

Is the Marketing Function Influential or Not? We Should Really Be the Ones to Know!

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David Stewart, and Daniel Rajaratnam**

Over the last 30 years, an increasingly significant amount of research has emerged concerning the state of marketing's influence within the firm. However, the results have been surprisingly inconsistent. For example, Homburg et al. (2015), benchmarking Homburg et al. (2009), show that marketing's influence has in fact decreased over the last two decades. This result appears to contradict research showing that the marketing function contributes to shareholder value (e.g., Gupta et al. 2004; Kumar and Shah 2009). Again, another recent work by Feng et al. (2015) suggests that marketing's influence has increased in the last 15 years and that it is also a driver of firm performance. To complicate the picture even more, Nath and Mahajan (2008) make the case that the presence of a CMO has no effect on firm performance. Given the amount of rigorous, yet contrary research findings, it is surprising (read: unsettling) that the results may in fact be dependent on methodology and/or sample. How does this impact strategic marketing theory? How does this information impact practitioners, marketing spend, hiring practices, Ph.D. programs, etc.?

The purpose of this special session is to dive more deeply in this provocative area of contention and continue the much needed conversation about marketing's influence within the firm. Top scholars in this area of research are being asked to present their thoughts and/or findings and discuss both sides of this contentious research from four key perspectives, managerial, theoretical/conceptual, quantitatively, and qualitatively.

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Terry Clark is professor in the Marketing Department at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, where he has taught marketing strategy in the undergraduate, M.B.A. and Ph.D., programs. He was chair of the department from 2002 to 2012. Prior to joining SIU, Professor Clark was on the faculty of the Goizueta Business School of Emory University (1993–1999) and the College of Business at the University of Notre Dame (1986–1993). He has been nominated for various teaching honors, including “Outstanding Graduate Teacher of the Year” (2009, 2014), “Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher of the Year” (2003) at Southern Illinois University, “Distinguished Educator” (1995), and “Caldwell Teaching Fellowship” (1997), both at the Goizueta Business School of Emory University.

Dr. Clark’s research focuses on strategic marketing issues and international marketing. His work has appeared in many business and marketing journals, including, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Sloan Management Review*, *Business Horizons*, and *Journal of International Business Studies*.

Hui (Sophia) Feng is an assistant professor at Iowa State University, and she received her Ph.D. from Indiana University. Dr. Feng’s research interests focus at the firm strategy level, with an emphasis on understanding the performance impact of marketing department power and marketing capabilities. Her research has been published in *Journal of Marketing*, and her work has been presented at a variety of national and international conferences such as AMS conference, AMA Summer and Winter Educator’s conference, and INFORMS Marketing Science conference.

O.C. Ferrell is the distinguished professor of Leadership and Business Ethics at the Jack C. Massey College of Business at Belmont University. He previously served as a university distinguished professor and creative enterprise scholar with the University of New Mexico’s Anderson School of Management. He comanages a second, \$1.25 million grant for business ethics education through the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative at the University of New Mexico.

Dr. Ferrell holds a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in Marketing, an M.B.A. in Marketing, as well as a B.A. in Sociology from Florida State University. He is vice president of Publications for the Academy of Marketing Science. Dr. Ferrell serves as a board member of the NASBA Center for the Public Trust and is also an advisory board member of Savant Learning. He serves on the Academic Advisory Committee for the Direct Selling Education Foundation. Dr. Ferrell is coauthor of several leading textbooks including *Business Ethics: Ethical Decision Making and Cases*, *Marketing*, *Marketing Strategy*, *Business and Society*, *Management*, and *Introduction to Business*. He has published in the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *AMS Review*, *Journal of Business Research*, as well as others. He writes weekly business ethics summaries and reviews for the Wall Street Journal with a subscriber list of

over 6000. Dr. Ferrell has served as an expert witness in some high-profile ethics, legal, and marketing cases.

Martin Key is an assistant professor of Marketing at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. Dr. Key's research primarily deals with marketing's influence within academia as well as the firm, particularly at the executive level. He has published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* and the *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*. He is a Daniels Ethics Initiative Business Fellow and currently teaches digital marketing and marketing strategy at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Linda L. Price (B.A., M.B.A. University of Wyoming, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin) is Underwood family professor of Marketing at University of Arizona. Linda is past president of the Association for Consumer Research, president designate for AMA Academic Council, and AE for Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science and serves on the Editorial Board for Journal of Consumer Research, Academy of Marketing Science Board of Governors, the Sheth Foundation, and other editorial boards. She is research faculty of Center for Services Leadership Network. Linda has received many marketing honors including the 2015 AMA CB SIG Lifetime Achievement Award, the 2013 Academy of Marketing Science Cutco/Vector Distinguished Educator Award for Lifetime Contributions to Marketing Scholarship, and the 2013 College of Business Distinguished Alumni Award from University of Wyoming. Linda's theory and research is published in leading journals and combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine collective consumer identity and adaptation, social influence and network interactions, and how consumers' emotions and imaginations enrich, distinguish, and give agency to their lives. Her research has been and is currently funded by a variety of agencies including USDA and the Marketing Science Institute. She has published books, chapters, and over 70 articles that have collectively garnered over 7000 citations and mentored many Ph.D. students who are now leading marketing scholars.

Daniel Rajaratnam is a clinical professor of Marketing at the University of Texas at Dallas where he teaches in the Global Executive and M.B.A. programs. His research focuses on strategic marketing and global business issues. He has published in the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *International Business Review*, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, and several other journals. His dissertation won the Alpha Kappa Psi Foundation and Academy of Marketing Science doctoral dissertation award in second place in 1990.

David W. Stewart, Ph.D., is president's professor of Marketing and Law at Loyola Marymount University and the current editor of the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*. Dr. Stewart has previously held faculty appointments and various administrative roles at Vanderbilt University, the University of Southern California, and

the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Stewart is a past editor of both the *Journal of Marketing* and the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. He is the author of more than 250 published articles, chapters, and proceedings contributions and has authored or edited 12 books. His published work has focused on consumers' use of information and shopping behavior, effective marketing communications, and marketing strategy, as well as research methodology.