Does Marketing have an Image Problem? An Empirical Study in to the opinion of Marketing from the perspective of business and consumers.

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Tony Ferguson
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An Empirical Study into the opinion of Marketing from the perspective of business and consumers.

Tony Ferguson

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the Requirements of the degree of:

Masters in Business Studies

Department of Continuing Education

Cork Institute of Technology

Research Supervisor: Dr Angela Wright

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Abstract

In the 50 year period since the marketing concept was first introduced to business strategy, we have witnessed a shift from the post-World War 2 austerity of supply shortages, to a modern day consumerist society, where maturing markets and an excess supply of goods and services pose serious challenges, in a highly competitive business environment. As competition has intensified, businesses have endeavoured to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Billions of dollars have been invested in research to gain an insight in to what motivates a highly sophisticated and increasingly cynical consumer. These challenges have been exacerbated since 2008, by the worst global recession since the 1920s. Businesses have cut costs to the bone, and it is apparent that in order to survive, a focus on new market opportunities is required. The confluence of these events suggests a marketing-centric business strategy is vital to identify new growth areas.

This study contends that marketing has not benefitted from these economic, cultural and environmental shifts. An examination of existing and empirical mixed method research conducted for this study suggests marketing is suffering from an image problem within the business environment, and from a consumer perspective. Rather than driving business strategy, this research posits that the influence of Marketing within an organisation is limited. From the perspective of senior management, the marketing function is seen to lack accountability. As such, in times of recession, marketing budgets are often cut before the budgets of almost all other departments. From a consumer perspective, it appears from this research that Marketing is often viewed as an intrusive, manipulative medium for unscrupulous businesses, and is to be treated with suspicion.

The findings of this research indicates that Marketing activities should be metrics-based, to overcome the perceived lack of accountability internally. A reassessment of Marketing qualifications and training may be required, to increase the skill set of Marketers. New online marketing tools such as social media are also required to engage in a dialogue with consumers who are genuinely interested in the product or service, rather than the traditional interruptive one-size-fits-all approach. The researcher believes this study offers relevant and useful insights for Marketing practitioners, researchers, and academics as regards the value of Marketing, and how it is currently perceived, from both an organisational and consumer perspective.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Marketing has become synonymous with hype, gimmickry, and the primacy of image over substance; marketers at many companies wittingly or unwittingly end up exploiting their own customers.

(Sheth and Sisodia: 2006:5).

1:0 Introduction

This research study investigates whether a negative image associated with the Marketing function exists, from the perspective of their colleagues within the organisation, and consumers in the external environment. The study examines what the major factors (if any) that contribute to the negative perceptions associated with marketing, from the perspective of these key stakeholders. The researcher will also reveal whether recent changes in the external environment, such as the current worldwide recession, and the proliferation of social media are impacting the marketing in terms of its overall image.

1:1 Background to the Research

The following sections provide a background to the major themes of this research. A brief overview related to the lack of accountability in marketing is discussed. The deficiency of trained marketers in the business and academic world is also examined. An investigation of the unethical practices employed by Marketers is also discussed. A brief synopsis of consumer attitudes toward marketing, in terms of the environment, ethical, and health issues
and the targeting of underage consumers are also addressed. Finally, a background in to how economic challenges are impacting marketing is also discussed.

1:1.1 The Aims and Objectives of this Study

In the completion of this study, the researcher endeavours to address a number of issues related to the perceived image problem in marketing. The aims and objectives can be classified as follows:

- To confirm whether marketing has an image problem from a consumer perspective. Secondary research indicates that consumers are ambivalent at best in their attitudes towards the marketing they encounter in their daily lives. It is the author's intent to confirm whether this exists, through an online consumer survey – the structure of which is outlined below.

- To confirm whether marketers encounter negativity towards their profession within their organisation, by conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews, using both face to face and telephone interview methods, with 11 business and academic leaders. As highlighted in Chapter 2, secondary research indicates that marketing is not held in the same esteem as other departments such as engineering and finance. There appears to be a reluctance to promote marketing managers to executive level positions also. It is the author's objective to confirm this through the semi-structured interviews with the 11 marketing leaders.

- To investigate, through the qualitative face to face and telephone interviews with participants, who are leaders in industry and academia, whether a focus on increasing the standard of marketing qualifications in Ireland will improve the image and performance of marketers vis-a-vis their peers in the workplace, thereby enhancing their opportunities to progress up the management levels in their organisation.

- To analyse whether marketing communications can be improved, from the perspective of consumers, by undertaking quantitative research, through a self-administered online survey.
To examine, by way of qualitative semi-structured interviews, how the recession in Ireland is affecting marketing departments. Secondary research indicates several cases where the marketing department is the first to be cut in times of recession. The author will also confirm whether there is any link between this and the apparent image problems associated with marketing.

1:1.2 Is there a lack of Accountability in Marketing?

Ambler (2003) argues that marketing lacks accountability because its performance is difficult to measure. “Marketers know better than anyone else that marketing performance is hard to measure. However good a job they may be doing, the metrics may not come out right. So long as they can secure decent budgets, why rock the boat? This is short-term thinking. So long as marketing is not accountable, the discipline will not gain the respect of its peers, still less, the CEO”, (2003: 62).

McGovern (2007) posits that “many marketing managers will tell you that marketing performance can’t be measured. It’s not that managers are short on measurement tools, or that marketing metrics lack utility. The problem is that these managers don’t know what metrics to measure or how to interpret the results. They may collect all manner of plausible marketing-performance metrics, from customer satisfaction to retention, but if these can’t be correlated with marketing activities and revenue results, the data aren’t very helpful”, (2007: www.hbr.org).

Dunn and Halsall (2009) contend “the fact remains that the majority of marketers are still struggling to link the cause and effect of marketing spending and quantify its real returns.
Sixty percent of the marketers in our survey said that they lacked the right approaches and analytic tools to drive ROI and accountability”, (2009: 6).

1:1.3 The Deficient Standard of Marketing qualifications and training

Shaw (1998: 7) contends that “unlike their accounting counterparts, marketers never need to learn the basic analytical and numerical skills. The result is that all of marketing’s clever analysis and interpretation work is done by a small cadre of specialists, and many marketing bosses may never have used any of these techniques at any stage in their careers, not even during training. As a result, they are ill-qualified to tell whether this statistician, or that market researcher, is pulling the proverbial wool over their eyes. By contrast, the CFO or Finance Director, has used most of the techniques that his juniors apply on his behalf, and knows what he is dealing with. The ignorance of analytical tools, and even contempt for them, is typified by a marketing vice-president of a major credit card company, who proudly stated in Marketing Business in June 1997: “Ask me to handle more than two statistics and I am about as useful as a chocolate fireguard””, (1998: 7).

Mullin (2001) states “a survey in 2000 found that 250,000 people in London used the word ‘Marketing’ in their job title. Of these, only 4,000 belonged to the Chartered Institute of Marketing in Central London”, (2001: 22).
Vasegar (2011) reveals the importance of work experience to students of Marketing: “A third of graduate vacancies this year will be filled by applicants who have already worked for their new employer as an undergraduate, according to a poll of 100 recruiters which underlines the increasing value of internships. The majority of these employers said it was unlikely that an undergraduate without any work experience would get a job”, (2011: www.guardian.co.uk).

1:1.4 Marketing: The Potential for Unethical Behaviour and Practices

Delener (1995) posits that “marketing, as a business discipline, is particularly vulnerable to criticism of ethical practices. Sub-disciplines of marketing (i.e., advertising, pricing, and marketing research) offer extensive opportunities for unethical behaviour. Generally, commercialism and marketing activities have not fared well, in the view of most ethicists”, (1995: 6).

Sheth and Sisodia (2006) contend that “too many companies try to exploit a customer’s emotions, trust, confusion, lack of organisation, or lack of knowledge. Companies take advantage of vulnerable consumers, such as children, the elderly, or the indigent. They convey a false sense of objectivity in their advertising, engage in opportunistic pricing or price gouging, push harmful or unnecessary products, make it difficult for unhappy customers to leave them, create and exploit customer addictions, pressure customers in to making hasty decisions, or unduly influence trusted advisors (such as pharmacists and doctors) to give customers poor advice. Such hit and run marketing is so widespread that it sometimes appears to be the norm, rather than the exception”, (2006: 6).
Donovan and Henley (2010) state that “marketing as an activity has been accused of being unethical in a number of ways: creating greed and dissatisfaction; misleading because it doesn’t give the full picture of a product; manipulative because it persuades people to buy things they don’t need; and a waste of valuable resources. Other marketers, such as the tobacco companies and alcohol marketers, are accused of targeting vulnerable audiences such as children, teenagers and disadvantaged groups”, (2010: 195).

1:1.5 Marketing and the Consumer: An ethical, environmental and health perspective

As discussed by Star (1991), in Dolan (1991), an inequity exists in the relationship between the marketer and the consumer. “Individuals often don’t perceive a need for particular products until they have been persuasively exposed to the possibility of having them – and it is marketing experts who expertly do the persuading. When an expert takes on an amateur, especially when money is involved, the general feeling is that it’s unfair”, (1991: 119).

As discussed by Wilmott (1999), in Brownlie et al (1999) “wherever there is disciplinary power, such as the power of marketing to constitute and satisfy consumer need, there is a potential for transgression. An unintended consequence of treating social relationships as media of exchange is a tendency for individuals to feel, existentially, empty and anomic, rather than autonomous and fulfilled. When people feel that they are being treated as objects who are ‘targeted’ by those (e.g. marketers) who design the delivery of services as well as the features of products, they may feel more abused than served”, (1999: 215).

Smith et al (2002) contend that “marketing activities have a pervasive influence on almost all aspects of our everyday life. It has been estimated that marketing costs account for as much as one-half of the selling price of all the goods we purchase. As consumers, then, we should
have some understanding of the nature of these costs so that we might better determine whether we are receiving good value for our marketing investment', (2002: 4).

Polonsky and Mintu-Wimsatt (1995) reveal that “Ten State Attorneys General stated that ‘attempts to take advantage of consumer interest in the environment have led to a growing number of environmental claims that are trivial, confusing or even misleading.’ Product packages are often marked ‘environmentally friendly’ or ‘degradable’ – terms that may be too vague to convey the real benefit to the environment, and do not provide the consumer with adequate information to select correctly among brands. As consumers have become increasingly environmentally aware, they have also become increasingly sceptical of claims”, (1995: 270).

The United States, Federal Trade Commission (2000) issued a report on the marketing of violent entertainment products to children, by the motion picture, music recording, and electronic games industries. “This report responded to a request from President Clinton and similar Congressional requests that the Commission undertake a study to answer two questions: whether these three entertainment industries promote products that they themselves acknowledge warrant parental caution in venues where children make up a substantial percentage of the audience, and whether their adverts are intended to attract children and teenagers. After a comprehensive study that included internal industry marketing documents, consumer surveys, and television, print and Internet advertising, the Commission concluded that the answer was to both questions was “yes””, (2000: 1).

Babor (2010) argues that “much of the current research on alcohol marketing emphasises the impact on children and teenagers. This reflects an understanding of the role of marketing in
recruitment of new consumers as well as concern over the harm experienced by younger
drinkers. In emerging markets, the recruitment of non-drinking adults to become drinkers
may also be affected by marketing. Another issue from a public health perspective, although
less researchers, is the possibility that marketing reduces the people’s ability to cut back or
stop drinking, when there is a desire to do so”, (2010: 186: 187).

1:1.6 Marketing and the Impact of Recession

Burger (2009) reveals that Marketing is one of the first disciplines to be targeted during
recessionary times, in spite of the potential to grow market share during economically
challenging times: “Given that tough times can be can also be the best of times from a
marketing perspective, why is it that companies – larger ones in particular – not only reduce
marketing spending once financial conditions force them to do so, but even reduce spending
in anticipation of hard times. Do these companies know something that runs contrary to
history and logic? One clear but unfortunate conclusion arising from my discussions with
vice-presidents is that it is considered wiser and safer for managers to reduce spending,
including marketing spending, sooner rather than later. Cutting sooner is seen as pro-active
and showing leadership; cutting later is seen as reactive and following (rather than leading)
events. Cutting too much shows aggression and decisiveness; cutting too little shows
weakness and hesitation. Ironically, when cutting too much, and too soon, causes sales to
decline unnecessarily, that very decline will justify the cuts and be evidence of management’s

1:2 Rationale for the Study

It is the contention of the researcher that the role and importance of Marketing is viewed with
scepticism in the business world, and is the object of consumer cynicism and frustration in
the external environment. Research of existing literature on this topic indicates that this image problem has existed since the advent of the marketing concept, to the present day. As discussed by Wilmott (1999) in Brownlie et al (1999): “As an academic and applied discipline, marketing will continue to be viewed with suspicion, and to lack social status and influence concurrent with its expanding role in shaping the organisation of production and consumption, so long as it is widely deemed to be implicated, deeply and uncritically, in processes of hype and manipulation that are stimulated by the relentless quest for sources of capital accumulation where markets for basic goods and services are saturated and competition is intense”, (1999: 218).

The researcher chose to investigate the apparent image problems associated with marketing, in an effort to explain how an entire business discipline may be discredited, despite its importance as a key intermediary between an organisation and its customers.

The research undertaken for this study indicates an increased consumer sophistication and demand greater choice of products and services. It is also evident that, in the current recessionary environment, supply generally of products and services outstrips demand. Despite the fact that Marketing is likely the only function within an organisation to have an accurate understanding of consumer motivations; paradoxically, it is among the first areas to be cut when in a recession impacts the business. The author believes that this common occurrence merits further empirical research.

An examination of existing research indicates that, while similar themes have addressed internationally (and in an American context in particular) there is a dearth of information currently available from an Irish perspective.
1.3 Research Focus of the Study

This study presents an empirical research of the image problems associated with Marketing. The study is concerned with the major factors that have contributed to this, from a business perspective and from a consumer perspective.

Having provided the reader with a background to the major themes discussed throughout the study, as well as having established the researcher’s objectives, the next chapter shall be concerned with existing literature related to this research study. Chapter 2, is divided in to two sections. The first section focuses on the image problems associated with marketing from an internal perspective (within the Marketer’s organisation). The second section relates to literature which focuses on marketing practices that contribute to a consumer cynicism the industry.

Chapter 3, presents the research methodology employed in the completion of this study. The principles of Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods research are outlined. In an effort to investigate definitively the research problem, a Mixed Method research approach was adopted for this study. An explanation for the researcher’s adoption of the Mixed Method research strategy is also revealed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4, examines the major findings of the empirical research undertaken for this study. This includes the purposive sample of 11 business and academic leaders, who work in or are closely aligned to the marketing function within their organisation. This sample was chosen for the qualitative semi-structured interview process. Chapter 4 also includes the findings of
the Quantitative online survey of 100 consumers. The findings from Chapter 4 are divided into two sections:

Section 1 is concerned with the findings derived from the qualitative semi-structured interviews. The findings are presented according to the following themes:

- The image of Marketing from the perspective of the business world
- The challenge for credibility and parity of esteem for Marketing
- Marketing: The importance of metrics
- Leadership challenges faced by Marketing
- Marketing jargon and how it contributes to the negative image of Marketing
- The failure of business to get the true potential from Marketing:
- The need for improvement in academic standards in Marketing in order to improve the standards of Marketing in business
- Marketing and the Media: The consumer dictates the communication process
- The Impact of Pricing on Marketing in the Recession
- The existence of sinister Marketing practices

Section 2 focuses on the major findings emerging from the quantitative online survey of consumers. The findings are presented according to the following themes:

- Marketing has an image problem with consumers
- Consumers are suspicious of Marketing motives
- Consumers are experiencing Marketing fatigue
- Consumer purchasing is increasingly determined by price
Chapter 5 concludes the study with a review and summary of the major findings revealed in Chapter 4. The empirical findings are contrasted with existing previous literature. The researcher delivers recommendations for practice based on the findings of the existing previous literature, and the empirical research conducted for this study. The researcher presents recommendations for future research, based on topics which emerged during the course of this study, but were not discussed in detail, due to time and other constraints.

1:4 Summary

Chapter 1, provided the background to the major themes on which this study is based, and established the researcher's objectives. This chapter also provided the rationale for this study. Chapter 2, focuses on the existing literature which is related to this study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine the relevant literature on the research question in two sections. Section 1 highlights literature related to the image of marketing, the value placed on the marketing function, and some of the challenges facing the marketing profession, from a business perspective. Section 2 examines literature related to the image of marketing from a consumer perspective.

Section 1: The Image of Marketing from a Business Perspective:

2:1 Marketing – A Misunderstood Profession

*Marketing has an image problem – how ironic is that? In colleges it is often seen as the soft option, the opposite end of the spectrum to accountancy, an area without measurement.*

Patton (2005) in McWilliams (2005: 104)

Kotler (2003) argues that marketing “is still a terribly misunderstood subject in business circles and in the public’s mind. Companies think that marketing exists to support manufacturing, to get rid of the company’s products” Kotler argues that the truth is the reverse, that manufacturing exists to support marketing. The company can always outsource its manufacturing. What make a company are its marketing offerings and ideas (2003: xi).
Levinson (2007), states that traditional marketing is "so shrouded by mystique that it intimidates many business owners", (2007: 5). Their aversion to making mistakes often results in avoidance of engaging in marketing activities. Levinson also argues that "traditional marketing is also geared towards large business, with huge sums of money to invest, which prevented smaller firms from implementing a marketing strategy", (2007: 5).

In a Marketing survey, Deloitte (2007) reveal that “A common misperception of Marketing within business is that while it may have creative expertise and is important in the promotion of the company and its brands, its practitioners are less capable of measuring its results and quantifying its success. Indeed, just one-fifth of our survey believes their current key performance indicators are the right ones to measure the true success of marketing”, (2007: www.deloitte.com/asset).

Farris et al (2010) are in agreement with Kotler (2003). “Despite its importance, Marketing remains one of the least understood and least measurable functions for many businesses. The effectiveness of Marketing is fundamental to stock market valuations, which often rests upon aggressive assumptions for customer acquisition and organic growth. Nevertheless, many corporate boards lack the understanding to evaluate marketing strategies and expenditures”, (2010: xiii).

2:1.2 Marketing – An Undervalued Profession

In many organizations, marketing exists far from the executive suite and the boardroom.

As discussed by Levitt (1960), in Cox (1988) there are certain industries such as electronics that focus all their efforts on research and development with little regard for marketing. “Having created a successful company by making a superior product, it is not surprising that management continues to be orientated toward the product rather than the people who consume it. It develops the philosophy that continued growth is a matter of continued product innovation and improvement”, (1988:14).


As discussed by Willmott (1999), in Brownlie et al (1999), “the widely held and ascendant belief in markets – as superior, efficient and effective allocators of resources and satisfiers of customer needs – surely presents marketers with ‘a powerful rhetoric’ for augmenting their credibility and authority, as well as extending their influence. And yet, despite the positive valuing of markets, and the demand for the services of marketers, both practitioners and academics, there has not been an equivalent shift in their prestige or, relatedly, the credibility of marketing knowledge”, (1999: 205-206).
Ambler (2003) states that marketing has recently suffered from “a distinct lack of respect and ‘clout’, which is only partly due to economic recession. A trend has emerged where marketing functions have been reduced in many businesses. Marketing’s role has been either subsumed in other areas and functions (such as new products by design and R&D, customer relations by IT and operations) or marginalised (i.e. to ad copy and promotion planning)” (2003: xiii). Trout and Ries (2004) state that marketing communications techniques such as advertising are held in low esteem and in some cases detested. “To many intellectuals, advertising is selling your soul to corporate America. Not worthy of serious study”, (2004: 2).

In a marketing survey, Deloitte Consulting (2007) ask “Is this the golden age of marketing? Our research shows that unfortunately this isn’t the case. Although senior management recognise and acknowledge the importance of marketing in growing their business, their actions in practice indicate that many are simply not walking the talk. 70 percent of respondents do not strongly believe that the role of the Marketing function is clearly articulated within their organisation – confusion reigns between the role of the Marketing department and the practice of marketing in the broadest sense.” (2007: www.deloitte.com/assets).

As discussed by McDonald (2008), in O’Dea (2008), Marketing lacks influence at corporate level. This is evidenced by the fact that “only 14 of the FTSE 100 companies in the UK have marketing directors”, (2008: 18). McDonald emphasises a market-led approach as opposed to a marketing-led approach. The reason for that is that marketing is not held in high regard”, (2008: 18).
2.1.3 Marketing Metrics and the Return on Investment

*When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind: it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have, scarcely in your thoughts, advanced to the stage of science.*

William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, Popular Lectures and Addresses 1891-1894

(Farris et al 2010: xiii)

Farris et al (2010) define metrics as:

*A measuring system that quantifies a trend, dynamic or characteristic.*

Farris et al (2010: 1)

Lenskold (2003) puts forth the theory that “Marketing put such strong emphasis on creative and entertainment value, that it lost touch with its primary purpose of generating profits. Removing the direct connection between marketing initiatives and profits led to a corporate mentality that marketing was more of an expense than an investment”, (2003: 5). Lenskold (2003) also states that “recent research shows that marketing ROI is both a priority and a challenge for most companies. In Accenture’s study of marketing executives in the United States and the United Kingdom, 68 percent reported difficulty of measuring the ROI of their marketing campaigns”, (2003: 5:6).
La Pointe (2005) suggests that “it is the very “art” component of marketing that requires the CMO to have the full confidence and trust of his or her CEO and the executive committee. To win this credibility, today’s CMO needs to find ways of measuring risk that are transparent and understandable to all. If you want top management to accept the art you bring to the process, you have to do a better job of quantifying the chances for success. Only in the rarest organisations will marketing chiefs get by with the words “trust me”. These days, leaps of faith come with pretty heavy price tags”. (2005: 20).

33% of CFOs do not think marketing is a key driver of growth in their organisation.

74% of organisations aren’t reporting marketing measures to the investment community.

Deloitte Consulting (2007: www.deloitte.com/assets)

Deloitte Consulting (2007) reveal the CFO view of marketing, suggesting: “The Marketing Director waxes lyrical about the intangible asset of the brand – and I agree in the importance of the brand as a foundation for growth. But we all have to clearly demonstrate what the investment produces in terms of building value in the business. Marketing have constantly hidden behind a fog of measures that are based purely on tactical marketing activity, rather than solid financial metrics that are relevant to the City. For years they have kept me at arm’s length. This hasn’t done them any favours in improving my perception of them, but has also been to their detriment in not learning or understanding how best to apply financial discipline to their function”, (2007: www.deloitte.com/assets).
Dunn and Halsall (2009) posit that “although there is consensus around the need for greater marketing accountability, only a relatively small amount of companies have found the solution. Since 2004, the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) has conducted its own senior marketer survey on marketing accountability. In 2005 they found that just 16 per cent of companies were confident in their ability to predict the impact of a 10-per cent cut in their marketing spending and to get senior management to buy in to their forecast”, (2009: 6).

McDonald and Mouncey (2009) postulate that “the principal reason that marketing as a discipline is at an all-time low is because of its lack of accountability to the directors for the often enormous amounts of money invested by marketers. One US academic, David Stewart (2008), estimates that companies devote no less than 20-25 percent of their expenditure to Marketing. However, despite the high proportion of funds dedicated to marketing, McGovern et al reported in the Harvard Business review in November 2004 that: “In a survey of large US companies, more than one-third reported that their boards spend less than 10 percent discussing marketing or customer related activities””, (2009: 1).

Farris et al (2010) contend that “Marketers are by no means immune to the drive toward quantitative planning and evaluation. Marketing may once have been regarded as more an art than a science. Executives may once have cheerfully admitted that they wasted half the money they spent on advertising, but they didn’t know which half. Those days, however, are gone. Today, marketers must understand their addressable markets quantitatively. They must measure new opportunities and the investment needed to realise them. Marketers must quantify the value of products, customers and distribution channels – all under various pricing and promotion scenarios. Increasingly, marketers are held accountable for the financial ramifications of their decisions”, (2010: 1:2).
Jeffery (2010) concurs with Farris *et al.* (2010) regarding the importance of metrics. "We are living in difficult times, and marketing measurement and data driven marketing are becoming increasingly important. Now more than ever, managers need to justify their marketing spending, show the value they can create for the business and radically improve their marketing performance", (2010: 3).

Harden and Heyman (2011) contend that "in today’s marketing environment, many of the older methods used to measure the value of marketing media have been found to be false, fuzzy and inaccurate. As marketing budgets get tighter, many of us find there is no room for strategies that do not materially and directly contribute to the health of an enterprise that we, as Marketers, are responsible for", (2011: 2).

### 2:1.4 Marketers and the Importance of Qualified Practitioners

*There’s nobody there on the board to really tackle the problems we face, and yet when they look at the marketing community they don’t see what they need. It’s a really tiny minority that are properly professionally qualified. Yet you wouldn’t get a job as an accountant if you weren’t qualified, or as an engineer. The real key is to train people to put the theory in to practice.*

Shaw (1998) refers to the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) objective of improving the qualifications of marketers: “In the UK, the Chartered Institute of Marketing has declared that it will professionalise marketing, and it has introduced a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme to encourage marketers to attend seminars on their subject. Yet, when it was asked how much training marketers already have, no facts were available. One spokesperson comments: “It might be a bit impertinent to be seen to investigate people’s qualifications”, (1998:8).

Deloitte Consulting (2007) reveal that “The average tenure of the CMO is widely accepted to be less than that of other tenures of the senior management team. However, the issue of rapid turnover occurs at all levels throughout the Marketing function...when the CMO and third party specialists turn over so regularly, and the Marketing middle management are developing increasingly specialist skills that do not necessarily set them up for success at the helm, this places Marketing on the back foot in terms of strategic implementation”, (2007: www.deloitte.com/assets).

As discussed by Devaney (2010) in Rothery (2010), the perception is that managers think of marketing as “some type of discretionary spend, which is incorrect. At board level, the ‘commercial guy’ understands the sale and its profitability, but does not necessarily understand the consumers cannot readily explain “who are the people these products are being promoted or sold to? Who are the people buying these products and services? What do they look like? How are they changing? What’s their view of us and the competition’”, (2010: 20).
2:1.5 The Emergence of Social Media and Online Marketing and the Decline in Traditional Marketing Techniques

Weinberg (2009) states that “traditional marketing tactics are not as effective as they once were, because consumer trust in these media forms has declined. Today, information is more easily accessible online, and more significantly, that information is a lot easier to find. Generations are becoming increasingly digital savvy. Text messaging and web activity are becoming second nature (and are claiming addicts on a daily basis). If a consumer is seeking out information about a particular product she won’t necessarily sit down with a cup of coffee and read her favourite magazine to find information about the product; she is more likely to turn on her computer and look for reviews and endorsements from other individuals just like her”, (2009: 6).

Scott (2010) posits that it is incumbent on marketing to incorporate an online element to the overall marketing strategy in order to reach the target market. “There’s no doubt that, today, people solve problems by turning to the web. Just consider your own habits. How do you research products and services? If your organisation isn’t present and engaged in the places and at the times that your buyers are, then you’re losing out on potential business – no matter how successful your offline marketing program is. Worse, if you are trying to apply the game plan that works in your mainstream media-based advertising and PR programs to your online ones, you will not be successful”, (2010: 5).
Blanchard (2011) argues that “one of the fundamental reasons why social media has been so readily embraced by the general public is that it helps connect people with each other in ways that are valuable, meaningful, and convenient, on their own terms, and on an unprecedented scale. Bear in mind that Facebook isn’t “Brandbook”, Twitter isn’t “Promotweets”, and YouTube isn’t “CorpTube”. After decades spent enduring thousands of daily marketing messages being shoved at them across every communications channel known to man, the public found in the social web a means of turning the message off and turning instead to what mattered to them more: relationships, trust and conversations. Businesses planning to develop a presence in social media therefore need to tread lightly and pay attention to the unspoken rules governing interactions in this space”, (2011: 4).

2:1.6 Marketing and the Gender Imbalance

As discussed by Collum (2005), in McWilliams (2005), there is increasing gender imbalance, where marketing is becoming increasingly dominated by women, which may affect the overall representativeness of the profession. “The only concern I have is that marketing is becoming more a preserve among women than men with an ever increasing proportion of women entering in to the profession. This isn’t a sexist comment but I believe any profession is better off having a greater balance among the sexes”, (2005: 103).

2:1.7 Marketing and the Impact of Recessionary Cycles

As discussed by Bunworth (2005), in McWilliams (2005), price cannot be the best or sole constituent of a brand. Focusing on emotional values is critical as they can’t be beaten and undercut every week. (2005: 106)
As discussed by McDonald (2008), in O’Dea (2008), in a recessionary cycle, “the knee-jerk reaction is to drop your prices. In a downturn the first thing to work out is who your profitable customers are, and how to keep them. The key is to understand them better than competitors”, (2008: 21).

As discussed by Kotler (2009) in O’Dea (2009), it is counter-productive to cut marketing spend during a recession. “In a downturn, it can be common for a CEO to put the stoppers on marketing projects that are costing the company as they want to save money. Along with R&D, marketing is often one of the first things to suffer. This is not the answer. It is better to keep investing, or work smarter”, (2009: 25).

Kotler (2009) defines ‘Working smarter’ in O’Dea (2009), as follows:

*Working smarter means you peel the onion and find all the micro markets where you’re working – and by micro markets I mean different geographies, different segments of the market and so on. Then you start re-allocated your money away from weakening situations – not only those that are weakening now but where it’s clear there is not much future anyway*

2:1.7.1 Marketing and the Recession in Ireland

As a consequence of the recession in Ireland, there’s been a massive shift in values. Interrogating spend, making informed and rational decisions: that now cascades all levels of consumer thinking. They’re looking for brands they can trust.


Kotler (2009) in O’Dea (2009) highlights the importance of understanding what is happening to the major stakeholders such as customers, suppliers and the company’s employees, “and that itself is the idea I call early warning systems – something to catch the flavour of the change that is going on very rapidly right now”, (2009: 24).

McDonagh (2009) contends that employers are looking for new skill sets from their marketing team, as a result of the recession. “From a marketing point of view, the focus now is very much on commercial skills, value for money and providing a tangible return on investment. Companies want to do more for less and with fewer staff. As a result we have noticed a significant increase in demand for marketers with strong strategic planning, commercial and customer-orientated skills”, (2009: 69).

Trainor (2010) argues that “a recession is in fact a time of ‘unparalleled’ opportunity and is a time for vision and for guts. It is worth bearing in mind that the greatest shifts in market share happen at times of great economic turmoil”, (2010: 8).
2:1.8 Marketing: The Impact on Competition

Kotler and Armstrong (2001) espouse the view that large companies can use unfair competitive marketing practices “with the intention of hurting or destroying other firms. They may set their prices below costs, threaten to cut off business with suppliers, or discourage the buying of competitors products. Various laws work to prevent such predatory competition. It is difficult to prove that the intent or action was really predatory. Take Microsoft, for example... [Last year] Microsoft’s $3.4 billion income accounted for 41% of the profits of the 10 largest publicly traded software companies. In its zeal to become a leader not just in operating systems but on the Internet, the company bundled its Internet Explorer browser in to its Windows Software. This move sparked an antitrust suit by the government, much to the delight of Microsoft’s rivals. Netscape has seen its market share plummet as it tries to sell what Microsoft gives away for free”, (2001: 760).

2:1.9 Marketing and the over-reliance of Research

*We all have a tendency to use research like a drunkard uses a lamppost: for support not illumination.*

David Ogilvy (1963: 100)

As discussed by Brown (2005) in McWilliams (2005), the research methods used, and how the empirical data is interpreted does not focus enough on consumers. “Many companies often pick parts from market research that they want to utilise, or view as the best possibility to make most money out of, rather than what is relevant to the consumer”, (2005: 80).
Hinkes (2010) posits that marketing departments used to be the creative engines powering successful corporations. “Now they’re overrun by number-crunching nerds. As a direct consequence, despite all the conspicuous focus on “change management”, the way brands respond to change in the marketplace has deteriorated. No one would argue with the objectives and need for consumer research. But brand marketing is not a science. It requires analysis, discipline and detail. Even more, it requires intuition, flair and vision. Great marketers are visionaries, not bean counters. They succeed by defying conventional wisdom. They see over the near horizon, envisioning products and ideas long before the average consumer even senses a need for them. Nothing captures this principle better than the adage, “If Edison had done market research, he would have invented bigger candles”” (2010: www.levidepochesblogs.com).

2:1.10 Marketing and its Status in Academia

Willmott (1999), in Brownlie et al (1999) highlights the increasing critical scrutiny of marketing shibboleths in particular by the pluralistic editorial policies of a number of journals such as the Journal for Consumer Research. “Whilst it may be argued that academics have a vested interest in detecting crises which they, as ‘experts’ then proceed to analyse, and for which they prescribe remedies, it is probably fair to say that, in academia as in industry, marketing continues to be viewed with some scepticism and suspicion, if not distaste, and has yet to achieve full respectability as an academic discipline or as a management specialism”, (1999: 206).
2:1.11 Summary

This section detailed the opinions and attitudes towards the marketing profession, from the perspective of the Marketer’s peers in a business and academic context.

The next section details the opinions of marketing from the perspective of consumers, and outlines the position of marketing in society with regard to issues such as ethics, politics, ethnicity and environmental issues.
Section 2: The Consumer Perspective

2:2 Marketing and the Consumer: An Ethical Dilemma

Marketing ethics is even more of an oxymoron than marketing academics.

Schlegelmilch (1998: 4)

Schlegelmilch (1998) contends that managerial decision-making very often calls for ethical judgments, in particular in marketing. “Indeed, because marketing represents the interface between a company and its customers, ethical misconduct in marketing is particularly visible and, consequently, particularly dangerous for the reputation of the firm”, (1998: 5).

As discussed by Smith and Quelch (1991), in Schlegelmilch (1998), ethicists identify three levels of duty to which people – and hence managers in organisations are obligated:

- Avoid causing harm
- Prevent harm

With regard to discounting consumer welfare, according to Schlegelmilch (1998) “it seems more likely that it results either from a failure to identify the existence of an ethical dilemma or choice, or from a misplaced sense of loyalty in following the lead of superiors or trying to protect company interests”, (1998: 389).
Levinson and Horowitz (2010) state "too many businesses see marketing as a weapon of war. They think that to succeed they have to climb over their competitors, fool their customers, and herd their employees into constricted conformity", (2010: 3).

### 2:2.1 The Ethical challenges of Marketing to ethnic groups

Schlegelmilch (1998) argues that marketing managers "face a barrage of ethical issues which concern all aspects of the job on a daily basis. In the international arena, differing regulations and cultures further add to the complexity of ethical dilemmas", (1998: 80).

Schlegelmilch (1998) notes that for multinational companies with business activities in numerous countries, the issue of ethical relativism assumes great importance. (1998: 7)

The Oxford Dictionary defines relativism as:

> "The doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute"

(www.oxforddictionaries.com)

Schlegelmilch (1998) highlights the challenges ethical relativism pose for marketing. "What might be perceived as ethical in one country or culture might be viewed as unethical in another. Even studies of value systems in different European countries, which are relatively homogenous, reveal major differences in tolerances on issues such as accepting a bribe, where there is a higher tolerance in Belgium when compared with Denmark", (1998: 7).
Schlegelmilch (1998) notes that “marketing in less developed countries is often characterised by an imbalance of power because the foreign corporation controls access to information about the product, its use, likely effects of misuse, and the availability of safer alternatives. Consumers in less developed countries may be vulnerable to exploitation in so far as they lack, to a greater or lesser degree, the basic skills and knowledge that typify consumers in the Western markets”, (1998: 380).

Schlegelmilch (1998) also highlights “the unwillingness of multinationals to apply the same standards expected in the West to newly emerging economies. Faced with increasingly negative attitudes towards smoking in the USA and increasing regulation, cigarette producers are seeking new growth markets abroad. Will young people in new industrialised Asian countries, who want to embrace a modern lifestyle and Western values, be misled by evocative advertising in to equating known carcinogens with social emancipation?”, (1998: 382).

As discussed by Shue (1981) in Schlegelmilch (1998), “vulnerable consumers can be victimised by global corporations. The mistreatment has a great deal to do with the discounting of the welfare of people across national boundaries, especially when the boundaries mark cultural, ethnic or racial differences. Harm to foreigners is simply not taken as seriously”, (1998: 599).
Schlegelmilch (1998) site the Globe Report (1996) on the effects of advertising to different ethnic groups. "When it comes to advertising, Asians are the most trusting, with Russians being the most cynical. Across the world, 72 per cent believe Marketers deliberately exaggerate health benefits and 70 per cent complain that they brain wash children", (1998: 105).

2:2.2 Marketing and Political Influence

Kotler and Armstrong (2001) note that business is criticised for wielding too much political influence, particularly in the oil, automobile and pharmaceutical industries. "Advertisers are accused of having too much power over the mass media, limiting their freedom to report independently and objectively. Kotler and Armstrong site Fact magazine, which states "How can [most magazines] afford to tell the truth about the scandalously low nutritional value of most packaged foods, when these magazines are being subsidised by such advertisers as General Foods, Kellogg's, Nabisco, and General Mills? The answer is they cannot and do not", (2001: 759).
Clow and Baack (2002) highlight the increased focus by the government on marketing activities to monitor any potential violations of the law. "The Federal Communications Commission has authority over television, radio, and the telephone industry. The U.S. Postal service watches over all mail-type marketing materials and investigates mail fraud schemes. The most powerful federal agency with jurisdiction over marketing communications is the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). In more severe instances of deceptive or misleading advertising the FTC can order a firm to prepare "corrective advertising". Corrective advertising occurs "when the FTC concludes that consumers believed the false advertisement, it can require the firm to produce corrective ads to bring consumers back to a neutral state", (2002: 45:47). Clow and Baack (2002) site Exxon as an example. The FTC ruled that Exxon could not substantiate its claim that their high octane premium gasoline lowers maintenance costs because it burns cleaner and leaves fewer engine deposits (2002: 45:47).

As discussed by Grant (2009), in Rothery (2009), a negative view of marketing is pervasive in government bodies also. "The extreme views within National Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are that business is wrong and marketing is worse, because it's selling people things they don't need", (2009: 21).
2:2.3 Marketing and HealthCare

Lawrence (2010) refers to misleading advertisements and marketing campaigns such as the Yakult’s claims that their probiotic drink contains health benefits. “The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) posted its formal assessment of the merit of more than 800 health claims, including widely used assertions that probiotic products boost the immune system. The claims were submitted to the EFSA by the food industry and member states. Many of those claims, on which the probiotic industry has based its advertising and marketing in recent years, were ruled unproven by the EFSA's panel of independent scientists”. (2010: www.guardian.co.uk).

Applbaum (2009) espouses the view that in the pharmaceutical industry, the decline of innovation is directly linked to the rise of marketing. “Pharmaceutical value has increasingly become a marketing proposition, not a scientific one. What is valuable to marketers can be meaningless, dangerous and costly to everyone else”, (2009: 15).
2:2.4 Marketing and the Environment

As discussed by Alexander (1993), in Schlegelmilch (1998), “packaging makes up on average 40 per cent of the world’s solid waste. As consumers and governments become more concerned about the effects of solid waste on the environment they are expecting companies to develop packaging that is environmentally friendly. The bona fides of communicating the environmental attributes of a product can be questionable. For example, one might question the motivation and ethics of stressing that a washing powder is phosphate free while it still contains other environmentally harmful substances. “It is also questionable whether the emphasis on waste reduction through the use of refill packages or concentrates in products like fabric softeners, which many people regard as both useless and environmentally harmful in the first place, does not mislead consumers into thinking that the product, overall, is ecologically sound””, (1998: 84).

As discussed by Grant (2009) in Rothery (2009), there is a responsibility for all marketers to help change consumer behaviour for the greater good and help build community. “Otherwise, if marketing does not manage to make that journey, we’ll increasingly find that advertising and marketing are banned because it is viewed as part of the problem”, (2009: 21).
Shapiro (1973: 174) contends that alleged marketing excesses under attack by consumerist groups may not be correctable imperfections but rather essential features of the modified capitalist order which most of the same critics would accept as performing reasonably well. Could that same economy function without extensive advertising, brand proliferation, etc.? "Is marketing a substitute or surrogate villain for individuals who fail to recognise that the factors disturbing them are inherent features of North American capitalism? Some indications exist that this is the case. Not all of the social critics who attack marketing practices would, if called upon to make a choice, accept with equanimity the existing pattern of a modified free market", (1973: 174).

Schlegelmilch (1998) contends that perceptions of what is moral and what is not clearly impact the evaluating of advertising. "Consider, for example, a case from Germany: The Bahlsen Company in Hannover advertised its white chocolate by stating it is permissible to snack on sweets (Naschenerlaubt). Because snacking is 'allowed', will the consumer draw the conclusions that eating Bahlsen white chocolate will have no negative effects such as weight problems? Once the Berlin Consumer Protection Association forced the issue, the statement was indeed considered misleading by a Berlin Court. Is it not questionable to assume that the average consumer in Germany will be so affected by the advertisement that they will not be able to make a rational choice?", (1998: 110).
Kotler and Armstrong (2001) argue that in spite of the prevalence of marketing, consumers still have the capacity to disregard what is not relevant to them. “People have strong defences against advertising and other marketing tools. Marketers are most effective when they appeal to existing wants rather than when they attempt to create new ones. Furthermore, people seek information when making important purchases and do not rely on single sources. Our wants and values are influenced not only by marketers but also by family, peer groups, religion, ethnic background and education”, (2001: 757).

Schlegelmilch (1998) also puts forth the counter argument to consumers’ responsibility for their own welfare. While the product itself may be perfectly ethical, how the product is positioned in market place, and who is targeted may be unethical. “This could be the case where the target market is unable to think rationally through the information and therefore will make uninformed or poor choices”, (1998: 82:83). Schlegelmilch (1998) sites Smith and Quelch (1993) who investigate the positioning strategy employed by the Suzuki Motor Company Ltd for its Suzuki Samarai four wheel drive vehicle. “The car was positioned as ‘a unique, exciting, fun vehicle that stands in a class by itself’. Roll over incidents were so high that the Consumers Union in the US brought complaints to the Federal Trade Commission stating that because the car was positioned as a sports utility car, consumers – many of whom were young, first time buyers – tended to drive it more recklessly and have more accidents”, (1998: 82-83).

2:2.6 Marketing and Superlative claims

Clow and Baack (2002) note that firms often use ‘puffery’ in their communications to the market.
The Oxford Dictionary defines ‘puffery’ as:

“Exaggerated or false praise.”

(www.oxforddictionaries.com)

Clow and Baack (2002) refer to the Tree Top advertising which states that their apple juice is “twice as good” as example of puffery. (2002: 43)

Gershon and Buerstatte (2003) concur that marketing communications and advertising messages must be accurate and truthful and meet appropriate standards, due to the attention it receives from the public and the communication efforts made to the public. “Some organisations claim to be the ‘best’ or the ‘consumer’s choice’ provider of certain services. But how many bests can there be in a particular market? How many areas can one organisation be the best in? Unless backed with factual data (which may be difficult) such claims are inappropriate and should be toned down”, (2003: 293).

2:2.7 Marketing and Consumer Welfare

As discussed by Star (1991), in Dolan (1991), marketing can lead to consumer frustration even if the product or service offering highlights a consumer need. “Another group of consumers who are exposed to marketing programs that bother them are those who have the needs that the programs address but not the demographic characteristics of the best-fit program targets. They may have, for example a strong desire for a high-performance sports car or expensive toys (as advertised on Saturday morning TV) but not the resources to pay for them. Such consumers are likely to experience an unusual amount of frustration”, (1998: 125).
Star (1991) further discusses the unintended adverse social effects which occur as a result of the marketing process, in Dolan (1991). “The marketing concept, like all good things that seem to make good sense, is burdened by process constraints that limit, in implementation, the achievement of its promises. In particular, the lack of congruence among segments, targets and audiences seems a significant cause of consumer distraction and frustration. Marketing programs that produce social goods (consumer satisfaction) will almost surely also have dysfunctional social effects”, (1991: 125).

Schlegelmilch (1998) notes that due to the current legal environment and the volatility of a company’s reputation, decisions about product safety should be easy to make. However, firms sometimes face an interesting challenge: safer products cost more but consumers are unwilling to pay for the increased cost. “Even worse, in some countries, highlighting safety features could cause consumers to question what they previously assumed was a safe product. For example, Regina Corporation, a small appliance manufacturer in the United States devised an immersion detection circuit interrupter for its home spa products. This device interrupts the circuits should someone accidentally drop an appliance in the water. Regina Corporation did not advertise the benefits of this device because they believed it would frighten potential buyers”, (1998: 81).
Kotler and Armstrong (2001) argue that “each company and marketing manager must work out a philosophy of socially responsible and ethical behaviour. Under the societal marketing concept, each manager must look beyond what is legal and allowed, and develop standards based on personal integrity, corporate conscience, and long-run consumer welfare”, (2001: 773). Kotler and Armstrong site the international association of marketing managers and scholars – the American Marketing Association – as an example. The AMA has developed a code of ethics outlining the responsibilities and conduct marketing managers should adopt when dealing with customers, and other key stakeholders. (2001: 773).

2:2.8 Marketing and Underage Consumers

Clow and Baack (2002) note that by the age of 18, the average American teen has viewed over 100,000 beer commercials, and espouse the view that many beer commercials are designed to encourage underage drinking and build brand loyalty among a population which is not even supposed to use the product. “The alcohol industry spends $2 billion per year on advertisements and promotions. About one-third of this amount is spent on television advertising, usually broadcast during sporting events. Research indicates that young males strongly respond to ads featured during football, baseball, and basketball games”, (2002: 30:31). Clow and Baack (2002) also note the lasting impact of alcohol advertising on underage viewers. “A surprising number of children cite alcohol commercials, such as the ones for Red Rock Cider and Carling Black Label Beer, as being among their top 10 favourite television ads”, (2002: 30:31).
The National Research Council Institute for Medicine (2004) reveals that “a substantial proportion of alcohol advertising reaches an underage audience, and is presented in a style that is attractive to youths. For example, television alcohol advertisements routinely appear on programs for which the percentage of underage viewers is greater than the percentage of underage youths in the population. Alcohol companies, advertising companies, and commercial media should refrain from marketing practices (including product design, advertising and promotional techniques) that have substantial underage appeal, and should take reasonable precautions in the time, place, and manner of placement and promotion to reduce youthful exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing activity”, (2004: 4).

2:2.9 Marketing and its Pervasiveness in Society

As discussed by Star (1991) in Dolan (1991) marketing activity will always reach unintended demographic groups, in spite of the marketers’ efforts to communicate specifically to their target market. “No matter how specialized our media, how carefully computerised our audience data, how sophisticated the protocols of market analysis, there remain, as always, major misfits among products, audiences, messages, and media. As one marketing executive recently said, ‘This consumer and behaviour research is interesting, but in the end we still tell our advertising agencies to cast a wide net, to go after middle-income homeowners between 21 and 40’. In the end the marketer develops a program to coincide, to the greatest extent possible, with the attributes of the consumer target group. Unfortunately the ‘greatest extent possible’ is always full of disjunctions and static”, (1991: 120).
As discussed by Godin (2009), in Rothery (2009), the ubiquitous nature of marketing means that it is physically impossible for a consumer to pay attention to everything that marketers expect their target market to, “like the 17,000 new grocery store products that were introduced last year or the $1,000 worth of advertising that is directed exclusively at an individual consumer”, (1999: 23).

Stratten (2010) contends that “if your potential customer do not have an immediate need for your product or service, then you are potentially turning them off and losing them for the future”, (2010: 4).

2:2.10 Marketing Fatigue

As discussed by Star (1991), in Dolan (1991), marketers face major challenges in their efforts to communicate effectively and precisely to their target audience. “Even the most efficient marketing program will not reach all members of a target but will certainly reach people with no interest in the product: either they do not need or want or cannot afford the advertised product. The result is frustrated consumers and, eventually, angry social critics”, (1991: 118).

Kotler and Armstrong (2001) note that the marketing system is charged by critics with creating ‘cultural pollution’. “Our senses are being constantly assaulted by advertising. Commercials interrupt serious programs, pages of ads obscure printed matter, and billboards mar beautiful scenery. These interruptions continually pollute people’s minds with messages of materialism, sex, power, or status”, (2001: 759).
Today communication itself is the problem. We have become the world’s first over communicated society.

Trout and Ries (2004: 1)

2:2.11 The Impact of Cultural shifts on Marketing

Willmott (1999), in Brownlie *et al* (1999), suggests that out of various management functions, “it is marketing that takes the leading role in promoting and facilitating consumerism as it enables modern individuals to identify with particular images and lifestyles that they fulfil through their identity-work as consumers. Marketers have become key cultural intermediaries who educate the masses in the pleasures of consumption. And yet as the role of markets and marketing has expanded, marketers have experienced frustration and anxiety regarding their credibility, status and power of their specialism. Paradoxically, the increasingly central role of exchange and consumption in advanced capitalist societies has been accompanied more by resentment and self-doubt than by self-assurance and conviction”, (1999: 208:209).

Godin (1999), in Rothery (2009), puts forth the theory that some marketing traditional marketing techniques that were once effective, such as direct marketing, no longer have the same impact and are now regarded as a nuisance. “Almost no one goes home eagerly anticipating junk mail in their mail box. Almost no one reads People magazine for the ads”, (1999: 25).
Godin (1999), in Rothery (2009), views traditional marketing practices for the past 90 years as *Interruption Marketing*. He defines it as Interruption Marketing “because the key to each and every ad is to interrupt what the viewers are doing in order to get them to think about something else. They’ve also increased their noise level of their ads – more jump cuts, more in your face techniques”, (1999: 25).

As discussed by Sparks (2005) in McWilliams (2005), it is “a myth that marketers have the power to create magnificent packaging around a brand that will sell, because they put a lot of money in to it, and advertised it. Unless the product or service satisfies a human need this doesn’t work”, (2005: 55).

Hill *et al* (2011) argue that major technological and cultural trends are beginning to force a change to “this brandocracy”. “For example, new methods of scanning data at point of sale have dramatically increased the availability of timely and accurate data, and declining computer costs are making it affordable to track consumers as individuals, which give retailers a major advantage over established brands, and are one of the major contributors to declining brand loyalty. Fundamental organizational change will be needed to overcome 60 years of ‘brandocracy’. Three key stubbornly-held characteristics feed this inertia: a belief in and a reliance on the mass market; an emphasis on marketing quantity, not quality; and a decision-making process based on intuition and experience, not facts and analysis”, (2011: www.strategy-business.com ).
The message for consumer goods companies and their marketing brandocracies is clear, and fundamental. Instead of selling a brand to an ill-defined portfolio of customers, they must sell a well-defined set of customers a portfolio of brands and products. 


In an Irish context, O'Bric (2010), states that consumers will not accept poor marketing from Irish brands just because the marketing is developed locally [in Ireland]. “Our brands have to be as compelling and compete for people’s attention as much as Nike and Adidas and Audi do”, (2010: 19).

2:2.12 Summary

This section provided an insight in to the opinions and attitudes towards marketing from a consumer perspective, encompassing consumer issues such as ethics, the environment, politics, culture and ethnicity in marketing.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the objectives of the dissertation, the research problem; and the methodologies used in the design, data collection and analysis of the primary and secondary research undertaken. The researcher explains the motivation behind the research question and the choice of research instruments used. Finally, the researcher outlines the conclusions drawn from the research.

Wisker (2008) contends that the choice of methodology and the methods for your research follows on naturally from your worldview and philosophy, and from the clear definition of a title and of the research questions that underpin your research, (2008: 66).

According to Wisker (2008) Research projects can be undertaken for different purposes. These can be categorised as:

- Exploratory research
- Descriptive research
- Explanatory research
Saunders et al (2007) posit that exploratory research "is particularly useful if you wish to clarify your understanding of a problem, such as if you are unsure of the precise nature of the problem". (2007: 133). The purpose of this research is to investigate the apparent image problems associated with marketing. The researcher believes an exploratory study is the most suitable approach to examine the reasons behind these occurrences in business, and from the perspective of consumers.

According to Saunders et al (2007) there are three principal ways of conducting exploratory research:

- A search of literature
- Interviewing experts in the subject
- Conducting focus group interviews, (2007: 133).

The researcher has undertaken an in-depth research of literature related to the research question. Qualitative research, in the form of 11 semi-structured interviews with business and academic leaders, and Quantitative research, based on an online consumer survey, have also been conducted by the researcher, in the completion of this exploratory research. The details are outlined further below.
3: 1 Research Methodology

McDaniel and Gates (2007) describe research methodology as “how the research was done and why it was done that way. Issues that need to be addressed include who was interviewed, why did we interview these people, how they were interviewed, why were they interviewed in that manner, how people were selected, what type of sampling methodology did we use, whether the sample is a representative sample, how many people did we interview, how the completed surveys were processed, what special statistical procedures were used and why did we use those procedures, and so forth”, (2007: 593).

The elements of research methodology as described by McDaniel and Gates (2007) above will be discussed in detail below.

3: 2 Research Problem

Tull and Hawkins (1990) contend that defining the research problem ‘is the most critical part of the research process. Unless the problem is properly defined, the information produced by the research process is unlikely to have any value’, (1990: 45:46).

Wisker (2001) concurs with Tull and Hawkins (1990) in that ‘defining your research area, choosing your title and asking your main research questions are essential points of entrance in to the research process’, (2001: 13).
The research problem in this study is derived from related topics discussed in a Strategic Marketing module on the Masters in Business Studies course, as well the researcher's own experience in a work environment. It appears counter intuitive to the researcher that in a consumerist, free market society, the marketing function is often dismissed as superfluous within organisations, and is considered intrusive by consumers. It is the researcher's view that while there are International studies focusing on this topic; a knowledge gap exists from an Irish marketing perspective. For these reasons, the researcher found the apparent image problems associated with marketing a compelling topic, and therefore worthy of further study.

3:3 Research Question

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define the research question as 'the specific query to be addressed by this research that sets the parameters of the project and suggests the methods to be used for data gathering and analyses, (1998: 35).

Wisker (2008) contends that when the researcher is exploring a research question 'you will be asking about relationships between people, incidents, contexts and events, and you will be interpreting what you discover in relation to underpinning theories and concepts. Your research design will set out to explore, address, and enquire, and try to construct some responses rather than final fixed answers', (2008: 50).

The researcher is exploring the question of whether Marketing has an image problem. The researcher will then outline in more detail whether this image problem exists within the business environment, and externally, from the perspective of consumers.
3:4 Research Objectives

Burns and Bush (2010) define research objectives as follows: ‘Research objectives state specifically what information must be produced by the researcher so that the manager can choose the correct alternative to solve the problem. Research objectives are very specific and tell researchers exactly what information they must collect in order to solve the problem, (2010: 110). The aims and objectives of this research are found in Chapter 1, Section 1:1.1 of this study.

3:5 Research Design

Tull and Hawkins (1990) define research design as "the specification of procedures for collecting and analysing the data necessary to help identify or react to a problem or opportunity, such that the difference between the cost of obtaining various levels of accuracy and the expected value of the information associated with each level of accuracy is maximized", (1990: 44).

Tull and Hawkins (1990) further explain that there are 8 steps in the research design process that are not necessarily sequential in that they can often interact and occur simultaneously:

- Define the research problem
- Estimate the value of the information to be provided by the research
- Select the data collection methods
- Select the measurement technique
- Select the sample
- Select the analytical approach
- Specify the time and the financial cost
- Prepare the research proposal, (1990: 44:45).
Creswell (2003) states that there are three major approaches to research to consider when undertaking primary research:

1. Quantitative Research
2. Qualitative Research

3:5:1 Quantitative Research

Burns and Bush (2010) define quantitative research as ‘research involving the use of structured questions in which the response options have been pre-determined and a large number of respondents are involved. When you think of quantitative research you might envision a nationwide survey conducted by telephone interviews – that is – Quantitative research involves a sizable representative sample of the population and a formalised procedure for gathering the data’, (2010: 235).

3:5:2 Qualitative Research

As discussed by Jacob (1988), in Key (1997), Qualitative research can be defined as ‘a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important. Detailed data is gathered through open ended questions that provide direct quotations. The interviewer is an integral part of the investigation’, (1997: www.okstate.edu).
Burns and Bush (2010) state that Qualitative research 'involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Observations and statements are in a qualitative or non-standardised form', (2010: 235).

3:5:3 Mixed Method

Saunders et al (2007) define the Mixed Method approach to research as 'a general term for when both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures are used in a research design. It is subdivided into two types. Mixed method research uses quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures either at the same time (parallel) or one after the other (sequential) but does not combine them. This means that, although mixed method research uses both quantitative and qualitative world views at the research methods stage, quantitative data are analysed quantitatively and qualitative data are analysed qualitatively', (2007: 145:146).

The researcher undertook an exploratory study, employing a parallel mixed method approach. The qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried separately to the quantitative online survey; however both were completed during the same time frame. Throughout the research process, the researcher also employed the qualitative research technique of keeping a research journal (diary). Further explanations and details of each research method adopted by the researcher are provided below.
3:5:4 Exploratory Research

Wisker (2008) states that 'exploratory research asks both 'what?' and 'why?' questions. It begins with the question 'does x happen?' followed by 'why does x happen?' and sets out, using a variety of methods, to discover whether what is in the question is true or not', (2008: 72).

The reasoning behind this research design was that the depth of data derived from the combination of the 11 qualitative semi-structured interviews, the quantitative self-administered online survey, and a diary to record the research progress would enable the researcher to effectively attain the research objectives outlined above.

3:6 Research Strategy

Following the formulation of the research objectives, as outlined above, the researcher employed a strategy of triangulation. Wisker (2008) states that triangulation in research 'uses at least two, and preferably three methods to gather data. In this way, the analysis of results and findings can be drawn from several sources, through the vehicle of several methods, ensuring increased validity, developing patterns of data', (2008: 231). This strategy of utilising a combination of research methods would produce a more definitive study, in the opinion of the researcher.
The study of secondary data based on the challenges faced by marketing professionals was the first step taken by the researcher to assist the process of deciding on a research problem. The next step involved discussing the topic with research supervisor Dr Angela Wright, to determine whether the research problem was feasible and could potentially result in a study of academic value. Following a further examination of relevant secondary data, the researcher contacted leaders in both industry and academia to request an interview, to be conducted in a semi-structured fashion, using open-ended questions. The researcher also conducted an online consumer survey, to gauge consumer opinions on the general theme of the semi-structured interview questions, as well as other marketing-related issues. Throughout the primary research process, a research journal was also kept by the researcher to monitor the progress of the study as well as record the insights, experiences and challenges as they occurred.

3.7 Data Collection

Tull and Hawkins (1990) identify three basic data collection approaches in marketing research:

- Secondary Data – utilisation of data that were developed for some purposes other than helping to solve the problem at hand.
- Survey Data – the systematic collection of information directly from respondents. This can be described as primary data, if it is collected for the current research problem. Otherwise it is also a form of secondary data
- Experimental Data is where the research manipulates one or more variables in such a way that its effect on one or more other variables can be measured. Similar to survey data can be both primary and secondary, depending on whether or not it was collected for the current research problem, (1990: 53).
Data collection was carried out by the researcher, using a combination of the techniques outlined by Tull and Hawkins (1990: 53) above – that is – a triangulation of research methodologies. An examination of secondary data, which included an examination of relevant academic books, journals, and reports containing references to the image of marketing within organisations and amongst consumers, was undertaken as the first data collection stage. Following analysis of this secondary data, the researcher commenced the second data collection stage which involved the primary research element of the study. This stage was completed, using a combination of semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with a representative sample of 11 business and academic leaders, an online consumer survey, and a research journal (see Appendix D). The data collection methods employed by the researcher are described in detail in sections 3:7.1 to 3:7.6.

3:7:1 Secondary Research

Burns and Bush (2010) refer to secondary data as “the process of searching for and interpreting existing information relevant to the research objectives. Secondary data are those that have been collected for some other purpose”, (2010: 146). As outlined in Section 3:7, the secondary data was sourced from a combination of academic books, journals, reports, and print journalism as well as investigation of secondary sources available online.

3:7:2 Primary Research

According to Chisnall (2001) primary research is one of two generic classifications of data on which research designs depend. Primary data are data that have been collected for the first time by on or a blend of the following:

- Observation
3:7.3 Personal Interviews

Chisnall (2001) defines an interview as "a conversation directed to a definitive purpose other than satisfaction in the conversation itself. It is concerned with the purposeful exchange of meanings, and it is this interaction between the interviewer and the respondent which contributes so much to the success of the interview", (2001: 173).

According to Jobber (2004), there are four options when choosing a survey method:

- Face-to-face Method
- Telephone Interviews
- Mail Surveys

To complete the qualitative element of the research for this study, the researcher employed a combination of face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews, as well as maintaining a research journal.

3:7.3.1 Face-to-Face Interviews

Jobber (2004) states that 'a major advantage of face-to-face interviews is that response rates are generally higher than for telephone interviews or mail surveys. Seemingly the personal element in the contact makes refusal less likely', (2004: 168).
For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed the face-to-face method for eight of respondents, who took part in the interview process. The face-to-face setting enabled the researcher to note the body language and facial expressions of the interviewees, to determine whether the interview was proceeding in a manner in which they were comfortable. This allowed the researcher to conduct the interviews in a way that facilitated participants to communicate their opinions openly.

3:7.3.2 Telephone Interviews

Kinnear and Taylor (1991) state that 'the telephone interview consists of an interviewer asking personal questions of one or more respondents via the telephone instead of by direct personal contact. With the telephone interview, the lower degree of social interaction between the interviewer and respondent reduces the potential for bias in comparison with the personal interview', (1991: 319).

A total of three respondents took part in the telephone interviews, mostly due to the time constraints for both the researcher and the interviewees, but also due to geographic restrictions in the case of one interviewee, who is based in Dublin. While this survey method does not allow the advantage of interpreting how the interviews are progressing, as well as the face-to-face method, it is the researcher’s opinion that the three interviews were completed in an open, relaxed and fluent manner for both the interviewee and the researcher.
A representative sample of 11 business and academic leaders, who are employed as marketing managers, or are closely aligned to the profession, were chosen for the semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews. It is the researcher’s opinion that this sample would have the strongest insights on how marketing is perceived within their respective organisations. The interviews were based on the same 13 open-ended questions (see Appendix B), which allowed the interviewees the opportunity to express their opinions in an open and detailed manner. It also allowed the opportunity for related topics to be discussed by the interviewees as the interviews progressed. A list of participants is outlined in Appendix A. The duration of the interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 95 minutes.

Chisnell (2001) describes three forms of interview which are commonly used

- Limited response
- Free response

The researcher’s interviews followed a free response format. Chisnall (2001) notes that free response interviews “give the respondent a great deal of freedom in answering questions arising from some general points of discussion made by the interviewer. Open questions are more general than closed questions, and the interviewer has the delicate task of encouraging the respondent to take an active part in the interview while, at the same time, keeping irrelevant discussion to a minimum”, (2001: 174: 175).
The researcher endeavoured to remain impartial and withheld his opinions throughout the interview process in order to prevent any possibility of influencing the interviewees' responses. As noted by Tull and Hawkins (1990) “the interviewer must follow one rule: one must not consciously try to affect the content if the answers given by the respondent. The respondent must feel free to reply to the various questions”, (1990: 392).

3:7.4 Surveys

Burns and Bush (2010) define surveys as follows: “Surveys involve interviews with a large number of respondents using a predesigned questionnaire. Communication is necessary to learn what respondents are thinking and their opinions, preferences, or intentions. Large numbers of respondents may be required in order to collect a large enough sample of important subgroups or to ensure that the study accurately represents some larger population”, (2010: 266).

An online, self-administered survey, containing a combination of Likert scale and open-ended questions was employed to investigate the opinions of consumers in their attitude towards marketing practices.

Burns and Bush (2010) define an online survey as “one in which computer technology plays a central role in the interview work. Either the computer conducts the interview or respondent interacts directly with it. In the case of Internet-based questionnaires, the computer acts as the medium through which potential respondents are approached, and it is the means by which respondents submit the completed questionnaire”, (2010: 273).

The survey was conducted online for a number of reasons:
- It enabled the researcher to investigate the opinions of consumers, in a relatively inexpensive and timely manner
- Online surveys allow the researcher to analyse the survey responses and gain valuable insights, using a variety of measurements available via the online service provider.
- An online survey provides the opportunity to divide the respondents into specific group segments, based on demographic profiles

3.7.5 Determining the Sampling Size of the Survey

Burns and Bush (2010) define the population, from the perspective of research as “the entire group under study as specified by the research project. A sample is a subset of the population that should represent the entire group”, (2008: 292). A total of 100 consumers responded to the online consumer survey.

According to Saunders et al (2007), there are two types of sampling techniques available to the researcher:

- Probability Sampling


It is the researcher’s view that a non-probability sampling technique was most appropriate for this study, for a number of reasons:

- A sampling frame was not available to the researcher
- There were limited resources (time, budget, etc.) available to the researcher to engage in probability sampling.

Saunders et al (2007) state that there are five main non-probability sampling techniques which can be used for research purposes:

- Quota
- Purposive
- Snowball
- Self-selection

Saunders et al (2007) posit that purposive sampling “enables you to use your judgment to select cases that will best enable you to answer your research question(s) and to meet your objectives. This form of sampling is often used when working with very small samples such as in case study research and when you wish to select cases that are particularly informative”, (2007: 230).

The researcher used a purposive sample for the qualitative semi-structured interviews, as the interviewees were selected for their in-depth knowledge of the research question.
Saunders *et al* (2007) state that Snowball sampling is commonly used “when it is difficult to identify members of the desired population”, (2007: 232).

The researcher used a snowball sample for the quantitative online survey. The researcher’s work colleagues, friends, family members were initially contacted directly via email which contained a link to the survey website, where they could complete the consumer survey. These respondents were then encouraged to contact other consumers using the same link to the survey website. A total population of 100 consumers completed the survey, using the snowball sample method.

**3.7.6 Research Journal**

Wisker (2008) states that “journals are a very useful way of capturing the changing decisions and reflections involved in carrying out research. They can help to capture things that would otherwise disappear from memory or, because they are not committed to paper or tape, might fail to be clearly articulated”, (2008: 221).

The researcher employed the use of a research journal throughout the research process, and in particular to track the progress and themes emerging from the semi-structured interviews. It is the researcher’s view that the research journal assisted in capturing the various issues as they arose with particular interviews, elements of the online survey, and general research. It also enabled the researcher to capture the experience of completing each part of the research process in words. The research journal (i.e. diary) is located in Appendix D.
3:8 Data Analysis

Chisnall (2001) notes that “the raw material of the research process, i.e. data, has to be processed by tabulation, analysis, and interpretation, so that the research findings can be communicated to clients and readily understood”, (2001: 44).

The researcher adopted a grounded approach to the data analysis stage of the research process. Wisker (2008) explains that a researcher adopting a grounded approach starts “from his or her own or others’ experience and grows theory from that experience in action”, (2008: 213).

3:9 Ethical Considerations

Malhotra (1996) posits that “the topic of ethics is extremely pertinent for marketing and for marketing research because of the amount and variety of contact marketers have with the public. Of all the aspects of business, marketing is the closest to the public view and, consequently, is subject to considerable societal analysis and scrutiny. This has created the perception that, within business, marketing is the area most prone to unethical practices. It is therefore imperative that marketers and market researchers in particular, adhere to ethical practices”, (1996: 822: 823).

Saunders et al (2007) state that “your research design may need to consider the extent to which you should collect data from a research population that is unaware of the fact that they are the subject of research and have not consented”, (2007: 153). The researcher can confirm that this did not occur during the course of this study.
According to Burns and Bush (2010) "ones philosophy usually determines what is appropriate, ethical behaviour", (2010: 90). Burns and Bush (2010) define ethics as "a field of inquiry into determining what behaviours are deemed appropriate", (2010: 90). The researcher adhered to the ethical considerations outlined above, when undertaking both primary and secondary research for this study.

With regard to the primary research undertaken, the researcher informed all participants in the semi-structured interviews about the purpose of the study as well as an explanation of the research question itself during the initial contact. Prior to the commencement of each interview, all participants were informed that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed for review by the research supervisor and the external examiner. Throughout the course of each interview, the researcher remained impartial and withheld any personal opinions that might potentially influence the interviewees' response. Following the interview, the researcher requested permission from the interviewees to use quotes where applicable. Each participant was also informed that the views expressed in the course of the interview could remain anonymous, if that was their preference.

The online survey was constructed so that the respondents remained anonymous. The only information available to the researcher was the survey questions based on demographics (age group and gender) as well as the respondents' IP address. Ethical considerations outlined above were adhered to for all comments entered on the researcher's diary.

With regard to the secondary research outlined in Chapter 2 of this study, all sources of the secondary data are recorded and highlighted both in the text and in the References section in the study.
3:10 Limitations of the Study

As the study progressed, the researcher found that image problems associated with marketing could encompass a wide range of related topics such as corporate social responsibility, environmental concerns, and ethics. Due to the limited time available to complete the research and the fact that it was undertaken in a part-time capacity, the researcher narrowed the scope of the study to challenges faced by marketers within their organisations and the opinions of consumers in Ireland. The researcher noted that the attitudes faced by marketers within their organisation as well as the opinions of consumers have shifted in recent times due largely to political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (PESTEL) changes in the external environment.

It is the researcher’s opinion that this study could be further developed to focus on areas of concern such as the tools associated with online marketing which enable the profession to be driven more by metrics. Further detail on this is discussed in Chapter 4.

With regard to the qualitative semi-structured interviews, the researcher encountered some challenges in convincing some marketing leaders to take part. One interview was cancelled, following an explanation of the research topic to the potential interview candidate, who had initially agreed to be interviewed. There were also several requests for interviews that were ignored. In the relation to the interviews that were conducted, the researcher faced some challenges – particularly in the earlier interviews – with regard to keeping the responses within the boundaries that the 13 questions covered.
One limitation of conducting one of the semi-structured interviews by phone was inability to read the expressions on the interviewee’s face, which the research found useful in other interviews, to determine whether the interviewee was happy with how the interview was progressing. It is the researcher’s experience that the telephone interview did not inhibit the content of the interviewee’s answers.

Lastly, it is the researcher’s opinion that the research question, based on the perceived image problems associated with marketing, has negative connotations and could therefore potentially result in a reticence on behalf of the interviewees to discuss the topic openly and expand on some of the questions, as opposed to a topic which is based on the positives in marketing. This may have resulted in a more limited examination of the study.

3:11 Reliability and Validity

Tull and Hawkins (1990) note that the term reliability “is used to refer to the degree of variable error in a measurement. We define reliability as the extent to which a measurement is free from variable errors. This is reflected when repeated measure of the same stable characteristic in the same objects show limited variation”, (1990: 272).

According to Tull and Hawkins (1990), there are four approaches to the estimation of reliability:

- Test-Retest Reliability which is applying the same measure to the same objects a second time
- Alternative forms reliability – measuring the same objects by two instruments that are designed to be nearly as alike as possible
- Internal comparison reliability – comparing the responses among the various items on a multiple-item index designed to measure a homogenous concept
- Scorer reliability – comparing the scores assigned the same qualitative material by two or more judges, (1990: 273).

Tull and Hawkins (1990) also note that validity, like reliability is concerned with error. “However, it is concerned with consistent or systematic error rather than variable error. A valid measurement reflects only the characteristics of interest and random error”, (1990: 274).

According to Tull and Hawkins (1990), there are three basic types of validity:
- Content validity – involves assessing the representativeness or the sampling adequacy of the items contained in the measuring instrument
- Construct validity – involves understanding the meaning of the obtained measurements
- Criterion-related validity – involves inferring an individual’s score or standing on some measurement, called a criterion, from the measurement at hand, (1990; 274:275).

The researcher endeavoured to ensure that all primary and secondary research was investigated, conducted, analysed, and reported in reliable and valid manner. The conclusions derived from the research are realistic and credible, in the opinion of the researcher.
3:12 Summary

This chapter defined the research problem and question. It outlined the research methodology of triangulation employed by the research. It also highlighted the objectives of the research as well as the research design, strategy and data analysis employed to meet these objectives.

The primary research involved a mixed method approach. This included a combination of qualitative semi-structured interviews from a purposive sample of 11 participants, a quantitative online survey, and a research diary kept by the researcher to record the progress of the study. The interview questions, the online survey and the diary are all located in the Appendix. At all times, ethical considerations were foremost in the approach the researcher took to the study – particularly in the case of the primary research carried out.

The analysis of the primary research as well as the findings resulting from this are outlined in Chapter 4, following.
Chapter 4: Research Findings and Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings derived from the two primary research techniques employed for the study. The chapter is completed in two sections:

Section 1 of Chapter 4 focuses on the Qualitative research process conducted for this study. This involves 11 semi-structured interviews with business and academic leaders operating in a broad range of industries and in academia. A total of 8 interviews were completed in a face to face setting. The remaining 3 semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone. The 11 interviewees, who have a direct responsibility for, or are closely linked to the marketing function of their organisation, were purposefully selected for a number of reasons:

- An excellent understanding of the market in which their organisation competes, as well as an awareness of how the internal and external environment is impacting the marketing department;

- The interviewees selected have a direct link to the consumer and are ideally placed to give an insight into how consumer opinions, habits, preferences, etc.; have changed in recent years; and

- As business and academic leaders, who are directly linked to marketing, the interviewees were ideal candidates to discuss how the marketing function is changing, if the influence of marketing is growing within their organisation, and whether
marketers could be better trained to meet those changes and increase the influence of marketing at a strategic level.

The interviews were conducted using the same 13 open-ended questions, which were communicated to the interviewee in a manner that would avoid the interviewer’s opinions influencing the answers. The interview questions are available in Appendix B.

The semi-structured nature of the interview process was employed by the interviewer in order to allow the interviews progress at the interviewees’ pace and also to allow their opinions to be voiced freely. This method also has the benefit of enabling the interviewees to express ideas and opinions which may not have been previously apparent to the interviewer.

All interviewees consented to be quoted in this study, and full transcripts of each interview are available on request. A complete list of the interviewees can be found in Appendix A.

Section 2 of Chapter 4 focuses on the Quantitative research process employed by the researcher for this study. The quantitative research process involved an online consumer survey, which was completed by 100 consumers.

The online consumer survey is included in the research conducted for the study, for a number of reasons:

- The topic of the study is based on consumer opinions of marketing, as well as those who work in organisations that employ a marketing department. Therefore it is the
researcher's view that primary research focusing on the consumers' view of marketing is a relevant worthwhile contribution to the study; and

- Based on the author's secondary research, it is apparent that much of the negative opinions of marketing come from consumers. Therefore, primary consumer-based research is a relevant addition to the study.

The split between male and female respondents in the Online Survey is 44% and 46% respectively. The online survey includes consumer age demographics, to examine whether any discernable differences in consumer attitudes towards Marketing existed amongst the following age groups:

- Under 20 Years Old
- 20 – 29 Years Old
- 30 – 39 Years Old
- 40 – 49 Years Old
- 50 Years or Older

The participants in the online consumer survey were advised of the general theme of the research. Consumer comments are included in Section 2 of Chapter 4. The identities of the participants are restricted to the Age Category (as outlined above) and the gender, to ensure the anonymity of the consumers.
Section 1: The View of Marketing from those within the profession

4:1.1 The Image of Marketing from the Perspective of the Business World:

The 11 semi structured interviews completed for this study reveals that a majority of interviewees accept that Marketing has an image problem – both within their organisation and from the business-to-consumer perspective. The following sections reveal the major factors contributing to this image problem, from the viewpoint of those who participated in the interview process.

4:1.1.1 The Image Problem facing Marketing from a Business-to-Consumer Perspective:

The study reveals that 64% of interviewees accept that Marketing has an image problem, from the perspective of consumers.

The following interviewee states that as society in Ireland has changed. There is a wider range of products and services available to the consumer, and as a result, increased competition for share of voice in the marketing world. Consumers have become jaded with the relentless targeting by marketers, and are suspicious of any Marketing messages they perceive to be questionable:
The consumer has become, you know, the consumer today versus the consumer 20 years ago, where we all got excited about Snap, Crackle and Pop...that was about it...you know marketing messages weren’t so complex, so therefore maybe the consumer didn’t have as much - certainly in Ireland – didn’t as much choice, weren’t exposed to as many messages, that they weren’t as sophisticated. Consumers now are really sophisticated, and because they are so sophisticated and they can make an informed choice, they are absolutely suspicious of the marketing messages that are coming out.

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd

The same respondent also notes that whereas well-crafted messages were effective in the past, the traditional marketing lexicon now deters rather than attracts potential customers. The contributor is mindful of this, when it comes to communicating with the target market. In response to the question does marketing have an image problem the interviewee states:

Absolutely, I think it does, and we have to be very careful, and I have to be very careful. Every time I hit somebody, (because I have to be careful of that when I’m writing a message), and we’re sitting down talking about it, and we say ‘let’s say this to them’, and then we end up with... ‘that’s such a marketing message. They’re going to see through that straight away’.

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd
The following respondent states that the failure of some Marketers to correctly identify and communicate to an attentive target market is leading to frustration, from the perspective of consumers and contributes to the negative image of marketing:

*I only recently got a text from a supplier for blinds and I’m not in the market for blinds at the moment. I got three or four texts a day. I got very upset over this as well! And I just think this is the beauty and the really nice part of marketing that you have to find your right market and then try and convince these people to buy your services or products. But you can’t just hit everybody with it. It’s not going to work for you this way so.... Even bad ads on TV.... you kind of feel ‘Oh God... who thought this up and why is this happening’! Yes I do think that it has a bad image alright."

Suzanne Detzner,
Market Research Project Manager, Eolas

The following interviewee concurs with the previous contributor and believes that a basic function of marketing – (i.e. the mutually beneficial act of matching the needs and wants of consumers with a product or service that fits those needs and wants) – often fails. However, the following interviewee believes the mismatch of the consumer and the product or service can often occur due to a misunderstanding by the consumer, rather than the vendor:
I think that’s possibly more about the person than the marketing. And like any of the packages and all of the things marketing-wise that we do, are targeted at people who we know like the product. We’re not trying to convince anyone who doesn’t want to come, to come. I often find that particularly here, to be exclusive, you have to exclude people, and that’s a theme that’s really become apparent this year...that people feel... ‘oh God, we really need to get away, we’ll definitely go to Inchydoney, I’ve heard loads about it’. And often, the people who come here aren’t the type of people that we were targeting. And we find they don’t enjoy the experience, and we don’t enjoy them being here. You know, sometimes, you just get the wrong people. Their expectations are completely different to what we’re offering, and sometimes you’re wondering, ‘God, did we put out the wrong information?'

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa

The following respondent states that the negative image of marketing, from the perspective of consumers, does exist, but is the result of an innate cynicism within people in general. The researcher notes an acknowledgement in the interviewee that what they are doing – in marketing a product or service – is somehow clandestine. When asked during the interview if Marketing has an image problem, her response was as follows:

I think it does. I think it always will. Its human nature to be cynical of somebody that’s trying to covertly sell you something and giving it a different face, you know.

Claire Carroll,
Digital Marketing Manager, Ogilvy Ireland
The following interviewee accepts that some elements of Marketing, such as above the line advertising, can be uninspiring from the perspective of consumers. However the interviewee believes that a consumer will not single out one department – i.e. Marketing – for criticism. Rather, they will criticise the whole company or brand that is responsible for these adverts:

*I don’t think people associate messages by newspaper, media, TV. I don’t think they associate that with the marketing department. They associate it with the company. Some of the very creative stuff that you see on the internet is so clever and so edgy and I would think that people would think very positively of that. I think you can get bored of some of things you see between ad breaks during the Sunday Game at the weekend. I think people see that as tired and boring – same old, same old.*

David Kelly,
Chief Commercial Officer, SWS Group

The following interviewee is in agreement with the previous respondent stating that consumers may not necessarily separate the Marketing element from the business or brand itself. The participant also notes the misperception that marketing equals advertising:

*The misperception or misconception is probably still out there that marketing is advertising and I think it always will be. People don’t necessarily understand what marketing is about. Would there be an image problem with the consumers? I don’t know if the consumers really think about a discipline like marketing*

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor
The following interviewee posits that due to the increasing sophistication of consumers, most Marketing departments and businesses in general are mindful and endeavour to avoid misleading consumers, which would result in a negative image. Marketing also has to adhere to strict media guidelines which prevent any superfluous or incorrect claims:

To answer your question, they are savvy consumers; they’re not going to pull the wool over anybody’s eyes. Tesco are a recent example where Conor Pope showed them up. Regular consumers would be aware of that anyway. There is an emphasis on marketing to be honest when you’re communicating. If we’re making a claim that our own brand range is 30% cheaper than the leading brand; you have to substantiate it. You can’t just make comments. Everything we say has to be authenticated and it’s challenged by the media as well. If we are doing a price cut campaign and our team have to substantiate that – show me how you dropped your prices or show me how the own brand is cheaper. So definitely there is a big emphasis on honest communications. You have to get it right first time because if you pull the wool over somebody’s eyes, it will backfire.

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager, Centra

However, the same interviewee also suggests that consumers do not forget marketing mishaps easily, and sites the following example:
Did you ever hear of Cadbury’s offer to collect wrappers for sports equipment? It was probably the biggest marketing mess ups of all time. Kids collected wrappers, brought them into Tesco and the amount of wrappers equated to free goal posts or basketballs, etc. There was one journalist who exposed it, revealing that you needed, say 1,000 wrappers, to get a basketball. For a kid to work off the calories of those chocolate bars, he would have to continually bounce the basketball for 98 hours! That was a huge mess for them PR wise.

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager, Centra

4:1.1.2 The Image Problem facing Marketers within their Organisation

A further 18% of interviewees, who participated in the semi-structured interviews state that the negative image of Marketing exists within their own organisations also.

The following interviewee reveals that the image problems associated with Marketing exist within business, due to the perception that it is a function which anyone could perform. The contributor also states that – with regard to consumers – the image problem may be associated with certain brands in particular, rather than marketing in general. In response to the question, ‘Does Marketing have an Image Problem’, the contributor states:
You know, I'm sure it does, and I don't think it's marketing in general, it's probably some brands have an image problem with consumers, as opposed to marketing, so I think that response would probably vary, depending on what brands you're talking about. And again, marketing is a discipline which most people feel they could do very easily. So back to what people think internally, I'd say most people internally would think, 'sure for God's sake I could probably do marketing in the morning'. Everyone has an opinion on it. Whereas, something like Finance, people think 'oh God, I don't know much about those numbers. I better not say anything. I don't understand it fully'. Whereas, marketing is easy, so people understand it, and have an opinion on it, and therefore could easily think, 'sure that's easy. I could do that', kind of opinion. So I'm not surprised consumers are cynical.

Rhona Holland,
Marketing Director, PepsiCo

The following interviewee is in agreement with the previous contributor stating that Marketing does have an image problem internally, which is the result of a misunderstanding of what Marketing involves and what is its role within an organisation. The interviewee also makes the point that a lot of people view Marketing as a talking shop. In response to the question whether marketing has an image problem or not, he states:

Yes, definitely. I think that it's probably a misunderstanding of what marketing is more than anything else. I suppose you have the clichéd image of people working in marketing, kind of a lot people working in a room talking about stuff, but nothing really gets delivered out of it. You probably get this skit whereby you get people in a room talking about ridiculous ideas.

Ray Coppinger,
Online Marketing Manager, Premier Global Services
This study has revealed that 73% of participants in the semi-structured interviews acknowledge their Marketing department is not held in the same esteem as other departments in the business and academic environment.

The following interviewee reveals the popular perception that Marketing historically has no accountability when it comes to marketing budgets:

*Historically marketing would have been seen as the crayon dept. You know, we come up with the nice colours, and you know it's kind of 'here's lots of money, now go run a campaign and we can't track it'. So marketing has historically been the cost centre, the department that spends all the money. Sales are the guys who bring the money in and then we blow loads of it.*

The same interviewee sites the omission of Marketing vacancies from a company recruitment drive, as further proof that it is not as high on the agenda as other departments:

*What's interesting, even in terms of the rest of the company, a lot of the PR and publicity that's been going around recruitment, and Quest in Cork, and all the rest of it – if you read any of the articles – you'll see, you know – 'Oh, and we're recruiting in Sales and Renewals and Finance' but never a mention of Marketing...Marketing doesn't even feature in most people's minds.*

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd
The following interviewee states that challenge facing Marketers of accounting for the Marketing budget often leads to a perception that the department is wasteful and incapable of quantifying a Return on Investment:

_I suppose there's an ROI question... With off line marketing I think the challenge is, if you run a campaign in an airport with a banner, you go to an event... it's very hard to quantify the actual return from that investment. So I think there's probably an image problem with marketing, whereby it's hard to know what they're bringing to the business_

Ray Coppinger,
Online Marketing Manager, Premier Global Services.

The following interviewee states that the lack of Marketing credibility is based on the belief that it is a department which is responsible solely for minor frivolous tasks:

_I think we've had it here in Calor before our internal re-positioning – that is marketing is advertising, and does the brochures, does the ad in the paper, gets me the free pens and umbrellas, and what not, and it's not taken seriously... Yeah, not being taken seriously is probably the biggest thing._

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor.

The following interviewee states that the marketing function has little impact in his organisation:

_In a business-to-business trade, it's not particularly sexy, its ordinary pretty straightforward office-based type of activity. I don't think marketing has as much of an impact or is as important._

David Kelly,
Chief Commercial Officer, SWS Group
The following interviewee posits that Marketing is not seen as a true profession on a par with accounting and law:

*The first issue I suppose really is that marketing really isn't regarded as a profession, and that would be over my years working in this area really, unlike the professions - legal, accounting, etc.*

Lisa Murphy,
Strategic Planning Director, Think-Tank.

The following interviewee posits that even though the Marketing department is responsible for some of the most globally recognisable brands, the respondent's peers in other departments – particularly in Finance – can be dismissive of the actual benefits that the marketing function brings to the business:

*I guess if you were to talk in general internally a lot of other functions within the organisation look at marketing sometimes as a bit of a waste of money and surely that's a place where we can cut a bit of funding from, and you know we always have this internal kind of joke between finance and marketing department and you know saying we should be cutting x, y, and z budget and you're spending too much, etc., etc., and marketing trying to turn things round and saying if we weren't here building our brands no one would buy them. There would be no need for marketing, no need for finance or manufacturing or any other type of function, because we wouldn't be selling anything. So, you know, that's the kind of constant debate that goes back and forth I guess.*

Rhona Holland,
Marketing Director, PepsiCo
The following participant in the interview process states that the esteem in which Marketing is held often depends on the academic and professional background of senior management:

*If you’re talking to senior management, a lot of the time a lot of them are from a more scientific background and there have been attempts to treat the faculty as a much lighter faculty because we are the numbers faculty.*

Maurice Murphy,
Marketing Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology

The same interviewee sites his own experience, as example of image Marketing has amongst his peers from other departments:

*I remember my first job lecturing and I was lecturing marketing to a computing class. The coordinator came over to me who was in year 3 and said “we don’t want any soft marks in this subject”.*

Maurice Murphy,
Marketing Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology

The following interviewee concurs with the previous contributor’s comments, stating that the credibility or the esteem, in which marketing is held, often depends on the attitude of senior management. It is the contributor’s experience that the perception of marketing has not always been positive, and often there is confusion about what is the function of marketing:
I know that in other jobs I would have done, it wouldn’t have been the main thing. They would have said ‘what is marketing actually?’ Or some people thought that marketing was sales, which is what everyone kind of thinks initially. I suppose it’s what everyone thinks when they think about marketing – it’s ‘selling the hotel’. It’s not really, and you know that and I know that but internally, sometimes it’s trying to get that across. Not in this job as I say because the owner of the hotel is quite marketing-orientated anyway, so he realises that in a recession, marketing is where you spend most of your money. Rather than what a lot of places do, which is cut the budget.

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa

4:1.3 Marketing: The Importance of Metrics

The study has revealed that a total of 36% of interviewees in the semi-structured interviews believe that the adoption of metrics in marketing has become central to measuring the overall performance of the department within their business. The interviewees’ views are expressed in under headings 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 below:

4:1.3.1 The absence of Metrics in Marketing raises question marks over performance

The research highlights the challenges that marketing traditionally face, when it comes to measuring the department’s success. 18% of respondents reveal that marketing is relying on estimations rather than evidence without clearly defined metrics.
The following interviewee argues that Marketing as a profession must reject the traditional approach of investing in marketing activity, without being able to quantify its impact, in favour of a metrics driven approach which enables a company to employ a more scientific approach to measuring success:

*Now everything should be metrics driven. In a lot of organisations it’s not metrics driven and there’s a lot of education – also here at Quest – there’s a lot of education around moving from that kind of more or less trying and see what happens without results back, or any negative impact if it doesn’t work, versus making sure that if I spend 10,000, we’re going to get, you know, 3x or 10x of that back*

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd

The following interviewee highlights one of the key reasons why marketing has an image problem within many organisations:

*Other departments have the clearer deliverables or results from the work they do, you know? Operations can have 99.9% up time, Sales can have revenue targets. What do marketing bring?*

### 4:1.3.2 The recession has expedited the adoption of Metrics in Marketing

The study reveals that 36% of interviewees believe the recession has hastened the arrival of metrics-based Marketing:
The following interviewee states that a metrics-driven Marketing strategy is now more relevant, given the current economic environment facing business. The interviewee reveals that the internal shift toward focusing on metrics, to account for all marketing spend, has emerged in conjunction with the shift towards online marketing:

*I guess people are far more interested in the metrics of what we’re spending and what the results are. In a non-recessionary time, you’d be a lot about spending a lot of money on certain types of advertising, whereas now it’s a lot more about can you justify the spend, so looking at the Return On Investment on every piece of our marketing spend. We’re doing a lot more online, as opposed to big huge costly ads and buying the media appropriately. So I guess it’s just shifted, as it has everyone’s opinion, in terms of looking for real value for what we’re spending, making sure we’re measuring for what we’re spending, talking to consumers a lot and also valuing that consumers are strapped and under pressure. On a monthly basis, we have metrics that we get in that are sales and profit figures and they are what drives the business, so they’re very, very important. But we have very important KPIs which are things like Market Share.*

Rhona Holland
Marketing Director, PepsiCo

The following interviewee posits that Marketing budget and performance is scrutinised in greater detail as a result of the current recession:

*In the good years if you wanted to spend 50k going to an event and having a stand in place, there might have been fewer questions... But nowadays, marketing spend is probably scrutinised a bit harder, because of that lack of tracking and ability to measure.*

Ray Coppinger,
Online Marketing Manager, Premier Global Services
The following interviewee also states that the recession has driven the focus towards measurement of all elements of marketing at a micro level:

\textit{You're searching for perfection and we re-look at everything, measure it every 6 months and make sure we do better. For example, regarding our point of sale; we did a whole piece on it this year of looking at every single element of point of sale that you see.}

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager with Centra

The study also revealed the potential for greater marketing influence in the overall strategy of a business, when more focus is placed on metrics. The following participant highlights an example of this:

\textit{Marketing is implementing a scoring system which means that if they hit the website once, they get a mark of 1. If they come back and maybe attend a web class, maybe it goes to 3. If they download the evaluation then it might go to 5. And then it turns up in the Sales guys' queue. So Marketing is having a huge impact on how...on driving how the Inside Sales model is shaped. And I think that is only going to increase over time.}

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd

\textbf{4:1.4 Leadership challenges faced by Marketing}

This study has revealed that 27\% of interviewees, who participated in the semi-structured interviews, state that their Marketing department face internal challenges in their efforts to align the Marketing strategy with the business strategy and incorporate a Marketing ethos within their organisation.
The following interviewee posits that re-positioning the company brand can be undermined by a lack of cohesiveness with other departments:

_We've put a big bold branding position statement out there with 'Calor – Now We Can'. I suppose the biggest challenge is that that's a huge promise, because it's very positive and very affirmative and yes we can help you, and we can do this for you and what not. The huge challenge is we're saying that as the public face of the organisation, but can the rest of the organisation follow that and deliver on the brand promise? That to me is the big challenge internally. Can we actually have a big company come with us and deliver the brand promise that we're out there shouting about? If someone in credit control or in customer support doesn't deal with someone in a very nice way, the Calor promise is undermined. You can have the nicest TV ad in the world, but how the phone is answered could make or break it"._

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor Ireland.

The following interviewee notes that while marketing may be viewed as central to business strategy, other departments prioritise goals that may not necessarily work in tandem with marketing strategy. The participant reveals that it can be a challenge to refocus the various stakeholders within a business on a longer term vision which can often be sacrificed to short term needs:
I think that goes back to the personalities within the hotel and the background of the people. The owner of the hotel is an accountant by trade but would be very marketing focussed. So while the finance and all of that is very important and that’s what keeps us going, he would be very aware of the importance of the marketing and putting money into that. The only difference would be that operationally day to day, some of the stuff gets a bit pushed forward maybe more because it's literally in that day. The challenge for me is to make sure that the stuff that’s happening next month and the month after is talked about in time.

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa

The following interviewee concurs with the previous contributor’s view that marketing faces internal challenges, regardless of the fact that Marketing is pivotal to the overall business strategy within the organisation.

Back in 2005, Marketing was almost like an afterthought. There was a strategic move in 2007 to put marketing at the heart of business. When the recession hit, the decision was made to put even more emphasis on marketing. The marketing department need to be continually on top of the game, and keep the focus, as a result.

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager for Centra

4:1.5 Marketing Jargon contributes to the negative image of Marketing
This study has uncovered that marketing jargon contributes to its negative image, both internally within organisations, and from the perspective of the organisation's customers. 27% of the contributors to the semi-structured interviews in this study confirmed that marketing speak has a negative impact on its image internally and externally.

The following interviewee acknowledges that the Marketing industry also contributes to its poor image, through the proliferation of marketing jargon:

\textit{I suppose as an industry we're probably not understood, but maybe -- to go off in a slight tangent -- we don't help ourselves. I was looking at a marketing magazine there recently and the jargon we come out with as an industry sometimes is embarrassing.}

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor.

The following interviewee sites the growing cynicism amongst consumers as a major reason why marketing jargon needs to be avoided:

\textit{I think your average consumer is very cynical. Therefore, for me, as a marketer I have to be very cognisant of the cynicism that somebody and the other end of the email or the other end of the advertisement is going to feel. So you have to make it as scientific and as helpful to them as you possibly can.}

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd.

The recession has heightened the negativity associated with the use of marketing jargon, with the following interviewee confirming that customers are more cynical of what they perceive to be marketing spin:
The market isn't as open as it was. It's restricted by the recession and people are very reluctant to spend money, so it's a lot more of a convincing job that it would be. There's no more flowering, wrapping everything up nicely. It's very much 'look you have to make sure things are done right, probably better than maybe the last time'.

Suzanne Detzner,
International Market Research Manager, Eolas.

4:1.6 Businesses often fails to get the true potential from Marketing:

This research has uncovered the failure of many organisations to properly leverage the full potential of Marketing and the capabilities of Marketers. 18% of participants in the semi-structured interviews believe the true of Marketing is undervalued.

The following interviewee outlines the limitations placed on the marketing function within his organisation:

It's not understood in what it can actually bring to an organisation because by only being seen as advertising, the leaflets, and the brochures, and helping me give a few free things to a customer, then you're not actually getting the value out of marketing, which is understanding the customer, the proper customer segmentation, the proper targeted campaigns, etc. That's what true marketing is about.

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor Ireland.
The following interviewee reveals that her Marketing agency work with clients, whose perceptions of what Marketing can bring to their organisation is limited to routine and basic Marketing tasks:

*In terms of, you know, leveraging the power of what an understanding of Strategic Marketing can do for a business, and how primarily it is all about generating profit. They wouldn’t have an understanding of the link, really, between business goals – marketing and facilitating the achievement of business goals, and brand being the face of the business strategy*

Lisa Murphy,
Strategic Planning Director, Think-Tank.

4:1.7 A focus on academic standards in Marketing is required to improve the standards of Marketing in Business:

The study has reveals five major issues associated with academic qualifications in Marketing, which need to be addressed, in order to better prepare graduates for a career in Marketing. The issues are discussed in Sections 4:1.7.1 to 4:1.7.5

4:1.7.1 The Importance of Work Experience to Marketing students:

The research reveals that 45% of contributors to the semi-structured interviews state that practical Marketing experience, prior to graduation is vital to ensuring students are fully prepared for a career in Marketing.
The following interviewee states that, if faced with a choice of hiring a new employee with a more Practical-based qualification, as opposed to someone with a Theory-based qualification, there would be no doubt who she would choose:

_There are a lot of Marketing theory Masters, and I think if I saw somebody’s CV with Marketing Practice, MBA, I’d bite their hand off, whereas the recruiting that I’m doing now, I’m seeing a lot of people that have got a BA in Marketing and Management, and then no Marketing skills, or Marketing ability and unfortunately I’m not in a position to take those kinds of people because I need to have someone who can be up and running easily._

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd

The following interviewee is in agreement with the participant’s views expressed above, regarding his preference for graduates with experience:

_We hired a girl last August, straight from college. She’s a graduate of the diploma in marketing practice, which happened to be in Smurfit, but I know there are other ones. She had practical experience. She worked on projects for organisations, and she came in with quite practical knowledge on how to apply these things and how to get things done._

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor.

The following interviewee posits that the standard of newly graduated students with practical experience is highly advantageous in comparison to qualifications he received at 3rd and 4th level:
We would have students who come through us and I would have had students under me over the last 6 years. They're lucky in a way that certain courses do look for work experience over 3 years. That's something I didn't have in CIT. Until I went to UCC to do my Masters, it was never on the table.

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager, Centra

The following interviewee states that while a focus on academic advancement is advantageous, it is vital to include work experience in the process of preparing for a career in marketing:

*I would say firstly, whatever you can do, and what you're doing in terms of a Masters – you know – 'specing' yourself up in terms of education is fantastic. And then just trying to get some expertise, trying to get some experience and exposure to what happens in reality and in a marketing basis.*

Rhona Holland,
Marketing Director, PepsiCo

The following interviewee contrasts the abstract nature of her own academic experience, versus a qualification with the benefits of more practical experience:

*In my time, it was all esoteric stuff. No practical experience. I mean, that's a basic thing, you know...If I had my time again, I would have tried to get in to a programme – an undergrad programme, or something like that, in one of those major companies.*

Lisa Murphy,
Strategic Planning Director, Think Tank
4.1.7.2 Social Media and Online Marketing Courses/Modules are a prerequisite to all Marketing graduates

The study uncovers a trend towards a preference for graduates with Social Media and Online Marketing experience. 45% of the respondents to the semi-structured interviews state the importance of incorporating Social Media and Online Marketing in Marketing courses.

The following interviewee advises that current students and Marketing courses need to stay abreast of the changes social media have brought to Marketing and business in general:

*I certainly would be inclined to ensure they were up to date on trends and that they are plugged into what's happening in terms of the social media revolution. You need to be getting conscious of what LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, and so on, can do for a business in terms of awareness. So I would make sure that college graduates are fully versed in the latest trends and technologies.*

David Kelly,
Chief Commercial Officer, SWS Group

The following interviewee is in agreement with the previous contributor, and states that the traditional tools of communicating to customers, such as print media, have changed irrevocably with the advent of social media, smart phones, and the shift to online marketing:

*Looking at the technological landscape in terms of understanding of what are tablet devices going to do to the print media, what are tablet devices going to do to e-commerce, what's near field communication in mobiles going to do in terms of e-commerce, and just in time transactions. So it definitely needs to be looked at. But I would whole-heartedly get behind any initiatives that would look at bringing the digital mind set in to the academic world.*
The following interviewee espouses the view that those in the Marketing industry who do not adapt to social media and online marketing will soon find that their skill set is obsolete:

*In this day and age you have to demonstrate that you’ve got some online skills as well, so that you can do you Google ads, and you can do your online advertising or your email blasts. You need to be able to show that, because if you can’t do that now, very soon, people who don’t have those skills are going to be seen as dinosaurs.*

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd.

The following interviewee states that the inclusion of Social Media and Online Marketing to Marketing courses needs to be expedited as the more traditional marketing techniques that are taught at an academic level are becoming increasingly irrelevant:

*I think social media marketing needs to be pushed out there a little bit quicker I would say. It’s here, and I don’t think the courses have caught up with that, if you know what I mean. There’s a very traditional...looking at traditional models of marketing that don’t really exist anymore.*

Ray Coppinger,
Online Marketing Manager, Premier Global Ltd

The following interviewee also states the importance of incorporating social media in to the academic education of marketers. The contributor acknowledges that the marketing function within her own company is somewhat behind the learning curve in terms of adapting to the shift to online marketing:
If I had my time over, I would certainly be savvier regarding the internet, social media and what’s out there, but they probably are now anyway. I think it took us certainly here about 12 months to cotton on to Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare, and even at that, we’re not there yet. But I think as an intern if you could bring that to a company, it would be huge because I think a lot of the positions now...we’re in the position and only learning about social media now, whereas if you could have this as kind of a string to your bow, I certainly think would be an added advantage.

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa

4:1.7.3 Marketing theory needs to be relevant to smaller industry, as well as multinationals

The study reveals that 27% of participants in the semi-structured interviews believe the theory content of most Marketing courses are too broad-based, and does not prepare the graduate for the various marketing cultures that exist within various industries such as retail, pharmaceutical, etc.

The participants in the semi-structured interviews also reveal that a lot of the marketing content at 3rd and 4th level education is largely based on multinationals, which bears little or no relevance to most marketing positions in business – and in particular in Ireland.
The following interviewee, states that the marketing course he completed had very little relevance when he began his career in the retail industry. As a result, this contributor was not as prepared as he could have been, had a more tailored approach to the marketing in academia existed:

_I remember thinking that in college they should have gone into looking at industries more and what marketing means in that type of industry. It was very much broad principles. I remember in CIT you could go down Direct Marketing or Services Marketing were the choices you got, and I went for Direct Marketing but they never looked at different types of industries and what marketing means within those industries. I can tell you now that marketing in a retail industry is a hell of a lot different to telecommunications or tourism. The same principles apply but I think it would have been beneficial to have a clear understanding of different types of industries and what marketing means to them. If I was going back to lecture or if I was building a curriculum, I would definitely do a section for a semester on segregating different types of industries._

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager, Centra.

The following interviewee is in agreement with the contributor above and states that there is too much focus on how marketing is carried out in large multinationals, which does not relate to the marketing performed in most business based in Ireland:
I did marketing in UCC myself and a lot of it was theory-based and focussing on huge companies with huge budgets. I remember doing a project on Jameson and another one on Diageo, who have huge budgets, do billboard advertising worldwide. That's all fine and dandy, but when you go somewhere that's a lot smaller and budgets are a lot less, and the whole product is more specific, it's good to be aware that it's not all razzle dazzle stuff with big companies.

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa

4:1.7.4 The standard of undergraduates needs to improve to ensure an improvement in the business environment

The following interviewee opines that many of the undergraduates currently undertaking Marketing courses are often immature and have a poor understanding of basic grammar, which will lead to disappointing results academically, and ultimately a poor standard of graduates who are unprepared and unsuited to a career in marketing:

There should be a stipulation that you have to be at least 20 going in [to third level education] or else we have to extend the period because what's happening is a lot of them are coming in and they have problems in terms of their basic literacy and numeracy. Those who are performing badly are not suitable to careers in a lot of cases. They don't have the time keeping skills, they don't have university skills, and they don't have literacy skills. I sat down with someone one day and was teaching how to use an apostrophe to someone who was 23 and doing a Masters. We did it very simply and I felt English was going to let her down in her dissertation. It's due to the fact that people aren't picking up books or newspapers.

Maurice Murphy,
4:1.7.5 Metrics and Measuring performance needs to be included in Academic studies

The study indicates that 27% of respondents believe Metrics in Marketing should be incorporated into 3rd and 4th level courses in academia, in order to better prepare students of Marketing for a career in the business world.

The following interviewee posits that while the creative element of marketing is studied in 3rd and 4th level education, a focus on how to measure success is not tackled in her experience, and is vital in the business world:

_You will always have to justify your spend and you will have to make sure that you measure your successes of a marketing campaign at all times, and I think that’s something that’s missing in college usually quite a bit. You learn about how to create an ad or how to create a certain campaign, how to use different marketing tools, etc., but you don’t learn enough about how to measure your success._

Suzanne Detzner,  
Market Research Project Manager, Eolas.

The following interviewee concurs with the views expressed by the previous contributor, regarding the importance of incorporating metrics and measuring marketing performance into 3rd and 4th level education. The interviewee states that it is an issue which only recently has been addressed:
I think probably in the academic world, they’re just starting to get around to the idea that metrics are important and it’s not all ‘product, price, placement’, it’s not the 4 P’s all the time, you know what I mean? There’s a lot more to it than that. I think Marketing has become... or the way I see marketing going, it’s more like accounting than it ever was.

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd

The following interviewee is in agreement with the above statement, regarding the importance of introducing an understanding of metrics to marketing courses:

I think a data statistics focus is actually really important. It’s probably something that was over-looked traditionally.

Ray Coppinger,
Online Marketing Manager, Premier Global Services.

4:1.8 Marketing and the Consumer: From Monologue to Dialogue

The study has revealed that Marketing communications are increasingly decided by a more assertive target market, according to 36% of respondents, who participated in the semi-structured interviews. Consumers now play a major part in deciding the medium and content of marketing, and in some cases, marketing is carried out on a consumer-to-consumer basis.

The following interviewee reveals that the marketing message and the business in general are increasingly by-passed with the advent of social media. The recession has underlined this shift. Consumers are listening to other consumers and deciding on whether to spend their money based on that dialogue, rather than what the marketing department is communicating:
I find in the recent past that TripAdvisor and Social Media are huge because people are looking at other people’s reviews on how they got on, and was it worth their money. When you’re spending – whatever it might be – €500 or €600 for a weekend, they want to be sure they get every last penny’s worth of value. And TripAdvisor I’m finding is huge for people. You know, telling other people how they got on and what good value it was.

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa.

The following participant states that the balance of power has shifted completely to the consumer, in terms of marketing communication. The consumer is now integral to the creation and dissemination of adverts, due to the shift online and the out-dated nature of traditional marketing:

There’s a whole digital revolution now, if you like and consumers in many cases are actually creating our ads. Especially in the States, we do that quite a bit, and have competitions for people to create our TV ads and whatever, but the point being, the power has very much shifted to the consumer. Whereas, in the good old days, as we’d call them, the power very much rested with the brand and with the company. So we’ve had to change a lot and that’s a big challenge for organisations like ourselves, to educate ourselves in what’s going on and what the new realities are from a consumer/brand relationship.

Rhona Holland,
Marketing Director, PepsiCo.

The following interviewee states that it is a major challenge in the current economic environment to communicate effectively with the consumer, and differentiating the business from their competitors’ messages, to enable cut-through with the target market:
The biggest challenge is getting products through because of all the industries, the retail industry is spending more on marketing than they ever did before the recession. The Sunday Independent is literally covered with adverts, on TV you see Centra, Tesco, Dunnes, SuperValu – everybody is shouting.

Shane Lynch,
Brand Manager for Centra.

The following interviewee reveals that a greater understanding of the customer’s economic position has to be considered when communicating with customers, in a business to business context, as a result of the recession. When asked, during the semi-structured interview, if the company has the recession altered how it communicates with customers, the participant stated:

Yeah, I think it has, in terms of the level of empathy you’ve got to show to customers, or to clients. You have to be very mindful of the fact that they are working under extreme pressure, from their managers and stakeholders. So I think that level of consideration is hugely important.

Claire Carroll,
Digital Marketing Manager, Ogilvy Ireland

4:1.9 The Impact of Pricing on Marketing in the Recession
The study reveals that price is the sole focus for consumers, when making a purchasing decision, as a result of the recession, according to 36% of participants in the semi-structured interviews. As price dictates the purchasing decision, this is restricting the impact of the other elements of the Marketing Mix, and ultimately the marketer’s ability to differentiate their business from competition.

The following interviewee states that the consumer focus on price limits the creativity and innovativeness of their marketing department as the target market is not interested in hearing about other product attributes. *The biggest challenge to get through to the consumer is finding innovative and different ways of talking about value for money. That’s pretty much all they want to hear about in the main, and that’s a huge challenge.*

Shane Lynch, 
Brand Manager for Centra

The following interviewee posits that industries, such as IT – where discount messaging would never have previously been considered – have now begun to communicate with their target with an increased focus on price cuts. In response to the question ‘Have you altered how you communicate with your customer, as a result of the recession, the interviewee revealed:
I would probably say yes, to be honest, and that would be not just here but probably in my previous organisation as well. Customers have become much more price sensitive. So therefore, you’re talking less about the bells and whistles and ‘oh look at that shiny red light or this shiny green light’. But you will see more of it probably than you historically have done. But certainly a lot of the other organisations are turning their messaging around to ‘hey 50% off if you buy this week’s...’ almost like the second hand car dealer type thing that you wouldn’t have seen in ‘Tech’ at all in the past.

Elaine McCarthy,
Field Marketing Manager, Quest Software International Ltd

The following interviewee concurs with the previous contributor’s comments regarding a focus on price. The interviewee states that it is very challenging to operate in Marketing at present, without having a financial incentive for the consumer:

I think we’re probably much more focused on value messages and payment plans as a company. You’re very much more conscious of promoting value messages. The financial hook is very important in any of our messaging at the moment, because we’re finding customers need a financial hook.

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor.

The following interviewee states that the recession has brought about a more assertive consumer, who is not interested in how marketing positions the business, but rather informs the business what they expect, and what they will pay for it. This change has made a lot of marketing functions almost redundant:
Consumers are a lot savvier and they know what they want. It’s got to the stage at times where they ring and tell you what they want rather than you telling them what you can offer them. Which, in one way it’s good, but in another way it’s a shift in people’s thinking, and people know literally what they want. They’ll nearly tell you, I want this and this is what I’ll pay for it. Rather than us getting to extol the virtues of what we can do, and then give them the cost of it, there’s a bit of a move there, you know?

Ruth McCarthy,

Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Lodge and Spa.
The study reveals that 100% of participants in the semi-structured interviews do not accept that Marketing is evil. It's worth noting that the proposition "Marketing is evil" may seem somewhat extreme. The term "evil" was deliberately chosen, as it is provocative and aimed at eliciting a response. It is a rather extreme view of a profession or discipline, and not one that might ever apply to other professions such as medicine, engineering, or teaching, etc. However, this study reveals, upon examination of the interviewees’ responses in the semi-structured interviews, that 55% of participants believe that evil (or sinister) Marketing practices have taken place historically and still occur to the present day.

The following interviewee posits that Marketing as a function is not evil, but reveals that Marketing can be used for evil purposes, and has historically been employed in a sinister fashion. In response to the question “Is Marketing Evil?” the respondent posits:

*To say its evil, to me the real question should be “can marketing be used for evil purposes?”

The truth is absolutely, yes. You see that for hundreds of years. If you do some research on how the Nazi party ruled in the 20’s and 30’s in Germany - that’s probably one of the most amazing case studies of marketing for all the wrong reasons. At the end of the day, it was the German party’s view of the world and how it could be. They got into people’s heads and that’s what marketing can do. That absolutely is evil.*

David Kelly,
Chief Commercial officer, SWS Group
The following interviewee states that Marketing departments often employ cynical and intrusive practices to influence consumer behaviour. The contributor sites Google as an example – an organisation whose corporate logo, ironically, is “Don’t be Evil”:

*I suppose like anything, it can be used in an evil way. Evil is probably a strong word for it, but it can be used...I think it can be very pervasive. I think it can be very intrusive in your life. Even some of the remarketing that we do – remarketing is where you visit our website, we’ll drop a cookie on your...this is not PGI, this is just a general tactic – drop a cookie on your laptop or your machine, and any time you’re on Google display network, so you’re on a site that runs Google ads, you’ll see a PGI ad. That’s just a small example. It’s not overly evil but because you showed and interest by going to the PGI website. But it’s just that idea that you’re being followed... Google nowadays I think is going to a point where because Google knows so much about our search history, what we’re searched for in the past, they’re modifying the results to show us what we think we want... It’s censorship. It’s like I’m doing a search for places to go in Edinburgh. Again, it’s going to be based on first of all who is paying the most to appear in the search results. It’s going to be based on things I’ve done in the past and it might not necessarily...I might not necessarily want to do in Edinburgh. So I miss out on great stuff because Google are thinking they know better than I do.*

Ray Coppinger,

Online Marketing Manager, Premier Global.

The following interviewee opines that consumers are free to choose to accept or reject the Marketing message, however the participant also concedes that certain target audiences are vulnerable to Marketing techniques, and may not be able to rationally decide whether to consume the product/service or not:
I'm sure it can be used quite cynically and what not, but is it evil? No. At the end of the day, people have a choice, don't they? Some people probably need protection from themselves of course, and they're not capable of free choice, but evil is probably pushing it a little bit...There can certainly be a role for regulation and what not in marketing, to make sure that people are not...you know, you're not exploiting certain sectors of society. Because there are people who are being signed up for services and what not that are not capable of paying for it. That type of thing is wrong. I'd certainly not condone it.

Oliver Kenny,
Marketing Manager, Calor.

The following interviewee rejects the notion that Marketing is evil. However, the participant states that professional, experienced Marketers will use the tools and tactical nous at their disposal to influence the purchasing habits of consumers, who may not realise that they are the victim of surreptitious marketing. In response to the question, “Is Marketing Evil”, the participant states:

No....but I think marketing will use – I wouldn’t say a weakness – but marketing will use what it can to make a sale, or get the business. There are an awful lot of clever people in marketing, and there are also an awful lot of clever tools, and techniques in marketing, and I do think that they will play to the different characteristics of different customers.

Suzanne Detzner,
International Market Research Manager, Eolas.

The following interviewee accepts that the marketing practices in certain industries are ethically questionable. The contributor sites marketing targeted at children as an example which she personally has an issue with and could not defend:
I can see how some people – depending on what marketing, or what company they’re talking about, and what they’re looking at – you can see a lot of – particularly the kid’s things – there’s Christmas toys out already, and there are shoes for kids with lip gloss and all of that. I personally would have an issue with that, because my daughter wants the Lilly Kelly’s [shoes] because of the free lip gloss. But if you go in to the Pound shop, you’ll get the Lip Gloss and she’ll never need the Lilly Kelly’s, you know what I mean? So I can see where people would be a bit miffed by that. But again, I suppose that’s up to the person to remove themselves, if possible from that kind of advertising.

Ruth McCarthy,
Director of Marketing, Inchydoney Island Lodge and Spa

The following interviewee posits that the unethiical elements of business in general can often be misinterpreted as the responsibility of marketing, from the perspective of consumers:

Marketing is what consumers hear about a business. So there’s probably a mistrust of companies and capitalism, as you say. So marketing is just the way in which consumers hear about the business, about the products or the brands, or their environmental policies in regards to what we’re doing with water, you know, or for example sweat shops in China. People hear that about a company, and how do they hear about it? They hear about it from various sources, but everything is banded together as marketing. And I think there’s just a general mistrust of organisations in general, be they politicians, or companies, etc.

Rhona Holland,
Marketing Director, PepsiCo.
Section 2: The results of the Online Survey of Consumer Attitudes towards Marketing

4.2.0 Introduction

Section 2 of Chapter 4 in this research is based on the findings of the Quantitative research carried out by the researcher. The Quantitative research involved a consumer survey conducted online. The online survey contained a total of 10 questions. Two of the questions are open-ended to allow consumers express their opinions freely on their understanding and opinions of marketing. The remaining 8 questions employ a Likert Scale structure, where the respondent is given a number of options to express how strongly he/she agrees with a statement or not.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the demographic split by age category, of the respondents who participated in the online survey. The largest percentage of respondents are in the 30-39 age group. A non-random snowballing technique was employed in the selection of survey participants. A link to the survey was distributed to the researcher’s work colleagues, peers, students, friends and family members. All were encouraged to forward the link to the online survey to any potential respondents with online access.
Figure 4.1 Age Demographic of Consumers in Online Survey:

The demographic of the survey can also be determined by gender, to examine whether any significant differences of opinion exist between Male and Female participants in relation to Marketing. Figure 4.2 illustrates the gender split:
4.2.1 Marketing has an Image problem with Consumers

This study has revealed that Marketing has acquired an image problem, from the perspective of consumers. The online survey indicates that over 25% of consumers Agree that Marketing has an image problem, regardless of whether it was deserved or not. A further 41.8% of consumers reveal that they Somewhat Agree with this statement. Figure 4.3 below illustrates the overall response to the statement “Whether it is deserved or not, Marketing has an image problem”: 
Figure 4.3 Consumer Response to: “Does Marketing have an Image Problem?”

Figure 4.5 below illustrates the demographic split of respondents to the online survey, by Age Category, regarding the image problem associated with Marketing. The researcher notes that out of a survey population of 100, 2 respondents to the survey did not fully complete this question. With the exception of the respondent under 20, all age groups reveal a relatively low percentage of respondents who Disagree that Marketing has an image problem.
Figure 4.4 Consumer Opinions of the Image of Marketing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree %</th>
<th>Agree/Somewhat Agree Total %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5 below highlights the gender split of consumers who Agree, Somewhat Agree, or Disagree that Marketing has an Image problem. The researcher notes that there is a higher percentage of Females (56%) to Males (44%) that Agree, and also a higher percentage of Females (56.1%) to Males (43.9%) that Somewhat Agree that Marketing has an image problem:
The following contributor to the online survey posits that Marketing as a profession is devoid of credibility and integrity:

*It's totally false at this point. If it began with any kind of integrity it has since totally lost it.*

Male, 20-29 Years Old

The following participant in the online survey states that she has personally experienced inappropriate marketing techniques, in spite of the existence of marketing regulations:

*Although regulated, I have come across Marketing which I have personally found inappropriate.*

Female, 20-29 Years Old

The following contributor to the online consumer survey is unimpressed with the function of Marketing. The consumer defines marketing as:
The art of making a certain group of people buy something they might not want.

Male, 30-39 Years Old

4.2.2 Consumers are Suspicious of Marketing motives

The study reveals a high level of consumer scepticism in relation to marketing messages. Figure 4.6 reveals 11.1% Agree that 'Marketing exists solely to entice customers to buy products they do not need'. A further 39.4% somewhat agree with this statement.

Figure 4.6: ‘Marketing Exists Solely to Entice Customers to Buy products they do not need’

The following participant in the online survey states that customers should be wary of the true motives behind Marketing activity:
Customers have to be very careful, because companies only want them to be victims spending money on products they don't really need. And marketing uses lies to sell products. The customer might feel pushed to purchase things.

Female, 30-39 Years Old

The following survey respondent posits that Marketing targeted at potentially vulnerable groups such as children may not be ethical. The respondent also opines that marketing can result in consumers choosing a product or service that is of poorer quality due to a more convincing marketing campaign:

Creating a demand for a product may involve convincing people that they need products, which do in fact do not. Marketing directed at children may put unfair pressure on parents. An inferior product may be more successful than its competitors due to a marketing campaign, rather than the quality of the product possibly leaving consumers worse off.

Male, 20-29 Years Old

The following respondent in the online consumer survey states that the objective of marketing is to mislead consumers:

I believe a lot of marketing is misleading and catches people out.

Female, 20-29 Years Old

The following consumer states that Marketing is a ploy, which may or may not trick someone in to purchasing a product or service:

Marketing is something that will either work on a person or not. Some people see right through it and don't fall for the marketing ploy. Others will, and they will buy into the marketing campaign.
Female, 20-29 Years Old

The following consumer concurs with the above statement, revealing that Marketing is used as a tool to deceive unwitting consumers:

*They try to lure you in to get interested in something you really don't want to buy.*

Male, 30-39 Years Old

The following consumer states that there is a responsibility on marketers to compete with business rivals, in a legal and ethical manner, and prevent any illegitimate practices which would adversely affect their competitors:

*The responsibility is on marketers to promote their products fairly, and also not to use information regarding their competitors, in a false way.*

Male, Under 20 Years Old

The following contributor to the online survey posits that Marketing is guilty of offering the consumer the illusion of a better life and promise of a higher social standing amongst their peers, through the conspicuous consumption of fashionable products or services, which the contributor strongly resents:

*I think that it can idealise "life" and create false expectations for certain people. Everyone has to have a certain product to be cool and "fit in" to society. This is something I hate.*

Female, 30-39 Years Old

The following participant in the online survey states that the potential exists for Marketing to be used in an unethical manner, especially when targeting vulnerable groups:
It depends on whether vulnerable people are knowingly taken advantage of. Like anything else, I would suppose marketing can be used ethically or unethically.

Male, 30-39 Years Old

4:2.3 Consumers are experiencing Marketing Fatigue

The study reveals that a large majority of consumers are increasingly ignoring Marketing activity, due to the proliferation of advertising and other media messages. Figure 4.7 below illustrates that 27.3% of respondents agree with the statement: “There is so much media communication these days that I try to ignore a lot of it.” A further 54.5% of consumers somewhat agree with this statement.

Figure 4.7: Consumer Marketing Fatigue:

The following participant in the online survey states that the pervasive and intrusive nature of certain Marketing techniques applied by businesses is preventing, rather than enabling the chances of increasing demand and a positive image for the product or service.
An example of evil marketing is that we get the same call centre phone us at home for the past 3 years asking if we would wish to discuss our computer requirements. We have tried being rude, being nice, asking to speak to their manager, wasting their time. They simply will not stop calling. An example of Evil and unsuccessful Marketing.

Male, 30-39 Years Old

The following respondent, who participated in the online survey, highlights the iniquitousness of marketing which is leading to consumer indifference:

**Marketing is everywhere now...you just take it or leave it**

Female, 20-29 Years Old

The following contributor to the online survey states that online technology enables Marketers to monitor consumers and then target them with advertising:

**The target market is tracked on the internet, therefore leading to aggressive pop ups for things that you 'want'**.

Male, 40-49 Years Old

4:2.4 Consumer Purchasing is increasingly determined by Price

The study has revealed that consumers purchasing decisions are increasingly motivated by price, which has made other elements of the Marketing mix (product, place, promotion) almost redundant. This increased consumer prudence suggests that Marketing as a function has diminished, in terms of creating demand and increasing market share.
Figure 4.8 illustrates the consumer response, in the online survey, to the importance of pricing. Figure 4.8 highlights that 5% of consumers agree that their purchasing decisions are based purely on price. A further 54% of consumers somewhat agree that their purchasing decisions are based purely on price. The researcher notes that only 15% of consumers disagreed with the statement that purchasing decisions were based purely on price:

Figure 4.8. The Importance of Pricing to Consumers:
4:2.5 Is Marketing Evil? The Consumer View.

The study reveals that a notable percentage of participants in the online survey believe marketing is a sinister profession, which operates with evil intent, when targeting consumers. Figure 4.9 below illustrates the consumer response in the online survey to the statement 'Marketing is evil'. 2% of respondents believe that Marketing is an evil practice. A further 15% somewhat agree with the statement.

Figure 4.9. 'Marketing is Evil': The Consumer Response.
The following consumer, who participated in the online survey states that Marketing is evil. The consumer explains this view by referring to Marketing practices in the pharmaceutical industry, which are unethical. The consumer notes that branded products are overpriced in comparison to generic products which are just as effective:

*Marketing is evil as it pushes up the prices of products that are of similar or even less quality in that market, essentially causing people to think that they need these more expensive "branded" products, in order to get ahead in life. A good example of the evil is the marketing practices adopted by pharmaceutical companies. Branded products are being forced on the consumers, in this country certainly. I can buy a pack of non-brand paracetamol in Northern Ireland for 16p, but here I would have to pay far above that.*

Male, 20-29 Years Old

The following participant in the online survey posits that marketing is not evil but when used excessively, it can be annoying:

*Marketing is not evil; however excessive marketing or use of intrusive marketing techniques can be annoying.*

Female, 30-39 Years Old

4:2.6 Marketing: Targeting vulnerable groups in society

The study reveals that many consumers believe Marketing is evil primarily because it engages in the targeting of vulnerable groups in society, such as children and consumers are physically or mentally incapacitated.
The following contributor to the online survey states that Marketing practices involve targeting vulnerable groups, and coercing specific target groups to purchase products or services which are not needed. The consumer also posits that Marketing can influence the consumer to purchase a product or service which is unsuitable or of poor quality:

*From my previous definition of marketing, creating a demand for a product may involve convincing people that they need products which do in fact do not. Marketing directed at children may put unfair pressure on parents. An inferior product may be more successful than its competitors due to a marketing campaign, rather than the quality of the product possibly leaving consumers worse off.*

Male, 20-29 Years

The following participant in the online survey concurs with the previous contributor, regarding the marketing practice of targeting vulnerable demographic segments, such as children. In response to the statement ‘Marketing is Evil’ the consumer states:

*I agree because marketing is often used strongly towards children as they are easy targets, which is wrong.*

Female, 20-29 Years Old

The researcher found that, in some cases, the consumers did not give the term “evil” its literal interpretation, but rather interpreted to mean something negative, like marketing is a nuisance or is intrusive:

*Certain times during the year parents are bombarded with marketing material which increases pressure to get the latest overpriced gimmicks.*

Male, 40-49 Years Old
The following contributor to the online survey is critical of some marketing practices in the medical industry, which coerce the target market into consumption, due to apparent misdiagnoses of serious medical conditions. The consumer posits that this results in products being promoted by companies and marketers, targeting vulnerable groups, who may not require them:

*It depends on the type of marketing. Some types of marketing are purely exploitative and are therefore 'evil'. For example, I read yesterday about the situation in the US where the diagnosis of bipolarity in children is becoming very common. It's a controversial subject and is being pushed by over-zealous psychologists (who, incidentally, are also promoting their services). The drug companies have jumped on the bandwagon promoting their medications for prescription. Combined, it seems a market has been created where it may not actually exist, or at least exist to the extent that the psychologists/drug companies insist that it does.*

Male, 30-39 Years Old

4:3 Summary

This chapter presented the key empirical findings of this study in two sections.

In Section 1, the researcher reveals the results of the qualitative research undertaken for this study. The researcher discusses the views expressed by the 11 business and academic leaders, who participated in the semi-structured interviews. The same 13 questions were posed to all 11 interviewees. 8 of the interviewees were participated in a face-to-face setting. The remaining 3 interviews were conducted by telephone.
In Section 2, the researcher examines the results of the Quantitative research undertaken for this study. The researcher discusses the views expressed by consumers in the online consumer survey. The survey contained 10 questions in total. 8 of these questions employed a Likert scale format. The remaining two questions were posed in an open-ending format. There were a total of 100 respondents to the online survey.

Chapter 5 develops conclusions from the main findings of this study, and presents recommendations arising from these findings. Finally, Chapter 5 will present recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Findings

5:0 Introduction.

This current research was undertaken to examine the image problems associated with Marketing, from the perspective of consumers, and internally, from the perspective of other departments within an organisation.

Chapter 5, provides a synopsis of the major points of discussion derived from the qualitative research conducted, through 11 semi-structured interviews with business leaders employed in diverse industries such as retail, IT, FMCG, Tourism and Academia. Through the qualitative semi-structured interviews, this research examines the interviewees' own opinions on where Marketing stands at present, as well as their advice on how to improve the image and effectiveness of the profession in the future.

Chapter 5 also discusses the major findings of the quantitative research conducted for this study, which is based on the testimonials of consumers, and their views on marketing, which were captured in an online consumer survey.

The empirical findings of both the qualitative and quantitative primary research will compared with the existing secondary data by authors who have previously examined marketing issues which are similar to the researcher's current study.

The researcher will also propose recommendations for practice, as well as recommendations for future research, that have emerged from this study.
Section 1: Conclusions and Findings based on the semi-structured interviews with marketing leaders

5:1 Introduction

Section 1 reveals the key findings of the qualitative research carried out for this study. The qualitative research involved 11 semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher with business and academic leaders who operate in a wide variety of industries.

5:1.1 The Image of Marketing from the Perspective of the business world

This study has revealed that Marketing has an image problem within the business world. The results of the semi-structured interviews with the 11 business leaders show that 64% of respondents acknowledge that Marketing has an image problem. The significant findings emerging from interviews indicate that increasing consumer sophistication in recent times has resulted in a more cynical, jaded view of marketing. As previously noted, Trout and Ries (2004) stated that “today communication itself is the problem. We have become the world’s first over communicated society”, (2004: 1).

The semi-structured interviews also indicate that marketing communications may reach consumers who have no interest in the product or service, which also contributes to the negative image of marketing. “Often, the people who come here aren’t the type of people that we were targeting. And we find they don’t enjoy the experience, and we don’t enjoy them being here”, (Chapter 4: 75).
As previously noted, Star (1991), in Dolan (1991), states that “no matter how specialized our media, how carefully computerised our audience data, how sophisticated the protocols of market analysis, there remain, as always, major misfits among products, audiences, messages, and media”, (1991: 120).

5:1.2 The Challenge for Credibility and Parity of Esteem for Marketing

Another finding emerging from the semi-structured interviews indicates that the Marketing department in the business and academic world is not held in the same esteem as other departments such as Finance or Sales. 73% of the contributors to the semi-structured interviews state that Marketing is held in less esteem that other departments within their organisation. Two major trends emerging from the interviews reveal what is causing this crisis of credibility in Marketing.

The lack of clearly identifiable benefits that a Marketing department brings to an organisation, such as Return on Investment – i.e. accounting for budget – has traditionally blighted Marketing’s position in business. “I suppose there’s an ROI question...with off line marketing I think the challenge is, if you run a campaign in an airport with a banner, you go to an event...it’s very hard to quantify the actual return from that investment,” (Chapter 4: 81)

The second major finding related to Marketing credibility, and the esteem in which the function is held within an organisation, is founded on the culture of the company, and the attitude of senior management in particular: “I know that in other jobs I would have done, it wouldn’t have been the main thing. They would have said ‘what is marketing actually?’”, (Chapter 4: 84).
As previously noted, Deloitte (2007) state that “although senior management recognise and acknowledge the importance of marketing in growing their business, their actions in practice indicate that many are simply not walking the talk”, (2007: www.deloitte.com/assets).

5:1.3 Marketing Needs Metrics

Through the semi-structured interviews, this study has uncovered that a shift towards metrics-driven marketing is vital in order to improve the performance of the department, and improve the image of marketing in business. The qualitative research, in the form of 11 semi-structured interviews, indicates that the recession has expedited the emergence of applying metrics to all elements of marketing. “I guess people are far more interested in the metrics of what we’re spending and what the results are. In a non-recessionary time, you’d be a lot about spending a lot of money on certain types of advertising, whereas now it’s a lot more about can you justify the spend, so looking at the Return On Investment on every piece of our marketing spend”, (Chapter 4: 86).

As previously noted, Jeffery (2010) highlights the link between the recession and a focus on metrics in Marketing. “We are living in difficult times, and marketing measurement and data driven marketing are becoming increasingly important. Now more than ever, managers need to justify their marketing spending, show the value they can create for the business and radically improve their marketing performance”, (2010: 3).
5:1.4 Leadership challenges faced by Marketing

The research indicates that different functions across the business can often compete to influence the direction of the organisation. The following respondent posits that there is often a conflict between the immediate day-to-day priorities of Operations and longer term Marketing strategies: “Operationally day to day, some of the stuff gets a bit pushed forward, maybe more, because it’s literally in that day. The challenge for me is to make sure that the stuff that’s happening next month and the month after is talked about in time”, (Chapter 4: 88).

The following interviewee posits that the marketing goal of delivering on the brand promise can be undermined by other departments within the business when dealing with consumers. “If someone in credit control or in customer support doesn’t deal with someone in a very nice way, the Calor promise is undermined and...You can have the nicest TV ad in the world...how the phone is answered could make it or break it”, (Chapter 4: 88).

As previously discussed by Levitt (1960), in Cox (1988), the failure of businesses to align marketing and business strategy often stems from the origins and culture of the business. “Having created a successful company by making a superior product, it is not surprising that management continues to be orientated toward the product rather than the people who consume it”, (1988: 14:15).
5:1.5 Marketing Jargon contributes to the Negative Image of Marketing

The study has also shown that the business leaders, who participated in the 11 semi structured interviews, believe a large portion of the negative image associated with marketing can be attributed to the use of jargon by the shibboleths of Marketing.

The following interviewee states: "I suppose as an industry we're probably not understood, but maybe – to go off in a slight tangent – we don't help ourselves. I was looking at a marketing magazine there recently and the jargon we come out with as an industry sometimes is embarrassing", (Chapter 4: 89).

The following interviewee concurs with the previous respondent, and states the importance of avoiding marketing jargon when communicating with consumers: "I think your average consumer is very cynical. So you have to make it as scientific and as helpful to them as you possibly can", (Chapter 4: 90).
5:1.6 Businesses often fails to get the true potential value out of marketing:

The results of the qualitative semi-structured interviews have revealed that there is often under appreciation of the true potential marketing and what the profession can contribute, in terms of driving the business.

The following participant posits that her Marketing agency work with clients, whose perceptions of what Marketing can bring to their organisation is limited to routine Marketing tasks: “In terms of, you know, leveraging the power of what an understanding of Strategic Marketing can do for a business, and how primarily it is all about generating profit, they wouldn’t have an understanding of the link really.” (Chapter 4: 91)

The following contributor states: “[Marketing] is not understood in what it can actually bring to an organisation because by only being seen as advertising, the leaflets, and the brochures, and helping me give a few free things to a customer, then you’re not actually getting the value out of marketing.” (Chapter 4: 91)

5:1.7 A focus on academic standards in Marketing is required to improve the standards of Marketing in Business:

The qualitative semi-structured interviews carried out for this study also examines the role of education in preparing marketing students for a career in marketing. The study reveals that in many cases, marketing courses have not kept abreast of the changes in the business world. Four key issues have emerged in the course of the research:
The study indicates that 3rd and 4th level education needs to have a stronger focus on marketing practice, in order to prepare graduates for a career in Marketing, according to 45% of interview participants.

The following interviewee states: “There are a lot of Marketing theory Masters, and I think if I saw somebody’s CV with Marketing Practice, MBA, I’d bite their hand off, whereas the recruiting that I’m doing now, I’m seeing a lot of people that have got a BA in Marketing and Management, and then no Marketing skills”, (Chapter 4: 92).

As previously discussed by Vasegar (2011), “A third of graduate vacancies this year will be filled by applicants who have already worked for their new employer as an undergraduate, according to a poll of 100 recruiters which underlines the increasing value of internships”, (2011: www.guardian.co.uk ).
5:1.7.2 Social Media and Online Marketing Courses/Modules are a prerequisite to all Marketing graduates

The interviewees who participated in the semi-structured interviews have revealed a paradigm shift in the Marketing profession towards online marketing. 45% of interviewees highlighted the importance of academia keeping pace with the online marketing revolution. The following respondent posits: “In this day and age you have to demonstrate that you’ve got some online skills as well, so that you can do you Google ads, and you can do your online advertising or your email blasts. You need to be able to show that, because if you can’t do that now...very soon, people who don’t have those skills are going to be seen as dinosaurs”, (Chapter 4: 95).

As previously noted, Scott (2010) posits that it is incumbent on marketing to incorporate an online element to the overall marketing strategy in order to reach the target market. ‘There’s no doubt that, today, people solve problems by turning to the web. Just consider your own habits. How do you research products and services?’ (2010: 5).

The following contributor also supports a greater focus on social media and online marketing in academia: “I would whole-heartedly get behind any initiatives that would look at bringing the digital mind-set in to the academic world”, (Chapter 4: 95).
5:1.7.3 Marketing theory needs to be relevant to smaller industry, as well as multinationals

This study has uncovered a point in question regarding the applicability of current marketing courses for smaller enterprises. As previously noted, Levinson (2007) states “traditional marketing is geared towards big business”, (2007: 5).

The results of the semi-structured interviews reveal 27% of respondents believe Marketing courses are too focused on large multinationals. The following contributor supports this view: “I did marketing in UCC myself and a lot of it was theory based and focussing on huge companies with huge budgets. I remember doing a project on Jameson and another one on Diageo, who have huge budgets, do billboard advertising worldwide. That’s all fine and dandy, but when you go somewhere that’s a lot smaller and budgets are a lot less, and the whole product is more specific, it’s good to be aware that it’s not all razzle dazzle stuff with big companies”, (Chapter 4: 98).

5:1.7.4 The standard of undergraduates needs to improve to ensure an improvement in the business environment

The qualitative research has found that in an academic context, a large percentage of students are not suitable to undertake a Marketing course, and as a result are not prepared for a career in marketing. The following interviewee states: “I sat down with someone one day and was teaching how to use an apostrophe to someone who was 23 and doing a Masters. We did it very simply and I felt English was going to let her down in her dissertation. It’s due to the fact that people aren’t picking up books or newspapers”, (Chapter 4: 99).
5:1.7.5 Metrics and Measuring performance needs to be addressed at an Academic level

The qualitative research conducted for this study indicates that 27% of interview respondents believe Metrics in Marketing should be incorporated into 3rd and 4th level courses in academia, in order to better prepare students of Marketing for a career in the business world. The following interviewee states: “I think probably in the academic world, they’re just starting to get around to the idea that metrics are important and it’s not all ‘product, price, and placement’”, (Chapter 4: 100).

The following interviewee is in agreement with the above statement, regarding the importance of introducing an understanding of metrics to marketing courses: “I think a data statistics focus is actually really important. It’s probably something that was over-looked traditionally”, (Chapter 4: 100:101).

5:1.8 Marketing and the Media: The Consumer dictates the communication process

According to 36% of respondents, who participated in the semi-structured interviews, consumers now play a major part in deciding both the content of marketing and how it is communicated. The following participant states: “The power has very much shifted to the consumer. Whereas, in the good old days, as we’d call them, the power very much rested with the brand and with the company. So we’ve had to change a lot and that’s a big challenge for organisations like ourselves – to educate ourselves in what’s going on and what the new realities are from a consumer/brand relationship,” (Chapter 4: 102).
As previously noted, Kotler and Armstrong (2001) posit that “our senses are being constantly assaulted by advertising. Commercials interrupt serious programs, pages of ads obscure printed matter, and billboards mar beautiful scenery. These interruptions continually pollute people’s minds with messages of materialism, sex, power, or status”, (2001: 759).

5:1.9 The Impact of Pricing on Marketing in the Recession

The qualitative research reveals that 82% of interviewees believe a focus on value for money is vital when communicating to the customer, which has made other elements of the marketing mix irrelevant in many cases. One interviewee notes: “The biggest challenge to get through to the consumer is finding innovative and different ways of talking about value for money. That’s pretty much all they want to hear about in the main and that’s a huge challenge”, (Chapter 4: 104).

Another respondent concurs with the previous contributor and opines that consumers have become a lot more assertive in their dealings with product or service providers: “Consumers are a lot savvier and they know what they want. It’s got to the stage at times where they ring and tell you what they want rather than you telling them what you can offer them,” (Chapter 4: 105).
5:1.10 Is Marketing Evil?

The following contributor posits that Marketing as a function is not evil, but it can be used for evil purposes, and has historically been employed in a sinister fashion. In response to the question “Is Marketing Evil?” he states: “To say its evil, to me the real question should be ‘can marketing be used for evil purposes?’ The truth is absolutely, yes. You see that for hundreds of years. If you do some research on how the Nazi party ruled in the 20s and 30s in Germany - that’s probably one of the most amazing case studies of marketing for all the wrong reasons”, (Chapter 4: 106).

The following interviewee concurs with the previous contributor’s statement. The interviewee sites Marketing practices in Google as an example of sinister marketing: “Google nowadays, I think, is going to a point where because Google knows so much about our search history, what we’re searched for in the past, they’re modifying the results to show us what we think we want. It’s censorship,” (Chapter 4: 107).
Section 2: Consumer Attitudes towards Marketing, as revealed in the Online Survey

5:2.0 Introduction

Section 2, of Chapter 5, reveals the major findings emerging from the Quantitative research conducted for this study. The researcher employed an online survey to examine the image of marketing from the perspective of consumers.

5:2.1 Marketing has an Image Problem in the eyes of Consumers

The quantitative research conducted for this study reveals that Marketing has an image problem, as indicated in the consumer response to the online survey. 25% of consumers agree with the statement: ‘Whether it is deserved or not, Marketing has an Image Problem’. A further 41.8% somewhat agree with the statement. The following consumer posits: “Creating a demand for a product may involve convincing people that they need products which, in fact, they do not. An inferior product may be more successful than its competitors’, due to a marketing campaign, rather than the quality of the product, possibly leaving the consumers worse off”, (Chapter 4: 117).
5:2.2 Consumers are suspicious of Marketing motives

The quantitative research indicates a high level of consumer scepticism in relation to marketing messages. The online survey of consumers reveals that 11.1% agree ‘Marketing exists solely to entice customers to buy products they do not need’. A further 39.4% of consumers somewhat agree with this statement. The following consumer states: “Customers have to be very careful because companies only want them to be victims, spending money on their products, which they don't really need. Marketing uses lies to sell products,” (Chapter 4: Female, 30-39 Years Old). The following participant in the online survey states “Marketing is something that will either work on a person or not. Some people see right through it and don’t fall for the marketing ploy. Others will and they will buy into the marketing campaign”, (Chapter 4: 117).

5:2.3 Consumers are experiencing Marketing Fatigue

The results of the quantitative research carried out for this study indicates that the traditional Marketing methods are longer having an impact on the target market. The online survey of consumers reveals that 27.3% of respondents agree with the statement: “There is so much media communication these days that I try to ignore a lot of it.” A further 54.5% of consumers somewhat agree. The following consumer posits “Marketing is everywhere now. You just take it or leave it”, (Chapter 4: 120).
The following consumer reveals: “We get the same call centre, who phone us at home for the past 3 years, asking if we would like to discuss our computer requirements. We have tried being rude, being nice, asking to speak to their manager, and wasting their time. They simply will not stop calling,” (Chapter 4: 120).

5:2.4 Consumer purchasing is increasingly determined by price

The quantitative research conducted for this study reveals increased price sensitivity amongst consumers. The results of the online consumer survey have uncovered that 5% of consumers agree that their purchasing decisions are based purely on price. A further 54% of consumers somewhat agree that their purchasing decisions are based purely on price.

5:2.5 Is Marketing Evil? The Consumer View

The results of the online survey have shown that a significant percentage of consumers view marketing (and marketers) as extremely negative and cynical in their dealings with consumers. This is especially the case with the marketing tactics employed the pharmaceutical industry, and products aimed at children in particular. The quantitative research conducted for this study has identified that 2% of participants believe that marketing is evil. A further 15% of participants somewhat agree that marketing is evil.

The following consumer espouses the view that “marketing is evil, because it pushes up the price of products that are of similar, or even less quality, than competing products in the market. Essentially, it is causing people to think that they need these more expensive "branded" products in order to get ahead in life”, (Chapter 4: 123).
The following consumer accuses the pharmaceutical industry of engaging in sinister or evil marketing: “Some types of marketing are purely exploitative, and are therefore evil. For example, I read yesterday about a situation in the US where the diagnosis of bipolarity in children is becoming very common. It’s a controversial subject and is being pushed by over-zealous psychologists (who, incidentally, are also promoting their services). The drug companies have jumped on the bandwagon promoting their medications for prescription. Combined, it seems a market has been created where it may not actually exist, or at least may not exist to the extent that the psychologists and drug companies insist that it does”, (Chapter 4: 125).

5:3 Recommendations for Practice

This current research has revealed that Marketing is facing a serious challenge with regard to overcoming an image problem, from the perspective of their target market – i.e. – the consumer and from the view of other departments within the business environment.

This study recommends that a more scientific approach to identifying the right target market and employing the correct medium to reach this market be implemented. The researcher also recommends that a focus on the bottom line and a return on investment in marketing is vital to overcoming the lack of esteem in which the department is held – principally, because of the lack of accountability when it comes to the marketing budget. The research reveals that adopting a metrics-driven strategy in marketing will enable the department to be more accountable for the marketing budget.
Another finding of the study indicates that the overuse of marketing jargon is contributing to the negative image associated with the marketing profession. The research has revealed that traditional marketing messages no longer produce the desired impact. The researcher recommends that marketing practitioners communicate in a forthright, more scientific style with their target market, and avoid the overuse of superlatives.

The study also reveals that a focus on improving the academic standards of marketing courses is a necessity to enable newly graduated marketers to better adapt to the business world. Central to this is a focus on work experience and online marketing, which – the researcher recommends – should be a fundamental element of all marketing qualifications.

The research indicates an increased sophistication in consumers, who are more circumspect and less inclined to take marketing messages at face value. Therefore, the sinister marketing practices employed by certain businesses, as revealed in this study, are more likely to result in resentment and cynicism from the perspective of consumers. The researcher recommends, therefore, that marketers engage in a dialogue rather than a sales pitch, with a view to overcoming the antipathy many consumers feel towards the industry.

This study also suggests that a large percentage of consumers believe marketing has an image problem. There is increased suspicion of marketing motives, and consumers are not as influenced by traditional marketing methods. As a result of the recession, consumers have revealed an increased price sensitivity. The researcher recommends that a greater emphasis on social media and online marketing is needed, which enables a dialogue to develop with the consumer, thereby overcoming the negative and sinister image associated with marketing.

Figure 5.1 Summarises the key recommendations for practice:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business-to-Consumer Marketing Image</strong></td>
<td>Intrusive marketing techniques</td>
<td>Update marketing medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective marketing techniques</td>
<td>Focus on new marketing techniques</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use of Marketing Jargon</td>
<td>Avoid traditional marketing messages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>Focus on new online marketing techniques</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Evil/Sinister Marketing</td>
<td>Engage in dialogue through social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Marketing Image In the Business Environment</strong></td>
<td>Lack of understanding of the role marketing concept</td>
<td>Introduce organisation-wide marketing concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of accountability/focus on ROI</td>
<td>Introduce metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited scope for Marketing at strategic level</td>
<td>Align marketing and business objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influencing strategy</td>
<td>Greater focus on bottom line in Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metrics</strong></td>
<td>Measuring success</td>
<td>Introduce metrics-based Marketing and focus on ROI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Standards</strong></td>
<td>Keeping abreast of change</td>
<td>Introduce social media and online marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical experience</td>
<td>Mandatory work experience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevance to smaller companies</td>
<td>Less focus on multinationals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education standard of students</td>
<td>Industry-specific marketing courses/modules</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on basic grammar and current affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5:4 Recommendations for Future Research

This research encompassed a broad range of issues associated with the main challenges currently faced by the marketing profession. Due to time constraints, the researcher did not have the capacity to thoroughly investigate all areas of interest which arose from the primary qualitative and quantitative research, as well as the secondary research discussed in Chapter 2. This section proposes recommendations for future research based on issues which arose during the course of this current study:

5:4.1 Measuring marketing success through online marketing techniques.

This study has revealed the growing importance of marketing accountability. The use of online marketing tools enables a more scientific measurement of the investment made in marketing initiatives. This is especially pertinent at present, given the current economic climate. Research could be undertaken to investigate the potential for introducing Key Performance Indicators, through online marketing, to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of marketing.

5:4.2 Aligning Marketing and Business Strategies

This research indicates that within a business and academic environment, departments often have to compete with each other, to determine the business strategy of the organisation. Research could be undertaken to investigate the challenges faced by marketing in its efforts to contribute to the overall business strategy, and how the brand promise can be undermined by the culture and activities of non-marketing departments within an organisation.
5:4.3 Introducing a Degree in Social Media

This current research has discussed the increased importance of social media to marketing. The qualitative research conducted with 11 business and academic leaders reveals a dramatic shift toward online marketing. The potential for a degree or master’s degree in social media and online marketing requires further exploration. Research could be undertaken, investigating the costs and benefits of introducing a course in social media and online marketing in 3rd level institutions, in conjunction with businesses that employ marketing departments locally.
5:4 Conclusions

The objective of this study is to investigate whether marketing has an image problem from the perspective of consumers and within the business and academic world. Initial examination of secondary data by the researcher suggests that marketing is suffering from an image problem. This study expands on the existing literature, through the empirical findings of the researcher.

The empirical findings revealed in this study emerged from both the qualitative and quantitative research methods undertaken by the researcher. The results of each research method were discussed in two parts by the researcher in this study.

The qualitative research process involved 11 semi-structured interviews with business and academic leaders, operating at a management level within their organisation, in diverse industries such as tourism, retail, PR and Marketing agencies, as well as FMCG companies. The major issues emerging from the qualitative research include a lack of accountability for the marketing budget, the necessity for a metrics-based approach to marketing initiatives, and a focus on improving the academic qualifications of marketing graduates. The qualitative research also indicates that key marketing functions, such as maintaining and improving brand image, are being undermined by other departments competing for strategic control within the organisation. Finally, the misuse of Marketing jargon is also adjudged, by the participants in the semi-structured interviews, to be a contributing factor to the negative image of marketing – both within the organisation and externally.

The quantitative research carried out for this study involved an online survey, to gauge the opinions of consumers in their attitudes towards marketing. The key issues emerging from the quantitative research indicate that some consumers are highly suspicious of all marketing practices. The ineffectiveness of traditional marketing methods, due to a decline in traditional media outlets, and increased price sensitivity, due to the recent recession, were also revealed to be contributing factors to the negative image of marketing, from the perspective of consumers.

The conclusions of this research study confirm that Marketing does suffer from an image problem, from the perspective of key stakeholders such as consumers in the external environment. Internally, the majority of work colleagues outside of marketing, employees, and management directly associated with marketing, as well as those operating within the function itself also accept that there are image problems associated with marketing. The researcher concludes that many of the factors contributing to this negative image, such as the lack of accountability for marketing budgets, and marketing qualifications that do not prepare the graduate for a career in marketing, can be successfully addressed. Other issues such as the cynicism of consumers towards marketing and business in general will require a long-term approach to bring about a positive change to the image of marketing.
References


McDonagh, Aldagh – Marketing Age Volume 3 Issue 5 September/October 2009. p. 69


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Trainor, Tom 2009. ‘A time for Marketing to hold its nerve.’ Marketing Age Volume 3 Issue 4 July/August. p. 8


APPENDIX A – Interview Guide

1. In your opinion, what are the major challenges currently facing marketing – both internally and externally?

2. Has the current recession impacted your marketing dept? In what ways?

3. Has the recession altered how you communicate with your customers? In what ways?

4. Do you feel the influence of marketing on the strategic goals of a (your) company will increase in the coming years?

5. From an internal perspective, is marketing held in the same esteem as other departments such as finance and sales?

6. From an academic point of view, what recommendations would you make in terms of preparing undergraduates for a career in marketing?

7. In your opinion, does marketing have an image problem with consumers?

8. How is marketing performance measured internally?

9. Is there a contingency marketing plan in place for the coming 12 months?

10. Aside from pricing, what is the most effective of way of attracting new customers or holding existing customers?

11. As the face of business, is marketing the target for what is actually a general mistrust of capitalism, from the perspective of consumers?

12. Is there an over-emphasis on marketing (and business in general), to protect and inform consumers, when a degree of consumer awareness and understanding should also exist?

13. Is marketing evil?
APPENDIX B – List of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne Detzner</td>
<td>Market Research Project Manager</td>
<td>Eolas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Murphy</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Director</td>
<td>Think-Tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Murphy</td>
<td>Senior Marketing Lecturer</td>
<td>Cork Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Carroll</td>
<td>Digital Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Ogilvy Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver Kenny</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Calor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane Lynch</td>
<td>Brand Manager for Centra</td>
<td>Musgrave Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine McCarthy</td>
<td>Field Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Quest Software International Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Coppinger</td>
<td>Field Online Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Premier Global Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Kelly</td>
<td>Chief Commercial Officer</td>
<td>SWS Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhona Williams</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>PepsiCo Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C – Online Survey Questions

1. Are you Male or Female?

2. Please tick which Age Category you are in:
   - Under 20 Years Old
   - 20 – 29 Years Old
   - 30 – 39 Years Old
   - 40 – 49 Years Old
   - 50 Years Or Older

3. Please briefly define Marketing as you understand it.

4. My Purchasing decisions are based purely on Price:
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Neither Agree or Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree

5. A consumer should take as much care in the consumption of a product or service, as the vendor should when providing information on the correct usage, terms, and conditions.
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Neither Agree or Disagree
6. Marketing Is Evil

- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree

7. Please briefly explain your answer to Question 6

8. Marketing is a key element of a free market economy which provides us with better value and wide range of product and services

- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
9. Please specify whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing exists solely to entice customers to buy products they do not need</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is so much media communication these days that I try to ignore a lot of it</td>
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<tr>
<td>The recession has made me more cynical of business in general</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In spite of the recession I believe some form of free market capitalism is better for society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whether it is deserved or not, marketing has an image problem in the eyes of most consumers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

10. The marketing efforts of Irish companies compare well to their International counterparts

- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
APPENDIX D – Research Journal

Date: 16 February 2011

Topic: First One to One meeting for dissertation

Comments: The first one to one meeting arranged with Dr Angela Wright focused on commencing Chapter 2 (Literature Review) of the Dissertation. Correct use of quotations, suitable and relevant sources of secondary research and writing style were discussed.

Date: 02 March 2011

Topic: Second One to One meeting for dissertation

Comments: Dr Angela Wright reviewed my work completed so far on the Literature Review. Areas to focus on for the next meeting include correcting the headings, quotations, dates and introduction. Dr Wright also suggested some relevant dissertations that would be useful as references.

Date: 16 March 2011

Topic Third One to One meeting for dissertation

Comments: Dr Wright reviewed the work completed since our last one to one meeting. The key learning from this meeting was incorrect use of italics, removing ‘your voice’ from the literature review, and including definitions (of marketing, for example) where applicable. Further recommendations of other dissertations such as ‘Ireland: A Branding Phenomenon?’ by Sarah O’Mahony were also discussed.

Date: 19 March 2011
**Topic: Further research for dissertation**

**Comments:** I visited the CIT library to go take a look at any text books that may be relevant to my Literature Review (Chapter 2). A number of text books such as Principles of Marketing, by Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong (2001) and Rethinking Marketing – Towards Critical Marketing Accountings by Douglas Brownlie et al (1999) were very insightful and have been included in my Literature Review.

**Date: 30 March 2011**

**Topic: Fourth One to One meeting for dissertation**

**Comments:** Dr Wright reviewed the work completed on the literature review since the third one to one meeting. Errors such as incorrect use of italics and abbreviations were discussed. Dr Wright also advised that I should focus on the flow of the literature review, to make it more readable, and also work on the headings. We also discussed relevant candidates for interviews for Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

**Date: 04 April 2011**

**Topic: Preparation for Chapter 4**

**Comments:** I contacted my first interview candidate to discuss the dissertation and the possibility of conducting an interview. My first candidate is Suzanne Detzner – a German lady who is International Market Research Manager with Eolas. Eolas is a market research, consumer and sensory research company that is based in Cork. Suzanne has a background in Marketing and I felt she would be an ideal candidate to begin the interview process.

**Topic: Organising interview for Chapter 2**
Comments: I emailed Lisa Murphy, who is Strategic Planning Director of Think Tank, to request an interview for my dissertation. The interview was organised for 19 May 2011.

Date: 06 April 2011
Topic: Further research for dissertation
Comments: I visited the CIT library to research any text books that would be relevant to my dissertation. A number of books such as Relationship Marketing – Theory and Practice by Francis Buttle (1996) and Marketing Ethics: An International Perspective by Bodo Schlegelmilch (1998) were used in my Literature Review.

Date: 25 April 2011
Topic: Pilot Interview with Suzanne Detzner
Comments: The first interview was a useful introduction to the qualitative research section of my dissertation. It gave me an insight to how the interviewee responds to each question. The approach I took was to avoid adding comments while the interview was in progress, to ensure my own comments did not influence the interviewee’s opinions. I believe that this approach made the interviewee more hesitant in her answers however. Some interjections may have contributed to a more elaborate response to the questions, and prevented some of the answers from heading off in a tangent.
Date: 18 May 2011

**Topic: Organising interview 3 for Chapter 4**

**Comment:** I contacted Maurice Murphy, a Marketing lecturer in the CIT to request an interview. Maurice’s main research area is in Social Marketing, which should be very relevant to my dissertation. The interview was arranged for 25 May 2011.

Date: 19 May 2011

**Topic: 2nd Interview for Chapter 4 with Lisa Murphy**

**Comments:** This was a big step forward from the first interview. The interviewee was more confident in her opinions, and both the length and quality of responses were a big improvement. I made a point of commenting during some of the answers, to clarify on the interviewee’s opinions, as well as trying to steer the interview back to the question, if I felt the topic had changed. One noticeable issue which arose and should be addressed in the 3rd interview is that the interviewee asked on a number of occasions whether she answered correctly. She also speculated on the opinions of other people who work in the marketing profession. The key learning for the next interview is to highlight that I am looking for the interviewee’s opinion on his/her experiences alone, when answering the questions, and that there is no right or wrong answer. I will mention this before the interview commences, and remind the interviewee during the interview if necessary.

Date: 25 May 2011

**Topic: Interview Number 3 for Chapter 4 with Maurice Murphy**

**Comments:** The interview was cancelled by Maurice due to illness. We re-scheduled the interview for 08 June 2011.
Date: 02 June 2011

**Topic: Organising interviews 4 and 5 for Chapter 4 of dissertation**

**Comments:** I contacted Dan O’Boyle, who works in Ogilvy to arrange an interview with his colleague Claire Carroll (also in Ogilvy) on 09 June 2011. Dan also scheduled another meeting with Oliver Kenny (a client of Ogilvy’s) – the marketing manager in Calor – also on 09 June 2011. Both interviews will take place in Dublin.

Date: 08 June 2011

**Topic: One to One meeting with Dr Angela Wright**

**Comments:** The purpose of this meeting was to review progress on Chapter 4 as well as updates on other areas of the dissertation, such as the value of undertaking a consumer survey. Dr Wright felt it would be a worthwhile exercise and advised that it may be a good idea to base the questions for consumers around the topics discussed in the Interviews.

**Topic: Interview Number 3 for Chapter 4 with Maurice Murphy**

**Comments:** The structure and flow of the interview process is improving with each interview completed. I am keeping in mind what I felt worked and didn’t work in previous interviews. Mr Murphy was an excellent interviewee with a real insight in to all the topics covered by the interview questions. The interview ran to nearly 90 minutes and it was great to hear the opinions of qualified and experienced lecturer, and to contrast an academic’s opinions with those who work in industry. Mr Murphy also mentioned that he liked that there were no interruptions on my part and the interviewee was allowed to experience his opinion freely and at his own pace. I will bear this in mind for future interviews.
Date: 09 June 2011:

Topic: Interview Number 4 for Chapter 4 with Claire Carroll

Comments: This interview was very business-like and the most concise so far. Ms Carroll’s background is in Digital Marketing, and it was excellent to hear the opinions of someone who is working in one of the newest and most exciting elements of the marketing profession. The interview was held in Dublin, which is good in terms of variety of interviewees. I believe it is important to have varied interviewees that operate in urban environments, along with those who operate in the provincial cities/towns.

Topic: Interview Number 5 for Chapter 4 with Oliver Kenny, Marketing Manager for Calor

Comments: The interview with Mr Kenny was the most interesting so far. There were no issues with straying from the questions, and his opinions are an excellent contribution to my qualitative research thus far. It was also mentioned in the course of the interview that the new CEO of Calor came from a Marketing background, which I felt was very relevant to the overall theme of my dissertation.

Date: 11 June 2011

Topic: Organising Interview Number 6 for Chapter 4

Comment: I contacted Shane Lynch, who is Brand Manager for Centra (part of the Musgrave Group) to organise a meeting. I feel that it is important to interview someone in the marketing department of one of the largest and most established businesses in Cork, as their marketing insights into the local and national market would certainly be worth exploring and would be a very worthwhile contribution to the dissertation.
Date: 12 June 2011

**Topic: Organising Interview Number 6 for Chapter 4**

**Comments:** Mr Lynch has agreed to the interview, which has been scheduled for 18 June 2011.

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Date: 17 June 2011

**Topic: Organising Interview Number 7 for Chapter 4**

**Comments:** I contacted Elaine McCarthy, the Marketing Manager for Quest Software International Ltd. I believe Elaine would be an excellent candidate for an interview for a number of reasons. Firstly, Quest Software International Ltd is one of the few large companies that are expanding in the midst of a recession. It has grown from 3 people at the beginning of the 2011 to nearly 100 employees, as of 17 June 2011. I thought it would be an interesting contrast to some of the other interviewees who are facing greater challenges, as a result of the recession. Secondly, I believe it is a good idea to get an insight into the marketing strategies of a large multinational company.
Date: 18 June 2011

Topic: Interview Number 6 with Shane Lynch, Brand Manager with the Musgrave Group

Comments: The interview went exceptionally well. Mr Lynch was honest and forthright with his opinions. He was also very keen to expand on all topics, and the interview lasted over 90 minutes. Mr Lynch’s opinions on marketing were very positive overall, but he was did not avoid criticising certain elements, where he felt it was deserved. His opinions on preparing undergraduates for a career in marketing were also very interesting. Mr Lynch has also kindly offered to help me organise some other interviews with colleagues of his that he felt would be very suitable to the topic of this study.

Date: 21 June 2011

Topic: Interview Number 7 with Elaine McCarthy, Field Marketing Manager with Quest Software International Ltd.

Comments: The interview with Ms McCarthy went very well. Elaine’s perspective on the image of marketing internally and externally was very interesting, as was her suggestions on where marketing can be improved in academia. Interestingly, Ms McCarthy did not come from a marketing background, but was able to apply her analytical and IT background to her role as marketing manager.

Date: 04 July 2011

Topic: Organising Interview 8

Comment: I contacted Lisa Shanley, the Marketing Manager for Starcom, based in Dublin. The interview has been arranged for 11am on 13 July in Dublin.
**Topic: Organising Interview 9**

**Comment:** I contacted Paul Leahy, the Marketing Manager for Fuse, which is based in Dublin. This interview has also been arranged for 2pm on 13 July in Dublin.

**Date: 11 July 2011**

**Topic: Interview 8 and 9**

**Comment:** I had to cancel both interviews with Lisa Shanley and Paul Leahy unfortunately, due to work commitments on 13 July. Both have kindly agreed to meet me again at a re-scheduled date.

**Date: 13 July 2011**

**Topic: Contacting potential interview candidates**

**Comments:** I contacted Coolmore Foods based outside Bandon, in West Cork to request an interview with the Marketing Manager. I spoke with Eoghan O’Callaghan. Mr O’Callaghan was reluctant to confirm whether or not he could go ahead with the interview. He gave me his email address and asked me for some more details. I emailed him, explaining my background, what the interview related to, and some of the broad themes on which the questions are based.

**Topic: Contacting potential interview candidates**

**Comments:** I contacted Mr Ray Coppinger, the online Marketing Manager for Premier Global Services, based in Clonakilty, West Cork. The interview is scheduled for 15 July 2011. Mr Coppinger has kindly agreed to be interviewed. The interview is scheduled for 12pm 14 July at his office in Premier Global Services.
Date: 14 July 2011

Topic: Interview Number 8 with Ray Coppinger in Premier Global Services

Comments: The interview with Mr Coppinger was very interesting. As online marketer for a growing firm he had some great insights into the latest developments in marketing. Similar to Claire Carroll in Ogilvy, Mr Coppinger is not experiencing the negative impacts of the recession, in contrast to other interviewees. He also felt that online marketing should be differentiated from 'offline marketing' in that some of the perceived shortcomings of traditional marketing, such as measurability, cost effectiveness, and accountability were overcome due to the tools available to online marketers. He also mentioned that because a large element of online marketing is a 2 way conversation between the consumer and the business, the image problem that other interviewees faced was not as applicable in his role with Premier Global Services.

Date: 18 July 2011

Topic: Contacting potential interview candidate

Comment: I contacted David Kelly, the Commercial manager for SWS, who is based in Dublin. Mr Kelly kindly offered to take part in the interview and was happy for me to conduct the interview face to face or by conference call. As Mr Kelly is based in Dublin, I scheduled the conference call for 9.30am on Friday 22 July.

Date: 20 July 2011

Topic: Contact with Eoghan O’Callaghan from Coolmore Foods

Comments: A week after my initial contact and email to Eoghan O’Callaghan, I have not received any response, which I will assume means that the marketing team in Coolmore are unavailable for an interview.
Date: 21 July 2011

Topic: Contacting potential interview candidate

Comments: A friend of mine provided me with the contact details for Rhona Holland – the Marketing Director for PepsiCo, based in Little Island, Cork. My friend (a work colleague of Ms Holland’s) confirmed that Rhona would be happy to conduct an interview for my research. I emailed Rhona today, to organise an interview time.

Date: 22 July 2011:

Topic: Interview Number 9 with Mr David Kelly

Comments: This was the first interview conducted via conference call. I was concerned that the levels of interaction that exists in a face to face interview would be a major loss, but the interview was one of the most interesting so far. Mr Kelly’s comments were insightful and to the point. The interview was the shortest so far, but it did not in any way take away from the content, opinions expressed, etc. The last three questions in particular shifted the interview in a more philosophical direction, so it was excellent to be afforded the opportunity to interview the commercial manager of a growing business that is indigenous to Cork, but at the same time has a multinational element to it. Any concerns regarding the interview setting/location were proven to be unfounded, thankfully. In short, it was a worthwhile experience and a great addition to the interviews carried out thus far.

Date: 01 August 2011

Topic: Contacting a potential interview candidate

Comments: I followed up with Lisa Shanley, the Marketing Manager for Starcom, who I had initially contacted on 04 July in the hope of organising Interview 9.
Date: 02 August 2011

Topic: Discussion with Lisa Shanley regarding a potential interview

Comments: Ms Shanley responded to my request to re-schedule an interview. I suggested that we organise the interview by telephone on this occasion, due to the time and geographic constraints involved with organising annual leave and travelling to Dublin. Ms Shanley has kindly agreed to proceed with the interview by telephone but requested some more details on the topic of the interview beforehand. I have sent some more details on the major themes to be discussed in the interview by email.

Date: 02 August 2011

Topic: Discussion with Lisa Shanley regarding a potential interview

Comments: Ms Shanley responded to my email regarding the major themes of the interview and expressed reservations about whether she is a suitable candidate. We agreed to speak tomorrow at 1pm to discuss the interview.

Date: 03 August 2011

Topic: Discussion with Lisa Shanley regarding a potential interview

Comments: The scheduled call for 1pm was cancelled by Ms Shanley due to an urgent meeting. She will contact me as soon as she can, with regard to re-scheduling the interview.

Date: 08 August 2011

Topic: Discussion with Lisa Shanley regarding possible interview
Comments: I have not received an update from Ms Shanley yet. I have decided to look in to other options for interview 10, due to the research deadline on 16 September, and the assumption that Ms Shanley appears reluctant to proceed due to the topic of the research.

Topic: Follow up with Rhona Holland from PepsiCo

Comments: Having received no update so far, I followed up with Rhona Holland again today, in the hopes that we could arrange an interview sometime in August.

Date: 09 August 2011:

Topic: Contacting a potential interview candidate

Comments: I contacted Ruth McCarthy, the Marketing director for the Inchydonney Island Spa Hotel, in hope of organising interview number 10. Ms McCarthy kindly agreed to a telephone interview on 10 August. I believe this interviewee will be a fantastic addition to list of participants so far, as it will be the first time I will interview someone who is involved with the tourism sector, which is so vital to the local and Irish economy. Also, the fact that the interview candidate is responsible for marketing one of the countries most renowned hotels is an added bonus.

Date: 09 August 2011:

Topic: Contact with Rhona Holland from PepsiCo

Comments: Ms Holland responded to my email today, explaining that she was out of the office on holidays. We have arranged an interview for 22 August 2011, which is fantastic news, given the Global brands such as Pepsi and Doritos, for which Rhona has responsibility.
Date: 10 August 2011:

Topic: Interview Number 10 with Ruth McCarthy

Comment: Unfortunately Ms McCarthy had to cancel the interview today. We have re-scheduled for tomorrow (11 August).

Date: 11 August.

Topic: Review of progress so far for Chapter 3 and Chapter 4

Comment: Having progressed a considerable distance with both Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of the research, I feel it is worth submitting my work on both chapters for a quick review by Dr Angela Wright in the hope that Dr Wright will confirm that I am on the right track with both chapters.

Date: 11 August

Topic: Interview Number 10 with Ruth McCarthy

Comments: The interview went ahead and I was very satisfied with the outcome. Similar to David Kelly’s interview, conversing with Ms McCarthy by telephone, rather than face to face did not cause any issues and I believe Ms McCarthy was able to answer the questions as fluently and freely as she would have in a face-to-face setting.
Having completed the online survey, I also included some survey results, where applicable, as the interview progressed. I believe it assisted in putting the interview questions in the right context, and gave Ms McCarthy an insight to the overall theme of the study. I believe it also prevented any possibility of my own opinions influencing the tone or the content of the interview. One issue that arose in the course of the interview was the difficulty in communicating question 11 effectively, so that Ruth was able to answer. I referred to some of the survey results, which had a similar theme, and this seemed to help clarify question 11 ('As the face of business, is Marketing the target for what is actually a general mistrust of capitalism, from the perspective of consumers?')

Date: 22 August

Topic: Interview Number 11 with Rhona Holland

Comments: The 11th interview was the third to be conducted by phone. One of the major advantages emerging from the phone interviews seems to be that the topic of conversation remains on the questions being asked, preventing the tendency to veer off in to marketing tangent, based on something outside the scope of the interview.

The interview with Ms Holland went very well. For this interview, I referred to the survey results again, as per the previous interview with Ms Ruth McCarthy. So for example on Question 7 (Does Marketing Have an Image Problem with Consumers?) I was able to refer to the survey results, and Ms Holland stated her points from there. The survey was also referred to in the last three questions. I believe this strategy separated the interviewer from the questions, and prevented the risk of allowing the questions to become the opinion of the interviewer, in the eyes of the interviewee, which I endeavoured to avoid throughout the entire interview process with all 11 interviews.
Date: 25 August

Topic: Review of Dissertation progress with Dr Angela Wright

Comments: Dr Angela Wright, the research supervisor, contacted me to arrange a review of the progress with the dissertation so far. The meeting has been arranged for Monday 29 August. In advance of the meeting I have also sent Angela a soft copy of some of the chapters to check that I am on course in terms of content, writing style, etc.