EXPLORING MARKETING'S LOSS OF INFLUENCE TO LEAD CHANGE AND

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Luis I. De La Cruz B.

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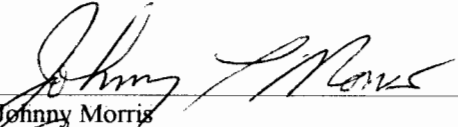
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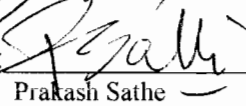
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Abstract

The current qualitative study using a phenomenological approach explored a loss of marketing influence to lead organizational change and its implementation to improve the performance of selected companies operating in health care, health insurance, medical equipment, real estate, and banking and finance markets in South Florida. Limited information is currently available about marketing influence within firms. Two research studies a decade apart focused on marketing influence within firms turned out significant disagreements pertaining to marketing influence and the loss of marketing leadership image and influence within researched firms. In this study, face to face semi-structured audiotaped interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 15 managers from diverse functions. Journal entries documented the data that could not be recorded. The research was conducted and analyzed over a 6-month period. Nvivo 9 qualitative analysis software was used to develop codes, categories, and themes from interviews and nine open-ended questions from a survey. The primary themes that emerged from the study were marketing loss of leadership was a threat to organizational reputation and sustainability, evidence of marketing value contribution to measure accountability to profitability, marketing leadership, credibility, and respect across functions and from senior management, the value of change, consumer oriented culture, and customer satisfaction. Major recommendations for future research included expanding the sample incorporating consumer packaged-goods and information technology firms. Research possible qualitative metrics for marketing performance and assess non-financial metrics to measure marketing creativity contribution. Narrow the scholarly-practice gap and determine the source of lateral influence of marketing leadership.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife and perennial friend Gladys AKA Mami. There were many times when I felt overwhelmed and lost sight of the finish line and Mami resurrected my drive with pampering love and the encouraging valor of the souls that never quit. I could never compensate for the waiting period and the social isolation during those four years that Gladys rewarded me with a great deal of patience emotional support, and guilt-free engagement. She stood by me in those difficult tough days, weeks, and years to ensure I completed my journey. This doctoral degree is a paid tribute to Gladys; I could not have completed this doctoral program without her, she was always there for me. For that and much more, my wife owns my love and she has my everlasting respect, admiration, and gratitude.

I would like also to dedicate this doctoral degree in loving memory to my uncle George Cespedes and to my dear aunt Fidias Cespedes from whom I received parental unconditional love, guidance, support, and encouragement to pursue academic goals. The only regret I feel is the personal absence of my uncle George at the finish line. This journey meant a lot to my uncle and aunt. I could not leave this dedication page without recognizing my grandmother Gregoria Orozco Charris, who encouraged my grasp for the stars and my cousin Helen Cespedes who reminded me of the family pride and to never give up in the face of a challenge. A special dedication of this research study goes to my son Alexander and granddaughter Alexandria who represent the future in my family.

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This dissertation would not be possible without the unending support and mentoring of my committee members. I thank Dr. Johnny Morris my mentor who understood the nature of the study and helped me to shift research method and design after having written already three chapters under another mentor. My trust was rewarded. I am grateful to Dr. Morris for his words of support, advice, and staying with me during this time, which seemed like a long process. I sincerely thank Dr. Prakash Sathe for insightful recommendations, which made me cautious in my data analysis and interpretations. Special thanks to Dr. William July who provided the motivation needed to persist and helped me to treat obstacles as normal events with a deadline. I am indebted to my committee for helping me to keep my eyes on the prize.

Dr. Charla Harmon a Phoenix graduate and a friend deserves a special acknowledgement for her unselfish engagement and caring attitude during the times of the proposal process. Dr. Harmon encouragement, enthusiasm, and voluntary assistance in interpreting the rules of engagement helped to achieve a successful proposal. Thank you Dr. Charla. I thank Dr. Duane Kujawa for a lifetime encouragement through undergraduate and graduate school and Dr. Victor Wallen for motivating me into pursuing a doctoral degree. Both made them sound easy to follow in their food steps. Thank you, I am happy I did.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Marketing as a function faces a threat of extinction, or an increasingly reduced role in strategic planning unless marketing executives find ways to be accountable, show their influence on innovations, and lead in customer connectedness (Brown, 2005; O'Sullivan & Abella, 2007; Stewart, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010). Scholars interested in defining metrics for marketing performance argued for further research that identifies non-financial metrics to measure marketing performance (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2007, 2010). "Over the past three decades marketing academics have raised their concern with the decreased influence of marketing at the level of corporate strategy" according to Nath and Mahajan (2008, p. 65). A decrease in the marketing department influence however seems to go beyond corporate strategy, including having an effect on the level of credibility and respect marketing receives in the organization, and in assessments of its performance (Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, & Srivastava, 2004; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

In times in which change is no longer a threat in the horizon but ubiquitous, and a market orientation is critical to adapt quickly to changes and secure financial success; a diminished level of marketing influence and functional respect among senior managers may affect organizational performance (Connolly, 2008; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998; Moorman & Rust, 1999). In a period of rapid marketplace changes in which marketing could have shown leadership in organizational change, the role of marketing appears to have diminished in terms of effectiveness and trust (Webster, 2006). Renowned authors concurred that, "In dynamic market environments, marketing competence in the form of customer orientation, market knowledge, and a focus on customer value might be the keys to business performance and profitability" (Webster, 2006, p. 287).

Executives in marketing departments however lacked either proven conceptual models, or economic and financial data to demonstrate to non-marketing managers that marketing expenditures were investments (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2010; Webster, 2006). Treating marketing investments as expenditures made marketing budgets an easy target to cut (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2010). Outsourcing manufacturing to less developed countries and customer services to low-labor cost areas became appealing alternatives to operating costs reduction (Webster, 2006).

Building customer satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability are long-term strategic marketing objectives, which have fallen second to operational perspectives that are financially driven (Webster, 2006). The allocation of funds to marketing strategic activities that focus on long-term growth and profitability are linked to corporate sustainability (Brown, 2005; Webster, 2006). A concept many chief executive officers (CEOs) are still not recognizing, but is one principle that led General Electric in 2003 to a sustainability strategy that restored marketing to the driver seat in strategic actions (Comstock, Gulati, & Liguori, 2010).

The influence of the marketing function in organizational strategic development is paramount to firms' differentiation through innovation and continual growth (Stewart, 2006; Stringfellow & Jap, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010). Contribution to business performance is a metric and status factor, which historically earned marketing credibility and respect among senior managers, and enhanced marketing influence across functions (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2010). The customer advocacy role of marketing contributed to advance marketing influence and centrality across hierarchical levels and departments within business-to-business (B2B) organizations (Hutt & Speh, 2007). To perform this challenging inter-functional role, marketing leadership exercises managerial competencies and a relative influence initiating, developing, nurturing, and sustaining a healthy network of relationships within the firm, and with

customers (Hutt & Speh, 2007). Through inter-functional influence, marketing executives attempt to influence the direction of change implementation and organizational performance (Harris, Ogbonna, & Goode, 2008).

Marketing as a function seems to undergo some type of transition. A recent study from O'Sullivan and Abella (2010) reported "senior management teams spend less than 10% of their time discussing marketing issues and are often dissatisfied with marketing contribution" (p. 42). The perceived marketing inability to be accountable for business performance has diminished the function's status and discretionary expending power (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2010; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2010). Recent organizational research shows a marketing function underrepresented and undervalued as an organizational rainmaker (Brown, 2005; Parsons & Maclaran, 2009; Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). Such image undermines marketing executives' influence on decision-making processes to drive change and improve performance, which may limit the achievement of two "sustainable competitive advantages, adding value to customers, and increasing growth" (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006, p. 230).

Reported research about the value of marketing showed that the average compensation of a marketing executive in the United States was 69% of a finance executive, and 91% of a manufacturing executive (Pfeffer, as cited in Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). The marketing function ranked only above human resources in industrial and business-to-business companies (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). Finance was a favored background over marketing for executives seeking CEO candidacy, and only one out 20 Fortune 500 companies had a chief marketing officer (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). In strategic planning, other functions perceived that marketers develop and execute tactics but not strategies (Gronroos, 2007; Webster, 2005a).

Stringfellow and Jap (2006) "believed that marginalization of the marketing function is a grave and serious mistake" (p. 230). Verhoef and Leeflang (2010) argued that firms must maintain a strong and influential marketing department in addition to a market orientation. The ability of marketing managers to document their contribution to the value of the firm through functional interactions and influence on decision making, innovations, and performance continues to be a questionable issue. A critical issue that deserves further research associated with the status of marketing influence (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2010; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2010).

The current study used a qualitative research method and phenomenological design to explore the loss of marketing influence in leading change readiness, gaining inter-functional support for change implementation, and positively contributing to the performance of a group of companies operating in South Florida. The investigator conducted a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews guided by a modified van Kaam Method (Moustakas, 1994). The modified van Kaam Method is a proven research approach to explore and understand the lived experiences and perceptions of a purposive sample. In the current study, this approach was applied to a convenient sample of 15 professional employees of a group of companies operating in South Florida (Ferris & Minnelli, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). The investigator taped and transcribed semi-structured interviews for data analysis (Ferris & Minnelli, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). The interview questions revolved around marketing influence over cross-functional decision-making, leading change, its implementation, and organizational performance.

A qualitative method applied to the current study because the investigator sought to understand perceptions of individuals forming a convenient sample of study, and to elaborate pertinent theories drawn from perspectives described in face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2005). Phenomenology is a design through which researchers seek to describe rather than explain the

experiences and perceptions of individuals based on their own perspectives (Lester, 1999). The intention in using a phenomenological design with this qualitative study was to seek an understanding of perceptions and perspectives for a given situation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966).

Exploring marketing influence on inter-functional decision-making, organizational change, and performance was the situational base of this research. To provide a foundation for the current study, Chapter 1 began with an overview of the background of the research problem, followed by a broad and specific problem definition, statements of purpose, and significance of the study. The chapter included a description of design and nature of the study, hypotheses, research question, and a framework of relevant theories, and concepts. Chapter 1 concluded with a discussion of assumptions, scope, limitations, and delimitations including definitions.

Background of the Problem

Marketing managers' inability to account for their contribution to the organization top and bottom lines has diminished marketing influence, credibility, and respect within the firm; specifically with senior management, and across leading functions (Brown, 2005; O'Sullivan & Abella, 2007; Stewart, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010). Scholars interested in defining a measure for marketing performance continue to call for further investigations of metrics to gauge marketing performance (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2007, 2010). Marketing performance and productivity metrics appear as uppermost organizational priorities in several Marketing Science Institute biannual reports (Clark, Abella, & Ambler 2006).

Social Concern. A loss of marketing influence in organizations has contributed to increase a scholarship-practice gap. Brown (2005) argued that marketing scholarship could be contributing more to business practices; the connection between marketing scholarship and

marketing practice appears weak. Business organizations must work closely with academics to develop relevant ideas about applications for a multi-dimensional market environment (Brown, 2005).

Bridge (as cited in Brown, 2005) claimed marketing scholarship drove the changes in the marketing practice twenty years ago; currently, businesses are in need of problem solving applications at customer interface stations and backstage deliverables. Scholars are not the only ones pressed to shed some light about marketing transition and customer ownership; practitioners are under pressure to comply with financial transparency and accountability reporting, which includes marketing investments and expenditures (Clark, Abella, & Ambler 2006). A persistent criticism of marketing managers is the absence of results assessment based on expenditures made, and is one reason claimed for the loss of marketing credibility and respect with senior managers (Webster, Malter, & Ganesan, 2005). Marketing executives have a stake in measuring their performance and regain the ability to provide feedback to senior leadership (Stewart, 2006). Individual compensation, promotion, and departmental budgets depend on management capabilities to measure productivity and effectiveness (Clark, Abella, & Ambler 2006).

In terms of productivity and effectiveness, the impact of marketing activities cut across organizational functions including competitors and customers. This spanning influence of marketing may lag in certain areas, which may affect a fair measure of marketing total contribution at a given point (Clark, Abella, & Ambler 2006). The contribution of marketing to the future direction of the firm may not appear in scorecards that exclude leading indicators (Gotts, 2009). Reports with historical (lagged) data obscure opportunities that lie ahead with potential competitive advantages; the execution of marketing strategies across functions within

the organization could be stalled when a leading vision is not shared among functional leaders (Gotts, 2009).

Senior management could improve assessments of marketing performance by recognizing leading and lagging indicators within technological and environmental contexts. Key performance indicators (KPIs) should be in alignment with the engaged marketing activity, which requires of senior management some level of familiarity to assess performance according to situational capabilities (Gotts, 2009). A management dashboard is a comprehensive tool recommended to report KPIs from management information systems to senior management (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Although a popular tool among marketers, the role of dashboards in managing marketing productivity has received little attention from marketing research (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2007).

To marshal marketing strategies, marketers must take advantage of functional interdependence and increase the frequency of marketing interactions in its operating environments (Ford & Hakansson, 2006; Lenox, Rockart, & Lewin, 2006). Managers and business academics recognize that frequent business interactions are important to build collaborative teamwork (LaRue, Childs, & Larson, 2006). Interactions are an intrinsic part of the empirical reality of business and of business systematic change (Ford & Hakansson, 2006).

Increasing technological change and associated cost pressures drove companies and its functions to specialization. Specialization tends to increase levels of functional interdependence by tying functional and individual resources (Ford & Hakansson, 2006). Interactions transform interdependent resources into capabilities (Lenox et al., 2006), which yield value to each interacting function; leading to conclude that a key aspect of business interactions is building, managing, and exploiting interdependence over time (Ford & Hakansson, 2006; Levinthal,

1997). Under the customer-centric frame, marketing as a function and a process extended beyond its boundaries, and ceded some market activities to sales, finance, and operations as part of functional interdependence (Brown, 2005; Moorman & Rust, 1999). Homburg and Grunner (1998) coined the shift a "cross-functional dispersion of marketing activities," which was going to reduce the need for a strong marketing unit (p. 180).

Theoretical Interest. The dispersion of the marketing role, which could shrink marketing domain, could increase also marketing influence (Greyser as cited in Moorman & Rust, 1999). According to the resource dependency view, different organizational functions have varying degrees of power because of their different capabilities. Capabilities needed to seize important resources and strengthen unit contribution (Dawes & Massey, 2006; Kholi, 1989). Functions seeking dependence on others to cope with their own problems and minimize the need to invest in its own resources are subject to the influence of a resource-dominant function and logic (Ford & Hakansson, 2006).

Interdependencies can empower but also constrain a function's ability to decide, direct, change, and grow; interdependencies seem to generate both problems, and opportunities for organizational functions (Ford & Hakansson, 2006). Under such perspective, "A simultaneous upgrading of the market orientation and downsizing of the formal function" could take place reflecting a new marketing process organization (Greyser, as cited in Moorman & Rust, 1999, p. 181). Under the process organization perspective, some scholars began to predict the decline of marketing as a standalone function, reduced in size, centrality, and resources (Moorman & Rust, 1999).

The absence of research and tools surrounding antecedents and evolution of economic realities presents researchers and managers with a problem: to understand and analyze

multidimensional aspects of interdependency (Ford & Hakansson, 2006). Although a correlation may appear to exist between high functional interdependency and performance in terms of profits (Demsetz, 1973), previous scholarship does not present a clear picture of such relationship (Lenox et al., 2006). Homburg, Workman, and Krohmer (1999) could not account in 1997 for the level and determinants of relative influence of marketing within the firm. The absence of empirical research presented a significant gap in understanding the factors that could lead to variations in marketing influential leadership role.

According to Webster (1997), for the previous two or three decades marketing yielded its involvement in the development of strategies to specialized functions within the organization. Day (1992) previously had argued that little or no empirical evidence was available to confirm the strategic role of marketing was declining, but Day posited that as organizations with hybrid structures and self-directed teams evolve, functional departments' importance diminishes. Marketing could be in a transitional stage evolving in organizations starting to flatten structures to adapt to marketplace changes. This dynamic process may require different marketing leadership metrics and a focus on leading indicators that signal early change patterns (Gotts, 2009).

Homburg et al. (1999) conducted a study to fill a marketing research gap, and found marketing and sales relatively influential within the firm when compared with other functional groups. In their sample, the marketing unit was found highly influential most of the time but in terms of setting and holding strategic course, marketing was distinctively the most influential function. Homburg et al. (1999) found no evidence of a diminished marketing role because of shifts toward new organizational forms.

A recent study assessing marketing influence investigated a decade later the degree of marketing influence inside the organization. The authors confirmed the influence of marketing in the company's market orientation, and the latter relatively associated with positive firm performance (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010). Verhoef and Leeflang (2009, 2010) identified "accountability and innovativeness" as leading factors of marketing influence but found no increase in influence from the customer-connecting role of marketing (2009, p. 14).

Verhoef and Leeflang' study (2009) attempted to build a theory from previous research findings about the influential role of marketing in organizations and its effect. The authors' discoveries contributed to an increasing debate around the decreasing influence of marketing within firms, and questioned the need for a strong marketing department within organizations (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) posited that marketing decision-making nowadays was limited to advertising, relational marketing, segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Sales and finance departments influenced and sometimes determined pricing and distribution terms.

The functional dispersion of some marketing mix functions indicated a reduced marketing role given the absence of marketers' participation in corporate strategic development (O'Dea, 2007; Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, & Srivastava, 2004). Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) results tended to support arguments from popular and scientific sources that marketing was losing its importance in business organizations (Webster, Malter, & Ganesan, 2005). Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) affirmed the importance of a strong marketing department in the midst of an ongoing perception to the contrary; thinking marketing could sustain a market orientation and better organizational performance.

A market-oriented culture represents an antecedent of marketing influence, a signal of support from top management and their recognition of the functional contribution of marketing. Increasingly competitive and changing business environments challenge sustainability, propelling firms to seek innovations to make a difference, master financial efficiencies, and become problem solvers to add value to customers' offerings (Edgar & Lockwood, 2010). Marketers, who lead in these areas, play a role in transforming competencies for problem solving when dealing with continual change (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Edgar & Lockwood, 2010).

This qualitative phenomenological study differs from the aforementioned studies, which exclusively used quantitative methods in researching the influence on marketing within the firm. This study explored the lived experiences of functional employees about the loss of marketing influence to lead change and improve performance. An appreciation and rich understanding of the lived experiences of research participants was a valuable outcome from the current study (van Kaam, 1966).

The findings from this study may offer other perspectives to the general conceptualization about the steep decline of the marketing function and diminished influence at the corporate strategy level (Leeflang, 2004; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010; Webster et al., 2005). The investigation may contribute to narrow a literature gap. Extant research already pointed toward the inter-functional influence of marketing, and its impact on the direction of change implementation with a subsequent effect on functional and organizational performance (Harris, Ogbonna, & Goode, 2008). The research findings may suggest to marketing researchers, strategic planners, organization development (OD) theorists, senior leadership, and marketing unit managers a renewed use of marketing strategic role to influence decisions pertaining to change, its implementation, and performance improvement.

Statement of the Problem

The general situational problem marketing faces lies in the changing role of the marketing function and the effect this role variation has on the function's influence inside the organization (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Pfeffer (1992) argued that marketing managers successfully influence powerful functional groups to support marketing's change initiatives when managers share the process but when marketing ignores these functional groups or has no influence over them, functional groups may hinder change effort. The leadership role of marketing to reconcile functional interests to create integrated strategies and customer solutions is compromised as the level of its inter-functional influence diminishes. The side effect of losing influence seems to reduce marketing effectiveness to drive change and its implementation to improve performance (Hutt & Speh, 2007; Nath & Mahajan 2008; Rust et al., 2004; Verhoef & Leeflang 2009; Webster, et al., 2005). Information about the varying role of marketing in the academic literature and the popular press lead to conclude that marketing could be in steep decline in many companies (Leeflang, 2004; Webster et al., 2005).

The specific problem is the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change and positively contribute to firm's performance. "Over the past three decades marketing academics have raised their concern with the decreased influence of marketing at the level of corporate strategy" according to Nath and Mahajan (2008, p. 65). The loss of marketing influence goes beyond corporate strategy to affect the level of credibility and respect marketing received in the organization (Rust et al., 2004; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). In times in which change is no longer a threat in the horizon but is ubiquitous, and a market orientation is critical to adaptation and financial success; a diminished level of marketing influence and respect may affect

organizational performance (Connolly, 2008; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998; Moorman & Rust, 1999; O'Dea, 2007).

Authors in the reviewed literature emphasize the importance of marketing in terms of marketing orientation and its influence over organizational performance (Homburgh, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The results from the current study may contribute to improve the performance of the South Florida companies that participated in the research. Some of the participating companies experienced a loss of some marketing influence affecting cross-functional decision-making, some agility to respond to changing conditions, and some failure to attain inter-functional support for change implementation to improve performance.

The current study used a qualitative method and phenomenological design to explore the loss of marketing influence to lead change readiness, gain inter-functional support for change implementation, and positively contribute to improve performance in a group of South Florida companies operating in diverse industries. The investigator explored research gaps in the implications of the loss of marketing influence to effect a change and improve the operational performance of the marketing unit and the organization. A qualitative method applied in the current study because the investigator sought to understand perceptions of individuals forming a convenient sample of study, and elaborated pertinent theories from participants' perspectives described in face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2005).

A qualitative phenomenological study helped to explore and describe the lived experiences of a convenient sample, which in this research constituted the relationships of people, and told how the environment influences behavior (van Kaam, 1966). The use of qualitative research with a phenomenological design was the appropriate methodological

combination for a study that explored and described the lived experiences of participants under observation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966). A group of 15 managers employed in manufacturing, service, and distribution firms operating in South Florida composed the convenient sample.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of 20 managerial employees who were invited to participate in a research study. A qualitative research study pertaining to the loss of marketing influence to lead change readiness, gain inter-functional support for change implementation, and improve the level of performance of a group of firms in diverse industries operating in South Florida. The intention in using a phenomenological design with this qualitative study was to seek an understanding of perceptions and perspectives for a given situation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966). A phenomenological design was in alignment with investigations that intended to explore the lived experiences of people. The current qualitative phenomenological study informed through exploring and describing lived experiences of the 15 managerial employees who participated about the level of influence of marketing leadership. In essence, the participants' perceptions about the degree of loss in marketing influence over decisions that could affect organizational change and performance across functions.

A qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate for the study because its inductive design enabled the exploration of human behavior from multiple perspectives, and explained a holistic interpretation of individuals' experiences (Karami, Rowley, & Analoui, 2006; Neuman, 2006). The specific population for this study included 15 managerial employees of the 20 in the selected initial sample, who work for a group of firms in health care, medical

products and equipment, health insurance, real estate, banking, and finance operating in South

Florida. The current study followed a systematic and structured seven-step model developed by

Moustakas (1994), which is appropriate for inexperienced investigators. The lived experiences

of managerial employees were explored in semi-structured face-to-face interviews using a

modified van Kaam Method (Ferris & Minnelli, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

Purposive sampling was the type of sampling the investigator used for this study.

Participants were selected with a specific purpose in mind; the convenient sample included

people of interest not randomly selected (Polit & Hungler, 1999). Leedy and Ormrod (2001)

posited that a typical sample size for a qualitative research study is between five to 25

participants. Substantive research from doctoral theses and between 500 to 1,000 research

reports showed that a variation of a phenomenon reaches saturation at around 20 research

participants; indicating new constructs do not emerge in qualitative research studies with more

than 20 participants (Sandberg, 2000). The sample size met Leedy and Ormrod (2001) and

Creswell's (2005) guidelines for typical qualitative research studies.

<div align="center">**Significance of the Problem**</div>

Significance of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study differed from previous research that used

quantitative methods to determine marketing levels of influence in organizations (Homburg et

al., 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Learning from the lived experiences of managers

associated with the loss of marketing influence to lead change and improve performance

supported, and explained some of the issues risen in previous quantitative studies (Homburg et

al., 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The qualitative data that emerged from the perceptions

and perspectives of 15 managers delivered a rich appreciation and understanding of marketing

influence within the firm (van Kaam, 1966). The results yielded valuable outcomes for participants in this study.

The study may contribute also to narrow a gap in the literature, existing research points toward the loss of inter-functional influence of marketing and its effect on the strategic direction of change, change implementation, and impact on organizational performance (Harris, Ogbonna, & Goode, 2008). Verhoef and Leeflang claimed their 2009 Dutch study was the second empirical investigation in a decade to inquire about the loss of influence of marketing within the firm. The authors confirmed the influence of marketing in a company's market orientation and the latter relative association with positive firm performance (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; 2010). Regarding the body of knowledge about the theme of this research, Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) added, "Many statements about the role of marketing in modern firms remain anecdotal or journalistic" (p. 15).

This study offers other perspectives to a general conceptualization about a steep decline of marketing and diminished influence as a function at the corporate strategy level (Leeflang, 2004; Stewart, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010; Webster et al., 2005). The emergence of information and logistics driven services signaled an economic shift from manufacturing, which brought an increase in firms' value from intangible assets (Rust et al., 2004). Market-based assets and market capabilities are intangible assets and sources of competitive advantage, recognized to influence potential cash flows and to contribute to business capitalization (Fornell et al., 2006; Gupta et al., 2004; Joshi & Hanssens, 2004; Ramaswami, Srivastava, & Bhargava, 2008). Rust et al. (2004) posited that many intangible assets are not included in balance sheets, such as "brands, market networks, and intellectual property" (p. 78).

The outcomes from exploring levels of marketing influence across diverse functions may assist senior management in measuring the contribution of marketing to increase competitive advantages and performance. The study may contribute knowledge to marketing and organizational development (OD). The research may suggest using marketing strategic value to influence decisions toward change readiness and implementation as a driver of innovation and profitable performance to market researchers, strategic management teams, OD theorists, senior leaders, and marketing unit managers. The research results may increase the understanding of the level and determinants of influence among functional groups, which may be significant to organizations in their efforts to direct, and implement organizational change (Homburg et al., 1999).

Significance of the Study to Leadership

Leadership is a key component in the management of limited resources, and a vital driver for change when attempting to gain competitive advantages, and create value for customers (Ramaswami et al., 2008). The results from this study offer different perspectives about the influence of marketing leadership across functions. A leadership tied to resource value, change readiness, change implementation, innovativeness, and performance.

Performing organizations speak the language of marketing leadership, expressing it through a customer-oriented culture and customer-centric activities embedded in non-marketing functions, such as operations and finance (Stewart, 2006). The context of the marketplace and the variables of purchase and consumption are still unchallenged domains of marketing leadership (Stewart, 2006). The study's results may contribute to highlight a new organizational form of marketing leadership. A non-siloed lateral leadership that could play a central role in interpreting for senior management the strategic approach to a hierarchy of markets and

customers, and determine the capability of the organization to participate in profitable stages of the value chain when outsourcing for superior performance (Stewart, 2006).

The discoveries from the current study may increase an understanding of a leadership role senior management plays when enhancing or depreciating credibility and respect for value contributions from marketing (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The results may touch on relational aspects of marketing leadership with customer connections, and with internal functions, which have been perceived as marketers' loss of leverage (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Studying the level of inter-functional influence of the marketing function may yield additional insights into leadership influence over decision-making, change processes, and performance improvements.

The value of this study to leadership might also come from unexpected perspectives participants may provide when describing lived experiences about the leadership of marketing, or a leadership role variation, which might influence change and performance across functions. The study could bring new knowledge to leaders of South Florida companies operating in diverse industries about increasing customer-centric connectedness, improving delivering value to customers, and assessing marketing contribution to the value of the firm (Lundberg, 2006; Stewart, 2006). The study might identify the influence of marketing leadership in motivating the action of others to achieve goals separate from the maintenance function of marketing management, which is subject to short-term performance metrics, and budget accountability (Bush, 2008). Health care, health insurance, real estate, banking, and financial investments are industries undergoing pressing transformational changes. Industry leadership and participants could benefit from understanding how marketing leadership might influence readiness to change, change implementation, and business performance across functions.

Nature of the Study

Overview of the Research Method and Design

The study used a qualitative method and phenomenological design to explore the loss of marketing influence to lead change readiness, gain cross-functional support for change implementation, and positively contribute to the performance of a group of firms in diverse industries operating in South Florida. A group of managerial employees in manufacturing, service, and distribution firms operating in South Florida comprised the population sample. A qualitative method was appropriate because the investigator sought to understand perceptions of individuals forming a convenient sample of study to elaborate pertinent theories drawn from perspectives described in face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2005).

In qualitative research, investigators gather data in the form of words, and analyze collected data using common themes to describe events (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Phenomenological research seeks to describe rather than explain and is effective in exposing the experiences and perceptions of individuals based on their own perspectives (Lester, 1999). The intention in using a phenomenological design with this qualitative study was to seek an understanding of perceptions and perspectives of the people who became participants in the study of a given situation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966).

This qualitative phenomenological study informed through exploring and describing lived experiences of managerial employees about the level of influence of marketing leadership on cross-functional decisions pertaining to organizational change and performance. A phenomenological design was aligned with the explorations of perceptions from lived experiences, which was the objective of the current qualitative study. According to Moustakas

(1994), phenomenology supports the type of research selected for the current study. Phenomenology allows capturing broad in scope descriptions that could assist in a reflective structural analysis.

Structural and textural analyses from personal interviews revealed essentials of lived experiences. In-depth face-to-face interviews provided information to draw raw data from which to develop new body of knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological design also permitted the investigator to be flexible, and adapt the direction of the research when the data collected warranted a change (Moustakas, 1994; Neuman, 2006).

Overview of Method and Design Appropriateness

Quantitative vs. Qualitative. The alternative to a qualitative method is a quantitative approach. A quantitative method enables the use of a scientific approach to gather specific data objectively measured or expressed in numbers using statistical assessments (Creswell, 2005, 2007a; Newman, 2003). The intention in using quantitative research is to test theories and hypotheses to generalize results (Simon, 2006). The nature of the problem in the current study did not lead to an inquiry into the relationship between variables; for such objective quantitative measurement tools exist to make the application of a correlational design adequate (Anderson, Sweeney, & Williams, 2006; Creswell, 2005).

The subject in this study involved exploring, understanding perspectives, developing theories, gathering data in the form of words, and analyzing the data using common themes to describe a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b; Denzing & Lincoln, 2005). The examination of relationships between variables and the differences between groups align better with the nature of a problem using numeric data (Creswell, 2005).

Qualitative vs. Mixed method. A mixed method is another research option that uses quantitative and qualitative data collection, and analysis processes to describe the phenomena under study (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). Neither mixed nor quantitative methods are appropriate for the current study because the nature of the study was to describe the lived experiences of managerial employees from diverse industries. A case study, grounded theory, content analysis, and ethnography are alternative designs to a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2007b; Leedy & Omrod, 2005).

Others vs. Phenomenological. Other qualitative methods considered carried the following limitations: the designs were more normative, the designs did not address adequately the needs for a context-sensitive basis to understand marketing loss of influence and respect (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Rust et al., 2004; Slack & Parent, 2006). A case study explores in depth many if not all variables in a unit that seeks to uncover the interplay of significant factors, which characterize a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007b; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Grounded theory is an inductive methodology that uses a systematic form to generate theory through set procedures. From these procedures, a model about a particular behavior or a phenomenon could develop. Qualitative and quantitative studies could use grounded theory (Creswell, 2007b; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Content analysis examines systematically and in detail the contents of text. Content analysis offers significant potential for qualitative and quantitative research but remains underutilized because of unfamiliarity with the method and inherent limitations (Neuman, 2006). Ethnography uses techniques to uncover the social order and meaning a setting or particular situation may have for the participants (Creswell, 2007b; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Ethnography is also costly to conduct, and presents difficulties in access to research sites (Spradley &

McCurdy, 1972). The purpose of the research in the current study is not to generate new theory, rendering ground theory inappropriate (Berg, 2004). The potential for investigator bias, anecdotal data, and unrestricted access requirement of action research made this approach inappropriate for the current study (Berg, 2004).

Phenomenology, on the other hand, revolves around attributes of the human experience, which include among others intuition, essence, perception, meaning, knowledge, context, themes, and patterns. Moustakas (1994) stated, "For Husserl, as for Kant and Descartes, knowledge based on intuition and essence precedes empirical knowledge" (p. 26). In Moustakas' words "perception was regarded as the primary source of knowledge, the source that cannot be doubted" (1994, p. 52). Qualitative research using a phenomenological design was the appropriate method and design approach for the current study because allows flexibility in describing the lived experiences of participants under study (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The criterion for this qualitative phenomenological study is van Kaam's (1966) modified model. Moustakas (1994) modified the original van Kaam's method for the science of foundational human formation. The goal was to serve social science research in phenomenological studies that could use perceptions from a group of people when attempting to depict a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology was the appropriate research design to address the research question in this study. A research question framed the initial boundaries to guide the investigator in understanding from perceptions of selected people any marketing level of influence in an organizational structure. Levels of influence that could lead decision-making processes, introduce actionable change, and affect performance.

Field Testing

Informal, interactive phenomenological interviews with participants using open-ended questions and comments according to Moustakas (1994) helped to gather data that addressed the research question in the current study. Field-testing research questions in interview questionnaires and surveys is recommended for novice investigators (Creswell, 2007a). Surveys and questionnaires were field tested to ensure proper instrument use and consistency in the data collected (Simon, 2006). Although Moustakas (1994) argued that conflicting perceptions are unlikely in phenomenology because each participant's lived experience is unique; field testing, however ensured the questions clearly made sense and no further clarification was needed to elicit intuitive responses (Cooper & Schindler, 2002). The interview questions (see Appendix D) were field-tested according to the above criteria using three professionally trained individuals excluded from the sample population.

Geographic Location

South Florida offered a diverse sample population for examining marketing roles and levels of influence for change and corporate performance. Selected firms operating in diverse industries represented a convenient sample. According to a study from World City and the School of Business of the University of Miami (2009), South Florida multinational firms oversaw more than $ 221 billion in annual revenues, a 9% increase year over year. The 1,146 multinationals in the area represented 54 nations; employed 129,000 workers just in South Florida, and oversaw 605,000 workers worldwide. Researchers at World City (2009) also examined the decision-making power of multinationals by corporate structure, and found that more than 47% had a top marketing position based in South Florida.

Population and Purposive Sampling

For qualitative research, other relevant design steps suggested encompass purposive sampling, data collection, and data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Purposeful sampling is a method "used when there are clear rationale or criteria for selecting participants to form a sample group to be studied or tracked" (Champion, 2002, p. 2). A convenient sample could reduce bias within a purposeful category (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling is an approach used to sample a population of interest from whom data could be gathered in semi-structured taped interviews; asking the same questions, and taking notes to capture body language that cannot be recorded (Moustakas, 1994). Patton (2002) stated, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 244). Creswell (1998) suggested, "Long interviews with up to 10 people" (p. 65) for a qualitative study. Meanwhile Boyd (2001) argued that in a qualitative study thematic saturation might be reached between two to 10 participants.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) argued that a typical sample size for a qualitative research study is between five to 25 participants. The sample size targeted meets Creswell's (2005) guidelines on typical qualitative research studies. Substantive research from doctoral theses and between 500 to 1,000 research reports showed that a "variation of a phenomenon reached saturation at around 20 research participants" indicating new constructs do not emerge in qualitative research studies with more than 20 (Sandberg, 2000, p. 13).

Each individual who participated in the study held a managerial position in any of the participating firms. Individuals became self-selected participants by responding *yes* to the question: Have you had any interaction experiences with the marketing function in times of organizational change? A characteristic of purposive sampling is to select individuals who will highlight the elements of a specific phenomenon, and make a robust contribution to address the

research question (Leedy & Omrod, 2001). The sample selection was based on the investigator's judgment and the purpose of the research.

A certified participant was that individual who completed the interview and approved the transcription. Each participant was briefed on the objectives of the current study, and his or her role as stated in the Informed Consent and Confidentiality form (see Appendix A). The distributed and signed consent forms remained in the investigator's possession, and were not shared with anyone. Interview transcripts were stored on disc in a locked box at the author's home to ensure confidentiality. Each participant was asked to sign a Consent to Participate form (see Appendix A), and was given the opportunity to review the transcript from the interview, agree to its accuracy, and amend or add insights. These steps qualified the transcription for insertion in the study. The investigator's certification for Human Research Subjects was current until 2013.

Perception in phenomenological research is without doubt an exclusive source of knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). The registration, recognition, and interpretation of memorized sensory experiences become perception whereas the continuity of having sensory experiences leads to knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This research attempted to enhance knowledge about marketing loss of functional leadership influence over decision-making about change readiness, change implementation support, and effect on performance. The investigator paid close attention to emerging marketing leadership patterns or associations with transformational, distributed, and adaptive leadership theory.

The current qualitative phenomenological study relied on the perception and experience of managerial employees, who participated. The literature indicated the selected approach was the most appropriate method to acquire knowledge from the perceptions and experiences of a

convenient sample of managers. In this study, the investigator using the modified van Kaam phenomenological method by Moustakas (1994) focused on the lived experiences and explications given by participants rather than accentuating the investigator's personal interpretation.

Seven-step Process

According to Moustakas (1994), the seven-step process modified from van Kaam (1966) could be used to determine themes and patterns from the participants' interview process. The seven steps outlined in Creswell (2005) included cataloguing and preliminary grouping; elimination of unessential data; grouping by themes; linking themes to applications, and constructing textual, structural, and textual-structural descriptions of individual experiences. Data was stored, catalogued, and coded using Nvivo9 ®, a recognized software program.

Nvivo9 ® is a recommended tool used in many phenomenological studies for qualitative data analysis. The investigator codified, connected, adapted, and modeled data gathered from digitally taped interviews. The program was instrumental to assess and clarify patterns in themes, which appeared in the discourse of the lived experiences of the managerial employees who formed the sample population.

To capture socially constructed realities, Moustakas (1994) recommended setting aside personal judgment. *Epoche* is a reference to the process of bracketing or horizonalization (Moustakas, 1994). The investigator suspended personal judgment or bias by bracketing himself from the rest of the world (Koch, 1995). The investigator's adoption of a not-knowing stance underlined the skills to develop to learn about other people's perspectives (Keenan, 2004). The investigator kept in mind bracketing, and reduced the data to be understood in terms of their

similar and dissimilar components, motives, validation, and descriptions in text and structure, which led to find, and examine possible meanings (Moustakas, 1994).

Purposive sampling was the approach used to sample a population of interest. A population formed by 15 managerial employees who interacted with the marketing function, and from whom data was gathered in 15 semi-structured taped interviews. Data was obtained by consistently asking the same questions and taking notes to capture body language that cannot not be recorded (Moustakas, 1994). Chapter 3 provides in depth explanations of the phenomenological design. Chapter 4 presents the results of this research study in the form of tables, and counted and average themes that were found and analyzed in common sentences, and paragraphs of coded data.

<div align="center">**Research Question**</div>

A general research question according to Moustakas (1994) served as a guide to both investigator and participants in the process of gathering information and the reduction process. The overarching research question what is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance guided this research study. The question design set the activity mode and mood for open and honest sharing of lived experiences as seen through the eyes of the participant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The research question guided the kind of data intended for collection and restricted the interpretation and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). Semi-structured interview questions provided an opportunity for participants to express themselves in an open and informal environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Moustakas (1994) suggested certain words to use in developing interview questions that draw concise wording and open comments. The use of the word "how" is more limiting than

"what" in open-ended questions, and the word "perceives" motivates participants to give their individual perceptions about questions related to participants' personal experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The word "describes" stimulates sharing details associated with the question and personal experiences in an open-ended question and answer structure, and the word "experience" motivates participants to share views and opinions of personal experiences associated with postulated questions (see Appendix D) (Moustakas, 1994).

The research question was intended to support appropriately the purpose of this investigation, and to gain an understanding from the experiential perceptions of managers about the loss of marketing influence. The type of influence needed to lead change, gain cross-functional support for change implementation, and improve performance in a group of selected companies that participated in the study. An understanding of the lived experiences of managerial employees provided insights about the loss of marketing leadership influence in strategic decisions, change readiness, and inter-functional support for change implementation. The outcomes may guide senior leadership and functional management in their assessment of marketing contribution to increase competitive advantages and organizational performance.

Theoretical Framework

Shank (2006) defined "a theory is a formal account of meaning used to make sense of complex phenomena and to allow investigators to derive testable hypotheses" (p. 17). A theory is only a story when it can explain a phenomenon and should not be used to make predictive hypotheses that could be verified or falsified (Shank, 2006). In quantitative research, the closest thing to a story is the concept of theory. Whereas, qualitative research treats a story in its own terms, each has its own character and plays its own role in helping investigators understand complex phenomena (Shank, 2006).

In traditional quantitative research, new research themes tend to derive from previous research and theory ends grounded in existing theory. In qualitative research, the emphasis is on "taking the world as you find it" (Shank, 2006, p. 36). The latter approach carries more weight than grounding research in existing theory (Shank, 2006).

Theory, which was once an exclusive academic operating concept disdained by the business community has gained centrality in the ordinary planning of activities featured in high-flex organizations (LaRue, Childs, & Larson, 2006). In the words of W. Edwards Deming "Without theory, one has no questions to ask, without theory, there is no learning" (Covey, Merrill, A. & Merrill, R., 1994). Theories frame a study establishing boundaries for the facts under investigation and contribute to produce substantive meaning (Cooper & Schindler, 2007).

Cooper and Schindler (2007) defined theory as a collection of systematically related schemes, concepts, and definitions to predict, and clarify a phenomenon. Theory is a modifiable proposition that serves to explain, predict, interpret a phenomenon of interest, and understand the context in which the event takes place (Bradley et al., 2007). Included among extant theories to help understand the influence of the marketing function on decision making associated with this research topic are organizational leadership, contingency theory, institutional theories of the firm, and the literature on organizational power and influence.

The outcomes from this study may contribute to new perspectives in assessing marketing contribution to the firm from marketers and leadership perspectives, which may provide a basis for a new organizational marketing role and organizational design (Greenwood & Miller, 2010; Stewart, 2006; Wind, 2006). The integration of this study's results with other research discoveries could add to leadership theory in the area of cross-functional influence on decision-making, distributed, and adaptive leadership for change, and performance improvement.

Possible integration of findings may help to reclaim marketing leadership, and may even bring marketing to a new level in customer relationship management (Perks, 2007; Stewart, 2006).

Organizational Theory

"Organization theory is by definition about insights into orchestration of collective cooperation" (Greenwood & Miller, 2010, p. 78). In contemporary organizations, groups, and teams seem to hold the experience, knowledge, and expertise to solve problems, make decisions, and perform organizational tasks (Bunderson, 2003). Some groups have more knowledge and expertise than other groups, which makes them influential in problem solving and decision-making. A current concern of organizational theory is to understand the alignment of intra-organizational group influence to share expertise to improve performance (Bunderson, 2003; Greenwood & Miller, 2010).

Transactive, distributed, and expert influence are streams of research in organizational theory proximal to the current study (Bunderson, 2003). Marketing has shared expert knowledge about consumer behavior and management, established a market orientation, and customer-centric culture, and ceded marketing functions to other operational groups (Bunderson, 2003; Stewart, 2006). Marketing shared distribution knowhow with information systems, logistics, and operations (Bunderson, 2003; Stewart, 2006).

Inter-functional groups defer to the expert group decision-making power, and collaborate to achieve organizational goals when most members of a group share high performance expectations about a particular group (Bunderson, 2003). The factors that determined in the past marketing influence and informed on performance expectations may have become diffused status cues. The perception of lost marketing status has affected cross-functional influence, credibility,

respect, leadership, and functional performance (Bunderson, 2003; Stewart, 2006; Rust et al., 2004).

One of the challenges organizational theory faces is to develop an organizational design suitable to move people and resources to achieve collectively intended goals (Greenwood & Miller, 2010). An organizational design that structures accountability and responsibility to develop and implement strategies including business processes, resources, and information that operationalize the designed structure (Greenwood & Miller, 2010). Accountability and responsibility are expected marketing capabilities and the source of specific status questions about marketing legitimacy, and marketers' strategic leadership (Bunderson, 2003; Moorman & Rust, 1999; O'Sullivan & Abella 2006; Park & Auh, 2009; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The current study may contribute with information and data to the design of organizational structures for collaborative collective performance. A design that contemplates the traffic of functional, social, and political influences among coalitions with expertise claims (Bunderson, 2003). Specialized work groups and teams of experts willing to lead, share, and follow adapting to change faster, focused on the customer, and stakeholders (Colletti & Fiss, 2006; Wiley, Brooks, & Lundby, 2006; Wind, 2006).

Contingency Theory

In contingency theory external factors, moderate performance of a structure or of strategy related constructs (Bunderson, 2003; Homburg et al., 1999). Contingency theory focuses on the task context of organizational subunits in which different responses are expected from diverse contextual demands (Ambos & Schlegelmilch, 2007). From the former perspectives, influence to control may become a function of the task context (Ambos & Schlegelmilch, 2007) and the

value of functional resources may depend on contextual demands (Hult, Ketchen, & Arrfelt, 2007; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

Perks (2007) suggested that when one function dominates a process of change or innovation; the function acting as a champion induces bias and resentment. Bias and resentment could lead to the exclusion of profitable functional involvement in resource allocations negatively influencing the change process. A high level of competence in the leading function will influence followership when is sustained by communication and collaboration efforts from the championing function (Perks, 2007). A brand of functional competency promotes senior management support for needed resources and increase functional engagement in participation and decision making (Perks, 2007).

Contingency-based research implies that certain organizational strategies and the structures that follow them are adapted rationally and systematically to environmental factors, which moderate their leadership performance (Drazin & Van de Ven, 1985; Homburg et al., 1999; Howes, Lewis, & Vera, 2009). Talan (2010) argued that distributed leadership widens the leadership practice lens, integrating leaders, followers, and specific situations (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Distributed leadership defines who leads and who follows, depending on the leadership activity deployed (Talan, 2010).

The specific situation comprises routines, tools, and structures that support leadership functions (Talan, 2010). Sharing decision-making becomes a byproduct of leadership functions a situation demands. Leadership functions might include clarifying roles, values, goals, articulating a vision, implementing a vision, meeting adaptive challenges, engaging leaders, and followers in leadership work to fit given situations (Spillane, 2005; De Luca & Atuahene-Gima, 2007).

Another relationship established by authors who examined contingency theory is the direct effect between external environment changes and the level of subunit influence in companies (Boeker, 1989; Hambrick, 1981, Salancik & Pfeffer, 1974). Thompson (1967) introduced the concept of dominant coalitions to illustrate organizational power plays among functions over the control of scarce resources. Dominant coalitions explain the background of changes, decision-making, and adoption of solutions defined in strategies, which could shape the future of organizations (Bowler, 2006).

A network of individuals within and around the organization could form a dominant coalition and influence the mission and goals of the organization (Cyert & March, as cited in Bowler, 2006). Bowler argued "a dominant coalition influence goals though informal channels" (p. 261). According to Child (1972), a dominant coalition challenges direct links between the organizational form and the environment.

Child (1972) argued strategic choices led by influential members within the organization play a mediating role in decision-making processes. Marketing is a function that could use its people's experience, expertise, and knowledge associated with customers and their behavior to influence organizational decisions about the customer, and market changes (Bunderson, 2003; Wind, 2006). A cross-functional team could become a legitimate dominant coalition of specialists to serve customers and stakeholders (Bunderson, 2003; Park & Auh, 2009).

For the purpose of the current study, the interactive nature of the marketing function implies adaptation to internal, external, and institutional contingencies. Variations in adaptation may affect internal, external, and institutional attitudes toward marketing (Homburg et al., 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2010). Marketing influence varies when the nature of environmental

contingencies affect market growth, differentiation, or cost control (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010).

Sharing or shifting influential power with R & D, operations, and finance are contingent upon the type of situations confronted (Homburg et al., 1999). Marketing influence thrives when firms face increased market complexities, major market changes, high levels of market uncertainty, and are taking a prospector's strategic position (Homburg et al., 1999; Miles & Snow, 1978; Ghoshal, 2003). This qualitative phenomenological study contributed with information and data to assess the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change and positively contribute to firm's performance under increasingly changing conditions. The study enhanced the importance of cross-functional teams in understanding and guiding decision-making to improve performance. The study outcomes also informed on the organization's cultural and institutional role in adopting or resisting change when a negative attitude toward marketing prevails (Homburg et al., 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2010).

Institutional Theory

"Contingency theory holds that firms adapt to fit the environment" (Homburg et al., 1999, p. 2). Institutional theory, on the other hand, implies that organizational strategies and structures respond to conformity and legitimacy pressures from stakeholders that will influence social networks (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Under both theories, organizations need to adapt, and in the adaptive process, change communication rules and performance metrics to promote learning and creativity from adaptation, and innovation experiences (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008).

The following are some institutional factors affecting change and performance across organizational functions: coalitions and competing values; senior management's approach to

maximize economic goals from functional roles and activities, and the application of a multidimensional view to assess issues in external, and internal organizational contexts (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008). Economic constraint is one institutionally and socially constituted factor that influences performance metrics in organizations (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008). Marketing influence increases when firms pursue a differentiation strategy but decreases when firms pursue a cost leadership strategy (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; 2010). Under conditions of economic constraint, Hussain and Hoque (2002) suggested that senior management favors financial metrics to assess functional performance.

Conventional financial metrics such as return on investment or profit and loss (P&L) used for measuring performance exclude non-financial performance factors such as customer satisfaction, market share, and service quality (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Hussain & Hoque, 2002). Measuring marketing performance exclusively on financial terms is inappropriate in competitive environments because uncertain economic climate obscures functional focus on the performance of non-financial factors (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008). Accounting and financial standards that ignore contributions from intangible assets affect the measurement of marketing performance. Top management culture, strategic orientation, and timelines could influence management vision and measure long-term competitive advantages that may derive from marketing decisions. Actions taken by marketing executives linked to sustainability factors such as growth, customer retention, and lifetime value of customers (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Hussain & Hoque, 2002).

Contingent theory confirms the premise there is not just one functional performance measurement; the greater the environment uncertainty the more difficult it is to define metrics to evaluate performance (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008). Performance metrics must fit changing

environments; systems need to change according to environmental changes (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Hussain & Hoque, 2002). Institutionalized performance measures inhibit changing to adapt and discourage risk taking with innovative ideas; preserving metrics already inefficient or partially effective (Homburg et al., 1999).

According to institutional theory, social systems cannot keep pace with environmental changes. Institutional theory aids to observe if inertia and the perception of stability are institutional barriers to change (Homburg et al., 1999). This qualitative phenomenological study contributed with information and data to review the effect of the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change and positively contribute to firm's performance. The study enhanced the importance of changing management systems to improve performance metrics for marketing directives on activities across functional teams (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Homburg et al., 1999).

Power and Influence

A market transaction is the primary unit of analysis in marketing and represents a vehicle by which the exchange of products and services take place among people, firms, and other organizations (Wilkinson, 2006). Transactions involve interactions among parties coming together to exchange something of value, value that may result in mutual gain received directly or indirectly. Resources, competencies, and advantages form a value package each proponent presents in exchange for a competitive position to influence the exchange process (Wiley, Wilkinson, & Young, 2006).

Marketing has value when assumes leadership in exchanges between the internal and external organizational environments. Internally, marketing creates and delivers value to customers, depending on the relations and interactions with sales, finance, operations, and R&D.

Externally, marketing counteracts competitive pressures and reaches for customer satisfaction. Every participant in a network of exchanges has some degree of power and influence. The nature and patterns of relations a function possesses defines participants' leverage in terms of decision-making and leadership (Wilkinson, 2006). The central role of marketing leads it to influence decision-making across functions to sustain a market orientation, and develop competitive advantages introducing changes in response to environmental trends.

Studies about marketing power focused on distribution channel relationships provided a platform for distinctions between power and influence. Channel power was conceptualized as the ability of one channel member to propel a change in the attitudes of another channel member. Influence on the other hand embodies successful exercise of power; a change in one channel member originates from another member (Stern & Scheer, 1992). In the current study the definition of marketing influence follows Homburg et al. (1999)'s conceptualization in which "influence is the exercised power of the marketing subunit within a business unit, relative to other subunits over activities important to the success of the business unit" (p. 2).

An interest about the effect of power and influence of leaders and coalitions over decision-making processes is found in current organizational theory, management strategy, and sociology (Enz, 1986; Homburg et al., 1999; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1974). The absence of inter-functional support is one identifiable reason after preparation and judgment for the failure of strategy implementation in power-driven situations, (Brown, 2011; Tichy & Bennis, 2007). Hierarchical business organizations for profit or non-for-profit rely on power; power exercised by individuals in position of influence who construct influential structures (Brown, 2011).

Two influence strategies that could be associated with marketing influence not just in decision-making but also in leading change implementation are contingent control (CC), which

is oriented toward assertiveness, sanctions, and upward appeal; *quid pro quo* exchange; and gentle persuasion (GP); a more nurturing, and conformity inducing approach (Leong, Bond, & Fu, 2007; Sun & Bond, 1999). GP induces internalization and adherence to strategic goals, whereas CC induces compliance and change of a transient nature that is short-lived and demands minimum effort (Leong, Bond, & Fu, 2007). In a study conducted by Leong, Bond, and Fu (2007), GP was instrumental in dealing with superiors and subordinates, but scored low for lateral influence. CC on the other hand scored high for horizontal (lateral) influence even when managers were unsure peers across functions would comply. To determine if the influencer's social capital exercises more power than position power in leading across and within functions, authors suggested further research.

Three conditions that fuel participation, positional power, and influence in organizational subunits are the subunit workflow centrality, the degree of involvement of the subunit in coping with environmental uncertainties, and the substitutability of the tasks performed by the subunit (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck, & Pennings, 1971). Coping with uncertainty can become a survival strategy; Hickson et al. (1971) argued that contingencies were not controlled strategically without some combination of coping with the following three variables: uncertainty, centrality, and substitutability. The ability to cope (Crozier, 1964) with strategic contingencies by prevention and information (Hickson et al., 1971) gives a functional subunit participation, positional power (Clark, 1968), and increase its visibility before senior management in revenue production.

Pfeffer (1981) argued that power went to groups that controlled critical scarce resources. Subunits that provide valued resources with no close substitutes on which others are dependent will wield more power (Homburg et al., 1999). This qualitative phenomenological study

contributed with information and data to explore the effect of marketing influence on inter-functional decision-making, change readiness, change implementation, and performance. The study enhanced the importance of changing management systems to improve performance metrics for marketing contributions across functional teams (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Homburg et al., 1999).

Definition of Terms

The definition of terms increases an understanding of the meaning of words or expressions used in the contents of the current study. The following definitions include the term itself, a category, and attributes linked to research themes in the proposed phenomenological study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The list is not exhaustive; the choice of terms did not follow a prescribed format, it was subject to the author's interpretation of certain terms that may require further clarification.

Adaptation. The challenge to acquire sufficient resources required to change and discretion to modify interdependent actions to perpetuate an organizational form (Scott & Davis, 2007).

Business Leaders. **A** team of managers responsible for daily supervision of employees in finance, marketing, human resources, and others pertaining operational functions (Luftman & Brier, 1999).

Bracketing. To suspend or set aside previous knowledge, judgments, and experiences about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2007b; Moustakas, 1994).

Bricoleurs. An individual who is adept at doing diverse tasks, drawing on a variety of sources, and making do with whatever is at hand (Neuman, 2003).

Clustering. Clustering is a grouping of a number of similar things. In the current study, clustering involves grouping the data into core themes revealed by the participants (Moustakas, 1994)**.**

Culture. Culture is defined as **"**The belief, values, and world views that are imbedded in the company largely through its history and leadership." Culture is the main source of context (LaRue, Childs, & Larson, 2006, p. 24), and a source of control (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Empirical, Transcendental Phenomenology. A term used for a description of a phenomenon as experienced by the research participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Husserl, 1981; Moustakas, 1994).

Epoche. The method used by the investigator to observe and describe the phenomenon without taking into account personal experiences (Husserl, 1981).

Horizonalization. The term horizonalization is a process of grouping in which each phenomenon appears as equal in value "as we seek to disclose its nature and essence" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95).

Influence. A special form of communication that represents a balancing act between creating results and building relationships; inducing others toward directed action using some form of power to affect desired results. Some influential perspectives include personal, cultural, and organizational contexts (AAPA, 2006).

Inquiry. Inquiry is an instance of questioning that may reveal open or empty spaces when observing and examining phenomena. An inquiry takes into consideration the major external and internal forces driving change in the environment (LaRue, Childs, & Larson, 2006).

Latency. Defines the problem of creating, preserving, and transmitting the system's distinctive culture, and values (Parsons, 1960; Scott & Davis, 2007).

Leader. A leader is an individual, who leads an activity, team, or group (Feltner, Mitchell, Norris, & Wolfle, 2008). For the purpose of the current study, the term leader in a formal or informal role is one assigned to direct activities in a team project.

Leadership. Leadership is "an interpersonal process for influencing the actions of an individual or group toward accomplishing goals in a given situation (Feltner et al., 2008, para. 4).

Leadership Behavior. Leadership behavior is the conscious and unconscious action, verbal communications, and nonverbal cues used by leaders to communicate organizational goals, task assignments, and group norms (Speechley, 2005).

Lived Experiences. In a qualitative phenomenological study, the feelings, and perceptions of participants are their lived experiences "expressed about one's life in an interview" about an experienced event (Simon & Francis, 2001, p. 32).

Natural Open System. An adaptive system to change in which new developed informal structures to survive can prevail over formal ones, abandoning formal rules, and forms for others not clearly defined (Morgan, 2006). Natural organizations focus on the benefits to be realized by recognizing external identities of an organization's participants (Scott & Davis, 2007).

Organizational Factors. Organizational factors are identifiable influences on leadership development, acting within the work culture or context, and situations in which people contribute to a specific work outcome (Vardiman, 2001).

Phenomenological Study. A research design that describes the lived experiences of research participants associated with a specific concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007b; Moustakas, 1994).

Power. A term defined as a relational and situational form of control or influence over others; not based on individual characteristics but as a property of a social relation residing implicitly in the others' dependence (Emerson, 1962; Scott & Davis, 2007).

Market Knowledge. This term defines organized and structured information related to a market (Li & Calantone, 1998).

Market Knowledge Competence. A process that generates and integrates market knowledge (Li & Calantone, 1998), identifies an organizational strategic asset (Glazer, 1991), and is a core organizational advantage (Sinkula, 1994).

Rational Open System. The rational perspective to organizations that emphasizes a goal orientation and formal structure in which structure is pliable, and can be molded to achieve desired goals; ignores the ambiguity, uncertainty, and chaos that affects decision making, and generally suppress the external identities of organizational participants (Baum & Rowley, 2002; Jones, 2007; Scott & Davis, 2007).

Role. The "broadly recognized rights and obligations that define what would be expected of anyone occupying a given position embedded within a system of social relationships" (Hage & Powers, 1992, p. 9).

Social Capital. "The features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit, and enhance the benefits of investments in physical, and human capital" (Putnam, 1993, p. 36).

Teams. A team is not a workgroup. In a workgroup, people are combined and organized to do certain work. In a team, groups of people who have their own social structures are organized to perform interdependent and interrelated tasks for which members have a clearly

defined role, and a personal stake in a successful outcome (Cartwright, 2003, Kokt, 2003; Puck, Rygl, & Kittler, 2006).

   Thematic Analysis. The term identifies aspects that participants of a study had in common. "Clustering of the delimited meanings or horizons into core themes" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 131).

   Transformational Leadership. A leadership style recognized as most effective to engage people in decision-making and innovation processes (Farrell, Flood, Curtain, Hannigan, Dawson, & West, 2005).

Assumptions

   An assumption is a hypothesis taken from granted; it has a basic nature without which the research problem itself would be nonexistent (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The proposed study made several assumptions: (a) to find among participants 15 managers exposed to some form of organizational change, who can share their lived experiences; (b) to find participants who had work experience in a functional area when organizational changes took place; (c) the expectation that participants will provide open and honest information about their lived experiences. Other important assumption was that a qualitative phenomenology approach was the best method to conduct the proposed study. The core assumption possibly implied in the research question was the impact of the loss of marketing influence to diminish marketing inter-functional effectiveness to drive change and its implementation to improve performance.

   The assumptions about the investigator's role included recognizing the author as a seasoned executive engaged in organizational management and leadership, who will observe, interview, and interpret data objectively. Investigator's objectivity was vital to ensure impartiality. The investigator remained unbiased when observing and evaluating every situation.

Assumptions about data included expectations of accurate and valid data to archive from the research, and accurate data interpretation that reflected the intended meaning of participants.

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Scope and Limitations

</div>

Scope

The scope of the current study is narrow; the research was limited to 15 participants who volunteered as part of a purposive sample. Participants were managerial employees working in firms operating in different industries located in South Florida. The study was limited to companies that market products and services in health care, medical products and equipment, health insurance, real estate, banking, and finance. This qualitative phenomenological design study relied upon in-depth semi-structured interviews intended to explore the phenomenon of loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change and positively contribute to firms' performance. The sample size met the saturation guidelines of Leedy and Ormrod (2001), Creswell (2005), and Sandberg (2000).

Limitations

Limitations are "potential weaknesses of the investigation" (Creswell, 1994, p. 110). In this study, respondents were limited to individuals who had the time and inclination to participate. Time constraints also imposed a limit on the number of participants. Sampling from few cities and structures of subsets of large firms posed some limitations. South Florida however, offered a diverse sample population for examining marketing roles, levels of influence on change, and corporate performance in various industries.

According to a study from World City and the School of Business of the University of Miami (2009), South Florida multinational firms oversaw more than $ 221 billion in annual revenues, a 9% increase year over year. The 1,146 multinationals in the area represented 54

nations; employed 129,000 workers just in South Florida and oversaw 605,000 workers worldwide. World City also examined the decision making power of the multinationals by corporate structure and found that more than 47% had a top marketing position based in South Florida. The perception that multinationals based in South Florida focused in Latin America was incorrect, only 33% focused south of the border, another 15% of foreign companies covered the United States, and 33% were U.S. multinationals doing domestic business, the rest were managing global operations that excluded Latin America.

In this research approach, despite that Nvivo 9® software was used for electronic theme definitions; the investigator was the research instrument. The investigator observed, listened, interpreted, and appraised meaning (Brazeley & Richards, 2005; Gibbs, 2002). The investigator close involvement made the study subject to the personal biases of the author.

The investigator overcame these limitations avoiding leading participants, being truthful in its interpretations, recognizing possible personal bias, and focusing on documenting just those feelings, and perceptions shared by participants. Inviting participants to interpret transcripts for accuracy, and adding their insights aided to limit the investigator bias (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The view of the investigator and the views of participants offered two perceptual lenses under which validity of their interpretations could be established (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The author was a former marketing executive of Fortune 500 companies in diverse industries involving medical products and equipment, health care, pharmaceuticals, real estate, and finance. Because, phenomenological research requires bracketing—a process of rigorous self-reflection; the investigator's bias was suspended as well as the knowledge and notions about the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen & Daniels, 2004). The exclusive focus on participants lived experiences was a limitation of the current study because of the number of

experiences in quantity and scope shared at a given point from participants impromptu descriptions (Moustakas, 1994; Simon & Francis, 2001).

Delimitations

"Delimitations are factors that affect the study over which the researcher have some control" (Baron, 2010, p. 5). The current study was limited to those participants who volunteered as part of a convenient sample. Qualitative research often uses purposive rather than random sampling strategies (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Using purposive sampling the investigator selected a population of interest; 15 managerial employees who interacted with the marketing function and from whom data was gathered about their lived experiences.

Through 15 semi-structured digitally taped interviews, the same questions were asked, and notes were taken to capture body language that cannot be recorded (Moustakas, 1994). The 20 participants were respondents to a letter requesting participation (see Appendix A), which identified the selection criteria to qualify. The selection of "information rich" individuals or groups yielded significant insights to the research question (Devers & Frankel, 2000).

The study focused on the phenomenon of loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change and positively contribute to the firms' performance. The focus of the study was on individual employee's perspectives about a phenomenon that has been identified interacting with marketing. The investigator was the research instrument, who was responsible for the development, maintenance, and eventual closure of relationship with research subjects, and sites. Good relationships in such context were important for effective sampling and for the credibility of the research (Frankel & Devers, 200a). Phenomenological research is not an exhaustive method (Moustakas, 1994).

Summary

A set of facts and circumstances that surround the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change and positively contribute to the firms' performance were introduced in Chapter 1. The functional dispersion of some marketing mix functions indicated a reduced marketing role. A perceived shift from strategic to tactical justified the absence of marketers' participation in corporate strategic development. The varying role of marketing seems to indicate that marketing is a function in transition.

A function according to some authors in sharp decline, underrepresented in the executive suite, and perceived has having lost senior management's respect. Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) albeit in agreement with the perception of marketing loss of influence across functions, found the influence of the marketing function positively related to the organization market orientation, which in turn was related positively to firm performance. To perform successfully in an inter-functional role, marketing must attempt to reconcile different group interests, create integrated strategies, and customer solutions (Hutt & Speh, 2007).

The changed role of marketing was argued to be a barrier affecting its intra-organizational influence to lead (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). For instance, when marketing managers can influence powerful functional groups, change adoption has higher possibilities than when marketing has no influence over people in other functions that could hinder change processes (Pfeffer, 1992). Leeflang (2004) and Webster, Malter, and Ganesan (2005) noted that scholarly articles and popular news about the varying role of marketing implicate that marketing influence in organizations was sharply diminishing.

The leadership role of marketing in reconciling functional interests to create integrated strategies and customer solutions is compromised as its level of its inter-functional influence

diminishes. A loss of influence lead to a reduction of marketing effectiveness to drive change to improve performance (Hutt & Speh, 2007; Nath & Mahajan 2008; Rust et al., 2004; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; Webster et al., 2005). The absence of empirical research illustrates a significant gap in understanding the factors that could lead to variations in the leadership role of the marketing function. Authors had previously argued that little or no empirical evidence was available to confirm the strategic role of marketing was declining (Day, 1992; Homburg et al., 1999). Regarding the body of knowledge about this topic, Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) added, "Many statements about the role of marketing in modern firms remain anecdotal or journalistic" (p. 15).

This study may contribute to narrow a literature gap; research has pointed the influence of marketing determines its relative importance, and senior management plays a role in encouraging marketing leadership, assessing marketing performance with metrics fitting to contemporary marketing roles (Harris, Ogbonna, & Goode, 2008; Gotts, 2009). Two quantitative studies, conducted a decade apart have researched marketing influence and the degree of marketing influence within the firm obtaining outcomes that left a door open for further research. A qualitative phenomenological study informed through observing, interpreting, and describing lived experiences of 15 managerial employees about the loss of influence of marketing leadership on decisions associated with change and performance in certain South Florida organizations operating in diverse industries.

This research study followed a systematic and structured seven-step model developed by Moustakas (1994) deemed appropriate for inexperienced investigators. The lived experiences of 15 managerial employees were explored in face-to-face semi-structured interviews using a modified van Kaam approach (Ferris & Minnelli, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). According to

Moustakas (1994), the seven-step process modified from van Kaam can be used to determine themes and patterns from the participants' interview process.

Data extracted and transcribed was stored, catalogued, and coded using Nvivo 9®. A program designed to codify, connect, adapt, and model qualitative data such as those obtained in face-to-face interviews. The program was a tool that assisted in the identification of patterns from themes emerging in the discourse of the interviews with the people who decided to participate in the research study.

A review of available literature appears in Chapter 2, to provide historical and current perspectives associated with this qualitative, phenomenological study. The review provided a framework to learn and understand more about the scope and depth of extant research on inter-functional relationships associated with marketing influence within the firm. The relevant literature provided a background that included exploration, examinations, and theories associated with the marketing level of influence over cross-functional relationships (CFR) and its effect on decision-making, change readiness, change implementation, and organizational performance.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The objective of the study was to learn about the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance in organizations. A qualitative phenomenological approach was selected to explore appropriately the lived experiences and perceptions of a purposive sample of 15 managers using a modified van Kaam methodology (Moustakas, 1994). Information collected during digitally audiotaped semi-structured interviews was transcribed and coded. The themes and patterns that emerged interpreting data yielded insights concerning the loss of marketing leadership influence to lead change, gain cross-functional support for implementation, and improve performance in a group of companies operating in diverse industries in South Florida.

Chapter 2 introduced past and present research that revealed agents and factors possibly affecting marketing loss of influence within an organization, and implications into leading change, and improving organizational performance. A literature review provided background information for the study about existing views, gaps, and debates on marketing loss of influence to lead change, build support from functional relationships to implement change, and improve performance. The discovery of foundational work conducted by prior researchers helped to learn and understand about the varying roles of marketing. Reviewing the antecedents of marketing leadership in cross-functional relationships and performance outcomes assisted in answering the research question formulated in Chapter 1.

The analysis of the work conducted by prior researchers indicated patterns or themes. These patterns or themes provide organizational leaders with information and insights to extend knowledge about the role and influence of marketing. A leading functional role perceived to

affect decision making to drive change, obtain functional support for change implementation, and enhance performance.

Chapter 2 included current and empirical research documenting extant contributions relevant to: (a) the role of marketing, (b) the influence of marketing within the firm, (c) the culture of the organization, (d) inter-functional decision-making process, (e) change readiness and implementation support, (f) and marketing orientation and performance. Phenomenological research information and other relevant theories to support the study were added to the literature review chapter. As stated by Hart (2003), "The researcher needs to know about the contributions others have made to the knowledge pool relevant to their topic" (pp. 26-27).

Literature Review Organization

A historic information outline concerning marketing management as a decision system, conceptualizations about the nature, scope, and substance of the functional role of marketing, and ways to measure marketing performance framed the introduction of the literature review. The subsequent section presented supporting theories and themes that included decision-making as a leadership trait, transformational and transactional leadership styles, contingency theory, institutional theory, power, and influence, and the culture of the organization. An attempt was made to associate literature review themes with marketing influence, marketing loss of influence, functional decision-making, inter-functional change implementation, and improving performance.

The last section focused on influence and the loss of market influence in an attempt to integrate factors suspected and admitted in the literature. Contributing factors that enhanced the author's understanding of issues surrounding marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance. The literature review concluded with a brief on phenomenological design,

and an assessment of gaps in research pertaining to the impact of the loss of marketing leadership in organizational change processes and performance improvement.

Literature Review Documentation

The reviewed literature for the background of marketing influence within the firm and the loss of marketing influence came from sources in University of Phoenix online library. For a limited number of research articles the investigator used secondary website search engines. The combination and linkage of title searches helped to locate literature with a variety of topics, to provide substantive and robust findings.

The available literature included books written by scholars and topic of interest from experts, peer reviewed journals, dissertations, and websites. Resources from University of Phoenix provided access to online searches used for gathering research documents through EBSCOhost, Sage, Emerald, InfoTrac Onefile, ProQuest, Thomson Gale PowerSearch, and ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis databases. Further research leads originated in bibliographies and references listed in related research subject articles.

To assemble a significance list of topic-associated sources, the investigator used key words and phrases to narrow the search for content, and refine the process to seek the most relevant studies, and outcomes linked to the topic of study. The investigator conducted more than 100 content searches using the following key words: *marketing function, cooperation, market orientation, marketing capabilities, business performance, interdependencies, base of power, influence strategy, dependence, manifest influence, organizational learning, strategic alliances, leadership, leadership behaviors, interpersonal, and group relationships, marketing, value proposition, cross-functional integration, cross-functional influence, conflict management, cross cultural study, coopetition, influence tactics.* The word combinations produced a

substantive amount of documents relatively associated with neighboring areas of the research topic. The innumerable amount of virtual literary resources were not indicative of an exhaustive search for primary sources but provided a reasonable documented research range of diverse information to support the current study.

The author found pertinent literature for the topics shown in Table 1. For purposes of this study, the study used primary sources from 2005 to the present, depending on earlier references for historical perspective. Limiting studies to more recent studies eliminated older sources that did not add a strong element to the historical perspective. The table contains: a) 107 related articles published between 2005 and 2011, and (b) 25 related books published in the same period. An exhaustive review of the literature revealed a gap between year 2005 and year 2011. Data related to the research problem of the current study were collected and analyzed. Possibly, this information may contribute to narrow the knowledge gap and expand the literature body of knowledge.

Table 1

Literature Review Search

Topic of Examination	Peer Reviewed Articles	Germinal Works	Popular Works	Books	Studies	Total
Inter-functional Power and Influence	25	2	0	4	1	32
Inter-functional Decision Making	19	1	0	6	3	29
Marketing Leadership	38	0	0	3	1	42
Marketing Performance	46	4	3	9	3	65
Organizational Change	14	1	1	10	1	27
Leadership Style/Theory	11	7	0	13	1	32
Management Structure/Culture	13	12	0	9	1	25
Research Design/Method	18	2	3	32	0	55
Total	184	19	7	86	11	307

A few available references addressed the impact of marketing loss of influence but no accessible study was found specifically researching marketing loss of influence in relation to leading change, implementing change with inter-functional support, and influencing organizational performance. Only one quantitative and a one mixed study published a decade apart (1999-2009) approached the themes of marketing influence and loss of influence within the firm but ending with opposite outcomes. The author did not find a phenomenological study associated with the latter or the former research themes. The author made an extraordinary effort

to find and stay consistent with sources published from 2005 to 2011. The author made some exceptions with academic sources presenting a historical perspective and containing information about research gaps associated with the current study.

Historic Overview

Marketing Management

Marketing originated as a support function to sales in the 1950s developing into a management discipline soon after (Drucker, 1954; McKitterick, 1957). A management philosophy that advocated a customer orientation and integrated quantitative methods and behavioral science, which added depth to the management, discipline (Webster, 2005b). Market segmentation was a novel concept to increase market efficiencies that gained widespread acceptance in the turbulent environment of post-World War II.

The marketing segmentation strategy was consistent with the philosophy of customer orientation (Webster, 2005b), and marketing strategies relied on statistical analysis from market research data for decision-making (Drucker, 1954; McKitterick, 1957). Around 1960, the marketing concept coined by Drucker had received attention in published articles, and a marketing staff grew focusing on product and brand management ideas. Innovation emerged in product planning, advertising, research, and other marketing initiatives (Drucker, 1954; McCarty, 1960; McKitterick, 1957). The first academic texts produced a consensus definition of the four marketing P's: product, price, promotion, and physical distribution as representation of the marketing strategy (Webster, 2005b).

The strategic choice approach is a seminal point of departure for the conceptualization of marketing influence within the firm. According to Child (1972), a dominant coalition leads from a position that allows it to adjust organizational structure and processes as well as influence

organizational environments. The relationship between organizations and their environments shaped an operational model for strategic choices. These strategic choices were the subject of a decision-making process led by the marketing function. The early research conceptualizations about marketing management were significantly similar in the way they described marketing management as a decision system (Borden, 1964; Kotler, 1984; McCarthy, 1984; McGarry, 1950).

Kotler (1984) defined marketing management as "the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to create, build, and maintain beneficial exchanges, and relationships with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives" (p. 14). Other authors conceptualized marketing management as a multi-stage decision system (Cravens, Hills, & Woodruff, 1980). Interpretative differences however were argued too; Hulbert (1979) in a review of descriptive models of marketing decisions affirmed that the level of research on this subject was "moribund" (p. 38).

Cunningham and Robertson (1983) found research in marketing management focused on the marketing mix at the brand level and in prescriptive technologies. The variations in terminology and the number and allocations of marketing functions albeit confusing indicated intent from authors to be more explicit than others were (Conant, 1986). A similarity presented by conceptualizations found in reviewing historical perspectives was the absence of empirical studies. Burke (1984) recognized the minimal attention given in the literature about how marketing managers made decisions.

The concept of *organizing* introduced by Dalrymple and Parsons (1983) led to coin the marketing function as "the task of setting guidelines and organizing the people needed to run the marketing program" (p. 13). The former concept opened the door for inquiries about

organizational issues in the implementation of marketing strategies. None of the other conceptualizations explicitly addressed any type or form of organizational issues associated with marketing management.

Other conceptualized functions associated with marketing intended to measure marketing performance using cost and benefit analysis correlated with sought opportunities. This evaluative approach unfolded market strategies, such as *matching*, which were unrecognized in leading conceptualized models (Enis & Mokwa, 1979). From the preceding review, drawn inferences from the literature led to view marketing management as a decision system. A system in which, various tasks are executed despite conventional agreements about the nature, scope, and substance of the perceived role of marketing (Hunt, 1976). Empirical research gaps appeared on organizational issues about the implementation of marketing decisions, the level of control of pricing, and other marketing mix elements (Comanor & Wilson, 1974; Monroe, 1980; Robicheaux, 1976; Samie, 1980; Wittkink, 1977) that gave way to research opportunities to further the organizational influence of marketing.

Measuring marketing performance was another area of concern for the marketing function. Kotler (1984) identified four types of measures for marketing initiatives: annual plan control, profitability control, efficiency control, and strategic control. Annual plan control relied on market-share analysis and sales-to-expense ratios as metrics to assess the effectiveness of marketing decisions. Income statements calculated by product, customer-type, trade channel, and order size were used as profitability controls in determining profit and loss performance. Management used selected efficiency indexes to measure outcomes from appropriations of marketing expenditures. The only type of metric that required assessment of managerial

performance was strategic control linked to the choices made to seize the best opportunities given market situations, available products, and distribution channels (Kotler, 1984).

A marketing audit was used to rate marketing effectiveness of strategic control (Shuchman, 1959). The marketing audit is a method applied to control policies or as an agent for policy change (Mokwa, in press study as cited in Conant, 1986). Descriptive research about the way marketing managers evaluated their effectiveness was limited. The majority of research work was conceptual, normative, and biased toward quantitative research. Available research gave limited attention to qualitative inquiry of managerial perceptions about contextual influence on decision-making (Child, 1972).

Supporting Theories

Leadership Style and Activity

Decision-making. Leadership authors recognized decision-making as an important leadership activity (Bazerman & Chugh; Kleiner, 2003). According to Yukl (2006), a leader laid the groundwork for change and influenced followers through the course of decisions and subsequent actions. The decision-making process initiated with a focus on problem solving and ended with a commitment to execute specific actions as solutions (Lipshitz & Mann, 2005). A leader's cognitive frame had an influence on the decision-making process, and served as a schema to move forward an overwhelming amount of information (Daft & Weick, 1984; Kiesler & Sproull, 1982).

Schemas help to guide the selection of information and to integrate it into a coherent whole (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). Schemas influenced how to interpret information and channel them for action (Lant & Hewling, 2002). Nadkarni and Narayanan (2007) argued that top-level strategic leaders used schemas as filters for contextual information in decision making and about

making meaning through stories told to employees about environmental events (Boal & Schultz, 2007).

The conceptualization of previous schemas or cognitive maps led to several implications regarding the nature of strategic decision-making. The decision-making process could be influenced by the nature and development of the lens used by leaders to filter information. This approach implied a construct of reality from lived experiences shaped by leaders' beliefs (Boal & Schultz, 2007). Beliefs that remained embedded in cognitive maps; advancing the ability to think contextually, and forming a leadership mindset to deal over time with increasing complexities (Boal & Schultz, 2007).

The mindset of marketing leadership as a product advocate in the long run differs from the short-term orientation about the customer perceived from other functions. The higher the level of market orientation across the firm, the lower the power of the marketing group; as customer concentration increases, more functions engage in interpreting the market thus decreasing the influence of the marketing function (Workman, Homburg, & Grunner, 1998). A diminished role in proprietary customer knowledge and customer influence could affect inter-functional perception about marketing performance and its contribution to the organization (Homburg & Jensen, 2007).

Constructive development and stratified system theory support the former theoretical conceptualizations (Jacques & Clement, 1991; Kegan, 1982; Phipps, 2009). The way a leader structures and understands strategic environments is more important than discovering its own beliefs and values, and the leader's operating choice using a particular leadership style (Lewis & Jacobs, 1992; Phipps, 2009). The learning moments from lived experiences showed when leaders faced a challenging situation, rallied the people, conveyed strategic intent, and made

decisions focused on mission goals (Useem, 2010). The level of marketing influence strengthens or weakens its functional synergy, its leadership in decision-making, and its ability to effect change across functions to sustain competitive advantages (Homburg & Jensen, 2007).

Rational and Political Models. The use of the rational model for decision-making assumed stability in goals and contexts ignored competing internal agendas, discounted perceptual biases, and managerial bounded rationality (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). Edlefson (2010) argued that a leader needs a political frame to understand challenges in situational contingencies. A political model includes competing interests for individuals and groups, coalition building, negotiations, and trade-offs among competing goals, which inevitable engages control of information, and communication to influence decision-making processes (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007; Pettigrew, 1973).

Incremental Model. Both the rational and political models of strategic decision-making normally apply to major issues involving important changes for the organization (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). When significant decisions have a long-term impact on the organization, an incremental decision-making process offers an alternative approach. The method allows shifting strategies through a series of small steps, testing the commitment of limited resources, measuring outcomes, and changing directions before adverse outcomes (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007; Hickson, Butler, Cray, Mallory, & Wilson, 1986). The incremental approach appears to ensure minimal operational disruption in the event of decision implementation failures. The slow pace of the process however may indicate an absence of commitment from the leader championing change, which may affect long-term support from stakeholders.

The Garbage Can Model. Another strategic decision-making approach developed as a mathematical model and unintended as a formal theory but as an encouragement for scholars to

explore ideas was the garbage can. The central idea was to experiment with concepts derived from decisions made in *garbage cans* (environments) in academia in which *organized anarchies* predominate (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). The environment (garbage can) contains problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities (Cohen et al., 1972), and differs from the previous models discussed in that solutions in the garbage can model appear to exist before the problem is evident. A political coalition may be the link between problem and solution but linkages could also come from simple change or new organizational rules (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007).

The functional influence of marketing was more apparent in organizational environments in which rational or political decision-making models applied. One of the most common political splits in organizations was found between functional units (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). Inter-functional collaboration involved multiple constituents with diverging or conflicting objectives. Conflict of interests made it difficult to generate value independently from each function, and to bring them together as a group required a high level of cooperation (Fang, Palmatier, Scheer, & Li, 2008).

Any marketing collaboration that created a formal or informal entity depended on trust at the inter-organizational level, intra-functional, agency level, and inter-functional, or intra-entity level (Fang et al., 2008). Decision-making and trust were attributes found in leadership styles. The chosen leadership style by a strategic leader moderated the extent to which his or her beliefs and values influenced strategic decision-making (Phipps, 2009). The following paragraphs establish links between leadership styles and decision-making models to assist in enhancing the understanding for some components affecting marketing loss of influence across organizational functions.

Transactional Leadership. The type of leadership style modeled by the marketing function may determine the level of influence over colleagues and followers toward organizational change; as companies continues to flatten hierarchies the ability to construct cross-functional peer-based relationships increases in importance for leaders who want to accomplish goals (Church & Waclawski, 2001; Willink, 2009). Many firms roll out empowerment initiatives that shift critical decisions to a coalition thus increasing dependence on peer support (Hill, 1994). Interactions and interdependence yield competiveness for needed resources, and executives spend considerable time and energy laterally influencing peers from different functional areas or business groups to support new initiatives, such as changes in strategic direction (Conger, 1998; Enns & McFarlin, 2004; Rodrigues, Perez, & Gutierrez, 2007). Drucker (1999) recognized that executives evolve within structures in which rank implied accountability to persuade but not authority to command. In top down organizations, acquiring and using lateral influence skills, may be the only mean to clear the red tape path to implement effective change (Enns & McFarlin, 2004).

The basis for transactional leadership is a leader-follower relationship that involves mutually beneficial exchanges as a necessary condition. Transactional managers direct the execution of activities and set tactics stimulating individuals using personal reward systems (Willink, 2009). Rewarding has its influence and influence is both an individual and a structural group phenomenon (Homburg et al., 1999).

One of the most common functions of a leader is to direct the decision-making process. The leader may assemble a coalition to support a particular strategic choice, which may be seen as a form of a transactional style in which mutually beneficial arrangements exist with enough parties to gain sufficient political power (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). The contribution of

value of the marketing function in a transactional leadership role is that of a subunit that could provide valued resources with no close substitutes, on which others are dependent. According to Homburg et al. (1999) co-dependency allowed a function to wield more power. Pfeffer (1981) asserted that more power went to groups that controlled critical scarce resources.

Transformational Leadership. The rational and political models of decision-making appear to fit a transactional leadership style in the form of a mutually beneficial exchange of value. The issues of perceived fairness and legitimacy however may affect the level of influence from a leading function or coalition. Ignoring important criteria by alienating issues dissonant to a leading group may have negative effects when the concern of those leading seems illegitimate (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007; Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988).

A diminished level of legitimacy of the marketing function may hinder the willingness of other functions to collaborate and share knowledge with marketing, which is critical for improving performance (Park & Auh, 2009). The incremental approach to strategic decision-making does not fit well with transactional leadership, retreating from certain positions does not instill the trust that followers seek (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). In the case of the garbage can approach, the evaluation for fit of leadership styles is difficult because of the random and reactive nature of the events, indeterminacy of the process, and the absence of a logical agenda (Cray et al., 2007).

Three elements common to most definitions of leadership are influence, group, and goal setting (Lewis et al., 2006). Leadership is the foundation of an organization that encompasses leaders and followers, a shared sense of trust, commitment, imagination, and risk-taking. The transactional and transformational school of thought (Bass, 1985) derived from a humanistic approach in which democratic style leaders were perceived better equipped to deal with

complexity and change (Bennis, 1961). This line of thinking contributed to the importance gained by transactional and transformational theories (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), which have become dominant in the study of leadership (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005).

Transformational leadership integrates influence, groups, goals, and a shared sense of trust, commitment, imagination, and risk-taking. Transformational leadership refers to a charismatic style in which followers move beyond self-interests, and leaders change the culture of organizations realigning with new visions, and a renewal of shared assumptions, values, and norms (Bass, 1985; Carless, 1998). In transactional leadership, relationships between leader and followers are exchange based in which self-interests dominate (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Downton (1973) believed that the fulfillment of mutual transactional commitments formed the basis of trust between the transacting parties. Lindgreen, Palmer, Wetzels, and Antioco (2009) affirmed extant notions that transformational leaders could increase the effectiveness of leadership behavior over and above what was achievable under transactional leadership.

In referring to transformational leadership as a charismatic style, the literature showed that Finkelstein (1992) maintained that top-level leaders had a substantial influence in the development of organizational strategies, and strategic changes, which affected collective performance. Agle and Somenfeld (1994) had reported in their research a positive interaction between charisma and environmental uncertainty. In 1997, House and Aditya noted however little empirical evidence in support of a connection between a charismatic style and the introduction of change. Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996) posited that strategic change was an important component and mediating variable for any theory of strategic leadership. Along these lines, Waldman and Javidan (2002) argued further about the role of strategic change as a predictive of charisma, which in turn forecasted positive firm performance.

The neighboring research from the previous authors hinted at relationships among charisma, uncertainty, change, and performance. Charisma, uncertainty, change, and performance relational components were identified in adopted marketing roles as influential transformational factors, to maintain the marketing orientation and renew value propositions to markets (Peters, Gassenheimer, & Johnston, 2009). The actions of marketers appeared to influence information and knowledge generation across all interrelationship levels inside and outside the organization (Peters, Gassenheimer, & Johnston, 2009). Marketing collected customer feedback combined with functional knowledge and competence appeared to provide the basis for the firm's value propositions and competitive advantage (Peters, Gassenheimer, & Johnston, 2009). Marketing intangible assets (brands, customers, and channels) and capabilities (marketing expertise and process knowledge) seemed to contribute to capitalize firms in environments in which a shift has taken place from manufacturing to information and knowledge driven services (Ramaswami, Srivastava, & Bhargava, 2009).

Ramaswami, Srivastava, and Bhargava (2009) called for an assessment to fill a research gap of marketing leadership contribution in the implementation of organizational processes. Assessed information to help understand better how marketing capabilities influenced market decision-making processes and others beyond marketing domains linked to financial performance, and the value of firms (Moorman & Rust, 1999). Waldman and Javidan (2002) suggested a need for qualitative efforts to take a closer look at some complexities surrounding charisma and environmental uncertainty at the strategic level, along with interactions affecting performance forecasts. Qualitative research may help to explain outcomes from quantitative studies on the aforementioned topics.

Contingency Theory

"Charismatic leadership principles and processes potentially apply across a wide variety of situations; however, there are situations in which they apply more than in others" (Shamir & Howell, 1999, p. 258). Effective leaders fashion their behavior by anticipating and reacting to followers' needs and other situational demands (Antonakis & House, 2002). In contingency theory, external factors moderate strategy related constructs and leadership behavior. Certain organizational structures or strategies relate systematically to environmental factors, this direct relationship constitutes a basis of contingency theory (Antonakis & House, 2002; Homburg, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999).

External factors associated with marketing influence found by Homburg, Workman, and Krohmer (1999) were identified in frequent and unpredictable market-related changes and competitive strategic actions resembling chronicled contingency theoretical data in business strategy articles. Hickson et al. (1971) presented a strategic contingency theory that correlated subunit power with the function's workflow centrality, input substitutability, and the ability to cope with critical environmental uncertainties. The strength of the relation of subunit behavior to outcomes was subject to variations from changes in contextual conditions (Antonakis, 2001).

Each functional unit had resources that contributed to outcomes regardless if it was in one firm within a network of firms or one unit within a firm composed of multiple units (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The transactional influence derived from value exchanges indicated that, "Power goes to groups that control critical, scarce resources" (Homburg, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999, p. 2). Marketing cemented its influence with contributions to the perception of "the firm's financial performance, customer relationship performance, and new product performance" (Moorman & Rust, 1999, p. 15).

Contingency theory maintains that organizations must continue to adapt to fit the demands of the external environment; marketing is particularly important in adapting to dynamic environments and highly competitive market conditions in which customers are concentrated (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). In highly competitive environments, technical competence in products may be insufficient to ensure profitability (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). The expertise of marketing to create value in the perception of consumers is a functional competitive advantage. Workman reported in 1993 (as cited in Stringfellow & Jap, 2006, p. 30) that high-tech firms could not sustain their competitive advantage over time without improvement in their marketing capabilities.

The marketing environment for the new century projects to deliver rich information, knowledge, and extreme turbulence (Achrol, 1997; Cheung, 2004). Among the characteristics of marketing competitiveness in a 21st century firm are the importance of knowledge, empowerment of customers, and strategic adaptation of organizations. The aforementioned issues demanded from the marketing function significance measures, inferences, calibration, and an understanding of functional interfaces to rethink the role of marketing (Cheung, 2004; Day & Montgomery, 1999) including potential marketing reform (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006).

Institutional Theory

In contrast to contingency theory, which claims firms adapt to fit their environment; institutional theory holds that business practices and organizational structures appear institutionalized when they remain in place after found inefficient (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Institutionalization as defined by Meyer and Rowan (1977) is "the processes by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take a rulelike status in social thought and action" (p. 341). Social conformity and legitimacy pressures from the environment may provoke a weak

selection of organizational actions and structures among efficient ways of organizing; incorporating elements externally legalized without efficiency assessments (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Park & Auh, 2009).

Institutional perspective defines legitimacy as a set of constitutive principles that structures and penetrates organizations (Suchman, 1998, 1995). Legitimacy is attributed to a group or organization that is accountable for its activities according to institutional and legitimacy theories (Park & Auh, 2009). The perception that marketing cannot justify its contribution to the firm is due to lack of accountability; a performance metric that could affect marketing standing in an organization (Park & Auh, 2009). The inability of marketing to respond to social and economic pressures may diminish its functional status and influence in the organization; a diminished level of legitimacy might weakens willingness in other functional areas to collaborate and share knowledge with marketing, potentially hindering organizational performance (Park & Auh, 2009; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

A weak perception of legitimacy reduces marketing influence to induce collaboration from other departments, which may result in decreasing organizational performance (Park & Auh, 2009). Homburg et al. (1999) commented on the difficulty in achieving collaboration and sharing knowledge among functional units due to the competitive nature of cross-functional interactions. Suchman (1995) posited that organizational legitimacy is central to institutional theory, and addressed norms and knowledge that limit, construct, and empower organizational leaders and functions. Organizations operate in an environment of norms, values, and assumptions about what is appropriate economic behavior (Oliver, 1977). Despite marketing pivotal role in determining the market orientation of the company, rumors of lack of accountability, and questions about internal legitimacy appear to affect negatively the level of

respect from the upper echelon, and marketing degrees of organizational influence (Park & Auh, 2009; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

The association of diminished legitimacy and influence with accountability has moved marketers to demonstrate the value of their functional contribution in a consistent manner. Researchers had used two approaches to obtain and analyze the right metrics for marketing efforts: the direct sales effects of the marketing mix for the quantitative-oriented and tracking customer mindset such as awareness, affect, and purchase consideration (Shuba, Vanhuele, & Pauwels, 2010). Kotler (2003) stated that "companies making steady share gains in the minds and heart of consumers will inevitable make gains in market share and profitability" (pp. 38-39).

Responding to an apparent growing demand for marketing accountability could be critical to regain marketing standing in the corporate suite (Marketing Science Institute, 2009). Most metric-based quantitative research had linked marketing actions to the firm top and bottom lines, and to stock performance (Srinivasan & Hanssens, 2009). To complement input and output measures, other researches incorporated perceptual constructs in behavioral outcome models including the combining of behavioral and attitudinal data to predict brand performance (Gupta & Zeitham, 2006; Marketing Science Institute, 2006).

Mindset metrics have found supporters and critics; critics argued that mind-set metrics remain associated with advertising accountability based on a short-term view of the sales function. Critics argued that metrics fail to include the long-term revenue benefits of brand building and customer retention (Shuba et al., 2010). Keller and Lehmann (2006) attested that marketing actions that affirm brand equity in the consumers' minds might not translate immediately into sales; however, mind-set metrics could verify if marketing move consumers in the desired direction. Tracking mind-set metrics may alert the company about a decline in

interest, and signal opportunities to chance offerings to preserve the bottom line. Shuba et al. (2010) suggested that marketing executives could make a case for building customer market share; quantitative modelers could include mindset metrics in sales response models, and branding experts could include the competition when tracking consumer behavior patterns.

Mindset metrics have proven valuable as diagnostic measures in many companies to explain future sales performance beyond what could be explained by marketing-mix activities. The results from the first study about mindset metrics could not answer a criticism associated with the cost of tracking mindsets versus the benefits of knowing about them; a limitation recognized by investigators (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006; Shuba et al., 2010). The outcomes from the study outlined initial steps to allow marketers to respond with alternatives, which could demonstrate the importance of marketing actions in improving organizational performance.

Legitimacy is an operational resource managed and deployed to gather support for activities that reflect accountability for an entrusted agency (Park & Auh, 2009). Internal stockholders perceptions of failure to deliver agency responsibilities could incite opposition by internal groups with a stake in the expected outcomes that may affect its survival (Donaldson, 1981). As a reliable organizational agent, the expectations from the marketing function are minimal performance variance and high accountability; from the institutional perspective, marketing legitimacy once established is unquestionable (Park & Auh, 2009; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

Marketing remains however, subject to social demands from other departments and the upper echelon as part of an entity that works collectively to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes (Park & Auh, 2009). Jepperson (1991) encouraged stakeholders to foster willingness to collaborate with the institutionalization of activities into the social structure of legitimate

organizations. The perception of marketing as a legitimate function can induce organization-wide support for its activities through collaboration and information sharing from audiences such as other functional departments.

Power and Influence

To project an air of legitimacy the marketing department should reaffirm legitimacy by contributing to organizational performance, and justifying and communicating its contribution to internal stakeholders (Park & Auh, 2009). The agent and principal relationship theory explained that by giving instruction and presenting demands about expected outcomes, the principal grants power and resources placing authority and accountability on the agent for the fulfillment of expectations (Park & Auh, 2009). Marketing attains its initial source of power from its position in the institution.

Following the argument of the coalitional view of the firm, Thompson (1967) introduced the concept of the *dominant coalition* noting the variability in power of functions associated with specific situations and proposals intended to influence strategic choices, and the strategic direction of the firm. *Domination* is an advantage of organizational players who control resources and facilities to mobilize scarce resources (Staber & Sydow, 2002). Dominant members of the organization make strategic choices involving structural changes mediated by agreements in response to contextual conditions (Child, 1972). Mediation is an operational form of power.

Marketing management of distribution channels provides a context for most of the studies on marketing power. Intermediation is a brokerage function borne of the imperfect nature of markets, ubiquitous market changes, and bounded rationality that bring together providers and seekers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). In the context of distribution channel relations, the

conceptual distinction between power and influence defines channel power as "the ability to evoke a change in the behavior of another channel or brokerage firm". Describing influence as "the change in one channel that originated change in another channel firm, and embodies the successful exercise of power" (Stern & Scheer, 1992, p. 260). In the study for the loss of marketing influence conducted by Verhoef and Leeflang (2009), marketing channel power is included as an environmental characteristic next to market turbulence. Marketing influence is defined as "the exercise power of a marketing subunit within a business unit, relative to other subunits over activities important to the success of the business unit" (Homburg et al., 1999, p. 2).

The inclusion of the concept of power as an environmental control variable in Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) study was a consequence of intense debates about the increase in power of channel brokers. According to Webster et al. (2005), the gained strength of retail and distribution channels contributed to dilute the centrality of marketing in organizations and the deterioration of its influence. The aforementioned concept originated with trade promotions and sales force discounts subsidized by providers, these incentives were pulling funds away from advertising activities lowering marketing influence (Ailawadi, 2001).

Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) discoveries showed that a demonstration of marketing capabilities could offset negative institutional and environmental contingency factors, which could restore marketing centrality in the organization. Empirical support for accountability, innovateness, and the absence of support for creativity as antecedents for marketing influence presented research gaps. Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) suggested that associating growth, innovateness, and accountability with financial results provide potential tangible metrics.

Measuring marketing creativity is more difficult in the absence of developed reliable metrics for intangible contributions.

Lee and Hsief (2010) presented an argument that integrated marketing capability, innovative capability, and competitive advantages fueled by entrepreneurial actions of marketing leaders. The results from Lee and Hsief informed that marketing entrepreneurial orientation directly influenced marketing capability and innovateness to sustain a firm competitive advantage. To sustain an organization competitive advantage, leadership could develop a culture of entrepreneurship and two leading capabilities: marketing and innovation. Competitive advantages arise from adaptation to market changes, accurate market information, improved marketing technologies, superior marketing skills, and management capabilities (Day, 1994; Lee & Hsief, 2010).

Marketing Organizational Culture

Historically, the range of marketing management practice has included strategy, tactics, and cultural orientations, which may vary in particular competitive cycles impacted by external and internal change agents (Webster, 1992, 2005a). Webster described "Organizational culture as a system of values and beliefs that guide the actions of organization members" (Webster, 2005a, p. 5). Deshpandé and Webster (1989) argued that organizational culture could be considered a knowledge system from the marketing perspective. Culture as a knowledge system explains the reasons for situations that emerge and the form they may take in diverse organizations. Organizational culture as a system defines codes of conduct and functional behavior to fit structures, goals, and markets.

A market orientation is adopted into the organizational culture when the marketing concept influences every organizational function. The marketing concept is a formula

prescribing customer advocacy but is also an operating philosophy; a mission that validates the reason for a company to be in business that is to satisfy the needs of its customers (Webster, 2005a). A customer orientation strategy and a market-oriented organizational culture depend on the acceptance and adoption of the marketing concept (Webster, Hammond, & Rothwell, 2010). A marketing culture is defined as a market-oriented culture (Conrad & Brown, 1997) comprising dominant values, means, and behaviors, which characterize the individuality of the organization, and describe the internal behavior of the company as well as its relation to the environment (Zostautiene & Urbanskiene, 2002; Zostautiene & Vaiciulenaite, 2010).

A market-oriented organization reflects the importance of coordination in inter-departmental and individual activities intended to meet and exceed customer expectations by delivering superior value (Webster et al., 2010). A market-oriented organization continually scans the environment for changes in customers, competitors, and marketplace information to stand ready to provide superior value (Webster et al., 2010). Theory and empirical research suggested that higher levels of market orientation resulted in higher levels of organizational performance (Connolly, 2008; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998; Homburgh, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

A market orientation refers to an organizational culture that blends a company culture with a market commitment to provide superior value by focusing on the customer, adapting timely to the changing needs of customers, scanning the environment to acquire competitive information, and maintaining inter-functional integration (Webster, Hammond, & Rothwell, 2010). A market orientation is the type of business culture and climate created in an organization to lead behavior and actions effectively to achieve sustainable advantages (Narver & Slater, 1990; Kholi & Jaworski, 1993). The market orientation should become the dominant

culture pulling the company together as long as values, means, and behaviors affecting teamwork, cross-functional cooperation, coordination, flexibility, and innovativeness count with top management and employees support (Simberova, 2009). The corporate culture could be an important barrier to market orientation implementation. From these perspectives, the influence of marketing represents a substantive incremental dimension. Webster (2005a) noted that marketing management in customer-oriented and learning organizations was an indispensable function to lead with maximum influence and control over American businesses.

The relationship between corporate culture, strategy, and the environment is an important consideration in the implementation of a marketing orientation in the firm. The organization culture affects people's behavior, and when the strategy is clear and precise, and is in line with the culture; the culture will act in support of the strategy. A strong culture supports the implementation of strategies that lead to improve performance (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). A strategy communicated through vision, procedures, and objectives, and is implemented successfully will yield results aligned with the culture of the organization, which reflects the way things are traditionally done reinforcing organizational culture (Simberova, 2009). The adaptation of the culture to the environment may shape conflicts and create space for new strategies (Simberova, 2009).

The implications from blending an organization culture with a market-oriented culture to develop a company-wide customer-centric attitude, point to leading aspects of a strong marketing influence. An influence reflected by the practice of functional leadership in a continual mode to maintain organization members' commitment toward customer satisfaction, a readiness to adapt to competitive markets and customer changes, and to lead, and execute change implementation with integrated support from various functions. Narver and Slater (1990) and

Kholi and Jaworski (1990) pioneered the measurement of market orientation in the business organization scoring three separate and equally important components: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. The authors concluded that marketing culture is an organizational variable that shapes essential behavior to develop superior value to consumers.

Narver and Slater (1990) and Kholi and Jaworski (1990) thought that organizations should be proactive in gathering market intelligence, dispersing intelligence information to members of related departments, and inducing immediate responses to the information. Tsai and Wu (2010) posited internal communication channeled by functional leaders encourage cooperation between inter-functional departments, and allow information and knowledge sharing within members enhancing creativity among members.

Current Literature

Marketing Influence

This section identifies issues and controversies. The current literature review explicates associations with the study theoretical framework and presents detailed descriptions, and explanations of the process that took the marketing function from losing influence once held within the firm, its critics, forecasted doom, and offer potential avenues of hope for a reformed function (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006). The goal is to enhance further understanding of the complexities, threats, and opportunities involved in the influential role of marketing, and marketing leadership ability to influence decision-making, lead change readiness, and change implementation to improve organizational performance.

Marketing as a phenomenon changed in the last 25 years (Gronroos, 2006; Scott & Davis, 2009; Sheth & Sisodia, 2006). Services marketing, relationship marketing, and network-based

business-to-business marketing are new marketing fields along with consumer goods-oriented marketing (Gronroos, 2006). Interactions anticipate exchanges as a central marketing concept in communications between suppliers and customers. Interactions make co-production (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and co-creation of value possible (Normann & Ramirez, 1993).

The emergence of new marketing fields has come with the recognition that marketing influence on top echelons has been declining; reducing the voice of the customer in corporate decision-making (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; Webster et al., 2005; Webster, 1997). Increasingly the marketing function carries minimum representation on the board of directors, and even on top management teams (Gronroos, 2007). Marketing is a discipline in crisis (Gronroos, 2007), "over the past three decades marketing academics have raised their concern with the decreasing influence of marketing at the level of corporate strategy" (Nath & Mahajan, 2008, p. 65).

Early predictions about marketing becoming a dominant function of American organizations, and assuming ultimate influence and control appears unfounded (Grigg, 2007; Webster, 2005a). The literature widely has reported that marketing was losing its credibility and the marketing function was in decline (Grigg, 2007; Sheth & Sisodia, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; Webster et al., 2005). An environment however, in which rapid change takes place due to globalization effects, deregulation of industries, increasing competition, unpredictable changes in consumer behavior, a customer-centric culture, expanded information technology, and organizational restructuring appears ideal for marketing efforts to be placed at the forefront of strategic development, and implementation.

Some authors (Day & Montgomery, 1999; Webster, 2002b, 2002c; Webster et al., 2005) seemed to disagree with the aforementioned optimistic vision. Senior managers under economic pressures focus on short-term measures of financial performance and drive decisions toward

cost-cutting, downsizing, and downsizing bureaucracy. A search for greater efficiency and responsiveness to a changing environments, outsourcing, and channel alliances has contributed to diminishing, and marginalizing the role of marketing in the firm.

Marketing Loss of Influence

McGovern, Court, Quelch, and Crawford (2004) stated that less than 10% of the board of director's time in surveyed American firms was dedicated to discussing marketing and customer issues. McGovern et al. (2004) maintained, "Misguided marketing strategies have destroyed more shareholder value and probably more careers, than shoddy accounting or shady fiscal practices have" (p. 70). In many companies, the marketing function is in steep decline; a condition that has gone beyond a loss of influence in strategic decision-making, including lack of respect for marketing by top leadership and organizational functions (Gronroos, 2007; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Cassidy, Freeling, and Kiewell (2005) argued that over 50% of CEO interviews in a European study by McKinsey had a negative impression of their firms' marketers. Many CEOs, for example, expressed frustration when funds requested by marketing had no supporting data or the data contradicted the funding objective (Cassidy, et al., 2005).

A report in Chief Executive (2004) magazine indicated that 35% of CEOs claimed their marketing organization needed improvement. Another study from the Association of national Advertisers indicated that chief marketing officers (CMOs) had a short-term tenure "averaging only 23 months" (Hyde, Landry, & Tipping, 2004, p.6). Gronroos (2007) made a case between strategic and tactical marketing orientations. Gronroos (2007) claimed that institutionalized structural frameworks focused on marketing mix management and the four P model kept marketing in a tactical mode rather than a strategic one.

Market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, which are considered the most important marketing strategic concepts were excluded in the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, and place). The interface points between a firm and its customers have proliferated and increased beyond the traditionally simple customer contact points maintained by mainstream marketing. The constraints of current marketing framework has limited marketing ability to be strategic and severed the link between marketing planning and strategic planning at the corporate level (Gronroos, 2007).

The tactical dimension in marketing supersedes strategy emphasizing operational decision-making and short-term business performance. The tactical focus is on sales volume and market share (Webster, 2005a). A tactical orientation limits the unit of analysis to short-term transactions, setting aside long-term economic implications that affect market growth, and marketing cross-functional relationships. A reduction of marketing cross-functional influence affects the level of marketing participation in strategic planning (Webster, 2005a).

Kotler, Rackham, and Krishnaswamy (2006) reported sales domination over marketing, and the marketing function an adjunct to sales in cases highlighting a positive relationship between marketing and sales. The authors noted that when marketing acted as an independent player and exercised power through brand managers; disagreements between marketing and sales emerged and created doubts about marketing competence in a short-term oriented environment.

Pressures from financial markets and shareholders induced short-term outcomes in organizations diminishing the importance of strategic thinking to guide tactics (Webster, 2005a). Financial pressures and marketing inability to document its contribution forced a reduction in market spending and influence. The outcome of marketing loss of influence and shifting marketing activities to finance and logistics contributed to categorize marketing as a cost rather

than an investment thus accelerating a transfer of funds and responsibilities to the field sales unit (Webster et al., 2005).

Brown (2005) condensed in an essay, critical observations of the perceived performance of the marketing function in a tactical role. Observation drawn from discussions among prominent top managers from IBM, Yellow Roadway, Luxottica Retail, McKinsey & Company, and Cisco Systems described customer management topics, although only one executive was from marketing. Meeting participants however, expressed a common interest for consumer satisfaction topics and other marketing subjects. Among the themes discussed closely associated with the theme of the current study were the integration of business processes and the use of technology; managers discussed how cross-integration was critical to seize opportunities between functional silos rather than within silos. Participants recognized governance issues as barriers to cross-functional opportunities, and to effective workflow among business units (Brown, 2005; Swink, Narasimhan, & Wang, 2007).

According to Greg Reid senior vice-president and CMO of Yellow-Roadway, participants recognized a need for connectivity and synergy to improve competitive advantage. A growing shift from strategy to execution opened up exchanges about implementation of strategies. Taking action at the point of interface with customers, empowering front-line workers to provide customers with solutions rather than a simple product or service (Brown, 2005). Marketing, however, was not mentioned when discussing the responsibility of the relationships with customers. The people who deliver solutions, products, and services were named responsible for customer relationships (Brown, 2005). The role sales and marketing had focused on by taking over sales objectives left the keeping of market innovation promises and retention of customer loyalty in the hands of other functions in the organization.

Based on published discussions and material about marketing, researchers might deduct that "marketing [has] died, was declared impotent, or most likely just irrelevant to many senior managers" (Schultz, as cited in Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, p. 14). O'Dea (2007) reported that LEGO ex-CEO Christian Majgaard believed that marketing had lost its strategic role as a consumer advocate and customer value, and that few marketers are engaged in strategy implementation. Marketing people must speak to the board in their language. Marketing in many firms have "lost a seat at the table" in organization boards (Ganesan, Malter, & Webster, 2004; Webster et al., 2005). The author recognized that might be difficult to find scholarly evidence testifying that marketing by the standards of most marketing researchers is not a discipline in crisis, and is not in steep decline.

The literature seems to indicate a loss of marketing influence that reflects on the marketing leadership within the firm (Homburg, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999). Webster (2002b) argued that the role and influence of marketing have often being changeable in conceptual and academic aspects, as part of an adaptation process to influence business operations and financial performance. Marketing as an organizational culture had focused on customer satisfaction and as a business strategy had instituted segmentation processes. Among them targeting consumers and positioning firms; differentiating products and services; and stimulating demand tactically through promotion and pricing (Webster, 2002b). Ganesan et al. (2004) affirmed the organic function of marketing increased its exposure to take risks when responding to internal and external environmental changes affecting its degree of influence.

The outcomes of studies in marketing are limited to the role the marketing function played and how much influence marketing exercised. Changes in internal and external environments change or should change marketing, which contributes to outdate its academic

definition in marketing management textbooks (Ganesan et al, 2004; Kotler, 2000). These perspectives could be part of the areas of debate in assessing the multidimensional role of marketing within the firm. Assessment of a particular cycle in marketing performance within the firm might miss the dynamic nature of the discipline and its relationship to a changing environment. Such approach could yield a positive judgment limited to one dimension as in the case of the study of Homburg, Workman, and Krohmer (1999); a pessimistic judgment but a multidimensional assessment with potential future for marketing as in the case of Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) or an overly negative one by Lehman and Jocz (1997).

Dispersion of Influence and Performance

Lehman and Jocz (1997) argued in *Reflections,* a compendium of chapters from leading authors, that the success of the marketing concept led to downsizing in marketing departments and a reduced operating role of the marketing professional. Greyser (1997) described as "marketing migration" the dispersion of the marketing concept application in which everyone became a marketing concept expert, thus making marketing specialists less relevant. Webster (1997) indicated that when companies make marketing everyone's responsibility, it becomes nobody's responsibility.

Lusch (2007) classified marketing evolution over the past 100 years in three stages: to market, marketing to, and marketing with. To market defined a primary function that takes things to market; marketing to, became the action of identifying customers and marketing to them, and marketing with, meant that the primary mission was collaborating with customers to co-create value. Marketing emerged from sales support to become an influential separate function as a management reaction to the shortcomings of the hard sell approach (Webster, 1997; Webster et al., 2005).

Marketing as a function neglected to recognize the role of core competencies to guide business strategies, this capability gap motivated marketing strategists to move to the emerging powerful group of strategic planners. Strategic planning arose in reaction to perceived shortcomings in the marketing concept approach, a functional unit that lost its appeal in the 1980s leaving marketing suffering a loss of identity and influence (Au & Merlo, 2009; Lehman & Jocz, 1997; Webster, 1997; Webster et al., 2005). Day (1997) projected three future choices for the marketing function within the firm as a functional silo, in a subordinate position to another function, or as a guidance center focused in delivering value to customers. Marketing as a theory, a thought, and a practice appeared to continue being a work in progress discipline (Lusch, 2010).

Homburgh et al. (1999) found in a survey of United States and German companies that marketing had substantial influence relative to sales, R&D, operations, and finance. Marketing and sales were relatively influential in comparison with other functional groups, and the quality of their cross-functional relationship might have an influence on performance (Homburg & Jensen, 2005). Marketing however, ranked above other functions as a highly influential group within the firm on a general basis (Homburgh et al., 1999). Differences in marketing and sales orientation and mindset for problem solving could explain marketing influential leadership over sales but little research characterizing the orientation exists. Further empirical inquiry would be required to explain how a conflicting ideological and structural relationship between marketing and sales units affects organizational performance (Graham, 2010; Homburgh et al., 1999; Xu, 2006). The study concluded that marketing did not seem to have lost its seat or its voice in strategic decision-making, and marketing relative influence was not low in horizontal process-based organizational forms (Homburgh et al., 1999).

Marketing and sales were found to be influential in change adaptation and implementation. Institutional and contingency factors however could act as barriers for introducing change and the adaption process (Homburgh et al., 1999). Corporate culture and institutional inertia are not dynamic variables; firms may not adapt as rapid and continually to changes as their environments do (Homburgh et al., 1999). The value of marketing contribution in strategy formulation and decision making to the firm will define the importance of marketing to senior management. Homburg et al. (1999)'s results indicated that contingency factors such as trading value affect marketing influence when influence is institutionalized, in such case adapting to change may become a slow bureaucratic process .

Some of the internal contingency determinants revealed that marketing influence was higher in firms with a differentiation strategy and lower in business units with a cost-leadership strategy. A CEO with a marketing background was related positive to marketing influence (Homburgh, 1999). The study did not report a significant relationship between market growth and marketing influence but a positive one (Homburgh et al., 1999).

In the area of market uncertainty, the reputation or skill of the marketing function to cope with uncertainty may increase its influence. The study results however could not support such claim (Homburgh et al., 1999). The influence of marketing leadership to effect change across functions depended on the influence level of other functions, the functional background of their managers, and the appreciation of the value of resources that contributed to activities in common. The results indicated that to implement change successfully, a function leader must have support from the marketing and sales groups (Homburgh et al., 1999). Influence is both an individual and a structural group phenomenon.

An area that requires investigation is the effect of the dispersion of influence in the quality of cross-functional relationships. Further research is desirable to determine how much loss of cross-functional productivity occurs because of the dispersion of influence between functions (Troilo, De Luca, & Guenzi, 2009). A determination of the influence of dispersion in marketing inter-functional relationships may increase knowledge about the marketing unit's performance (Troilo et al., 2009).

Jaworski and Kohli (1993) argued that interactions and the ability to change and adapt among organizational functions affect the development of a consumer centric culture. The literature however indicates a gap about the influence of power distribution across functions over the development of a customer-centric culture in organizations. No conclusive evidence exists of an association between cross-functional integration in decision-making and a market orientation culture.

Kromer, Homburgh, and Workman (2002) posited that cross-functional dispersion of influence affects performance. Many other factors however, which precede the allocation of power and influence affect organizational performance too. Troilo et al. (2009) affirmed that the allocation of marketing influence among functions positively motivates the development of market offerings of superior value to those of competing firms. The implication from this affirmation is that a fair distribution of influence in decision-making improves competitiveness, capabilities, cross-functional dynamics, reinforces roles, and a customer-centric mindset.

Miller and Monge (1986) supported Troilo et al. (2009)'s affirmation, suggesting that functional members who share decision-making improve their workflow and competency levels outcomes that conform to organization theory. Similarly, in collaborative environments in which functions share decision-making power, interactions increase, and difficulties in communication

decrease. People and tasks organize to fit and face specific situations according to a contingency approach to marketing performance (Ruekert, Walker, & Roering, 1985).

From these theoretical perspectives, the degree of interaction and collaboration between marketing and other functions may provide a platform for interdepartmental integration. Rouzies et al. (2005) advocated sharing of decisions between functional units. A common understanding of market and organizational challenges and a sense of ownership of the solutions are some of the incentives from cross-functional shared decisions. Additional benefits from teamwork among functions are agility in early communications about customer information, innovations addressing market needs, and improvement to the marketing mix (Menon, Jaworski, & Kohli, 1997).

According to Krohmer et al. (2002) a firm's performance is one variable associated with dispersion of influence across functions. Performance is the net result from the efficient collaboration, effective workflow, and adaptation across functions, and the decision process inefficiencies brought by people with limited expertise. Guenzi and Troilo (2006) and Troilo et al. (2009) claimed that performing to create value for customers is the activity of businesses that focus on producing offers that do better than the competition in the eyes of consumers. A firm that leads in value-added products and services builds competitive advantages, and improves market performance (Olson, Slater, & Hult, 2005).

According to Rust, Moorman, and Dickson (2002), studies of marketing performance measurements established that value creators lead with benefits over costs in the minds of consumers. Value-added products and services yield improvements in performance reflected in repeat purchases, higher revenues, and publicity from satisfied customers. Rust, Lemon, and Zeithami (2004) posited that adding value to customer offers above those of competitors

increases the financial value of the firm and term of customer loyalty. Sales growth and market share are measurements of brand perceptions and satisfied customers that reflect a firm's commitment to make customers successful (Rust et al., 2004).

Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) stated that results from Moorman and Rust (1999) enriched Homburg et al. (1999) discoveries by asserting marketing contributions to perceptions of a firm's financial performance, customer relationship performance, and new product performance. The contribution indicated that to be profitable a firm must not only be market oriented but also have a strong and influential market function. Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) aimed at understanding the relationships between the marketing department influence and market orientation, and the effect of both on organizational performance.

In Verhoef and Leeflang' study (2009), the sample population comprised a group of Dutch firms with more than 250 employees; a combination of in-depth interviews, and a survey were conducted engaging CMOs, marketing managers, and CFOs. The study identified innovateness, creativity, and marketing cooperation with other functions as antecedents of marketing influence. Influence was measured as perceived, based on top management respect and decision influence. Previous studies had provided only one measure of marketing influence.

Departing from a relationship between a dominant market function and a market-oriented culture (Harris, 1999) Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) included a link between marketing influence and a market orientation in their model. The authors affirmed marketing's influence as positively related to the firm's market orientation and the latter relatively associated with positive firm performance. Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) identified accountability and innovativeness as leading factors of marketing influence but found no increase in influence from the customer-connecting role of marketing. The authors' discoveries contributed to an

increasing debate around the decreasing influence of the marketing department within firms. The integrative focus of their study was to determine any further need for a strong marketing department within organizations (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) posited that nowadays the decision influence of marketing departments only affected advertising, relationship management, segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Sales and finance departments influenced and sometimes determined pricing and distribution terms. The study's results supported claims in the popular and scientific press about marketing losing grounds within firms (Rust et al., 2004; Webster, Malter & Ganesan, 2005). Despite their claim, Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) confirmed a need in firms of a strong marketing department because marketing could sustain the market orientation and better performance. A market-oriented culture could represent an antecedent of marketing influence and a sign of a renewed top management respect for marketing.

Phenomenological Design

Phenomenology is one of several qualitative research designs that study the lived experiences of people (Finlay, 2009). Phenomenology means the study of phenomena, and is both a philosophy and a research strategy (Byrne, Kakulu, & Viitanen, 2009). The scientist who developed the phenomenological design was a German philosopher named Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) who "sought to develop a new philosophical method which would lend absolute certainty to a disintegrating civilization" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 2).

The following orientation is based on the premise that human experience makes sense to those who live in it prior to all interpretation and theorizing (Creswell, 2003) and express the fundamentals of phenomenology. When an area of inquiry requires collecting facts and find some order in the collected data, researchers use inductive reasoning as the process of choice in

the absence of scientific theories from which to hypothesize (Byrne et al., 2009; Creswell, 2003). Inductive reasoning begins with observations and measures, detects patterns and regularities, and formulates some tentative hypothesis that could be explored to develop some general conclusions or theories (Creswell, 2003). The process of inquiry is open-ended and exploratory. Situational and personal aspects of the people involved are inseparable, and some generalization is possible by making allowances for local and personal influences (Creswell, 2003).

The goal of researchers who use a phenomenological design is to gain knowledge and understanding of the essential truths of human experiences (Byrne, 2001). The subject is the person being interviewed, and is the primary source of data for the phenomenological researcher. The investigator studies the subject's experiential descriptions and processes them through series of steps to reach the best understanding of the experience being investigated (Creswell, 2003, 2005). Phenomenology becomes a philosophy and research study methodology used to gain additional knowledge of a phenomenon through the understanding of lived experiences of participants (Creswell, 2003, 2005).

Patterns and understandings are developed by engaging a small number of participants to certain extent, in a process in which the investigator brackets individual experiences totally, to ensure that only the participants' experiences are disclosed in the study (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). In advance to initiating in-depth interviews with participants, the investigator prepares an *epoche* with the intention to eliminate from the interaction, collection, and interpretation of the exchange any preconceived notions or personal experiences, which unintended may influence what the investigator 'hears' the participants saying (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The reasons for bracketing or *epoche* come apparent in the definitional context of phenomenological research. Phenomenological research becomes phenomenological when

involves rich description of lived experiences; when the investigator has adopted a special, open phenomenological attitude, which at least initially refrains from importing external frameworks, and sets aside judgments about the realness of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2009).

Bruyn (as cited in Creswell, 1998) stated that phenomenology serves as the rationale behind efforts to understand individuals by entering their field of perception to see life as these individuals see it. A phenomenological study may be challenging to use; the investigator must adhere to the philosophical principles of phenomenology, the participants in the study must be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, and bracketing personal experiences by the investigator may be difficult. The investigator needs to decide how and in what way personal experiences will be introduced into the study (Creswell, 2003). A phenomenological method is deemed sound when it links appropriately to some phenomenological philosophy or theory, and when its claims about method are justified, and consistent (Finlay, 2009).

Conclusion

The level of importance of the marketing function in an organization could be measured by the respect marketing receives from high echelons, other functions, and stakeholders (Dawes & Massey, 2006). Central to marketing influence is the function advocacy for the customer across hierarchical levels and across functions within business-to-business (B2B) organizations (Hutt & Speh, 2007). To perform such challenging cross-functional role, which includes initiating, developing, nurturing, and sustaining a healthy network of relationships within the company and in customer organizations, marketing leadership exercises managerial competencies, and a relative influence (Hutt & Speh, 2007). The inter-functional or intra-functional influence of marketing may have an impact on the direction of change implementation affecting functional and organizational performance (Harris, Ogbonna, & Goode, 2008).

According to the resource dependency perspective, different organizational functions have varying degrees of power because of their different capabilities to seize important resources that strengthen organizational contributions (Dawes & Massey, 2006; Kholi, 1989). Marketing gained prominence as a discipline and for its contribution to the marketing orientation in the form of an organizational culture (Webster, 2005b). The marketing orientation has been associated with successful financial performance. The varying adaptive roles of marketing throughout business cycles have promoted that many of marketing activities have been accessed by other organizational functions such as pricing and physical distribution, which have fallen in sales, finance, and logistics domains.

Marketing has fallen out of grace with higher echelons pressured to measure functional contributions in the short-term, which has placed marketing in the position to quantify and explain its contribution to profitability. In spite that many statements about the role of marketing in modern firms remain anecdotal or journalistic (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009), marketing practitioners are aware that inability to account for functional contribution undermines the function standing within the organization. Marketers feel pressured to demonstrate their contribution to firm performance (O'Sullivan & Abela, 2007). Marketing inability to measure its input has earned it a cost center classification rather than one of investment.

From a strategic management position, marketing has been relegated to influence tactical decisions with a limited role or none in strategic decisions. The strong marketing department that developed a marketing-oriented culture as an antecedent of its leadership role and influence is experiencing a loss of influence within the firm. The possibility the role variation of marketing has affected the function's intra-organizational influence to lead, is a concern of

academics, business organizations, and marketing professionals (Homburgh, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

Some authors posited that variability in role definition, role load, products, services, industries, and markets restrained effective integration between marketing and other functions but Homburg, Jensen, and Krohmer (2008) argued that a systematic investigation of variability of marketing interfaces was absent in examined research studies. If marketing managers cannot influence powerful functional groups to be ready for change, adapt, and adopt changes, support for implementation of innovations will not take place, and competitive advantages will not develop affecting performance, and sustainability (Homburgh, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Pfeffer, 1992; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Firms that implement innovations outperform their competitors in terms of market share and profitability (Voss, Montoya-Weiss, & Voss, 2006).

Nath and Mahajan (2008, p. 65) sustained "over the past three decades marketing academics have raised their concern with marketing decreased influence at the level of corporate strategy." In times in which change is no longer a threat in the horizon but is ubiquitous, and a market orientation is critical to adaptation and financial success, a diminished level of respect, power, and influence of the marketing function may affect organizational performance (Connolly, 2008; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998; Moorman & Rust, 1999). A marketing orientation has been linked to positively affect key customer relational elements of service satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and customer lifetime value. A strong marketing function is required to maintain a market orientation (Fagalvi, Martin, & Young, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009)

A phenomenological study allowed exploring and describing the lived experiences of 15 managerial employees pertaining to the loss of marketing leadership influence to lead change

readiness, gain cross-functional support for change implementation, and improve the level of performance of a group of companies operating in South Florida. A qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study because its inductive design enables the exploration of human behavior from multiple perspectives to explain a holistic interpretation of individual experiences (Karami, Rowley, & Analoui, 2006; Neuman, 2006). An appreciation and understanding of the lived experiences of the research participants were valuable outcomes of the current study (van Kaam, 1966).

The emergence of information and logistics service economics signaled an economic shift from manufacturing that brought an increase in the firm's value from intangible assets. Market-based assets and market capabilities are intangible assets and sources of competitive advantage recognized to influence potential cash flows, and contribute to business capitalization (Fornell et al., 2006; Gupta et al., 2004; Joshi & Hanssens, 2004; Ramaswami, Srivastava, & Bhargava, 2008). The outcomes from the current study in examining the level of marketing influence across functions may assist senior management in their appreciation of marketing contribution to increase competitive advantages and organizational performance (Lundberg, 2006).

The literature presented in this literature review supported a significant need for a phenomenological study. An investigation that explored the lived experiences and perceptions of the research participants, a study that examined beliefs and factors about how marketing loss of influence may have affected its ability to impact cross-functional decision-making, lead change, and improve performance. The literature review provided support for the research question that guided the study: What is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance? The research question guided the

kind of data intended for collection, and restricted the interpretation, and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

Summary

Chapter 2 provided historical perspectives on marketing management, its development and evolution. In the review, the author introduced current research about the marketing function role and influence, and research findings supporting leadership, decision-making, power, influence, contingency, and institutional theories. The objective was to link extant literature to marketing influence and loss of influence associated with cross-functional change, and performance. The literature review provided in-depth theoretical knowledge that assisted with this qualitative phenomenological study that focused on the loss of marketing influence to lead change and improve performance in organizations. The data from the literature review substantiated the need for further research to gain additional knowledge about employees perceptions on factors they could believe had an impact in the loss of marketing influence to lead change, obtain cross-functional support for change implementation, and improve performance during organizational changes.

Chapter 3 presented a research methodology for this qualitative phenomenological study. The chapter included the research method and design, the appropriateness of design, the research question, a sample population, geographic location, sampling frame or method, the instrumentation that was used in data collection, and analysis process for the current study, validity, and reliability issues.

Chapter 3: Method

"Over the past three decades marketing academics have raised their concern with the decreased influence of marketing at the level of corporate strategy" according to Nath and Mahajan (2008, p. 65). The role of marketing as "the guardian and guarantor of customer interests" lost its luster when marketing surrendered its strategic mission for tactical deployment to satisfy short-term financial metrics (Seth & Sisodia, 2007, p. 141). The influential role of marketing resided in developing innovative marketing concepts driven by customer needs to sustain the legitimacy of the company's market orientation, which leads to improve performance (Seth & Sisodia, 2007; Verhoef & Leeflang 2009). In times, in which change is ubiquitous, and a market orientation is critical to adaptation and financial success; marketing cross-functional influence could help organizations to anticipate and adapt to changes faster, implementing agile strategies to improve performance (Connolly, 2008; Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Seth & Sisodia, 2007).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of 15 managerial employees, to identify patterns and themes concerning marketing loss of influence to lead change readiness, implement change, and improve the performance of a group of South Florida companies. The intention in using a phenomenological design with this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of perceptions and perspectives derived from a given situation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966). Perceptions and perspectives form lived experiences and worldviews, which fall within the focus of a phenomenological design aligning it with the goal of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The current qualitative phenomenological study informed about the level of influence of marketing leadership through exploring and describing the lived experiences of 15 employees conforming the sample population. In essence, participants shared their individual perceptions about the impact of marketing loss of influence in leading change and improving performance. Themes that emerged were identifiable through extant literature and collected data from semi-structured interviews. The themes serve to inform senior management about factors affecting marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve organizational performance.

Each selected participant was holding a full time managerial position, and had interacted with marketing in organizational change situations that took place in diverse companies operating in South Florida. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. A modified van Kaam method (1994) was used with semi-structured digitally taped interviews. Open-ended questions constituted the format of the interviews, which were transcribed. The obtained data were analyzed and coded using Nvivo 9®, a recognized software program. Nvivo9 ® is a recommended tool effectively used in many phenomenological studies.

Chapter 3 included a detailed description of the research method, a selected design, and appropriateness required to answer the research question: what is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance? An anthology of the status of marketing within firms reveals that marketing is in trouble (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Research has pointed to the impact marketing loss of influence might have on decision-making and the direction of change, which could affect functional and organizational performance (Harris, Ogbonna, & Goode, 2008). Harris, Ogbonna, and Goode (2008) recognized a shortage of research on marketing influence on organizations, and

acknowledged the importance of senior management's support to encourage positive interactions between functional managers to foster team spirit.

Verhoef and Leeflang claimed their 2009 Dutch study was the second empirical investigation in a decade to inquire about the influence and loss of influence of marketing within the firm. The authors found the influence of the marketing function positively related to the organization market orientation, which in turn was related positively to firm performance. Pertaining to extant literature about the loss of influence of marketing Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) stated, "Many statements about the role of marketing in modern firms remain anecdotal or journalistic" (p. 15). The aforementioned conclusive remarks indicate a possible 10 years empirical research gap.

A research method was presented in Chapter 3 to explore the loss of influence of the marketing function to lead decision-making processes toward change, and its implementation to improve organizational performance. The chapter provided: a) a review of the research method, design, and appropriateness, b) a guiding research question, c) a discussion of the population, sampling and data collection, e) informed consent, confidentiality, and geographic location, f) interview questions, data collection, data analysis, validity, and reliability issues. The research instrument and data collection method described the appropriateness of the method to understand marketing loss of influence to lead change decisions to improve performance.

Qualitative Method and Research Design

Organizations have common features according to Scott (2008), who argued that institutional theory has contributed to raise challenging questions about the effect of commonalities in the world of organizations. According to Scott (2008), organizations tend to resemble one another and organizational settings shape behavior between rational interests and

conscious choices. Organizations use resources to control and maintain its formal structures; institutional control and constituted participants resist and dose possibilities for introduction, adoption, and implementation of change (Scott, 2008). Scott had also argued that organizations define objectives and induce participants to cooperate, and manage their contributions by coordinating, controlling, and accommodating workflow across neighboring functions. Berg (2004) suggested that qualitative research provides the framework to explore, define, and assist understanding organizational social and psychological phenomena, and the social settings of individuals forming organizations.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a unique form of empirical inquiry, an emergent approach that may lead researchers in new unanticipated directions (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010); a form of turning systematic empirical inquiry into meaning (Shank, 1994, 2006). "In terms of methodologies, perspectives and strategies qualitative research is an umbrella term, which encompasses many approaches" (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2001, p. 7). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) defined qualitative research as a method used to describe, explain, explore, and interpret, or build a theory to support an investigator's purpose.

The qualitative approach is holistic, context-bound, and makes use of basic personal skills the investigator already has. Skilled qualitative researchers are aware and alert of their assessments of situations, competent in their abilities to select and apply appropriate techniques, willing to suspend previous assumptions and knowledge, and ready to head off in different directions if required. A set of basic personal skills include observing, conversing, participating, and interpreting (Leedy & Ormond, 2001; Shank, 2006).

Sensitivity to overt and hidden assumptions is a necessary attribute in the qualitative researcher, observing includes hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, or any sensorial combinations. Conversing is the interplay of talking and listening. Participating is getting involved, and interpreting is about finding meaning without jumping at interpretative conclusions too soon (Shank, 2006).

Observation and interviews are means through which qualitative research may be conducted using a relatively small sample. Words and narratives are used to communicate findings, and inferences are inductive (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Shank, 2006). Investigators analyze taped recordings in an inductive fashion to look for patterns and themes as a form of interpretive analysis. The best-known inductive data-driven approach to qualitative research and best-developed example is grounded theory (Shank, 2006). Other types of qualitative studies are: a) phenomenological, b) case study, c) longitudinal, d) ethnographic, e) philosophical inquiry, and f) participatory.

A research question and in-depth exploration of lived-experiences provide a qualitative investigator using semi-structured interviews an opportunity to unveil a theory without instruments to measure interacting variables (Creswell, 1994). Themes and patterns that may develop from face-to-face interactions and dialogue could be compared to other existing theories, enhancing knowledge that could be gained from individuals' lived experiences (Creswell, 1994). The investigator increases his or her understanding from deeper perspectives experienced through face-to-face interaction. The meaning that participants assign to their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values of an assumptive world provides the investigator with a deeper understanding of human actions (Marshall & Gretchen, 1999).

Sociology and qualitative methods provide the analysis and understanding of patterned behavior and social practices of society, both help to interpret the relevant values and attitudes of individuals and group interactions in situations taking place in daily life experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research is an interpretive form of soft data from impressions, words, sentences, symbols, photos, and so forth that dictate different strategies, and collection techniques. Qualitative research allows to understand the world in a natural setting and to make sense of a phenomenon from what it means to people (Neuman, 2003).

Social researchers systematically collect and analyze empirical data, and carefully examine patterns and themes in the data to understand and explain social life (Neuman, 2003, 2006). The qualitative data obtained gives researchers rich information about the social process in specific settings. Qualitative researchers speak a language of cases and contexts, they are *bricoleurs* who apply logic in practice, follow a nonlinear and cyclical research path transcending perspectives (Neuman, 2003).

Research requires a systematic ethical approach within a defined methodology that includes detailed planning for measurement of variables, thoughtful structured reflection, and disclosure of approaches to establish transparency, and replication (O'Leary, 2004). Phenomenology offers an appropriate strategy for qualitative inquiry in which a researcher can focus upon phenomena, gather data from meaning provided by participants, and add personal value to the study (Osborne, 1994). Osborne identified the 1980s as the starting period in which increasing questions emerged about the focus of inquiry and the exploration of methodologies emphasizing discovery, description, and meaning rather than prediction, control, and measurement.

Qualitative research has gained momentum in a time of global uncertainty. Government agencies are attempting to regulate scientific inquiry by defining what counts as good science (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006). Such regulatory activities raise issues, which may affect the independent position of qualitative research methods, and point toward a subordination role to quantitative research methodology. The regulators argued the differences between hard science and soft scholarship in terms of what is good science, adding qualitative researcher' commitment to comment on positivist or quantitative projects based on the interpretive traditions of qualitative research (Denzin et al., 2006).

Qualitative research stands as an approach in which the design of each investigation is unique, regardless of the qualitative-quantitative methodology divide, which is presumed to be polarized artificially by differences in philosophical perspectives (Technocratic vs. Transcendent) among other methodological variables (Denzin et al., 2006). Variables exemplified by the relationship (distant vs. close) between investigator and study subjects, induction vs. deduction dimensions, and the origin of the research question (Denzin et al., 2006). Research authors argued in relation to the divide that trade-off and overlap between experimental survey and qualitative research inevitably involves loss as well as gain, concluding that no single approach is ideal (Hammersley, 1992; Lloyd-Jones, 2003).

Phenomenology

"Phenomenology enables researchers to examine every day human experience in close, detailed ways" (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p. 56). Phenomenological research seeks to describe rather than explain, and is effective in exposing the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives (Lester, 1999). This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach and in-depth semi-structured personal interviews. The intention in using a

phenomenological design with this qualitative study was to seek an understanding of perceptions and perspectives for a given situation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966).

The current qualitative phenomenological study informed through exploring and describing lived experiences of 15 managerial employees about marketing loss of influence associated with leading change and superior performance. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenology supports the type of research selected because it allows capturing broad in scope descriptions that could assist in a reflective structural analysis, which may reveal essentials of lived experiences. The phenomenological design permits the investigator to be flexible, and adapt the direction of the investigation when the data collected warrants a change, which includes modifying the research question (Moustakas, 1994; Neuman, 2006). In-depth face-to-face interviews provided information to draw raw data from which to develop new body of knowledge to ground a theory (Moustakas, 1994; Neuman, 2006).

van Kaam methodology. The van Kaam method modified by Moustakas (1994) was used to analyze the data that was gathered. The method includes the following steps: first, horizonalization: classifying living experiences into groups; second, reduction and elimination: determining the relevance of statements and eliminating statements limiting the ability to understand and label the participant's expressions; third, the identification and elimination of applicable themes and clusters; fourth, validation, and construct of meaning from thematic clusters.

To capture socially constructed realities Moustakas (1994) recommended setting aside personal judgment. *Epoche* is a reference to the process of bracketing (Moustakas, 1994). Investigators suspend personal judgment or bias, bracketing themselves from the rest of the

world (Koch, 1995). The investigator's adoption of a not-knowing stance underlines the skills to develop to learn about other people's perspectives (Keenan, 2004). Other suggested relevant design steps encompass purposive sampling, data collection, and data analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

The investigator must keep in mind bracketing, and the reduction of the data to be understood in terms of their similar and dissimilar components, motives, validation, and descriptions in text and structure, which might lead to find, and examine possible meanings (Moustakas, 1994). The modified van Kaam method (Moustakas, 1994) was appropriate for this study. The design provided a vehicle to explore and value the meaning of events experienced and described by the people being studied. The modified van Kaam methodology concentrates on perceptions and perspectives of participants suspending pre-conceptions and judgments from the investigator (Moustakas, 1994). The choice of a phenomenological approach was twofold to identify a phenomenon in a context where perceptions had taken place, and to illuminate knowledge about the purpose of the study. Moustakas (1994) suggested the format followed by the investigator for correct use of the van Kaam method in this study:

The data obtained from semi-structured interviews and observations should be stored, catalogued, and coded. The investigator used Nvivo 9®, a recognized software program for data storing, cataloguing, and coding purposes. Nvivo 9® is a recommended tool used in many qualitative phenomenological studies. Face-to-face interviews provided an opportunity to observe, record, and take notes of what cannot be recorded when participants responded freely to open-ended questions from a questionnaire. The Nvivo 9® software assisted in ascertaining themes regarding the understanding of marketing leadership loss of influence to lead decision-making processes, implement change, and improve performance.

The intention of this investigator was to explore and describe lived experiences from 15 managers in the context of manufacturing, service, and distribution businesses operating in South Florida. Lived experiences constituted the relationships of people who could express how environments influence behavior (van Kaam, 1966), expressions that provided through interviews relevant insights about the loss and possible recovery of marketing influence to lead as a strong function. A function that could maintain a market orientation culture closely associated with sustaining organizational performance (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

Personal Lived-Experiences of Participants. The experiences that were shared through participants' statements helped uncover the details of the phenomenon being discussed. The shared information illustrated the perceptual connection of life and reality from experiences that shaped individual behavior once internalized. According to Heidegger (1982), the internalized assumptions people make from their perceived world will affect how people interpret daily occurrences.

Probing people during an interview motivates a deconstruction process of collective concepts of interest, individualization of a phenomenon, and extracting personal perceptions of such phenomenon (Heidegger, 1982). In reference to the current study, the concept of interest is the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance. Knowledge could be the outcome from analysis and assessments of people's perceptions (Merleau-Ponty, 2004).

Phenomenology is relational, and permits through units of experience such as observations, perceptions, sensations, concepts, interpretations, judgments, and reflections to make sense, and understand the origins of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2004). A phenomenological approach provides an opportunity for subjective holistic experiences.

Phenomenological researchers aim at discovering consistent themes in the lived experiences shared by participants.

Phenomena are part of the subjective collective consciousness, and do not surface until an investigator takes the time to listen to broad perspectives offered by interviewed participants (Heidegger, 1982). Qualitative analysis is structured to grasp unrestricted from what others have perceived, information from which commonalities and contexts could be established (Heidegger, 1982). The qualitative research process allows gathering the lived experiences and perceptions of participants in an attempt to deconstruct a concept of interest, which in the current study was the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance.

To avoid interruptions and maintain focus during communication exchanges with participants, interviews were audiotaped in a neutral space limited to the participant and the interviewer. A neutral environment contributed to an understanding of a person's beliefs through a holistic approach (Hemphill-Pearson & Hunter, 1997). The author took measures to secure privacy in public places when interviews were not conducted in the privacy of participants' homes, and carefully listened, and took detailed notes including observations of what cannot be recorded. This interviewing approach was consistent with the ontology of qualitative research.

The lived experiences of the individuals who participated in the current study derived from natural and social events sometimes ignored as having major significance (Williams, 2002). Witnessing first-hand knowledge from the managerial employees, who participated, provided valuable insights about marketing loss of influence to lead decision-making processes toward change, and improve performance. The use of a quantitative method would have restricted the essence of the respondents in the voiced lived experiences that surfaced during the interview (Neuman, 2006).

Research Method and Design Appropriateness

The study explored the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change readiness, gain inter-functional support for change implementation, and positively contribute to the performance of a group of firms in diverse industries (health care, health insurance, banking, finance, real estate, and distribution) operating in South Florida. The literature recommended a qualitative phenomenological design to address research problems that required exploring research participants to learn more about a situation when variables were unknown, and the literature offered none or little information about a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). For this purpose, the current study used a qualitative method and phenomenological design. A qualitative method applies when an investigator seeks to understand perceptions of individuals forming a convenient sample of study, and to elaborate pertinent theories drawn from perspectives described in face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2005). In qualitative research, investigators gather data in the form of words and analyze collected data using common themes to describe a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The alternative to a qualitative method is a quantitative approach. A quantitative method enables the use of a scientific approach to gather specific data objectively measured or expressed in numbers using statistical assessments (Cresswell, 2005, 2007a; Newman, 2003). The intention in using quantitative research is to test theories and hypotheses to generalize results (Simon, 2006). A quantitative method examines relationships between variables and differences between groups, which aligns better with a problem that requires the use of numerals to quantify data (Creswell, 2005).

The nature of the problem in the current study did not lead to an inquiry into the relationship between variables, for the latter objective quantitative tools exist to make the

application of a correlational design adequate (Anderson, Sweeney, & Williams, 2006; Creswell, 2005). The nature of the problem and the research question in the current study was context specific and did not lead to an inquiry into the relationship between variables (Anderson, Sweeney, & Williams, 2006; Creswell, 2005).

Quantitative research does not adequately capture insights of participants' experiences; the approach is limited by narrowly constructed variables and requires pervasive access to research sites (Berg, 2004). The phenomenological design permits the investigator to be flexible, and adapt to the direction of the investigation when the data collected warrants a change (Moustakas, 1994; Neuman, 2006). The subject in the current study involved exploring, understanding perspectives and developing theories rather than examining relationships between variables and differences between groups, which aligns better with the nature of a problem using numeric data (Creswell, 2005).

Alternate qualitative methods carried the following limitations: the designs were more normative and did not adequately address the needs for a context sensitive basis of understanding marketing loss of influence and hierarchical respect to lead (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Slack & Parent, 2006). Ethnography is costly to conduct, and presents difficulties in access to research sites (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). The purpose of the research in the current study was not to generate new theory rendering ground theory inappropriate (Berg, 2004). The potential for researcher's bias, anecdotal data, and unrestricted access requirement of action research made the approach inappropriate for the current study (Berg, 2004).

The difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches lies in the meaning of actions, language, and beliefs through which human participants express reality (Creswell, 2002). The intention in using a phenomenological design with this qualitative study was to seek

an understanding of the perceptions and perspectives of participants about a given situation (Creswell, 2007b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; van Kaam, 1966). A phenomenological design was in alignment with investigations that intend to explore the lived experiences of people. The current qualitative phenomenological study informed through exploring and describing lived experiences of managerial employees about the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead organizational change and improve performance.

A qualitative phenomenological research approach seemed suitable to seek answers to the research question what is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance, and address the stated problem: the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change, and positively contribute to firm's performance. The nature of the problem and the research question in this study were context-specific and did not lead to an inquiry into the relationship between variables (Anderson, Sweeney, & Williams, 2006; Creswell, 2005). Exploring, understanding perspectives, developing theories, gathering data in the form of words, and analyzing the data using common themes to describe a phenomenon were identified steps inherent to a qualitative phenomenological design (Creswell 2007a, 2007b; Denzing & Lincoln, 2005). Phenomenological research seeks to describe rather than explain, and is effective in exposing the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives (Lester, 1999).

A qualitative phenomenological design was appropriate for a study that needed to rely on lived-experiences testimonies of participants to gain an understanding about them, and flexibly acquire knowledge from individual perceptions and experiences. The registration, recognition, and interpretation of memorized sensory experiences become perception, and the continuity of having sensory experiences leads to knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The current qualitative

phenomenological study relied on the perception and experience of managerial employees, who participated, and was the appropriate method to acquire knowledge around these managers' perceptions and experiences.

When researchers believe their study could explore multiple possible realities perceived and constructed by different people, the investigative approach should be qualitative (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews for the selected method and design facilitated study implementation within an expected reasonable period. The facts that participants worked in local companies; a convenient sample size seemed accessible and manageable by one investigator, and data access and collection appeared viable.

Research Question

A general research question, according to Moustakas (1994), serves as a guide to both researcher and participants in the process of gathering information and in the reduction process. The general research question asked as part of the current study is: What is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance? The interview questions provided an opportunity to the participants to express themselves in an open and neutral environment (Hemphill-Pearson & Hunter, 1997). The research question guided the kind of data intended for collection and restricted the interpretation and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

Moustakas (1994) suggested words to use in developing interview questions to draw concise wording and open comments. The use of the word "how" is more limiting than "what" in open-ended questions, and the word "perceives" motivates participants to give their individual perceptions about questions related to participants' personal experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The word "describes" stimulates sharing details associated with the question and personal

experiences in an open-ended question structure, the word "experience" motivates participants to share views, and opinions of personal experiences related to the postulated question (Moustakas, 1994).

The research question guided the framework of this study, which is to understand from the perceptions and perspectives of a convenient sample of managers, information about the impact of the loss of marketing influence to lead change, gain support for change implementation, and improve the performance of a group of companies in scattered industries functioning in South Florida. An understanding of the lived experiences of qualified managerial employees in health care, health insurance, banking, real estate, financing, and medical devices and instruments provided insights about the research theme. The outcomes may guide senior leadership and functional management in their assessment of marketing contribution to competitive advantage and performance.

Population, Sampling, Informed Consent, Confidentiality

Population

Personal interviews were conducted with a convenient sample of 15 participants, working full time for firms in health care, medical products and equipment, health insurance, real estate, banking, and finance operating in South Florida. The study population was comprised of individuals in managerial positions, who had interacted with marketing in situations of organizational change as a criterion for their selection as participants. Only participants who completed the interview and approved the transcriptions were included in the study.

The investigator knew professionally some of the participants who were contacted at their homes via their personal e-mail and telephone, and who were invited to participate in this study, and presented with an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix A) for signing. Other sources to

recruit possible participants used were professional associations to which the author belongs. The author's involvement in community services provided opportunities to obtain referrals for professionals whom were contacted later at home by mail or personal e-mail.

A convenient sample was drawn from chosen professionals who met the selection criterion attempting to gather 15 qualified participants from scattered industries. The industries sought were health care, medical products and equipment, health insurance, real estate, banking, and finance. The investigator's relationship with some of the participants was strictly professional, acquired through educational and professional associations. The interviews were conducted in the participant's home and in public places ensuring a distance away from other people to maximize participant's privacy and to limit interruptions and distractions.

Sampling Frame

The type of sampling was purposive and non-probability. A purposive sample required from the individuals who were selected to meet a proposed criteria. The proposed criteria required a *yes* answer to a question: Have you had any interaction experiences with the marketing function in times of organizational change? The criteria design illustrated a form of self-selection.

A self-selection process increased the inclusion of participants who truly recognized their interaction with marketing in times of organizational changes. Such selection allowed capturing rich descriptions within the estimated research time-line and sample boundaries. Individuals, who believed they could qualify and identify with the experience described, validated the belief in having participated in an organizational change process (Patton, 2002). Non-probability sampling satisfied the investigator's intention to define the essence of the experience of marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance (Patton, 2002). Non-

probability was the appropriate sampling type because the specific experience was an elusive concept (Patton, 2002).

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was the approach used to sample a population of interest from whom data were collected in 15 semi-structured taped interviews asking consistently the same questions, and taking notes to capture body language that cannot be recorded (Moustakas, 1994). Purposive sampling is a method "used when there are clear rationale or criteria for selecting participants for the sample group to be studied or tracked" (Champion, 2002, p. 2), and could reduce bias within a purposeful category (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) stated, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 244). Creswell (1998) suggested, "Long interviews with up to 10 people" (p. 65) for a qualitative study. Boyd (2001) added that in a qualitative study thematic saturation could be reached with two to 10 participants.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) posited that a typical sample size for a qualitative research study is between five to 25 participants. Substantive research from doctoral theses and between 500 to 1,000 research reports showed that a variation of a phenomenon reached thematic saturation at around 20 participants; indicating that new constructs do not emerge in qualitative research studies with more than 20 (Sandberg, 2000). The projected sample size for the current study aligned with the range suggested for a qualitative phenomenological study by Cresswell (2005) and Leedy and Ormrod (2001).

Informed Consent

A form titled Informed Consent was hand delivered to participants' homes including a return self-addressed envelope for remitting a signed consent form. The consent form explained the reasons and goals of the study, and described the actions and activities of participants (see

Appendix A). Participants were asked to confirm their consent for recording the interview by checking a *yes* box placed in the informed consent form (see Appendix A).

The participants were also required to place their initials after specific statements in the informed consent form related to the interview. Each participant was assigned a numbered letter code identifier. Participants were required to read and sign the consent form to ensure disclosure of confidentiality and mutual agreement of terms before data collection took place.

Only full time managerial employees who responded *yes* to the question: have you had any interaction experiences with the marketing function in times of organizational change, were asked to sign the consent form. The former question was stated in the introduction of the consent form. For prospects who indicated an interest in participating; an interviewing schedule form was sent to confirm meeting date and time. Participants were reminded of the interview date and time by phone and via their private email address to ensure participants availability to attend the scheduled interview.

Possible participants who wished to meet in their workplace for a face-to-face interview signed a Permit to Use Premises form (see Appendix B). In addition, those participants who desired to refer peers for possible participation were presented with a Participant Referral Form to add referral information (see Appendix C). For all possible participants the rules were the same, the informed consent emphasized that participation was strictly voluntary, and participants were able to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to him or herself or to their workplace position. The collected information was confidential and albeit the outcomes of this study were going to be published; participants' name or professionally associated identity were not identifiable in the study, participants were offered access to the final dissertation.

The consent forms stayed in the investigator's possession, and were not shared with any other person or group. Participants reviewed and approved the transcription for their inclusion in the study. An overview of the study by email or by phone was an option for participants upon request. The investigator was current with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification for the protection of human research subjects.

The possibilities that subjects will encounter stress, psychological, social, physical, or legal risks other than those ordinarily encountered in their daily lives were minimal. No physical or psychological examinations or any other tests were be required or conducted during the research process. Visual or auditory stimuli, chemical substances, or other measures were not needed.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity were essentials to promote honesty and peace of mind in in-depth interviews with participants of this research study. The selected participants were assigned a code to ensure confidentiality of collected data. Through this step, future participants were ensured of personal anonymity and confidentiality of the information shared during voluntary interviews. The investigator conducting the study transcribed from interview audio tapes. Electronic files of face-to-face interviews were protected using Avast® computer antivirus software on one laptop computer. Access to the electronic files was password-protected for a single user.

All the confidential documents including electronic files, recordings, transcriptions, and hand notes were retained and were going to be secured for a period of three years in a locked cabinet in the investigator's home, and then shredded, and destroyed. Confidentiality and anonymity disclosures were included in a letter requesting participation (see Appendix A). The

author signed a Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix F). In the event the author was in need of an APA editor, a professional for APA editing must sign a third party Non-disclosure Agreement (see Appendix H). At the outset of the interview, the consent form to act as a participant was reviewed to ensure cooperation was encouraged, and participants were motivated toward a positive personal interaction and robust descriptions (Marshall & Gretchen, 1999).

Geographic Location

The current study sought to explore and understand marketing loss of influence to affect decision-making in the introduction of change and its implementation to improve performance in a group of diverse firms in health care, medical products and equipment, health insurance, real estate, banking, and finance operating in South Florida. South Florida is a hub for diverse manufacturers, service companies, and distributors (Paton, Sommer, & Black, 2008). According to Paton et al. (2008), the South Florida area leads in health care businesses in the country, every health care industry participant wants a share of the South Florida Health Care market.

South Florida market appeal increases levels of competition and competence, and consequently the cost of doing business and size of marketing investments for manufacturers, service business, and distribution firms operating in markets for medical products and equipment, pharmaceuticals, health insurance, and health care (Paton, Sommer, & Black, 2008). The aged population and baby boomer generation starting retirement point toward potential increases in population of Florida, this growth trend will increase demand for banking, finance, and real estate marketing activities. Florida already ranked second nationwide in medical device establishments with more than 400 FDA-registered device companies in the state (Paton et al., 2008). According to a study from World City and the School of Business of the University of Miami (2009), South Florida multinational firms oversaw more than $ 221 billion in annual

revenues, a 9% increase year over year. The 1,146 multinationals represented 54 nations, employed 129,000 workers in South Florida, and oversaw 605,000 workers worldwide

Data Collection

The investigator is the primary instrument in data collection rather than some inanimate mechanism (Eisner, 1991; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). In qualitative research, the process includes several data collection considerations. The data was to be reported primarily in the participants' words rather than in numbers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). Open-ended questions enriched the collected data recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the Nvivo 9® software.

In qualitative research, data is interpreted focusing more on the particulars of the phenomena rather than on generalizations. The meanings and interpretations of collected data were negotiated with the participants because it was the participants' realities that the investigator attempted to construct (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The subtle differences in meaning, opinion, and attitudes of the participants about multiple realities were expressed in tacit ways; qualitative research relies on intuitive and tacit knowledge to value the data rather than quantifying it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Phenomena are unfolded and the essence of the lived-experiences becomes reality when the research process brings meaning and understanding to the experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

The interpretation of the collected data enhanced the investigator's understanding of the lived experiences of 15 managerial employees pertaining to the loss of marketing leadership influence to lead change, gain cross-functional support for change implementation, and improve the performance of a group of diverse companies operating in scattered industries in South Florida. An understanding of the lived experiences of 15 functional managers provided insights about the loss of marketing leadership to influence strategic decisions across functions. In this

study, the investigator requested from individuals who qualified to join a convenient sample of selected professionals. A combined informed consent and invitation (see Appendix J) to participate form were hand delivered to the homes of potential participants with a self-addressed envelope to return the signed Information to Consent form (see Appendix A). An interview was scheduled at a time and place convenient to the participants who responded accepting participation in the current study (see Appendix I). The investigator continued to contact people until similar themes emerged indicating data saturation. "In qualitative research, the inquirer uses more of an open-ended stance and often changes the phenomenon being studied or at least allows it to emerge during the study" (Creswell, 2005, p. 133).

Permission was obtained from participants to use a digital recorder to tape the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). The investigator listened and took notes during the interview process, paying extra attention to subtle and meaningful cues in participants' expressions, questions, and occasional digressions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The investigator conducting the study transcribed the data. The author made sure confidentiality was guaranteed by not using participants' real names or personal information. The investigator planned steps to provide a relaxed and comfortable interview environment (see Appendix I) that allowed participants to discuss their situations freely without pressure. Each participant was able to examine the transcribed interviews for clarity and accuracy, approve it, and add or subtract parts of it.

The fundamental steps after reviewing the audiotaped interviews and notes began by developing a written transcript (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Transcriptions were processed using Nvivo 9® software to ensure the preciseness of captured data. From the gathered data, the

investigator identified statements associated with the research theme and extracted relevant phrases or sentences that reflected specific thoughts.

The identified statements were grouped into categories that reflected various meanings of the experienced phenomenon. Divergent perspectives were identified from the experiences of different people about the same phenomenon. The identified material provided the investigator with assorted meanings to assemble a description of the phenomenon as participants had experience it (Leedy & Ormond, 2005).

Instrumentation

The instrumentation proposed for the current study consisted of a phenomenological study with in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with selected participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The investigator was the primary instrument for collecting descriptive data in a qualitative phenomenological study and is an assumption for the current study (Creswell, 2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The potential participants were managers working full time for a group of diverse firms in health care, medical products and equipment, health insurance, real estate, banking, and finance operating in South Florida.

The data collected during the interviews aided in the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In the process of collecting data because the investigator has experienced the phenomenon under study, the investigator's personal feelings and perceptions were set aside to suspend possible influence from the researcher over the perceptions and feelings of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Consistency in repeating the same questions for each interview while setting aside the investigator's perceptions, feelings, and previous knowledge ensured that only participants' feelings and perceptions were uncovered. Suspending previous knowledge, bias, and feelings of the investigator is a bracketing process known as *epoche* (Moustakas, 1994).

Moustakas stated, "*Epoche* does not eliminate everything, does not deny the reality of everything, does not doubt everything *only the natural attitude*, the biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis for truth and reality" (p. 85).

Moustakas (1994) argued that qualitative phenomenological methods aim to understand common bonds in a phenomenon and include the recognition of the value of qualitative methods, the focus on a holistic experience, a definition of the meaning of phenomena, and the ability to understand experiences through the participants' perceptions (Husserl, 1981; van Kaam, 1966). The design of the questions asked in the interviews aimed to encourage participants to talk freely about a theme without acknowledging they were providing a particular answer (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Broad questions facilitated substantive and vital descriptions of the participant experience of the event (Moustakas, 1994). The interview questions (see Appendix D) for this study allowed understanding the lived experiences of managerial employees pertaining to the loss of marketing leadership influence to lead change, gain cross-functional support for change implementation, and improve the performance of a group of diverse companies in scattered industries operating in South Florida.

Interview Questions. The investigator guided by the research question, what is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance consistently asked without alterations the following questions to all participants: The first two questions attempted to capture managerial employees' experiences with the organizational structure:

1. Based on your experience, how would you describe the organization and its culture in your role as a functional manager?

2. Based on your experience, what examples best describe interactions within your own function and with other functions when responding to changing conditions.

3. Based on your experience, how would you describe the perceived value from inter-functional collaboration that promotes change, its implementation, and adoption to improve performance?

4. Based on your experience, what factors influence change across functions?

5. Based on your experience, how do you perceive the image of marketing leadership and respect within organizational functions and before senior management?

6. Based on your experience, how would you describe marketing influence in the decision-making process of functions facing changing conditions to improve performance?

7. Based on your experience, what factors could be associated with winning cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes to improve performance?

8. Based on your experience, what would be the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and implement change to improve performance?

9. Based on your experience, what suggestions would you make to measure marketing positive contribution to organizational change, change implementation, and improving organizational performance?

The following question was designed for the field test collaborators: What additional interview questions would you suggest that might improve the current study? Posing this last question to experts helped to identify issues that improved the questionnaire and overall research study.

Demographic questions informed on the type of individuals that participated in the study. The following questions provided insights about the educational and professional experience of

the participants. The combined information aided in enhancing the understanding of the

population sample to be studied.

Demographic Questions:

10. How many years have you worked as a manager?

1) Less than 1 year   2) 1-5 years   3) 5-10 years   4) more than 10 years

11. What is the level of education attained?

1) Associate   2) Bachelor   3)Master   4) Doctoral

The addition of a gender category was based on observation during the face-to-face interview.

Field Test. Field-testing interview questions helped to detect flaws and weaknesses in

them; a field study is a term used in social research as a feasibility study or trial run for a

proposed investigation (Cooper & Schindler, 2007; Simon, 2006). Field testing ensured that

information obtained in a questionnaire is proper, consistent, and the wording is appropriate for

the audience (Cooper & Schindler, 2007; Simon, 2006). Albeit, Moustakas (1994) attested that

field testing interview questions may not present discrepancies for interpretation because the

individual participants' lived-experiences are different and unique. Field-testing ensured the

interview questions made sense to the participants, and participants were able without further

clarification respond to questions about their experiences (Cooper & Schindler, 2007; Simon,

2006).

Requesting field testing participants to suggest additional interview questions to enhance

theme development and selecting a small sample of test participants (Simon, 2006) were

arguments supported by Cooper and Schindler (2007). The authors recommended the use of

participant experts to define the field test group, to protect the study population, and minimize

the risk of exhausting the study population. The current study used a small sample of three

individual experts for field-testing the interview questions. The purpose of the last participation question was to obtain suggestions from the field test experts; the field test results consisted of described experiences or perceptions similar to anticipated responses. The clarity of interview questions increased with the process of rewriting interview questions.

Data Analysis

"Data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all of the phases of a qualitative project and the one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature" (Thorne, 2000, p. 1). In quantitative research, questions, and hypotheses do not change during a study whereas in qualitative research the research questions may change based on the responses of the participants (Creswell, 2005). This approach makes quantitative research more deductive and qualitative more inductive.

Deductive and inductive reasoning are two methodical components used in data analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Deductive reasoning is an "if-this –then that", a logic approach aligned with quantitative studies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 34) and informally considered a top-down approach. Inductive reasoning is a bottom-up approach aligned with qualitative research methods, which allows the generalization of concepts over complete categories of objects or situations from information drawn from particular situations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Put simply, deductive reasoning involves moving from generalities to specifics using a series of reasoned statements (Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2005). Inductive reasoning takes a series of specific observations and attempts to expand into a more general theory. Inductive reasoning is used when people want to make sense of a series of observations such as in qualitative research explorations; informally inductive reasoning is considered a bottom-up approach (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Neuman, 2006).

Data analysis encompasses the choice of design, the details in collected data, and the understanding of different data forms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Data analysis is a process in the exploration of a central phenomenon that begins with an idea to explore before gathering data (Creswell, 2005). Questions and purposes may change because the qualitative inquirer allows the participants to set the direction, and in doing so, the investigator learns the participants' views rather than imposing his or her view about the research situation (Creswell. 2005). In the current study, the central component of both the purpose statement and the research question was the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2006). Qualitative research is an exploration process rather than establishing correlations between two or more concepts as found in quantitative research (Neuman, 2006). The open-ended stance of the inquirer permits that comparisons and relationships may emerge as the data analysis advances (Creswell, 2005).

A database created from collected data is not sufficient to conduct a qualitative study. To transform raw data into new knowledge, the investigator must engage in active and demanding analytic processes throughout all phases of the research. Qualitative data may be collected for quantitative studies because is not exclusive to the domain of qualitative research. Many quantitative studies employ open-ended questions in surveys, semi-structured interviews or other form of non-numerical forms of data.

The distinction of the data between quantitative and qualitative studies is the set of assumptions, principles, and values about truth and reality associated with both methods. Quantitative research uses the scientific method to build a more complete understanding of reality and to discover truths that exist in the world. Qualitative researchers on the other hand, focus on uncovering knowledge about how people think and feel about the events that affect

them, rather than in making judgments about whether their thoughts and feelings are valid (Thorne, 2000).

In qualitative research, data analysis involves the use of inductive reasoning to generate ideas and strategies to sort and organize sets of qualitative data (Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2006). The latter process integrated in computer software is not a replacement for the intellectual and conceptualizing process of the investigator. Data collection and analysis processes tend to be concurrent, new analytic steps inform and may alter the process of data collection. Reciprocally new collected data informs the analytic process, which may make qualitative data analysis not entirely distinguishable from actual data (Thorne, 2000). The theoretical approach used by investigators, the strategies employed to collect or reconstruct data, and the understanding that an investigator develops what is necessary to answer the research question are analytic processes, which influence data, and its analysis (Thorne, 2000).

Selection Appropriateness. The current study used a phenomenological approach rather than grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative analysis. Instead of finding patterns and commonalities within human experiences, phenomenology attempts to uncover and describe the essential nature of the lived experiences of research participants, in depth and detail that could be captured from a systematic, reflective, and exhaustive research process (Moustakas, 1994). To differentiate phenomenology from constant comparative methods, which allow investigators to use pre-existing or emergent theory against which to test all new pieces of data collected; bracketing in phenomenology challenges the investigator to set aside all preconceptions, leading the inquirer to work inductively with the data to generate new descriptions and conceptualizations (Moustakas, 1994; Thorne, 2000).

Data Analysis Techniques. The interviews contents were analyzed rigorously in the current study using the following steps defined in the van Kaam method (1966) modified by Moustakas (1994):

1.   Bracketing: to capture socially constructed realities Moustakas (1994) recommended setting aside personal judgment or bias. *Epoche* is a reference to the process of bracketing (Moustakas, 1994). The investigators suspend personal judgment or bias bracketing themselves from the rest of the world (Koch, 1995). The investigator's adoption of a not-knowing stance underlines the skills to develop to learn about other people's perspectives (Keenan, 2004).

2.   Horizonalization is a process in which living experiences are classified into groups, transcriptions have equal value, and thematic clusters are drawn from interview responses classified but not interpreted.

3.   Elimination is determining the relevance of statements and eliminating those outside the following criteria: the ability to understand and label the participant's expressions; the identification and elimination of applicable themes and clusters; validation and construct of meaning from the thematic clusters.

4.   Determination of the actual themes: the inquirer has to acknowledge preconceptions before determining the actual themes by writing down personal ideas, assumptions, or knowledge regarding the research topic.

The investigator must keep in mind bracketing, and reduce data to be understood in terms of its similar and dissimilar components, motives, validation, and descriptions in text and

structure, which might lead to find, and examine possible meanings (Moustakas, 1994). The modified van Kaam (1966) approach was the appropriate method for the current study, its design provided a vehicle to explore and value the meaning of events experienced and described by the observed participants. The modified van Kaam approach "seeks to disclose and elucidate the phenomena of behavior as they manifest themselves in the perceived immediacy" (1966, p. 15).

The modified van Kaam methodology helped the investigator to focus on the perceptions and descriptions delivered by observed participants without subjective interpretation of the investigator (Moustakas, 1994). The choice of a phenomenological approach was twofold because included the identification of a phenomenon in a workplace where contextual perceptions had taken place, and illuminated knowledge about the purpose of the study (Moustakas, 1994).

The data analysis entailed the following steps: (a) organize the data, (b) review the data, (c) code the data, (d) describe the data, (e) identify emerging themes from the data, (f) and connect the emerging themes (Creswell, 2003). The data that was obtained from semi-structured interviews and observations was stored, catalogued, and coded using Nvivo 9®. Nvivo9 ® is a recommended tool used in many qualitative phenomenological studies. Creswell (2003) recommended computer software programs rather than hand analysis to manage significant amount of qualitative data. The Nvivo 9® computer software allowed streamlining of data analysis, facilitated understanding of unstructured data to form conclusions, and added validity to the results of the study (Morse, 2006; Roberts Priest, & Traynor, 2006).

The qualitative data analysis software assisted in ascertaining themes regarding the understanding of marketing leadership loss of influence to lead decision-making processes, implement change, and improve performance. The investigator intended to understand how

environment influences behavior from perceptions and perspectives of managers in the context of diverse organizations in scattered industries (van Kaam, 1966). The examination of lived experiences revealed relevant insights about the loss and possible recovery of marketing influence as a strong function to lead organizational change. A function that could maintain a market orientation culture closely associated with sustaining marketing performance (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

<div align="center">**Reliability and Validity**</div>

Qualitative research is an investigative approach that explores, discovers, and explains phenomena. Underlying these activities, a qualitative phenomenological research design allows the investigator to reach an understanding about the attributes of human experience, which include intuition, essence, perception, meaning, knowledge, context, themes, and patterns (Newman, 2006; Creswell 2007b). Moustakas (1994) stated, "For Husserl, as for Kant and Descartes, knowledge based on intuition and essence precedes empirical knowledge" (p. 26). The role of the phenomenologist is to enter a research study through the *epoche* process, encouraged by a desire and readiness to listen and hear what is present without biases and preconceived notions, which may raise barriers to understand or prevent meaning from being uncovered (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Moustakas, 1994).

For the current study, qualitative analysis provided an opportunity to generate inductively new knowledge and construct reality. The investigator may be seem as a *bricoleur,* a maker of quilts who interprets a set of reality representations pieced together to fit the specifics of a complex situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). "The quilter stitches, edits, and puts a slice of reality together" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5).

Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Flick, 2002). "Triangulation or the use of multiple methods is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation" (Flick, 2002, p. 227). "Triangulation is an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Flick, 2002, p. 229). Objective reality can never be captured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). "Qualitative research is many things to many people. Its essence is twofold: a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter, and an ongoing critique of the politics, and methods of post positivism" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 13). The constructivist paradigm starts out exploring more than one reality perceived and constructed by different people, and gathers and interprets subjective knowledge from participants through their meanings, opinions, and attitudes expressed in tacit ways about many realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Throughout this approach, phenomena are unfolded, and the essence of the lived-experiences becomes reality; the research process brings meaning, and understanding to participants lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

In multiple realities, reliability relies on consistency of context, transferability, dependability, and confirmation. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the latter sets of terms replace the quantitative (positivist) reliance for validity and reliability. Exploring, discovering, and explaining phenomena are activities of qualitative research; the results from these activities may support validation for the proposed investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Reliability is strong when a researcher can recreate similar contexts with results that show similarities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Through bracketing, the investigator addresses bias issues, identifying, and journaling preconceived assumptions regarding the research topic.

In qualitative research, validity is closely associated with reliability and defined as the "accuracy, meaningfulness, and credibility of the research project as a whole" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 103). In multiple realities, "credibility, dependability, confirmability, verification, and transferability may be used instead of the term validity" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 106). Some research activities that investigators could use to ensure validity include extensive experience; thick and rich descriptions; negative case analysis; and observations from participants and colleagues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Research protocols that could strengthen consistency, reliability, and validity suggested the use of the same questions in all interviews; make available a typed copy or electronic file of the transcript to each respondent for review, and provide feedback for potential adjustments (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

According to Creswell (1994), "qualitative researchers have no single stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability in qualitative studies" (p. 157). The explanation is that qualitative studies are specific for a particular phenomenon and are not applicable to other contexts. The accuracy and truthfulness of the respondents sharing lived experiences is what counts toward validity of the data in a qualitative research project (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Rigor is the use of discipline, a scrupulous adherence to detail and strict accuracy; for many individuals these properties equate the idea of validity (Twycross & Shields, 2005). Rigor emphasizes the need for "credibility, transferability, and auditability" (Twycross & Shields, 2005, p. 36). The validity of a study is an intrinsic component of the tools used in the study correlated with the effectiveness of the tools used to measure the phenomenon of interest (Robert et al., 2006). Two critical aspects of validity are internal and external validity.

Internal Validity. The design of the study, and the data collected and analyzed can help the investigator draw accurate conclusions about cause-and-effect and other relationships within the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The extent to which this process is possible defines the internal validity of the outcomes. Comparative analysis could be conducted for internal validity, using triangulation. Triangulation is "the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or researchers in the study of a topic … and assists with the consistency, comprehensiveness, and robustness of the study" (Roberts et al., 2006, p. 44).

In this study, the triangulation of data from interviews, observations, and the examination of organizational documents facilitated the comparison of results with the literature reviewed. From the literature review, the examination of published information, and the themes identified from the interviews through data collected, coded and categorized similarities and differences were found. The similarities and differences found between literature review information and emerging dominant themes increased internal validity supported by the accuracy of the data from the perspective of respondents (Creswell, 2003).

The process of recording interviews, transcribing recordings, and providing transcripts to respondents for review and feedback for potential adjustments, added a measure of validity into the study. Executing the transcriptions and participants' review within a few days from the interview increased accuracy in respondents' feedback (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Sorin-Peters, 2004). Internal validity however could have been affected by conflicting time schedules and interruptions from other people or unforeseen circumstances, which could have influenced the interview.

Purposive sampling minimized potential eventualities. The investigator made an effort to include an equal number of male and female participants in the convenient sample. The

investigator attempted to secure a public place that was quiet away from nearby people to ensure participants were comfortable sharing an accurate account of their lived experiences.

External Validity. The external validity of a research study is the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the study can be generalized to other contexts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The purpose and research question for the current study is specific to the loss of marketing influence and the marketing function's ability to lead change and improve performance in a group of diverse companies operating in scattered industries in South Florida. The specificity of the study and participants' function did not allow generalization of possible findings. However, external validity addresses applicability of research outcomes, the more relevant the results and conclusions the greater the external validity the study may exhibit (Silva, 2008; Twycross & Shields, 2005). Therefore, given that, external validity requires only that results be relevant to analogous settings; using a real life setting and a purposeful homogeneous sample from that setting supports the validity of the study (Otto, 2005).

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Summary

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The current study proposed to conduct a qualitative research using a phenomenological design to explore, describe, and explain the loss of marketing influence to lead change and improve performance in a group of diverse companies operating in scattered industries in South Florida. The proposed sample population comprised 15 managerial employees working full time in health care, health insurance, real estate, banking, finance and medical devices and instruments. The proposed data collection strategy consisted of semi-structured face-to-face open-ended interviews with a convenient sample of employees who volunteered to participate in the study (Creswell, 2003). The investigator ensured participants of confidentiality of the information and anonymity.

The current study used a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). The proposed data analysis consisted of coding and categorizing information to determine common themes emerging from the participants' responses (Creswell, 1994; Marshall & Gretchen, 1999). The validation from participants and the use of a computer software program added to the reliability and validity of the outcomes from studying marketing loss of influence in the workplace (Robert et al., 2006). Chapter 4 reports the results of the data from the proposed study.

Other suggested research design's steps include purposive sampling, data collection, and data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Purposeful sampling is a method "used when there are clear rationale or criteria for selecting participants for the sample group to be studied or tracked" (Champion, 2002, p. 2), and could reduce bias within a purposeful category (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling was the approach used to sample a population of interest from whom data could be gathered in semi-structured taped interviews; asking the same questions and taking notes to capture body language that cannot be recorded (Moustakas, 1994). Patton (2002) stated, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 244).

Creswell (1998) suggested, "Long interviews with up to 10 people" (p. 65) for a qualitative study. Boyd (2001) argued that in a qualitative study thematic saturation could be reached with two to 10 participants. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) argued that a typical sample size for a qualitative research study is between five to 25 participants. A convenient sample of 15 participants met Leedy and Ormrod (2001) and Creswell's (2005) guidelines on typical qualitative research studies. Substantive research from doctoral theses and between 500 to 1,000 research reports showed that a "variation of a phenomenon reached saturation at around 20

research participants" indicating new constructs do not emerge in qualitative research studies with more than 20 (Sandberg, 2000, p. 13).

Chapter 3 covered an ample discussion of the research method, the design appropriateness, population sample, and rationale for sampling, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Reliability and internal and external validity issues were addressed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the results of the current study and includes detailed descriptions of themes and patterns that emerged during the analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of 15 managerial employees pertaining to the loss of marketing influence to lead change readiness, gain inter-functional support for change implementation, and improve the level of performance of a group of firms in diverse industries operating in South Florida. Chapter 4 describes in essence, the perceptions and lived experiences of the study participants from functional and cross-functional interactions during conditions of internal and external changes. Changes in which marketing influence had or could have had an impact in leading them, implementing them, and contributing to improve the organizational performance of the South Florida firms that participated in the study. The analysis of conducted interviews with a convenient sample of respondents using a questionnaire revealed influential factors pertaining to the loss of marketing leadership in promoting change, implementing it and improving organizational performance.

Chapter 4 includes the results of this research study. Textural descriptions in Chapter 4 show specific themes and patterns found that emerged during the inductive analysis of collected data. The sections that comprise Chapter 4 include the research question, data collection review, data analysis and findings, summary, and conclusion.

Research Question

Chapter 4 reports the results of semi-structured face-to-face interviews conducted with the study participants using an open-ended questionnaire with nine items pertaining to the research question: What is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance? The research question guided the kind of data intended for collection and restricted the interpretation and analysis of the data (Creswell,

2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). A general research question according to Moustakas (1994) serves as a guide to both investigator and participants in the process of gathering information and the reduction process. The question design sets the activity mode and mood for open and honest sharing of lived experiences as seen through the eyes of the participant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The semi-structured interview questions provided an opportunity for participants to express themselves in an open and informal environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

The research question was intended to support appropriately the purpose of this investigation, and to gain an understanding from the experiential perceptions of managers about a central phenomenon; the loss of marketing influence. The type of influence needed to lead change, gain cross-functional support for change implementation, and improve performance in a group of selected companies that participated in the study. An understanding of the lived experiences of managerial employees provided insights about the loss of marketing leadership influence in strategic decisions, change readiness, and inter-functional support for change implementation.

Chapter 4 reports the results of this qualitative phenomenological study using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). The aforementioned method includes the following steps:

1. Horizonalization: Listing and develop preliminary grouping of applicable experiences
2. Reduction and elimination of irrelevant data to determine invariant constituents of the central phenomenon
3. Grouping invariant constituents into themes of the lived experiences that describe the phenomenon

4. Validation: verification of invariable constituents and themes against the participants' scripts for applicability and compatibility

5. Construct individual textural descriptions of the experience using validates invariant constituents and themes

6. Prepare for each participant a structural description of the experience based on the textural descriptions

7. Construct individual textural-structural descriptions of the phenomenon that explain the significance and essence of the experience

Chapter 4 exhibits specific themes that emerged from the collected and analyzed data and the patterns discovered during the process. The tracking of the data analysis was conducted with Nvivo 9® software. The responses from the study participants contributed to answer effectively the central research question.

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Data Collection Review

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Participants

Three professional managers who had experienced organizational changes participated as individual experts for pilot testing the interview questions. Pilot testing could ensure interview questions make sense to the participants, and participants are able to respond to questions about their experiences without further clarification (Cooper & Schindler, 2007; Simon, 2006). The purpose of the last interview question (see Appendix D) was to obtain suggestions from the pilot test experts; the pilot test results indicated that no changes to the open-ended questions and questionnaire format were required. The pilot test results described experiences and perceptions similar to responses obtained in the taped interviews.

Moustakas (1994) attested that pilot testing interview questions do not present discrepancies for interpretation because the individual participants' lived-experiences are different and unique. Participants answered the nine open-ended questions posed completely and appropriately without signs of ambiguity or uncertainty. Investigators do not need to make changes to pilot tests when participants appropriately complete questions asked without confusion or uncertainty (Neuman, 2003).

The selection of participants using purposive sampling allows choosing "information rich" individuals and behaviors to gain greater insights into the research question (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p. 264). The investigator used purposive sampling to select participants beginning on October 1, 2011 and ending on December 10, 2011. Hand delivered communications to the homes of 20 potential participants working in South Florida included a letter of invitation (see Appendix J), an informed consent form to participate (see Appendix A), and an interview questionnaire (see Appendix E). A permission to use the premises was sent via e-mail to one candidate with whom it was applicable (see Appendix B). A return self-address envelope was provided to return the signed Information to Consent form.

Participants who truly recognized having interactions with marketing in times of organizational changes contributed to a self-selection process by assenting to a qualifying question: have you had any interaction experiences with the marketing function in times of organizational change? Self-selection enhances capturing rich descriptions within research time-lines and sample boundaries, and validate beliefs of participants for qualification and identification with the experiences they describe (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling is a fitting method when criteria for selecting participants are clear and specific (Champion, 2002). Patton (2002) posited that purposive sampling reduces bias in a purposeful category.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) posited that a typical sample size for a qualitative research study is between five to 25 participants. Substantive research from doctoral theses and between 500 to 1,000 research reports showed that a variation of a phenomenon reached thematic saturation at around 20 participants; indicating that new constructs do not emerge in qualitative research studies with more than 20 (Sandberg, 2000). The projected sample size for the current study aligned with the range suggested for a qualitative phenomenological study by Creswell (2005), Leedy and Ormrod (2001), and Sandberg (2000), although Patton (2002) stated, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 244).

After the response-waiting period, 15 individuals who qualified confirmed their participation in the study. The final sample size was still within the boundaries argued by Leedy and Ormrod (2001), Patton (2002), and Sandberg, (2000). Despite the wish to conduct 20 interviews time and cost were limiting factors in the decision to complete 15. Participant demographics in Table 2 show the sample diversity across attributes that enrich the study.

Table 2

Demographic Overview (N=15)

Co-researcher Current Managerial Function	Code	Gender	Education	Years of Experience	Industry	South Florida County
Customer Service Manager	R1	M	Bachelor	5-10	Banking	Dade
Operation Manager	R2	M	Bachelor	More than 10	Medical Equipment	Dade & Broward
Financial Manager	R3	M	Bachelor	More than 10	Finance	Dade

Nursing Officer	R4	F	Master	More than 10	Health Care	Broward
Marketing Manager	R5	F	Master	More than 10	Real Estate	Broward
Systems Manager	R6	M	Master	More than 10	Finance	Dade
Customer Service	R7	F	Bachelor	More than 10	Health Insurance	Dade & Broward
Sales Manager	R8	M	Bachelor	More than 10	Finance	Dade
General Manager	R10	F	Master	More than 10	Health Care	Dade
Event Promotion Manager	R11	M	Bachelor	More than 10	Medical Equipment	Dade
Human Resources	R12	M	Master	More than 10	Medical Equipment	Dade
General Manager	R13	M	Bachelor	More than 10	Finance	Dade & Broward
Managing Director	R14	M	Doctoral	More than 10	Health Care	Dade
Public Relations	R15	F	Master	5-10	Health Insurance	Dade & Broward

To protect the identities of participants, the investigator used a combination of letters and numbers. For example, research participants numbered 1 to 3 have assigned codes R1, R2, and R3 respectively (see Table 2). The intended sample of 20 participants included an equal representation of male and female co-researchers. The participants available when the interviews started were 15, changing the composition to five female respondents instead of 10 and maintain the 10 male respondents originally planned (see Table 2). The 15 respondents chosen to code and analyze brought diverse viewpoints and professional role diversity to

incorporate and enrich the study. The sample size was large enough (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Sandberg, 2000) to ensure enough data to recognize and identify emerging themes.

Interview Questions

The same predetermined nine open-ended questions were asked in a consistent manner to all 15 participants using a semi-structured interview format. The questions were field tested to avoid ambiguity, when necessary upon request the investigator refined for clarity the wording of the questions. The investigator informed participants before initiating the interview there were no right or wrong answers in the questionnaire, the intention in the questions was to elicit coresearchers' opinions. The interview was not meant to be interactive; interruptions were limited to a request for clarification on either side. The investigator emphasized that the focus of the interview was the participants' opinion and not the opinion of the interviewer.

The design of the interview questions followed Moustakas (1994) suggested wording to draw concise open responses. The use of the word "how" is more limiting than "what" in open-ended questions, and the word "perceives" motivates participants to give their individual perceptions about questions related to participants' personal experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The word "describes" stimulates sharing details associated with the question and personal experiences in an open-ended question and answer structure, and the word "experience" motivates participants to share views and opinions of personal experiences associated with postulated questions (see Appendix D) (Moustakas, 1994).

The purpose of each question was explained to clarify intent of exploring and understanding a central phenomenon from each participant's perspectives not to develop a consensus from co-researchers (Creswell, 2005). The central phenomenon was marketing loss of

influence to lead change and implement it to improve organizational performance. The
questionnaire had few questions, a central question, and sub-questions, starting with general
questions to open up the respondents to share information, placing the central question near the
end as a brief question (Creswell, 2005).

Questions on demographics and logistical data were added at the end of the questionnaire.
Demographics contain *attributes* according to Brazeley and Richards (2005) and Gibbs (2002)
referring to education, position experience in years, location, and gender. The personal nature of
the age variable led to its exclusion, participants felt uncomfortable with the question. The
diversity of firms and markets in which the respondents operate in met the study requirements in
industry sector and geographic location. The questionnaire and highlights of the intentions
behind the questions are presented.

1. Based on your experience, how would you describe the organization and its culture in
    your role as a functional manager?

    Question 1 encourages sharing perceptions about a familiar environment, minimizing
    potential situational anxiety from the interviewing process.

2. Based on your experience, what examples best describe interactions within your own
    function and with other functions when responding to changing conditions.

    Question 2 invites to share an illustration of perceived functional relationships under
    changing conditions.

3. Based on your experience, how would you describe the perceived value from inter-
    functional collaboration that promotes change, its implementation, and adoption to
    improve performance?

Question 3 explores perceived value in cross-functional collaboration. Questions 1-3 explores an environment formed by climate and organizational orientation in which relationships are formed and participants assert a value of relational collaboration. Lived experiences constitute the relationships of people who could express how environments influence behavior (van Kaam, 1966), and might disclose relevant insights about the loss and possible recovery of marketing influence to lead as a strong function.

4. Based on your experience, what factors influence change across functions?

5. Based on your experience, how do you perceive the image of marketing leadership and respect within organizational functions and before senior management?

6. Based on your experience, how would you describe marketing influence in the decision-making process of functions facing changing conditions to improve performance?

7. Based on your experience, what factors could be associated with winning cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes to improve performance?

8. Based on your experience, what would be the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and implement change to improve performance?

9. Based on your experience, what suggestions would you make to measure marketing's contribution to organizational change, change implementation, and improving organizational performance?

10. How many years have you worked as a manager?

    1) Less than 1 year   2) 1-5 years   3) 5-10 years   4) more than 10 years

11. What is the level of education attained?

    1) Associate 2) Bachelor   3)Master   4) Doctoral

Questions 4-7 explore for identifiable factors motivating cross-functional change and introduce the marketing function for a perceived evaluation in leading change, implementing, and improving performance. Question 8 introduces the central question to explore if a perceived loss exists and the perceived outcomes from such loss. Question 9 searches for perceived reforms to sustain marketing leadership in change and performance improvement processes.

Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in person in the privacy of the homes of most participants and in public places; ensuring privacy was secured from disruptions, the immediate presence of people, and noise that could affect digital recording quality. A structured interview questionnaire added consistency to the questions routine and assisted in the collection of rich data without the intervention of preconceived ideas from the investigator (Moustakas, 1994). The investigator reminded participants before recording the interview of the confidentiality and anonymity characteristics of the research data collection and analysis process. Co-researchers were informed that a copy of the transcribed interview or a copy of the recording if they chose would be sent to each participant for review and clarification.

The investigator informed participants before initiating the interview there were no right or wrong answers in the questionnaire, the intention in the questions was to elicit coresearchers' opinions. The investigator emphasized that the focus of the interview was the participants' opinion and not the opinion of the interviewer. The interview was not meant to be interactive; interruptions were limited to a request for clarification on either side.

Data collection occurred during a 30 days period. Each interview lasted between 25 minutes to 1 hour and 5 minutes. The investigator listened actively, observed, took notes during each interview, and kept them as journal entries in digital files. The notes helped the investigator

to register elements that cannot be recorded: body language, tone of voice, and any perceived nuance in descriptions, which could be used for reflection in the analysis stage. The interviews transcriptions into a word document took place within 24 hours of the scheduled interview, and later sent to the corresponding participant for validation. Participants were positively excited to participate, were supportive and engaging before, during, and after the interview session.

The interviewing style, active listening, and the level of observation were refined as the interviewing process advanced. The experience acquired improved the examination of nuances and finer details of human experiences that are not possible using a survey (Moustakas, 1994).

Coding Process

The preparation of textual data particularly transcripts of audio taped interviews requires following guidelines for an organized collection technique given the increased use of qualitative research methodology (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). The preparation of textual data requires added attention in lieu of the use of software program like Nvivo 9® to assist with qualitative data analysis. The investigator continues to be the research instrument responsible for preparing, entering, analyzing, and interpreting transcribed text. MacQueen and Milstein (1999) argued that inadequate data preparation could delay or contaminate the analysis process. The investigator should recognize as *research activities* the preparation of transcribed audiotaped interviews and the production and use of transcripts (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003).

Guidelines for developing transcriptions may include preserving in the transcription the natural form of speech presentation, keeping word forms, the form of the commentaries, and use punctuations as close as possible to the stated responses. Keeping an exact reproduction of what was said without prematurely reducing text, and maintaining the transcription approach suitable for computer use and researchers (Mergenthaler & Simon, as cited by McLellan, MacQueen, &

Neidig, 2003). To initiate the coding process, completed transcriptions were filed as sources in internals folders in Nvivo 9® after receiving electronically signed validation statements from each participant or declination to review the data in the provided transcription.

The data that was obtained from semi-structured interviews and observations was stored, catalogued, and coded using Nvivo 9®, a recognized software program produced by QSR International a Boston based company. Nvivo 9® is a recommended tool used in many qualitative phenomenological studies. The Nvivo 9® software assisted in ascertaining themes regarding the understanding of marketing leadership loss of influence to lead decision-making processes, implement change, and improve performance.

The van Kaam method modified by Moustakas (1994) was used to analyze the data collected. The method includes the listing of initial coding of passages, and performing horizonalization classifying living experiences into groups. Determining the relevance of statements called reduction and eliminating statements limiting the ability to understand and label participant's expressions. Other steps include identifying applicable themes and clusters and the validation and construct of meaning from thematic clusters, composite description of employee narrative of invariant themes, and the presentation of findings.

Data Analysis and Findings

The following sections adhered to Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam methodology explained thoroughly in Chapter 3 and highlighted in the coding process. To protect the identities of participants, the investigator used a combination of letters and numbers. For example, research participants numbered 1 to 3 have assigned codes R1, R2, and R3 respectively (see Table 2). These codes identify respondents in the following paragraphs.

Textural description. Appendix K presents responses from completed interviews using the same identical questionnaire (see Appendix E). The synopses show the responses that served as a foundation for data analysis following Moustakas' (1994) modified version of van Kaam's method of phenomenological data analysis. To identify common themes and patterns from the responses the investigator used the Nvivo 9® software. Chapter 2 included current and empirical research documenting extant contributions relevant to the design of the open-ended questions formulated in the interview questionnaire. The research mix that guided the design for the research and interview questions included the following themes: (a) the role of marketing, (b) the influence of marketing within the firm, (c) the culture of the organization, (d) inter-functional decision-making process, (e) change readiness and implementation support, (f) and marketing orientation and performance. The following quotes are verbatim. Slight editions or additions for clarity purpose are noted with the use of square brackets.

Question 1. Question 1 was, **"**Based on your experience, how would you describe the organization and its culture in your role as a functional manager?" As shown in Table 3, eight out of 15 (53%) participants believed a consumer orientation predominated in the organizational culture. Participant R2 stated, "The culture is very consumer oriented because our job is very service oriented at the sales and customer level… Any suggestions we have if he [CEO] believes that is good and will help despite it may not be a money making decision; he [CEO] would do it if it helps to improve patient care". Respondent R10 added, "I would say that we are consumer and education oriented, working on trying to assist people about a particular product, and being advocates for them; educating them about a product, and how to use the product to improve their situation in the future". Participant R7 stated, "Culture is mostly consumer oriented because the

sales of medical insurance and everything is based on the demand of the client and in trying to provide to them". Participants R8, R9, R10, R11 and R15 expressed similar belief patterns.

As shown in Table 3, six out of 15 (40%) participants attested to a strong management leadership and a market competitive culture. Respondent R1 stated, "The culture that I am in now is very educational and competitive; compared to others in the same market it is very stable and as an employee ah, ah, this culture is not top down. There are procedures like any other bank, one has to be through, it is not what one says, just follow regulations" Participant R3 responded, "Participatory, uh, top down? Well is a combination of both because is very participatory but there is obviously a hierarchy that gives orders… Yeah, we try to make sure that everyone is producing, we don't try to micromanage what they do, we hope that they do the right thing and have a good result." R11 emphasized, "My organization is a profit-oriented company with secondary values of engaging educating and promoting our medical services and equipment in the community." R4, R6, R12, R13, and R14 acknowledged strong management and R2, R8, R9, and R12 shared a competitiveness pattern.

As shown in Table 3, five out of the 15 (33%) participants recognized a learning organization orientation. Participant R1 stated, "The culture that I am in now is very educational and competitive; compared to others in the same market it is very stable". Participant R5 responded, "The culture of our organization is so diverse ah, I'm thinking so much on education, and I apologize because I was a teacher before." Participant R10 posited, "I would say that we are consumer and education oriented, working on trying to assist people about a particular product and being advocates for them." Participants R9 and R11 shared the same educational perspective.

Table 3

Responses to Question 1 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	*%*
Consumer orientation	8	53
Strong management leadership	6	40
Competitiveness	6	40
Educational	5	33

Question 2. Question 2 was "Based on your experience, what examples best describe interactions within your own function and with other functions when responding to changing conditions?" As shown in Table 4, 11 out of 15 (73%) participants thought that arriving at a consensus about the value of change improve interactions among like-minded people making team decisions about adapting to changing conditions. Team-oriented organizations facilitate interactions within each function and with other functions when there is a decision consensus about the value of change. The team adopts and adapts to change when strong management leads the change.

Participant R2 stated, "Ah, this question is more related to my team basically, the way we handle things in the organization is team based on what the leadership at the company is promoting. We ask to the internal team what do you think. We work as team; we have weekly meetings with the different territories, and must be worth to all teams participants if we must change something; is a team decision and if it is pushed from the top we must make it work". Participant R10 argued, "Uh… I think we have worked very closely trying to develop a new computer program that would allow us to avoid leasing a program and for that ownership, we

collaborated, we worked together, documenting as a team to develop a project to serve a customer."

Participant R11 added, "In my organization when change arises, it is up to the manager first to disseminate the information and bring the other departments together, to implement some kind of game plan to basically prepare for whatever changes arise. Many times the organization is reactive and not a proactive, so in its functioning it becomes more proactive…, uh, the departments in general are reacting to the change not been proactive to changes before they happen." Participants R3, R5, R9, R12, and R14 expressed similar belief patterns.

As shown in Table 4, seven out of 15 (47%) participants believed that frequent communications were the key to win internal and cross-functional support to respond to changing conditions. Respondent R2 stated, "We work as team; we have weekly meetings with the different territories, and must be worth to all teams participants if we must change something; is a team decision and if it is pushed from the top we must make it work". Participant R3 responded, "Well communication is key, and we always from the technological standpoint have tried to maintain that we would be paperless and advanced. We want to make sure that we are able to communicate with each other in real time for that there is a lot of crossed training involved."

Respondent R8 stated, "Changing conditions and interactions are based on interactions with peers in similar positions, they take place formally and informally, changing conditions are communicated to everyone, and it is up to each individual to respond to those changing conditions." R15 emphasized, "Ah, basically in our organization when a change is happening we have a meeting, and we do a lot of brain storming, the decision is what the majority wants;

whatever the majority think is more convenient." Respondents R11, R12, and R14 perceived a similar pattern.

As shown in Table 4, nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that a strong management leadership influences functional and cross-functional interactional support to respond cooperatively to changing conditions. Respondent R1 stated, "OK, ah, we follow top down when there is a change because I believe some departments are outsourced, and when it comes down to those departments one hand does not know the other and they are not very helpful. When is more internal the change, departments help each other out, but you can tell the difference when something is outsourced is like one world does not know the other, like we are not in the same company."

Participant R11 responded, "In my organization when change arises, it is up to the manager first to disseminate the information and bring the other departments together, to implement some kind of game plan to basically prepare for whatever changes arise." Respondent R15 stated, "We are constantly changing because we provide services that are constantly changing to companies. Because we are used to getting trained for changing things, we are used to change, and then we just go ahead and adapt to where the organization is going." Respondents R6, R9, R12, R13, and R14 expressed similar belief patterns.

As shown in Table 4, five out of 15 (33%) participants perceived cross training as an initiative for promoting interactive communication; leading to team building and improve cross-functional support. Participant R3 asserted "And you know, no matter if we are deficient in one area there is always somebody in another area to pick up where that person is deficient, and cross training is very important." Respondent R7 posited, "So, that was a big change trying to handle a big group of people, and train them to handle claim processing in the United Sates with the same

system that was used in Europe with the same way of doing claims." Participant R15 believed "Because we are used to getting trained for changing things, we are used to change, and then we just go ahead and adapt to where the organization is going." Respondents R9 and R12 shared similar belief patterns.

Table 4

Responses to Question 2 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	%
Value of change consensus	11	73
Strong management leadership	9	60
Frequent communications	7	47
Cross training support	5	33

Question 3. Question 3 was, "Based on your experience, how would you describe the perceived value from inter-functional collaboration that promotes change, its implementation, and adoption to improve performance?" As shown in Table 5, 10 out of 15 (67%) participants believe that the perceived value from inter-functional collaboration was a consequence of strong management leadership directing the collaborative efforts through communications and incentives to get the job done.

Participant R6 described "So the value within the company from inter-functional collaboration is also a steering top down model, which means the cross-functional communication to promote changes and so on, is also a top down so is not so much communication on the horizontal level. Collaboration takes place just in a day-to-day business

because we seat together and meet together, and speak about day-to-day business issues. If there are changes of course, we have to adapt to them but mainly there are centralized, top down, and we have to see how we can implement; it so it is the kind of not steering or been in the driver seat, it is more a kind of reaction." Participant R11 responded, "Value, meaning how much value is put into it? How much importance, exactly, importance of inter functional collaboration; sadly some departments are not collaborating. Although they are important to the overall organization, they may not have as much say as other departments when it comes into the decision-making process. So, although they may be heard their opinions may not be as valid as other departments in the organization, so some departments value will be higher, but at the end of the day it will be up to the main manager to bring together the overall value of the functioning of inter functional communication and collaboration."

Participant R12 stated, " It was very difficult…ah ah even though I was in charge of this new field of business, nobody really wanted to collaborate with me because they were all thinking they were losing power when they collaborated with me. When they worked with me, together they felt that ah… for them it was still better to do their own thing, and ah… and rather not work with me, ah, than really helping me out, there was no help from any subsidiaries with respect to the fact that we wanted to have things changed. There was no real help no collaboration no…. there were rather behind my back trying to kill me. So then, the change that was affecting everyone has to be driven by top management to obtain valuable collaboration across departments." Participant R15 described, "How do you describe the perceived value? Ah, when we do have other departments coming to help ours, sometimes is valuable, sometimes is not because of the difference on how we work, and sometimes it takes more time to train someone or having help us than it is for us to get it done. Ah, but I believe when it is done, if

done with good intentions, it does create value." Participants R2, R3, R4, R5, R9, and R14 expressed their views in similar patterns.

As shown in Table 5, eight out of 15 (53%) participants believed that strong management leadership could, and try to influence the positive promotion of change, its implementation, and its adoption to improve performance as a reward that benefits everyone in the organization. Participant R2 asserted "I think that I kind of alluded to that a little bit; we do what we do, but corporate management will try to influence us and generally they have being right in terms of what they have said. This is why we should do things, and a lot of times they [leadership] say we want to do something and we required your investment…" Respondent R5 added, "The collaboration from the top levels ah, they are there; the top levels work together to implement new changes."

Participant R6 described, "If there are changes of course, we have to adapt to them but mainly there are centralized, top down, and we have to see how we can implement; it so it is the kind of not steering or been in the driver seat, it is more a kind of reaction." Respondent R11 stated, "Although they [collaborating functions] are important to the overall organization, they may not have as much say as other departments when it comes into the decision-making process. So, although they may be heard, their opinions may not be as valid as other departments in the organization, so some departments value will be higher, but at the end of the day it will be up to the main manager to bring together the overall value of the functioning of inter functional communication and collaboration." Respondents R4, R6, R13, and R14 shared similar thoughts.

As shown in Table 5, eight out of 15 (53%) participants believed that working as team get the job done across functions. Participant R2 stated, "So, the company we represent is 1099 but corporate treat us like employees because we almost have no choice if we want to keep our

distributorship; investing in our business requires we invest in the same areas they [leadership] are investing and we follow suit. I kind of manage the same way if I want my team to do something, I must also do something for the team." Respondent R3 asserted, "Well, we try just based on communication whenever somebody is deficient if there is something that we can do to increase performance and efficiency, there is a lot of value to that."

Respondent R10 believed, "Uh, I think that we are like-minded; there is an emphasis, a lot of value placed on working together to make sure the organization continues to grow and evolve. I think that there is a lot of perceived value by all the team players, we saw there were things we did over time they seemed not to work and we knew we had to make some changes. We have to be better and improve conditions for our clients when we first started we tried to engage people to read health insurance information, and even with offering prizes; we realized something was not working, either people did not take the time reading it to educate, or did not perceive any value to better themselves." Participants R1, R4, R5, R11, and R15 expressed views along the same pattern.

Table 5

Responses to Question 3 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	%
Strong management functional collaboration directive	10	67
Strong management leadership influence	8	53
Change through Teamwork	8	53

Question 4. Question 4 was, "Based on your experience, what factors influence change across functions?" As shown in Table 6, nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that revenue, market share, and profit budgets contain leading factors that influence change across functions. Participant R3 stated "Losing a client, if we lost a client, ah, and our clients are in the health care industry and those clients represent a number of different hospitals; it could impact obviously our revenue cycle and our revenue cycle will impact whether or not we have to change operations, laying off employees, etc, etc." Respondent R10 posited, "Ah, uh, I think the factors that influence changes were financial factors, with the organization we had a lot of them that were driven by customers; if they were unhappy about a particular service provided or they had a suggestion about what they need it, we tried to fit into what the customers' needs were. The consumers want weighted heavily into what we needed to do to effect change."

Participant R11 believed that, "Economics first and foremost, profitability ah… those are the two main ones." Respondent R15 stated, "Restriction in budgets is a factor that change constantly and how budgets are distributed among the departments affect us a lot, and there are politics involved." Participants R1, R5, R7, R13, and R14 expressed similar belief patterns.

As shown in Table 6, nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that motivation and preparation are incentives to influence change and reduce change uncertainty about qualifying and job loss. Participant R12 stated, "Well…they thought that not coping with change, ah, would leave them with what they were doing before. And, that, ah, they were this way thinking that they were really preventing any new things or any new fields of business. And, because of those new fields of business, they were scare. In the old part of the business, they knew how to deal with it but this new part of business they did not know how to cope with, so they rather prevented me from doing my job than doing anything else. People were afraid that change will

kill them, would make them lose their own jobs, ah, due to the fact that somebody will point out that they are not really able to do additional jobs that they were not supposed to do." Participant R6 replied, "I would say the most important factor besides communication is openness to new approaches. Is also ah… a kind of team work and no hierarchy structures to overcome and to tear down functional departments."

Respondent R3 added, "Other than that when we decided to go paperless it was very simple process; as a matter of fact once it was implemented outside the cost of it, which was very expensive. Outside of that, people loved it because you were able to acquire information real time as opposed to go into a file to find data manually. Scanning the system was faster and that's just one example of ah using technology to be more efficient, and also been compliant with what our clients view in terms of privacy, and different federal regulations that monitored privacy."

Responded R4 stated, "Encouragement," and participant R2 asserted, "This is tough; I think what you are talking about is motivation, drive. This is something interesting I have been battling as a manager with what I do, and need to do to motivate these guys. Because everybody thinks in my opinion, that is money; these guys already make a comfortable living and I use as example - we have a total shoulder to sell and at one point I give $5,000 cash to the first guy who sells it, and still nobody was able to sell it." Participants R6, R7, R5, R8, and R9 perceived a similar pattern.

Table 6

Responses to Question 4 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	*%*
Financial Performance	9	60
Motivation and Preparation	9	60

Question 5. Question 5 was, "Based on your experience, how do you perceive the image of marketing leadership and respect within organizational functions and before senior management?" As shown in Table 7, 10 out of 15 (67%) participants believed that organizational functions and senior management in their organizations have respect for the marketing function and its leadership. Participant R2 stated, "Within this company, marketing is respected…The people that work in marketing are considered team leaders… Marketing is top priority." Participant R15 replied, "Respect, I think marketing has a high level of respect in the organization and we have it from the CEO and the different marketing heads because we are a marketing oriented firm." Respondent, R11 said, "From outside the company looking in there is a high level of respect by senior management towards the marketing function." Participant R4 stated, "Totally, equal with the top level senior management we all of us deal well together, we all respect each other there is no hierarchy; we are all at that level just as equal. So, the image of marketing leadership is good, excellent." Participants R1, R3, R5, R9, R10, R14, and 15 expresses similar image perceptions about respect for marketing leadership.

As shown in Table 7, five out of 10 (33%) participants recognized a subordinate role of management before senior management in the absence of leadership to drive marketing strategies limited to top management directives. Participant R6 stated, "There is no real marketing leadership within our company is what I have to experience. There is more a kind of subordination, steered by senior management, in the way that if they want to have some new information about the market; then they tell marketing to do it. Marketers are just running a routine; they are not in the driver seat to tell the company where they have to go they are just reacting to what the senior management is saying."

Respondent R12 expressed, "Marketing leadership was mainly practiced by Board members, all the other functions below the Board were not really involved in strategic issues, also the Board did not always informed the second level and the third level about what was really going on, and what the real reasons were for certain practices or for certain business issues. Well the Senior Executives were really taken care of marketing. There was a marketing department with few people that were in charge of marketing, who were supposed to do all the advertising. They were supposed to do all the creative approaches but they were unable to do it, due to a lack of capability, so ah, the board were mainly given the direction were to go, and they were following along, and working along that line." Participants, R7, R8, and R13 expressed their perceptions in similar fashion.

Table 7

Responses to Question 5 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	%
Recognition of respect for marketing leadership image	10	67
Recognition of marketing subordinate role image	5	33

Question 6. Question 6 was, "Based on your experience, how would you describe marketing influence in the decision-making process of functions facing changing conditions to improve performance?" As shown in Table 8, 11 out of 15 (73%) participants believe that marketing influences decision-making processes in sales and other functions through information, marketing tools, demand increase, and adapting to market changing conditions.

Participant R1 stated, "Ah, marketing has influence in sales, sales quarters, and customer satisfaction. One, if the sales are down, marketing influence helps to make the reps strong , and focused on created strong marketing demand; when marketing is too strong customer demand drops when reps are complacent not responding quickly, and functional resources capacities are not enough to serve a demand increase. Marketing direction influences other areas to adapt to conditions using different strategies for education and market services implementation."

Respondent R4 said, "Decisions for change, well, I would say, in most of the people you are going to find resistance to decide to accept changes, because some people are very comfortable into whatever they are doing. Once, marketing brought change into the organization and had management support, although you still found people resistant to it, in the long run marketing influence on their decisions to adopt changes was always positive in my experience". Participant R11 said, "If the marketing strategy is a sound one, like, it has been bought by the departments; then it would be a lot easier for departments to integrate the message, and buy into the marketing strategy. However, if they don't believe in the plan from the get go; them the value of the marketing strategy would be much less, and more marketing efforts would have to be done to influence decision to adopt changes." Respondent R9 added, "Oh, let's see, marketing helped our agency because initially when we started the program we knew that we had the skills to provide services to anyone it. It was the marketing efforts we put in place that allowed us to show the sponsoring programs we were doing a good job in a diverse community". Participant R5 added, "The only marketing influence is dollars, is money, there are so many wonderful ideas, so many marketing ways of doing things out there so that is the influence…Oh so the influence of decision making process, is all about money." Participants R2, R6, R7, R8, R12, and R13 expressed beliefs along the same patterns.

As shown in Table 8, four out of 15 (27%) participants believed that marketing influences functional decision- making processes during conditions of change from the perspective of customer satisfaction. Participant R3 stated, " So, ah, if we are doing something that is not appealing to our clients, and our client if it is our number one client if you will the one that generates the most revenue for our business; and he says, hey you need to change something otherwise you are not going to have our business anymore. Everybody, I think will be on board with making the change." Participant R9 said, "It was the marketing efforts we put in place that allowed us to show the sponsoring programs we were doing a good job in a diverse community." Participants R1 and R14 expressed similar belief patterns.

Table 8

Responses to Question 6 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	%
Marketing influences cross-functional decision process	10	67
Marketing influences other functions' customer satisfaction	5	33

Question 7. Question 7 was, "Based on your experience, what factors could be associated with winning cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes to improve performance?" As shown in Table 9, 13 out of 15 (87%) participants believed that the evidence of value in terms of revenue growth, company reputation, customer satisfaction, budget efficiencies, work benefits, and a teamship orientation including bottom up opinions were factors

that promoted cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes, which may require for marketing leadership to change too. Participant R1 stated, "Ah, to win support, ah, marketing, well they could have focus groups to target specific markets to be more specific on the target. Ah, instead of wasting time with products that should not go to certain targets. Like, wasting time sending for example bills to pay online to a society full of seniors, who are not up to date with technology, instead of wasting their time with that, you know, making a focus group that communicates the right direction, so I say a focus group."

Participant R3 asserted, "Increase revenue, if we increase revenue we will be more productive. Then, we will share the basic philosophy to share our earning with our staff, they would have bonuses, and they would have different programs that we implement based on our earnings. Things such as I will give examples, outside the normal monthly bonuses based on earnings. We also could give employees health insurance for the family at no cost to them, although there is going to be an increase in cost to us for the life of that employee based on the market". Respondent R6 added, "I guess marketing could be more proactive in providing information about market changes, about customers, about the value of the customer. There are much more that can put the customer and the market into focus, and been proactive providing this information, marketing could have a lot to offer and have more influence within the company."

Participant R7 commented, "Marketing had to work with people, whose education was not up to par, and brochures had misspellings and had to be redone; this was expensive redoing thousands and thousands of marketing material and this went over for a period of two years. There was a lot of waste of money. I do not think they use the resources you know of the sales department as well as they should have. I think there were miscommunications between

marketing, customer service, and medical personnel. Certainly, the marketing department influenced the sales and accounting departments. Sales and marketing department are very close. For the sales people that were travelling a lot and in direct contact with the agents, I do not know how much communication was between sales and marketing. Sales would have meetings with management and report the problems; customer service was not included in those meetings."

Participant R8 thought, "I think, marketing must prove to the folks in my capacity its effectiveness and that it can work. Often times budgets are, are being spent in marketing in most cases than not, have failed to deliver the results. Therefore, it needs to be promoted or need to be shown statistically, and in other areas to show its effectiveness. I think, until that takes place, people in functional managerial capacities would be suspect of marketing and its effectiveness." Respondent R10 posited, "Ah, I think marketing leaders must have ideas that are well accepted by others within the organization. I think if you surround yourself with people that are like-minded and willing to try new things; I think that that is a big part of it, and just being open and willing to change yourself as a marketing manager or marketing lead person to embrace change, and move people to work with you to make change happen."

Participant R15 felt, "Ah, I think the factors that can help the marketing effort would be creating more of a sense of, of family making. It seems that everything everyone does as an employee is for the greater good of the company, making us feel more important. I would say. And, then that would affect our condition, the way we see things, and maybe how we would support it". Participants R2, R3, R11, R12, and R13 express similar feelings.

As shown in Table 9, nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that proactive communications about the market, customers, marketing initiatives, and performance results and

benefits were factors to win cross-functional support for marketing leader to drive changes to improve performance. Participant R6 stated, "I guess marketing could be more proactive in providing information about market changes, about customers, about the value of the customer. There are much more that can put the customer and the market into focus, and been proactive providing this information, marketing could have a lot to offer and have more influence within the company."

Respondent R8 argued, "I think, marketing must prove to the folks in my capacity its effectiveness and that it can work. Often times budgets are, are being spent in marketing in most cases than not, have failed to deliver the results. Therefore, it needs to be promoted or need to be shown statistically, and in other areas to show its effectiveness. I think, until that takes place, people in functional managerial capacities would be suspect of marketing and its effectiveness."

Respondent R9 stated, "The leadership should be more experienced not just in administration but also in treatment modalities so that the rules that they make governing us are more useful to the client. Marketing may put up a book that reads very well, not one that has very little to do with what we are actually providing to our clients. Do not need to have to interpret whatever information marketing is giving to us, that we have to interpret in such a way, and presented in a way that is going to be helpful to us. I think that for the managers, the leaders I think they should stretch their values a little bit rather than just invent rules they should value our opinions."

Participant R11 perceived that, "Marketing should define marketing goals and defining specific strategies to obtain set goals. Ah, defining ah, having the exact strategies on any possible profitability opportunity from the goals, and making sure that all marketing strategies

are synonymous with the credibility of the whole company." Participants R2, R5, R7, R10, and

R15 expressed similar views.

Table 9

Responses to Question 7 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	*%*
To evidence marketing value	13	87
Proactive Communications	9	60

Question 8. Question 8 was, "Based on your experience, what would be the impact of

marketing loss of influence to lead change and implement change to improve performance?" As

shown in Table 10, 13 out of 15 participants believed the loss of marketing influence to lead

change and implement it to improve performance threatens a company's reputation and market

performance sustainability. Participant R10 stated, "Ah, we did, we did see some of that at one

point and it really meant a lot to me when you do not have somebody in a position that is either a

strong player wanting to make changes or able to make changes; really affect how the

organization performs. Ah, things can go downhill very quickly If there is not a leader who is

willing to move things forward, and kind of lead the others that are on their team sort of speak.

Ah, if you do not have that kind of level support marketing support and you are not a 100 percent

behind it just, kind of defeats the purpose of even trying to marshal changes to improve

performance."

Respondent R11 argued, " The impact would be high if the marketing…if marketing will

lose influence if the marketing message is incorrect, and if the people inside don't agree with the

marketing message and the marketing strategy; then there is no way that that message will ever

fly outside of the company". Respondent R15 stated, "If marketing loss its influence? I think the company might grow apart and people would start being more independent instead of more integrated."

Participant R3 posited, "Well, I mean that's the adverse of what we said before. If we lose a client, and if there is… if we are unable for whatever reason to have marketing influence; our mission on business would be limited to a hand full of competition if you will. What we do is very specific, and for our clients we know that we are at the top of our market, if we lose that market share then our reputation goes with it, it will be very difficult to recover from that." Respondent R2 stated, Like I said before we are education based, and the loss of marketing influence would be a disaster, every day we have new product announcement, new educational tools, new sales, support, marketing, facts, training labs, new techniques, new banner, new conferences, new ads. Marketing drives all that."

Participant R7 stated, "The loss of influence of marketing, I can tell you from my observations that marketing people were much attuned to the agent reward system, support tools, conventions, and tours and when the budget was cut and some of the key players were let go; sales started to decline significantly. At one point, the marketing department was in charge for example of the holyday parties, and since there were so few of them, they had to take that function from them. I think that the employees were upset that the giveaway and parties was not that good, employee picnics stopped. The decline of the marketing department kind of reflected a decline in the overall company." Participants R1, R3, R4, R5, R6, R9, R3, and R14 expressed similar viewpoints.

Table 10

Responses to Question 8 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	%
Threat to reputation and sustainability	13	87

Question 9. Question 9 was, "Based on your experience, what suggestions would you make to measure marketing's contribution to organizational change, change implementation, and improving organizational performance?" As shown in Table 11, eight out of 15 participants believed that growth of revenues is a measure of the contribution of marketing to organizational change and its implementation to the improvement of organizational performance. Participant R3 stated, "One of the keys to our business is performing at the highest level possible ah well measuring that I mean…revenue. The revenue that we generate for our firm directly correlates with the revenue we generate for our clients." Respondent R2 emphasized, "I think is sales without a doubt, you know. Fortunately, marketing reports can show a loss of business for the regional managers to react checking the sales area managers."

Participant R12 stated, "Marketing influence can easily be measured by additional generated revenue, that's a major issue. In that respect, marketing influence can also be seem as if …that you really show up as an innovative leader in certain areas of marketing; like you are a leader in advertising in your field of business. Ah, but for us the company that I work for the only thing that is really counting is revenue. Respondent R5 argued, "The only thing that you could measure it is by the phone calls that come from the leads that are generated… Ah, I just don't think a lot of them see the value of it and don't matter how much we try to show them, how

marketing is important, and how much it leads to your business until they see it and actually make that sale; they don't understand it. They don't understand that the one thing to measure marketing, I know that's obviously your lead generation how many sales you make in our business or how many leads you get to make sales." Participants R6, R11, and R14 expressed similar views.

Table 11

Responses to Question 9 (N=15)

Prevalent theme	Frequency	%
Revenue Growth	8	53
Customer satisfaction	8	53
Educated unified employees and improved communities	8	53
Company Reputation	7	47
Validating performance results	7	47

As shown in Table 11, eight out of 15 (53%) participants believed that increase in customer satisfaction is a measure of the contribution of marketing to organizational change and its implementation to the improvement of organizational performance. Participant R2 stated, "Customer loyalty is pretty important, if you are retaining customers and you are still growing you are Ok". Participant R4 emphasized, "Marketing is good. Wow, if is concerning the patients, marketing has been excellent because we had an influx of patients coming in thru marketing, alright because there were signs all over the place, come in see your child get the best health care services, so when it comes to the patients marketing is good."

Participant R6 added, "Therefore, you'll need different columns of knowledge, one of them is of course marketing. So it has an important role and it should be measured of course by revenue contribution, of course I will go for market share and I will go for this part of customer value within the market, revenue is a part of it but not directly." Participants R3, R9, R11, R14, and R15 expressed similar belief patterns.

As shown in Table 11, eight out of 15 (53%) participants believed that educated, informed, unified employees and improved communities in which the company operates are measures of the contribution of marketing to organizational change and its implementation to the improvement of organizational performance. Participant R2 stated, "Quotas and penetration are separate from your sales revenues; revenues must meet diverse categories caps. People must be motivated to sell in any of the targeted categories. Weekly conference calls, newsletters, patient education programs play a role in performance." Respondent R6 stated, "How to measure it's a little bit difficult, ah, I guess if you want to lead a company which has competitors is important to have full market information to make the right decisions. Therefore, you'll need different columns of knowledge; one of them is of course marketing."

Respondent R3 felt, "Ah, in our environment they [clients] are happy with the bottom line whatever that bottom line is, the greater the bottom-line the happier the client, we also have to be condescending of how they [clients] feel in the respective markets. How we treat community, so we have to also not only be aware of how we generate revenue from a community perspective, but how it impacts our clients; we also have to protect them in terms of negative bias."

Participant R7 stated, "Uh, I think based on what I experienced the market department contributed tremendously to the feeling of working for a company, the company spirit. We had

T-shirts with the company logo; there were competitions for the best department service. Marketing gave us a sense of pride from the brochures and brought to life the concept that management was trying to implement. The image of a company made marketing the façade of the company, the storefront. When you cut resources, and do not provide other resources to improve the storefront, polish the product to improve the façade, and employees do not see the company as a prestigious company; the client sees the decline of the company through the eyes of the marketing group that is how important marketing is."

Respondent R15 concluded, "To measure it? I think maybe ah asking the employees how they feel, ah, every not all the time but once in a while how changes that are happening in the organization, how are affecting them as an employee. Maybe get a greater view of where the organization is moving, and showing more welfare considerations. Sales definitely and internal things, the morale of employees, how satisfied the client is, and how the service is doing as a measure of marketing effectiveness." Participants R4, R5, R9 and R10 expressed similar views.

As shown in Table 11, seven out of 15 (47%) participants believed that the market reputation of a company is a measure of the contribution of marketing to organizational change and its implementation to the improvement of organizational performance. Participant R11 stated, "I would say that the way to measure the marketing performance would be to ah, higher ah, maybe would be higher visibility of your marketing message inside and outside of your company. People know exactly what your company are all about inside and outside that there are higher job performance levels, better work environment, and overall profitability of the company."

Respondent R4 added, "How we treat community, so we have to also not only be aware of how we generate revenue from a community perspective, but how it impacts our clients; we

also have to protect them in terms of negative bias." Participant R10, suggested " I think about the suggestion I would make, we tried to survey our clients and their employees. Uh, at least once a year we would sent out a survey and ask for feedback from those clients and their employees, did they use our services during the year, how many times, how was the interaction with our staff, what we did, the things we did not do but needed to do better. Doing that kind of self-evaluations, also having our clients evaluate you is key to tell you if your marketing yourself right, if you are marketing the right services, and if you are meeting your clients' needs. Ah that is a very important thing to know you must gauge what you doing, what you are doing well, and what you need to change." Participants R3, R7, R9, R10, and R15 expressed similar views.

As shown in Table 11, seven out of 15 (47%) participants believed that documenting and validating market investments with results is a measure of the contribution of marketing to organizational change and its implementation to the improvement of organizational performance.

Participant R15 suggested, "Sales definitely and internal things, the morale of employees, how satisfied the client is, and how the service is doing are a measure of marketing effectiveness."

Respondent R10 suggested, "Doing that kind of self-evaluations, also having our clients evaluate you is key to tell you if you are marketing yourself right, if you are marketing the right services, and if you are meeting your clients' needs. Ah that is a very important thing to know, you must gauge what you doing, what you are doing well, and what you need to change."

Participant R9 stated, "It would have to be success. It would have to be if there have been a successful improvement says as measured by …I think that if a client finishes your program and chooses to come back to you that are a measure of success. I think that if a person actually tells you that he's learning something and through word of mouth actually refers people

to you, all these factors are, I think are positive changes and all these things are measurable statistics."

Participant R1 suggested, "I think there has been a lot of new ideas that may be a waste of time, that is probably one of the things that need improvement with more research. I think, I think the time, the time to make decisions was too quick and not much research was done. Ah, due to desperation for sales increase or deadlines to be met, because number dropped to rapidly so now that is it what it is I think that more research would help." Participants R8 and R15 expressed similar views.

Emergent Themes. The themes with the highest frequency are the emergent themes for each question shown in the textural-structural description of the meaning and essences of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). As shown in Table 12, the emergent theme for question 1 is consumer orientation as the type of prevalent organizational culture with a response frequency of eight. The emergent theme for question 2 is value of change consensus as the variable that influences interactions in changing conditions once there is agreement about the value of the change with a frequency of 11.

The emergent theme for question 3 is strong management functional collaboration directive as the inducing collaborative value variable with a frequency of 10. The emergent themes for question 4 are financial performance, and motivation and preparation as leading factors that influence change across functions with a response frequency of nine for each. The emergent theme for question 5 is recognition of respect for marketing leadership image with a frequency of 10.

The emergent theme for question 6 is marketing influences cross-functional decision process with a frequency of 10. The emergent theme for question 7 is to evidence marketing

value with a frequency of 13. The emergent them for question 8 is a threat to reputation and sustainability with a frequency of 13. The emergent themes for question 9 are revenue growth, customer satisfaction, educated unified employees, and improved communities with a frequency of eight for each theme.

Table 12

Emergent Themes Identified from Responses (N=15).

Question	Emergent Themes	Frequency
Question 1	Consumer orientation	8
Question 2	Value of change consensus	11
Question 3	Strong management functional collaboration directive	10
Question 4	Financial performance	9
Question 4	Motivation and preparation	9
Question 5	Recognition of respect for marketing leadership image	10
Question 6	Marketing influences cross-functional decision process	10
Question 7	To evidence marketing value	13
Question 8	Threat to reputation and sustainability	13

Table 12 (*Continued*)

Question 9	Revenue growth	8

	Customer satisfaction	8
	Educated unified employees and improved communities	8

Outliers. A collected statement or observation from one or a few participants in a research study is coined an outlier (Barnett & Lewis, 1994; Sproull, 2004). The investigator decides what an outlier is by how far an observation lies from other values or responses considered normal to the research inquiry (Smith & Albaum, 2006). Outliers may provide useful information about the research topic or the data collection, and recording process but also can be random variation or just bad data points (Barnett & Lewis, 1994). The investigator could explore causes for their emergence in the collected data to understand the reason for extreme data, and the probability of appearing in other responses (Moore & McCabe, 1999). The investigator could choose to discard outliers from the rest of the data set based on the degree of inconsistency with significant themes (Sproull, 2004).

The two outliers noted in the data analysis inconsistent with responses from the majority of respondents consisted of one out of 15 participants who perceived technology as the organizational culture, and one out of 15 participants who perceived validation of opinions as a value for cross-functional collaboration. Osborne and Overbay (2004) argued, "Researchers rarely report checking for outliers of any sort" (p. 1). The investigator recognized a dubious origin aspect in unveiled outliers, and concluded that social desirability of the variables culture and validation of opinion could have influenced the respondents (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). The investigator decided to note their detection after considering that the number of outliers were

not significant or represented a major pattern related to the problem statement and purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study (Sproull, 2004).

Summary

The investigator used purposive sampling to select participants beginning on October 1, 2011 and ending on December 10, 2011. Hand delivered communications to the homes of 20 potential participants working in South Florida included a letter of invitation (see Appendix J), an informed consent form to participate (see Appendix A), and an interview questionnaire (see Appendix, E). A permission to use the premises was sent via e-mail to one candidate with whom it was applicable (see Appendix B). A return self-address envelope was provided to return the signed Information to Consent form.

After the response-waiting period, 15 individuals who qualified confirmed their participation in the study. The final sample size was still within the boundaries argued by Leedy and Ormrod (2001), Sandberg, (2000), and Patton (2002). Despite the wish to conduct 20 interviews, time and cost were limiting factors in the decision to complete 15 interviews. Participant demographics in Table 2 show the sample diversity across attributes that enrich the study.

Each participant completed the interview questionnaire responding to the same questions consistently asked to the other participants. The textural description (see Appendix K) shows in detail how each participant responded each question. The synopses show the responses that served as a foundation for data analysis following Moustakas' (1994) modified version of van Kaam's method of phenomenological data analysis. To identify common themes and patterns from the responses the investigator used the Nvivo 9® software. The Nvivo 9® software

assisted in ascertaining themes regarding the understanding of marketing leadership loss of influence to lead decision-making processes, implement change, and improve performance.

The results of data analysis of participants 'responses to question one through nine yielded emergent themes that are identified by frequency in Table 12. The emergent themes are as follows: regarding culture, functional interactions, and collaboration value the themes are: (1) Consumer orientation, (2) Value of change consensus, (3) Strong management directive for functional collaboration. Regarding factors influencing change, respect and influence on decision-making the themes are: (4) Financial performance and motivation and preparation (5) Recognition of respect for marketing leadership image, (6) Marketing influences cross-function decision process. Pertaining to winning cross-functional support, loss of marketing leadership, and performance metrics: (7) To evidence marketing value, (8) Threat to reputation and sustainability, (9) Revenue growth, customer satisfaction, and educate unified employees and improved communities.

Chapter 4 described the specific emerged themes and patterns revealed in the data analysis process. Chapter 5 presents concluding comments and recommendations of the investigator for this research study. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the emerged themes and explains how the identified factors might lead to help marketing executives to measure their performance, provide the desired feedback by senior leadership and organizational functions, and regain the ability to lead change and its implementation to improve organizational performance. The investigator includes personal interpretations and reflections pertaining to the information provided by research participants.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study following a modified van Kaam Method (1966) by Moustakas (1994) and using transcribed audiotaped semi-structured interviews explored the lived experiences of 15 managerial employees and identified patterns and themes concerning marketing loss of influence to lead change and its implementation to improve the performance of a group of South Florida companies. For the purpose of the study, a self-selection process assisted to draw a purposive sample of 15 functional managers whom had experience interactions with marketing during organizational changing conditions. The diversity of roles participants played and the different industries in which they operated enriched the description of the data collected. Data for the study were analyzed for emergent core themes, characteristics, and descriptions using the Nvivo 9® qualitative data analysis software.

A qualitative phenomenological design was appropriate for a study that needed to rely on lived-experiences testimonies of participants to gain an understanding about them, and flexibly acquire knowledge from individual perceptions and experiences. The current qualitative phenomenological study relied on the perception and experience of managerial employees who participated and was the appropriate method to acquire knowledge around participating managers' perceptions and experiences. The registration, recognition, and interpretation of memorized sensory experiences become perception, and the continuity of having sensory experiences leads to knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

A qualitative phenomenological research approach seemed suitable to seek answers to the research question what is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance, and address the stated problem: the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead change, and positively contribute to firm's

performance. The nature of the problem and the research question in this study were context-specific and did not lead to an inquiry into the relationship between variables (Anderson, Sweeney, & Williams, 2006; Creswell, 2005).

Chapter 5 begins with an overview of Chapters 1 through 4 of the current study. The objective of the investigator in Chapter 5 is to present and interpret conclusions drawn from the literature review, the methodology, and the analysis of data. The investigator presents the study findings, the analysis of the data, and the core themes that emerged from the data; summarizing interpretations and suggesting recommendations based on the results obtained from the completed research. The investigator interprets and evaluates the importance, significance, and meaning of the study to relevant constituents (senior management, functional managers, employees, researchers, and the community). The investigator discusses any impact that assumptions, limitations, and delimitations from Chapter 1 have had in the results.

Overview Chapters 1 through 4

Chapter 1 introduced a multidimensional environment, in which a problem pertaining to the loss of influence of marketing leadership to lead and implement change, and positively contribute to a firm's performance have become evident to senior management, managerial functions, employees, researchers, and consumers . The loss of influence of marketing leadership cut across organizational functions including external stakeholders; a spanning influence that may affect a fair measure of marketing total contribution if lagging at a given point (Clark et al., 2006). The ability of marketing managers to document their contribution to the value of the firm through functional interactions and influence on decision-making, innovations, and performance is questionable and is an issue that O'Sullivan and Abella, (2010), and Verhoef

and Leeflang, (2010) thought deserved further research pertaining to the status of marketing leadership.

The purpose of the study as defined in Chapter 1 was to explore and describe the lived experiences of functional managers about the loss of marketing influence to lead and implement change to improve performance. An appreciation and rich understanding of participants' lived experiences were viewed as valuable outcomes of this research (van Kaam, 1966), which may lead to a renewed use of marketing strategic role to influence decisions pertaining to change, its implementation, and performance improvements (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). A renewed role of the marketing function and the effect such role variation may have on the function's influence inside the organization (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009) could contribute to reconcile functional interests to create integrated strategies and customer solutions.

Chapter 1 explained the study including background information consistent with the problem, purpose, and significance of the study for organizations and implications to leadership, the nature of the study, the research question, and the theoretical framework acknowledged for this research study. To conclude Chapter 1, the investigator described the limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and definitions of terms consisting of words used in the research study. The investigator discusses in Chapter 5 any impact that assumptions, limitations, and delimitations from Chapter 1 have had in the results.

Chapter 2 included a comprehensive literature review that revealed agents and factors possibly affecting marketing loss of influence within an organization, and implications into leading change, and improving organizational performance. A literature review provided background information for the study about existing views, gaps, and debates on marketing loss of influence to lead change, build support from functional relationships to implement change,

and improve performance. The discovery of foundational work conducted by prior researchers helped to learn and understand about the varying roles of marketing. Reviewing the antecedents of marketing leadership in cross-functional relationships and performance outcomes assisted in answering the research question formulated in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 included current and empirical research documenting extant contributions relevant to: (a) the role of marketing, (b) the influence of marketing within the firm, (c) the culture of the organization, (d) inter-functional decision-making process, (e) change readiness and implementation support, (f) and marketing orientation and performance. Phenomenological research information and other relevant theories to support the study were added to the literature review chapter. The supporting theories and themes framing Chapter 2 included decision-making as a leadership trait, transformational and transactional leadership styles, contingency theory, institutional theory, power and influence, and organizational culture. A historic overview section included, described the transitional strategic and tactical roles of marketing, their influence in the management of the firm, and the auditing measures used for marketing performance. The literature review concluded with a brief on phenomenological design and an assessment of gaps in research pertaining to the impact of the loss of marketing leadership in organizational change processes and performance improvement.

In Chapter 3, the investigator presented a comprehensive justification for the selection and appropriateness of the research method and design. Chapter 3 described the population and the sampling selection criteria. A self-selection process increased the inclusion of participants who truly recognized their interaction with marketing in times of organizational changes. The selection approach allowed capturing rich descriptions within the estimated research time-line and sample boundaries. Individuals, who believed they could qualify and identify with the

experience described, validated the belief in having participated in an organizational change process (Patton, 2002). Non-probability sampling satisfied the investigator's intention to define the essence of the experience of marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance (Patton, 2002). Non-probability was the appropriate sampling type because the specific experience was an elusive concept (Patton, 2002).

The research method proposed in Chapter 3 was intended to explore the loss of influence of the marketing function to lead decision-making processes toward change, and its implementation to improve organizational performance. The chapter provided: a) a review of the research method, design, and appropriateness, b) a guiding research question, c) a discussion of the population, sampling and data collection, e) informed consent, confidentiality, and geographic location, f) interview questions, data collection, data analysis, validity, and reliability issues. The research question guided the kind of data intended for collection and restricted the interpretation and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). The research instrument and data collection method described the appropriateness of the method to understand marketing loss of influence to lead change decisions to improve performance.

Chapter 3 explained how communications were hand delivered to the homes of 20 potential participants working in South Florida. Communications consisted of a letter of invitation (see Appendix J), an informed consent form to participate, which included a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity to participants (see Appendix A), an interview questionnaire (see Appendix, E), and a self-address envelope to return the signed Information to Consent form. The study utilized Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam Method and Nvivo 9® qualitative data analysis software to analyze the interview data obtained from the participants of the study.

Chapter 4 presented the analysis of data derived from conducted research participants' interviews, and described the specific emerged themes and patterns revealed in the data analysis process. Nine major themes emerged from the collected and analyzed data using semi-structured audiotaped interviews and Nvivo 9® qualitative data analysis software. The data from 15 face-to-face interviews with managerial employees from diverse functions working for companies operating in diverse industries in South Florida were presented through tables and textural descriptions.

The intent of all phenomenological research is to make heard the underrepresented voice, and to expand, add value, and redefine assessment (Pistrang, Picciotto, & Barker, 2011). The synopses of responses encapsulated the essence of the voices of the respondents pertaining to their lived experiences under conditions of change. The voices and perspectives of respondents integrate the firsthand knowledge of the managers that participated in the study and provided insights about the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and improve performance, and how to regain marketing influence to lead and implement change to improve organizational performance.

In Chapter 5, the investigator presents the study findings, the analysis of the data, and the core themes that emerged from the data; summarizing interpretations and suggesting recommendations based on the results obtained from the completed research. The results were obtained from semi-structured face-to-face interviews conducted with the study participants, using an open-ended questionnaire with nine items pertaining to the research question: What is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance? The research question was intended to support appropriately the purpose of this investigation, and to gain an understanding from the experiential perceptions of

managers about a central phenomenon; the loss of marketing influence. The question design set the activity mode and mood for open and honest sharing of lived experiences as seen through the eyes of the participant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The objective of the investigator in Chapter 5 is to present and interpret conclusions drawn from the literature review, the methodology, and the analysis of data.

Conclusions

Identified gaps in the literature and unresolved professional inquiries undergoing organizational changes sometimes as a marketing manager and other times as a sales manager motivated an academic and personal interest to explore for an understanding of marketing loss of influence to lead and implement change to improve performance. Verhoef and Leeflang claimed their 2009 Dutch study was the second empirical investigation in a decade to inquire about the influence and loss of influence of marketing within the firm. Pertaining to extant literature about the loss of influence of marketing Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) stated, "Many statements about the role of marketing in modern firms remain anecdotal or journalistic" (p. 15). The aforementioned conclusive remarks indicated a possible 10 years empirical research gap. A scholarship-practice gap has been attributed to the perception of a loss of marketing influence; the connection between marketing scholarship and marketing practice appeared weak (Brown, 2005).

The current study conducted a qualitative research using a phenomenological design to explore, describe, and explain the loss of marketing influence to lead change and improve performance in a group of diverse companies operating in scattered industries in South Florida. The sample population comprised 15 managerial employees working full time in health care, health insurance, real estate, banking, finance and medical devices and instruments. The data

collection strategy consisted of semi-structured face-to-face open-ended interviews with a convenient sample of employees who volunteered to participate in the study (Creswell, 2003). The research question guided the kind of data intended for collection and restricted the interpretation and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

The devised problem stated was addressed using the results of the research study; factors leading to avoid a loss of marketing leadership were identified. The purpose statement was addressed using the results of the research study. The current qualitative phenomenological study informed through exploring and describing lived experiences of the 15 managerial employees who participated about the level of influence of marketing leadership. In essence, the participants' perceptions about the degree of loss in marketing influence over decisions that could affect organizational change and performance across functions. The central research question, what is the impact of the loss of marketing leadership influence in leading change and improving organizational performance was answered through the emergent themes identified from participants' responses. The loss of organizational sustainability led the response following a cycle of marketing leadership initiatives including motivation, preparation, implementation, delivery, and informing evidence to continue leading.

Emergent Themes

The van Kaam method of phenomenological data analysis modified by Moustakas (1994) and Nvivo 9® qualitative data analysis software were used to identify emerging themes and patterns from the data collected. The investigator expected that consistent themes would emerge from the interview process; the investigator arrived to a point of saturation of the qualitative data being collected determining that further data would result in redundant conclusions. The results

show (see Table 12) the emergent themes, for question 1 is consumer orientation as the type of prevalent organizational culture with a response frequency of eight. The emergent theme for question 2 (see Table 12) is value of change consensus as the variable that influences interactions in changing conditions once there is agreement about the value of the change with a frequency of 11.

The emergent theme for question 3 (see Table 12) is strong management functional collaboration directive as the inducing collaborative value variable with a frequency of 10. The emergent themes for question 4 are financial performance, and motivation and preparation as leading factors that influence change across functions with a response frequency of nine for each. The emergent theme for question 5 is recognition of respect for marketing leadership image with a frequency of 10.

The emergent theme for question 6 (see Table 12) is marketing influences cross-functional decision process with a frequency of 10. The emergent theme for question 7 is to evidence marketing value with a frequency of 13. The emergent them for question 8 is a threat to reputation and sustainability with a frequency of 13. The emergent themes for question nine are revenue growth, customer satisfaction, and educated unified employee and improve communities with a frequency of eight for each theme.

Question 1 theme: Consumer orientation. Question 1 was, "Based on your experience, how would you describe the organization and its culture in your role as a functional manager?" The emergent theme was consumer orientation eight out of 15 (53%) participants in the study believed a consumer orientation identified their organizational culture. Deshpandé and Webster (1989) argued that organizational culture could be considered a knowledge system from the marketing perspective. Culture as a knowledge system explains the reasons for situations

that emerge and the form they may take in diverse organizations. A market orientation is critical to adapt quickly to changes and secure financial success; a diminished level of marketing influence and functional respect among senior managers may affect organizational performance (Connolly, 2008; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998; Moorman & Rust, 1999).

Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) confirmed the influence of marketing in a company's market orientation and the latter relative association with positive firm performance. A market-oriented culture represents an antecedent of marketing influence, a signal of support from top management and their recognition of the functional contribution of marketing. The investigator expected from professional experience that a market orientation was a necessary ingredient to the survival of marketing leadership in an organization. A consumer-oriented culture theme led a string of themes that show consistency resonating with the problem, purpose, and the research question.

Question 2 theme: Value of change consensus. Question 2 was "Based on your experience, what examples best describe interactions within your own function and with other functions when responding to changing conditions" The emergent theme was the value of change consensus. As shown in Table 4, 11 out of 15 (73%) participants thought that arriving at a consensus about the value of change improve interactions among like-minded people making decisions as a team about adapting to changing conditions. Team-oriented organizations facilitate interactions within each function and with other functions when there is a decision consensus about the value of change. The team adopts and adapts to change when strong management leads the change.

To marshal marketing strategies, marketers must take advantage of functional interdependence and increase the frequency of marketing interactions in its operating

environments (Ford & Hakansson, 2006; Lenox, Rockart, & Lewin, 2006). Interactions

transform interdependent resources into capabilities (Lenox et al., 2006). Resources and

functional capabilities add value to changes and exchanges between interacting functions.

The degree of involvement of a function interacting with other functions to cope with

change is one of three conditions that fuel participation, increase positional power, and increase

influence across functions (Hickson et al., 1971). Marketing could promote positive interactions

during changing conditions using contingent control (CC), a strategy that induces compliance

and change of a transient nature and demands minimum effort. CC is oriented toward

assertiveness, sanctions, and upward appeal. Gentle persuasion (GP) is another strategy that

induces internalization and adherence to strategic changes however, CC scores higher for

horizontal (lateral) influence even when managers are unsure peers across functions would

comply (Leong et al., 2007).

Question 3 theme: Strong management functional collaboration directive. Question

3 was, "Based on your experience, how would you describe the perceived value from inter-

functional collaboration that promotes change, its implementation, and adoption to improve

performance?" As shown in Table 5, 10 out of 15 (67%) participants believe that the perceived

value from inter-functional collaboration was a consequence of strong management leadership

directing the collaborative efforts through communications and incentives to get the job done.

Participant R6 described "So the value within the company from inter-functional collaboration is

also a steering top down model, which means the cross-functional communication to promote

changes and so on, is also a top down so is not so much communication on the horizontal level.

Collaboration takes place just in a day-to-day business; because we seat together and meet

together, and speak about day-to-day business issues. If there are changes of course, we have to

adapt to them but mainly there are centralized, top down, and we have to see how we can implement; it so it is the kind of not steering or been in the driver seat, it is more a kind of reaction".

In top down organizations, acquiring and using lateral influence skills, may be the only mean to clear the red tape path to implement effective change (Enns & McFarlin, 2004). One of the most common functions of a leader is to direct the decision-making process. The contribution of value of the marketing function in a transactional leadership role is that of a subunit that could provide valued resources with no close substitutes on which others are dependent.

Inter-functional collaboration involved multiple constituents with diverging or conflicting objectives, which makes it difficult to generate value from each function to another, and to bring them together as a group required a high level of cooperation (Fang, Palmatier, Scheer, & Li, 2008). The functional influence of marketing has been found more apparent in organizational environments in which rational or political decision-making models apply. One of the most common political splits in organizations was found between functional units (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007).

Question 4 themes: Financial performance, motivation, and preparation. Question 4 was, "Based on your experience, what factors influence change across functions?" As shown in Table 6, nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that revenue growth, market share increase, and profit budgets are leading factors that influence change across functions. As also shown in Table 6, nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that motivation and preparation are incentives to influence change across functions, and reduce change uncertainty about qualifying, and job loss. Pertaining to financial factors Homburgh et al. (1999) argued that contingency

factors could influence whether senior management would pressure functional processes for change towards a cost-leadership strategy or a differentiation strategy. Marketing influence ranked higher under change demanding differentiation strategies, which bring innovative leadership, competitive advantages, and core competencies although are perceived as long-term investments (Stewart, 2006; Stringfellow & Jap, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010)

Revenue, market share, and budgeted margins are short-term measures of quarterly financial performance but also are indications of stockholders and senior management professional discipline and attitudes towards uncertainty (Anderson, 2003). Stockholders' demand for higher and frequent stock dividend payout and CEOs with finance or operation backgrounds favored sales revenue maximization (Anderson, 2003; Homburgh, 1999). Management remuneration, job security, and prestige underlines pressing for short-term revenue gains with satisfactory profit for operational stability and control rather than profit maximization levels that may not occur again (Anderson, 2003; Baumol, 1967). Market-based assets and marketing capabilities are intangible assets and sources of competitive advantage recognized to influence potential cash flows, and contribute to business capitalization (Fornell et al., 2006; Gupta et al., 2004; Joshi & Hanssens, 2004; Ramaswami, Srivastava, & Bhargava, 2008). Building customer satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability are long-term strategic marketing objectives, which have fallen second to operational perspectives such as outsourcing that are financially driven based on expected demand increases with reduced prices (Webster, 2006).

Manager across functions are affected by diverse sources of internal or external uncertainties that trigger change, a need for financial stability is one of them. Research participants recognized change as a factor vital to the development of an organization, and because change is, ubiquitous participants spoke at ease about change and changing conditions.

Nine out of 15 (60%) participants believed that motivation and preparation are incentives to influence adopting and adapting to change across functions, and reduce change uncertainty about qualifying, and job loss. Employee's change readiness is a factor to support effective and successful organization changes (Shah, 2008).

Participants suggested cross-functional training, frequent meetings, and marketing communications in advance to initiatives implementation; change agents (OD) that limit intervention to the specific change situation may perceive an employee active role of a positive readiness to change attitude based on financial needs and fail to perceive an employee passive role about change readiness based on psychological needs (Shah, 2008). A commitment to company, and career, an ongoing socialization processes, and demographics have a positive impact on employee readiness to organizational changes (Shah, 2008; Nonaka & Nishiguchi, 2001).

Question 5 theme: Recognition of respect for marketing leadership image. Question 5 was, "Based on your experience, how do you perceive the image of marketing leadership and respect within organizational functions and before senior management?" As shown in Table 7, 10 out of 15 (67%) participants believed that organizational functions and senior management in their organizations have respect for the marketing function and its leadership. The positive response to this question contrasts with Webster (2006) argument that in times of rapid changes failing to lead organizational changes appears to have diminished the role of marketing effectiveness and credibility. O'Sullivan and Abella (2010) posited that marketing contributions to business performance historically has earned marketing credibility and respect among senior managers, and enhanced marketing influence across functions.

Huth and Speh (2007) affirmed the customer advocacy role of marketing contributed to advance marketing influence and centrality across hierarchical levels and departments within business-to-business (B2B) organizations. A market oriented culture and marketing leadership exercise of managerial competencies and a relative influence initiating, developing, nurturing, and sustaining a healthy network of relationships within the firm, and with customers allow the marketing function to lead and maintain cross-functional influence. To extend the argument Verhoef and Leeflang (2010) asserted that firms must maintain a strong and influential marketing department in addition to a market orientation. The varying role of marketing seems to indicate that marketing is a function in transition as organizational leadership shifts from sales growth to market share, from revenue to company growth, from product to consumer orientations, from short to long-term horizons, and from profits to sustainability.

Question 6 theme: Marketing influences cross-functional decision processes.
Question 6 was, "Based on your experience, how would you describe marketing influence in the decision-making process of functions facing changing conditions to improve performance?" As shown in Table 8, 11 out of 15 (73%) participants believe that marketing influences decision-making processes in sales and other functions through information, marketing tools, demand increase, and adapting to market changing conditions. Participants provided specific descriptions of how marketing influences cross-functional decisions in the face of change affecting performance. People are in a comfort zone when change strikes and the unknown sets in but a sound marketing strategy communicated and sold across functions encourages the lagging function to step up and out of the comfort zone for change implementation. Cross training, educational tools, and implementation mechanisms for market services via technology, people, and incentives let people perform with the right skills and confidence.

Marketing has shared expert knowledge about consumer behavior and management, established a market orientation, and customer-centric culture, and ceded marketing functions to other operational groups (Bunderson, 2003; Stewart, 2006).

Inter-functional groups defer to the expert group decision-making power, and collaborate to achieve organizational goals when most members of a group share high performance expectations about a particular group (Bunderson, 2003). Marketing is a function that could use its people's experiences, expertise, and knowledge associated with customers and their behavior to influence organizational decisions about the customer, and market changes (Bunderson, 2003; Wind, 2006). A consumer-oriented culture appears to a fertile ground for marketing to retain or regain influence over decision-making processes of organizational functions that perceived marketing as the customer advocate.

Question 7 theme: To evidence marketing value. Question 7 was, "Based on your experience, what factors could be associated with winning cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes to improve performance?" As shown in Table 9, 13 out of 15 (87%) participants believed that the evidence of value in terms of revenue growth, company reputation, customer satisfaction, budget efficiencies, work benefits, and a teamship orientation including bottom up opinions were factors that promoted cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes, which may require for marketing leadership to change too. Participants provided specific responses to this question that seemed to have been lacking often in their thinking about supporting marketing efforts. Participants expected marketing to anticipate changes, share the information, motivate and prepare the affected functions starting with their leaders, and show the results and benefits accrued to those involved in a universal language.

Recent organizational research shows a marketing function underrepresented and undervalued as an organizational rainmaker (Brown, 2005; Parsons & Maclaran, 2009; Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). The ability of marketing managers to document their contribution to the value of the firm through functional interactions and influence on decision making, innovations, and performance continues to be a questionable issue. A recent study from O'Sullivan and Abella (2010) reported "senior management teams spend less than 10% of their time discussing marketing issues and are often dissatisfied with marketing contribution" (p. 42).

The perceived marketing inability to be accountable for business performance has diminished the function's status and discretionary expending power (O'Sullivan & Abella, 2010; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2010). Such image undermines marketing executives' influence on decision-making processes to drive change and improve performance (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006, p. 230). Marketing managers' inability to account for their contribution to the organization top and bottom lines has diminished marketing influence, credibility, and respect within the firm; specifically with senior management, and across leading functions (Brown, 2005; O'Sullivan & Abella, 2007; Stewart, 2006; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, 2010). Marketing executives have a stake in measuring their performance and regain the ability to provide feedback to senior leadership (Stewart, 2006). Individual compensation, promotion, and departmental budgets depend on management capabilities to measure productivity and effectiveness (Clark, Abella, & Ambler, 2006).

Question 8 theme: A threat to reputation and sustainability. Question 8 was, "Based on your experience, what would be the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and implement change to improve performance?" As shown in Table 10, 13 out of 15 (87%) participants believed the loss of marketing influence to lead change and implement it to improve

performance threatens a company's reputation and market performance sustainability. The investigator felt a sense of loss in the voices of respondents and gestures of dismissal of such idea in terms of their positions and company's good will some even went as far as predicting the consequences for the industry.

Participants' comments on functional disorientation and operating blind folded led some to wonder about the purpose for marshalling organizational changes to improve market performance in the absence of marketing leadership. Respondent R11 argued, " The impact would be high if the marketing…if marketing will lose influence if the marketing message is incorrect, and if the people inside don't agree with the marketing message and the marketing strategy; then there is no way that that message will ever fly outside of the company." In the investigator's years of organizational exposure as a marketing professional such potential organizational change from the demise of a people's function never emerged including in organizations in which sales was dominant; marketing was institutionalized but not dead. Brown (2005) argued marketing as a function faces a threat of extinction or an increasingly reduced role in strategic planning unless marketing executives find ways to be accountable, show their influence on innovations, and lead in customer connectedness.

Question 9 theme: Revenue, customer satisfaction, education, and community.
Question 9 was, "Based on your experience, what suggestions would you make to measure marketing's contribution to organizational change, change implementation, and improving organizational performance?" As shown in Table 11, eight out of 15 (53%) participants believed that growth of revenues, customer satisfaction, and educated, informed, unified employees, and betterment of communities in which the company operates are measures of the contribution of marketing to organizational change, its implementation, and firm's performance. Revenue

growth is a metric that accounts for quantitative contributions to short-term financial performance.

As discussed in the theme for question 4, revenue increase is subject to perceived mandates in functional budget commitments and concern with individual performance particularly in sales, distribution, customer service, and telemarketing areas. Webster (2006) argued that building customer satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability are long-term strategic marketing objectives, which have fallen second to operational perspectives that are financially driven. The aforementioned long-term strategic objectives of marketing leadership are linked to a firm's sustainability, a concept many chief executive officers are still not recognizing however, is a principle that led General Electric in 2003 to a sustainability strategy that restored marketing to the driver seat in strategic actions (Comstock, Gulati, & Liguori, 2010).

Marketing is essential in dynamic environments in which customer requirements change rapidly, competition is intense, and created value in the market offer must be evident to the customer. The recognition of value-adding opportunities is a company-wide effort that requires marketing influence over other functional areas of the firm (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). Customer equity although a key marketing metric should be part of performance metrics across functions linked to customer satisfaction. An organization with a consumer-oriented culture could be driven toward customer-focused activities, responsive to customer needs learned from need detection, and the monitoring of consumer levels of satisfaction.

Under the customer-centric frame, marketing as a function and a process extended beyond its boundaries, and ceded some market activities to sales, finance, and operations as part of functional interdependence (Brown, 2005; Moorman & Rust, 1999). Homburg and Grunner (1998) coined the shift a "cross-functional dispersion of marketing activities," (p. 180). The

dispersion of the marketing role, which could shrink marketing domain, could increase also marketing influence (Greyser, as cited in Moorman & Rust, 1999).

"Marketing succeeds only when all departments work together to achieve goals" (Keller & Kotler, 2006, p. 301). To educate, inform, unify employees, and improve communities that consume and live where the firm operates; marketing focuses or should focus on internal and external marketing. Marketing communicates and drives the vision, mission, and strategic goals and must ensure cross-functional harmony; everyone must understand, accept, and implement changes that would improve performance (Keller & Kotler, 2006). Internal marketing includes hiring, training and motivating employees to serve customers and market effectively, a unified internal marketing effort improves the effectiveness of external marketing initiatives (Keller & Kotler, 2006).

A customer-oriented culture is a central phenomenon in the integration and alignment process of internal marketing that involves bottom-up and top-down organizational participation. Marketing strong management leadership is required to centralize and coordinate functional synergies that lead toward insightful understanding of consumers, ongoing consumer relationships with the company, and product and service innovations (Keller & Kotler, 2006).
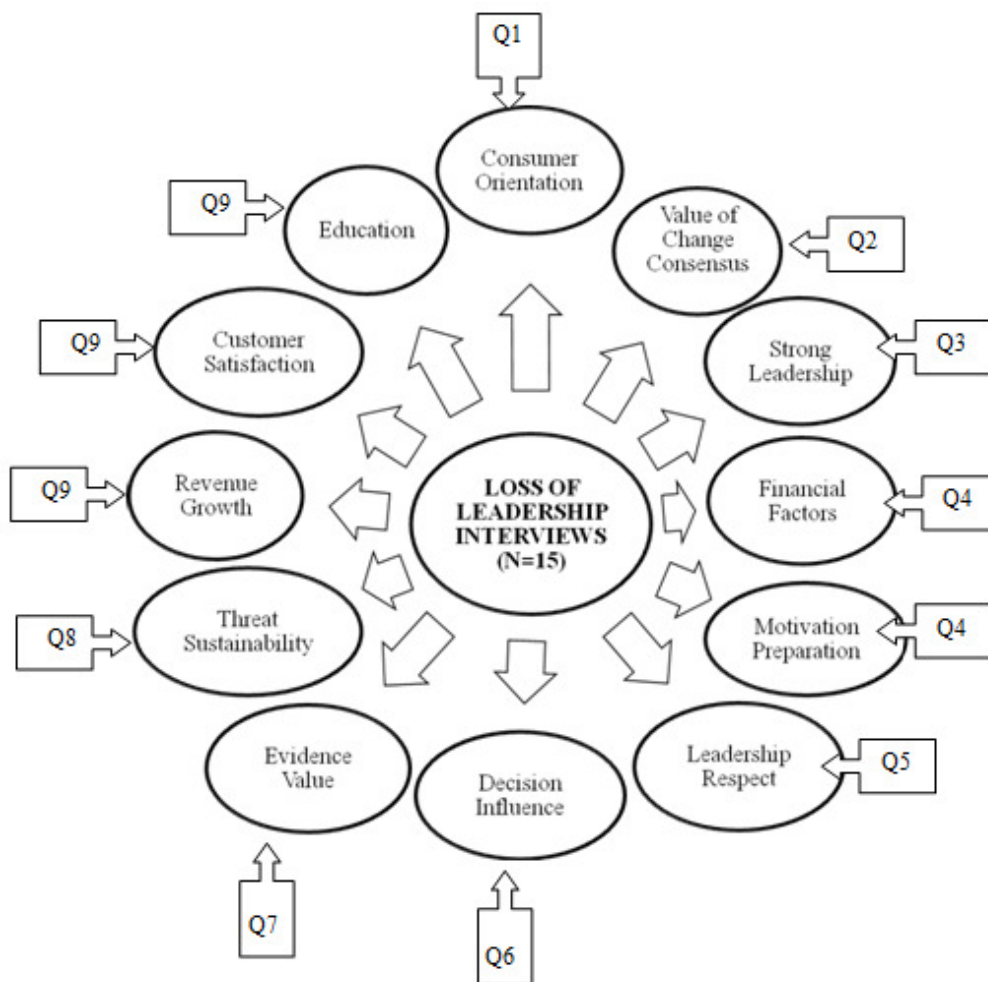
Figure 1. Nine major themes derived from participants responses to the interview questionnaire.

External marketing includes stakeholders affected by marketing initiatives framed within legal, ethical, social, and environmental contexts. Senior leadership and marketing managers face challenges balancing conflicting criteria of performing for profits, customer satisfaction, and public interests. The multidimensional accountability of marketing may require other than financial metrics.

Relevant themes. Insightful recognition by participants led to identifying the most important themes: The presence of a customer-oriented culture as a fertile environment for marketing leadership, the need for a cross-functional collaborative consensus about the value of

change, and an active strong leadership influence. A confirmation of marketing leadership image of respect by senior management and marketing influence in cross-functional decision-making in their firms; the need for evidencing value of marketing output internally and externally to size marketing performance, and in how marketing loss of leadership threatens organizational sustainability. Sustainability comprises a set of actions taken by marketing executives linked to sustainability factors such as growth, customer retention, and lifetime value of customers (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Hussain & Hoque, 2002).

The leading themes (see Figure 1) with the highest and identical frequencies are linked to two major current corporate concerns sustainability and accountability (Bunderson, 2003; Bush, 2008; Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Greenwood & Miller, 2010; Hussain & Hoque, 2002; Moorman & Rust, 1999; O'Sullivan & Abella 2006; Park & Auh, 2009; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The majority of respondents (87%) to the research question (Question 8) concurred that a loss of marketing leadership was a threat to the reputation and sustainability of their firms and that evidence of marketing value was a leading factor associated with obtaining cross-functional support to lead (Question 7).

Theme rationale. These themes encapsulate the essence of the problem and research question through the fulfillment of the purpose of this research study. The responses met the burden of derivation from the interview questions, the sincerity, accuracy, and trustworthiness of participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The triangulation of data from interviews, observations, and the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods, and researchers in the study of this topic assisted to add consistency, comprehensiveness, and robustness to this study, and facilitated the comparison of results with the literature reviewed.

The investigator felt compelled to search for identifiable features of the status of marketing leadership after authors in the reviewed literature emphasized the importance of marketing in terms of marketing orientation and its influence over organizational performance (Homburgh, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The investigator explored research gaps implicating the loss of marketing leadership to influence change and its implementation to improve the operational performance of the marketing unit and the organization. The investigator thought the results from the current study could contribute to improve the performance of selected South Florida companies found willing to participate in the research. The results showed that most of the participating companies experienced a loss of some marketing influence affecting cross-functional decision-making, some of the agility to respond to changing conditions, and some failure to attain inter-functional support for change implementation to improve performance.

The majority of respondents (87%) to the research question (Question 8) concurred that a loss of marketing leadership was a threat to the reputation and sustainability of their firms and that evidence of marketing value was a leading factor associated with obtaining cross-functional support to lead (Question 7). The themes identified provide a framework that may guide the participating companies into holistic marketing practices but could also narrow the scholarship-practice gap (Brown, 2005). Brown (2005) argued that marketing scholarship could be contributing more to business practices; the connection between marketing scholarship and marketing practice appears weak. Business organizations must work closely with academics to develop relevant ideas about applications for a multi-dimensional market environment (Brown, 2005). Scholars however, are not the only ones pressed to shed some light about marketing transition and customer ownership; business practitioners are under pressure to comply with

financial transparency and accountability reporting, which includes marketing investments and expenditures (Clark, Abella, & Ambler 2006).

The investigator admits the extant research is clearly not sufficient to address the multidimensional aspects the loss of marketing leadership engages across corporations undergoing different situation, and operating in diverse contexts. Stringfellow and Jap (2006) "believed that marginalization of the marketing function is a grave and serious mistake" (p. 230). Verhoef and Leeflang (2010) argued that firms must maintain a strong and influential marketing department in addition to a market orientation. O'Sullivan and Abella (2010) and Verhoef and Leeflang (2010) believed that the status of marketing influence is a critical issue that deserves further research. The investigator following the thoughts of Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) who stated, "Many statements about the role of marketing in modern firms remain anecdotal or journalistic" (p. 15); believes that more independent empirical evidence and academic research to address marketing leadership role, structure, philosophy, and contexts would improve current knowledge.

The senior management and functional manager of the firms the study participants perform might be able to select and combine any of the identified themes and factors believed to avoid the loss of marketing influence but maximize its influence to lead change and implement it to improve organizational performance. Homburg, Workman, and Krohmer (1999) could not account in 1997 for the level and determinants of relative influence of marketing within the firm. The absence of empirical research presented a significant gap in understanding the factors that could lead to variations in marketing influential leadership role. The results from this study may contribute to narrow such gap. Webster (2005a) noted that marketing management in customer-

oriented and learning organizations was an indispensable function to lead with maximum influence and control over American businesses.

Research Contribution Summary

In closing, the results from this study affirms the need for a strong marketing management leadership a structural factor questioned by Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) the second and last research on the decrease of marketing influence within the firm. The same authors argued that marketing has a limited role and no influence on cross-functional decision-making; the research results indicate that marketing influences decisions across functions and has a critical role in the sustainability of the organization. The findings from this study offer other perspectives to the general conceptualization about the steep decline of the marketing function and diminished influence at the corporate strategic level.

The argument about senior management having no respect for marketing and functions having a tainted image of its leadership found no shelter in this research study based on respondent beliefs that a leadership image of marketing and senior management respect is apparent. The results support the need for evidence of market contribution to performance amply argued by most authors in the literature. The influence of a market-oriented culture on the customer-focused attitude of respondents even in those who did not use marketing efforts because they were not delivered timely is an indication of marketing influence within the firm, and a concern with customer connectedness. The latter was another issue reflecting a reduced role of marketing influence in strategic planning accused in the literature.

The respondents' belief that a loss of marketing leadership would be a disaster and a threat to sustainability is a compelling recognition of the currency of marketing leadership among the interviewed responses. The responses represent statement of confidence in a leading

function; respondents could not conceive operating without despite operating in industries undergoing extreme structural and regulated reform. The investigator is extremely satisfied with the lived experience of conducting this research, the challenging and stimulating learning process and the realization that the conclusions may have positive implications for business leaders in industries in transition; add to narrowing gaps in the literature, and may compel other investigators to further the modest set of findings offered in this research.

Investigator Reflections

The research was conducted attentive to overcoming possible personal bias as a research instrument and from close involvement observing, listening, interpreting, and appraising meaning, by avoiding leading participants, being truthful in the interpretations, recognizing possible personal bias, and focusing on documenting just those feelings and perceptions shared by participants. Inviting participants to interpret transcripts for accuracy and adding their insights aided to limit the investigator bias (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The investigator background as a former marketing executive of Fortune 500 companies in diverse industries involving medical products and equipment, health care, pharmaceuticals, real estate, and finance demanded bracketing; he investigator's bias was suspended as well as the knowledge and notions about the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen & Daniels, 2004).

The investigator sought to understand perceptions of individuals forming a convenient sample of study, and elaborate pertinent theories drawn from perspectives described in the conducted face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2005). The phenomenological design permitted the investigator to be flexible, and adapt the direction of the research when the data collected warranted a change (Moustakas, 1994; Neuman, 2006), fortunately such situation was not present and method and design remain consistent with the original problem, purpose, and

research question. The core assumption in this study was implied in the research question about the impact of the loss of marketing influence to lead change and its implementation to improve performance. The assumptions about the objectivity of the investigator; including recognizing the author as a seasoned executive engaged in organizational management and leadership, who will observe, interview, and interpret data with bias.

In this study, respondents were limited to individuals who had the time and inclination to participate. Time constraints also imposed a limit on the number of participants. Sampling from few cities and structures of subsets of large firms posed some limitations. South Florida however, offered a diverse sample population for examining marketing roles, levels of influence on change, and corporate performance in various industries. Assumptions about data included expectations of accurate and valid data to archive from the research, and accurate data interpretation that reflected the intended meaning of participants. The investigator expected that consistent themes would emerge from the interview process; the investigator arrived to a point of saturation of the qualitative data being collected determining that further data would result in redundant conclusions.

The origin of the problem, purpose, and research question emerged when the investigator felt compelled to search for identifiable features of the status of marketing leadership after authors in the reviewed literature emphasized the importance of marketing in terms of marketing orientation and its influence over organizational performance (Homburgh, Workman, & Krohmer, 1999; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The investigator explored research gaps implicating the loss of marketing leadership to influence change and its implementation to improve the operational performance of the marketing unit and the organization. The investigator thought the results from a research study in prevailing industries

operating locally could contribute to improve the performance of selected South Florida companies found willing to participate in the research.

The investigator confronted emotional moments shared during the interview process. As shown in Table 10, 13 out of 15 (87%) participants believed the loss of marketing influence to lead change and implement it to improve performance threatens a company's reputation and market performance sustainability. The investigator felt a sense of loss in the voices of these respondents and their gestures of dismissal of such idea; in terms of their positions and company's good will, some even went as far as predicting disastrous consequences for the industry. In the investigator's years of organizational exposure as a marketing professional such potential organizational changes from the demise of an organizational function never emerged including in organizations in which sales was dominant; marketing was institutionalized but not dead.

The results showed that most of the participating companies experienced a loss of some marketing influence affecting cross-functional decision-making, some of the agility to respond to changing conditions, and some failure to attain inter-functional support for change implementation to improve performance. The respondents' belief that a loss of marketing leadership would be a disaster and a threat to sustainability was a compelling recognition of the currency of marketing leadership among the interviewed responses. The high percentage of respondents that rejected the idea of a loss of marketing leadership to lead change surprised and impressed the investigator. The responses represented statements of confidence in a leading function respondents could not conceive operating without despite operating in industries undergoing extreme structural and regulated reform.

In Figure 2, the investigator presents a leadership marketing cycle based on the leading themes discovered in this research. Figure 2 encapsulates the concepts described in the conclusions section. The schema design in Figure 2, could keep marketing in a loop to sustain leadership of the change process captured from the essence of themes discovered in this research.
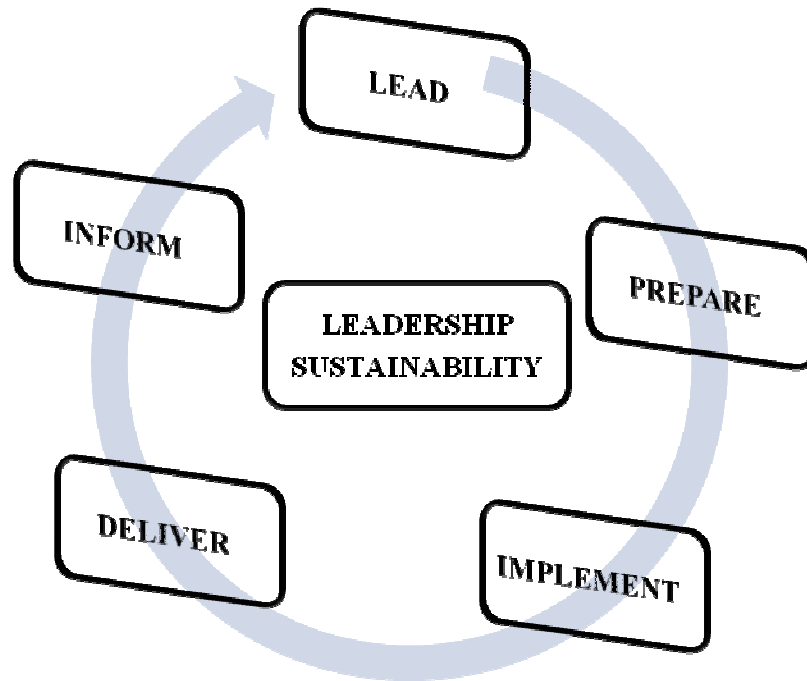
Figure 2. Leadership marketing cycle based on the leading themes.

The marketing leadership cycle (see Figure 2) is an ideographic model drawn from the synopsis of responses addressing consistent stages for marketing leadership sustainability as senior leadership and functions follow the path marked by the discovered themes in Figure 1. The themes in Figure 1 could guide senior leadership and cross-functional management to recognize marketing as support hub for each function consumer focus in an integrative fashion. The leadership appreciation for marketing as a cross-functional support hub may bring improvements in the way marketing contribution is perceived. Senior management may initiate

a renewal process that includes communicating the value of changes across functions, and evidencing leadership commitment to the preparation of human resources toward a unified learning organization serving the market and the community. Marketing could recover some of the loss leadership and regain its strength and rightful place in these organizations.

The investigator is extremely satisfied with the lived experience of conducting this research, the challenging and stimulating learning process, and the realization that the conclusions may have positive implications for business leaders in industries in transition. The possibility that research results could add to narrowing gaps in the literature, and may compel other investigators to further the modest set of findings offered in this research.

Themes impact on leadership

Business leaders in health care, health insurance, banking and finance, real estate, and medical equipment need to recognize that institutionalized operational practices and behavioral attitudes in companies do not change as fast as changes occur in the marketplace to anticipate and respond with agile strategies, to meet competitive performance demands or to develop core competencies timely to compete effectively. Institutional theory holds that business practices and organizational structures appear institutionalized when they remain in place after found inefficient (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This reality is a challenge to extant leadership paradigms in the aforementioned industries as the currency of health care, health insurance, real estate, mortgages, and banking and finance issues and unresolved conflicts seem to indicate. Functional silos do not reward coordination or joint accountability and sustainability has become a stakeholders' concern in the above industries; substantive reform is underway including an overhaul of policies and procedures that require different leadership and organizational structural design (Deloitte, 2012; Hackbarth, 2009).

Marketing managers could take advantage of the interactive nature of the marketing function, which implies adaptation to internal, external, and institutional contingencies (Homburgh et al., 1999; Verhoef & Leeflang, 2010) to seize a leadership opportunity as the expert function in leading changes from industry reform processes. Inter-functional groups defer to the expert group decision-making power, and collaborate to achieve organizational goals when most members of a group share high performance expectations about a particular group (Bunderson, 2003). Effective leaders fashion their behavior by anticipating and reacting to followers' needs and other situational demands (Antonakis & House, 2002).

In contingency theory, external factors moderate strategy related constructs and leadership behavior. Homburgh et al. (1999) found that external factors associated with marketing influence were identifiable in frequent and unpredictable market-related changes and competitive strategic actions. Leadership influence and power went to functions that gained centrality by the ability to cope with critical environmental uncertainties (Hickson et al., 1971).

In highly competitive environments, technical competence in products may be insufficient to ensure profitability (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). The expertise of marketing to create value in the perception of consumers is a functional competitive advantage that is applicable to internal marketing (Stringfellow & Jap, 2006). The organic function of marketing increases its exposure as a group leader that takes risks when responding to internal and external environmental changes and thus increasing its degree of influence (Ganesan et al., 2004).

The research results indicate that marketing did not seem to have lost its leadership image, senior management respect or its voice in influencing cross-functional decision-making. Marketing relative influence was not low either in horizontal process-based organizational forms.

These conclusions to the investigator's surprise contain strong similarities with those drawn by Homburgh et al. in 1999; the first study done on the level of marketing influence within the firm. The reform process affecting the industries represented in this study is not yet fully in place, which provides senior leaders an opportunity to support marketing initiatives to lead; preparing change teams to communicate at the functional level the value of change focused on creating value for the customer, and thus reinforcing a customer-oriented culture (Ramaswami et al., 2008). Performing organizations speak the language of marketing leadership, expressing it through a customer-oriented culture and customer-centric activities embedded in non-marketing functions, such as operations and finance (Stewart, 2006).

The study's results may contribute to highlight a new organizational form of marketing leadership. A non-siloed lateral leadership that could play a central role in interpreting for senior management the strategic approach to a new hierarchy of regulated markets, informed, protected customers, and determine the capability of the organization to participate in potentially profitable stages of niche markets, and value chain when outsourcing for superior performance (Stewart, 2006). The discoveries from the current study may increase the understanding by senior management of the leadership role they play when enhancing credibility and respect for value contributions from marketing (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

An assessment of results could bring new knowledge to leaders of the participating South Florida companies that operate in diverse industries about increasing customer-centric connectedness. The results may provide valuable insights about commitment to improve the delivery of value to customers and evidencing it to employees. The results may motivate to assess qualitatively marketing contribution to the value of the firm to avoid the loss of marketing

leadership, and place organizational sustainability at risk when limiting accountability to short-term performance measures (Lundberg, 2006; Stewart, 2006).

Marketing managers across participating companies have a unique opportunity to exercise strong management leadership to influence, motivating the action of others to achieve transformational goals separate from the assumed maintenance function of marketing management, which is subject to short-term performance metrics, and budget accountability (Bush, 2008). The integration of this study's results with other research discoveries could add to leadership theory in the area of cross-functional influence on decision-making, distributed, and adaptive leadership for change, and performance improvement. Possible integration of findings may help to reclaim marketing leadership, and may even bring marketing to a new level in customer relationship management (Perks, 2007; Stewart, 2006). The author recognized however, that it might be difficult given the scholarship-practice gap (Brown, 2005) to find scholarly evidence testifying that marketing by the standards of most marketing researchers is not a discipline in crisis, and is not in steep decline.

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Recommendations

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From the research

To leadership. Leadership in the participating companies managing businesses in health care, health insurance, banking and finance, real estate, and medical equipment manufacturing and service sectors could learn from the thematic analysis about tacit beliefs people they lead have in common (Moustakas, 1994). The legacy of marketing in their companies is a consumer-oriented culture, an environment in which open and honest communication needs to be consistent and clear to enhance employee readiness for unpredictable and inevitable change. Leaders need to articulate a clear vision, mission, and goals and drive consonant initiatives that evidence to

employees a concrete direction that has currency with internal capabilities, capacities, and external demands. The benefits that accrue from the implementation should be evident to every stakeholder to sustain ongoing unity across functional units and the supply chain.

The identified themes and the pressure from industry reforms provide senior leaders an opportunity to reflect upon the tacit perceptions managers and subordinates share about strategic directions, assumed change implementations, the distribution of benefits across stakeholders, and the status of the *esprit de corps*, and morale of the organization. The results suggest modification of a rational open structure toward a relational model based on trust and responsibility; a model holistic marketing initiatives could offer when senior management support is consistent and coherent; integrating short and long term planning and metrics in performance reviews. A leadership committed to the motivation and preparation of change-ready teams to communicate at the functional level the value of change focused on creating value for the customer and thus reinforcing a customer-oriented culture and the leadership of marketing in a learning organization (Ramaswami et al., 2008).

These leadership initiatives encapsulate the respondents answer to perceived collaborative value (Question 3) based on strong management leadership and to a consensus on the value of change (Question 2) and a consumer orientation (Question 1) also influenced by strong management leadership. Verhoef and Leeflang (2009) affirmed the importance of strong marketing management in the midst of an ongoing perception to the contrary; thinking marketing could sustain a market orientation and better organizational performance. The results overwhelmingly identified a loss of marketing leadership as a threat to sustainability, and a consequence of the treatment given to marketing contributions from the perspectives of

marketing shifting roles; roles assigned to marketing throughout the dispersion of prevailing marketing activities to other functions (Greyser, 1997; Lehman & Jocz, 1997).

Leadership could recognize that increasingly competitive and changing business environments challenge sustainability, propelling firms to seek innovations to make a difference, master financial efficiencies, and become problem solvers to add value to customers' offerings (Edgar & Lockwood, 2010). Marketers, who lead in these areas, play a role in transforming competencies for problem solving when dealing with continual change (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Edgar & Lockwood, 2010). Leadership could encourage marketing leadership as a problem solver and enhance its reputation and respect across functions. Leadership could reflect that, the role of marketing as "the guardian and guarantor of customer interests" lost its luster when marketing surrendered its strategic mission for tactical deployment to satisfy short-term financial metrics (Seth & Sisodia, 2007, p. 141). The influential role of marketing resided in developing innovative marketing concepts driven by customer needs to sustain the legitimacy of the company's market orientation, which leads to improve performance (Seth & Sisodia, 2007; Verhoef & Leeflang 2009).

Ramaswami, Srivastava, and Bhargava (2009) called for an assessment to fill a research gap of marketing leadership contribution in the implementation of organizational processes. Leadership could reflect on the assessed results, to help understand better how marketing capabilities influences market decision-making processes and others linked to financial performance, and the value of firms (Moorman & Rust, 1999). The contribution of marketing to the future direction of the firm may not appear in scorecards that exclude leading indicators (Gotts, 2009). Reports with historical (lagged) data obscure opportunities that lie ahead with

potential competitive advantages; the implementation of marketing initiatives across functions could be stalled when a leading vision is not shared among functional leaders (Gotts, 2009).

Senior management could improve assessments of marketing performance by recognizing leading and lagging indicators within technological and environmental contexts. Key performance indicators (KPIs) should be in alignment with the engaged marketing activity, which requires of senior management some level of familiarity to assess performance according to situational capabilities (Gotts, 2009). A management dashboard is a comprehensive tool recommended to report KPIs from management information systems to senior management (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). Senior management, shareholders, and finance could realize that marketing is an investment and not a cost center, the impact of marketing strategies is long-term whereas tactical strategies are short-term, that growth, customer retention, and lifetime value of customers are strategies not tactics linked to marketing accountability and sustainability. Change is a dynamic process, which may require different marketing leadership metrics and a focus on leading indicators that signal early change patterns and set the pace for adaptiveness (Gotts, 2009).

To ethics. Health care, health insurance, banking and finance, real estate, mortgages, and medical equipment services are in a reforming stage because of ethical issues affecting stockholders and stakeholders including the U. S. government with global ramifications (Deloitte, 2012; Federwisch, 2006; Hackbarth, 2009). These industries are regulated some more than others, and they are quite large encompassing an array of institutions and market segments with a common denominator they are highly profitable serving market segments in which consumers are not well versed (Federwisch, 2006). The results from the study indicate a leadership predilection for short-term focus in terms of revenue and unit performance; managers

with entrepreneurial and competency characteristics who lead these industries have "self-interests that sometimes morph into greed and selfishness" (Federwisch, 2006, p. 1).

The accumulation process influences a shift from strategic thinking to tactical practices, which trades long-term planning for short-term results; the underlying shift affects sustainability components such as growth, customer retention, and lifetime value of customers that are actions linked to marketing accountability (Gimzaukiene & Kloviene, 2008; Hussain & Hoque, 2002). Profit maximization and maximization of shareholder value are tenets propagated in business school and in management meetings that showed their influence among 60% of the participants who chose revenue growth as the leading factor for change. The pursuit of profit maximization and maximization of shareholder value could obscure the ethical risks also mentioned by participants in conjunction with revenue affecting moral and *esprit de corps* development. The ethical and moral impact could derive from "the failure to be taught, the failure to look beyond one's own perspective, and the lack of proper mentoring" (Duska, as cited in Federwisch, 2006, p. 2).

Management and marketing leadership have social responsibilities, internally to mentor employees to differentiate between legal and moral behavior recognizing the spirit of the law when following the letter of the law (Federwisch, 2006). In determining performance demands and compensation, management should not induce unethical behavior in the pursuit of the highest return some respondents alluded to such tacit directives. Marketing leadership in carrying on its internal and external marketing should encourage standards of business behavior as well as deliverable features and benefits of offerings avoiding backroom deals that may lead to corruption practices.

Marketing leadership could introduce a code of conduct and publish an ethics policy statement. The sensitivity of the participants' industries to that sort of contingencies requires avoiding "moral muteness" and "moral myopia" (Waller & Lanis, 2009). The results indicate a sincere concern of the participants for a sense of family, unification, identification with an organization of prestige, a good will that translates stability and reliable support in times of uncertainty.

For Further Research

A recommendation for further research includes replicating the research study using firms in consumer-packaged goods and information systems because of the contrast among business-to-business (B2B) and direct to consumer transactional structures. The recent study had a high concentration in B2B transactions and the persona of the end-user was diluted in the process of catering to physicians, nurses, companies, and channels who were not the recipient of the product itself. The study responses from participants might have been similar due to market proximities and structural complementarities. The choices for the final consumer are limited in health care, health insurance, banking and finance, real estate, mortgages, and medical equipment services and the consumer is subject to a qualifying process. Despite that, consumer information about service providers may be available, other choice limitations based on collective policies, discretionary income, and centralized regulations such as government-mandated health care would make the decision for the consumer.

Other research recommendations include assessing qualitative metrics for marketing performance, a theme argued for further research that could identify non-financial metrics to measure marketing performance. Measuring marketing creativity is an example of the difficulty in measuring marketing performance in the absence of developed reliable metrics for intangible

contributions. Marketing performance and productivity metrics appear as uppermost organizational priorities in several Marketing Science Institute biannual reports (Clark, Abella, & Ambler, 2006).

Another suggested research is determining the source of the lateral influence of marketing leadership; defining if the social power of marketing leadership influences more than the function's positional power to lead across and within functions. Narrowing the scholarly-practice gap with current academic evidence, that marketing by the standards of most academic marketing researchers is not a discipline in crisis, and is not in steep decline is another topic for further research. Perhaps marketing is just a discipline that will be always in transition as much as the dynamic environment in which it operates. After all, the basis for the claim that marketing is in decline and in crisis "remain anecdotal or journalistic" (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009, p. 15).

An additional and the last recommendation for further research is the impact of cultural diversity in the managing and subordinate population to perceive meaning-making influential behavior. Cultural disparities may have a drastic effect on successful integration affecting alignment, communications, followership, and performance (Bajaj, 2009). The leadership in the participants' firms and in other industries with similar features would benefit substantively from further comprehensive and innovative research to improve marketing leadership influence within the firm.

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study explored and described the lived experiences of functional managers working in health care, health insurance, medical equipment services, real estate, and banking and finance pertaining to a loss of marketing influence to lead organizational change and its implementation to improve performance. A loss of influence of marketing

leadership to lead and implement change, and positively contribute to a firm's performance have become a subject of concern to senior management, managerial functions, employees, researchers, and consumers according to anecdotal and journalistic sources (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009). The theoretical framework proposed in contemporary organizations, groups, and teams seem to hold the experience, knowledge, and expertise to solve problems, make decisions, and perform organizational tasks (Bunderson, 2003). Some groups have more knowledge and expertise than other groups, which makes them influential in problem solving and decision-making. A current concern of organizational theory is to understand the integration and alignment of intra-organizational group influence to share expertise to improve performance (Bunderson, 2003; Greenwood & Miller, 2010).

The literature argued the marketing function has established a leadership role sharing expert knowledge about consumer behavior and management, established a market orientation and a customer-centric culture, and ceded marketing functions to other operational groups improving their functional performance (Bunderson, 2003). The factors that determined in the past marketing influence and informed on performance expectations may have become diffused status cues. The perception of lost marketing status has affected cross-functional influence, credibility, respect, leadership, and functional performance (Bunderson, 2003; Stewart, 2006; Rust et al., 2004).

According to 15 participants interviewed in this research, some loss of marketing leadership have taken place as top down pressures for short-term revenue growth goals has placed marketing in the position to quantify and explain its contribution to revenue and profitability. The nine themes identified from interviews data analysis are linked to the lived experiences of research participants regarding marketing credibility, respect, leadership, and

functional performance linked to a loss of market leadership and its influence to lead changes across functions to improve performance. The underlying conclusion of the interview data in this research study is that marketing loss of leadership would threaten the reputation and survival of the participating organizations and should be avoided. Marketing should evidence the value of its contribution to performance to maintain senior management respect and increase its extant influence on cross-functional decision-making. Accountability and responsibility are expected marketing capabilities and the support for marketing legitimacy and marketers' strategic leadership.

The integration of this study's results with other research discoveries could add to leadership theory in the areas of cross-functional influence on decision-making, distributed, and adaptive leadership for change, and performance improvement. The integration of findings may help to reclaim marketing leadership and bring marketing into a holistic dimension in organizational and customer relationship management.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Based on your experience, how would you describe the organization and its culture in your role as a functional manager?

2. Based on your experience, what examples best describe interactions within your own function and with other functions when responding to changing conditions.

3. Based on your experience, how would you describe the perceived value from inter-functional collaboration that promotes change, its implementation, and adoption to improve performance?

4. Based on your experience, what factors influence change across functions?

5. Based on your experience, how do you perceive the image of marketing leadership and respect within organizational functions and before senior management?

6. Based on your experience, how would you describe marketing influence in the decision-making process of functions facing changing conditions to improve performance?

7. Based on your experience, what factors could be associated with winning cross-functional support for marketing leaders to drive changes to improve performance?

8. Based on your experience, what would be the impact of marketing loss of influence to lead change and implement change to improve performance?

9. Based on your experience, what suggestions would you make to measure marketing's contribution to organizational change, change implementation, and improving organizational performance?

10. How many years have you worked as a manager?

    1) Less than 1 year   2) 1-5 years   3) 5-10 years   4) more than 10 years

11.   What is the level of education attained?

1) Associate   2) Bachelor   3)Master   4) Doctoral