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Marketing Strategy And Marketing Performance: Does Strategy Affect Performance?

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Abstract— *This article surveys marketing management literature to find out the positive impact that a good market and marketing can have on marketing performance at the marketplace. The marketplace in this contest can be either a country or even a continent since the companies are multinational and also have diversified holdings which help them to spread their tentacles to every nook and cranny of the globe. Locally based companies are not left out since they all use marketing strategies to do their marketing. Companies or multinationals of U.S. and U.K. parentage will be used a lot. Does the literature attest to the positive impact of very good marketing strategies on a company's marketing performance? This is going to be investigated to come out with the justify opinion. Coming out with a very good marketing strategy to pilot or direct a company's marketing assault is not very easy. It is plainly herculean. Implementation, monitoring, controlling and evaluating marketing strategies are equally herculean. Top marketing management do not have it easy with formulating, managing, and evaluating marketing strategies. Marketing performance measurement is tackled in this piece. It is essential to point out that marketing is not the pressure of only those in marketing (pan–marketing). It is very general managerial with all corporate functional players all actively involved.*

Keywords— ***Marketing strategies, marketing performance, companies, Ghana.***

I. INTRODUCTION

A good marketing strategy, though opinions differ, it's a sine qua non for marketing success. No military general wins the battle without a very good battle plan. The caveat is that it takes a very long period to come out with a very good marketing battle plan. The plan cannot be produced in a vacuum. They must be developed within the context of the wider environment in which the organisation is operating. They need to take into account the opportunities and threats which are emerging as these external factors change. To ensure this appropriateness of plans. The first critical step in planning entails a thorough assessment of the relevant environment (CIM, 1995). The term 'environment' is very broad. It covers all the economic, political, social, cultural, legal, technological and demographic influences in the countries an organisation operates in. It also encompasses influences on customers and the behaviour of competitors in these 'markets'. All these factors share the same characteristic: they have an impact on the performance of the organisation, but they cannot be controlled by management. They are therefore often referred to as the 'uncontrollable' factors. Top management have a limitation here, they cannot control the 'uncontrollable' external factors and this may have an effect on their performance when it comes to coming out with a good marketing strategy. Strategic planners must take account of environmental influences, and try to forecast what these might be, in order to produce plans that are realistic and achievable. Given the continual changes in the environment, this is by no means an easy task. M.E. Porter (Competitive Strategy) has written the following: (1) 'The essence of formulating competitive strategy is relating company to its environment' and (2) 'Every industry has an underlying structure or set of fundamental economic and technical characteristics…The strategist must learn what makes the environment tick.' A second top management shortfall or limitation is coming to terms with what makes the environment tick. It calls for complex mathematical modelling and scenarios to ascertain which environment will help the organisation to succeed in its marketing. A deep insight into the environment and what has even happened in the past must all be gathered and studied for a very good decision. Statistical, computational, and mathematical models are called for. What I am dwelling on is that, if there is any marketing disaster or shortfall, it is not going to be entirely fair to keep the blame on management. What if there is an economic depression? Do we blame management for the economic depression? Marketing strategy consultant Ian Wilson (1990) has postulated that coming out with the best of all marketing strategies does not guarantee automatic success of the marketplace. A company can be in the wrong place.

What are the environmental variables which planners need to consider and evaluate before developing their marketing plans. These variables impact on businesses and may favourably or adversely affect marketing place. The first is the economic environment. The rate of growth in the economy is a measure of the overall change in demand for goods and services. Growth is an indication of increases in demand. However, if there are regional variations in the rate of growth then demand will be different in geographic segments of the market. Other economic influences in an organisation include at a regional or national level (i) The rate of inflation (ii) Unemployment rate and the availability of power (iii) Interest rates (iv) The balance of trade and foreign exchange rates (vi) The level and type of taxation (vi) The propensity to save within the community (viii) The availability of credit. At an international level, comparative growth rates, inflation rates, interest rates and wage rates in other countries, the extent of protectionist measures against imports, the nature and extent of exchange control in various countries, the development of international economic communities and the prospects of international trade agreements between countries, and the levels of corporate and personal taxation in different countries. Obviously, in general terms, the state of an economy will influence the planning process for organisations which operate within it. In times of boom, with increased demand and consumption, the overall planning problem will be to satisfy demand. Conversely, in times of recession, the emphasis will be on cost effectiveness, continuing profitability, survival and competition. Economists can contribute to the strategic planning process with economic forecasts and information about economic trends. The second is political and legal environment. The government controls much of the economy, being a country's largest supplier, employer, customer, and investor. The slightest shift in political emphasis can decimate a particular market almost overnight. Aerospace and defence are particularly vulnerable to shifts in political decisions. For a variety of reasons, nations wish to 'do their own things.' The shipping and airline industries have been particularly affected by the desire and insistence of many countries to have their own fleets. The third is social, demographic and cultural environment. Demography is the study of population and population trends. Demographic change has implications for the following (a) What services and products or organisation's customers will want and the size of demand for certain products. (b) The location of demand. In the U.K, there appears to be a gradual population shift out of the inner cities and into smaller towns. The fourth is the technological environment. Technological change is rapid, and organisations must adapt themselves to it. Technological change can affect the activities of organisations as follows (a) The type of products or services that are made and sold. (b) The way in which products are made. (c) The way in which services are provided. (d) The way in which markets are identified. (e) The way in which employees are mobilised the effect of technological change might be as follows. (a) To cut production and other costs, and perhaps to cut sales prices. (b) To develop better quality products and services. (c) To develop products and services that did not exist before. (d) To offer products or services more quickly or effectively than before. Organisations that operate in an environment where the pace of technological change is very fast must be flexible enough to change quickly and must plan for change and innovation, perhaps by spending heavily on research and developments. Metatechnologies are inventions with many applications. Technological change is hard to forecast. Many of the uses of an invention may be quite different from what the inventors considered. The fifth is the competitive environment. Porter (1988) suggests that there are five basic competitive forces which influence the state of competition in an industry. He calls these the 'structural determinants of the integrity of competition' which collectively determine the profit (i.e. the long run return on capital) potential of the industry as a whole. These five competitive forces are as follows. (a) The threat of new entrants to the industry. (b) The threat of substitute products or services. (c) The bargaining power of customers. (d) The bargaining power of suppliers. (e) The rivalry amongst current competitors in the industry.

II. THE PROBLEM

Does a very good marketing strategy positively contribute toward a company's marketing performance? It is not appropriate to say yes for Wilson (1990) reviews the disappointing history of strategic planning throughout American business and identified seven 'deadly' sins. First, marketing strategy planning staff tend to expropriate the process – they have the time, and the arrogance, to do the work, but thereby manage to cut out the executives who really know the business. In the hands of staff, elaborate methodology and preservations begin to smother content, vision, and originality. As staff takes control, strategy conception becomes separated from execution–line managers are alienated from the process and feel no responsibility for implementation. Portfolio concepts encourage an over emphasis on divestments and acquisitions, and tend to relegate businesses to the neglected status of 'cash cous'. Formal planning systems are inclined to close off strategic options rather than widening debate. Quantification and an outward bias lead to a neglect of internal and cultural issues. Finally, corporate planning's reliance on 'simple point' forecasting has failed to cope adequately with the extreme uncertainty of the 1970s and 1980s.

Wilson's (1990) review is a damning indictment based on wide consulting experience. The academic evidence is only slightly more encouraging. Greenley (1990) reviewed some substantial empirical enquiries into the relationship between corporate planning activity and company performance, and found that only five reported a positive relationship. Boyd (1991), pooling data from various studies in order to get large sample sizes, finds a slightly positive relationship between planning and profitability on most measures, but reposts several studies with slightly negative results. Greenley (1990) queries the direction of causality anyway: does corporate planning produce profitability, or is planning a luxury approved mostly by the successful?

If we are not saying yes to the question, then why the expense of formulating marketing strategies to be used in the company's marketing warfare? Can a company conduct its marketing without any strategy? Is it a feasible proposal? Can a pilot, pilot a plane without any compass? Is he not going to miss his destination and even his altitude?

A very good marketing strategy may or may not contribute towards a company's marketing performance. The jury is not unanimous. It must be pointed out that, apart from a very good marketing strategy, other internal and external variables can also positively contribute toward successful marketing. It is in order a very good marketing strategy is expatiated. There is criteria for a good marketing strategy. One, it must be appropriate in the light of the company's resources. Two, it should have appropriate time horizon. Three, it should be workable. Four, it must be consistent internally. Five, it must also be externally consistent. Six, it must have tolerable degree of risk (Jain, 1995). It must be mentioned that the market is never ever static. It is dynamic. Thompson et al (1995) state that the market is a moving target. It is never going to be stationary and that it is only a dead military general who does not revise his battle plan. Companies need marketing strategies every day. For all days are not the same and no company can also do all its marketing at one place. A change of place warrants a new marketing strategy. If a marketing manager succeeds in company A with a marketing strategy, it does not mean he is going to succeed in company B with the same marketing strategy. No two different companies can have the same market and marketing situation. Can we even get two environments to be the same? It is obviously no.

There is no such thing (based on anecdotal evidence) as the one magic, everlasting strategy. Strategy like any other tool wears out, needs sharpening and over time will need replacing by something better i.e. more suitable for the prevailing conditions.

III. PURPOSE OF STUDY

1. It is to make it clear to those of marketing fraternity that possessing a very good marketing strategy does not mean a successful marketing is going to be done. Having a well–crafted marketing. Strategy does not automatically guarantee marketing success.
2. It is also to let marketing followership come to terms with the fact that the jury is not unanimous as to the fact that a very good marketing strategy provides a positive marketing performance.
3. Again to let leaders understand that positive marketing performance by virtue of having a very good marketing strategy or not is not the only cause of the marketing success. Information technology department, finance, accounts, procurement, musianadfreponsued, operations, research and development, production/engineering, all play yeonen roles in the marketing success.
4. Yet again to help leaders come to the realisation that managing a marketing strategy is not an easy assignment.
5. Lastly, it pays for a company's top marketing management team to make it a policy of periodically reviewing and appropriately making amendments to marketing strategy for efficacious results.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

1. As a source of reference for students and marketing practitioners.
2. For those aspiring to become marketing practitioners one day, come to the realisation that, having a very good marketing strategy is not going to guarantee marketing success. Other factors or variables should conjointly work to bring it out.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

An attempt will be made to find out whether marketing management theorists and consultants are not unanimous on the fact that positive marketing performance is as a result of a very good marketing strategy a company has crafted for itself. Does strategy have any impact on a company's positive marketing performance?

Henry Mintzberg (in his recent book, The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning), suggests that one of the pitfalls of any planning system is its inflexibility. Objectivity, a tendency towards conservation and an obsession with control can all breed a climate of infirmity which can result in, at best, incremental change focused on the short run. In fact there are many organisations which become market leaders and then sit back, relegating any consideration of strategic change to the last item on the agenda. Examples include Kodak's international loss of leadership in the camera market to Japanese competitors who launched new compact technologies and the Cooperative Societies' demise in the U.K. in the face of more innovative approaches to retail marketing.

CIM (1995) points out that strategic and tactical wear–out is the problem that any organisation will face if it retains its current strategies and tactics without any review or consideration of change. The danger is that tactics and strategies become tired or worn–out because customer needs change, technology changes and competitors change the rules of the game. Doyle (1990) has pointed out that of all the companies identified by Peters and Waterman in the early 1980's as 'excellent', only a minority can be said to have retained this 'excellence'. In light of this fact, it is not surprising that Tom Peters is now preaching that the 'only constant thing today is change', and is consulting on the corporate renewal, change management circuit.

Many marketers (CIM, 1995) realise that change is a major factor in the 1990s trading environment, not the amount or degree of change, but the rate of change. Despite the fact that Levitt in the 1960s clearly stated that marketing strategies and tactics need to adapt to changing customer needs, certain organisations still continue to pursue marketing programmes long after their effectiveness has diminished. Many reasons can be put forward to explain this.

a) Strategic development means change and most people are afraid of this, preferring to stay in their own 'comfort zone'.
b) Change is becoming harder to forecast, so many organisations opt to stay with what is familiar. One of the most disconcerting aspects of the current situation is the apparent demise of clear trends in market demand. Fifield highlights the growing co–existence of opposites: large global organisations and small specialist players; scientific versus alternative and eastern medicine; technological advance and search for simple and natural products.
c) Market leaders, having developed a successful strategy are understandably reluctant to change it. Ever Ready, when attacked by Duracell with alkaline technology, invested a lot of time and millions of pounds in defending zinc chloride technology before realising they needed to launch their own competing long life battery.
d) The need for change often only becomes apparent when the gap between what a company is doing and what it should be doing increases to a point at which performance suffers in an obvious way. By which time competitorshave taken the initiative as in the case of the demise of the British motor cycle and shipping industries.
e) In The Theory of the Business (Harvard Business Review, September – October 1994), Peter Duncker argues that many companies fail because managers 'theory of the business no longer works'. A theory of the businesscontains the assumptions (about markets, technology, etc.) that 'shape any organisation's behaviour, dictate its decisions about what to do and what not to do, and define what an organisation considers meaningful results'. As a human artefact such theories become obsolete. A valid theory of the business is based on realistic assumptions about environment, mission and core competences. The assumptions in all three areas must fit reality. The theory must be known and understood through the organisation. It must be tested.
f) Paradoxically, keeping too close to customers, or some of them, can also result in strategic wear–out. Bower and Christensen (Harvard Business Review, January–February, 1994) assert that keeping close to your customers' can have disadvantages: 'an industry's leaders are rarely in the forefront of commessialising new technologies that do not initially meet the functional demands of mainstream customers'. In other words, new technologies are developed and take established industry leaders unawares, as they cannot predict the demand for it in existing (rather than future) markets.
g) Some organisations do not have environmental monitoring and strategic review procedures embedded within their marketing planning systems.

Wilson, Gilligan and Pearson (1990) highlight the sorts of factors which contribute to strategic wear–out:

a) changes in market structure as competitors enter and exit;
b) changes in consumers' expectations;
c) economic, legislative, technological changes;
d) distribution, supplier changes;
e) lack of internal investment;
f) poor control of company costs;
g) tired and uncertain management philosophy.

In order to avoid strategic wear–out a mule–functional perspective is required. Pettigrew and Whipp studied successful and less effective management of strategic and organisational change in eight well known British companies up to 1989, including ICI, Jaguar, Longman and Prudential. In this study they convent on how many companies are likely to be unsuccessful in maintaining change unless five demanding criteria are met.

a) Coherence of direction, actions and timing.
b) Environmental assessment; competitors, customers and regulatory climate.
c) Leading change by raising the climate and energy level for change.
d) Linking strategic and operational change (communication and reward systems).
e) Treating people as assets and as investments rather than costs.Paliwoda(1998) describes how Japanese companies and a British company maintain their productivity and strategic change. British Airways seems to have maintained momentum with consequent benefit to market success and profitability.

Pettigrew (1991) comments that strategicchange management is not just a complex process, but it is also relatively constructured which brings us back to Mintzberg's criticisms of planning processes. If planning becomes too rigid and scientific, rather than flexible and creative, it can stifle change and thereby lead to strategic and tactical wear–out. In the 1990s environmental monitoring, strategic review and effective marketing planning systems are vital, however, they should be used with environmental and organisational sensitivity. Large parts of the organisation need to be responsive to new information from the outside and the emergence of new capabilities from within.

Marketing effectiveness may be just one aspect of poor organisational effectiveness. A company might fail for a number of reasons, not necessarily related to the quality of the marketing effort. Stuart Slater (1984) from an analysis of U.K. companies during the severe recession of early 1980s, identifies the symptoms of corporate decline. They are the following:

a) Declining profitability
b) Decreasing sales volume
c) An increase in gearing
d) A decrease in liquidity measured by accounting ratios
e) Restrictions on the dividend policy
f) 'Top management fear'
g) Frequent changes in senior executives
h) Falling market share
i) Evidence of a lack of planning

Prahalad (1994) in his A New View of Strategy, admonishes companies to go for 'strategy as stretch and leverage'. He starts with strategic intent and argues that a firm should have the winning obsession at all levels and across all functions of the organisation.Strategic intent uses stretch targets to create competitive advantage. It is the role of senior management to develop the organisation in a way that closes the gap to develop between ambition and ability. He again touches on core competences and writes that a core competency is an ability that transcends products and markets, and it results when an organisation learns to harmonise multiple technologies, learning, and relationships across levels and functions. A core competency provides access to a wide variety of markets, makes a significant contribution to the customer's perceived benefit, and is difficult for competitors to imitate. Viewing the organisation as a portfolio of competencies is seen to lead to strategic advantage. In order to realise the potential that core competencies create, organisations must have the imagination to visualise new markets and the ability to move them ahead of the competition. The key to competitive advantage is the process through which organisations release corporate imagination, identify and explore new competitive space, and consolidate control over emerging markets. Prahalad suggests that four elements combine to quicken this imagination:

- escaping the focus on served markets
- searching for innovative product concepts
- overturning assumptions about price and performance relationships
- leading, rather than following customers

Leading customers to where they want to go, before they know it themselves, provides aasdfasda advantage. This approach involves all functions of the organisation. It creates marketers with technological imagination and technologists with marketing imagination, overcoming the debate about whether an organisation should be market– or technology–led.On the premise that being first to market provides a competitive advantage, expeditionary marketing is identified as a tool used by organisations that create competitive space. Expeditionary marketing helps organisations gain an understanding of the particular features, price, and performance of new products that will successfully penetrate the market. Expeditionary marketing increases the number of successful products an organisation achieves by increasing the number of market opportunities, niches, and product variations explored.

VI. MANAGING MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR A GOOD MARKETING PERFORMANCE: THE IMPERATIVES

Normally it is the wish of every reputable company to be doing well when it comes to evaluating its marketing effectiveness with the criteria of customer philosophy, marketing organisation, marketing information, the strategic perspective and operational efficiency. Other and perhaps more obvious ways of reviewing marketing effectiveness and measuring marketing capability are:

a) the extent to which the company has consistently increased market share
b) customer audits, ideally subcontracted to a marketing research agency to establish objectively the company's standing relative to competitors with regard to:
   i. product–service unix;
   ii. pricing policies;
   iii. promotion strategies over the mix but particular customer support and personal selling;
   iv. distribution service including deliveries, stocks, etc.;
   v. marketing knowledge/image;
c) interfirm comparisons;
d) PIMS database (comparisons of company's overall product, market and financial effectiveness relative to similar companies);
e) competitor audits (checking published accounts, competitor intelligence, etc.);
f) internalaudits of all resources.

In order to conduct effectiveness reviews, benchmarks need to be taken and targets set (Kotler, 1990). Why manage a company's marketing strategy? Is it really necessary for a marketing strategy to be managed? Is it not going to work on its own? Who is to manage it? Against what parameters must the strategy be managed? Who is the final arbiter if a strategy is managed well? Is it strategically wise for a company to subject its own marketing strategy to periodic reviews to ascertain its effectiveness? Who is to be blamed if at the end of it all, it is found out that strategy was not working according to company's pans set for it?

A company's marketing strategy must be well managed for the strategy to achieve the objective which has been set for it. It is not just enough looking on, but whatever is necessary for the strategy to be able to work must be provided and the agenda properly set and the objective realistic and attainable with both internal and the external environment permitting. It is important to point out that the internal and external marketing environments do not remain static. They are dynamic and this must be taken into consideration by the managers of the strategy. Demography can change, demand for products can also change, the competition can grow stronger, inflation and interest rates can also go up, exchange rate fluctuations can change, unemployment can rise, credit policy may be such that there will be crowding out of the private sector. Personality and life styles may also change and these and others call for a review of the company's marketing strategy to be very well managed. This calls for managerial astuteness and the entrepreneurial acumen with doses of innovativeness. The drive and urge to succeed in everything one does are all essential ingredients for effective strategy management.

If a strategy is left on its own, it is not going to function on its own. There should be the programming and serious planning to ensure that it really works. The microenvironment and macroenvironmentfocedsds which impinge and impact on a company's marketing performance must be accurately estimated for the necessary penacee and measures to be put in place to deal with it. At least, there are targets set for the marketing department to achieve and these targets become the parameters or benchmarks. For these to be achievable, it is mandatory some diagnostics of the strategy is done. Is the strategy 'strong' enough to achieve what it has been set for it? Is management not being too ambitious and overly optimistic? If after a careful investigation it is not overly optimistic and too ambitious given the environment the company finds itself in, then the benchmarks become the yardstick for assessing the effectiveness or otherwise of the strategy. It is essential the assessment is objectively and scientifically done. For a fair, a reliable, independent, objective, accurate assessment of the strategy, it is in the province of an independent external marketing consultant after an audit of marketing has been done to pronounce judgment. Especially marketing audit firms with a pedigree for auditing the company's line of business. But it is important the audit firm is given the necessary cooperation for an independent and objective audit to be done. After the audit and if need be, the necessary adjustments and amendments are made with even staff swapping jobs or even sue being dismissed.Possibly they were not active and proactive or there was some laxity or lethargy on their part. It is painful, but the organisation must grow and at the same time meet its marketing objectives with relevant strategies. The purpose of the internal market audit is to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the company's marketing efforts. And so it will be strategically imprudent and unwise for the company to stop the audit from being done. It is not only sick marketing departments which need diagnoses and possible treatment, even the healthier, which in the eyes of people and waterads are doing well, are also periodically audited for improvements in the future. It is not easy apportioning blame if a marketing strategy does not perform properly. It is wise an empirical audit and analysis are done before jumping to conclusions. A rationlins analysis of the situation is called for. This is why it was stated initially that managing a marketing strategy is heavily herculean. Implementation, evaluation, and control of strategies are not simple and straight forward. They must be planned with time scales and deadlines set and the whole should perform within schedule and all obstacles spotted and possibly removed. The insurmountable ones must be tolerated. Marketing does not come to an end and managing it very well is also very difficult, but doable.

The must dos or the imperatives for effective strategy management are many. Managers must have a bias for planning. Managers must ask themselves the following questions and answer them or find out answers. Is the corporate mission understood by all? If yes, it is very fine. Are corporate and marketing objectives feasible and being achieved? If again, feasible and being achieved, management must still ensure that they are feasible and the company is about to achieve them, expecting no gap at the end of the day. Are corporate strategies appropriate in the light of corporate resources or not? If corporate strategies are appropriate, what are the benchmarks or the indications to point to that? It is not enough for corporate strategies to be appropriate, it should be more than appropriate. Are corporate strategies working and what are competitors doing? Competitors must be ordepletelysurveilled and monitored. Management must see to the full working of corporate strategies. Have environmental factors changed?

Marketing managers need to pose the question, have environmental factors changed? If yes, do the factors have any bearing on the company's marketing performance, if yes, then an antidote must be found. The company's marketing need to restrategiseor modify or adapt its strategy to change in the environment to prevent any adverse impact on its marketing performance.

Are marketing mix plans harmonised? Are they tailored for each request? Is the company's positioning, marketing wise, alright or not? It is essential marketing mix plans are harmonised and also tailored for each segment. If the company's marketing positioning is not appropriate, it must be repositioned. Price, place, product/service and promotion, are they all alright? The synergistic blending is the four Ps and the market for holistic marketing is very important. This calls for periodic and possibly re–engineering of the company's marketing and marketing management cannot go to sleep. Are internal marketing audits done? What of customer audits? Internal marketing audits and customer audits must be done. Segment audits, competitor audits are all essential and must be done for effective marketing. When it comes to marketing research plan, is the right data provided at the right time in the right format? Marketing research plan needs the right data at the right time in the right format. Are budgets and performance measures appropriate and being achieved, if answers are yes, progress must still be made. The best can be better and management needs not rest on its oars.

Is organisation, integration and coordination working harmoniously, if yes, it makes for organisational effectivity and if no, there should be improvement. This will not take one day. Overall, how doesmarketing departmentcompare with last year and years before. How do they compare with competitors? If answers are favourable, then fine.

VII. MARKETING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Recent years have witnessed a renewed emphasis on delivering superior–quality products and services to customers. As cost–cutting and downsizing products diminishing returns, the corporate spotlight has returned to marketing to encourage growth in businesses. Effective marketing can be defined as success in winning and retaining customer preference and thereby achieving the firm's long–term goals. Pursuing customers at the least of every business activity is claimed to be key to sustained competitiveness (Kotler, 1997).

Marketing has to be broadly defined as being both the whole company's activities designed to satisfy customers and achieve its objectives thereby ("pan–company marketing") and the activities of the functional marketing department (Webster, 1992). Marketers believe that the marketing paradigm is best for business compared to alternative orientations, such as those towards production or shareholders.

Improving product and service quality and satisfying evolving customer needs and expectations requires on–going tracking and expansiveness to changing marketplace needs. Successful marketing requires monitoring of the effectiveness of marketing activities. Allocating resources to marketing, based on past effectiveness and the benchmarked experience of others, can significantly enhance performance. Better measurement leads to better marketing. What gets measured, gets attention, particularly when rewards are tied to those measures (Eccles, 1991). The firm's orientation and objectives, how they measure progress towards those objectives, and the impact of measurement on performance are all likely to influence performance. Webster (1992) classifies performance measures into six categories:

- financial, e.g. sales volume/turnover, profit contribution, Return On Capital;
- competitive market (i.e. those relative to competitor or the whole market), e.g. market share, share of voice, relative price, share of promotions;
- consumer behaviour, e.g., penetration/number of users/consumers/, user/consumer loyalty, user/gains/losses/churn;
- consumer intermediate being thoughts and feelings, e.g., awareness, attitudes, satisfaction, commitment, buying intentions, perceived quality;
- direct trade customer, e.g., distribution/availability, customer profitability, satisfaction, service quality; and
- innovation, e.g., number of new products/services, revenue generated from new products/services as a percentage of sales.

The topic of market orientation is closely related to the "marketing concept" (Kotler, 1997). Market orientation refers to the generation and dissemination of and responsiveness to market intelligence pertaining to current and future needs of customers (Kotler; Jaworski, and Kumar, 1993). In other words, marketing–oriented companies are customer driven. Narver and Slater (1990) view market orientation as a uni–dimensionalconstruct consisting of different behavioural components and decision criteria. An alternative is to see winning customers and beating competitors as distinct, albeit linked, constructs. "Customer orientation" reflects the understanding of the short–term strengths and weaknesses and long–term capabilities and strateiges of both the key current and the key potential competitors (Narver and Slater, 1990). Thus a firm may be preoccupied by building customer preference or by out–performing competitors or some mix of the two. A customer orientation may be reflected, for example, in close attention given to measures of customer satisfaction. Competitor orientation may be shown by primary attention being given to market share. Market orientation has been found to drive, or at least to correlate with, success (Narver and Slater, 1990; Meehan, 1997; Slater and Narver, 1994).

Performance, explicitly or implicitly, is compared against benchmarks. Planning has been linked to successful performance in strategy (Frederickson and Mitchell, 1984; Pearce, Robbins, Robinsons, 1987; Shrader, Taylor and Dalton, 1984) and marketing (Lysonski and Pecotich, 1992; Mintzberg, 1994). Swartz (1996), in a study on U.K. financial services, found no general association of planning with overall success.

VIII. OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENT OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Are all companies able to achieve objectives set by themselves at the end of marketing their products? Companies are not to achieve their objectives 100%. Some may be able to achieve marketing success, others will not be able. What therefore underfind the underperformance or non–performance? A lot of factors or variables account for this scenario. The competition may be too robust and intense, the company may not be able to pit itself against other companies who are in the market to do business, the market signals might not have been read perfect, by company's marketing executives, the product line may not be sufficient or adequate to meet market needs, the needs of the market may change, the companies may offer new product offerings which may generate or encourage a portion t did not work. The of the company'smarket to defect or switch to the company with the new product, promotional objectivesmay not be achieved, the company's advertising message may not be able to entice the market to take immediate action, distribution strategy may not be able to effectively deliver the company's products, etc. some internal and external forces may not also work as experienced. Why they did not work must be investigated. Is it the marketing environment that did not respond to the marketing or it is the company's marketing strategy that did not work.The company's marketing strategy may be faulted. But for how long are we going to fault marketing strategies? It is a question of the controllable forces versus uncontrollable forces.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Marketing is a "pan" activity. It encompasses all corporate functional players when putting up any marketing strategy for the marketing department to be used to prosecute its marketing warfare, it is incumbent on marketing staff to solicit "inputs" from all players in the organisation who matter. Whatever affects marketing as a department, affects everybody in the organisation.
2. Having the best marketing strategy does not guarantee that the company is going to achieve marketing success. There is more to it than that. Full monitoring and scanning of the marketing environment is very crucial as the environment has some influence on marketing success. It is suggested marketing management comes to a very good understanding and also comes toqwundswith what pertains in the overall marketing environment. A scientific approach to strategy formulation and management is beneficial.
3. Always apportioning blame to marketing department for non–performance or underperformance when it comes to marketing performance results is not appropriate. It shouldbe every corporate player's blame and not only marketing. But purposely packaging one's marketing strategy to withstand the "strains and stresses" of the overall marketing environment is in order. At least, the in–house testing of strategies is in order before releasing it to wage the marketing war. And possibly tying the "loose ends" if they happen to be there in the strategy.
4. Managing a company's marketing strategy is a difficult assignment, but it must be done. It therefore behoves all in the marketing department to handle their responsibilities professionally. For if the company brings in external marketing consultants to do the job, it will put the marketing staff's job on the firing line. The company's top management will even question the justification of keeping an 'in–house' marketing department staff.
5. Research is needed on what to do exactly for continuous positive marketing performance. It is the wish of every company's marketing department to be chalking successes in its marketing activities. Sadly, this is not always the case. An explanatory research is therefore needed to find an answer or solution.

X. CONCLUSION

The problem is to what extent a company's marketing strategy positively affects marketing performance. But Swartz et al (1996), in a study on U.K. financial services, found no general association of planning with overall marketing success. It is therefore one thing having a marketing strategy and another achieving positive marketing performance. As to where the fault also lies is another crucial question to be answered. A good research is needed to find an answer or else the debate will rage on. When exactly the strategy–success continuum will end is what we calmly await.

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