

Market Oriented Organizations and Talent Workers: Composition of the Workforce and its Influence on Market Orientation

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Abstract

Many organizations employ marketing initiatives to “assist” in launching new efforts to both internal and external audiences and weave marketing throughout as part of being “market oriented.” The primary motivation behind a market orientation is improvement of market performance, according to the literature (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski 1990).

There is literature on workforce composition and different types of workers and this includes concepts of talent workers and knowledge workers (Chowdhury 2003) and HEROes (Bernoff and Schadler 2010) but there is little to nothing on the type of workers employed by highly market-oriented organizations. The focus of this study is on the composition of the workforce in highly market-oriented organizations. In particular, this study examines whether highly market-oriented organizations have a higher number of talent workers than knowledge workers and if lesser or non-market oriented organizations have more knowledge workers than talent workers.

Using a market-oriented organization and non-market oriented organization for evaluative purposes, the hypothesis, highly market-oriented organizations have a higher number of talent workers than lesser market oriented organizations was supported. Also, the hypothesis of lesser and non-market-oriented organizations having fewer talent workers than more highly market oriented organizations was supported. The results are of significant interest to marketers interested in bridging the gap between worker type and degree of market orientation.

Literature Review –Brief Overview

Market Oriented Organizations and Talent Workers

The positive effects of market orientation on business performance are well documented in the strategic marketing literature (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990; Kirca, Jayachandra and Bearden 2005). While it is documented in the literature that knowledge workers will not necessarily gravitate to market-oriented companies, the characteristics of the organizations in which they will be found parallel that of market-oriented companies. Top-performing environments

attract top talent. Market oriented organizations are focused on results and profitability—organizations that focus on results achieved rather than elements such as time worked, tenure, ratings are more appealing to high-performers, the talents (Tulgan 2001).

“In the business context, talent may be defined as ‘capability applied to create value that is recognized and rewarded by primary stakeholders –owners, managers , and customers’ Talented people must know how their jobs fit within the value chain and not only perform the routine tasks well but also excel at the high-leverage components of their jobs (Chowdhury 2003).” Narver and Slater’s behavioral components of the organization can be applied to the characteristics of talent workers.

The literature on knowledge workers provides a take-away idea that all talents are knowledge workers, but not all knowledge workers are talents. "Knowledge workers may become talents through dedication and a well-defined goal, but most don't make the transformation". Knowledge workers take orders; "they are studious and obedient people." But talents take initiative and under the right circumstances, the creative personality can emerge (Henard and McFadyen 2008; Dul, Ceylan et al. 2011).

People with deep smarts have many characteristics of the expert, including “the ability to make rapid decisions on the basis of pattern recognition, to extrapolate from the known to the possible, and to make subtle distinctions that are invisible to the novice. They are also able to take a systems view of a product, organization or environment—and to predict interactions and interdependencies. In other words, possessors of deep smarts have the mental capability of a satellite: they can fly over the landscape, grasp the overall situation and then zoom in on critical details and potential problems (Hammer 2004).” This is consistent with Chowdhury’s description of talent workers.

Research Design

The MARKOR scale (a widely used market orientation measure developed by Kohli et al.) was used to gauge market orientation. Chowdhury’s Talent Scorecard was used to assess the concentration of talent workers and composition of the workforce to identify a representative sample of the talent workers in the professional services firm and in the government agency. Using a sample of 120 employees in the professional services firm and a total of 30 employees in the government agency, the hypotheses were tested. For purposes of this study, a MARKOR score of 4.0 or greater indicates a high degree of market orientation; a score below 3.0 indicates low market orientation. Both the hypotheses tested were supported. Highly market oriented firms have a greater ratio of talent workers to knowledge workers in comparison with lesser market oriented firms. Also, lesser and non-market oriented

firms have a lower percentage of talent workers than more highly market oriented firms.

The findings will be discussed in terms of their implications to marketers. Limitations of the study and directions for future research will be explored.

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Keywords: *market orientation, talent workers, knowledge workers, workforce composition, marketing strategy*

Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers and Practitioners:

The study of talent workers and their influence on market orientation is examined in this article. Talent workers compared to knowledge workers can influence the efficacy of market orientation.

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TRACK:

Marketing Strategy