy (1986), determined which marketing functions were organized as part of the marketing department and examined the responsibility of the chief marketing executive in terms of 21 activities. He found that marketing has the greatest responsibility for marketing research and advertising and, not surprisingly, the least responsibility for warehousing and transport (Workman *et al.*, 1998). A study published in 1996 concluded that the only decision areas still dominated by the marketing department were advertising messages and marketing research (Webster *et al.*, 2005). Wilkie and Moore (1999) defined 75 marketing-related activities, of which they found that marketing managers control only about 30, or less than half.

Looking broadly at the marketing literature and practice, it appears that, particularly since the 1990s, marketing has been thought of less as a function and more as a set of values and processes that all functions participate in implementing (Moorman and Rust, 1999; Balmer and Greyser, 2006; Grönroos, 2004). In line with the ascent of service marketing studies (Gummesson, 1979; Berry, 1983; Bitner, 1995; Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2006), the relational approach to marketing (Christopher *et al.*, 1991; Grönroos, 1996; Gummesson, 2002) and the network approach to business relationships (Hakansson, 1982; Hakansson and Snehota, 1995, 2006), the process view of marketing has become common. Modern marketing practice and theory both view marketing as a guiding philosophy for the entire organization and all its employees (Hooley *et al.*, 1990; Hunt, 2007; Grönroos, 1995, 2004; Srivastava *et al.*, 1999; Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Gummesson, 1991). Involvement of diverse organizational functions in marketing activities and integration of other functions with marketing is increasingly perceived as essential for producing better marketing outcomes (Shipley, 1994; Krohmer *et al.*, 2002; Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

The process approach to marketing activities reflects some major changes in the marketing function itself. Some scholars have suggested that many firms have reduced the size, resources, influence and even relevance associated with formal marketing functions (Webster *et al.*, 2005; Day and Montgomery, 1999; Moorman and Rust, 1999; Workman *et al.*, 1998). A major question for the discipline in the twenty-first century is whether marketing will cease to be an identifiable functional area and disappear into general management (Achrol and Kotler, 1999). Haeckel (1997) summarized the situation as "Marketing's future is not a function of business, but is the function of business" (as cited in Moorman and Rust, 1999).

3. Roles and responsibilities of marketing managers

Marketing managers have long been assigned to manage decisions related to the marketing mix and development of target marketing strategies and business strategies linked with marketing (Kotler, 1972) by being a strong advocate for customers (Urban, 2005) and the marketing concept (Anderson, 1982; Srivastava *et al.*, 1999) and a liaison between the customer and the product (Moorman and Rust, 1999). At the operating level, key traditional marketing tasks include identifying and categorizing customer segments; determining a customer's current and potential needs; developing and executing the individual components of sales, advertising, promotion, and service programs; and determining customers' responses to rivals' current and potential

offerings (Srivastava *et al.*, 1999). Marketing managers have been exhorted to “stay close” to the customer, to put the customer at the top of the organizational chart and to define the purpose of the business as the creation and retention of satisfied customers (Day, 1994).

Still, while the central role of marketing in achieving competitiveness and creating shareholder value is undisputed, the role of marketing professionals is increasingly questioned (Doyle, 2000). Leaders in marketing thought have proposed that many traditional decisions related to marketing mix, including day-to-day brand management, key account management, product development, and pricing and distribution, are no longer the primary domain of the marketing department but have been reassigned to strategic business units (Webster *et al.*, 2005; Srivastava *et al.*, 1999). On the other hand, while some historic roles of the department have been transferred to other functions, other responsibilities have been added to the roles inventory for the department. Achrol and Kotler (1999) offered six groups of emerging responsibilities: real-time marketing, marketing as “internal infomediary,” marketing as a creator of marketing knowledge, marketing as an organizational educator, marketing as an integrator, and marketing as coordinator and conflict manager. Brookes *et al.* (2004) suggested that there had been five major changes in marketing practices: emphasis on the service aspects of product delivery, financial accountability, transformation of organizational structures, shifts in power and control within industry marketing systems, and information technology (IT)-based interactivity. Therefore, the concepts of knowledge, relationships, interactivity, accountability, and value will be the most salient notions for today’s marketers. In this context, the most prominent emerging roles assigned to marketers in recent marketing literature can be summarized as:

- internal/external network management;
- knowledge generation and management;
- CRM; and
- marketing productivity and performance management.

3.1 Internal/external network management

Recently, managing internal and external relationships network which comprises many new actors has been increasingly becoming a key role for marketing managers. Marketing managers are involved in a significant interaction with this relationships’ ecosystem including internal players, e.g. sales force, engineering teams, customer services, and external actors, e.g. customers, suppliers, channel members, agencies, key industry players, government, and even competitors (Piercy and Cravens, 1995; Achrol and Kotler, 1999; Workman *et al.*, 1998; Nix *et al.*, 2008).

In this expanding network system, the task is much more involved than managing suppliers (Wyner, 2008); today’s companies work closely with dedicated partners on the supply and distributor sides of their businesses, expecting them to play proactive roles in designing winning technologies, services, and marketing strategies. Marketing outcomes are increasingly decided by competition between firms’ networks, rather than direct competition among firms (Achrol and Kotler, 1999). Although several marketing activities are transferred nowadays to the highly specialized external players, e.g. call centers, branding, merchandising, innovation, web-based marketing activities, and market research (Ueltschy *et al.*, 2006; Nix *et al.*, 2008), this does not

mean that marketing management can ignore its responsibilities (Srivastava *et al.*, 1999). Hence, marketing's new roles are primarily composed of managing the interaction and relationship environment among all parties, rather than hands-on execution of these tasks.

Organizations deploy resources, physical and human, beyond the marketing department since creating value for buyers is much more than a marketing function; rather, a seller's creation of value for buyers is analogous to a symphony orchestra, in which the contribution of each subgroup is tailored and integrated by a conductor, with a synergistic effect (Narver and Slater, 1990). This perspective places particular emphasis on the need for internal coordination to ensure effective marketing action and considers the marketing manager, through the marketing mix, as the arbiter of marketing action (McLoughlin and Horan, 2002). Hence, the past two decades have seen a growing interest in marketing's cross-functional relationships with other departments, as well as in issues related to how to reengineer organizations around key business processes to deliver better products and services to customers (Shipley, 1994; Workman *et al.*, 1998). With increasing frequency, projects are managed across functional departments and across organizations in a collaborative manner on behalf of the customer (Nix *et al.*, 2008), and traditional functional boundaries disappear entirely in the most effective organizations (Workman *et al.*, 1998; Webster, 1994). Wilkie (2005) pointed out that marketers influence many activities that are not typically considered "marketing," but they are not in control of them. Growing awareness of the importance of internal and external relationships and activities throughout the value chain (Day, 1994) has increased the importance of considering marketing's role in a broader atmosphere.

3.2 Knowledge generation and management

Under the new marketing concept, the job of marketing is to provide information to decision makers throughout the organization and to develop total marketing programs that deliver superior value to customers (Webster, 1994). Marketing provides information related to customers, competitors, and other market variables in order to facilitate market-driven learning (Harker, 1998; Slater and Narver, 1995) and plays an important informational role in managing costs (Srivastava *et al.*, 1999). Webster (2005) suggested that the marketing function should be responsible for developing and disseminating knowledge, rather than for developing and implementing marketing strategies. Customer information in particular is substantially broader than was once thought possible, and the number of options for generating information is much greater than it was just a decade ago. Every encounter between marketer and consumer (as well as a growing number of interactions among consumers) has the potential to be relevant to marketing (Wyner, 2008). The information-generation and knowledge-supplier role is expected to be a vital responsibility for the marketing manager since the major competitive ingredient for businesses in the future is information, be it social, economic, or technical.

3.3 Customer relationships management

For the last 50 years, marketing scholars and practitioners have generally agreed that marketing represents the customer focus of an organization (Grönroos, 2006), and an understanding of how to manage customer relationships effectively has become an important topic for both academics and practitioners (Reinartz *et al.*, 2004).

Marketing increasingly includes working collaboratively through close relationships with customers and partners to co-create solutions to complex problems and/or jointly pursue marketplace opportunities (Nix *et al.*, 2008).

CRM has developed into an area of major significance over the last decade or so (Payne and Frow, 2006). Day (1997) stated that marketing is likely to emerge as a lead function in managing customer relationships and that it plays an important role in the articulation, navigation and orchestration of the CRM process (Srivastava *et al.*, 1999). What sets present-day CRM apart is that organizations now have an increased potential to utilize technology and manage one-to-one relationships with potentially huge numbers of customers in the context of rapid market transformations (Payne and Frow, 2006). CRM has the potential to make the customers actively participate in value-creation processes, as IT creates several opportunities for firms to create a personalized dialogue with customers. However, the management of customer relationships is often incorrectly equated with CRM software (Payne and Frow, 2006; Reinartz *et al.*, 2004) alone, and many IT-enabled CRM activities have turned out to be failures in practice (Zablah *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, CRM is unlikely to succeed unless marketing managers give proper consideration to these issues (Ryals, 2005). When CRM is seen as an active management process, rather than as a software application, the marketing function may be expected to be the leading actor in the process.

3.4 Marketing productivity and performance management

Many authors have discussed measuring marketing productivity and financial accountability in the marketing function (Rust *et al.*, 2004; Sheth and Sisodia, 2002; O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007; Stewart, 2009). Wyner (2008) suggested that not only the traditional marketing metrics of advertising and promotion, but also the marketing activities themselves are central to company financials because of their links to overall business performance. Marketing performance is not a marketing department issue but an issue that cuts across all customer-related parts of the organization (Clark and Clark, 2004).

Discussions about the financial goals of marketing have broadened to include those who invest in, benefit from, and take responsibility for performance. Thus, the challenge of the marketing function is to document how marketing activities can be comprehensively measured in terms of their contributions to the company's financial performance (Sheth and Sisodia, 2002; Rust *et al.*, 2004), while hampered by the inherent complexity of marketing activities and compounded by limited and poor-quality data related to the marketing efforts in company financial statements (Kahn and Myers, 2005). This challenge has resulted in an increased interest by both marketing practitioners and theorists in formal performance evaluations (Clark, 1999; Barwise and Farley, 2004; Bush *et al.*, 2002; Marketing Science Institute, 2008).

In many industries, increasing financial pressures have led to a focus on short-term measures and earnings; this short-term focus has influenced future performance and has forced reductions in marketing expenses. While marketing expenditures are primarily long-term market investments with a financial return, top management has generally seen them as short-term costs with no documentable financial effect (Rust *et al.*, 2004; Grönholdt and Martensen, 2006). Therefore, the marketing function has been of decreasing interest to top management and has received commensurately decreasing budgetary support. However, if the return on a marketing investment could be documented, the role of

marketing throughout the organization would be significantly elevated. Barring such documentation, marketing will continue to be marginalized (Lehmann, 2004; Webster *et al.*, 2005; Baker and Holt, 2004), and marketers will become mere tacticians carrying out specific activities that persons in other fields have planned (Stewart, 2009). In short, marketing scholars and practitioners need to link the productivity and financial accountability of the function more explicitly to business performance.

4. Methodology

For the last two decades or so, scholars have discussed the changing roles of the marketing function and marketing managers and have proposed several emergent roles and tasks for both. The broadening debate has been well documented in the literature, but the challenge lies in finding real evidence, signals, and indicators derived from the practice (McCole, 2004). The current study develops a comprehensive role inventory for today's marketing managers and, in light of this inventory, offers valuable insights into the role of the marketing function in corporations. Since companies frequently utilize career web sites for recruitment purposes (Anderson, 2003; Thompson *et al.*, 2008), and some authors use these web sites for researches covering online job announcements (Aguinis *et al.*, 2005; Backhaus, 2004), we analyzed marketing job announcements that appeared in popular online job announcement web sites, such as www.monster.com, www.hotjobs.yahoo.com, and www.careerbuilder.com.

Content analysis is an observational research method that is used to evaluate systematically the symbolic content of all forms of recorded communications. These communications can be analyzed at many levels (image, word, roles, and so on), thereby creating a realm of research opportunities (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). Content analysis is systematic in the sense that a theoretical, a priori set of categories is constructed, into which communication content is classified. It is objective in the sense that classifications are rule-based, and the reliability of the classifications is tested quantitatively. Its quantitative character is also evident in the process of converting communication content into discrete units and calculating the frequency with which each unit occurs (Rourke and Anderson, 2002). Content analysis enables researchers to probe complex issues and nebulous concepts and facilitates an unobtrusive appraisal of communications; this unobtrusiveness is particularly valuable in situations in which direct methods of inquiry might yield biased responses (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). Thus, content analysis is appropriate for the objectives of this study.

The research began with 1,373 announcements that included the phrase "marketing manager" in the job title and that were advertised on the web sites during the one-week period. Content analysis is a detailed and time-consuming process, and these characteristics placed restrictions on the size of the sample (Harris and Attour, 2003). We needed a sample of manageable size, randomly drawn, from which generalizations are possible. The problem in determining what size sample to use is similar to that of determining sample size in other aspects of consumer research (Kassarjian, 1977). We selected 278 job announcements from the original sample using a systematic random sampling and saved the required roles and responsibilities sections of the selected announcements in a separate document. Every theme in the job announcements that reflected a role or responsibility was used as a unit of analysis (Kassarjian, 1977). Although job announcements do not generally disclose the entire list of the job's duties, they still provide relevant and concrete information for major roles and responsibilities

assigned to a specific job title. Some authors have proposed that concrete and specific recruitment messages signal the recruitment practices of the company and are predictors of applicant attraction (Barber and Roehling, 1993; Roberson *et al.*, 2005; Allen *et al.*, 2007).

The sample is constituted of various industries and 46 diverse job titles, including marketing manager, senior marketing manager, product marketing manager, field marketing manager, business unit marketing manager, and technical marketing manager (Table I). Analyzing the job titles that include the phrase "marketing manager" may provide valuable insights into practitioners' own appraisals and perceptions of the roles assigned to marketing managers, and examination of these titles can provide significant inferences about the status and role of marketing in the organization as well. Although the research methodologies used here were not exactly the same, some prior researchers have referred to the presence and role of the chief marketing officer in the top management team as an indicator of both the corporate status of marketing and corporate adoption of the marketing concept (Piercy, 1986; Webster *et al.*, 2005; Nath and Mahajan, 2008). We did not find any other studies that covered content analysis of marketing job announcements in the literature.

The stages for a content analysis that were proposed by Neuman (2006) and Neuendorf (2002) have been used for the current research. First, after an initial review of all the announcements by two coders, we developed, following an inductive approach, a coding form that included relevant dimensions for the roles and responsibilities of marketing manager. Neuman (2006) suggested that open coding be performed so the researcher locates themes and assigns initial codes in a first attempt to condense the mass of data into categories. Utilization of an open coding procedure resulted in seven main and 37 subcategories. Axial coding, the second stage of coding qualitative data, allows additional codes or new ideas to emerge and, as a result of this second stage of coding, six main categories and 21 subcategories emerged as a final coding framework. Then the whole sample was coded independently by two coders, and the marketing roles were classified for each announcement based on the coding form that was developed in the first two phases of the procedure. Cohen's Kappa for inter-coder reliability was 0.72, which indicates substantial agreement (Landis and Koch, 1977; Neuendorf, 2002). Where there were disagreements, the authors discussed the role category until consensus was reached or, when the discussion failed to yield agreement, the final classification was assigned to the code suggested by the senior author (Williams and Plouffe, 2007). Finally, research findings were tabulated (Table II).

Job title	<i>n</i>	%
Marketing manager	148	53.2
Product marketing manager	59	21.2
Senior marketing manager	10	3.6
Field marketing manager	10	3.6
Direct marketing manager	8	2.9
Online marketing manager	5	1.8
Other	40	13.7
Total	278	100.0

Table I.
Frequency of job titles
included in the sample

			Organizational roles of marketing
Role/responsibility	<i>n</i>	%	
<i>1. Marketing mix management</i>	950	34.8	299
1.1. Managing and executing promotion activities	799	29.3	
1.2. Managing and executing product-related activities	106	3.9	
1.3. Managing and executing prices and pricing activities	35	1.3	
1.4. Managing and executing distribution activities	10	0.4	
<i>2. Management of internal relationship networks (inbound roles)</i>	552	20.2	
2.1. Partnering, coordinating, motivating, training, and managing cross-functional teams	202	7.4	
2.2. Partnering effectively/working closely with other marketing functions	176	6.4	
2.3. Working with, supporting, and training the sales function	106	3.9	
2.4. Recruiting, training, monitoring, and managing marketing staff	43	1.6	
2.5. Partnering effectively and working closely with top management	25	0.9	
<i>3. Strategy development and execution</i>	421	15.4	
3.1. Developing and/or executing marketing strategies/plans/programs	247	9.0	
3.2. Developing and/or executing and participating in corporate-level strategies	114	4.2	
3.3. Developing target marketing strategy	60	2.2	
<i>4. Management of external relationships network (outbound roles)</i>	334	12.2	
4.1. Managing customer relationships	157	5.7	
4.2. Developing, coordinating, managing relationships with key industry organizations/ partners/suppliers/competitors	76	2.8	
4.3. Developing, coordinating, and managing relationships with external agencies (e.g. advertising, PR, and media)	63	2.3	
4.4. Developing, coordinating, and managing relationships with and training channel members	38	1.4	
<i>5. Data and knowledge management</i>	288	10.5	
5.1. Conducting, supervising, and coordinating formal customer/industry/market research	117	4.3	
5.2. Developing, maintaining, analyzing, and evaluating market knowledge	108	4.0	
5.3. Developing, maintaining, monitoring, and reporting customer/production/sales data	63	2.3	
<i>6. Management of marketing productivity and performance</i>	186	6.8	
6.1. Developing and reporting performance analysis and financial metrics for marketing	107	3.9	
6.2. Planning, creating, controlling, and managing marketing resources, funds, and budgets	79	2.9	
Total	2,731	100.0	Table II. Roles and responsibilities inventory for the marketing manager

5. Findings

Research findings reveal that there are six dimensions in the role inventory of the marketing manager:

- (1) marketing mix management;
- (2) managing internal relationships network;
- (3) strategy development and execution;
- (4) managing external relationships network;
- (5) data and knowledge management; and
- (6) managing marketing productivity and performance.

Managing and executing promotion activities is the most frequently mentioned role in the first dimension, as well as the most frequently mentioned role among all the role items. Managing product-related activities is the second most frequently mentioned

responsibility assigned, while managing price and channel-related applications is often not required in the marketing manager role. In the second dimension, managing internal relationship networks, managing, partnering, coordinating, and motivating cross-functional teams is the role addressed most often, while partnering effectively and working closely with top management is the least addressed role in managing internal relationship networks.

The third dimension is roles and responsibilities concerning strategy development and participation. Inherently, the marketing manager is mainly assigned to the development and/or execution of marketing strategies, plans, and programs. Managing external relationship networks is the fourth dimension. Managing customer relationships is the role most often assigned to marketing managers in this group of tasks. Key industry organizations, external agencies and channel members are other outbound constituents for the marketing manager.

Data and knowledge management is the fifth-ranked dimension, where conducting, supervising, and coordinating formal marketing research activities is the task most frequently assigned to a marketing manager in this cluster. Roles related to the dimension of managing marketing productivity and performance appears least often in the job announcements. Developing performance analyses and financial metrics for marketing and planning, and creating and controlling marketing resources are two key responsibilities in this dimension.

6. Conclusion and discussions

This study explores a comprehensive responsibilities inventory for today's marketing managers and arrives at valuable inferences concerning the role and status of the marketing function in organizations. Our findings reveal that today's marketing managers are assigned one or more of six responsibility dimensions in the organization. Promotional and relational (internal and external) role clusters are the most frequent responsibilities for marketing managers, while strategy development, knowledge generation, and performance evaluation of marketing activities are other key roles required from a marketing manager. In brief, today's marketing manager tends to be responsible for communicating about the company's market offerings, managing relationships with various internal and external actors in the value chain, distributing market knowledge throughout the chain, and developing or participating in marketing and business strategies while evaluating the performance of marketing activities. Considering the proposed role inventory, the marketing function is perceived as communication- and relationship-oriented, knowledge-based, and fluid, since it functions beyond set departmental boundaries.

Although management of the marketing mix has been prominent in the set of responsibilities of marketing managers, as they have been discussed in the literature, our findings reveal that marketing managers are heavily assigned to managing promotion elements in the marketing mix, while managing pricing and place elements of the mix appear to be almost completely out of the marketing managers' agendas. Although the recent conceptual discussions in the literature have gently signaled erosion in the mix-management role, our findings indicate a more dramatic dilution of this role. Hence, the traditional mix-management role of marketing managers has shrunk to consist primarily of managing promotion-related elements of the mix. For two decades, scholars have forecasted a shift in the marketing discipline from

a communication to a business discipline but, in practice, the proposed movement seems slower than forecast. Marketing as a concept embraces all four “Ps” in both the literature and commonly used textbooks, but our findings reveal that just one of these Ps is commonly assigned to the manager of the marketing function.

Developing and coordinating “communication,” “advertising,” “promotion” activities, and “marketing campaigns” were all used interchangeably in the advertisements to define the development and execution of the promotion elements of the marketing mix. Our findings indicate that developing, coordinating, and executing promotion activities of the company is the responsibility cluster most frequently assigned to the marketing manager. In this cluster, developing and coordinating visual/textual materials and marketing collateral materials are prominent roles assigned to the marketing manager. Communication roles that have emerged along with new technologies frequently appear in the announcements, mostly as they relate to web-related actions and responsibilities. Organization of trade shows and company meetings, along with participation in these events, is another key role of marketing managers in this cluster.

The results reveal that managing internal relationship networks is the group of roles addressed second most frequently in the announcements for marketing managers. Partnering effectively and working closely with other marketing-related functions is a major inbound responsibility, signaling that marketing activities are organized as sub-divisions or teams, such as creative, customer service, advertising, and research teams. The research results verify the traditional inbound role of the marketing manager as responsible for managing, partnering with, and coordinating cross-functional teams while supporting and training the sales force. The role of acting as a liaison among all departments to ensure consistency in marketing activities is often addressed in the announcements, which may signal that marketing is increasingly perceived as an organization-wide process. This perception may lead to an emerging set of responsibilities for marketing managers as supporters, integrators, and coordinators of all the pieces of marketing dispersed throughout the organization.

Naturally, if the job represents a senior-level title in the organization, a strategy development role becomes more prominent; however, junior-level titles are generally responsible for support and execution of marketing plans and programs. “Participation in the development of overall business strategies linking marketing” is notably addressed in the announcements and this may signal a desired extension of responsibilities embracing “business development” rather than “product development.” Modern marketing managers are increasingly expected to be the part of growth-related plans, like expanding to a new marketing channel, new businesses or innovative selling solutions. Although development of target marketing strategies are one of the major titles and chapters of marketing strategy texts, announcements do not frequently address responsibilities that include target marketing. Development of strategies related to internal marketing, value propositions, customers, customer services, and online marketing are addressed to some extent in the announcements, yet these are not major strategic roles.

In the network of external relationships, managing customer relationships is still the most frequently addressed outbound role for the marketing manager. The roles of handling relationships with current customers and handling those with prospective customers are included almost equally in the announcements. The lead and sales

generation role is still one of the major responsibilities related to customer relationships. Even though some announcements address developing and implementing retention/loyalty programs, the frequency is far less than that indicated in the relationship marketing literature, which puts the customer retention objective at the core of the marketing function.

The announcements we reviewed signal the importance of the development and management of relationships with a broad array of external actors, from vendors to resellers and from competitors to key industry organizations. As regards external networks, marketing managers have traditionally managed relationships with customers and external marketing agencies related to advertising, research, media, or public relations. However, a considerable number of announcements addressed the role of managing “co-marketing,” “joint marketing,” “co-operative marketing,” and “cross channel marketing” activities with the various players in the value chain of the specific industry. For example, a satellite TV services company emphasized “establishing a network of contacts at leading internet companies, including search, commerce, and media sites,” and a medical company delineated a responsibility that involves contact with financing companies in order to recommend and implement financing promotions. Involvement in supply relationships is also noticeable in the announcements: for example, a tour operator company addressed “collaborating with the various supply teams (air, hotel, and car) to optimize the inventory assortment based on demands from customer segments and origination markets.”

Today, the boundaries of outbound roles are defined as extending much further than was once the case, even covering political actors, local government, civic leaders, clubs, professional societies, and social associations in an effort to extend companies’ contacts and collaboration opportunities. For example, the administration of a shopping mall required that the marketing manager “[...] interface with the Mayor and Mayor’s Office, high ranking city officials and Office of Promotion & Tourism and the State Department of Tourism, as well as the Convention & Visitors Bureau, City and Downtown Partnerships, Boards and Alliance Groups and key business and political constituents/entities critical to growing visitor market pre-arrival awareness and post-arrival visits/share of wallet.” Similarly, a construction and engineering services company assigned a role to the marketing manager of “actively participating in professional societies as a committee/board member.”

It seems likely that managing relationships with the actors in widening external networks will be one of the key roles assigned to marketing managers for the foreseeable future. Marketing managers will be responsible for the cultivating the organization’s competence and effectiveness in this network and for engendering new business opportunities for the company. Hence, playing an active and direct role in creating new business opportunities may strengthen marketing’s status in the organization and make more visible its contribution to the success of business. In this sense, more studies are needed on how marketing managers should define this expanding set of relationships and maintain productive relationships with an increasing number of constituents.

The role of knowledge development and distribution, which involves responsibilities related to conducting or supervising formal market research projects, developing, and evaluating market knowledge, and maintaining customer databases, is well acknowledged in the marketing literature and has even been suggested as a primary role for today’s marketing manager. Market knowledge and customer expertise may

provide marketing departments with the courage of conviction they need to promote their bottom-line impact to other parts of the organization. However, while our findings reveal that the knowledge management role is one of the key responsibilities listed for marketing managers, it is still premature to say that this role is among the most important in a typical marketing manager's agenda.

While the measurement of the efficiency and productivity of marketing activities has been discussed in the literature, this requirement has also begun to be addressed in practice, as we found traces of these issues in the roles assigned to marketing managers. Marketers need to create a return on investment culture that embraces every marketing initiative and encourages a shift from opinion-driven decision making to data-driven decision making. Considerable numbers of announcements addressed responsibilities related to the development of performance analysis tools and financial metrics for marketing activities, a significant indicator of the increasing requirement that the marketing function itself be an efficient and productive ingredient for the business – and be able to prove it. In this respect, more research should be conducted on how marketing functions and their managers will define convincing metrics and develop rigorous assessment tools to measure the contribution of marketing to overall business outcomes.

The results of this study may serve as a comprehensive job description for marketing managers and a framework for performance appraisals of managers or departments. Marketing managers may use our results to judge their departments and roles against the “typical” department and may choose to refocus on neglected but essential responsibilities. Although our findings embrace current indications of the roles of the marketing managers and the function of marketing, managers may still in them hints about the future of the marketing function.

The evolving role inventory for the marketing manager, naturally enough, calls for evolving skills. Day (1994) labeled these skills as “market sensing,” the ability to understand customers, and “market relating,” the ability to maintain and enhance customer relationships. Considering the expanding network of relationships at both the inbound and outbound levels, relational roles will have considerable importance in the role inventory of marketing managers. Marketing people are required to develop strong relationship management skills as integrators, organizers, negotiators, and conflict managers. Considering the other role clusters found in the study, the marketing manager is required to have analytical skills, to be able to generate and disseminate knowledge, and to have a holistic vision that captures all the aspects of the business process, rather than simply having a departmental point of view. Similar studies could be conducted to design a comprehensive skills list required from marketing managers in order to determine whether emerging roles mean new skill requirements for marketers.

We might have included job titles other than marketing manager (e.g. field service manager, customer services manager, key account manager, and call center manager), which are directly or indirectly embraced by the marketing department or function, in our research. However, including all marketing-related titles in the research could be problematic in terms of the highly subjective determination of which titles are “related” to marketing. What's more, considering the research objective, examining only those announcements that included the phrase “marketing manager” provides realistic insights into practitioners' own appraisals of the responsibilities of the marketing manager.

However, future research could analyze other functional managers' responsibilities in order to determine whether they include some marketing-related roles. Quantitative field studies may also provide validation for the exploratory findings of the recent study, and longitudinal studies may generate valuable inferences about the major trends and changes in the responsibility inventory considered in this study.

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