

Political marketing and the marketing concept

The marketing concept

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Introduction

The application of marketing techniques by political parties in their electoral campaigns has been discussed by Butler and Collins (1994); Glick (1967); Kotler (1975); Kotler and Kotler, (1981); McGinness (1969); Mauser (1983); Newman and Sheth (1985); Nimmo (1970); Smith and Saunders (1990). Examining political processes and electoral behaviour from a marketing perspective may offer new insights into the behaviour and performance of political parties. O'Shaughnessy (1990) proposes that research and debate should focus on the marketing orientation of political parties. Significantly research on the actual marketing orientation of political parties is not substantial at this stage and as such this research focuses on this issue by addressing the marketing orientation of a major political party. This paper examines issues related to the marketing concept within a political party in Australia. The issues examined are the expressed understanding of the marketing concept, attitudes towards it, and influence and applicability of it within this political organization.

The marketing concept and marketing's domain

The author accepts normative arguments and theory propositions for the application of marketing in politics and marketing's extended domain generally. However, empirical research is needed to determine the extent that the marketing concept has been adopted by political parties and whether they can be said to be marketing oriented. This is the essential test of the generic concept of marketing, and marketing's delimited boundaries or domain. We must move beyond theoretical arguments based on unsupported propositions of marketing's domain and application to empirical investigations which detail the true domain and extent of the application of marketing.

The marketing concept is argued to be a useful philosophy which can be applied to both profit and non-profit organizations (Brownlie and Saren, 1991; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971). One of the earliest expressions of the marketing concept as a general management philosophy was that of Drucker (1954) and since this time there have been many definitions, arguments in favour of and criticisms against the marketing concept (Drucker, 1954; Houston, 1986; Keith, 1960; Levitt, 1960, 1984; McKitterick, 1957; Webster, 1988). Overall the marketing concept holds a position within marketing that sees it widely accepted as a foundation of the discipline (Kotler and Levy, 1969), and argued to

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be applicable in a wide range of contexts (Kotler, 1972; 1986; Kotler and Levy, 1973; Wensley, 1990). Basically the marketing concept holds that the needs of consumers are of primary concern and should be identified, and attempts made to satisfy the identified needs. The marketing concept in commercial terms is based on the premiss that all company planning and operations will be customer oriented and the goal is profitable sales volume and that all marketing activities in organizations will be organizationally co-ordinated. As such the philosophical basis of the marketing concept is that customer want/satisfaction is the economic and social justification for an organization's existence. When a political party or candidate applies this concept to the political process, they must be in a position to adapt to and satisfy voters' needs (Mauser, 1983; Newman and Sheth, 1987; Reid, 1988). Nimmo (1970) argued that candidates dispense information in order to produce a shift in behaviour and maintain voter support. To do this effectively requires a sufficient understanding of the values placed by voters on selected factors or criteria when arriving at a choice (Newman and Sheth, 1987). Houston's (1986) interpretation of the marketing concept provides a linkage between the marketing exchange process and the marketing concept as a means of creating and facilitating effective exchanges. Marketing has been extended to include all organizations and their relationships. Relationships are with any public not just commercial customers and, therefore, include exchanges of value between any social entities (Kotler, 1972). Politics falls within marketing's extended domain centrally because an exchange takes place when a voter casts his or her vote for a particular candidate. They are engaged in a transaction and exchange time and support (their vote) for the services the candidate offers after election through better government. Marketing, then, is applicable to political processes as a transaction occurs and is specifically concerned with how transactions are created, stimulated and valued.

However Houston (1986) provides a very succinct outline of the marketing concept and one that addresses such criticisms. Arguing that the marketing concept is a managerial prescription relating to the attainment of an entity's goals. For certain, well-defined but restrictive market conditions and for exchange-determined goals which are not product related, the marketing concept is a prescription showing how an entity can achieve these goals most efficiently (Houston, 1986).

Further:

the marketing concept follows that an entity achieves its own exchange determined goals most efficiently through a thorough understanding of potential exchange partners and their needs and wants, through a thorough understanding of the costs associated with satisfying those needs and wants, and then designing, producing and offering products in light of this understanding (Houston, 1986, p. 85).

Essentially, the key task and objective of an organization is to determine the needs, wants and values of its target markets and manage the organization to deliver the consumer's desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors.

This interpretation of the marketing concept dictates an understanding of the market, and it does not suggest that products be designed to satisfy only a market's research-defined demand. Satisfaction of the market's demand is important to the extent which it yields profits. Houston (1986) contended that an organization which has decided to offer a single, undifferentiated offering instead of designing products to suit each perceived market segment, may have arrived at this decision with a thorough understanding of the market's response and the accompanying costs, and is in fact an ideal user of the marketing concept.

The marketing concept provides a means of focusing all departments effectively and efficiently towards customer-need satisfaction and creating exchanges at a profit. If a political party's product is developed in relation to (or in consideration of) voters' values and needs and the party delivers the proposed product, voter satisfaction should be increased. Voters will have a sense of being part of a politically responsive institution (Newman and Sheth, 1987).

The theoretical arguments for examining the incorporation of marketing into politics is the generic concept of marketing (Arndt, 1978; Kotler, 1972; Kotler and Levy, 1969).

The *generic concept* of marketing broadened marketing in two significant ways, by extending it from the private sector into the non-commercial and public sector and by broadening exchange from only economic exchanges to any kind of exchanges (Kotler, 1972; Kotler and Levy, 1969). Marketing therefore includes all organizations and their relationships with any public (Bagozzi, 1975; Kotler, 1972). Consistent with these views of broadening marketing's domain Kotler and Levy (1969, p. 15) proposed that:

the choice facing those who manage non-business organizations is not whether to market or not to market, for no organization can avoid marketing. The choice is whether to do it well or poorly.

This is the choice facing political parties. With such choices, to make an important concept within marketing and one that raises fundamental issues for parties, is the marketing concept.

Applying marketing to politics

Shama (1973) believes that many concepts and tools are shared by marketing of goods and services and political marketing. Posner (1992) and Niffenegger (1989) argue that politicians have become likened to consumer products, complete with marketing strategies and promotion campaigns which enable them to gain market share, and increasingly election campaigns are being compared to marketing campaigns (Kotler, 1975; Kotler and Kotler, 1981; Mauser, 1983). It is argued that parties must understand the basic elements of marketing to be successful not only in the short term but also in the long term (Niffenegger, 1989; Reid, 1988). This marketing analogy is more than coincidental as Kotler (1975), Niffenegger (1989) and Shama (1973) believe the very essence of a candidate and political party's interface with the electorate is a marketing one and marketing can not be avoided. Marketing is not a panacea

or cure all, but a process allowing a more effective and efficient method to design and implement political campaigns. Marketing offers political parties the ability to address diverse voter concerns and needs through marketing analyses, planning, implementation and control of political and electoral campaigns.

Kotler and Andreasen (1991) propose that the difficulty in transposing marketing into public and non-profit organizations (political parties) is a function of how organization-centred such organizations are as opposed to customer-centred. An organization-centred orientation counters the organization's ability to integrate marketing. Therefore marketing is viewed currently as a marketing mindset of customer-centredness (Kotler and Andreasen, 1991, p. 42), and is seen in organizations which exhibit: customer-centredness, heavy reliance on research, are biased towards segmentation, define competition broadly, and have strategies using all elements of the marketing mix (Kotler and Andreasen, 1991, p. 53).

Foxall (1989) and Trustrum (1989) advocate that only a synergistic and purposive application of the sum total of marketing tools and concept is marketing. Further the marketing concept appears to provide the necessary integrating mechanism and that the implementation of one or indeed all of the marketing functions without adoption of the marketing concept is not marketing. However, having adopted the marketing concept it is not necessary to implement all of the functions, merely those which are appropriate to prevailing circumstances (Trustrum, 1989, p. 48). As such the marketing concept appears to be both a philosophical and practical guide for the management of marketing. However one important point missing from the literature is the diversity of applications or situations the concept can be used in or, more importantly, is used in, especially in relation to politics.

Research method

The methodology adopted in this paper consisted of a case study utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data gathering phases within a political party in Queensland, Australia. The data were collected through non-structured and structured in-depth interviews in stage 1, followed by a mail survey in stage 2. The case study method as used in this study is appropriate because it met three essential criteria. These criteria are, when the case is regarded as a critical case, a unique case and a revelatory case (Patton, 1990; Yin, 1989). The two-stage research design (qualitative and quantitative) used in this study allowed both an exploratory stage to investigate phenomena and develop ideas and then a descriptive stage to describe patterns of phenomena and quantify them within the same study. This is especially practical if the field of study is in its evolutionary or pre-paradigmatic phase (Parkhe, 1993).

Stage 1 consisted of non-structured and structured in-depth interviews with seven state executives (executive management) within the party. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to allow for a more superior case write up and analysis. Interview data analysis consisted of prioritizing data through the process of developing categories and searching for similarities within

interviews (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989). Interviewees were chosen on the basis of proximity to key events and organizational position and experience. This resulted in seven individuals being chosen, and as such is within the guide established by Eisenhardt (1989) and a belief that there was minimal contribution from further interviews with other executives.

Stage 2 provided quantitative measurement/data to supplement and complement stage 1. Stage 2 consisted of developing and administering an extensive 68-item questionnaire utilizing a Likert-type response format, which covered issues related to the marketing concept, market orientation, the political product, the party's marketing activity and effectiveness. Essentially the goal of the questionnaire was to identify characteristics, measure strengths of attitudes, understanding and knowledge, and quantify information obtained in stage 1. The questionnaire was used to examine the extent of consensus throughout the organization on the issues related to the marketing orientation of the party. Responses were rated from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was administered by mail to the four key decision-making categories within the organization identified during the interviews conducted in stage 1. The sampling process followed, dealt with determining a definition of units stable enough to sample, and that lent itself to the possible application of standardized codes. It required the informants of stage 1 assisting in the enumeration of a sampling frame based on the formal activities which the case was based around. The sample was based on purposeful stratified disproportionate sampling procedure. The rationale being that while it helps to estimate population parameters, there were identifiable subgroups within the case population that were expected to have different parameters on variables or dimensions of interest in the study. The case study interviews in stage 1 and the mail survey in stage 2 are compatible in their adherence to purposeful information rich samples (Patton, 1990). This sample design was more efficient than the simple random sample design because, for the same sample size, more representativeness was achieved and more valuable and differentiated information with respect to each subgroup or strata was sought. Table I identifies each strata and the enumeration of the sample for each group within the case.

The mail survey achieved an initial response of 44 per cent and a follow-up random sample of 20 per cent was drawn from non-respondents, this achieved a 100 per cent response rate and thus avoided a second order follow-up. The difference between respondents and non-respondents was shown to be

Subgroup	Sample frame	Sample size
State executive	29	29
State candidates 1992	105	58
State campaign director 1992	79	35
Branch chairman	105	28
Total	318	150

Table I.
Sample size

statistically insignificant. Overall the study achieved a 54 per cent response rate. The methodology and design of the study achieved results that were congruent and convergent through the triangulation of methods. Together both stages 1 and 2 of the research are congruent and the level of convergent validity of results is high.

Findings

Understanding of the marketing concept

The depth of understanding of the marketing concept is examined first from the results of the stage 1 interviews. The interview results indicate that those who hold the highest positions within the party and who are responsible for political marketing decision making and management have a minimal understanding of the marketing concept. For example, interviewee 4 expressed a simplistic understanding of the marketing concept, believing that the marketing concept was: essentially finding out what people want and then telling them what they want to get elected. Table II provides a summary assessment of the respondents of stage 1's understanding of the marketing concept.

Interviewee number	Large degree	Minimal	Had not heard of
1			✓
2			✓
3			✓
4		✓	
5			✓
6			✓
7			✓

Table II.
Expressed understanding
of the marketing concept

Source: Analysis of interview data

In conclusion to the expressed understanding of the philosophy called the marketing concept, six of the seven interviewees expressed no understanding of the term or what it meant. The only interviewee who expressed a minimal understanding of the term was incorrect when compared with those generally expressed in the marketing literature. Interview findings imply that this managerial body within this party do not have any understanding of the "marketing concept".

Interviewee attitude towards the marketing concept

During the interviews those respondents that expressed no understanding of the marketing concept were provided with a brief definition and objectives of the marketing concept in order to provide feedback on their attitude to it. The findings from the interviews indicate neither a positive nor a negative attitude towards the marketing concept and its applicability to politics and this political party. Table III provides an overview of attitudes of interviewees.

The findings indicated a belief that the marketing concept may move the party away from those philosophies which they espouse and as such is viewed negatively for that reason, and that adopting such a philosophy would only work short term. However, some interviewees expressed the view that if this philosophy will get candidates elected, it is good. There is, in the comments from one interviewee, a view that such philosophy would entail: that again it is the flight to the middle ground, telling people what they want to hear to get candidates elected. Another who expressed a mixed attitude towards the marketing concept as a philosophy on which to base or guide political marketing, commented that: "I think there is conflict between that approach and politics...you are not going to govern well. I think probably you have to adapt it a little in that you let them think you are giving them what they want or just tell them what they want to hear, and a fair bit of that goes on".

Generally those interviewed in stage 1, when exposed to a definition and the objectives of the marketing concept, had a somewhat negative attitude with regard to its suitability and overall use within the party. However, the implication from some interviewees is that if it can be used as a manipulative tool or will aid in winning elections then it would be viewed more positively.

Analysis of marketing concept dimensions/adequacy and influence survey results
Marketing concept dimensions and adequacy of the marketing concept were addressed through the questionnaire administered in stage 2. This stage provides an indication of the level of support for such a concept within this party. The results are presented in frequency tables which provides a combination of the results for all positions within the sample and then the responses or breakdown of individual position categories.

Marketing concept dimensions and adequacy

Part A of the survey questionnaire was administered to key decision-making categories within the case organization. Part A contained a number of questions related to the marketing concept, its objectives, adequacy and influence. Table IV displays summary statistics for part A of the questionnaire stage 2.

Interviewee number	Positive	Negative	Mixed
1		-	
2		-	
3		-	
4		-	
5			+/-
6	+		
7			+/-

Source: Analysis of interview data

Table III.
Expressed attitude towards the marketing concept

Table IV.
Summary statistics
(percentages)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>PAQ1</i> Business organizations' activities should be devoted to determining customers' wants and needs then satisfying them, while making a profit over the long run	60.0 Strongly agree/agree 100.0 93.9 100.0 90.9	36.3	1 Disagree/strongly disagree 0.0 6.1 0.0 9.1	2.5
<i>PAQ2</i> Political parties activities should be devoted to determining voters' needs and wants and then satisfying them to obtain government and staying in government in the long run	42.3 Strongly agree/agree 90.0 81.3 68.8 81.8	38.5 Neither agree nor disagree 10.0 3.1 6.3 9.1	Neither agree nor disagree 6.4	Disagree 9.0 Disagree/strongly disagree 0.0 15.6 25.0 9.1
<i>PAQ3</i> Political party decisions should be voter oriented to determine voter needs and wants and attempt to satisfy them within ideological bounds and parliamentary numbers rather than percentage of vote be the standard for evaluating marketing performance	64.9 Strongly agree/agree 80.0 93.5 88.2 100.0	7.8 Neither agree nor disagree 20.0 3.2 11.8 0.0	Disagree 3.9 Disagree/strongly disagree 0.0 0.0 0.0	
<i>PAQ4</i> The notion of being oriented towards satisfying voter needs and wants is too vague and general to be really useful in making decisions within the...Party	28.2 Strongly agree/agree 50.0	2.6 Neither agree nor disagree 0.0	Disagree 51.3 Disagree/strongly disagree 50.0	Strongly disagree 15.4
<i>Position</i> State executive				Strongly disagree 3.8

(Continued)



(PAQ4 continued)

PAQ5 In reality there are basic conflicts between attempting to satisfy voters' needs and wants and political party objectives

Candidate	25.0	0.0	75.0	Strongly disagree	6.4
Branch chairman	23.5	5.9	70.6		
Campaign director	60.0	10.0	30.0	Disagree	23.1

Position

State executive	Strongly agree	11.5	51.3	Neither agree nor disagree	7.7	Disagree/strongly disagree	23.1
Candidate	Strongly agree/agree	50.0	20.0	30.0			
Branch chairman		64.5	3.2	32.3			
Campaign director		76.5	0.0	23.5			
		63.6	18.2	18.2			

PAQ6 In the event of conflict between voter needs and wants and political objectives, political ones would be the overriding consideration within the...Party

Candidate	2.6	42.3	9.0	Strongly disagree	5.1
Branch chairman	60.0	10.0	30.0		
Campaign director	37.5	12.5	50.0	Disagree	41.0
	35.3	5.9	58.8		
	90.0	0.0	10.0		

Position

State executive	Strongly agree/agree	60.0	10.0	30.0			
Candidate		37.5	12.5	50.0			
Branch chairman		35.3	5.9	58.8			
Campaign director		90.0	0.0	10.0			

PAQ7 The concept of determining the needs and wants of voters in order to satisfy them to obtain office is a philosophy used by the...Party

Candidate	1.3	21.5	13.9	Strongly disagree	7.6
Branch chairman	10.0	20.0	70.0		
Campaign director	25.0	15.6	59.4	Disagree	55.7
	17.6	5.9	76.5		
	9.1	27.3	63.6		

Position

State executive	Strongly agree/agree	10.0	20.0	70.0			
Candidate		25.0	15.6	59.4			
Branch chairman		17.6	5.9	76.5			
Campaign director		9.1	27.3	63.6			

(Continued)

Table IV.

Table IV.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>PAQ8</i> The... Party has given considerable lip service to the marketing concept, but in general it has had little influence on the management campaigns of the party	15.0	61.3	6.3	15.0	2.5
<i>Position</i>	Strongly agree/agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/strongly disagree		
State executive	60.0	10.0	30.0		
Candidate	81.8	3.0	15.2		
Branch chairman	76.5	11.8	11.8		
Campaign director	81.8	0.0	18.2		
<i>PAQ9</i> The concept of determining voters' needs and wants and attempting to satisfy them to obtain and maintain political office would increase the attention and effort devoted to planning and controlling political and campaign activities	21.8	69.2	2.6	6.4	
<i>Position</i>	Strongly agree/agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/strongly disagree		
State executive	90.0	0.0	10.0		
Candidate	96.9	3.1	0.0		
Branch chairman	82.4	5.9	11.8		
Campaign director	80.0	0.0	20.0		
<i>PAQ10</i> The concept of determining customer (voter) needs and wants and then attempting to satisfy them, would work within the business world but not the... Party	19.0	6.3	53.2	21.5	
<i>Position</i>	Strongly agree/agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/strongly disagree		
State executive	40.0	0.0	60.0		
Candidate	9.1	6.1	84.8		
Branch chairman	17.6	11.8	70.6		
Campaign director	30.0	10.0	60.0		

Note: All figures are expressed as a percentage
Source: Analysis of survey data

Summary of concept and adequacy dimensions

The findings for the marketing concept and its adequacy show a high level of agreement for the objectives of the marketing concept. Further that when phrased in political terms or terminology it still receives strong support. However, there is a belief that there would be a level of conflict between voter needs and political objectives which would impact on using such a philosophy. This supports the similar findings from the interviews on this dimension.

Influence and applicability for the party

The following address the influence that the marketing concept has had on the party, and its applicability for the party. The results indicate that the majority (67 per cent) of respondents indicated that they believe the marketing concept would be useful in this party. The respondents are approximately evenly split between agreement and disagreement, believing political objectives would override voter needs in the event of conflict between the two. The findings on this dimension are consistent with those obtained in the interviews. It shows that there is a level of conflict between some sections of the party on meeting voters needs versus internal or political objectives. Interviewees also indicated the marketing concept could create such conflicts.

There is general agreement by respondents that the marketing concept has had little influence within the party. The extent of adoption and influence within the party obtained from the survey results are consistent with those obtained in the interviews. Both interviewees and survey respondents expressed a similar level of agreement that the marketing concept has not been adopted and as such has had little influence. However, the findings show that the majority (74 per cent) of the stage 2 respondents believe that the marketing concept with its voter orientation would work if adopted by the party. This contradicts some of the statements made during the interviews in stage 1 as to the suitability of the marketing concept to be used by the party. This contradiction between interviewees and survey respondents is believed to result from two issues, first the survey respondents were presented with the marketing concept expressed in terms generally applied to commercial marketing and then in terms expressed in political terms, and as such they to some extent received a more appropriate and applicable definition of its use and objectives than the interviewees. Second the interviewees may to some extent have a greater understanding of party mechanisms and constraints than survey respondents. Further, interviewees would be responsible for addressing implementation of the marketing concept within the party and therefore may more clearly see the potential conflict that could arise. With these issues in mind, interviewees may not want to consider implementing such a concept and, further, taking more notice of voters may be seen to be a loss of power and authority within the interviewees' group.

Overall the findings related to the marketing concept's influence and applicability indicate that the marketing concept has had no influence on this party. However there is a high level of support from survey respondents,

indicating that they see it as an appropriate concept and as such would prove beneficial to this party. However, the major issue of concern appears to be that party political objectives would override voter needs and as such would create conflict with adopting the marketing concept.

Conclusion: concept dimensions and influence

The findings show that there is a satisfactory level of understanding and positive attitude expressed by survey respondents towards the marketing concept as a valid and meaningful philosophy in general. Interestingly, the survey results contradict the interview results on some issues. However none of the interviewees were respondents to the survey. When influence or applicability for the party was addressed, the responses become more dispersed and a higher number of respondents selected neither agree nor disagree. Also those positions that would be believed to have a greater understanding of the organization's operations show that the marketing concept has had, or perhaps would have, little influence within the party and would create some conflict in its implementation. There appears to be a high level of support for the marketing concept when it is expressed in terms that suits its application to politics. This would tend to indicate that if the marketing concept is expressed in normative terms which show political party management what they ought to be doing, their acceptance of the basic principles of the marketing concept increases, because it ceases to be relevant to commerce only and addresses their specific political marketing environment.

Market orientation findings

Part C of the stage 2 questionnaire addressed the extent to which this party could be described as having a market orientation and as such is the most appropriate test of the extent that they have implemented the marketing concept or follow principles consistent with the marketing concept. Within this concept there are three central points of interest:

- (1) the organization-wide generation of market intelligence;
- (2) the dissemination of the intelligence across the organization; and
- (3) organization-wide responsiveness to it.

Essentially, two aspects of the marketing concept that will be evident in a market-oriented political party are a voter focus and co-ordinated marketing. The findings indicate that the party has a low voter focus and low research emphasis. These two-dimension ratings appear consistent, as the voter focus is derived basically from the philosophy adopted and is caused by the low research emphasis. The results indicate that the party's research is fundamentally *post hoc*. Indications are that minimal marketing research is performed and action taken *after* campaign strategy and tactical issues have already been developed. Overall the results show that intelligence gathering by

the party is low, and that dissemination of and responsiveness to it are negligible.

This is consistent with the view expressed by interviewee 7 that: (as is often the case...when research is done), there was a very restricted circulation and comments made on some questionnaire forms indicated that many believed the party does disseminate information but added that this was minimal and only at election time. Overall the findings indicated that the party does not have a market orientation. It does not effectively gather information on the marketplace, disseminate that information and respond to it effectively.

Conclusions and implications

This study addressed the marketing concept, its applicability, influence and levels of understanding within a political party. It is important to note that just because the philosophy of the marketing concept is not understood, it does not necessarily mean such a philosophy has not been adopted. As such the interviews addressed only the identified understanding of "the marketing concept".

Given that the marketing concept is so widely acclaimed and accepted within the academic discipline of marketing, one may assume that it would be well understood and followed by those who engage in marketing activity in organizations. The findings of this study indicate that this may not be the case. Those who would be responsible for adopting and implementing the marketing concept within the party do not have any knowledge of the processes involved, or its objectives. Attitudes towards the marketing concept and its applicability for this party were generally positive, however, the highest position of management in this organization had a negative attitude. Attitude of management towards the marketing concept appears to be important and operational dimensions and adequacy of such concept are key issues in addressing adoption and implementation of the marketing concept by organizations.

The semantic redefinition of the marketing concept appeared more appropriate for politics and received a high level of acceptance[1]. This may prove important if the philosophy of the marketing concept is to be adopted by the party. As such the indications are that the marketing concept as a philosophy needs to be expressed in terms that party management and workers can understand from their political perspectives, and shown that it can meet their objectives, before it can be considered to be useful by them. That is, to be anything more than a technical term in the marketing discipline, it requires industry specific redefinitions so that those within various sectors such as politics can see the relevance of the marketing concept through redefinition's focusing on objectives expressed in terminology specific to the political environment.

The second issue addressed was that of the influence and applicability of the marketing concept for the party. The findings indicated a positive expression of the marketing concept's applicability for politics and in particular this party. The findings of both stages of the study indicate that the marketing concept has had little influence on the party to date. It is believed that this lack of influence

and acceptance comes from the stage 1 interviewees' misconception regarding its specific use and benefits in politics. The findings show applicability and normative expressions are the first barrier to overcome in its implementation in politics.

Market orientation dimensions provide evidence to determine the extent that the organization has adopted the marketing concept (Jaworski and Kohli, 1990; 1993) or a similar/comparable philosophy. Examining the party's market orientation is the ultimate test to see if the party has adopted the marketing concept. The findings indicated that the party places a very low emphasis on marketing research and it does not focus effectively on voters. As such one of the key pillars of the marketing concept is missing, that is it does not have a customer focus. The survey posed a number of statements relating to whether the party surveyed voters to determine voters needs, the quality of the party performance and the quality of the party's product. The results indicated that the respondents believed the party did not perform such market research activities and that the dissemination of market information and responsiveness to it are not performed within the party or are only addressed in a perfunctory manner.

There appears to be no cognizance between the basic voter's needs and transient product offerings (leadership/policy/candidate) in the various combinations and as such the party has not at this stage been led to redefine and expand the nature of its operations to provide them with a sturdy political operating base. Because the marketing concept has not been adopted the various levels of political activity within the party have developed their own political and campaign logic based on their particular perceptions and skills. Each level is not focused on the satisfaction of voter needs and even perceives these needs to be different.

A number of barriers to implementing the marketing concept and the development of a market orientation have been identified. The first is an incomplete or misinterpretation of the marketing concept. Second, internal conflict between political objectives and voter needs. Third the management's own values and perception of the importance of voter needs and their input in the development of the political product, and finally, the short-term focus of politics and the percentage of the vote obtained in elections as the ultimate measure of success.

Similar problems to those identified in this study have also been found in research on marketing within the public sector by Foxall (1989) and Permut (1980). The findings of this research indicate that the problems highlighted are centrally about perception and understanding of what marketing is and its applicability to politics. The managerial body of the party has the view that marketing is essentially a selling technique used in election campaigns and beyond this limited application has no appropriate or extra role in politics.

A similar concern was addressed by Kotler and Andreasen (1991) who believed the difficulty of incorporating marketing into public and non-profit enterprises relates directly to whether they are more organization centred than

customer centred. An organization-centred orientation in a political party opposes its ability to integrate marketing into its operations. To counter this situation it is proposed that the essence of marketing is a marketing mindset of customer centredness which is fundamentally a marketing orientation derived from the organization having a marketing culture (Webster, 1992).

The argument raised here is that the party's view and application of marketing is essentially *not* marketing, because it relies on singular elements which are often applied out of context or ineffectively. The findings of this study are similar to that of Permut (1980) who examined performing arts administrator's use of marketing and concluded that marketing was seen primarily as a promotional tool tied to advertising.

In conclusion, marketing has not been successfully extended into the party's political operations, even though the party argues it successfully uses advertising and political polling. Contrary to the party's belief, marketing is characterized by an integrated and synergistic mix of product development and design, distribution, pricing (or economic cost) and promotion. This set of marketing activities is the twin-edge sword of marketing, the first edge is the mix of these elements developed to meet the needs and wants of target customers (voters) and the second is to meet the objectives of the organization. Essentially this party starts with its pre-developed policy and platform (products) and attempts to convince the voters of its merits over those of its competitors. What is required is a marketing-oriented application that considers not only the party's capabilities and objectives but also the voters' needs and wants. As such the semantic redefinition of the marketing concept used in this study is argued to be valuable as a guiding philosophy to meet such political party objectives.

The issues raised that such a concept would only work short term or would create a flight to the middle ground are, in fact, essentially derived from a selling orientation and being internally oriented. A marketing orientation driven by the marketing concept differs significantly from current orientation of selling in that it seeks to sell political products which are sought by voters. Thus the objective of meeting voters' needs through the party offering is to build brand loyalty and repeat voter exchanges by satisfying identified voter needs better than the party's political opponents. The notion of selling orientation based on issues at elections will in fact create a confused brand image as the party moves from one issue to another at various elections and over time lead to a lack of credibility. Political marketing cannot guarantee winning at every election, however it does offer improved performance, and more appropriate ways of making decisions and managing campaigns. A marketing orientation will lead parties and candidates to understand more fully voters' needs, and how they can meet such needs.

Many of the concepts explored in this research highlight significant problems that marketing has yet to address, such as problems of perception and understanding which conflict with traditional ideologies in politics. I argue that the central purpose of political marketing is to enable political parties and

voters to make the most appropriate and satisfactory decisions. Thus the value of marketing is that its concepts promote and enable parties and voters to participate in a constructive dialogue for both specific and broader societal development and utilization of social and economic goals.

Note

1. Political party decisions should be voter oriented to determine voter needs and wants and attempt to satisfy them within ideological bounds and parliamentary numbers rather than the percentage of the vote be the standard for evaluating marketing performance.

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