



**Marketing in Crisis: Review of what skills
Brand Managers in FMCG SA market deem
essential and how the skills are
effectively acquired.**

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MBA 2006/7

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FMCG SA market deem essential and how the skills are
effectively acquired.**

**A research report submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business
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requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration**

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ABSTRACT

South African organisations appear to be showing the same trend towards the global crisis – lack of confidence in the marketing discipline. The lack of confidence appears to be motivated by the applicability of marketing theory to marketing practice in order to reflect the new fast changing competitive environment.

The purpose of the research is to seek to identify how to improve marketing credibility in the organisation. The research indicates that despite marketers being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 199). The research will review what skills Brand Managers in FMCG market deem essential for future marketers, and how the skills are effectively acquired.

The study will first understand if Brand Managers believe marketers in the FMCG market in South Africa are losing credibility, and if so why they believe this is the case. Secondly the research will investigate the most effective way Brand Managers have acquired their marketing skills and thirdly what skill they believe are essential for the success of Brand Managers in South Africa FMCG market.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration for the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

.....

Date:

Vicky Barclay

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FMCG	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
US	United States
SA	South Africa
MBA	Masters in Business Administration

1. **INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The relevance and the usefulness of marketing theory in today's business environment is increasingly being questioned. The skepticism has led to the increased emphasis on how to translate the marketing theory into effective marketing practice.

The recent and well documented crisis of confidence in the marketing discipline (Brown, 2005) has to a large extent centered on the lack of applicability of marketing theory to marketing practice.

In a growing number of firms marketing professionals seem to be less represented on the board of directors and even on top management teams. In a study of large United States (US) firms reported by McGovern et al. (2004), the authors claim that less than 10 percent of the boards time is spent discussing marketing and customer related issues. In another US poll almost half of the CEO's interviewed make the point that marketing organisation need improvement (Chief Executive, 2004). A McKinsey study from Europe echoes this view and indicates that over 50 percent of CEO's interviewed in the study have a negative impression of their marketers (Cassidy et al., 2005). Other disciplines, such as corporate financial planning have taken more dominant positions in setting strategy, to the detriment of marketing function (Sharma, 1999).

In South Africa, "Marketing in Crisis" in a 2007 issue in the Journal of Marketing, presented findings from Markinor's qualitative research where fifty percent of marketers interviewed said they are not party to their company executive team. Just over 10 percent of respondents are considering moving to another job, they believe that they do not receive the necessary intellectual challenge and the ability to have influence and apply their skills in their current organisations.

Freeling (1994) has drawn our attention to chief executives who are claiming that marketing is no longer capable of driving profitable growth and who accuse marketers of not understanding the economics of the business. What is taught fails to reflect not only the nuances of reality but also major development in some areas of marketing thinking. With this general disillusionment with the inability of marketing theory to match corporate realities is evidenced within the business community.

Closing the alleged gap or bridging the divide between marketing academia and marketing practice has been one of the hotly debated issues in marketing. Conventional marketing concepts need to be refocused to reflect what is happening in practice. Despite being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 199). Traditional teachings need to be revised – not discarded, and marketing personnel need to know the traditional way of "doing marketing" before one can accept new or different way or delivering and implementing a marketing

programme. What is happening in reality is not reflected in our teachings and what's more, what is presented in the texts, does not represent best practice for managing marketing in organisations (McCole, P 2004)

Dacko, S. (2006) believes that narrowing the skills gap for marketing of the future lies in the bridging the academic – practitioner divide. The key to successful bridging is identifying the right skills for the task, clearly a never ending one and then providing the right opportunities in marketing education. An important question concerns the kind of marketing skills and knowledge students perceived to be most important for their future jobs. The effectiveness of student learning is likely to be reflected in the marketing skills and knowledge they believe are important to cope with future marketing roles.

Marketing education has a responsibility of preparing marketers of the future with the relevant knowledge and skills essential for subsequent organizational and career success (Brennan, 2004). Future marketers have the responsibility of making an effort to acquire and apply relevant marketing knowledge and skills. What if future marketers are not being given the right opportunities to acquire the right knowledge and learn the right skills? (Dacko, 2006). Given the mutual aim among both marketing academics and practitioners to bridge the ongoing divide (Baker and Holt, 2004), there is clearly a pressing need to review practices in marketing education to maximize the learning and preparation of future marketers.

Little research attention has been given to how we do – and do not – teach our future marketers important “how to” skills that are essential for life long success. Marketing career focused graduates who are lacking in broad skills will also limit their ability to apply marketing knowledge towards ensuring future company profitability – and survival – as well as achieving greater customer satisfaction and stronger competitive positioning (Dacko, 2006).

1.1 **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

South African organisations appear to be showing the same trend towards the global crisis – lack of confidence in the marketing discipline. The lack of confidence appears to be motivated by the lack of applicability of marketing theory to marketing practice in order to reflect the new fast changing competitive environment.

The purpose of the research is to seek to identify how to improve marketing credibility in the organisation. The research indicates that despite marketers being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 199). The research will review what skills Brand Managers in FMCG market deem essential for future marketers, and how the skills are effectively acquired.

The study will first understand if Brand Managers believe marketers in the FMCG market in South Africa are losing credibility, and if so why they believe this is the case. Secondly the research will investigate the most effective way Brand Managers have acquired their marketing skills and thirdly what skill they believe are essential for the success of Brand Managers in South Africa FMCG market.

1.2 THE PAPER OUTLINE

The paper is organised as follows: First, we discuss the problem facing Marketers within the FMCG market, and the purpose of the research.

The literature presented in Chapter 2 identifies the theories that inform the research. The research has specifically used how Brand Managers learn and what are the key skills required by Brand Managers within the FMCG market in South Africa. In Chapter 3, research questions are posed to test the literature found in chapter 2. Chapters 4 gives detail of the methodology used and details of how the information was collected and analysed. In Chapter 5 the research results are presented and in Chapter 6 the results are discussed and relationships between literatures are discussed. Finally in Chapter 7 the research is concluded and recommendations are given for stakeholders and for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 MARKETING IN CRISIS

2.1.1 GLOBALLY

Phillip Kotler father of modern marketing says "CEO's are no longer satisfied with communication measures of how much awareness, knowledge or preference has been created by marketing programmes. They want to know how much sales, profit, and shareholder value has been created." (Brand Equity, January 2004).

Marketing as a function has been described as going through a "mid life crisis". (Piercy, 1997). At the strategic level, the marketing discipline has been criticised for interdisciplinary isolation and the lack of an integrated strategic framework (Piercy, 1997). In a growing number of firms marketing professionals seem to be less represented on the board of directors and even on top management teams. In a study of large United States (US) firms reported by McGovern et al. (2004), the authors claim that less than 10 percent of the boards time is spent discussing marketing and customer related issues. In another US poll almost half of the CEO's interviewed make the point that marketing organisation need improvement (Chief Executive, 2004). A McKinsey study from Europe echoes this view and indicates that over 50 percent of CEO's interviewed in the study have a negative impression of their marketers (Cassidy et al., 2005). Other disciplines, such as corporate financial planning have taken more dominant positions in setting

strategy, to the detriment of marketing function (Sharma, 1999). There seems to be a view amongst practitioners in other disciplines that marketers over emphasise the more glamorous aspect of their role, relating to advertising agencies, rather than focusing on providing a more integrated approach to customers in the context of the real challenges within businesses (Grant, 1996).

Diana Woodburn Director of Cranfields Return on Marketing Investment Club and Director of Marketing Best Practice believes "Marketing is not seen as a core function in many companies. It remit is interpreted solely as a marketing communication role and hence as peripheral activity and part of general overheads. Symptomatic of the marginalized view of marketing is the fact that many companies have decided they can get by without a marketing director on the board" (Woodburn, 2004)

2.1.2 **IN SOUTH AFRICA**

This is a similar picture in South Africa. Markinor conducted quantitative research in South African to understand what the state of marketing is in South Africa (Journal of Marketing, "Marketing in Crisis", 2007). The research was conducted with over 400 marketers, included chief marketing officers, marketing managers and sales managers. (Markinor, "State of Marketing" 2006). They asked respondents why they would consider leaving their jobs, 92% said for more intellectual challenge while 90% said they would move if they could have a

greater influence on their business strategy of their company. The figures are dismal, some of the findings

- 50% of the respondents say they are not party of their company executive team
- 40% of respondents have only been employed in a marketing position for up to 5 years, while over half of those surveyed have been employed for less than 5 years by their company

Bongang Mohale acting Chairman of the Marketing Association said “this must be huge wake up for the sector” (Journal of Marketing, “Marketing in Crisis”, 2007).

2.2 **ROLE OF THE BRAND MANAGER**

With organisations questioning the role of marketers, it's important to understand the role of the marketer, what do they actually do? Marketing is not just a promotional activity. In world class organisations where the customer is at the centre of the business model, marketing as a discipline is responsible for defining and understanding markets, for segmenting them, for developing value propositions to meet the researched needs of the customer in those segments, for getting buy in from all those in the organisation responsible for delivering that value, for playing their own part in delivering it and for monitoring whether the promised value is being delivered (Mc Donald, M 2006)

The Brand Manager system was initially developed by Proctor & Gamble, in order to improve the effectiveness of developing and marketing products. Brand Managers are a key role that demands high degree of knowledge, an ability to continually update and renew knowledge and skills, and a high level of interpersonal skills to work though people to achieve results (Katsanis, 2006).

The role of the Brand Manager, in most, if not all industries, is to develop brand and/or product marketing plans, see that they are implemented, monitor the results and take corrective action. Such a limited scope does not capture the breadth of the coordination function (Low and Fullerton, 1994). Brand Managers have often been called "mini-general managers", as they represent the focal point

for all activities concerning a specific product\brand (Katsanis, 1999). With the increasingly rapid change, serious questions are being raised about the ability of Brand Managers to meet these challenges in today's leaner, faster moving and entrepreneurial enterprises (Low and Fullerton, 1994; Katsansis and Pitta, 1995).

Working as coordinators for the brand, they need support from specialists that work either in the company or as external consultants, and over who they have limited authority and control (Murphy and Gorschels, 1996).

Katsanis (2006) sites that there are persistent criticism of Brand Managers, which include their short term focus, short term tenure in the job and ignorance of key tasks required. Many of these concerns appear to be linked to the common practice of corporations which recruit both young and inexperienced candidates. With inadequate knowledge and lack of experience, many of these individuals fail in their duties as Brand Managers. The soft skills of brand management appear to be given short shrift by many companies, which would include leadership, team building, coaching, mentoring, presentation and negotiation. It can be assumed that the current level of training received by Brand Managers may not be sufficient for them to successfully carry out their tasks.

2.3 LEARNING METHODS

The workplace of the new millennium carries with it an expectation that workers will be multiskilled and capable of taking greater responsibility and initiative.

Information has replaced equipment as the firm's most important asset.

Increasing the knowledge that employees hold is the key to organisational success (Brooks, 1994). These "knowledge workers" are expected to be able to absorb more information and be responsible and creative in solving problems and making decisions. Burgoyne (1995) describes this transition as a move from manufacturing (creation using physical tools) to "mentofacutre" (creating using the mind).

The recent and well documented crisis of confidence in the marketing discipline (Brown, 2005) has to a large extent centered on the lack of applicability of marketing theory to marketing practice. What is taught fails to reflect not only the nuances of reality but also major development in some areas of marketing thinking, for example the work of Brown (2005). This study found that marketing strategy emerges not out of linear marketing plans as much traditional marketing teaching suggests, but out of current situations and opportunities.

Ardley (2006) believes instead of looking for problems and their resolution in systems and structures of knowledge, the focus shifts to one concerned with engaging with how people constitute their understanding, in order to explain what is going on in the world.

The future of marketing education and the impact of change on the future of marketing education, including new methods of teaching, are topics that have been widely discussed in the marketing literature (McCorkle et al., 2003; Berry, 1993; Ferrell, 1995; Hair, 1995; Lamont and Friedman, 1997; Mason, 1995). Marketing educators are urged to innovate and embrace alternative methods of instruction (Ackerman et al, 2003, Cunningham, 1999; Wee et al, 2003).

Despite being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 1998), Walker et al, (1998) argues a case for greater integration in what is taught in order for students to be better prepared to cope with the complex nature of today's business planning and decision making. Dacko, S. (2006) believes that narrowing the skills gap for marketing of the future lies in the bridging the academic – practitioner divide. The key to successful bridging is identifying the right skills for the task, clearly a never ending one and then providing the right opportunities in marketing education.

There is growing evidence that marketing graduates are under-prepared in the area of skills and over prepared in the area of knowledge (Davis et al, 2002). Walker et al (1998) believes that a recognized undergraduate education in marketing will provide students with the fundamental knowledge base, skills and competences essential to functioning effectively as a marketer, but believes there should be greater integration in what is taught so that students may be more

appropriately prepared for the complex multi disciplinary nature of today's business problem solving and planning.

While specialist marketing personnel may be able to use their knowledge and skills to perform functional activities such as conducting market research and disseminating consequent product specifications, recommending a pricing strategy, and so on, what is important for implementation is that the results of such activities influence organisational behaviour, support organisational objectives and positively contribute to organisational success. (Meldrum, 1996)

In recognising the changing role of marketing and the need to narrow the academia and practices gap, there are a number of suggestions to change the way marketers are taught. Mc Cole (2004) suggests that new developments in marketing including retro and experiential marketing are suitable candidates for narrowing the gap between academia and practice but that marketers of the future are currently ill equipped. McCole (2004) points out that, there are ways of doing marketing that are simply not being captured by current approaches to teaching. These new developments include areas like experiential marketing and retro marketing that are not currently being captured by current approaches to teachings.

Alternative educational methods include those that seek to promote "transformative learning" (Mezirow, 1997), which involves individuals shifting from their existing frames of reference, developing more autonomy and engaging in

crucial reflection. Transformation education promotes discovery learning by using group projects, learning contracts, role plays, case studies and simulations (Mezirow, 1997). Educational drama theorist Brookfield (1990) considers that simulations and games involve the affective domain of learning in addition to cognitive dimensions. Brookfield (1990) argues "because this kind of learning involves the whole person – intellect, feeling, and bodily senses – it tends to be experienced more deeply and remembered for longer.

Levy et al. (1989) defines work based learning as "linking learning to the work role" and demonstrate that it is derived from the experience of undertaking work activities. This form of learning should be common place, but is not the case because it has been ignored by academics as a valid source of knowledge. There are many different types of work based learning, ranging from short term student placement through customised courses to full undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The whole programme of learning is thus orientated to action with experience in the workplace drawing on various theoretical backgrounds. In this way new insights emerge from the ongoing learning cycle of theory /experience / reflection / theory, ensuring that the development of any new theory will be truly grounded. (Hill et al, 1998). Despite the recognised effectiveness of work based learning programmes in relation to the building of individual skills and competencies (Bridges, 1993) there has been little investigation of its usefulness in the marketing competency area.

Jain (1999) speaks about a lack of training results in a lack of skills to use the knowledge existing in a person; this causes ineffectiveness, a lack of self satisfaction, customer dissatisfaction and ensuring lower productivity. Jain (1999) categorises professional training into two groups:

- Formal educational training, which is mainly theoretical, undertaken to obtain academic diplomas and degrees, where people prove their ability academically, not practically.
- Informal on the job training, which is mainly practical and prepares a person to use the acquired academic knowledge efficiently and confidently.

Well trained individuals know the scope, expectations and depth of their jobs and will be able to add building blocks to their professionalism as they progress through their careers.

2.4 IDENTIFYING THE VALUABLE MARKETING SKILLS

Burgoyne (1989), states that competence can be defined simply as the ability and willingness to perform a task. This definition is compatible with most usages of the term, but does include the element of willingness, rather than just ability only. Boyatzis (1982) typified the American approach to competencies which regarded competencies as the underlying attributes of a person. In many studies the terms “skills” and “competencies” are used interchangeably, whilst others clearly distinguish between the two. In this paper skills and competencies will be used and are interchangeable.

Meldrum (1996) cited the lack of literature on individual competencies, knowledge and skills and is liable in part for the crisis in academic marketing as well as the crisis of confidence in the marketing profession itself. Further, companies have become increasingly concerned with the value of intellectual capital and emotional and cognitive intelligence, as well as the need to retain individuals with key skills and competencies (Langley, 2000).

A broad review of the literature on essential skill for marketers finds a considerable number of different skills that are all potentially important for marketers, there is a lack of consensus regarding what skills are most useful. There is clear and ongoing interest in appropriate skill development in marketing in the UK, where the Marketing and Sales Standard Setting Body (MSSSB) has

been set up by the Department of Education and Skills in 2001. While the aim of the organisation is to set competence standards representing the interest of marketing and sales, a concise list of important marketing skills does not exist.

Empirically, there is growing evidence that marketing career focused graduates are under prepared in the area of skills and over prepared in the area of knowledge (Davis et al, 2002). Duke (2002) finds that skills such as interpersonal skill and leadership skill needs to be developed by marketers to a much greater extent to ensure future organisational success in marketing. Baker and Holt (2004) acknowledge the inability to “show how marketing activities and cost influence shareholder value” clearly suggest a need for greater analytical and persuasion skills amongst practitioners.

Earlier studies on marketing management skills & competencies (Thomas, 1984, 1986; Cowell, 1988 and Middleton and Long 1990) identified marketing planning and implementation competencies as a key area of future concern to marketing practitioners. In later studies Middleton and Long (1990) went out to identify the marketing skills that were valued by employees through extensive exploration via literature, marketing employment adverts and surveys of employers. The authors were concerned with their findings, employees could not identify which marketing skills they required from marketing hires. A dialogue between marketing professionals and the academy was called, to distinguish between marketing knowledge and marketing skills and to utilize the concept of competences (Middleton and Long 1990). The authors found that the top 10 desired skills

identified for entry level marketers are: Communication, Creativity, Analytical skills, Numeracy, Resilience, Entrepreneurship, Initiative, Organisational Skills, Planning and Selling Skills.

One recent study by Taylor (2003) suggests that communication and problem solving skills, and the ability to think logically and work in teams, are more important for marketing assistants than specific discipline-related or other technical knowledge and skills.

Gray et al (2005) research conducted in New Zealand with marketing graduates, marketing managers and academics suggests that graduates need an ability and willingness to learn about product markets, solve marketing problems, communicate with internal and external stakeholders and work in teams, if they are to be employable as marketing assistants. It appears that, to develop into effective marketing managers, junior entrants to the business need to develop strategic thinking. The study provided new insights into the essential knowledge areas that marketing students must master for their future careers in marketing management. Gray et al identified the follow skills that appear to be essential: willingness to learn, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, written communication, team work, flexibility and adaptability, oral communication, ability to plan own work, multi disciplinary perspective and analytical skills.

Dacko (2006) presents a list of 22 key skills useful and supporting studies suggesting their potential importance to future marketers. Dacko (2006)

examined the skills that Brand Managers required in order to ensure successful execution of marketing activities and projects. They skill are: Analytical, Computer, Creativity, Crisis Management, Decision Making, Ethical, Etiquette, Foreign Language, Competence, Initiative, Interpersonal, Leadership, Negotiation, Oral Communication, Persuasion, Planning\Organisation, Problem Formulation, Risk Taking, Stress Management, Teamwork, Time Management and Written Communication.

Dacko's research identified those four skills scoring 8 out of 10 are absolutely essential for future marketers – Initiative, Analytical, Interpersonal and Decision Making skills. Six skills below 6 out of 10 showing a low marketing practitioner priority were Etiquette, Stress Management, Computer, Risk Taking, Crisis Management and Foreign Language competence.

3. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this empirical research aims to identify how to improve marketing credibility in the organisation. The literature presented indicates that despite marketers being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 199).

The research will review what skills Brand Managers in FMCG market are deemed essential for future marketers, and how the skills are effectively acquired.

The study will first understand if Brand Managers believe marketers in the FMCG market in South Africa are losing credibility, and if so why they believe this is the case. Secondly the research will investigate the most effective way Brand Managers have acquired their marketing skills and thirdly what skill they believe are essential for the success of Brand Managers in South Africa FMCG market.

The primary objectives of this paper are to:

- a. Uncover if South African Brand Managers believe marketers are losing credibility and that the marketing profession is in crisis.

- b. Clearly define the most effective ways in which Brand Managers acquired their skills and identify the most effective learning techniques.
- c. Identify the essential skills required by Brand Manager in South Africa FMCG market, as well as skills no longer deemed important for future marketers.

The questions that need to be answered are:

- a. Identify if Brand Managers in South Africa are aware of the “marketing is in crisis in South Africa”. Do they believe Brand Managers are losing credibility in the organisation? If so why they believe this is the case and what is causing marketers to lose credibility?
- b. How Brand Managers have learnt their skills, based on past experience. A probe into key moment’s \ successes in their career and how they learnt these skills?
- c. What are the 3 most important and the 3 least essential skills a Brand Manager requires in the FMCG market in South Africa?

4. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

4.1 **RESEARCH DESIGN**

As the primary research in this study seeks to understand how marketers learn and what skill they believe are important to ensure they don't lose credibility, richness of response was needed. The research is thus exploratory and seeks to build a picture based on the input by Brand Managers, currently employed as Brand Managers in South Africa FMCG organisations. Qualitative analysis methodology would be the most effective research methodology technique to capture the subjects' interpretation of what is occurring, Howard (1984). An unstructured interview technique was adopted to gain further richness in the data, for this particular research face to face interviews were applied.

Once the methodology was chosen, the sample group was identified. The study aims to examine the similarities of Brand Managers working in the FMCG industry, specifically detergents, foods, alcoholic and non beverages. Ten Brand Managers within the South African (FMCG) market were chosen. This study was conducted over a two month period from the beginning of August to the end of September, in South Africa. All the information was collected by personal in depth interviews.

Interviews were based on a structured interview guide and is attached as Appendix I. Open ended questions were developed in order to obtain additional

information relevant to the research objectives being achieved. The discussion guide did not incorporate a likert scale, as it did not need codification.

The discussion guide was divided into four main sections, using the literature review findings. The allocation of time was measured as a percentage of total time available, maximum of 1 hour. The first section examined how they entered marketing and why they chose marketing as a career. The second section probed how Brand Managers learnt their skills through understanding significant events within their career. Respondent were prompted to “tell their story”, in order to gain further insight into how such characteristics, roles and rules shaped their behaviour, Howard (1984). The third section reviewed their view on marketing losing credibility, did they believe this was happening in their organisation and within the FMCG market. The fourth section delved into what skills the respondents believed were relevant. Dacko, S (2006) list of 22 essential skills required by marketers was used to identify the top three most important skills and the bottom three least required skills. They were probed in more detail to understand how these skills were learnt and to understand respondents competency levels against the market.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed; the details of each interview are excluded from this report. This was done in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents.

4.2 **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

These findings are limited to South African Brand Managers within the FMCG market only. The findings may not be generalised across different industries eg Banking, Pharmaceutical etc. A limited number of Brand Managers were interviewed; this does limit sizing and scaling the data. Further quantitative research would be required in order to effectively identify the most important skills required by Brand Managers and the least most important skills. The list of skills used for the research was based on Dacko, S (2006) research. The skills list consisted of 22 skills, this list may have been too long and may have caused respondent fatigue.

4.3 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY CONCLUSION**

A qualitative methodology was used to resolve the research problem. In depth face to face interviews were conducted with ten Brand Managers within the FMCG industry in South African across a number of different industries.

5. RESULTS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The interviewees were representative of a range of industries within the FMCG in South Africa, they consisted of beverages – alcoholic and non alcoholic, food, personal care and household care. The Brand Managers interviewed have worked in Multi National organisations as well as South African National companies. In total ten Brand Managers were interviewed; Table 1 illustrates the demographics of the participants

Table 1: Respondent Demographics

<i>Demographics</i>		No. of respondents
Sex	Male	1
	Female	9
Age	20 - 24	0
	25 - 30	5
	31 - 35	5
	36 - 40	0
Race	White	6
	Black	3
	Coloured/Indian	1
Academic Qualification	Matric	2
	Undergraduate	7
	Post Grad	1
No. of Years in Marketing Role	1- 3	1
	4 - 5	6
	>6	3
Industry	Non Alcoholic Bev	3
	Food	3
	Personal Care	1
	Household Care	1
	Communications	1
	Alcoholic Beverages	1
Type of Organisation	Multi National	5
	South African	5

The research results are presented and will address the three research objectives:

- a. Uncover if South African Brand Managers believe **marketers** are losing **credibility** and that the marketing profession is in crisis.
- b. Clearly define the most effective ways in which Brand Managers acquired their skills and identify the most effective **learning techniques**.
- c. Identify the **essential skills** required by Brand Manager in South Africa FMCG market, as well as **non essential skills** no longer deemed important for future marketers.

5.1 MARKETING CREDIBILITY

5.1.1 How they entered Marketing

Respondents were asked to enlighten how they came to know about the marketing profession and why they chose marketing.

The majority of the respondents did not choose to study marketing when they completed matric. They were not aware of the marketing profession or what the role of marketing is in the organisation. Three respondents chose marketing when they completed matric. The motivation for this choice was based on the perception that marketing was about adverting, it was creative and fun, and they did not clearly understand the role of marketing. Four respondents studied other academic disciplines before converting to a marketing degree; they “discovered” marketing in university or once they were in the work place. A few respondents commented on why they didn’t study marketing once they completed matric.

“I can’t tell you offhand. I don’t think at that age you really know what you want to do.”

“I didn’t really know at the time what field I wanted to be in whether it was law or IT. So I went to UCT and I did business science where you do two years of general business grounding. Then we did marketing in the second year of business science and that really took my fancy, and I realized that’s where my heart was at.”

Three respondents opted to work first once they completed matric. They have subsequently completing or are busy completing a marketing degree or diploma part time, while they're busy working in the marketing profession.

Majority of the respondents - 9 out of 10 respondents, wouldn't change how they entered the marketing profession and that "*hindsight is a great thing*" they all mentioned. They all held great pride in the skills they had gained in the other organizational functions, and believe they have stood them in good stead for the challenges they have faced in marketing. One respondent said that working their way up was very beneficial and they would not change anything.

"I had to work my way up and fight for everything and I think it stood me in good stead. I am happy with the experience I have got through working my way up."

Another respondent who studies Micro Biology first, before completing a Marketing degree, felt the learning they had gained working in another area of the organisation has helped their identify and communicate with other departments.

"I really don't think it was a waste because in many ways it really helped me to think because I try to put myself into that person's shoes"

All the respondents interviewed were dedicated to the marketing profession and are not considering changing careers. The main reasons for high job satisfaction is the constant change which intern gives all respondents the constant challenge

of new things. They also enjoy working with different people across different functions and the creativity of the job. One respondent who passionately spoke about why they were in marketing, summed up what they all said.

“I like the pace, it’s exciting, it’s challenging. I like giving sales the tools to go out and do their job and at the end of the day satisfy our consumers. Marketing integrates every department. There are so many factors and aspects of marketing combining everybody. I just enjoy it – it’s amazing and I love it.”

5.1.2 **Is the Marketing Profession losing credibility?**

Most of the respondents had not been aware of any issues surrounding the marketing profession \ marketers globally or in South African, and were taken aback when the question was posed. There were mixed feelings with regards the answer to the question, half of the respondents believed marketing was losing credibility and the other half not.

There was some agreement with respondents who believe marketers were losing credibility. These respondents believed the industry was losing credibility because marketers were focusing on the wrong activities; they were no longer focusing on the consumer, but on the bottom line. The respondents believed that Marketers were no longer “consumer experts”. A few respondents verbalised it as follows:

"Marketers are focusing on volume delivery and not on consumers. Marketers have become very complacent over time to the extent that we have forgotten about brands and we have our own opinions driven by our own background. We are forgetting about the consumer"

"We are so commercially astute and trained that we are not necessarily doing what you want for our consumer. Our focus is on the bottle line"

One respondent was concerned that the Board and other Senior Managers in their organisation did not understand the role of marketing in the organisation. This is what the respondent had to say.

"I definitely feel there's a misconception: they think marketing as doing pretty pictures. If someone is organizing a golf day, they'll say they're in marketing"

The other half of the respondents who did not believe there were any troubles with marketing credibility in the organisation, felt that any issues concerning credibility has come from Sales.

"I believe it is because you continually hear the sales guys saying that marketers are not working hard and are just sitting in their ivory towers, you know how they talk."

5.2 MOST EFFECTIVE LEARNING METHODS

The respondents were asked to highlight key moments \ successes in their career and explain why they were significant. All respondents were energetic to share the details of their key career moments. Mostly all the key highlights mentioned by the respondents were positive activities in their careers. There were 3 significant moments that all respondents mentioned, they were

- a launch of a new product, they lead and managed
- a brand repositioning and relaunching
- increased responsibility when a direct reports left the organisation and they were given additional responsibilities

They passionately spoke about their key moments in the following manner.

"The one that comes to mind first is obviously the re-launch of Brand V which was a great learning for me. When we launched in 2004 it shot up to 1000 tons in the first year that was phenomenal."

"I was developing packaging for the new product and it coincided with my move into marketing. When I was done with the packaging development, I then moved into the marketing and was then involved in terms of the promotion and communications. So for me it was seeing it from the start and seeing it develop in the market and being involved in the whole process. Seeing everything came together was so exciting for me. And I thought, this is it! That was the highlight, most important than anything else"

"I went in as the assistant Brand Manager on Brand X. I worked on that portfolio and then was quite fortunate in the sense, I know it sounds ridiculous, but my Brand Manager left – I had been there for two months when she resigned and left. So I was kind of left on my own while they found a new replacement, which they really battled to find. Fortunately I worked very closely with the marketing manager which really stretched me a lot more."

Nearly all of the key moments the respondents mentioned happened early in their career, when they entered marketing. They all believe that they learnt the most in this time of their career. They mentioned a number of different types of learning methods which helped them achieve their key moment's \ successes in their marketing career. They have been grouped together and are listed below:

5.2.1 Formal Academic Learning

Majority of all the Brand Managers interviewed believe that the basic principles of marketing or the theory of marketing is a crucial requirement. By not having a formal degree \ diploma was not a barrier to entry into marketing, one is able to enter marketing and study part time. The respondents believed that if a Brand Manager did not have a formal degree or diploma their career progression would be hindered. One respondent, who completed her Marketing Diploma while working, said the following:

"But you do need the theory and the basics. I do need it, if you don't it takes you much longer to figure it out, yes you would eventually get there but it would take you longer to get there because you have all these things but you don't know how to funnel all your ideas"

In addition to the academic learning, the respondents also learnt a large amount of their marketing skills whilst in the work place. One respondent verbalized their thoughts on academic learning.

"Only 13% - 14% what I learnt at varsity I'm actually practicing. Most of the stuff I'm doing now I learnt on the ground running."

5.2.2 In the workplace learning

All respondents firmly believed they learnt most of the skills in the workplace, the theory was a good starting point but the how to do marketing was missing.

"When you're raw out of varsity you have all the theory but no idea how to apply it. So my focus was to get to into the marketing department"

The respondents revealed a number of different ways in which they learnt their skills in the work place. They all affirmed the importance of learning their skills by actually doing the work. There are two types of in the workplace learning that consistently came through from all the respondents, they are:

- The right coach \ line manager
- Sink or Swim

5.2.2.1 **The right “coach” \ line manager**

Seven out of the ten respondents believed their marketing skills were learnt through their line managers. A few respondents verbalised how they learnt their skills through their line managers.

"So I think you learn the most through working with someone who is good, has knowledge and a lot of experience and by actually doing things. There have been no manuals for brand management showing you how you should put a brand plan together, or when trying to work out a plan to follow certain steps. So I think it comes only from someone that you can learn from and experience, actually doing it yourself."

"She was my boss at the time and she literally took me into marketing. She is a perfectionist and everything is either right or absolutely wrong. I kind of just went to her and she taught me the ropes in terms of key strategy, how to manage brands, keeping the heart of a brand as opposed to product management. The first year was just a learning curve for me – she took me in briefing sessions, she involved me in writing briefs or a research brief : how to do it, how to structure it, what are the objectives, how do you achieve certain objectives, how to look at the market and know the market you're playing, how you become a better player as a brand versus a product or the person behind the product"

One respondent unequivocally believed he owed his success to his manager

"When I was assistant Brand Manager, she was Brand Manager: as I moved she moved. That's what I call people development: she developed me for the better. I was fortunate enough to work with her for a few year and then she went to France as she had hit her ceiling and that is when I became Brand Manager for brand x. I owe my success to her".

Respondents spoke passionately about their direct reports, and believed they had played a significant role in their career.

"She saw something in me that wasn't recognized before: she gave me self confidence in terms of my career. Things which I thought I knew but because no one had affirmed it, you become quieter, start fighting for things a little less. She was hugely instrumental in giving me that self confidence and the backing"

5.2.2.2 Sink or Swim

Three respondents believed they learnt their marketing skills by being thrown in the deep end, to swim or sink - *"It was mostly fending for myself"*

The one respondent learnt that the only way to succeed was to ask for help from other Brand Managers or their direct report. One respondent explained:

"First of all you have to go with gut feeling and you learn by mistakes but also important, and a huge learning, is how much you want to learn. Yes, you really struggle but you keep on asking questions and somebody will help you."

Respondents believed that the organisation culture allowed for failure and they don't believe other organisations would be able to accept this type of learning because failure was not tolerated. The respondents also knew they could rely on their line managers for support, so if anything went wrong they had someone who was willing to help support them.

"It was difficult because people thought of you as secretary. People still see you as a secretary. Not wanting to take instructions from you – it got so bad that eventually we had to get management involved."

Two respondents believed they were promoted \ moved into more senior roles before they were ready for the move. This happened when their direct reports left the organisation and there was no one to fill this position. They both assume that if they were not successful at this time in their career, they would not have been promoted as quickly as the where.

"I went in as the assistant Brand Manager on brand X . I worked on that portfolio and then was quite fortunate in the sense, I know it sounds ridiculous, but my Brand Manager left – I had been there for two months when she resigned and left. So I was kind of left on my own while they found a new replacement, which they really battled to find."

Fortunately I worked very closely with the marketing manager which really stretched me a lot more.”

“They gave me a position of assistant in marketing admin – you do not get lower than that. I took a huge drop in salary and did all the horrible work. I really loved it and soon after that the Marketing Manager left, they were really happy with my work and they gave me the opportunity to be Acting Marketing Manager”

5.2.3 Formalised In House Training

Respondents mentioned formalized training programmes run by the organisations they worked in. There were two types mentioned, the most mentioned programme was the in house Graduate Programme and the second training programme was formal marketing training managed and run by the organisation.

5.2.3.1 Graduate Programmes

The Graduate programmes cover 3 key demand areas - Sales, Channel Marketing & Consumer Marketing – they may vary depending on the organisation. They normally consist of a minimum of 6 months in each demand area, this allows the graduate to gain hands on experience in the industry. There were mixed points of view regarding Graduate programmes.

One respondent started their marketing career in the organisation through a Graduate Programme. This respondent felt the programme was beneficial in gaining insight into other demand areas in the business, but at the end of the programme it confirmed their desire to be in consumer marketing:

“The more I tried different things, the more I realized that I wanted to specialize in marketing itself”

Another respondent had been approached at university to enter a Graduate programme. The respondent felt the 2 year commitment to this programme was too long and would hamper her ascending the corporate hierarchy. This respondent did not go through the programme and has no regrets not participating.

“I wasn’t really sold on the idea of the graduate programme because of being in training for two years when there was potential for me to move around a bit quicker”

Three respondents that entered marketing via sales felt that Graduate programmes would definitely help you gain access to marketing. They found it was very difficult acquiring a marketing position once they had completed university. They started their career in sales believing it would help them gain access to marketing; this was not the case for the three respondents. They found it very difficult moving from sales into marketing. This is how one respondent

made the move from sales into marketing and why they believed why the Graduate Programmes would be beneficial:

"Being in sales there are a lot of people in sales who have the ambition to get out of sales and go into marketing. It's so hard to get a marketing job unless you are in a Graduate Programme or something like that. It was difficult to get out of that so I think I definitely achieved something by getting into Company n and into a head office environment where opportunities existed within that environment. I applied for 3 marketing jobs and eventually got into the field I wanted. So the key thing for me was to get myself into the right environment where I would have access to a marketing position."

The respondents did not believe it was crucial to go through this programme to enhance learning, but used as an entry into marketing.

5.2.3.2 In House Formal Training Programmes

Two respondents had participated in the organisations formal in house marketing training. All marketers in the organisation have to participate in the programme; it covered a range of marketing topics or business topics relevant to the organisation and the industry they're competing in. Both respondents felt the programme was very beneficial, even though it might have repeated what was taught in university it was advantageous to gain a marketing recap, learn the organisations terminology and be given practical guidance to marketing processes.

"Company y was one of those companies that believes in training its people. So for me that's where I learnt my marketing skills. I did what we call a 'marketing foundation' which is a course that you go on over a period. You break away from your work and you cover all the marketing functions. You learn those things, some of which you may have done previously and when you go back to your work things start to make more sense. Some was repetition but the basics were there. Because every business has its own business model and terminology but certain things remain the same."

"A couple of months ago I went on Company X brand building course. It's a week long very intensive course about brand building and marketing – it's phenomenal. What is your business goal? What is business role? What is your consumer role? Everything you need to know. It was phenomenal. It makes you look at every single stage before you actually come to your brand plan. It's one of the best programmes I've ever been on."

5.2.4 Organisational Systems And Processes

Formalised organizational systems and process were mentioned by two respondents; these processes and systems were only mentioned by respondents who had worked in Multi National organisations. Respondents working in national organisation did not have formal systems and processes.

Respondents who had access to formalized processes and systems believe it gave them a "step by step" approach to learning their marketing processes skills. The

respondents believed that they would have been lost if they did not have these formal systems and procedures.

"It's a very good thing especially for someone entering marketing. I found that at the beginning it was vital so that a person doesn't go outside the boundaries. At Company y I couldn't go outside the boundaries as they are very systems driven whereas at Company x you could go around the company processes in your own way. It was a good thing for me that I started at Company y because had I been at Company x before Company y I would have been lost and not known what to do."

5.2.5 Formal Mentorship programmes

A large number of the respondents did not participate in any formal mentorship programmes. One respondent believed it was a beneficial programme, but could not equate her success to the mentorship programme.

One respondent was fervently against formal mentorship programmes, they remarked.

"I was on a course they tried to set up a mentorship programme, where when you're stuck with a thing, they would expect you to go to a specific person. You don't know these people, their characters, and their personalities. You might actually think I would like so and so to be my mentor but you have no idea. A mentor should be someone who inspires you, shares with you. For me it didn't really make sense: rather give me time

to work with the people, to get to know the people. It takes a while to find a mentor so to make it a formal thing I feel doesn't work."

5.2.6 Additional Formal Educations

A high number of respondents believe there is a time in your career where you need to conduct additional formal education. One respondent spoke about being at a stage in your career where you need to rely on yourself for additional learning.

"I'm at the stage now where I have learnt to ask the right questions, I'm at a stage where I'm no longer only relying on my boss to teach me things and show me the ropes but also relying on myself to learn. There's one person who summed it up : learn as much as you can until you're 25, and from 25 to 35 start giving back, when at 35 to 40 or older, wisdom speaks. I'm at the stage where I'm still learning but also giving back."

Another respondent mentioned that marketers were perceived as "mini" general managers and felt that a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) was what was needed in order to progress from marketing into a General Manager role.

"I love marketing but I also like the business side of things and felt it was a way to get into a general management type role, and onto a board of directors."

5.2.7 Non Verbal Learning - Watch and Learn

A high number of the respondents mentioned learning skills by observing admired senior members in the organisation, taking these learning's and implementing them into their own style. They were adamant that it is not about mimicking a person at a more senior level, but about identifying someone who they deemed credible and observing how they conduct themselves in certain situations.

"I think you learn the skills which aren't in a text book, as you mature and as you deal with people and observe them. You learn because they do things a certain way. Those skills are definitely learnt over time."

5.2.8 Learning Conclusion

There are a number of ways in which Junior Brand Managers learn their marketing skills. On the job training appears to be the most preferred and the most effective way in which marketers learn their skills. The research identified other types of learning methods used which are not all academic in nature.

5.3 SKILLS REQUIRED BY BRAND MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The respondents were first asked spontaneously what skills they believed were important for marketers, they were then given a comprehensive essential skills listed based on Dacko, S (2006) research, Appendix B. Each skill was discussed in more detail. The respondents were asked to rank and state which skills they considered to be the three most important skills for marketers and the three least important skills. The combined respondent's results are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Skills rating in order of importance:

<i>Skill ranking</i>	Ranking	Score
Analytical	1	13
Planning\Organisation	2	9
Leadership	3	8
Decision Making	4	6
Interpersonal	5	6
Problem Formulation	6	3
Project Management	7	3
Accountability	8	2
Oral & Written Communication	9	1
Teamwork	10	1
Computer	11	0
Initiative	12	0
Time Management	13	0
Theory	14	0
Ethical	15	0
Risk Taking	16	-2
Creativity	17	-3
Crisis Management	18	-3
Persuasion	19	-4
Stress Management	20	-5
Negotiation	21	-5
Etiquette	22	-7
Foreign Language	23	-17

Most important skills
required by Brand Mangers

Least important skills
required by Brand Mangers

The table identifies the 3 most important skills deemed essential by Brand Managers, they are – Analytical, Planning and Organisations and Leadership skills. There are 6 skills displaying a positive rating, the respondents believe they are important skills to have as a Brand Manager but not the most important, they are – Decision Making, Interpersonal, Problem Formulation, Project Management, Accountability and Communication – oral and written. There are four skills - Ethical, Computer, Time Management and Initiative were nice to have skills but not deemed essential. The last four skills were rated negatively indicating they were not deemed important, those skills should be either left alone or de-emphasised, and they are Stress management, Negotiation, Etiquette and Foreign Language skills.

5.3.1 The 3 essential skills required by Brand Managers

5.3.1.1 Analytical Skills

Seven of the respondents identified Analytical Skills as one of the most important skill required by Brand Manager. There were different reasons given, ranging from the ability to read and understand profit and loss statements to being able to identify opportunities in the market by understanding and analysing research documents. Respondents verbalised there reasons:

“Financial year end; you need to project trends, understand them and forecast into the future. There is a lot of analysing. In terms of numbers, trends, seasonality, you need to be able to manage your books; you need o be able to manage your budget”

"It's very important. I think as a Brand Manager you are basically starting to build a small business, from start to finish. So the profitability of the brand is everything because you can't innovate, you can't communicate unless that brand is profitable. So it's important to be able to analyze the sales history, margins, raw materials, overheads etc to understand what is actually driving this range"

All respondents received fundamental financial management knowledge through their undergraduate degree, two respondents have completed a B Com Accounts degree and they believed it gave them a solid financial grounding –

"It gave me good financial background as well as marketing theory."

Most of the respondents were of the opinion they had learnt to apply the undergraduate financial knowledge when they started working, where they were required to analyse and make recommendation using the data they were given.

"I personally found it useful to pull and analyse data myself - gives me a far better understanding of what goes on in the business instead of asking someone to do it for you and be spoon fed".

Two respondents believed that it's important that Brands Managers possess the *"knack for number to start off with"*, but that analytical skills can be developed overtime - *"the brain can be trained"*.

The respondents who selected Analytical Skills as one of the most important skills required by South African Brand Managers, were asked to rate the competency of Brand Managers in South Africa using the following scale - one being not skilled and ten being highly skilled. The seven respondents believed that Brand Managers in South Africa had above average competency – rating them between 7 and 8. They were then asked to rate themselves, they also believed they were highly competent, achieving an average rating of about 7.

Only one respondent cited analytical skills as the least required skill required by Brand Managers in South Africa. This respondent believed Brand Managers should have a basic understanding of financials, but this should not be their area of expertise

"I think you need basic financial understanding. You do not need to be a financial guru but you do need to understand income statements and how things affect sales"

5.3.1.2 Planning and Organisational Skills

Four of the respondents rated planning and organisation skills as one of the essential skills a Brand Manager should possess. Respondents chose planning and organisational skills because Brand Managers lead a number of projects ranging from new product development to promotional campaigns. This is what they had to say about planning and organizational skills

"I feel that if you're planning and organisation and project management skills are a mess, I think it is a likely recipe for failure. You have to be organized." Another comment on project management *"If you are a good project manager and you can identify problems and show the ability to solve them by incorporating other people and taking them along the journey, I think if you've got that as a basis".*

They also felt that if you were unable to plan properly you would not be able to deliver what was required of you.

"You handle brands, and when you handle brands you need to plan properly, you need to know what you're doing and when. You need to organise well but obviously it goes on a day-to-day basis. Brand management is all about campaigns, activities and research so you need to plan your time otherwise you'll be one of those people who work until 9 O'clock. Work hard but work smart"

All respondents believed they had learnt their planning and organisational skills when they started working, regardless if they started in marketing or another discipline. Their planning and organisational skills were perfected when they entered marketing, through the guidance of their line managers who had taught them how to manage a number of different tasks at once.

"I learnt from a mentor. For me what goes with it and the way I get my head around it is by creating structure so that when you're thrown a problem how do you analyse a problem. Don't just jump right into the problem; try to lay it out – what are the implications? How are we going to tackle it? Who are we going to use to tackle it etc. So try and think it through before you jump into it."

"Planning and Organisations skills are also learnt through experience, you make a mistake and then you evaluate afterward to understand what went wrong - "Its easy to plan but it takes experience to know how to plan properly"

All four respondents ranked themselves higher than the market; they all believed Brand Managers in South Africa were highly competent at planning and organisational skills. No respondent believed this skill was not important to Brand Managers.

5.3.1.3 Leadership Skills

Three of the respondents placed Leadership Skills in the top 3 most important skills a Brand Manager should possess. The three respondents agreed that leadership skills are vital to Brand Managers because they lead a number of projects within the organisation. They spoke passionately about Brand Managers leading projects and if they can't lead their team, they will fail. They also felt Brand Managers give the organisation direction, where the brand is going and

what needs to be done. Their views on leadership were very similar; this is how they verbalized leadership.

"What leadership means to me is communicating, sharing and collaborating, making sure that your team and even people who are not directly involved are aware of what you are doing because if you need to push on their buttons they are aware of what is going on. It is also in terms of having one goal and working towards that goal: don't chop and change your goal."

"Absolutely! Take the lead, but lead from the front. You also need to respect other people. Get rid of this whole hierarchy thing: work with them."

One respondent believed that to be a good leader you need to be competent in a number of skills in order to be successful they are Communication, Decision Making, Negotiation/Persuasion, Risk Taking and Teamwork. This respondent felt that Brand Managers needed other team members to deliver what was required to achieve the overall goal - *"it's not about how we're going to do it my way."*

All three respondents concurred on how leadership skills were learnt. They believed that leadership skills are inherent in a person, you're born with the skill, but they did mention that this skill can be learnt.

"I think marketers by nature are more often than not leaders, more so than say accountants or manufacturing people etc."

Leadership skills are mastered through watching and learning, observing senior members in the organisation and mimicking their style

"You watch people, you learn from people."

"When you look at a person that's reporting to you and you see them doing well, you're also doing well. If I do well, you're doing well. There's a Zulu saying: The hand washes each other. Meaning, if you do well, I also do well."

Leadership skills take's time to learn, it's through trial and error that you improve perfect leadership skills, you need to understand the "*dynamics of leadership*".

"If I think of myself, I probably lead in different manners with different people: for example I would deal in one manner with the sales team because they are very strong"

The three respondents rated South African Brand Managers between 5 and 6; they believed the marketers in South Africa were competent, but not highly skilled in leadership.

"I think the general perception is that Brand Managers are very young and why should they listen to someone so young, they don't have that much experience. It's also easier to consult with the marketing manager for that leadership. And then I think you're sort of in the middle of the road, you're still growing and you're still learning. So I think it's in the middle."

One respondent rated themselves higher than the market, they believed they had developed this skill –*“I’m looking for bigger challenges now. I’ve worked quite hard at developing that skill.”*

5.3.2 Skills deemed not Essential Skills for Brand Managers

Respondents were required to identify 3 skills they believed were not essential to be an effective Brand Manager in South Africa. All respondents found it difficult to identify the three least important skills require by Brand Mangers. They considered all the skills important, but with varying degrees of competence required

“What do you knock off? It’s hard to knock anything off the list”

Table 3 presents the four least essential skills for Brand Mangers in South Africa

Table 3: Least important skills required by Brand Mangers in South Africa:

Skill ranking	Ranking	Score
Stress Management	20	-5
Negotiation	21	-5
Etiquette	22	-7
Foreign Language	23	-17

Least important skills required by Brand Mangers

The table indicates that Foreign Language skills were ranked the least essential skill by Brand Managers in South Africa followed by Etiquette, Negotiation and Stress Management skills.

5.3.2.1 Foreign Language Skills

All respondents unanimous identified Foreign Language skills as not being considered to be an important skill required by Brand Managers in South Africa. They all agreed that this skill would be a “nice to have”, but was not crucial. Some of the respondents’ responses to Foreign Language skills

“Why would you need foreign languages? Foreign languages are for multi-nationals.”

“You have to think local and brand local and that basically means that you have to have some sort of idea about the international world, but to speak the language – I don’t think so.”

Multi national organisation respondents did however feel they needed to have a basic command of the language of their head office eg Beiersdorf who are based in Germany and speak German, but felt it would was not essential. South African

\ National company respondents did not believe they needed any foreign language skills, English was the business language of choice in South Africa.

Interestingly, only one respondent mentioned that we live in a country with 11 official languages, and questioned whether “foreign language” could also mean different languages in South Africa. The respondent felt that if the Brand Manager understood another language they may have an advantage over other Brand Managers.

“If you think about it, maybe those who can speak an African language are just a step ahead. It’s not necessary but would be more effective. I don’t know if it would add enough for you to sit down and study a course but I think you would have some sort of advantage”.

5.3.2.2 Stress Management

Four respondents rated stress management as a non essential skill required by Brand Managers in South Africa. Respondents believed that we work in an environment and country where our stress levels are already high, stress is not unique to marketing only.

“... the increase in technology and communication has made us become more stressed; we are always connected through cellular phones, bluetooth, internet etc”

“I don’t know if that’s marketing or everyone and its just life”.

Respondent also felt that if you did not manage stress there would be a ripple effect on other skills that are essential to Brand Managers in South Africa.

"A Brand Manager has a big responsibility and there's nothing worse than a Brand Manager who cannot cope. It is important to manage it because I believe that if you're under stress, you're disorganized".

Six out of ten respondents mentioned that stress was an issue in their current marketing role, astonishingly all respondents mentioned they did not spend enough time managing stress and were flippant with how they addressed their own stress levels.

5.3.2.3 Etiquette

Three respondents rated etiquette as not being an essential skill required for marketing. The thinking amongst the respondents was that if you have studied at a university and are working in a corporate organisation, you will possess a level of required business etiquette. It's not a skill, it is what is required by all individuals who work in professional organisations.

"If you are educated to this point of Brand Manager it is automatically there"

It is a *"basic requirement"* as one respondent stated

"Etiquette - in this country there are various cultures and etiquette means different things to different people. It is so diverse. At this level you should know etiquette automatically. I don't think I would put this in a job definition"

One respondent felt very strongly about not being boxed in, etiquette wasn't important to this respondent.

"I've never been one who is boxed. I've always been considered an informed maverick. When you look around, I think mavericks will rule the world. What is etiquette? Who came up with that? Know the rules but you don't live by them. I don't think it's important to have."

5.2.3.4 Negotiation

Three respondents believed negotiation skills were not essential skills. The respondents believed persuasion skills were more valuable to Brand Mangers than negotiation skills, because marketing is not about tough negotiations. They felt that persuasion skills were more effective to compel other members of the organisation to deliver against their own objectives.

"Persuasion, it goes hand in hand with negotiation".

"For me it goes together with negotiation."

"Persuasion I think that falls under negotiation. A lot of times you're fighting for a little space so you have to use persuasion when negotiating for your brand. It's all about relationships and managing the relationships"

5.3 Other Highly Rated Skills Or Requirements, Worth Mentioning

There were others skill that were also deemed essential to Brand Managers in South Africa and are worth mentioning.

5.3.1 Passion

Two respondents mentioned Passion when spontaneously asked what skills they believed are essential for Brand Managers in South Africa. Passion is not a skill but the two respondents believed it was a necessary for Brand Managers to be passionate.

One respondents view on passion and the need to focus on people.

"I believe that marketing is really about people. You're targeting people so if you cannot be passionate about people then I think you're just a cold, heartless marketer with the main focus on how can you persuade people to part with their money"

The other respondents view on passion was that you need to "live" your brand; if you're not passionate about your brand then you should not be in marketing.

“If you haven’t got the passion and you don’t live, sleep, eat your brand you can break a brand so quick. You can’t look at it as a pay cheque every month, which is a big problem, I think, in this company.”

The same respondent mentioned that you don’t always work on the best and the largest brands in the organisation. It is vital that Brand Managers are passionate, that they are able to energise the organisation to obtain the attention the smaller brands require.

“Sometimes it’s hard when you have a duff brand and the odds are against you but you must believe in your brand. It is your brand, if you are not passionate how can you expect others to be passionate about it.”

5.3.2 Decision Making

Decision making was highlighted as an essential skill required by Brand Managers. The respondents believed that it is crucial for Brand Managers to make decisions, the reason it was so important was that Brand Managers lead a number of projects. The team members depend on the project leader to make decisions, if a decision is not made then everything is placed on hold and projects are delayed. The only way to learn is to make decisions; this is how the respondents verbalised decision making.

".....there's always chaos and you can't not make a decision".

"People need to make decisions and people need to be accountable and take responsibility. Make a decision and if it doesn't work, admit your mistake, learn from it and re-assess."

"If there is always someone there who is making the decisions for you, you will never learn to make decisions."

5.3.3 Inter Personal Skills

Brand Managers manage and lead a number of project teams, most of the members on the team are not direct reports. Strong inter personal skills are essential in order to ensure projects are implemented successfully. Brand Manager need to gain trust and respect, this is achieved through strong relationships formed. It's also necessary to gain credibility for themselves through strong inter personal relationships, the more credibility they gain the more people will trust them.

"As a Brand Manager you're also responsible for all these things that are happening, things that you don't really have direct control over so you need to rely on other people and get them to do things for you and you can only do that if you have good interpersonal skills, otherwise you are going to battle"

"I think for me it's about being able to respect people and they have to respect you back. But you have to earn the respect and they also need to earn it. Eventually it builds a stronger relationship and get to a point where you know that you call on a person you can rely on them."

One respondent spoke about building relationships through emotional intelligence and using emotional intelligence to deliver against their own objectives.

"It's all about emotional intelligence – the future of business is all about emotional intelligence: it's not about what you know, but can you make people do what they have to do."

5.4 **Essential and Non Essential Skills Conclusion**

The respondents were asked to spontaneously mention the most essential skills required by Brand Managers, they were then presented Dacko's list of 22 skills deemed essential for Brand Managers. The skills were discussed in detail by each respondent. The respondents were asked to rate their top 3 most essential skill and their 3 least essential skills required by a Brand Manager in South Africa. The 3 most essential skills are – Analytical, Planning and Organisation and Leadership skills, they are deemed essential for Brand Managers. There are 6 other skills ranging from Decision Making, Interpersonal, and Communication which are deemed important but not essential to be successful in marketing. Four skills which were nice to have, but not essential are - Ethical, Computer, Time

Management and Initiative. Eight skills were rated negatively indicating they were not deemed important, those skills should be either left alone or de-emphasised.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of the research is to seek to identify how to improve marketing credibility in the organisation. The research indicates that despite marketers being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 199). The research has reviewed what skills Brand Managers in FMCG market deem essential and not essential for future marketers, and how the skills are effectively acquired.

The discussion of the results will first understand if Brand Managers believe marketers in the FMCG market in South Africa are losing credibility, and if so why they believe this is the case. Secondly, review the most effective way Brand Managers have acquired their marketing skills and thirdly what skill they believe are essential and not essential for the success of Brand Managers in South Africa FMCG market.

6.1 MARKETING IN CRISIS

The research results have highlighted two potential issues facing marketing credibility in South Africa.

Board members and senior executives are not pleased with the state of marketing; this is driving down marketer's credibility in the organisation. The research highlights that Brand Managers do not believe they are losing credibility therefore marketers are not addressing the potential marketing crisis.

The role of marketing in the organisation is not clearly understood within the organisation or outside the organisation. Marketers are known as the "fun, creative" department. This is leading to marketers not being taken seriously and the demise of credibility.

6.1.1 **Marketers Credibility in the organisation**

There were mixed views regarding the issue – are marketers losing credibility? Majority of the respondents believed this was not occurring, and they did not believe it to be an issue facing marketing in the future. This finding are not consistent with the literature from Piercy (1997) where marketing as a function has been described as going through a "mid life crisis". In South Africa the Markinor research indicated marketing was indeed in Crisis. The research denotes that Brand Managers in South Africa are not aware of the global and local sentiment regarding marketing credibility. It is concerning, that if Brand Managers are not aware there is a problem, how are they able to address and rectify the issue facing marketing as a profession. The Markinor research pointed out that 50% of Marketing Executives do not sit on the company board, if the lack of focus

to improve marketing reputation at Board and Executive level continues, we can expect to see continual decline in marketing reputation in South Africa.

Other disciplines believe marketers are over emphasizing the more glamorous aspects of their role discussed by Grant (2006).

“There seems to be a view amongst practitioners in other disciplines that marketers over emphasize the more glamorous aspect of their role, relating to advertising agencies, rather than focusing on providing a more integrated approach to customers in the context of the real challenges within businesses (Grant, 1996).”

The research does not show any relationship between marketers focusing on the “glamour” aspect of marketing. Brand Managers in this research rated creativity skill as one of the least required skill for marketing. The respondents believed that creativity skills should sit outside of the marketing function and that advertising agency should be highly competent in this field. Brand Managers should be able interpret the creative, but they do not have to be creative.

Mc Donald (2006) speaks about marketers in world class organisations being at the centre of the business model. The perception of marketing being “glamorous” is being interpreted because the business does not understand the role of marketers and that they only see marketers as “promotional” implementers. The research highlights the issue surrounding the role of marketing, and that marketing is not the centre of the business model.

6.1.2 **Marketing Credibility in the external environment**

The role of marketing in the organisation is not clearly understood and the marketing profession is experiencing the same issues outside the organisation, there is limited understanding the critical role marketing plays in the organisation. Marketers are currently known as the “fun, creative” department and not a profession that drives organisational value growth. This is leading to marketers not being taken seriously and the demise of marketing credibility outside the organisation too.

The research has highlighted the issues facing marketing outside of the organisation which was not acknowledged in the literature review. Majority of the respondents interviewed did not have a clear understand the role of marketing as a profession in the organisation when they completed their schooling, which lead to a limited number of respondents entering the marketing profession. The respondents, who entered marketing directly from school, perceived marketing to be the “creative\fun” department that were responsible for promotions and advertising.

6.1.3 **Marketing Credibility Conclusion**

The marketing profession in South Africa is in crisis. There is limited understanding in the organisation and in the market of the critical role marketers play in driving increased shareholder value through their valuable assets – their Brands.

The research conducted by Markinor highlights that Senior Marketing echelon have recognised there is a crisis in marketing and that the profession is losing credibility. This research does not concur with the findings by Markinor, junior marketers do not share the sentiment that marketers are not losing credibility.

6.2 MARKETING LEARNING

The overall findings of this study concurred with the literature research by Walker et al, (1998), that graduates are unable to integrate the knowledge they have gained through academics teachings with the required marketing skills to be an effective Brand Manager.

“Despite being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 1998), Walker et al, (1998) argues a case for greater integration in what is taught in order for students to be better prepared to cope with the complex nature of today’s business planning and decision making”

All Brand Managers interviewed believed that you need the basic marketing theory and knowledge as a foundation to enter marketing, but all the learning occurs once you’re in the organisation. The research corresponds with Walker et al findings that the theory that is taught is not being adequately implemented. There is a gap between understanding the theory and how to practically implement once in the organisation.

The literature presented by Mc Cole (2004) suggests that we need to close the academia – practitioner divide in order for markets to be more successful. The research findings concur with this statement, there is conclusive evidence indicating that a large amount of the skills are learnt on the job through a number

of different ways eg On the Job training, organisations training programmes etc and not through the theory taught at university. McCole (2004) points out that, there are ways of doing marketing that are simply not being captured by current approaches to teaching, this in accordance of the research findings where respondents learnt most of their skills on the job through their direct line managers and action learning – actively participating in tasks.

Marketing learning programmes need to be reviewed in order narrowing the gap between academia and practice. The research identified 2 of the most successful ways in which the Brand Managers learnt their skills

- Organisations established process and procedures
- On the Job training through active learning, Brand Managers working on real live projects that they are responsible for.

Zaccardelle (1997) suggested that no one should be trained to do a job until the correct way to do the work has been defined. Multi national organisations have clearly defined processes and procedures that can be used across their different regional \ country business units. These processes were only identified by respondents who worked for multi national organisation. Respondents working in national organisations lack clear process and procedures, therefore relying heavily on, on the job training.

Levy et al. (1989) defines work based learning as “linking learning to the work role” and demonstrate that it is derived from the experience of undertaking work

activities. The research shows significant evidence that Brand Managers learn more effectively when linking their theoretical learning with practical on the job training.

Mackinnon's (1996) recommends for structured on the job training, he supports regular appraisals with greater frequency in the initial stages, clear milestones to indicate progression and provide motivation, and an effective management structure. The research indicated that none of the respondents had been formally reviewed on their progress and learning gaps were not identified. The respondents were aware of their own development gaps, but did not have clear plans to close the gaps.

The research results suggest that Junior Brand Managers were also being promoted too soon, due to the marketing skills shortage currently being faced in the marketing industry. Junior Brand Managers are being promoted too quickly in order to keep potentially talented marketers in the organisation. This is not aligned to Mackinnon's recommendation where clear milestones should be followed and achieved.

Graduate programmes supports the literature "linking the learning to the work role" Levy et al. (1989). The author was concerned that graduate programmes were not identified as a learning process by the respondents; they believed the graduate programme was a way in which to get into marketing – "a foot in the door".

6.2.1 **Marketing Skills Conclusion**

Marketers do require the fundamental marketing theory, but skills are learnt in the organisation two were identified as the most successful – organisational process and procedures and active learning through on the job training. The research concurs with the literature findings that there is an academic – practitioner divided and that new ways of teaching marketers is required in order to close the gap.

6.3 **ESSENTIAL SKILLS REQUIRED BY MARKETERS**

Middelton and Long (1990) went out to identify the marketing skills that were valued by employees through extensive exploration via literature, marketing employment adverts and surveys of employers. The authors were concerned with their findings; employees could not identify which marketing skills they required from marketing hires. The overall findings of this study concurred with Middelton and Long (1990), that Brands Managers found it difficult to spontaneously identify what skills were essential for marketers. Majority of the respondents highlighted knowledge requirements eg – ability to conducting market research vs. marketing skills required to be an effective marketer.

This research study utilised Dacko, S (2006) list of 22 Essential Skills required by marketers. The findings from this research were compared to Dacko's finding to identify any similarities or differences.

6.3.1 **Essential skills for marketers**

Dacko's research identified four skills that are absolutely essential for future marketers – Initiative, Analytical, Interpersonal and Decision Making skills. This research agreed with 3 skills when compared to Dacko's research. The most essential skill findings are as follows:

- Analytical skills which scored the highest rating amongst all respondents, in both research studies
- Decision Making ranked 4th and Interpersonal ranked 5th in this research
- Initiative skills were ranked in 12th place, which conflicted with Dacko's findings.

South African Brand Managers identified Planning\Organisation and Leadership as 2nd and 3rd most important skills required by South African Brand Managers. In Dacko's research Planning\Organisation skill was ranked 9th and Leadership ranked 6th. In both research studies respondents ranked their competency and skill level as high or a strength, except for Leadership, were both studies identified this skill as a weakness and that this skill required improvement.

This finding concurs with Duke (2002) finding that leadership skill needs to be developed by marketers to a much greater extent to ensure future organisational success in marketing.

6.3.2 Least essential skills required by marketers

This research concurred on the lowest ranking skill. Foreign Language competence was ranked the least important skill required by marketers by both research studies. This indicates that through globalisation language is no longer a barrier and it's not an essential skill for marketers in the future.

The other least most important skills for marketers did not concur with Dacko's research findings. This research indicated Etiquette, Negotiation and Stress Management as the other 3 least important skills required by Brand Managers in South African FMCG organisations. Dacko's research ranked the 3 identical skills between 15th and 17th position, they were not the least important skills but comparatively low. Indicating these skills are not necessarily important to both research studies.

6.3.3 Analytical skills

Baker and Holt (2004, p.558) acknowledge the inability to "show how marketing activities and cost influence shareholder value". The author was apprehensive with the high rating of analytical skills and the understanding of analytical skills by the respondents in this research. All respondents spoke about being able to understand and read an income statement and use research data to identify problem areas. The respondents did not make mention of using the information to influence shareholder value. Executives and Board members expect marketers to be able to show how marketing influence shareholder value, more than just understanding profit and loss.

6.3.4 Skills Conclusion

The understanding of skills by Brand Managers was concerning to the author and believed that Brand Managers could not spontaneously identify what skills were

important to acquire and attain. The skills identified in this research are not too dissimilar to what was discovered by Dacko's research. The most essential and the least essential skill in both research studies were in agreement. Analytical skills were ranked number 1 in both research studies and indicate the important of analytical skills required by marketers. The author highlights a concern surrounding the meaning of analytical skills by Brand Managers and the organisation. Foreign Language skills were ranked the least important skill by Brand Managers in both studies.

7. **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of the research is to seek to identify how to improve marketing credibility in the organisation. The research indicates that despite marketers being provided with a rich knowledge base, students may be insufficiently taught how to integrate and use that knowledge (Walker et al, 199). The research has reviewed what skills Brand Managers in FMCG market deem essential and not essential for future marketers, and how the skills are effectively acquired

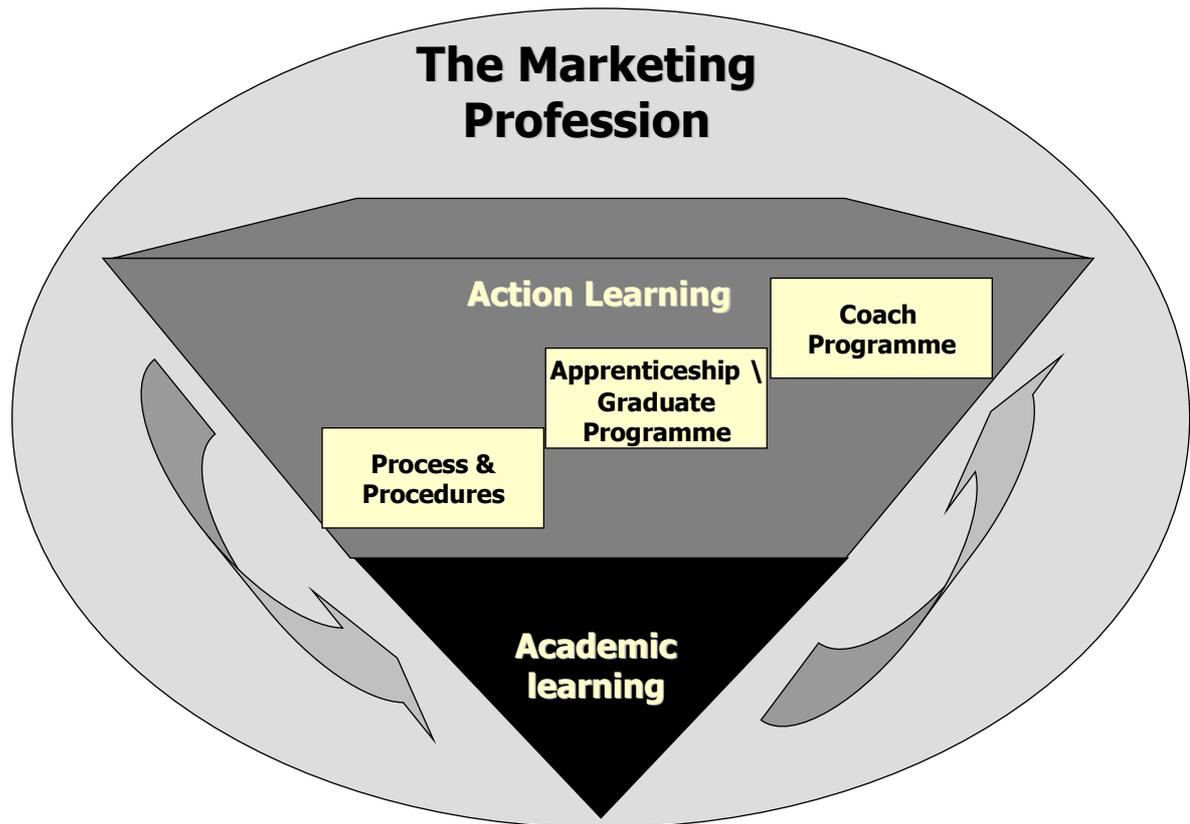
The research has clearly identified the marketing profession in South Africa is in crisis. There is limited understanding in the organisation and in the market of the critical role marketers play in driving increased shareholder value through organisations valuable assets – their Brands.

After the demise of the Marketing Federation of SA over 2 years ago, the Marketing Profession has lost its standing. The new Marketing Federation needs to urgently establish itself as a credible body and put Marketing back into the boardroom. Marketing is no longer perceived as a profession, it's no longer the pivotal department with in the organisation - it has become a "function" within the organisation. In order to improve marketing credibility it's crucial that Marketing re-establishes itself as a profession. Through the literature review and findings from the research, a hybrid learning model has been developed which will help improve marketing credibility.

The academic and practitioner gap needs to be closed and focus on developing the essential skills required by marketers to effectively drive shareholder value.

Marketer's needs to play a pivotal role in the business strategy and not just marketing strategies. Organisations and academics need to focus on improving the competency levels of Brand Managers key skill identified in the research. The way in which the skills are learnt requires both organisations and education institute to review how these skills are acquired and enhanced. The business environment is continually changing and effective implementation is crucial; the learning curve time period needs to be reduced in order to adapt to the fast changing market. A hybrid learning model has been developed; it addresses 2 key learning areas:

- Academic Learning - through educational institutes
- Action Learning – in the workplace learning



7.1 ACADEMIC LEARNING

The literature and research has highlighted the issue relating to the inability of Brand Managers to apply the marketing theory to marketing practice. Educational institutes need to review the current way in which marketing is taught and equip marketers of the future with the tools to implement the theory being taught. This requires educational institutes to be open minded to new innovative teaching methods. This will reduce the gap between gaining the marketing theoretical knowledge to being able to competently apply the knowledge in the workplace. New innovative ways of teaching marketing needs to be considered, the research

indicates that hands on practical experience is required, this could be done through experiential teaching methods.

Marketers also have a role to play to ensure we protect the profession, currently with the marketing skill shortage a large number of marketers are being promoted before they have reached the desired skill competency level. It's crucial for marketers to ensure they promote individuals who are equipped for the next level within marketing hierarchy. This requires marketers to work together to develop a competency framework in order to protect the future of the profession.

7.2 ACTION LEARNING

The organisation landscape is changing; marketing is the pivotal department in the organisation because it drives future equity for the business. Based on the research findings marketers need to be more than marketers. Marketers need to know how to communicate and gain “buy in” from different members of the organisation, the marketing plan is no longer there only plan marketers need to know, they need to have an integrated understanding of the business plan and lead the organisation into the future.

The research and literature indicates that Brand Managers learn most of their skills on the job through active learning programmes, the locus of learning has moved from the classroom to the work place. The learning curve for marketers needs to be shortened; the academic learning needs to be effectively implemented at a much faster rate. The following activities are suggested;

7.2.1 Processes and Procedures

Multi national organisations have very effective processes and procedures, Brand managers follow in order to deliver against a required objective. These processes and procedures gives marketers focus and direction eliminate any questions or concerns of what is required. The research indicated that South African national organisations lack effective processes and procedures, this is an area of

opportunity for SA companies to improve their marketing skills gap and reducing the learning curve period.

7.2.2 **Apprenticeship \ Graduate Programmes**

The research suggests that these programmes are not being effectively implemented in South African organisations. They are currently viewed by Brand Managers as a “foot in” the door into marketing, and not seen as a programme to gain insight into the entire business. If marketers need to be more than marketers and have an integrated overview of the business plan I believe apprenticeship programmes can be very effective in delivery this.

7.2.3 **Formalised Coaching Programmes**

The research highlighted that nearly all respondents learnt their marketing skills on the job through their direct line managers, Brand Manager or Marketing Managers at the time. With the skills shortage and marketers being promoted before they have achieved a certain competency level, will future marketers be less skilled because they’re being coached by inferior Brand Managers and Marketing Managers. The research indicated that Brand Managers were aware of their skill gaps, but were oblivious to how they were going to close the gap. I believe organisations should have coaching programmes and not mentorship programmes to help close the skills gap in order to make marketers more effective. Analytical skills or interpersonal skills. Junior marketers would have

access to highly competent individual who would be able to close their skills gap. The organisations may possibly identify skills gaps within the organisation, they could then be closed through additional training and education.

7.3 MARKETING PROFESSION CONCLUSION

In order to improve marketing credibility in the organisation and the market it's crucial that Marketing re-establishes itself as a profession. A hybrid learning model was presented to improve the way in which marketers learn their skills and reducing the learning curve period. The model identified 2 areas of focus:

- Academic Learning - requires educational institutes to review how marketers apply the theory in practice and close this divide.
- Action Learning – how to improve in the work place learning through reviewing and implementing effective in house activities
 - i. Processes and Procedures
 - ii. Apprenticeship \ Graduate programmes
 - iii. Formalised coaching programmes

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There is limited research available on South African Brand Manager Skills and how they learn these skills and would recommend the following future research.

- This research was limited to 10 respondents, it would be interesting to gain further insight into essential Brand Manager skills through quantitative research in order to size the important of each skill
- The research was limited to FMCG marketers only, other industries could be compared
- Marketing in Crisis was not identified by junior marketers, a review of the situation in 5 years time would be interesting to compare - has there been a shift in reputation (positive or negative).
- The research only considered the Brand Managers perspective of what essential skills marketing required, future research could consider the following points of view
 - Marketing Managers
 - Marketing Director
 - Executives and Board Members
- The research highlighted the important of on the Job Training and the role of the line manager. Future research could review what made the relationship successful

- Marketing skill shortage was mentioned, to what extent is this a problem in the marketing industry and how will it affect marketing in the future

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Appendix I

MARKETING SKILLS & LEARNING **Discussion Guide** ***August 2007***

INTRODUCTION (5 MINS)

- Moderator introduces self and explains purpose of discussion
- Make respondent aware that they will be recorded for the sake of records and transcribing, and gain permission for recording.

INDIVIDUAL CAREER (10 MINS)

- Tell me about when you left school, what you studied, when, where and how you entered marketing?
- Why did you choose marketing?
- Do you enjoy marketing and if so why?

COMPETENCE AND SKILL LEARNING PROCESS (10 MINS)

- I'd like to understand the key moments in your career, please take me through what they were and why
- Explore

What were they?

What made them significant - examples

Was there a key person eg Mentor, Manager etc

Was there an important event eg change in business strategy etc

Was there a key learning programme that you undertook? Eg completed a degree etc

- If you had the chance to start your marketing career over again, what would you do differently?

MARKETING IN CRISIS (10 MINS)

- Do you believe that marketing\marketers are gaining or losing credibility in your organisation?
- If losing credibility – why is this happening?
- If gaining credibility and no issues – why

MARKETING COMPETENCIES (20 MINS)

- I would like to understand what skill a brand manager requires in order to be effective (write down)
- “Skills that are essential to perform certain functions, for example, social workers must have competencies in a number of areas to be effective professionals and to be licensed”
- Please can you give me an example when such a skill (that they select) would be useful
- I have additional skills which I would like you to consider, let’s discuss in more detail.

Analytical
Computer
Creativity
Crisis Management
Decision Making
Ethical
Etiquette
Foreign language competence
Initiative
Interpersonal
Leadership
Negotiation
Oral Communication
Persuasion
Planning\Organisation
Problem formulation
Risk taking
Stress Management
Teamwork
Time Management
Written Communication

- Please let me know if they are essential skills for Brand managers, is so why
- How did you learn these skills
- Probe in more details:
 - Did you have a mentor
 - Did you learn through academic programme
 - Did you have a coach
 - Through other key members in the organisation
- I would like you to chose the top 3 essential skills required by a Brand Manager from the list, incl additional skills you identified - 1 being very important – 3 not important
- Please can you tell me why you chose these 3 skills
- Explore
 - How did you choose between them?
 - Why are they important?
- I would like you to chose the least 3 skills required by a Brand Managers, from the same list – 1 being the least required skill
- Please can you tell me why you chose these 3 skills
- Explore
 - How did you chose between them
 - Why are they not important
- If we had to take the essential skills, how would you rate an average South African Brand Managers that you know - "1" being not skilled and "10" being highly skilled.
- Explore:
 - I would like to understand why have you rated Anything over 8 – why do you believe these skills are high?
 - Anything below 5 – why do you believe these skills are

low?

- I would now like you to rate yourself using the same criteria?
- Explore

Please explain in more detail why you have rated yourself at this level – below or above your peers.

CLOSE (5 MINUTES)

In closing, is there anything you would like to add regarding what we've discussed today?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

