The factors that influence the marketing of Professional Services - A Case Study

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I, Meg Enerson, hereby confirm that this work is my original work and has not been submitted for any other qualification. All references, to the best of my knowledge, are accurately reported.

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"Leaders of professional services firms take decisions about the direction of their firm based on market insight and changing competitive landscapes."

Laurie Young (2010)

ABSTRACT

Indications from the initial phase of this study suggest that key marketing fundamentals apparent in this business sector differ significantly from those generally recognisable in commodity, consumer product and industrial marketing. It is postulated that whilst these differences are probably symptomatic of particular professional service practice norms and business ethics the formulation, implementation and evaluation of effective marketing can be facilitated utilising appropriate contemporary marketing paradigms.

This study explores the current marketing milieu in a multinational professional services organisation and attempts to identify factors relevant to marketing within the organisation. The objective of this study was to identify the critical factors that influence the successful marketing of professional services and to develop a framework to support these findings.

In order to accomplish this objective, the study was undertaken from a phenomenological, rather than a positivist paradigm. An exploratory quantitative Likert-scale survey combined with the allowance for qualitative open-ended comments/ feedback was adopted. The quantitative study incorporated employees in managerial, middle and junior roles from the Specific Professional Services Organisation 'SPSO's' national offices based in Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town. Marketing representatives from the 'SPSO's' international offices were also included in the survey.

It can be summarised that the main factors influencing the marketing of professional services can be grouped according to Strategy, Product/ Service, Price, Place, Promotion, Physical Evidence, People, Process, and Other.

A framework was devised, comprising the nine identified groups of factors including correlating recommendations, as well as a tabular outlay of additional constructive qualitative comments recorded from respondents with recommendations.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the members of my family – for each supporting me in your own special way - thank you for your continued belief in my ability to succeed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background to the study. The research problem of the study, the aim and the objectives are discussed and the significance of the study is highlighted. It will also provide an overview of the research methodology, the scope of the study with its delimitations as well as a short overview of the contents of the five chapters.

1.2 Background and context of the study

In the early 1970s the marketing of services emerged as a separate area of marketing with concepts and models of its own formulated to accommodate the typical characteristics of services (Grönroos 1994: 8). Service industries, in particular professional service organisations, have historically considered marketing a luxury, rather than a critical part of the business mix (Nagdeman 2009: xxi). As a result of this, service organisations have been relatively tardy in adopting marketing concepts and techniques but are gradually embracing progressive research–based constructs and industry practice.

The conceptual framework represented by the marketing mix paradigm has gained credence in the services industry, to become the prevalent future influence on marketing theory and practice for that sector (Gummesson 1994: 78). Contextually, the professional services industry is diverse, characterised by specialised (e.g. legal, accounting and medical) services and strategic sectoral service offerings such as banking and insurance.

Lovelock, Van der Merwe and Lewis (1999, in Snell and White, 2009: 199) characterised professional services as high in experiential and credence qualities which significantly impact on the decision making process from a client's perspective, which is why Snell and White (2009: 199) suggest that professional services are consistently characterised in the literature as the most high risk type of purchase. These inherent differences characterising professional services mean that

assumptions and findings from the broader field of marketing may not be relevant to professional services. Consequently, the professional services industry has been selected for this study given the potential wide application of marketing and the lack of empirical evidence on how various professions within this sector interpret and implement marketing.

1.3 Statement of the research problem and research questions

Gummesson (2007: 4) claims that "although knowledge of marketing has grown tremendously over the past half century, we have not (yet) found the marketing genome". Thus the research problem indicates a lack of knowledge of which services marketing mix variables have evolved and are critical to the professional services industry.

In the past, service practitioners have found limited inspiration in marketing theory and advice (Baker and Saren 2010: 400). A lack of consumer understanding may result in increased reliance on experience and credence qualities of the service offerings which may, in turn, enhance the importance of organisation-wide factors such as image, reputation and quality (Devlin 1998: 1095).

Some professional service sectors largely ignore marketing as a whole or, at best, pay lip service to it via limited promotion and public relations campaigns. As far back as the 1970's there was a lack of information, understanding and interest in services marketing reflected the inferior position of services in a once product-oriented world (Wilson 1972: 26). These activities are frequently seen merely as 'optional extras'. Marketing activities represent an 'investment', requiring 'non-billable' time to be spent with uncertain, long-term results, and few service businesses are adequately organised to manage their promotion investment activities. 'Billable' time has a high profile and receives close attention; 'non-billable' time is usually a disorganised jumble of sometimes productive, often non-productive activities which no-one understands (or cares to understand). As far back as 1997 Maister (1997: 134) identified that this would result in many marketing initiatives in professional services marketing being neglected, unmanaged or uncoordinated. Tuomivirta (2009: 5) states that another issue experienced is that specialists of professional services are most often not sufficiently trained in marketing.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that a clear professional services framework appears to be lacking, thus hindering professionals from marketing their services successfully.

To resolve this research problem, two research questions were developed:
- "What are the factors that influence the successful marketing of professional services
- What is the overall integrating framework of these critical factors that guides professional service practice"

1.4 The aim and the objectives of the study

Professional service corporate culture has traditionally tended to be dismissive of the need for formal marketing. This study was conducted to investigate the relevance, indeed importance, of a structured marketing approach in this sector as well as the factors influencing this process.

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors that influence the marketing of professional services and thus explore the current marketing milieu in a multinational professional services organisation, attempting to identify factors relevant to marketing within the organisation's business philosophy.

This study had two main objectives:
- The first objective of the study was to explore the critical factors that influence the marketing of professional services.
- The second objective was to develop a framework for the successful marketing of professional services.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this research is as follows:
- There is more literature in the market regarding goods than services marketing therefore this study gives further insight into the marketing of services in today's economic climate with special focus on the professional services industry.

- This study provides knowledge into how professional services marketing has evolved over the years, compared to previous years where professional services marketing was stunted by strict regulations and organisation polices.
- It will assist professional service organisations to utilise their marketing resources more effectively and efficiently.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of this explorative case study is delimited, and has certain limitations, as follows:

1.6.1 Delimitations

This case study was focused only on a specific professional services organisation referred to hereafter as 'SPSO'.

1.6.2 Limitations

The limitations of this study are as follows:

- The results of this case study relate specifically to the 'SPSO' being examined and cannot be generalised to other professional services organisations. Recommendations arising from this study however, may be used to advise other professional services organisations in their marketing strategies if one is mindful of the inherent differences.
- Only a limited number of people were interviewed within 'SPSO' locally and internationally which might have impacted on the results of the study, possibly resulting in an inaccurate representation of the 'SPSO' as a whole.

1.7 Research methodology and design

The research methodology and design of this study are as follows:

1.7.1 Study Type

This is a Case Study – "The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (McLarney, 2001: 810).

According to Creswell (1994, as cited in Srivastava and Thomson, 2009: 73) this study is qualitative in nature as it involves an inquiry process into the understanding of a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic pictures, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.

Although this study is a qualitative one, it has been operationalised by utilising Likert scales. The Likert attitude scale was developed as a tool in order to measure attitudes. The typical attitudes measured in a Likert scale study can be political, economic, familial or religious (Maranell 1974: 231)

1.7.2 Respondents

Employees from each of the 'SPSO's' offices comprised the population from which the sample was chosen to be interviewed by means of an interactive online survey.

Another source of respondents, whose comments are recorded here to support the findings of the study, were the members of a number of professional services marketing groups belonging to an internet based discussion forum called LinkedIn.com.

The non-probability sampling technique used in this study was purposeful or judgemental in nature i.e. individuals selected based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions (Teddlie and Yu 2007: 77).

The 'SPSO' employees interviewed were selected during the study in order to attain the most relevant results according to the qualitative nature of the study. The final sample size was 200.

1.7.3 Data collection

When designing and conducting this research, a triangulation approach was taken by using alternative sources across variable timeframes and in different places in order to collect data about this phenomenon from multiple perspectives and in different contexts. Open ended comments within the questionnaire were used which allowed for the identification of emerging issues. Permission was given to collect primary

data and other relevant company documents according to the chosen methodology of this study.

Data was collected in the form of a Likert scale questionnaire with spaces for open-ended qualitative comments. The questionnaire was emailed to the respondents who remained anonymous to all other respondents when submitting their answers electronically.

The questions listed in the initial interview schedule, developed from the literature available, were reviewed by certain key staff within the 'SPSO's' marketing department as well as marketing professionals from outside the 'SPSO' to ensure that the questions asked were relevant to the factors these professionals are experiencing.

1.7.4 Credibility

Data and methodical triangulation through reference to data was further used to improve credibility. The questions asked in the questionnaire were based on topics within the theoretical framework and validated via a pre-test by two marketing experts and a statistician, then followed by a pilot test with a small sample of respondents. The interview schedule for this study was reviewed by certain key staff within the organisation's marketing department to ensure that the questions asked were pertinent to the factors these professionals are experiencing. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha.

1.7.5 Data Analysis

The closed ended quantitative answers were analysed through the use of SPSS version 20.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The qualitative open ended responses were manually analysed for trends and themes and included follow up emails to respondents requesting feedback. Manual analysis of responses posted on LinkedIn.com too was conducted in order to assess any notable issues and themes raised.

1.8 Outline of chapters

This dissertation consists of five chapters. These chapters cover the following topics:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter includes a problem statement, background to the study, research objectives, research problem, rationale for the study, and limitations and delimitations.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This chapter gives an overview of professional services marketing. This includes a review of previous literature on established services marketing frameworks from inception up until present. Reference is made to the common characteristics of professionals and their perception of the marketing of their services.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This research methodology chapter focuses on the research methods employed. A description of the sampling method is provided, as well as of the questionnaire development and administration and the techniques used to collect the data. Any limitations of the research investigation are highlighted, indicating where errors may have occurred.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the data collected by means of questionnaires and secondary documents. This data was processed and translated into meaningful results that are easily interpreted. The analysis gives insight to some of the factors influencing the marketing of professional services.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusions

The final chapter provides the conclusion of this study. Recommendations are made as a result of the findings in chapter 4.

1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview and background to this study. The objectives and aims have been explained. The research problem was formulated. An outline of the significance of the study, the delimitations as well as the research methodology has been presented. Chapter two will present the review of literature relevant to the issue underlying the aim of this study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the current marketing situation in a multinational professional services organisation and attempts to identify factors relevant to marketing within the organisation's business philosophy. Research has been conducted on the factors that influence the marketing of professional services and includes; the role of marketing in an organisation, services marketing, professional services, the evolution of professional services marketing, marketing within the current professional services market, contemporary professional services marketing methods and models, customer service and satisfaction: implications for professional services marketing, problems and issues associated with the marketing of professional services, the impact of market dynamics on business performance, and the future of professional services marketing.

2.2 The role of marketing in an organisation

The proposition that an organisation's marketing process can serve to enhance perceived value delivery amongst its clients / customers, create a positive market image and attract new clients / customers is supported by pertinent literature and research.

In this regard Dolan (1997: 3) maintains that the role of marketing within an organisation pertains to the objectives and processes whereby the product or service provider creates a sense of value for its clients. It follows, therefore, that an organisation needs to define itself not only by the product or service it sells, but also by the value added and customer benefit thus provided. To ensure that the professional service organisation remains a viable business concern, it must sustain a process of supplying relevant, expert support, creating added value and receiving profit over time. Within this framework, recognition of the professional service organisation's ability to deliver value must be consistently demonstrated to the client target market and reinforced through its marketing strategy. This premise is given further credence by Dolan (1997: 3) who postulates that a marketing strategy involves two major activities:

- Selecting a target market and determining the desired positioning of the product or service in relation to the target audience.
- Structuring the marketing activity plan to achieve the desired positioning.

2.2.1 The marketing mix

It can be argued that the marketing mix paradigm is of particular relevance to developing an effective marketing model within the professional services industry. According to Cant (2010: 164), the marketing mix is a combination of marketing decisions designed to influence customers to buy the enterprise's products or services. Pertinently also, Borden (1964) quoted by Constantinides (2006: 408) identified twelve controllable marketing elements that, properly managed, would result in a "profitable business operation". Constantinides (2006: 408) notes further that Borden's twelve factor framework was simplified by McCarthy to a four-element framework: Product, Price, Promotion and Place. This construct, subsequently known as the '4Ps', is believed to have theoretical and practical value in providing marketing direction for professional service organisations. Thus it is argued that the marketing mix construct, first identified by Borden as a blend of marketing concepts describing the various elements in marketing, provides a helpful conceptual framework within which management can identify and adopt specific marketing objectives, strategies and tactics. The intention of this mix is to be effective in influencing and attracting customers.

2.2.2 Other marketing mix models

In the process of defining marketing needs and objectives the relevance of alternative models should not be ignored. Over commitment to a particular theoretical approach may result in a less than optimal corporate marketing strategy.

Other than the 'P' model, there have been a number of other marketing mix models developed in recent years (Yi and Yun 2009: 20). These models attempt to extend existing marketing mix theories so as to better accommodate specific aspects of marketing. Yi and Yun (2009: 20) elaborate on this fact by referring to the 4Cs proposed by Robert Lauterborn, a relatively widely accepted marketing mix model in which Consumer, Cost, Convenience and Communication are considered the most

important elements in marketing. Another example they give is Schuhz who proposed a 4R marketing mix which features Relevance, Reaction, Relationship, and Reward as prime elements and which emphasizes the significance of relationship marketing. They also refer to the 6P model proposed by Kotler which includes Public opinion (the markets current mood and attitude toward a service) and Political power (marketing activities in accordance with the current political climate) (Kotler 1999: 7).

Viewing Borden's original 4P marketing model as over simplistic, it is therefore later suggested that the elaborated 7P model represents a more comprehensive and effective theoretical framework for marketing in service industries.

2.3 Services marketing

Marketing in its modern form first took root in those manufacturing sectors that faced the greatest competition from the 1930s onwards. However, the services sector has continued to grow in industrialized economies where it now forms the dominant part of many national economies. In growing, the services sector has become more competitive and taken on board the principles of marketing. Deregulation of many services and rising expectations of consumers have had a dramatic effect on marketing activities within the sector (Palmer 2000: 574).

In this regard, Clow and Stevens (2009: 12) hold a compelling argument in favour of the introduction of marketing principles within service organisations' business strategies to facilitate the definition and realisation of their business objectives. Accepting that marketing is the process whereby perceptions of goods, services and their providers are managed effectively and efficiently. Clow and Stevens (2009: 12) identify significant benefits which formal marketing practice can yield for service organisations, utilising qualitative and quantitative methodology to assess client needs and enhance delivery of value-adding services. Clow and Stevens hold further that marketing emphasises the value of rational management and the need for congruity of policy with regard to fees, communication, services, and availability. Important decision-making as to the correct messages to be conveyed, at the right time, can likewise be facilitated.

2.3.1 Distinguishing characteristics of services marketing

Given that the services sector (professional services in particular) has certain distinguishing characteristics, it can be reasoned that adopting a characteristic-based rather than a stereotypical marketing approach will serve to encourage positive business outcomes.

Literature dating from the early 1970's describes the emergence of services marketing as a particular field of practice with concepts and models of its own reflecting the generally specialised nature of service offerings. Grönroos (1994: 8) holds that the fundamental difference between goods and services is that goods are produced, whereas services are performed. Furthermore, providers of services frequently operate within a market milieu moderated by legislated, professional or technical norms. These may be seen to pose particular constraints or even obstacles for service marketing practitioners. In similar vein, Palmer (2000: 574) suggests that 'pure services' have a number of key characteristics which have implications for the way they are marketed. These include: Intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity/ variability, perishability (simultaneous production/ consumption), and the inability to own a service other than in the context of intellectual property.

Industry-specific characteristics such as those discussed above are considered to have important implications for the marketing of services. Attendant difficulties in clarifying the nature of service offerings to clients and issues such as professional confidentiality (e.g. doctor / patient) which may hinder evaluation of service effectiveness require particular consideration. The foregoing characteristics are considered to be inhibitors to effective services marketing and may be seen to pose difficulties or obstacles to effective assessment of service value-added before or even after purchase. It is reasoned therefore that professional service offerings in particular are likely to be sufficiently unfamiliar to the average client to pose difficulties in distinguishing between work that is merely competent, and work that is truly outstanding technically (McNeilly and Barr 2006: 154). Gabbott and Hogg (1994: 311-324) suggest that a significant problem for the client is identifying cues which provide insight into the nature, quality and effectiveness of the service rendered. As early as 1981 Zeithaml examined this particular phenomenon with reference to three qualitative measures: search qualities, experience qualities and

credence qualities (Gummesson 1994:83). Search qualities are attributes that the consumer can investigate prior to making a purchase; Experience qualities are used by consumers to measure service value in terms of their own requirements and expectations; Credence quality assessment involves investigation and evaluation of the service provider's credibility and market reputation.

2.3.2 Developing a service marketing campaign

It is reasonable to assume that, not unlike conventional commercial companies, a professional service organisation's marketing campaign will generally be the consequence of deliberate policy formulation and strategic business planning.

It is argued also that marketing discipline applied within the professional service ambit can stimulate the service provider to take greater cognisance of clients' particular requirements as opposed to simply promoting existing service offerings. This is believed to be the first step in developing a marketing campaign. The second step involves identifying the marketing variables within the organisation. These marketing variables include: access; fees; clients; services and communications. The true requirements of the marketing organisation's clients become the key focus of its service offering. Information about the marketing organisation and the services it offers is then communicated to the market. These services must be accessible to the public at the right place and the right time in order for their needs to be met. Fees to be charged to clients should be congruent with the nature and value of the services offered by the professional services organisation. These organisations have the objective of meeting and exceeding the expectations of clients by providing value-adding services, through appropriate communication, at the right location, and thereby generating sufficient appropriate revenue as a result (Clow and Stevens 2009: 80).

2.3.3 The services marketing mix

Marketers and researchers have questioned whether the 4P approach to the marketing mix is sufficiently comprehensive for useful application to the service industry sector. Booms and Bitner in1981 accordingly proposed an expanded model, including three additional key elements, namely people, physical evidence, and process (Bitner 1992: 70).

2.3.4 The 7P model

Ivy (2008: 289) describes how marketers of tangible products have traditionally used the 4P model, whereas the dynamics of marketing in the service industry sector have been shown to be more adequately described by inclusion of 3 additional P's in the analytical framework, namely people; physical evidence and process. By recognition of these factors and their relevance to services marketing, cognizance is taken of the predominantly intangible nature of service industry offerings.

Embracing the 7P model as specifically relevant and therefore pertinent to the character of service marketing, it is helpful to amplify each of its constituent elements to facilitate their inclusion in the formulation of marketing plans and stratagems.

To this effect Crane (1993: 35-36) describes in detail each of the 'Seven P's' which make up the services marketing mix:

- **Product (service)**; this refers to aspects of the product/s at hand. In the professional services context this would mean the range of services offered, the level of quality expected characteristics of the service product, guarantees offered and after-implementation support levels.
- **Price**; this refers to fee rates, discounts offered, payment terms, credit facilities.
- **Place**; this is the location in which the service/s is offered, including accessibility and distribution facilities.
- **Promotion**; this covers the promotional mix, promotional budgets available, return on investment.
- **People**; this specifies the type and capabilities of staff employed, training programs, roles in service provision, compensation.
- **Physical evidence**; this refers to the service environment, aesthetics, cues to be managed and controlled.
- **Process**; this covers the service provider's policies, basic procedures for developing and delivering the service/s, IT systems and quality control measures.

All of these elements need to be synchronised and decisions regarding one element of the marketing mix must be considered with all the constituent elements in mind.

2.4 Professional services

As a departure point, it is submitted that professional services and their marketing are distinct and differentiated from other ("lay") services by virtue of their nature, origin and practice. Hence the approach to services' marketing by necessity differs from marketing of consumer, industrial and commercial services.

Attention is drawn here to the writing of Crane (1993:11) who holds that there is no standard or accepted definition for what constitutes a professional service or professional service provider. The term 'professional' tends to be used liberally as a means to elevate ones occupational title.

To illustrate the distinct nature of professional services, reference is made here to the work of Gummesson (1981: 108-112) who proposed the following relevant definition:

> "A professional service is qualified; it is advisory and problem-solving, even though it may encompass some routine work for clients. The professionals involved have a common identity, like physicians, lawyers, accountants or engineers, and are regulated by traditions and codes of ethics. The service offered, if accepted, involves the professional in taking on assignments for the client and those assignments are themselves the limit of the professional's involvement. Such assignments are not undertaken to merely sell hardware or other services".

Acknowledging that professional service provision and consumption represent an increasingly important component of the modern Western economic environment, it is not surprising that this has been described as: "one of the fastest growth sectors in economies worldwide, achieving double-digit growth rates" and are now a primary source of economic growth for both developed and developing countries (United Nations, 2005 as cited in Sweeney, Soutar, and McColl-Kennedy, 2011: 297).

2.4.1 Characteristics of professional services

Recognizing the distinct nature of professional services and developing an understanding of their predominant characteristics, their role in contemporary life and increasing significance economically is held to be essential for evolving a relevant marketing approach. The following characterisation is useful in this respect.

Devlin (1998: 1091) describes service offerings as predominantly intangible in nature, therefore tending to be lower in search qualities than goods. Moreover, in the case of a professional service, where the average client has a limited knowledge of its technology, methodology, features and benefits. In such an instance, customers greatly rely upon the service provider's credence and experience as revealed during the initial purchase phase.   As a consequence of the foregoing, professional services are consistently characterised in literature as the most high-risk type of purchase (Karantinou and Hogg 2001: 263-286).

As long ago as 1978 Gummesson (1978: 89-95) argued that all professional services are contingent upon a problem to be solved or a need to be satisfied and are performed by professionals; namely, people with relevant specialised education, qualifications and skills. He also identified that these services have a high level of customisation and are transacted between a supplier and a client, usually on a business-to-business or individual-to-individual basis.

Mitchell (1994: 315-339) describes the relationship between a professional services provider and a client as dynamic, with a number of risks involved for both parties, including organisational risks, financial risk, inexperience of decision makers, conflict of interests, length of purchase commitment, and the risks associated with complex decision making processes.

Baschab and Piot (2005: 9) observe that regardless of how its services are billed, the professional services provider is remunerated for its labour costs and time spent attending to clients' problems or needs. The input is time and labour, the output is intellectual property and relevant documentation. Due to the fact that billings / revenues grow as the input increases, professional services organisations are inherently manpower and management intensive.

2.4.2 Categories of professional services

It is contended that successful formulation and implementation of a marketing strategy for a professional services organisation will be dependent on gaining a clear perspective of the provider organisation's structure, cultural dynamics and operational state. Insight as to professional issues and constraints, if any, will also be

pertinent to success. As far back as 1982, this proposition can be facilitated by reference to Maister's (1982: 15-30) seminal portrayal of professional services transactions as brains, grey hair and procedural projects:

Brains; are extremely complex projects, which require the highest degree of expertise from the organization. Brains usually contain new solutions to new problems.

Grey hair; these projects may require client industry insight and highly customized output, but less innovation and creativity. The problems will be familiar from previous projects, but to find a solution, an expert must be involved to provide knowledge, experience and judgement.

Procedure projects; usually involve well recognized problems where customization can be accomplished through elements of routine and procedures.

Elaborating on this differentiation Maister (1982) suggests that, the 'Brains' perspective is most likely to differentiate a professional service organization from its competitors. In a similar vein, Smedlund (2008: 866-868) distinguishes four types of professional services as: operational; experimental; tactical; and high potential:

- **Operational** services are well understood in the market and the client is fully conversant with the service process and what outcome to expect. The service is clearly specified and follows a predetermined process and operations mandate. Examples of operational professional service offerings are auditing, accounting, and banking services.

- **In an experimental service**, a professional service organisation provides its clients with specialised services highly specific to their requirements and unique within its standard service-offering portfolio. Here, the client has little or no involvement in the research and development process thus increasing the risk of failure for the professional service provider but consequently enhancing the potential for profits. Such services are formulated on an ad-hoc basis even if the client is under the impression that they are ordering a standard service. Examples of experimental services are, for example, web services, such as voice-over-IP services.

- The third professional service category is known as **tactical services**. These tend to be specific to individual client needs, require significant client involvement. The client will generally have a strong vested interest in the successful delivery of the service and the professional services provider possesses specialised competencies and operational processes to ensure the efficient delivery of the service. A typical example of a tactical service is that provided by a law firm.

- The fourth category of professional services is the **high-potential service**. This service may involve radical innovation which, if successful, bonds a strong relationship between the supplier and client. In this service, the client bears its part of the risk of innovation when such an innovative service is created for the market. A high-potential service will potentially benefit both the client and the professional services organisation in the future. An example of a high-potential service is the SMS text messaging system that was developed during the Internet boom predominantly by independent technology providers and professional service organisations.

2.4.3 Selecting a professional service organisation

Unquestionably the identification, selection and engagement of a professional service provider represent a critical phase in the process of acquisition of added value or specialised input by the client. Equally it can be argued that effective marketing is crucial to successful engagement and intervention by a service provider. Credentials, expertise and operational style, all pertinent to client decision-making, can be communicated through targeted marketing.

Day and Barksdale (2003: 565) observe that the process in which a customer selects a professional service organisation is complex. In large organisations it is frequently a decision requiring high-level, possibly board-level endorsement. The fact that the potential benefit of professional services can often not be evaluated prior to purchase, and sometimes only with difficulty during and after the service has been rendered, makes the process an onerous one.

According to Day and Barksdale (2003: 575), a fundamental behavioural precept (and therefore applicable in marketing and communications) is that perceptions drive

choices, and perceptions can be influenced. This is seen in the initial stages of the selection process during which impressions of competing service providers are formed and assessed by the prospective client.

Tuomivirta (2009: 13) believes that the most important consideration with regard to professional service marketing is to understand how clients make the decision to choose a service provider. An error in choice of professional service provider could result in material disadvantage to both parties, and unnecessary expense. An appropriate choice of provider however should lay the foundation for a mutually beneficial business relationship and long-term cooperation. McPhail and Sands (1994: 127-134) identify three types of risk the client encounters when choosing or changing a professional service provider: Functional risk (will the provider meet the client's requirements?); Time risk (can the provider meet the deadlines set?); and Financial risk (what will the final cost of the service be?). Utilising strategic marketing communication tools it is the professional service organisation's to inform and satisfy the client or prospect that these all these risks have been acknowledged and addressed.

In this regard, Wheatley (1983) contends that the professional services industry is unique because practitioners are guided by formal ethical and quality codes that are acknowledged by members and regulated by professional peers. Membership is recognised by formal certification and practitioners are expected to place the interests of clients before self-interest and / or profit considerations.

2.5 The evolution of professional services marketing

Familiarity with the origins and operational dynamics of professional vocations will facilitate identification of their marketing needs and formulation of marketing solutions appropriate to their particular business context. Professional service corporate culture has traditionally tended to be dismissive of the need for formal marketing. This study seeks to demonstrate the relevance, indeed importance of a structured marketing approach in this sector.

2.5.1 Historic context

Service industries, in particular professional service providers, have historically considered marketing an unnecessary indulgence rather than a critical part of the business mix (Nagdeman 2009: xxi). As a result they have been relatively tardy in adopting marketing concepts and techniques, but are gradually embracing progressive research–based marketing constructs and industry practices. The conceptual framework represented by the marketing mix paradigm has gained credence in the services industry, and has become a prevalent influence on marketing theory and practice for that sector (Gummesson 1994: 78). Contextually, the professional services industry is diverse, embracing the traditional professional vocations, specialised peripheral fields such paramedical practices, librarianship, quantity surveying etc. Increasingly strategic sectoral service offerings such as banking and insurance are regarded as "professional". Lovelock, Van der Merwe, and Lewis (1999) characterised professional services as high in experiential and credence qualities which significantly impact on the decision making process from a client's perspective. As a consequence Karantinou and Hogg (2001: 263–286) observed that professional services are consistently characterised in the literature as the most high risk type of purchase. In the light of the foregoing it can be reasoned that the commonly held assumptions and techniques applicable within the broader context of consumer or commodity marketing may not be relevant to professional services.

2.5.2 Phases of professional services marketing

Although relatively recent in origin, professional service marketing can be understood to have evolved in response to changing norms of professional practice conduct (e.g. the acceptance of advertising in the legal services arena) and the emergence of competitive business forces in this sector.

Contemporary professional service marketing exhibits the cumulative effect of 20 to 30 years of development and growing sophistication. Newberry and Jackson (2010: 2-5) as well as Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 406) postulate that, in assessing and evaluating marketing as an institutionalised business process, professional service organisations frequently follow a predictable pathway comprising three discernible phases:

The initial phase of professional service marketing, sometimes known as the 'Nascent' phase, was developed whilst traditional professional constraints such as advertising prohibition continued to hold sway.   Hence, in this nascent era, a professional service organisation's marketing initiative (if any) was generally the domain of professional practitioners and partners, sometimes assisted by support personnel promoted from an administrative role to assist with events and social occasions. In many professional service organisations this model is still in effect. The relaxation of professional restraints on commercial operation, a more sophisticated client base, and increasingly competitive business conditions have all contributed to growing sophistication in marketing behaviour.   Responding to the need for business growth, professional sector businesses have embraced the concept of formalised marketing and, recognising the need for relevant competence in this respect, many have acquired practitioners with specialist skills and experience - either as corporate employees or consultants (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 2-5). In this manner, a professional service organisation may demonstrate an emerging sense of what marketing entails, and seeks to implement certain marketing activities with limited success (Kotler et al. 2002: 406).

On this early platform, the "second age" of marketing, manifested by a formal corporate marketing function came to the fore. Today, although gradually losing prevalence, this model may still be seen in many sizeable commercial organisations. The centralised corporate marketing function typically embodies both the organisation's specialist marketing and business development strategies within a centralised entity controlled by a dedicated senior manager or partner. This allows for a more effective and consistent provision of marketing services to the organisation, with greater budgetary control and focus on development growth and corporate identity.   This structure however may have disadvantages such as inflexibility and a lack of insight on behalf of the marketing team as regards the specialised requirements of professionals in practice groups or business units. In the absence of effective leadership and control over a centralised marketing function, this may contribute to discord and dissension in large, more complex organisations, reducing effectiveness and efficiency as individual operating units (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 2-5). An organisation endeavours to codify a marketing programme. A marketing coordinator is frequently engaged to "deal with it", whilst the

management's mind-set remains firmly oriented towards operations and to devoting as little of their valuable time on marketing activities as possible. The marketing coordinator frequently has little or no charter, budget, influence, or accountability (Kotler et al. 2002: 406).

The emergence of a third phase or "age" of professional service marketing – the "Matrix" framework – can probably be attributed to recognition by marketing practitioners of the limitations inherent in the above mentioned earlier phases. The deficiencies discernible in these early modalities necessitated a new marketing perspective – the 'Matrix' framework. This is commonly found in organisations of significant size where a marketing specialist is deployed at corporate or branch level and has a clear reporting line to a central corporate function (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 2-5). The management of the professional service organisation starts to "take marketing seriously". A marketing committee is constituted and a senior level manager or partner is designated to oversee the marketing programme. A marketing consultant may also be hired as the organisation's advisor on matters of service promotion and client development. Marketing actions are initiated, managed, and measured. In this phase however, marketing is commonly still viewed as a series of loosely connected episodes, including: seminars, advertising, brochure production, seminars, social gatherings and promotional events such as golf days (Kotler et al. 2002: 406).

Kotler et al. (2002: 406) identify a fourth phase of professional service marketing wherein the professional service organisation regards marketing as an integrated process and a core element of its business philosophy. Client development is a continuous process underpinning most aspects of the business or practice's existence. Marketing is no longer seen as a distraction, or time diverted from frontline operational activities, but an integral part of the organisation's business model. A corporate value shift has occurred, transforming the organisation into an externally focussed and consciously client oriented entity, concentrating on clients' needs and requirements to a far greater degree than before.

2.5.3 Contemporary professional services marketing

Pursuing the hypothesis that professional services marketing has evolved conceptually and is functionally attuned to that industry's needs and peculiarities, an appreciation of the nature and economic role of the professional services business sector is central to further definition and elucidation of applicable marketing methodology.

2.5.3.1 Introduction

Sweeney and Soutar (2011: 305) believe that understanding how professional service providers presently approach their marketing is important for many reasons. Firstly, the sector is a significant component of western economies. Second, the sector has expanded rapidly in recent years and third, there are numerous industry characteristics influencing marketing practice which represent challenges for practitioners. Lastly, whilst the nature of professional services is generally highly specialised or technical, the process in which the service is delivered relies heavily on human relationship factors.

2.5.3.2 Marketing perspectives within a professional service organisation

Kotler et al. (2002: 60) argue that all professional services organisations practice marketing in some form or guise whether or not the activity is officially styled as such or forms part of more familiar professional processes such as business or practice development, client liaison, write–ups in professional journals or even recruitment. Hence professional practice personnel may frequently be engaged in marketing activities whether consciously or not. Whilst the marketing function (if one is present) may have formal responsibility for marketing activities in whatever format is deemed appropriate to the organisation's business model, promotion and sale of its services is also executed in the course of their duties by professional and lay personnel. Some professional service providers are known to prefer informal repute – based marketing to attract clients in preference to maintaining a formal corporate marketing apparatus or marshalling an outsourced marketing campaign - thereby eliminating what might be perceived as unnecessary cost overheads. Addressing this debate, Bruce Marcus, a leading consultant in the United States specialising in the area of marketing legal services, asserts that the notion that reputation sells, is a corporate

myth and if anything, serves to impede the marketing success of professional services organisations.

Ridley's (2008: 363) studies highlighted some important considerations emerging from application of the contemporary 'market driven management' precepts to be implemented within a professional services organisation. He enforces that a marketing plan echoing the organisations objectives should be in place containing activities that are relevant to business practice, are supported by quality systems, and demonstrate value to a client. He suggests that all marketing actions should be well documented and measured to assess success. Ridley believes that the organisations marketing strategy must be communicated throughout the organisation and be used by management to demonstrate control.

Kotler et al. (2002: 60) suggest that any professional service organisation could benefit by officially embracing marketing in some appropriate operational format. This is especially important for organisations facing business environmental challenges such as target markets in which the organisation has no reputation and / or limited experience, active marketing efforts by competitors, and unpredictable and demanding clients.

Supported by Ridley's manifesto of principles, it is held that a professional service organisation can assert its commitment to value delivery and enhance its standing as a proactive rather than reactive player in the market - by formulating and communicating a marketing program which assists the organisation to monitor and anticipate market trends. It is clear that an organisation which chooses to take the reactive route and establish a marketing office just because everybody else has done so will achieve poor returns on the investment. (Kotler et al. 2002: 62).

2.5.3.3 7P model for professional services
Previous discussions address the premise that the 7P model offers a comprehensive and useful conceptual framework for the development of a relevant marketing strategy in a professional service organisation. In this regard, various marketing practitioners have commented on the means by which the 3 additional Ps, namely;

people, process, and physical evidence may be best utilised by professional service providers in promoting their intangible service offerings to their client markets:

1. **People**: Employees in customer interface positions constitute the link between the organisation's internal and external environments. These frontline personnel are key players in the processes of providing clients with service excellence and maintaining competitive advantage. It is for this reason that most professional service organisations place particular emphasis on recruitment, and retention of competent, committed and service oriented employees. Organisations that succeed in this respect can expect positive economic returns from their investment in human resources. It is also notable that these organisations exhibit a distinct culture of service leadership by "top management" (generally senior practitioners, partners and corporate executives). High performance human resources are arguably the most difficult corporate asset to emulate (Lovelock and Wirtz 2011: 280).

2. **Process**: A range of operational options is available to professional service organisations who seek to introduce a streamlined service process to improve operational effectiveness. Hoffman and Bateson (2010: 113-114) believe that the manner in which an organisation embraces the concept of "operational competitiveness" typically proceeds in four phases:

a) Available for service; in this phase operations are seen as a means to an end and the complexity of the activity is kept to a minimum.

b) Journeyman; progression to the second phase is frequently attributable to the arrival of competition in the market place. At this point the operations sector of the organisation becomes more innovative and starts to implement measurement procedures such as benchmarking.

c) Distinctive competence achieved; operations continue to excel, reinforced by expert, customer-focussed operational teams and appropriate human resources management systems.

d) World-class service delivery; to maintain this level of performance, operations need to continue to excel as well as adapt to new operational trends, competitive offerings and customers' ever-changing requirements.

3. **Physical evidence**: Bitner (1992: 60) explains that an organisation's physical evidence encompasses everything tangible and observable within its physical facilities. A client's experience of the service encounter is greatly influenced by the

provider organisation's physical evidence. Thus, the service provider organisation may manipulate its physical attributes to help shape its value proposition in the mind of the client. The physical evidence therefore should:

a) Package the service with tangible clues that communicate effectively to the client.
b) Facilitate, through effective design, constructive activities between clients and employees.
c) Socialise clients and employees alike in terms of their respective roles, behaviours, and relationships.
d) Differentiate the service provider from its competitors and communicate this image to the core target market.

2.6 Marketing within the current professional services market

Marketing performance in the service industry sector must, by necessity, be adaptive and capable of accommodating the varied complexion of professional practice. A plethora of sub – disciplines, with particular business objectives, operational processes, and client relationship nuances exists within the ambit of traditional professions and specialised commercial industries.

Illustrating this Nagdeman (2009: xxii) cites the example of a financial services organisation in today's highly volatile and competitive business arena. He asserts that in order to succeed in its marketing strategy, relevant competitor intelligence and sensitivity to rapidly changing sectoral trends is a prerequisite. The competitive landscape is experiencing a dramatic transformation due to uncontrollable influences such as rapidly evolving market and economic climate, the creation of dynamic new services, products and distribution channels, increasing competition threats, and growing target market awareness due to information technology. Nagdeman (2009: xxii) believes that the market place is becoming increasingly segmented. Consequently the successful marketing of a financial services organisation's offerings is increasingly dependent upon an ability to understand and appeal to the psycho-economic and demographic elements of discrete market segments. In order to achieve marketing success in this ever-changing environment, financial service organisations, regardless of their industry segment or size, must discard conventional methods and seek out the most effective methods to increase productivity and penetrate their target markets.

2.6.1 The marketing plan – its formulation and value in the professional services context

Conventional wisdom holds that a successful marketing campaign is the product of careful planning, thorough market analysis and strategic design. Accordingly it is submitted that "spontaneous", that is, relatively unplanned or unmonitored marketing activity, is unlikely to have long-term positive value for a professional service organisation. Whilst inadequate planning within an organisation can compromise delivery of quality professional services; a skilfully devised marketing plan can strengthen both service delivery and the organisation. The marketing plan should not merely be devised however; it must also be put into action (Clow and Stevens 2009: 76-77).

Clow and Stevens (2009) believe that professional service organisations, in today's turbulent environment, must know how to read their clients' needs. They must also be able to attract relevant resources, and utilise these resources to develop programs, services, and strategies that will acquire and maintain clients. Clow and Stevens' assessment of effective professional services marketing practice is based on the assumption that marketing behaviour and actions will foster and maximise mutually beneficial exchanges between the client and provider; be consistently supportive of existing clients' business requirements; whilst also pursuing a strategy of new client acquisition and maintenance.

Failure to institute processes and procedures to monitor and control the marketing process can compromise an organisation's marketing thrust. Control and planning should be integral processes within the marketing drive. A methodical planning process will facilitate the production of a fit-for-purpose marketing strategy for a service provider which may be implemented with the expectation of positive results. Positive results may be evident from increased revenue earnings, more positive client attitudes, and improvement in the organisation's overall reputation. Further strategic value may be gained from the marketing initiative by objectively analysing the information flowing from the marketing process, recognising both positive and less favourable feedback from client response. Important inferences can be drawn from this market information for analysis and comparison with preceding marketing data to identify aspects of the organisation's marketing profile requiring further

attention. A new cycle within the plan may then be initiated, involving tactical and process amendments, or where necessitated, a radical refocusing of the organisation's entire marketing strategy (Clow and Stevens 2009: 76-77).

2.6.2 Importance of control systems in professional services marketing management

With the benefit of experience and relevant research studies, it can be concluded that the fundamental principles of effective marketing evident in the general product or service marketing environment will also be pertinent to successful formulation and implementation of a professional service organisation marketing strategy. Accordingly, it can be expected that instituting effective control systems in the marketing management programme will meet a critical success criterion.

A key aspect of operational marketing management control lies in determining the extent and strategic value of information that should be invested into practitioners or managers to empower them to play an effective role in the marketing process. In determining the nature and strategic limits of information thus to be invested, it may be helpful to view the marketing planning process in terms of a series of short-term marketing phases or objectives within a long-term plan. If the short-term plans are all controlled and monitored properly, the long-term plan is more likely to be better controlled. In practical terms, relevant business performance and market-related information must be readily available to the marketer with an adequate time horizon for real-time action results to accrue. These should ideally be recognisable as indicators of corporate performance congruent with the organisation's objectives and thereby reinforcing desired partner and employee behaviour. Most organisations are able to maintain adequate planning control by compiling a monthly or quarterly marketing report. The cumulative result of these reports over an annual period constitutes vital information for the structuring of future control measures (Clow and Stevens 2009: 34-35)

Crane (1993: 38) believes that an effective marketing plan should answer questions regarding where the organisation currently is positioned in the market place, where it would like to be positioned, how to best to achieve this, by whom and at what cost.

When planning an effective marketing plan the planner seeks to ensure that the right message is sent to the right audience through the right medium by using the right methods at the right costs. It is deciding what is "right" that ensures a successful communications campaign (Clow and Stevens 2009: 79).

2.7 Contemporary professional service marketing methods and model

Familiarity with contemporary marketing trends and methodology can improve decision-making regarding choice of marketing mode and style best suited to professional service businesses. It is suggested further that notwithstanding the exclusivity and traditional conservatism characteristic of the professional service environment, significant benefit can be derived by marketers in this sector from knowledge of emerging marketing theory and practice in more conventional economic sectors. A relevant example is the Contemporary Marketing Practice (CMP) model.

This conceptual marketing model was formulated by Coviello, Brodie, and Munro (2000: 523-45) as a synthesis of research and opinion from both European and American schools of marketing thought. The CMP framework utilises a pluralistic approach, incorporating both transactional and relational aspects of marketing, and examining how organisations relate to their markets through various decisions and activities. Reid (2008: 376) observes that the CMP framework does not contemplate transactional and relational marketing as separate paradigms, but is founded on the premise that marketing is characterised by multiple complex processes. It can therefore be seen as a more pluralistic conceptualisation of marketing (Coviello, Brodie, Danaher, and Johnston 2002: 33-46). The value of the framework proposed by the CMP group is that it extends the view of marketing to a broader level, and captures both the transactional (transaction marketing) and relational perspectives of marketing (database, human interaction, and network marketing). Illustrations of how these four main modes of CMP marketing may be applied in a professional services organisation are offered by Coviello et al. (2000) as follows:

- **Transaction marketing** (TM) relates to organisations attracting and satisfying potential clients by managing the elements in the marketing mix. In general the

transactional approach involves creating discrete economic transactions that are often treated in isolation and in the context of a formal, impersonal process. In this form of marketing, customers (clients) are passive in the communication relationship and the organisation actively manages the exchange, and manages communication to buyers/clients in the mass market. Transaction marketing envisages managers focussed on marketing a service or brand to an identified group of clients. Furthermore, marketing activities are usually delegated to functional marketing personnel, and managers focus on developing internal capabilities related to the marketing mix. Integration with other functions in the organisation is limited, and the planning horizon for this type of marketing is generally short-term.

- **Database marketing** is a tool used by businesses to develop and manage long-term relationships between the organisation and its targeted customers. In this type of marketing, the focus is still on the market transaction, but now involves both economic and information exchange. The marketer relies on information technology (possibly in the form of a database or the internet) to form a type of client relationship, thereby enabling the service provider to compete in a manner different from mass marketing. Communication patterns in mass marketing are generally driven and managed by the seller and are, therefore, asymmetrical (similar to transaction marketing). Marketing is still 'to' the customer, rather than 'with' the customer. Relationships are not close and are facilitated and personalised through the use of technology. Such relationships do not generally involve on-going interpersonal communication and interaction between individuals, and exchange is discrete, albeit over time. Managerial investment for database marketing is in the tool and in supporting technology and information. That is, it becomes an internal and controllable marketing asset to be managed by specialist marketers. In this type of marketing, the managerial focus widens to include both the product/brand and specifically targeted customers.

- **Interaction marketing**: differs from database marketing in that it is reliant on face-to-face interaction within relationships. Marketing occurs at the individual level based on social processes and personal interactions. At a managerial level, interaction marketing is truly with the client or customer, as both parties involved invest resources to develop a mutually beneficial and interpersonal relationship. Interaction marketing is not the responsibility of a specialist marketer per se (as in database

marketing), nor is the practitioner necessarily in the position of seller. Rather, interaction marketing can involve a number of individuals across functions and levels in the organisation, and may encompass both buying and selling activities.

- **Network marketing**: occurs across organisations, where organisations commit resources to develop a position in a network of relationships. This is generally accomplished through business and social transactions over time, as a result of developing and maintaining individual, interaction-based relationships. Thus, network marketing encompasses relationships at both the individual level and the organisation level. The relationships are part of a larger network and, therefore, they can range from close (personal) to distant (impersonal) and have varying levels of power and dependence, as well as degrees of communication. Network marketing may be conducted at a senior management level or by "part-time" marketers from other functional areas in the organisation, or even outside the organisation. Network relationships may develop between clients, distributors, suppliers, competitors, and the like. From a general perspective it could be argued that the conditions for undertaking these different modes of marketing might vary and pose challenges for different types of professional service organisation.

2.7.1 Essential methods to ensure effective professional services marketing

Acknowledging that planned, systematic marketing can be beneficial to professional service businesses and, further, that there are contemporary methodologies which can facilitate this, it is worthwhile also noting the observations of researchers who have identified process variables which have positive valence in regard to the outcome of an organization's marketing campaign. Crane (1993), Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002) identify methods to ensure effective professional services marketing in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Methods to ensure effective professional services marketing

Method	Researcher	
	Crane	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom
'Making an offer that clients can't refuse'; develop a service offering specifically according to its client requirements, something a client 'can't	X	X
'Quality is king'; deliver a quality of service higher than the client's expectations and be sensitive to variables that effect a client's perception of	X	X
'Building the marketing organisation'; devise and utilise marketing principles and techniques that cater to clients' requirements.	X	X
'Knowledge is power'; relevant information is required in order to build any solid marketing program.		X
'Charting the course'; marketing strategies developed in order to create sustainable, competitive advantages.		X
'Pricing for success'; price services according to the perceived value of the service.		X
'Accessibility, accessibility, accessibility'; be accessible to all its clients at all times.		X
You cannot not communicate': endeavour to ensure that management and employees are in agreement when it comes to planning communication strategies.		X
'Riding the E-Train': e-commerce and the internet offer an ever-expanding number of possibilities in which to serve clients.		X
'Building meaningful relationships'; build a strong business relationship with clients that are both professionally and financially beneficial.		X
'The organisation can't be all things to all people'; identify the market segments that the organisation can best serve based on its expertise, experience and resources available.		X
'The future is now': the professional service marketer must understanding the organisation and its industry as well as the organisation's relationship with its clients to be better able to anticipate and respond to all future events.		X

Source: Adapted from Crane (1993: 21) and Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 26-33)

Forsyth (2003: 11) observes that in order for professional services marketing to be successful, there must be interdependence between the elements and continuity within the marketing process. The sequence within this process commences with the formulation of a marketing plan. Promotion then follows, aiming to prompt new business enquiries; prospects who require personal persuasion to convert to fee-paying clients. Next is the sales component, the most variable element, which may involve a sequence of different meetings, proposals, presentations and follow-ups depending on the circumstances. The final stages of the marketing process are client development and commencement of service supply. Forsyth (2003: 12) asserts that marketing can only be successful in a professional service organisation if it is

unreservedly embraced by all employees and management. It must be seen as a process essential to driving and directing the business.

In Table 2.2 Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing (as cited in Forsyth, 2003) describes eight degrees / levels of commitment to marketing within a professional service organisation:

Table 2.2: Eight degrees / levels of commitment to marketing within a professional service organisation

Level 1	The organisation approaches marketing grudgingly, reluctantly and with suspicion;
Level 2	The organisation employs fewer marketers than they require, but employs them in a positive spirit;
Level 3	The organisation employs as many marketers as they require, but only after being advised to do so by external consultants;
Level 4	The organisation employs marketers before they are advised to do so by external consultants;
Level 5	The organisation employs marketers, but only once an internal business case has been agreed upon;
Level 6	The organisation employs marketers on trust – without the organisation really understanding marketing fully;
Level 7	The organisation provides marketers with roles in which authority flows naturally from day-to-day duties;
Level 8	The organisation provides encouragement to their marketers to develop financial and commercial skills, providing training if required and thus empowering the marketing team to become self-sufficient as well as more effective.

Source: Forsyth (2003: 11)

Above all, it is maintained that, to be effective, a professional service organisation's marketing function needs to be optimally located (i.e. as an integral responsibility of professional practitioners or as a discrete unit reporting to senior professional management) and must furthermore enjoy recognition and participation at all levels within the organisation. In short, to succeed, marketing requires clear management support, authority and accountability and must be seen to make a difference.

2.7.2 Marketing activities according to size of organisation

It is envisaged that whilst the marketing planning process requirements of organisations of contrasting size may be similar; effort, resource allocation, and

investment will be uniquely determined, with reference to organisation size, structural complexity and the degree of competition in its business market.

Reid (2008: 378) attests to this, observing that both small and larger professional service organisations tend to have a similar planning emphasis, focusing on both service market development and the acquisition of new of individual clients. He observes also that professional service organisations of differing size will tend to adopt similar strategies in regard to "4P" activity investment, as well as development of personal relationships. Reid (2008) also examines the manner by which professional service organisations conduct contemporary marketing practices. He takes into account variance in organisation size, and observes how smaller organisations tend to be somewhat more transaction-oriented than their larger counterparts. Relative to smaller organisations, the larger organisations tend to place greater emphasis on client retention and development of relationships than acquisition of new clients. Smaller organisations also use more specialist and functional marketers in planning their marketing activity. Larger organisations tend to concentrate on fostering wide, integrated, or connected sets of relations with clients, placing emphasis nevertheless on individuals building long-term relationships. Lastly, Reid observes that larger organisations emphasise communication to specific client segments whilst encouraging personal interaction, networking and establishing enduring exchange relationships. Maintaining a healthy balance in both formal and informal interaction with clients is a guiding principle nevertheless.

Referring to these findings, Reid (2008) suggests that larger organisations are somewhat more relationship-focused than their smaller counterparts, possibly indicating recognition of the value of this with reference in response to a changing market environment.

2.7.3 Promotional mix for professional services

It is suggested that, as a determinant of successful marketing performance, marketing mix will be crucial in the formulation of a productive marketing programme. Optimal marketing mix selection can be facilitated by reference to guidelines established and tested by researchers and marketers in practical application.

In this regard, Clow and Stevens (2009: 78) believe that marketing communication involves decisions on what message is to be communicated, to what audience, through what methods and media, and at what approximate cost. They identify promotion of services as a necessity to inform, persuade, and remind clients that services are available for the benefit of clients though active participation.

Introducing the concept of the promotional mix, Crane (1993: 64) states that this useful protocol is available to professional services marketers including; personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and word-of-mouth promotion. This mix is utilised to project an image and create demand. Professional services marketers habitually use a combination of image-oriented and demand-oriented promotion. This promotional mix is intended to differentiate the service and the provider organisation, remind clients about services supplied in the past, encourage new clients to utilise these services and inform prospective clients about the benefits of the services available, while also developing and maintaining a favourable corporate image.

Clow and Stevens (2009: 124) believe that the promotional mix needs to be used in conjunction with the marketing mix. Each promotional mix component has advantages and disadvantages, an organisation should choose an optimal blend of these variables based on its goals, resources, personnel, abilities, and promotional budget.

2.7.4 Communication methods and tips

It can be expected that marketing proficiency grows with practice and honing of skills, including communication (verbal, written and electronic); image-creation; presentation and most importantly, interpersonal relationship building.

In Table 2.3 Schultz, Doerr (2009) and Hoffman, Bateson (2010) observe a number of communication guidelines and methods which researchers have identified as pertinent in regard to a professional services organisations' marketing strategy:

Table 2.3: Communication guidelines pertinent to professional service organisations

Hoffman and Bateson		Schultz and Doerr
Guideline		*Method/s*
Turning current clients into organisation spokespersons	→	Networking events, seminars, public speaking, writing and publishing a book
First impressions are everything: indicate an organisation's capacity through physical evidence	→	Identity, collateral, presentations, search engine optimisation , advertising, good publicity, white papers
Create visual pathways that reflect the organisation's quality	→	Identity, collateral, presentations, White papers, search engine optimisation
Establish regular communications with clients	→	Direct mail, telephone, e-mail, social networking, networking events
Develop a quality organisation brochure	→	Identity, collateral, presentations,
An informed office staff is vital	→	Advertising, networking events, e-mail, social networking

Source: Adapted from Schultz and Doerr (2009: 216-247) and Hoffman and Bateson (2010: 191-193)

2.7.5 The value of online marketing communication

Contemporary studies suggest that utilisation of the Internet has become an essential aspect of effective professional service marketing. It is contended herein that this key marketing communication medium is neglected only at the peril of the organisation concerned and that particular attention must be given to exploiting the marketing potential of the internet in a manner appropriate to the professional nature and norms of its vocational calling.

Lagrosen (2005: 65) points out that many professional service organisations believe that the greatest benefit derived from internet marketing compared to any other communication medium is that it allows for two-way communication between professionals and their target audience. This allows for the communication process to become far more personal, interactive and thus engaging for clients. It is consequently not uncommon for professional service organisations to encourage active communication between staff and clients by listing the corporate email addresses of key employees on the organisation's website and in professional service brochures. In conclusion of this discussion, it can be anticipated that professional services marketing practice will increasingly reflect the influence of emerging trends from the broader marketing arena, including technology – driven

marketing, utilising the internet and social networking media. Gradual attitude change is expected to accompany this process, arguably an indication of growing belief among professional practitioners in the value that modern multi-media marketing techniques can add to their brand.

2.7.6 Relationship and transactional marketing

Bojei and Alwie (2010: 82) observe that in the increasingly competitive professional services market, provider organisations must constantly strive to acquire and maintain clients. In order to achieve this, organisations are implementing strategies designed to develop lasting and meaningful relationships with current and potential clients. The Oxford Dictionary (2003) defines relationships as:

"The way in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected, or the way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave towards each other".

This definition implies that, in a relationship, both parties are required to work and behave in a manner that is mutually rewarding. The services sector is characterised by business relationships in which the interaction between client and supplier frequently has human and economic consequences above and beyond the simple transfer of expertise or product for money.

Reid (2008: 374) postulates that the manner in which marketing is practised is evolving from transactional to relationship marketing. Environmental factors influencing change include physical distance from clients, time, economy, deregulation, globalisation, client expectations, information technology, and competition.

Sweeney, Soutar, and McColl-Kennedy (2011: 294) observe that few researchers have investigated in depth as to how professional service organisations practice marketing beyond the relationship marketing paradigm. They acknowledge however, that the likes of Coviello, Brodie and Munro (1997: 374) are an exception to this norm having derived a marketing practices classification from empirical study and a review of relevant literature. Their framework incorporates: transaction marketing, network marketing, interaction marketing, database marketing, and E-marketing. Whilst the

latter four forms are commonly seen as elements of relationship marketing, transaction marketing features also in this framework, representing as it does another constituent stage in the professional service relationship building process sequence (Coviello et al. 1997). The same authors conclude from their studies that professional service organisations tend to adopt a transactional, rather than relationship approach.

Sweeney, Soutar, and McColl-Kennedy (2011: 305) have found that professional service organisations use interaction marketing and network marketing most frequently and most competently. Whilst relationship practices are most frequently used, transactional marketing also features significantly. These findings support Coviello, Brodie, Danaher, and Johnston's (2002) suggestion that organisations are likely to be pluralistic in their marketing practices, with multiple approaches frequently being used in the same organisation. Sweeney et al (2011) suggest that organizations should be aware of the need to monitor and compare the effectiveness of their own marketing practices with those of their competitors. They deduce that particular marketing practices can influence corporate financial performance of professional service organisations and that marketing practitioners are well advised to consider which performance metrics are most relevant before deciding on which marketing practices should constitute the core of their marketing strategy.

Ford, Gadde, Hakansson, Lundgren, Snehota, Turnbull, and Wilson (1998) acknowledge that a productive business relationship between provider and consumer can be deemed to exist when transactions between these parties are favourably influenced by the fruitful nature of their previous dealings.

2.7.7 Networking and cross-selling

Maister (1993: 337-341) deduces that many professional organisations emphasise the importance of networking but very few succeed at it. Maister (1993) asserts that the rationale of networking is to be able to deliver the range of the organisations' services to their current clients. In practice, few clients have such widespread needs and even if they do, the only effective type of cross selling of this nature is when there is an individual with definable expertise. If it is intended to build a marketing strategy within an organisation based on networking, Maister (1993) suggests that

this is achievable in circumstances where a professional practitioner with broad, possibly national operational scope is able to play a facilitating role by introducing prospective clients to his organisation or partnership via its regional offices or practice groups. Alternatively, canvassing new corporate client prospects can be achieved by utilising central marketing resources or personnel. The same marketing and client procurement process can be expected to occur routinely in multinational concerns.

2.8 Customer service and satisfaction: implications for professional services marketing

It is envisaged that the provision of services to clients by professional organisations, and on-going support relationships will be highly interactive. This can be expected to facilitate close, durable business relationships - equally so in the context of the "mature" professions – accounting, medical and legal – hence to be encouraged by service provider organisations among their practitioners at the client interface.

2.8.1 Introduction

Professional service provider's resources with which the client or customer may become familiar and interact in this manner include its personnel, its physical facilities, and other operational aspects such as IT systems. Therefore, a dominant concern within a service organisation should be how its performance is judged and perceived by the customer (Yelkur, 2000: 107).

That today's professional service business arena is becoming increasingly competitive and demanding is indisputably true. With growing representation of specialised professional service providers relative to the consumer population, competition for clients, be they corporate or individuals, has intensified for the majority of professional practitioners. The need to present a positive market image and an attractive service proposition can be seen as essential for a modern organisation's or practice's survival. Likewise, such organisations can be expected to be increasingly protective of their proprietary technology and operating processes. Since production and consumption of a professional provider's service tends to be simultaneous, customer service satisfaction cannot be explicitly divided into pre-transaction and post-transaction elements. The professional service provided can

frequently only be evaluated in terms of its eventual outcome. Customer satisfaction will most frequently be evident when clients' service expectations and post service delivery evaluation are congruent. Gronroos identified early on that the lower the congruence, the greater the likelihood of customer disappointment and disappointed customers may cause the image of the organisation to deteriorate (Gronroos 1978: 588-601).

Clients are increasingly more educated and more attuned to the concept of value, and apply this criterion to gauge service offerings, to pare back project submissions or indeed to divide a project amongst a series of specialist providers. Clients also tend to be increasingly critical, demonstrating stringent expectations regarding the level of servicing and service quality they will accept, whilst being reluctant to accept increased pricing. Reid (2008: 379) deduces from the issues highlighted above that professional service organisations can expect to face growing competitive pressure coupled with other uncontrollable environmental challenges in foreseeable future.

2.8.2 Enhancing customer satisfaction with the 7P model
Building on the above proposition that contemporary marketing techniques can materially improve professional service providers' competitive presence in their relevant markets, it can further be argued that modern marketing modes provide avenues for leveraging client satisfaction.

Ways in which to avoid disappointment and enhance customer satisfaction in a services organisation through the manipulation of the service marketing mix or 7P model are suggested below; these have been formulated by studying the propositions and theories of some of the service marketing authors:

- **Product / Service**: Because of the intangibility of many professional services, the provider organisation may find it difficult to assess consumer's perceptions of their services. In the interests of positive client response, the service marketer should highlight and emphasise substantive cues and also strive to create a strong organizational image. This can be done by communicating clearly to the customers the features of the service being provided and the strengths of the provider

organisation. In order to succeed in its business mission a professional services provider must formulate a service package that satisfies the needs and requirements of its target market and furnishes those services in a manner that provides value and satisfaction to the client (Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom 2002: 9).

- **Price**: Price becomes a pivotal quality indicator in situations where other information is not freely available to help the customer evaluate a service proposition. It is therefore essential that the service provider engage in competitive pricing. Being a substantive cue, price for service may therefore be a key factor on which the professional service marketer can focus to establish a competitive advantage. In the context of the core professions, referring here to medical and legal services, price becomes an important factor in client decision making, frequently being the only familiar basis for differentiation in the absence of other qualitative information (Yelkur 2000: 111-113)..

- **Place**: Because professional services are processes that cannot be stored, service businesses frequently find it difficult to synchronize supply and demand. Services cannot be inventoried for the same reason. Consequently service providers must make simultaneous adjustments, factoring in demand and capacity to achieve an acceptable balance between the two. The provider organisation may be assisted in this regard by operating multisite locations thereby making its services more accessible to its users. Should the service provider locate itself in a remote or inaccessible location regardless of other considerations, customers are unlikely to be motivated to use the service (Yelkur 2000: 111-113)..

- **Promotion**: The professional service marketer should constantly encourage word-of-mouth communication with its client market and internally among practitioners in addition to using regular advertising. Should the service provider be aware that poor or inaccurate perceptions of its service offerings exist in its target market then traditional marketing tactics (e.g. advertising, field selling, pricing) can be an effective way of communicating a more positive image to the market. Communication includes informing the clients or customers in a language they can understand. Post-purchase communication in the context of professional service provision is strategically relevant to the objective of customer or client retention, which may be equally important as attracting new clients, if not more so (Yelkur 2000: 111-113)..

- **Physical Evidence**: The physical evidence of the provider organisation, such as environmental décor and apparel, may significantly influence the customer's expectations of the service offered. Since professional services cannot be readily displayed, As professional service offerings can generally not readily be qualitatively advertised nor displayed for public viewing, service providers should be encouraged to create a conducive physical environment within their premises or where client contact occurs, thereby promoting favourable customer mind-set and perceptions (Yelkur 2000: 111-113)..

- **People**: As mentioned previously, professional service organisations tend to be labour-intensive The behaviour of service professional, specialist and lay personnel at the client interface will be highly relevant to achieving the objective of positive client perceptions of service quality and effectiveness. To foster customer-oriented personnel, the organization needs to recruit and select the right people, offering an appropriate package of employment and growth opportunities to enhance their skills and encourage them. Instilling a strong service ethos in recruits cannot be overemphasised, together with an appreciation of the importance of positive cooperative client interaction and the mutual dependence relationship which should develop between professional service practitioners and clients' staff. Should the client – service provider interface prove not to be comfortable, client perceptions and the likely positive outcome of the professional service provider's intervention may be compromised (Yelkur 2000: 111-113).

- **Process**: The methodology by which a professional service is delivered is key to its success since in this context the service and the provider tend to be inseparable in the perception of the client. Functional quality service delivery is especially important to service industries, as it may frequently be difficult to differentiate the technical attributes of different service providers of the service. Previous service experience may also influence the expectations of the customer. If the customer has experienced unsatisfactory professional service delivery from a provider previously, this can be expected to influence future perceptions of the service provider organisation. It is essential therefore to train frontline employees whose actions and behaviour can favourably influence clients' opinions of the service provider and the quality of the service provided (Yelkur 2000: 111-113)..

2.9 Problems and issues associated with the marketing of professional services

The particular dynamics and constraints thought to influence contemporary professional services marketing have been debated in preceding sections. In light of the foregoing, it should be assumed that complacency or ignorance with regard to progress and the needs of the wider societal market will blunt the marketing thrust of the organisation. As mentioned previously, the debate surrounding advertising and marketing in the professional services arena remains alive, although tempered by contemporary business trends.

2.9.1 Introduction

Marketing has long been a contentious issue confronting professionals, as many practitioners have seen it as a somewhat distasteful form of commercialisation. Traditionally, in many professions, concepts such as 'business' and 'profit' are seldom enunciated and the term 'marketing' has almost ceased to exist in the professional vocabulary. Notwithstanding this, the influences of commercialisation are evident in the professional services environment and the need to sustain and drive business expansion is generally acknowledged, In this regard, recent studies suggest that professional service organisations are progressively adopting contemporary marketing principles and strategies (O'Connor 1978: 308-10).

With their long historical presence in western socio-economic life and successful adaptation to the evolving human environment, professional service practices have shown their ability to accommodate technological innovation and information proliferation. They have demonstrated remarkable tolerance for new environmental conditions and operational constraints, together with an ability to respond successfully to change. (Sweeney, Soutar, and McColl-Kennedy 2011: 293). It is contended therefore, that whilst professional services are inherently conservative, they are able to adapt successfully to contemporary business patterns.

Webster and Sundaram (2009: 104-14) describe professional service organisations as those that offer expertise as their core service and, in most cases, knowledge is asymmetric across the provider and client relationship. Professional service providers tend to rely their specialised technical qualification and experience in their

pursuit of success operating within their particular realms of expertise and subject to relevant professional conduct codes, professional service providers habitually find themselves operating within the remit of specialist consultant / adviser consciously or otherwise fostering a sense of subject dependence amongst clients, whilst simultaneously encouraging a mind-set of technical competence. The professional service provider, eager to foster the perception of subject authority and the impression of "being constantly driven", may thus run the risk of conflict with client organisations' objectives relating to business development (Quader 2007: 115-61). Simon (2005) and Reid (2008) as cited in (Sweeney, Soutar, and McColl-Kennedy 2011: 297) acknowledge there is evidence to suggest that the abovementioned "pressure ethos" as well as other external imperatives such as the increasingly complex marketplace, demands of customers, competition, plus the continuing need to conform to professional and ethical standards, present obstacles to change.

2.9.2 Organisational structure

It is suggested that the ownership, organisational framework and hierarchy of a professional service organisation will tend to influence the pattern of adaptation to modern practices, including marketing.

Most 'core' professional service provider organisations are constituted either as organisations, partnerships or incorporated individuals / groups of practitioners. A common feature of these professional business units is that they tend to be democratic in nature. This may be to the detriment of the business concerned as democratic decision making tends to be slow and effective marketing action generally is the result of swift, sometimes pro-active decisions by the organisation's leadership. Democratic process may also limit decision- making effectiveness and impede prompt consensus response to changing conditions as consensus management generally implies compromise and debate. From a competitive marketing point of view therefore it is therefore considered essential for a partnership or other relatively democratic business unit to maintain an effective decision-making and communication process allowing for the initiation of relevant action as and when the market demands it. Should there be indecisiveness on marketing matters there is likely to be a competitor around who will take advantage of this fact (Forsyth 2003: 10).

2.9.3 Key factors inhibiting professional services marketing

Whilst maintaining that contemporary marketing can play an important role in the professional services sector, it is acknowledged that inherent, sometimes traditional factors and influences exist in this business environment which the marketing practitioner must acknowledge and contend with. The practitioner's aim will be to a produce a marketing formula which will embrace supportive environmental factors and realise competitive advantages for the professional service organisation. Achieving recognition within the profession as an innovative, technically competent professional service organisation whilst gaining client market acceptance as an affordable preferred service provider, will be key to this aim. Taking cognisance of these qualifying factors will assist the marketer in formulating an effective marketing strategy.

According to Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 14-19) there are ten distinct problems inhibiting professional services marketing namely, **third-party accountability** whereby professionals face certain constraints imposed by statute and professional bodies which may limit their ability to meet certain client needs in the manner that marketing practitioners would choose to promote; **client uncertainty** where purchasers of professional services may experience difficultly in evaluating a service offering due to its intangible qualities; **prior experience** with clients in similar industries and similar situations is almost always imperative in a purchaser's selection of a professional service organisation.. ; **limited differentiability** whereby enabling potential clients to recognise the qualitative differences between two similar providers of apparently equivalent services is problematic to marketers; **maintaining quality control** where sustaining high-quality levels can prove to be a very challenging task for service marketers in general. Many such service providers have to contend with the fact that the quality of their service delivery is heavily dependent on the behaviour of both clients and staff; **making doers into sellers** can prove to be problematic. Many professional and technical specialists simply do not want to get involved with marketing or sales and frequently may not be behaviourally suited to become a good 'seller'; **allocating professional's time to marketing** is challenging as professional service providers are unable to bill for time spent marketing their services. As a consequence, professional practitioners may exhibit reluctance to allocate much functional time to marketing activities; **pressure to react**

rather than pro-act whereby clients demanding priority service may also result in unrealistic deadlines being set which will serve also to limit time and resources designated for marketing planning; **conflicting views about advertising** where although it has been some years since professional bodies' restrictions on members advertising their services were lifted, the advertising topic is still commonly debated by professionals themselves; and finally **a limited marketing knowledge** whereby professional services providers, in general, have lacking marketing proficiency and recognise the need to "read up" on marketing theory and practice in their spare time - or hire in professional marketing consultants to assist with their marketing planning.

2.9.4 Dangerous assumptions

Pertinent to the view that appropriately tailored marketing is a relevant and productive application of resources in a professional services organisation, is the presumption that knowledge of prevailing industry culture and beliefs can serve to avoid unproductive effort and sharpen the marketing program's focus. Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002), in accordance with Tyler Ryder's "Eleven deadly assumptions that kill your marketing program", and Schultz and Doerr (2009) have identified key marketing errors and statements as being extremely detrimental to a professional services organisation's marketing plan as seen in Table 2.4.

Table: 2.4: Statements detrimental to a professional services organisation's marketing plan

Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom	Schultz and Doerr
Error	*Statement*
Failure to implement marketing owing to slow or indecisive committee decision process.	"Marketing methods don't work as well today as they used to."
Failure to effectively communicate value adding purpose in their marketing.	"My prospects and clients know the services I offer."
Spending on marketing activities that do not produce a return on investment or that are vanity exercises.	"Prospects and clients do not mind when I'm slow to return phone calls; they understand that I'm busy."
Holding unrealistic expectations for their marketing programme.	"The more complicated my message, the more prospects and clients will understand the need for my services." "I have to be careful not to repeat myself when talking with prospects."
Relying on one marketing tactic to achieve all objectives.	"My referral sources will send me all the new clients I need."
Poor implementation of their marketing plan.	"It makes no difference whether my photo appears in my marketing materials."
Ignoring, or failing to nurture business leads.	"When prospects or clients have questions, they will call me."
Failing to integrate various marketing techniques.	"The more I interact with prospects, the more time I waste."
Poor lead generation planning.	"My prospects understand what I say because they are in business and know the jargon."
Failure to adopt a view for the marketing programme and lacking persistence with its implementation.	"How an advertisement looks is not as important as what the ad says."

Source: Adapted from Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 24- 25) and Schultz and Doerr (2009: 216-247)

2.9.5 Key considerations for management

Segelod (2000: 151) observes that marketing is difficult to delimit and measure. It is not defined, there is no system of quantifying such investments, and managers find it difficult to decide what should be classified as an investment and what return might be expected from such an intangible investment.

An unfortunate reality is that the adoption of a formal marketing plan and implementation of recognised marketing responsibilities will inevitably add to the organisation's overhead expenses or cut down on the billable hours of its professionals. In order to sustain the marketing thrust it may become essential therefore to secure more highly profitable projects or remunerative clients in order to balance the cost of the marketing campaign. If a disproportionate amount of billable profit – generating time is consumed by marketing however service delivery may be compromised and the service provider's reputation tarnished owing to over commitment of manpower and the professional service provider's reputation may be tarnished. Fear of this undesired outcome is believed to contribute to many

professional services providers' reluctance to initiate formal marketing activity and responsibilities (Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom 2002: 61).

Nagdeman (2009: 14) believes that a key challenge for management is to provide innovative leadership that replaces the status quo and creates a culture of opportunity. To compete effectively in their modern business environments professional service organisations need to adopt and maintain a market-driven ethos on an organisation-wide basis. Organisations that successfully embrace a market and customer-oriented culture will receive enhanced opportunities for innovation, improved performance and incremental profitability.

2.9.6 Challenges within the professional service market

In common with product and service marketing patterns in the broader economic environment, successful professional service marketing can be constrained by inhibiting behaviour of representatives of the discipline or organisations concerned. It is argued that failure to motivate these human resources to spontaneously support marketing principles and action will compromise the effort.

Schultz and Doerr (2009: xv-xvi) report consistent feedback from cohorts of clients surveyed over a number of years indicating that, irrespective of differences in operational focus, all have experienced marketing challenges. Schultz and Doerr further report the existence of widespread negativity with regard to marketing amongst professional service practitioners. These disaffected professionals claim to have had difficulty in reaching full corporate consensus on a set marketing strategy, followed by widespread apathy exhibited by all concerned as regards "taking ownership" of the project, resulting in very little being accomplished. Furthermore, marketing managers or "champions" reported difficulty in establishing a "brand message" following adoption of a marketing plan, exacerbated by apathy and lack of motivation to implement the necessary actions. These organisations have reportedly also experienced difficulties differentiating themselves from other organisations with similar service offerings. Another trend observed was that during organisations' busy periods marketing was generally relegated to lowest priority in favour of activities perceived by management to be more urgent and profitable.

2.10 The impact of market dynamics on business performance

It is suggested that instituting effective marketing is akin to effecting behaviour change among professional service practitioners and provider organisations, requiring recognition and acceptance of frequently unfamiliar concepts and techniques.

2.10.1 Introduction

Reid (2008: 379) suggests that the cost of doing business in the professions may be escalating significantly, and that a range of competitive and environmental factors in the market may be impacting on financial performance and profitability. A number of issues related to the professional services market environment and their likely impact on business performance have been recorded. These include; an increase in market players and growing levels of price-based competition create a more dynamic and less profitable market place. Certain market sectors have reached maturity, with limited potential for increased growth in others. Simultaneously, with the emergence of an increasing number of niche players and "specialists", Reid (2008) observes that there is greater difficulty in creating a memorable market presence and protect existing relationships as service providers adopt a more aggressive promotion strategy. There is a shift in market behaviour whereby product or service differentiation is based less on technical service and increasingly on relationship quality. The increased personnel / client interface effort necessitated thereby can have the unfortunate unseen consequence effect of raising the costs associated with doing business and securing and retaining clients. There are increasing levels of research and development of new products and services with short lifecycles – meaning that the costs of innovation are increasing and positive returns thereon necessitate much shorter payback periods. The foregoing contemporary trends can be interpreted as evidence of long-term changing patterns in the professional service business environment such as the proliferation of specialists, increasingly well-versed and IT informed competitors and emerging marketing technologies that render many established approaches obsolete.

2.10.2 Factors influencing the determination of marketing costs

The impression is gained from experience in the professional accounting environment that there is little quantitative grasp of the cost of marketing. This is

possibly true also of other professional disciplines, indicative of the relatively recent onset of formalised marketing in these occupations. It is evident however that professional service marketing cost determination is a relatively complex and frequently subjective process (involving considerations and variables in many respects foreign to general product and service marketing). It is considered important that such cost determinants should be identified and as far as possible quantified within the organisation in contemplating the marketing investment.

Gummesson (1979: 313) observes in this regard that there are few reliable comparative estimates of marketing and sales costs for different types of professional service organisations. He contends also that there is a deficiency of costing concepts applicable to the special features of professional services. Gummesson consequently postulates a set of concepts relevant to marketing and sales cost estimation, using four example study cases. It transpired during Gummesson's data collection that the professional service organisations surveyed did not know their marketing and sales costs, nor did the clients know their cost of purchasing the professional services in question. Gummesson points out that the principal remuneration source of professional service providers is constituted by hourly fee billings invoiced to the client. Commissions and royalty payments are other income sources. In regard to professional service marketing, two categories of marketing costs were identified. The former concerned activities designed to increase the market's awareness of the service provider's identity and services and to create a favourable image. He named these 'costs for indirect marketing'. The latter cost category included expenses incurred in consultations with a specific prospect. These were identified as frontline selling costs arising from initial sales call, subsequent client follow up and the writing of proposals. According to Gummesson (1979: 313) the marketing cost component attributable to time spent by professionals on marketing activities can be determined at three levels:

1. **An upper cost**: This comprises the income sacrificed by the professional, assuming a full work-load (usually his hourly fee), plus expenses arising from specific marketing activities (e.g., travel costs, accommodation etc.).
2. **A lower cost**: For a professional not otherwise fully occupied, the only costs will be the expenses incurred for specific marketing activities, as above.

3. **A middle cost**: This principally comprises, the professional's remuneration plus sundry employment costs and overheads

Gummesson (1979: 314) interprets findings from this study as indicating that there is no single optimal solution to the question of which marketing costing approach should be used by the professional service provider. His view, however, is that an understanding of these cost elements should assist in more effective costing evaluations. Gummesson proceeds to the conclusion that his upper and lower cost frameworks seem to be more relevant alternatives in the short term and the middle cost in the long term. In the short term the determination of costs is a function of the work-load during a certain period. In the long term it is a matter of estimating the necessary marketing resources required to sustain the marketing campaign whilst maintaining the professional organisation's size and cost structure within acceptable limits. The organisation may be experiencing conditions of high or a low work-load and the work-load may be evenly or unevenly distributed on individuals. It can also be dispersed or concentrated in time. The volume of new business proposals can be low or high. In circumstances of positive business and revenue flow it is reasonable in the short run to use the upper cost. In a negative situation the opportunity cost is zero. In the short run the lower cost should therefore be used. If positive factors keep prevailing it is possible for the professional organisation to expand, if negative ones prevail, it must contract. In more neutral business scenario, the middle cost is reasonable, whilst maintaining an acceptable volume of work.

Conventional wisdom suggests however that it is inadvisable for professional service providers to employ the upper cost persistently, without regard to variations in economic conditions, business pattern and income stream fluctuations. This practice could convey the impression to existing and prospective clients that marketing is unnecessarily costly and may inhibit the organisation in its procurement of new work. When the distribution in work-load between the individual members of a professional organisation is inequitable, one individual could be in a very positive situation and another in an extremely negative situation. For the former professional it may be reasonable to assess the sales time as an upper cost, for the latter as a lower cost. If the former professional is a good marketer who can sell assignments for others he may make a larger contribution to the organisation by selling rather than operating.

Gummesson (1979: 308-18) further commented critically on the practice of using 'billable hours' to implement marketing – thereby charging a client for time spent on these activities. This, he contends, effectively overstates the actual cost of marketing, creating a negative perception and discouraging further such activities.

2.10.3 Effect of marketing on financial related performance according to the CMP model

Reid (2008: 379-380), conducted a study to determine if the Contemporary Marketing Practices (CMP) model in practice showed a positive impact on the financial performance of professional services organisations. The results of this analysis indicate that interactive marketing has a significant effect on financial related performance, and both interactive marketing and database marketing have a positive impact on client-related performance. Overall, the results suggest that the effectiveness of both modes of marketing performance can be enhanced through improvements to the way professional service providers interact with their clients. In increasingly competitive markets between an 8 per cent and 11 per cent improvement in performance (e.g. business growth or client retention) may be achieved, resulting in an improved competitive position for the organisation. The results of this research have a number of practical implications for managing the marketing of professional services.

In summary, Reid (2008: 382) observed that professional service organisations are likely to be persuaded to adopt an innovative and flexible range of marketing methodologies depending on client expectations and market conditions. The results of his exploratory study suggest that changing marketing environments require dynamic marketing solutions, including explicit encouragement of sound relationship building, strong corporate project management capabilities, clearly defined market orientation and commitment to improving the integrated marketing communication capabilities of professional service organisations.

2.10.4 Evaluating marketing productivity

In a similar context to that concerning quantification of professional service marketing costs, it can be anticipated that the evaluation of marketing productivity will

be influenced by issues, qualitative and quantitative, peculiar to the nature of the profession concerned and the marketing process itself.

A point of significance deduced by Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, and Srivastava (2004: 86) from their professional services marketing performance studies is that the evaluation of marketing productivity ultimately involves projecting the differences in cash flows that will occur from implementation of a marketing action. In contrast, from an accounting standpoint, decomposition of marketing productivity into changes in financial assets and marketing assets of the organisation as a result of marketing actions might be considered. The devotion of more attention to these marketing assets is likely to transform the way businesses are managed.

2.10.5 Benefits and significance of marketing within a professional services organisation

Negative preconceptions of many professional practitioners are held to be attributable for the relatively tardy advent of modern marketing techniques in the professional services business arena. It is maintained that vindication of marketing as a valid method of stimulating professional business performance needs to be promoted actively by senior professional leadership of organisations seeking to defend, grow or refocus their business. "Conversion" of professional and operational personnel to a positive marketing orientation is believed to be paramount to this process.

As long ago as 1977, Kotler and Connor (1997: 71-76) described how many professional practitioners in professional service organisations denied a role to marketing or, if they did accept it, had a very inadequate idea of its content and how it could be implemented in an organisation. Active marketing can be vital in assisting professional organisations to meet challenges they may face such as assaults on professional codes of ethics, changing expectations of clients, and increased competition in the market.

Young (2005: 31) is of the opinion that marketing has an important role within the professional services organisation and that it is imperative that corporate leaders adopt and internalise the principles of service marketing, rather than the more

traditional precepts of product marketing to increase revenues and margins successfully.

Schultz and Doerr (2009: 6) identify measurable outcomes as a result of marketing within a professional services organisation namely, new conversations with potential buyers; an increased chance of winning client engagements; a higher revenue per engagement and per client, and higher fees for services; and an increased affinity with the actual and potential workforce

According to Young (2005: 29-30), a Scottish-based law firm called Sheperd and Wedderburn elected to hire a marketing director whose main function was to develop a more marketing-led approach for the firm's business. The marketing director soon learnt that the task of implementing marketing initiatives within a partnership presented issues and challenges significantly different to those encountered in his more commercial marketing background. Many partners were sceptical about the value that marketing could bring to the firms. Against all odds, the marketing director persevered and succeeded in making the firm more market-orientated. The principal benefits flowing from this more market-focussed strategy could be seen in the rise of fee earnings from new client instructions, the improved perceptions of the firm by clients and, over time, approval and support from the partners for the new business approach. Significant lessons learned included the following: embedding a marketing-oriented culture with support from the lead partner is crucial, and marketing specialists have to make their case in a step by step fashion in order to gain influence in an environment where marketing concepts are relatively foreign and antithetical.

Day and Barksdale (2003: 577) emphasise how essential it is that professional service organisations adopt a marketing orientation with a view to strengthening their business growth strategy and increase the probability of winning prospective clients.

2.11 The future of professional services marketing

There is good cause to believe that formal organised marketing in the professional services industry is here to stay, It can be argued that this is long overdue, acknowledged as a necessity by professional practitioners in the face of competitive

economic reality, In the event however, it is argued that the precepts of modern marketing are beneficial both to professional service businesses and to their clients and customers. The former accrue the benefits of robust modern competitive business behaviour. The latter are benefited by far greater transparency and choice of service supplier. This is arguably a win – win situation.

2.11.1 Introduction

Schultz and Doerr (2009: xvii) speak of professional service organisations which have dominated the market place because of their intensive marketing and branding efforts. These organisations have become thought leaders, employed effective lead generation strategies, and implemented systems and processes to ensure that their success can build on itself. The professional services organisations that succeed with marketing and selling typically have at least one thing in common: They have had setbacks and failures on route to becoming the successful marketing and selling structures which they are.

2.11.2 Trends effecting professional services marketing

The importance of keeping abreast of emerging influences and modern trends in contemporary business marketing must be emphasised. Dynamics of professional practice as well as prevailing economic forces can be expected to bear directly on the conduct of professional service business and the increasingly important economic sector this represents.

Newberry and Jackson (2010) pose the question of how, going forward, current and future marketing directions are going to affect the way that professional service marketing is formulated and implemented. Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002) also believe that every professional service organisation must create a plan for the future by identifying and adapting to long-term trends in the professional service environment. Both parties point out a number of relevant trends in Table 2.5.

Table: 2.5: Trends affecting professional service organisations marketing in the future

Researcher	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom	Newberry and Jackson
Trends	The increasing importance of the brand: the organisation must articulate and communicate its identity and purpose in a manner that is consistent with its intended position in the marketplace. Frequently previously neglected, is gaining importance as professional service organisations endeavour to differentiate their offerings from competitors'	
	Blurred distinctions among professionals: organisations are experiencing increased pressure from clients to adopt more professional business practices. There is an increased need to offer clients expertise and assistance over and above the services the professional was traditionally trained to perform.	
	Migrated Marketing: there is an increased need for marketing and client-centric activity resulting in a simultaneous intensification of market orientation and downsizing of the formal marketing function. In certain circumstances, either for budgetary or perhaps ideological reasons, organisations have dispensed with business development specialists altogether and reallocated the function to professional or support personnel staff.	
	The Growth of the world economy: local professional service organisations choose to focus on international markets because clients are increasing demanding world-wide service	
	Cultural shifts: professionals are recognising the need to become culturally sensitive as they work with an increasingly culturally diverse client base.	
	The increasing importance of relationship strategies: relationships will continue to be the basis of retention strategies and a core component of a successful professional service organisation.	
	New models mean new ethics: new models of business may lead to new models of ethical behaviour.	
	More focus on cost-savings: organisations must continuously refine the quality of their deliverables whilst maintaining price competitiveness and accessibility.	
	The continued impact of technology: a professional service organisation must make every effort to ensure that the use of technology reinforces clients' trust.	

Source: Adapted from Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 405-414) and Newberry and Jackson (2010: 5-6)

2.11.3 The "Fourth Age" of professional services marketing

Viewing professional services marketing in the context of the "ages of maturity", suggests the need for on-going innovation and perhaps hitherto unprecedented entrepreneurship among professional service practitioners, It is contended that recognition of change necessity and flexibility to embrace new business paradigms, including innovative marketing modes to address growing competitive pressure will be the hallmarks of successful professional service providers of the future.

Newberry and Jackson (2010: 7) believe that the marketing strategy of many professional service organisations will need to transform in the future if they are to succeed in their respective market places. They split the levels of marketing within a professional services organisation into "Four Ages". They predict that the final and

"Fourth Age" will introduce a number of serious implications for professional service organisations: potential will exist for corporate marketers to diverge from a predominantly promotion-focused role into more commercially-driven, operational team players; professional service marketing will begin to drive pricing strategies, tactical implementation, and project management where increased emphasis and expertise will be required to cover new media activities and product development. They also predict that the typical professional services marketing unit in the year 2015 will still resemble today's matrix operation but with more complex dimensions such as external consultants and professional service co-providers joining the mix. The end point of the "Fourth Age" will include the "Stakeholder Structure", here specific activities of the marketing function are outsourced and managed by a small central team using clearly-defined contracts for agreed services.

In the "Fourth Age" paradigm, efficient management of direct (and indirect) target-setting and reporting will be vital for the professional service marketers' success. This may only transpire in the future but with persistent pressure on professional service organisations to demonstrate their improved operational efficiencies the abovementioned imperative is likely to tax professionals marketer's minds very soon in the future (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 8).

It is argued that professional service providers can no longer merely assume that their services will sell themselves, regardless how good they are. Just because they have the technical skills and know how, it does not necessarily mean that the prospective client will utilise their services. To many professionals the concept of marketing their services was alien, suspect, and consciously avoided. Many others however have, albeit sometimes reluctantly, started using adopted certain principles of marketing, mainly promotion in order to gain attention in the market. In more progressive practices, organisations and partnerships a holistic approach to marketing has been embraced within their organisation with rewarding results. What they have discovered is that in order to be client driven, the organisation must first be marketing driven. Marketing is state of mind, a business philosophy, and revolves around the concepts of client satisfaction and exchange (Crane 1993: xi).

2.12 Conclusion

Insight gained from work experience, augmented by a review of relevant literature and results of a survey conducted in a professional service organisation, has led to the conclusion that marketing as practiced in the professional services business environment has particular influencing characteristics and that the effectiveness of formal marketing activity cannot readily be evaluated .

Indications from the theoretical framework suggest that key marketing fundamentals apparent in this business sector differ significantly from those generally recognisable in commodity, consumer product and industrial marketing. It is postulated that whilst these differences are probably symptomatic of particular professional service practice norms and business ethics, the formulation, implementation and evaluation of effective marketing may be possible utilising appropriate contemporary marketing paradigms.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and design used for this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature on factors influencing the marketing of professional services. Chapter three presents the research methodology and design of this study. First, the different types of research and the design will be demonstrated followed by the form of the survey design and an explanation of the questionnaire design used for this study. Sampling method, data collection, data analysis and an overview of the main study will be discussed. In summary, a primary data research method in the form of a questionnaire survey was used to gather the quantitative data which, combined with open ended commentary, provided the findings of the factors influencing marketing professional services.

3.2 The research process

According to Weiers (2010: 104), the research process consists of seven steps. Figure 3.1 illustrates the research process of this study, showing how the dissertation's chapters relate to each of the steps.

Figure 3.1: The 7 steps of the research process

Step		Chapter
Step 1	• Defining the problem	CHAPTER 1
Step 2	• Deciding on the type of data required	CHAPTER 2
Step 3	• Determining through what means the data will be obtained	
Step 4	• Planning for the collection of data and selection of a sample	CHAPTER 3
Step 5	• Collecting and analyzing the data	CHAPTER 4
Step 6	• Drawing conclusions and reporting the findings	CHAPTER 5
Step 7	• Following through with decisions that take the findings into consideration	

Source: Based on Weiers (2010: 104)

3.3 Types of research

A primary data research project was chosen because the necessary data required for this research was either not specific enough, not current enough, or inadequate to fulfil the intended research aims and objectives. This study is therefore essentially exploratory (and to an extent descriptive), and as such is more hypothesis generating than hypothesis testing. It is also essentially inductive and so hypotheses or propositions were not developed and tested. It should be noted that the approach adopted was more phenomenological than positivist, and so a falsification approach was also not applicable.

According to Wiid and Diggines (2009: 84-85), there are two ways of collecting primary data for such a study – quantitative and qualitative research. Figure 3.2 shows primary and secondary data and the different qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This study was undertaken as a quantitative survey research combined with the allowance for qualitative open-ended comments/ feedback.

Figure 3.2: Data collection techniques
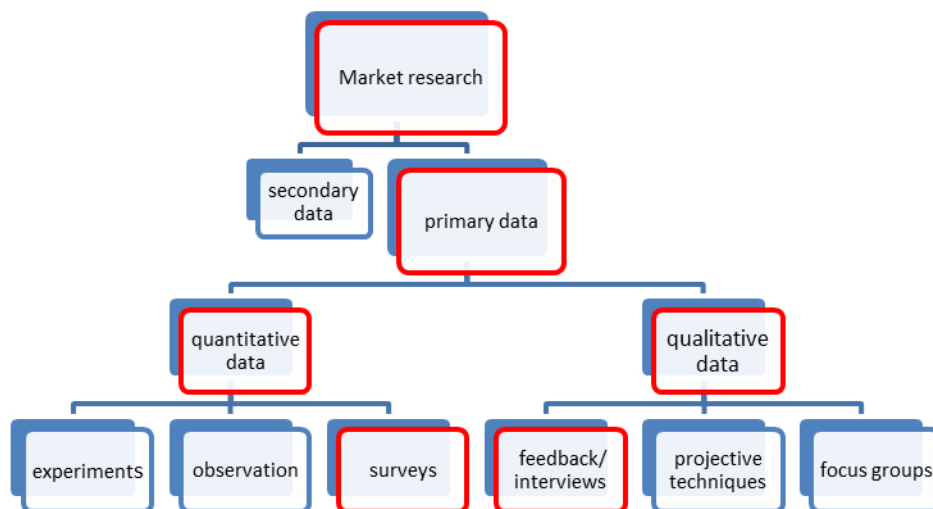
Source: Based on Wiid and Diggines (2009: 85)

3.4 The quantitative research design

According to Baker and Hart (2008: 146), a conclusive research design can be either descriptive or causal. The quantitative part of this study had a conclusive research design and was undertaken as descriptive research with a cross-sectional design.

3.4.1 Respondent selection – the sampling process

The selection of respondents for a research project, usually a large group of people, is very important. In terms of a research project, this large group of people is called the population or universe (Stevens, Wrenn, Sherwood and Ruddick 2006: 181). Stevens et al. (2006: 182) state that in marketing research, the aim is to evaluate target segments efficiently and effectively and, therefore, drawing a sample of the population is useful. Advantages of sampling are lower costs, time saving, and efficiency. These advantages convinced the researcher to use sampling in order to collect information to solve the research problem. Figure 3.3 shows the sampling process for determining the respondents for this study.

Figure 3.1: The sampling process

Step 1: Define population
Step 2: Determine sampling frame
Step 3: Select sampling method
Step 4: Determine sample size
Step 5: Select sample
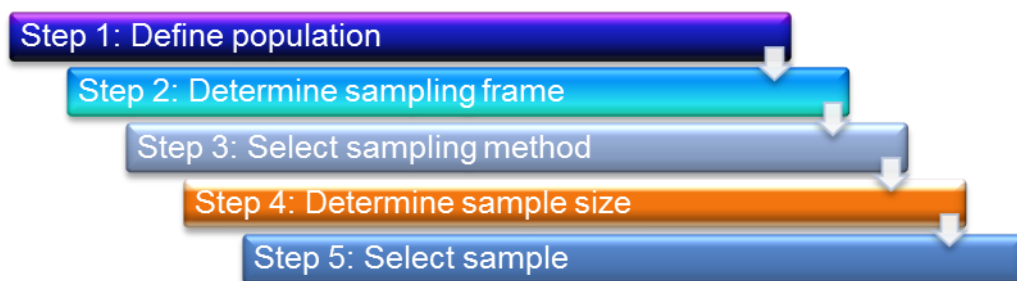
Source: Based on Stevens et al. (2006: 184)

3.4.1.1 Defining the target population

According to Wilson (2010: 188) and Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel and Page (2011: 165), the target population is the entire set of all elements relevant to the research project. Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau (2011) defined the characteristics of a target population. It is finite in size, i.e., at least theoretically, it can be counted, it has time restrictions, i.e., it exists within a specified time frame, and it is observable, i.e., it can be accessed. Defining clearly the target population is the first step in the sampling process. The defining of the population is not always straightforward and depends largely on the research questions and the context and background of the research project (Wilson 2010: 190). According to Stevens et al. (2006: 183), the target population consists of elements or objects which are available for selection during the sampling process and build the so called sampling unit. Therefore, the target group was formed out of the information, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Definition of the target population

Target population:	Employees from each of the 'SPSO's' offices, within South Africa and internationally
Elements:	Marketing Employees, Administrators, Director/ Partners, Consultant/ Advisors, Trainee Accountants, Bookkeepers, Managers
Units:	Marketing/ sales departments of the companies
Timeframe:	October – November 2011

Source: Based on Stevens et al. (2006: 183)

The Specific Professional Services Organisation 'SPSO' examined in this study was a large international multi-branch organisation within the financial services industry.

The target population used in this study were employees in managerial, middle and junior roles from the 'SPSO's' national offices based in Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town. Marketing representatives from the 'SPSO's' international offices were also included in the survey. The total population of respondents surveyed was 2000.

3.4.1.2 Determining the sampling frame

After defining the target population, the second step in the sampling process is to choose the sampling frame. A sampling frame is a comprehensive list of all the elements in the population from which the sample is drawn (Bryman and Bell 2007: 182; Churchill and Lacobucci 2009: 192; Sekaran and Bougie 2009: 267; Wilson 2010: 191; Hair et al. 2011: 167). Respondents were selected from the 'SPSO's' South African intranet email list as well as their international marketing contacts database which together constituted the sampling frame. The 'SPSO's' industry classification is that of a professional service provider.

3.4.1.3 Selecting the sampling method

Step three of the sampling process is to select an accurate sampling method. The various types of sampling techniques can be categorized on the basis of probability or non-probability sampling. By using a probability sampling method, every item of the target population has a known chance of being included in the researchers' actual sample (Wilson 2010: 194-197; Hair et al., 2011: 169-173). Non-probability

samples are any sampling techniques where the selection of the sample elements is not done by chance (Stevens et al. 2006: 188).

All 'SPSO' employees in the sampling frame were invited to participate in a closed ended quantitative survey. Therefore, the researcher attempted a census. As a result, the next step, due to the restriction that the participation was on a voluntary basis and, therefore, it was dependent on the actual willingness of the respondents to participate, was a self-selected sample.

Another source of respondents, whose comments are merely recorded here to support the findings of the study, were the members of a number of professional services marketing groups belonging to an internet based discussion forum called LinkedIn.com.

In both of the cases above, the results may have been influenced by self-selection bias by the sample.

3.4.1.4 Respondents – determining the sample size

The following step of the sampling process is to determine the sample size. According to Stevens et al. (2006: 191), the choice of sample size for non-probability samples is subjective. According to Sekaran (2010: 295) a population of 220 requires 140 for a good decision model. However, Wilson (2010: 202) quotes that a sample size should consist of at least 30 sampling units. Only 209 'SPSO' participants out of a population of 2000 'SPSO' employees responded to the questionnaire, out of which only 111 responses were completed in full – this was a 5.5% response rate. The 111 completed questionnaires were therefore accepted as the sample; 'the sample should be large enough so that there are 100 or more units in each category' (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1997: 17).

3.4.1.5 Executing the sampling process

The fifth and final step of the sampling process was to execute the sampling process. On the basis of the 'SPSO'S' intranet and email database, all employees were sent the survey.

Industry experts were also invited to submit their comments, on a public web-based platform called LinkedIn.com, to the open-ended qualitative question *"What factors do you believe influence the marketing of professional services?"*.

3.4.2 Data collection

The following section provides an overview of the data collection method and explains the one used for this research, specifies the data collection instrument design and presents the findings of the instrument testing in the form of a questionnaire pre-test and then a pilot study.

3.4.2.1 The data collection instrument – questionnaire design

In this section, the questionnaire design used in this research project is explained. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009: 197), a questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers. As Stevens et al. (2006: 134-135) state, the reliability and validity of a questionnaire is dependent on the way the questions were planned, constructed, and executed. Table 3.2 provides the structure of the closed-ended statements asked according to predetermined categories (refer to Appendix B for questions asked in this quantitative questionnaire).

Table 3.2: Structure of closed-ended statements according to category

Category	Closed-ended statements
Strategy	Numbers 1 – 5
Product/ Service	Numbers 6 – 7
Price	Numbers 8 – 9
Place	Numbers 10 – 12
Promotion	Numbers 13 – 14
Physical Evidence	Numbers 15 – 17
People	Numbers 18 – 24
Process	Numbers 25 – 31
Other	Numbers 32 – 34

The questionnaire started with a letter of information and consent providing the respondents with the necessary overview about the meaning of the research and explained what was expected of them. It consisted of closed-ended questions divided up into categories. Statements were provided about certain factors influencing the marketing of professional services – the respondent could agree, remain uncertain or

disagree with the statements using a Likert scale. Maranell (1974: 231) observes how the Likert attitude scale was developed to be used as a tool in order to measure attitudes. The typical attitudes measured in a Likert scale study can be political, economic, familial or religious.

Although strictly speaking Likert scales are ordinal data, they are often treated as interval data by marketing researchers (Kinnear and Taylor 1991: 257).

Each question had the facility for the respondent to add an open-ended comment should he/ she has any additional comments – this created a qualitative dynamic to the responses. Closed-ended questions were used to design this questionnaire because of their ease of administration and because the responses could be compared easily. For survey research, closed-ended questions are very popular, because they can be more easily processed than open-ended questions and provide a greater uniformity (Babbie 2010: 256). The instrument was developed from the review of the literature.

3.4.2.2 Testing of the data collection instrument

Before the main study was conducted, the data collection instrument was tested through a questionnaire pre-test to assess face validity. This took place between 20 April 2012 and 20 May 2012. The questionnaire was sent out to subject experts for their evaluation and to ensure that the questions asked were pertinent to the study's key objective. Webb (2002: 106-107) quotes Churchill (1991) when stating that "the questionnaire pre-test serves the same role in questionnaire design as test marketing serves in new product development". Webb (2002) also believes that the pre-test uncovers faults and gathers the right information before too much time and money has been spent on the study.

Following this, and once the recommended changes were in place, the pilot study took place between 10 June 2012 and 1 July 2012. Mackey and Gass (2005: 36) describe a pilot study as a small-scale trial of the proposed procedures, materials, and methods. They observe that the main purpose of conducting a pilot test is in order to test - often revise - and then finalise the materials and the methods of the study. A pilot test is used in order to identify problems, and to address them before

the main study is carried out. A pilot study is an important means of assessing the feasibility and relativity of the data collection methods and thus making any necessary revisions before they put into practice with the research participants. The questionnaire was sent out to nine Trainee Accountants from the 'SPSO' which was completed in full by all respondents.

The respondents for the pilot study and for the main survey were drawn from the same population. The wording and general appearance were tested through face validity by the supervisor and co-supervisor as well as by professional services marketing experts and required no changes. Cronbach's Alpha revealed, an overall, acceptable reliability (see Table 3.3). According to Gliem and Gliem (2003: 87), as a rule of thumb, results of alpha > .7 are acceptable, alpha > .8 are good, and alpha > .9 are excellent.

Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics of the pilot study

	Reliability Statistics	
Question Category	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Number of Items**
Strategy	-0.846	5
Product/ Service	0.421	2
Price	-1.4	2
Place	0.677	3
Promotion	0.77	2
Physical Evidence	0.476	3
People	0.441	7
Process	0.769	7
Other	-0.462	3
Overall	**0.783**	**34**

Due to the unacceptable nature of these Cronbach's Alpha statistics obtained from the pilot study, specific corrections were made.

3.4.2.3 The data collection administration method

The quantitative data collection method used for this research project was an online survey. According to Babbie (2010: 283), surveys which involve the use of the Internet are an increasingly popular method of survey research and it has become especially popular in marketing research. There are different forms of online surveys. They can either be conducted completely via e-mail or via a website. As done in this

study, potential respondents commonly receive an e-mail asking them to go to a web link to complete the survey online. Online surveys are, especially compared to conventional postal surveys, less costly. As Smith, Kisiel and Morrison (2009: 25) state, online surveys have advantages in efficiency, availability, and presentation which prompted the researcher to choose this method to conduct the survey.

For this research project, the questionnaire was sent out via e-mail to the identified targets with an introductory letter inviting them to participate in the study and informing them of their privacy rights and right to decline.   A second, follow-up mailing was done to increase the response rate. The data gathering took place between 6 July 2012 and 1 August 2012.

The qualitative data collection method used was follow up feedback arising from the open-ended survey comments as well as comments recorded off LinkedIn.com.

3.4.3 Data analysis

The next section provides an overview of the editing and cleaning of the data, the data entry process and the statistical techniques used to analyse the data.

3.4.3.1 Data editing / cleaning

The data gathered from the questionnaire was edited and cleaned to verify that the data values were correct and to detect and remove errors and inconsistencies from data in order to improve the quality of data (Rahm and Do 2000: 1).

Of the 209 questionnaires received, only 111 were suitable for use in this study. This was due to the fact that the remaining 98 questionnaires were either incomplete or the respondent declined the relevant terms and conditions and thus was automatically precluded from competing the rest of the survey.

3.4.3.2 Data entry

After editing and cleaning, the data was entered into SPSS version 20.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The data collected from the responses was analysed using SPSS and presented in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures.

3.4.3.3 Statistical techniques of data analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to organise and summarise the results of the quantitative data gained through the questionnaire. Charts and tables were used to present the results in a manageable form (Babbie 2010: 467). The univariate analysis of this study was made using SPSS to do a simple frequency distribution. Gravetter and Wallnau (2008: 37) explain that frequency distributions organize the number of variables in each category on the scale of measurement in a table. According to Royse, Thyer and Padgett (2009: 345), with univariate analysis, properties of single variables are investigated. Bar charts were used to present variations in and between variables. Furthermore, the researcher used pie charts to summarise and represent different data sets (Willemse 2009: 29-35). In addition, bivariate analyses were done to determine the empirical relationship between two variables simultaneously (Babbie 2010: 437). Therefore, cross-tabulation was used to summarise the data in two-way frequency or contingency tables, i.e., to show whether there is an association between the variables (Willemse 2009: 28).

Factor analysis was done additionally to identify underlying variables, or factors, which explain the pattern of correlations within a group of independent variables (Maier 2007: 513). The main goal of this statistical technique is data reduction. The principle component analysis was used as the extraction method, and the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. This is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. It simplifies the interpretation of the factors. The loading shows inter-correlations between components (Walker and Maddan 2008: 334-336).

As Mendenhall, Beaver and Beaver (2009: 4) state, inferential statistics use procedures to draw conclusions and make predictions about characteristics of a population from information contained in a sample. The chi-square test was used to test the independence of two factors. According to Lind, Marchal and Mason (2004: 347), a statement of significance is needed when reporting a result. The p-value is generated from a test statistic and if a result is significant, it is indicated with "$p < 0.05$". According to Willemse (2009: 198), a chi-square test for independence evaluates statistically significant differences between proportions for two or more groups in a data set.

3.5 The qualitative research design

The primary qualitative element of this study involved the collection and analysis of the open-ended comments/ feedback submitted by the respondents obtained through the questionnaire of the quantitative part of this research study.

Another qualitative element of this study was the recording of answers to open-ended questions off the web-based social forum, Linkedin.com.

3.5.1 The qualitative sampling and data collection process

The selected sampling method for the qualitative part of this research project was a non-probability sample. Probability samples are any sampling techniques where the selection of the sample elements is done by chance (Stevens et al. 2006: 188).The selection of the cases for the sample was done according to the elected open-ended response/s by the respondent and thus was totally uncontrollable.

According to Gratton and Jones (2010: 168), the sample size for qualitative research is usually small with the purpose to generate rich data from this small group. This is confirmed by Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 84) who state that qualitative samples are usually small in size. The participants of the survey, who had interest in further discussing or commenting on certain aspects of the survey with the researcher, had the opportunity to leave their contact details at the end of the questionnaire. In total, 11 participants showed further interest in being contacted by the researcher. All of these respondents were contacted by the researcher through email, asking for their further input. (Please refer to Appendix C for the structure of this email).

The validity of this new construct was determined by:
- Experts in the field
- The SPSO's Marketing Director
- The 7P Model
- Issues arising from theoretical framework

In an attempt to get a broader view of the current market's perspective on factors influencing the marketing of professional services today and in support of the findings

of the study, open-ended comments submitted by members of a number of professional services marketing groups belonging to an Internet based discussion forum called LinkedIn.com were reviewed. The comments recorded were all in response to the following question posed: *"What factors do you believe influence the marketing of professional services?".*

A number of marketing professionals commented on this topic, the results of which are revealed in chapter four and Appendix E.

3.6 Validity, credibility and reliability

The external validity indicates if the findings and results of the study can be generalized (Bryman and Bell 2007: 41-42). Due to the limitations of the study (section 3.8), generalization of the results could not be conducted with any confidence.

In order to increase the credibility of this study, face validity was assessed by distributing the questionnaire to the 'SPSO's' marketing management as well as to external subject experts to ensure that the questions asked were pertinent to the objectives at hand. Further credibility was established by the fact that only employees who had worked for the SPSO for six months or more were permitted to participate in the survey. This ensured that the respondents answering the questions had sufficient exposure to, and knowledge of, the SPSO's marketing practices and could comment knowledgably thereon.

Method triangulation was also performed by comparing the findings of all quantitative and qualitative methods (Hair et al.2011: 289).

Reliability indicates that a specific research study will obtain the same results if it is repeated or undertaken by different researchers (Wiid and Diggines 2009: 7). A test for the reliability of the responses to the questionnaire was done with Cronbach's Alpha. According to Andrew, Pederson and McEvoy (2011: 202), Cronbach's Alpha indicates how well a set of variables measures a single, unidimensional latent construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value will be high when the correlations between the respective questionnaire items are high.

The actual reliability statistics for the main study are presented in Table 4.1.

3.7 Limitations

This academic research study had a few limitations:

- This a newly created construct.

- The results of this case study relate specifically to the 'SPSO' being examined. Only a limited number of people were interviewed within 'SPSO' locally and internationally and therefore may not be fully representative of all 'SPSO' offices world-wide. These findings may also not apply to any other professional service organisations in South Africa and internationally.

- The sample size was drawn through a step-wise non-probability, purposive sampling technique, so that the actual sample size was dependent on the judgement of the researcher. Consequently, a generalization of the findings and results of the main study to the whole population could not be provided. In addition, the qualitative findings of the study were limited by the participant's willingness to interact with, and provide further input to, the researcher.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the research design and methodology of this study. The different types of research, the questionnaire design process and the different sampling techniques for the quantitative part of this research were demonstrated.

The chapter closed with the limitations of the study.

The next chapter will present the findings and discussion of the main study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an overview of the research methodology used from this study. Chapter four presents the research findings obtained from empirical research in this study. The data collected from the responses was analysed using SPSS version 20.0. The results will be presented in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures.

The findings of the quantitative and the qualitative research will be discussed. Finally, conclusions of all the results will be discussed.

4.2 Descriptive data analysis

This section will provide a short overview of the descriptive statistics based on the demographic information of the study. This involves the location data of the specific professional services organisation 'SPSO' as well as the designations of the respondents.

4.2.1 Organisation location data

This section presents an overview about the different office locations in which the respondents of the 'SPSO' were based, followed by the different designations held by each respondent represented in the study.

Figure 4.1 shows the different office locations in which the respondent operate. The majority of the South African respondents (34.8%) are situated in Johannesburg, whilst the smallest grouping came from Cape Town (11%). This is an accurate representation seeing that the 'SPSO's' Johannesburg office is the largest sample of the population comprising 376 staff members while the Cape Town office comprises only 77. Whilst the study is based on the trends of the 'SPSO' within South Africa it is also interesting to note the input received from their international offices (16%) comprising locations such as; Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Hong Kong, Israel, Kenya, Latvia, Minsk, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Figure 4.2: 'SPSO' office locations
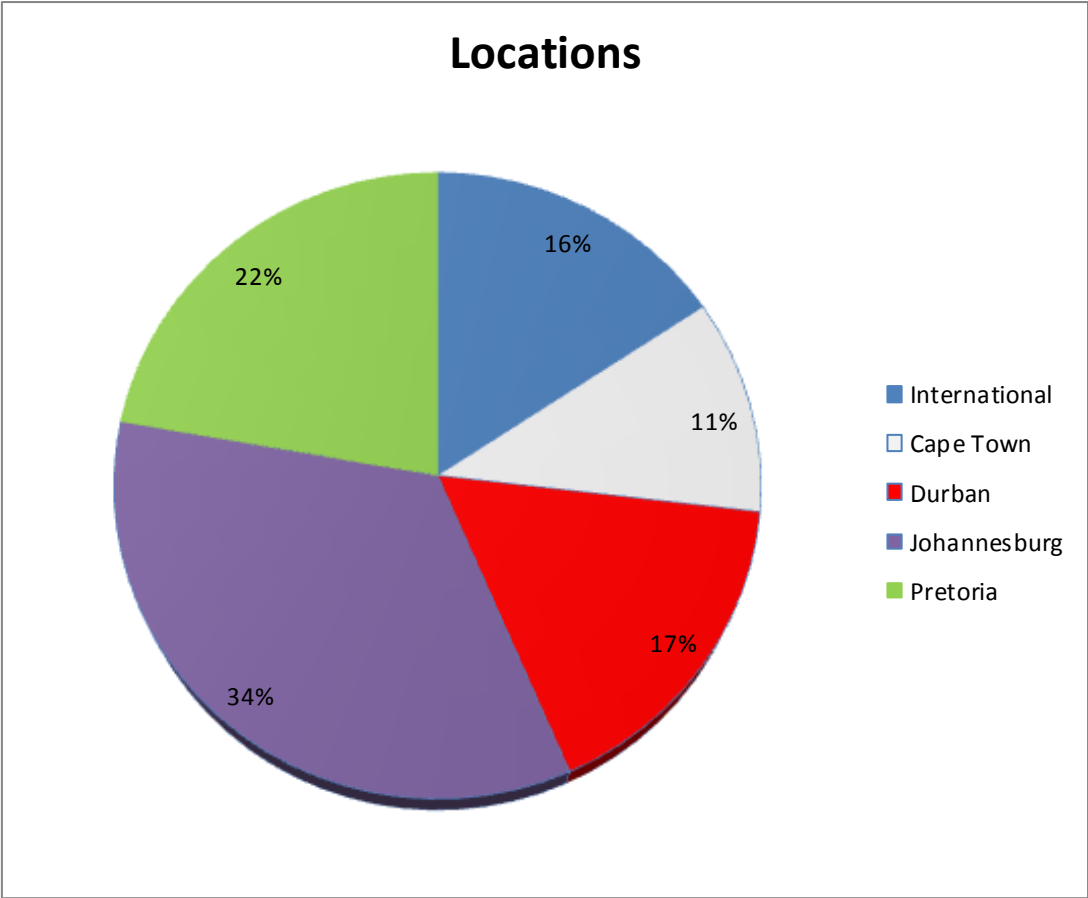
The results show that the respondents are spread across many locations locally and internationally but predominantly within South Africa. This means that the results of the research study focus predominantly on trends within the South African market.

4.2.2 Information about the respondents

This section summarizes the demographic data, such as designation within the 'SPSO'. A pie chart is used to present the results.

Employees from varying levels of responsibility within the 'SPSO' contributed towards this study by responding to the survey. Managers and trainee accountants formed the largest grouping of the respondents (18% each). Directors/ partners accounted for 17% and administrators made up 14% of the respondents. Consultants/ advisors comprised 12% while marketing employees and bookkeepers made up 8% and 7% respectively. The respondents identified as n/a (6%) did not indicate their designation in the survey (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.3: Designations of respondents
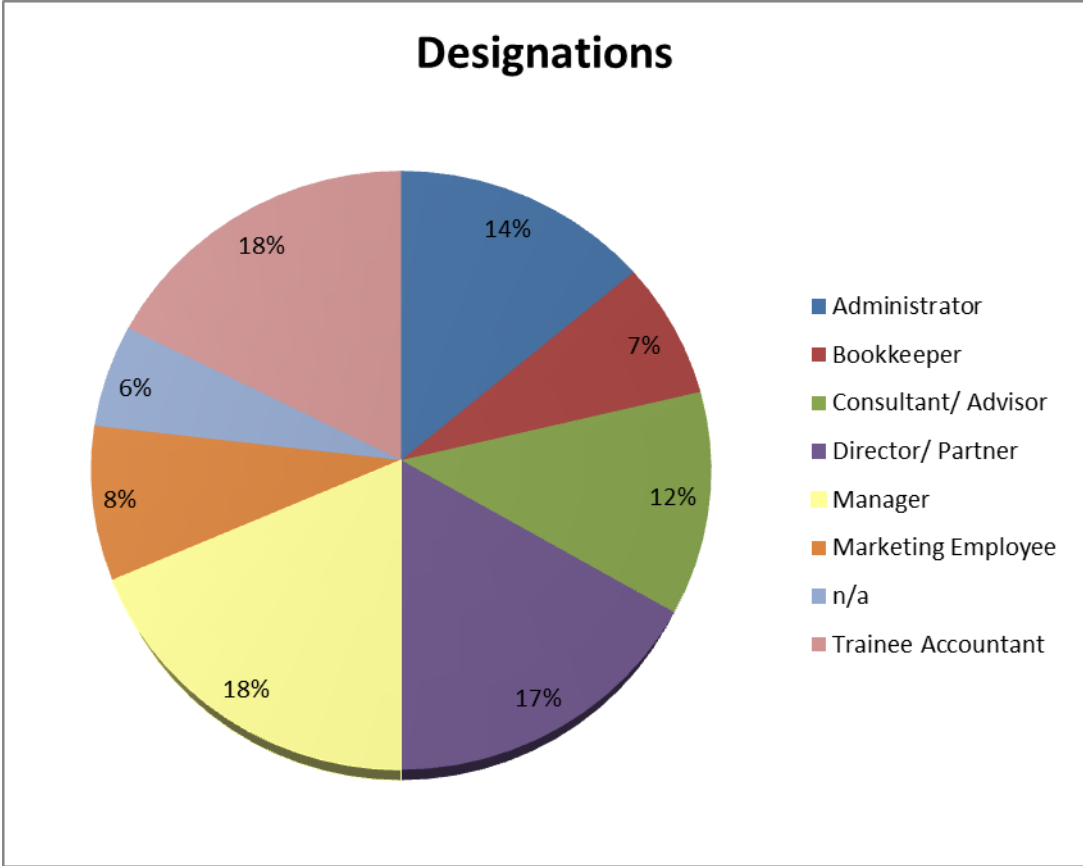
The results show that the respondents represent a variety of levels of hierarchy within the 'SPSO' and are evenly distributed in response rates. This means that the results of the research study represent views from employees at varied levels within the organisation with a relatively even representation from each designation group. The findings are thus not unique to any specific level in the organisation. Overall it can be concluded that the sample is reasonably representative of the population.

4.3 Factors influencing professional services marketing

The next section provides an overview of the results for the various factors influencing the marketing of professional services. These factors are divided according to pre-determined categories which correspond to findings from the theoretical framework.

Tables are used to present reliability as well as the univariate analysis to show the simple frequency distribution of the results for each section.

4.3.1 Reliability

The two most important aspects of precision are reliability. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as "acceptable" (Gliem and Gliem, 2003: 87).

Various categories of statements were tested for reliability. The results are presented in the Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Reliability scores of categories

Category	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategy	.657
Product/ Service	.510
Price	-
Place	.577
Promotion	.634
Physical Evidence	.538
People	.518
Process	.751
Other	.558
Overall	**.864**

The overall reliability score for the various sections that comprise this construct is 0.864. This is greater than the acceptable value of 0.70. Some of the individual sections fall below the acceptable value. The primary reasons for this are that the construct is newly developed, having improved on the pilot version, and that two sections had only two factors comprising them. It is an opportunity for improvement of the model in future research.

4.4 Discriminant Analysis

A discriminant factor analysis was performed to determine whether the questions that constituted the different factors influencing the marketing of professional services loaded along one or more factors. This means, did the questions (variables) that constituted these components actually measured the component, e.g., if the components measured what they were meant to measure? If there was a mixing of the factors, the components split along themes which were then grouped into appropriate categories. Certain components divided into finer components. This is explained in Table 4.2 through the rotated component matrix.

Table 4.2: Rotated component mix

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT	
Strategy	**1**	**2**
There are specific marketing strategies in place to acquire and maintain your organisations' target market.	.811	.061
The marketing department plays a significant role in the formulation of your organisations' business strategy.	.764	-.261
Your organisations' marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management.	.848	.163
Marketing Brainstorming sessions within your organization produce useful measurable outcomes.	.642	.043
Senior management should be complemented by younger, more innovative members to encourage more contemporary thinking on the running of the business.	.037	.974

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT
Product/ Service	**1**
Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	.821
Client centric behaviour and service excellence are a priority in your organisation.	.821

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT
Price	**1**
Your organisations' fees are in line with your competitors and relevant in the current economic climate.	.708
Price cutting to match competitor quotes is common practice within your organisation.	.708

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT
Place	**1**
The current location of your organisations' offices creates a positive image of your organisation to outsiders.	.798
Your professional personnel are mobile (as opposed to office-based) i.e. they take the service to the client.	.609
Your office is situated in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market.	.792

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT
Promotion	**1**
Management decisions and campaigns originating at the top of your organisation are communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of your organisation effectively.	.859
Your organisation has a functional and effective client management programme is in place.	.859

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT
Physical Evidence	**1**
The corporate visual identity and brand of your organisation are adhered to and portrayed by every employee.	.737
Your office design and working environment reflect a positive image for your organisation.	.656
Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.	.773

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT	
People	**1**	**2**
There is too much emphasis on cost to organisation when hiring marketing staff rather than on their relevant qualifications and experience.	-.090	-.549
Marketing is viewed as everyone's role in your organisation.	-.305	.780
There is currently an adequate staff complement in the marketing department of your organisation in order to achieve set goals.	.635	.333
Marketing personnel within your organisation have qualifications relevant to their current roles/ designations.	.800	-.060
Marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions within your organisation.	.328	.637
Your organisation offers its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.	.803	.123
Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	.387	.614

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT		
Process	1	2	3
Marketing management interacts well with management in other departments within your organisation.	.799	.111	-.287
The marketing department understands the requirements and limitations of other departments within your organisation when planning a marketing campaign.	.812	.109	-.248
The limitations and short-comings of other regions' offices within your organisation tend to hamper the marketing effectiveness within your own office.	-.035	-.045	.906
Marketing decisions are made without unnecessary delay and bureaucratic 'red tape'.	.692	.037	.309
Technological systems work well in your organization to facilitate marketing processes	.015	.936	.015
Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	.505	.597	-.111
Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.	.687	.187	.327

FACTOR/ ELEMENT	COMPONENT
Other	1
The marketing budget is the first area affected in times of financial difficulty within your organisation, regardless of marketing's relevance and effectiveness.	.806
Marketing a professional services organization is very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated.	.624
Your organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are not compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	.747

A typical factor analysis was utilised, where the researcher wished to represent a number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors. With reference to the tables above:

- The principle component analysis was used as the extraction method, and the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. This is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. It simplifies the interpretation of the factors.
- Factor analysis/loading show inter-correlations between variables.
- Items of questions that loaded similarly imply measurement along a similar factor. An examination of the content of items loading at or above 0.5 (and using the higher or highest loading in instances where items cross-loaded at greater than this value) effectively measured along the various components.

It is noted that the factors that constituted the components of **Product/ Service**, **Price**, **Place**, **Promotion**, **Physical Evidence** and **Other** loaded correctly along one factor. This means that the statements (variables) that constituted these components correctly measured the component. That is, the component measured what it was that was meant to be measured.

However, the other three components (**Strategy**, **People** and **Process**) have factors that overlap, indicating a mixing of the factors. This means that the statements in the

overlapping components did not specifically measure what they set out to measure or that the component split along sub-themes. One possibility is that respondents did not clearly distinguish between the questions constituting the components. This was highly likely due to the fact that the respondents were unable to distinguish what the questions were measuring i.e. these factors headings were not made evident in the questionnaire.

4.4.1 Suggested sub-themes

As a result of the overlapping of the above-mentioned factors, the researcher suggests that these components were split into the sub-themes seen in Table 4.3.

Table: 4.3: Identified sub-themes

Component/ factor	Sub-theme		
	1	2	3
Strategy	Marketing Strategy	Firm Strategy	
People	Marketing Employees	People Management	
Process	Marketing Process	Technology Process	Inter- departmental Process

4.4.1.1 Strategy

The suggested sub-themes regarding strategy are discussed below:

a. <u>Marketing strategy</u> – the first three questions were answered by respondents in regard to the marketing strategy of the firm. This is supported by some of the more qualitative comments provided such as "Do not have insight in marketing strategies" and "Need to invest in a good marketing strategy.

b. <u>Firm strategy</u> – the fourth question was answered by respondents with more reference to the firm's overall management. This is supported by qualitative comments such as "Our senior management has younger members which contribute significantly and really represent the trainees and the business".

4.4.1.2 People

The suggested sub-themes regarding people are discussed below:

a. <u>Marketing employees</u> – for these questions and this topic there were certain respondents who interpreted the theme as referring exclusively to the marketing personnel. This is supported by qualitative comments such as "With more qualified marketing professionals, we can achieve a lot more in marketing".

b. People management – the balance of the responses to the questions on this topic refer mainly to how people/ employees within the firm are managed (not specifically marketing personnel). This is supported by qualitative comments such as "Top management positions (management team) are achievable".

4.4.1.3 Process

The suggested sub-themes regarding process are discussed below:

a. Marketing process – in this instance the respondents interpreted the questions as referring to merely the marketing process within the firm. This is supported by qualitative comments such as "Marketing decides on a campaign and runs with it"

b. Technology process – another theme interpreted within these questions is that of the technology process within the firm. This is supported by qualitative comments such as "can make better use of technology".

c. Inter-department/ office process – a third theme interpreted in this line of questioning is that of how the different departments/ offices interact. This is supported by qualitative comments such as "There is little or no planning around various departments' limitations".

4.5 Univariate analysis

The figures below indicate the scoring patterns of the respondents for the variables that constitute the different (original) categories.

4.5.1 Strategy

This section examines different factors influencing the overall marketing strategy of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are low. Hence, the prominent options are between levels of agreement and uncertainty, as can be seen in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Respondent scores: Strategy
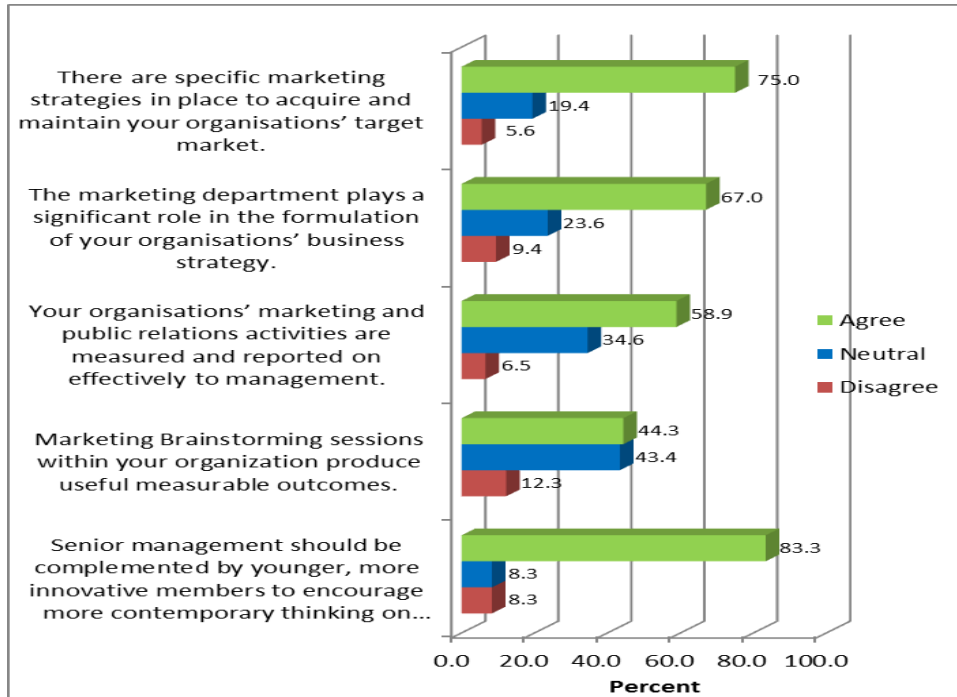
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.3 are as follows:

- Respondents were in strong agreement with the first and last statements. Younger managers complimenting senior managers (83.3%);

- the effect of marketing strategies (75.0%) were considered as important strategies for achieving success;

- approximately two-thirds of the respondents (67.0%) believed that the marketing department played an important role in the success of their organisation;

- a little less than 60% agreed that marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management and;

- approximately the same number of respondents (+/-44.0%) agreed or were uncertain, regarding the effectiveness of brainstorming sessions.

Qualitative comments recorded from respondents to support these findings are quoted below:

- "They however need more funding in this area as any good organisation knows; to invest in a good marketing strategy."

- "Our Senior Management has younger members which contribute significantly and really represent the trainees and the business."

These findings highlight Nagdeman's (2009: 14) belief that a key challenge for management is to provide innovative leadership that replaces the status quo and creates a culture of opportunity.

Clow and Stevens' (2009: 76-77) state that professional service organisations, in today's turbulent environment, must know how to read their clients' needs. They must also be able to attract relevant resources, and utilise these resources to develop programs, services, and strategies that will acquire and maintain clients.

4.5.2 Product/ Service

This section examines different factors influencing the overall marketing product (in this case service) of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are low, as can be seen in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Respondent scores: Product/ service
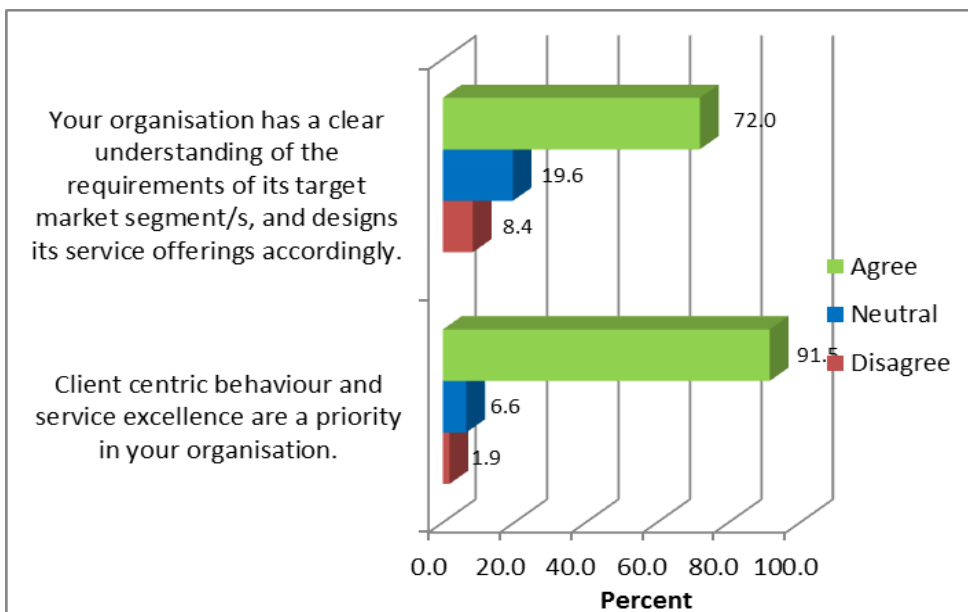
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.4 are as follows:

- Respondents were in strong agreement with both these statements. Both client centric behaviour and service excellence (91.5%) and having an understanding of target market segment/s and;

- (72.0%) were considered as important factors with regard to the 'SPSO''s product/ service offering.

Qualitative comments recorded from respondents to support these findings are quoted below:

- "For the most important segments, we have a moderate to good understanding. Nevertheless we launched a new programme to listen better to our clients. Some new niches require additional research."

- "Agreed, but it also seems to be fee driven"

These findings highlight Tuomivirta's (2009: 13) belief that the most important consideration with regard to professional service marketing is to understand how clients make the decision to choose a service provider. Similarly, organisations have the objective of meeting and exceeding the expectations of clients by providing value-adding services, through appropriate communication, at the right location, and thereby generating sufficient appropriate revenue as a result (Clow and Stevens, 2009: 80). Furthermore Nagdeman (2009: xxii) believes that the market place is becoming increasingly segmented. Consequently the successful marketing of a financial services organisation's offerings is increasingly dependent upon an ability to understand and appeal to the psycho-economic and demographic elements of discrete market segments.

In order to succeed in its business mission a professional services provider must formulate a service package that satisfies the needs and requirements of its target market and furnishes those services in a manner that provides value and satisfaction to the client (Kotler, Hayes and Bloom 2002: 9).

4.5.3 Price

This section examines the different factors influencing the pricing strategy of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to given statements. The analysis done on these factors indicates that there is a level of agreement and uncertainty, as can be seen in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Respondent scores: Pricing
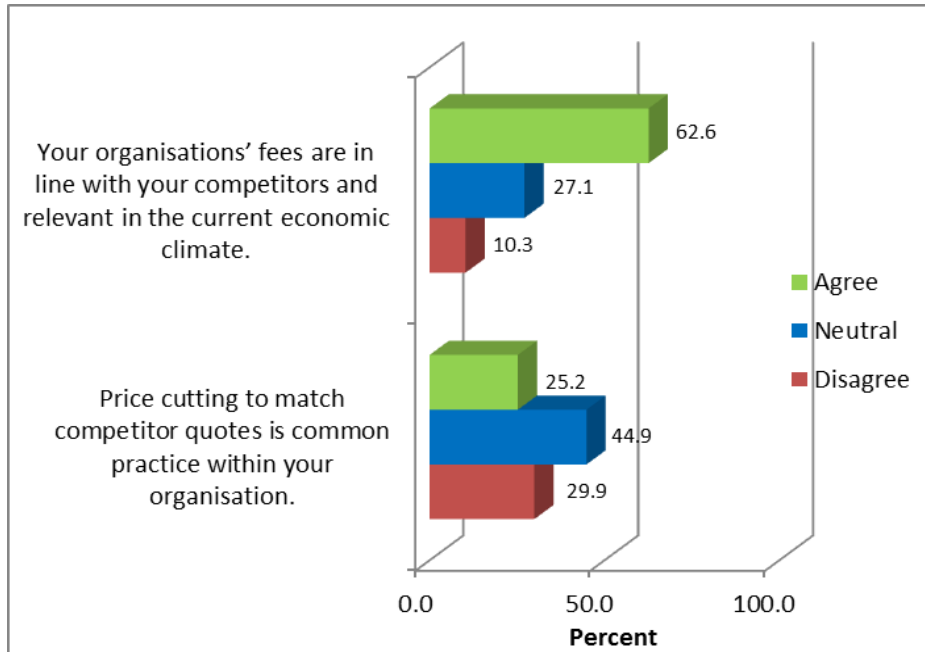
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.5 are as follows:

- Respondents were in relative agreement with the first statement that the organisation fees are in line with competitors (62.6%) and;

- the statement regarding the 'SPSO''s price cutting tactics was met with uncertainty (44.9%) responding neutrally.

 Qualitative comments recorded from respondents to support these findings are recorded below:

- "The big 4 which are our largest competition's fees are still much higher."

- "It depends on the situation and target client."

These findings highlight McConnel (1968), Olander (1970) and Zeithamls' (1981) view cited in Yelkur (2000: 111-113) that price becomes a pivotal quality indicator in situations where other information is not freely available to help the customer evaluate a service proposition - it is therefore essential that the service provider engage in competitive pricing. This also emphasises Kotler, Hayes, and Blooms' (2002: 405-414) belief that there needs to be more focus on cost-savings: organisations must continuously refine the quality of their deliverables whilst maintaining price competitiveness and accessibility. Furthermore, Reid (2008: 379) believes that an increase in market players and growing levels of price-based competition create a more dynamic and less profitable market place.

4.5.4 Place

This section examines different factors influencing the place or location of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are low, as can be seen in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: Respondent scores: Place
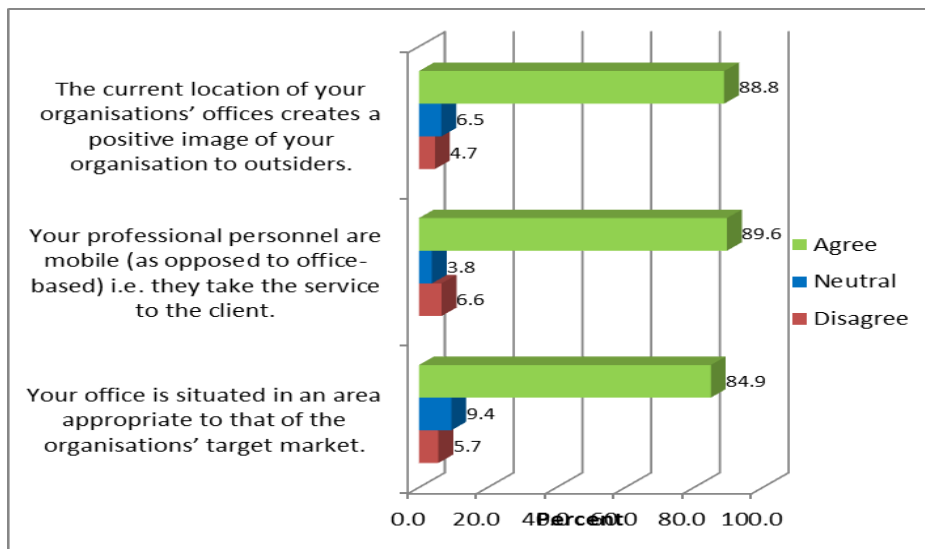
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.6 are as follows:

- Respondents were in strong agreement with all three of these statements, namely that the personnel are mobile (89.6);
- the current location of the 'SPSO' reflects a positive image (88.8%) and;
- the respondents' office location correctly positioned for the relevant target market (84.9%).

A qualitative comment recorded from a respondent is quoted below:

- "The new building definitely is very visible."

These findings highlight the fact that professional services cannot be inventoried for the same reason (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry 1985) as cited in Yelkur (2000: 111-113). Thus, the provider organisation may be assisted in this regard by operating multisite locations (Carman and Langeard 1980; Langeard et al. 1981; Upah 1980) thereby making its services more accessible to its users. Should the service provider locate itself in a remote or inaccessible location regardless of other considerations, customers are unlikely to be motivated to use the service. These organisations have the objective of meeting and exceeding the expectations of

clients by providing value-adding services, through appropriate communication, at the right location, and thereby generating sufficient appropriate revenue as a result (Clow and Stevens 2009: 80). Should the service provider locate itself in a remote or inaccessible location regardless of other considerations, customers are unlikely to be motivated to use the service (Carman and Langeard 1980; Langeard et al. 1981; Upah 1980).

4.5.5 Promotion

This section examines different factors influencing the promotion of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are relatively low, as can be seen in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Respondent scores: Promotion
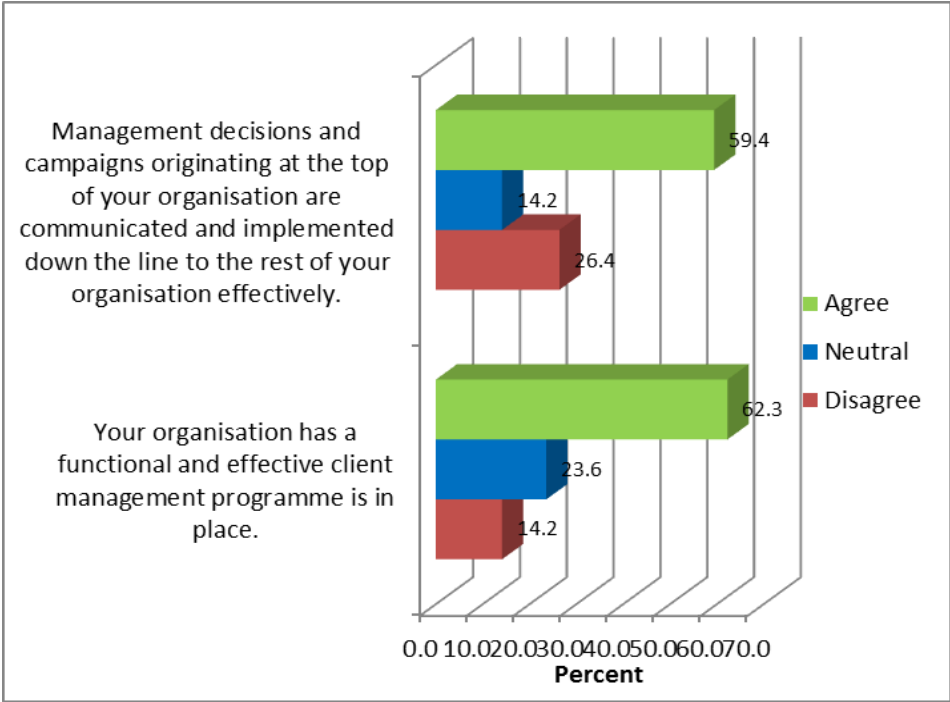
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.7 are as follows:
- Respondents were in relative agreement with these two statements, namely the effective communication of management decisions to employees (59.4%);
- having a functional client management programme in place (62.3) and;
- the latter statement received (23.6%) a neutral response.

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Qualitative comments recorded from a respondent to support these findings are recorded below:

- "We are informed daily of strategies and get mails about new clients / possibility of new clients."

- "Agreed, although we have to fine tune it."

These findings highlight Ridley's (2008: 363) statement that the marketing strategy must be communicated throughout the organisation. Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 26-33) reiterate this by suggesting that an organisation must endeavour to ensure that management and employees are in agreement when it comes to planning communication strategies.

Clow and Stevens (2009: 76-77) believe that strategic value may be gained from a marketing initiative by objectively analysing the information flowing from the marketing process, recognising both positive and less favourable feedback from client response. Further to this, Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 14-19) maintain that anxiety can be reduced by assuring the client that his or her choice was the correct one. Three methods of providing this assurance are; client education, follow-up surveys, and providing guarantees.

4.5.6 Physical Evidence

This section examines different factors influencing the physical evidence of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are low, as can be seen in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Respondent scores: Physical evidence
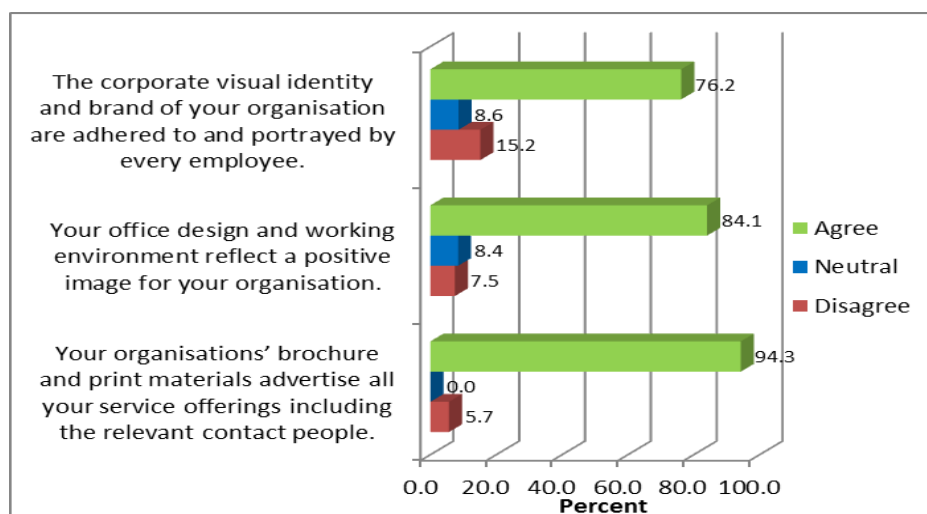
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.8 are as follows:

- Respondents were in strong agreement with all three of these statements, namely having an efficient organisational brochure (94.3);

- an office design reflecting a positive image about the organisation (84.1%) and;

- the adherence to the 'SPSO''s corporate visual identity regulations (84.9%). Qualitative comments recorded from a respondent to support these findings are recorded below:

- "To the best of our ability, we police the CVI, however there are still employees that do not adhere to it. Stricter measures need to be put in place."

- "Just some of the divisions and cities have a representative office compared to our positioning in the market. More representative and more brand focused work environments should be implemented to reflect our position to our employees and clients, contacts, etc."

These findings highlight Hoffman and Batesons' (2010: 191-193) advice that an organisation's capacity is indicated through physical evidence. Furthermore, the physical evidence of the provider organisation, such as environmental décor and apparel, may significantly influence the customer's expectations of the service offered. As professional service offerings can generally not readily be qualitatively advertised nor displayed for public viewing, service providers should be encouraged to create a conducive physical environment within their premises or where client contact occurs, thereby promoting favourable customer mind-set and perceptions.

Hoffman and Bateson (2010: 191-193) suggests the development of a quality organisation brochure.

Lagrosen (2005: 65) believes that in order to encourage active communication between staff and clients by listing the corporate email addresses of key employees on the organisation's website and in professional service brochures.

4.5.7 People

This section examines different factors influencing employees of the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement, uncertainty and agreement are varied. Hence, there are no evident options between the levels of agreement, uncertainty and disagreement, as can be seen in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9: Respondent scores: People
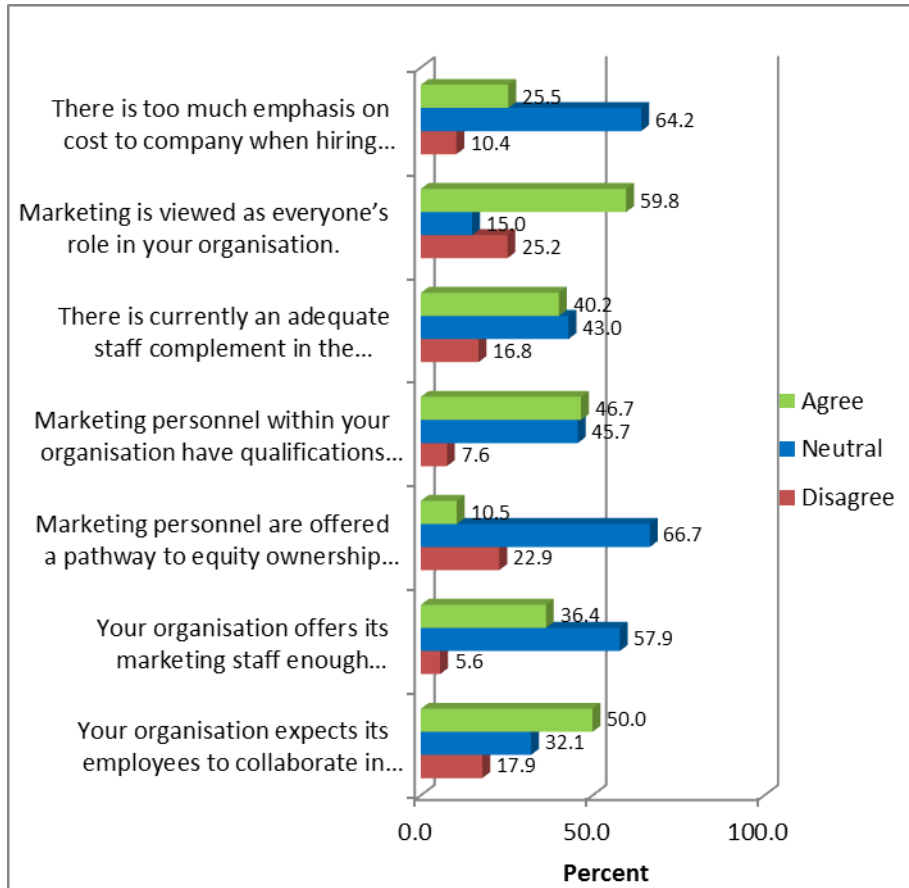
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.9 are as follows:

- Respondents were in agreement with the second and last statements, namely that marketing is viewed as everyone's role (59.8%);

- that the organisation expects its employees to participate in marketing initiatives (50.0%) were considered as important strategies in achieving success;

- a little less than 50% agreed and were uncertain that marketing employees have the relevant qualifications;

- approximately the same number of respondents (43.0%) where uncertain of the fact that there is an adequate staff compliment in the marketing department;

- a large proportion of respondents were uncertain whether the organisation offers marketing employees a pathway to equity ownership or top management (66.7%);

- of the emphasis on cost to organisation when hiring marketing staff (64.2%) and;

- as to whether the organisation offers marketing staff academic support (57.9%).

These findings highlight Kotler, Hayes, and Blooms' (2002: 60) suggestion that any professional service organisation could benefit by officially embracing marketing in some appropriate operational format. Furthermore, Forsyth (2003: 12) asserts that marketing can only be successful in a professional service organisation if it is unreservedly embraced by all employees and management.

4.5.8 Process

This section examines the different factors influencing the marketing process within the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are low. Hence, the prominent options are between levels of agreement and uncertainty, as can be seen in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: Respondent scores: Process

Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.10 are as follows:

- Respondents mostly in agreement with the first, second, fifth and sixth statements namely, that technological systems work well in facilitating the marketing process (65.1%);
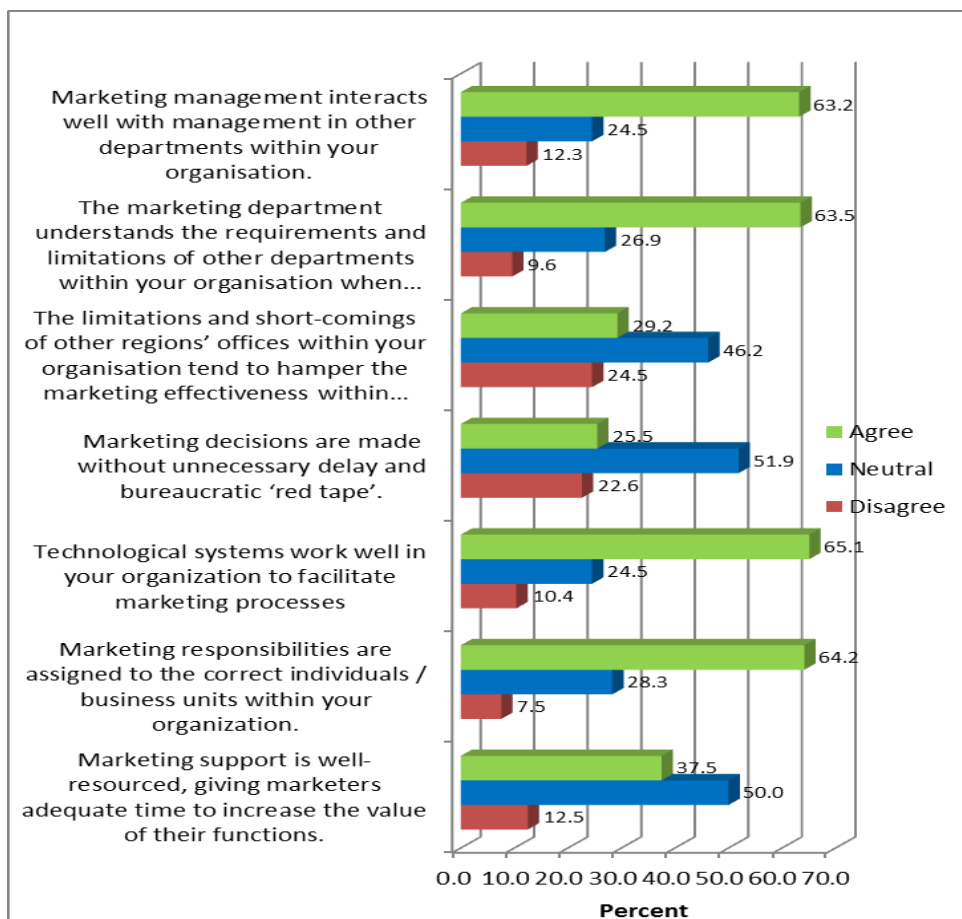
- that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals (64.2%);

- that the marketing department understands the requirements and limitations of other departments (63.5%);

- that marketing management interacts well with other departmental heads (63.2%); the balance of the statements was met with uncertainty as to whether marketing decisions are made without any delay or 'red tape' (51.9%);

- if marketing support is well-resourced (50.0%) and;

- whether the limitations of other offices hamper the marketing effectiveness of others (46.2%).

Qualitative comments recorded from a respondent to support these findings are recorded below respectively:

- "I think that we have a vast knowledge and skill base that is not utilised properly."

- "Technology systems like Maximiser, Maconomy and Survey Monkey are great."

These findings highlight Forsyth's' (2003: 11) observation that in order for professional services marketing to be successful, there must be interdependence between the elements and continuity within the marketing process. Furthermore, In the absence of effective leadership and control over a centralised marketing function, this may contribute to discord and dissension in large, more complex organisations, reducing effectiveness and efficiency as individual operating units (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 2-5). Clow and Stevens (2009: 34-35) believe that a key aspect of operational marketing management control lies in determining the extent and strategic value of information that should be invested into practitioners or managers to empower them to play an effective role in the marketing process.

Coviello, Brodie, and Munros' (2000: 523-45) belief that the marketer relies on information technology (possibly in the form of a database or the internet) to form a type of client relationship, thereby enabling the service provider to compete in a manner different from mass marketing. Furthermore, Gronroos (1978: 588-601) suggested that organisations can be expected to be increasingly protective of their proprietary technology and operating processes.

4.5.9 Other

This section examines 'other' factors influencing marketing within the 'SPSO' through the analysis of participants' responses to a given statement. The analysis done on these factors indicates that the levels of disagreement are mostly low. Hence, the prominent options are mostly between levels of agreement and uncertainty, as can be seen in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11: Respondent scores: Other
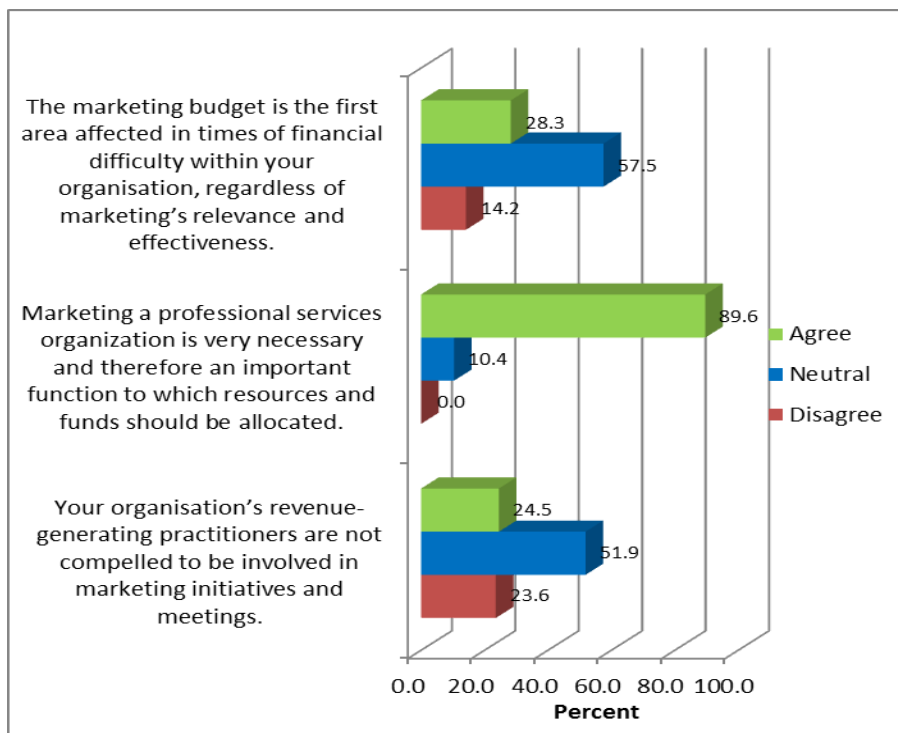
Analyses of participants' responses to given statements in Figure 4.11 are as follows:

- Respondents were in strong agreement with the second statement that marketing a professional services organisation is very necessary (89.6%);

- the first and last statements were met with uncertainty, as to whether the marketing budget is the first affected in times of financial difficulty (57.5%) and;

- whether the revenue-generating employees are compelled to become involved in marketing activities (51.9%).

A qualitative comment recorded from a respondent is quoted below:

- "Marketing is important especially in our market, with a high recession and a strong effect of the big four entering our markets and cutting the prices down..."

These findings highlight Day and Barksdales' (2003: 577) belief on how essential it is that professional service organisations adopt a marketing orientation with a view to strengthening their business growth strategy and increase the probability of winning prospective clients.

4.6 Correlations

Spearman's rho correlation was performed on the data in order to measure the strength of association between the variables (Healey 2012: 354). Positive values indicate a directly proportional relationship between the variables and a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. All significant relationships are indicated by a * (correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; 2-tailed) or ** (correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; 2-tailed). Refer to Appendix D for tables reflecting significant relationships.

Although Likert-type scales are technically ordinal scales, most researchers treat them as continuous variables and use normal theory statistics with them. Once two or more Likert or ordinal items are combined, the number of possible values for the composite variable begins to increase beyond 5 categories. Thus, it also is usual practice to treat these composite scores as continuous variables (Newsom 2013: 2).

Table 4.4 summarises the correlation results of the overall section relationships. Most of the significant values are positive, implying directly proportional relationships. Significant positive correlations can be noted between 'Place' & 'Product' (.527*), 'Promotion' & 'Product' (.641*), as well as 'Physical' & 'Product' (.492*) indicating that these relationships are consistent with the services marketing mix. Meanwhile, negative correlations such as 'Product' & 'Other' (-.111), 'Promotion' & 'Other' (-.246*), and 'People' & 'Other' (-.160) indicate non-significance and that 'Other' does not truly fall part of the traditional services marketing mix framework (the 7 P's).

Table 4.4: Correlations summary (Spearman's rho)

			Strategy	Product	Price	Place	Promotion	Physical	People	Process	Other
Spearman's rho	Strategy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000								
		Sig. (2-tailed)									
		N	108								
	Product	Correlation Coefficient	.380**	1.000							
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000								
		N	107	107							
	Price	Correlation Coefficient	.000	.293**	1.000						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.998	.002							
		N	107	107	107						
	Place	Correlation Coefficient	.262**	.527**	.195*	1.000					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.000	.045						
		N	107	107	107	107					
	Promotion	Correlation Coefficient	.413**	.641**	.285**	.395**	1.000				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003	.000					
		N	107	107	107	107	107				
	Physical	Correlation Coefficient	.403**	.492**	.213*	.558**	.455**	1.000			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.028	.000	.000				
		N	107	107	107	107	107	107			
	People	Correlation Coefficient	.257**	.319**	.226*	.149	.426**	.261**	1.000		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.001	.019	.126	.000	.007			
		N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107		
	Process	Correlation Coefficient	.437**	.411**	.128	.264**	.462**	.460**	.491**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.190	.006	.000	.000	.000		
		N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
	Other	Correlation Coefficient	.022	-.111	.007	.138	-.246*	.031	-.160	.001	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.821	.254	.946	.156	.011	.753	.100	.990	
		N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Open-ended discussion forum via social web-based platform

The following question was posed on a professional networking website called LinkedIn.com in June 2012: *"What factors do you believe influence the marketing of professional services?".*

Refer to Appendix E for all the responses recorded about this topic.

4.8 Notable findings

A number of notable findings from all the quantitative and qualitative feedback recorded by respondents were summarised.

Firstly, the outcomes recorded from the Spearman's rho correlations (refer to Appendix D) reflect interesting trends which can be observed in Table 4.5 below. This includes the factor group, the core statement regarding a factor; the correlation relationship (directly proportional/ inverse); any relevant literature corresponding to the correlation outcome; and any qualitative comment recorded by the 'SPSO' participant to support the finding/s. Comments from the LinkedIn.com respondents have been included here, where relevant, to support these findings.

This process of comparing the findings of all quantitative and qualitative methods utilised in the study to support an overall hypothesis is known as 'Method Triangulation' (Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel, and Page 2011: 289).

Table 4.5: Notable findings

Factor group	Core statement	Correlation relationship	Corresponding literature	Qualitative comment ('SPSO')	Qualitative comment (LinkedIn.com)
Strategy	The more marketing strategies that are used to acquire and maintain target markets….	….the more significant the role the marketing department will play in the formulation of the organisations' business strategy.	Clow and Stevens (2009: 12) hold compelling argument in favour of the introduction of marketing principles within service organisations' business strategies is to facilitate the definition and realisation of their business objectives.	"For the most important segments, we have a moderate to good understanding. Nevertheless we launched a new programme to listen better to our clients. Some new niches require additional research."	"More and more firms now have strategies for individual sectors which makes it much easier to have focus and relevancy for any marketing activity."
		….the more the organisation understands the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	Nagdeman (2009: xxii) believes that the market place is becoming increasingly segmented. Consequently the successful marketing of a professional services organisation is increasingly dependent upon an ability to understand and appeal to the psycho-economic and demographic elements of discrete market segments.		
Strategy	The more significant the role played by the marketing department in the formulation of the organisations' business strategy……	…..the clearer the organisations' understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s.	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 406) postulate that in the initial phase of professional service marketing a professional service organisation's marketing initiative (if any) was generally the domain of professional practitioners and partners, sometimes assisted by support personnel promoted from an administrative role to assist with events and social occasions	"In our office there is only 1 person (apart from directors) who is responsible for marketing."	"The biggest factor I have seen impede marketing in professional services firms is a reluctance/refusal on the part of the partners or business leaders to accept the marketing team's judgement on marketing matters."
		…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.			
Strategy	The more your organisations' marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management…..	…..the more useful and measurable the outcomes of marketing brainstorming sessions.	The cumulative result of marketing reports over an annual period constitutes vital information for the structuring of future control measures (Clow and Stevens 2009: 34-35)	"We communicate some of the progress, but can definitely toot our own horns a lot more"	"Consistency, measurement and making decisions based on facts instead of gut-feeling. Professional Services marketing stumbles quite frequently because it's not deliberate and consistent, and measurement of results against an objective are not reported back to the partners to help them understand what is and isn't working."
		….the easier and less delay in making marketing decisions.	Should there be indecisiveness on marketing matters there is likely to be a competitor around who will take advantage of this fact (Forsyth, 2003: 10).	"Campaigns are constantly being changed or stopped because of red tape"	"many firms' failures to stick to a plan and hold people accountable is often the death knell."
Strategy	The more useful and measurable the outcomes produced through marketing brainstorming	…..the clearer the organisations' understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s.	In order to succeed in its business mission a professional services provider must formulate a service package that satisfies the needs and requirements of its target market Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 9).	"Some of the target markets are investigated with Marketing, but not all"	"If fee-earners don't empathise with their clients' needs and concerns they can neither formulate an appropriate solution nor pitch it to them in a compelling way."

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	sessions within the organization…				
Strategy	The more the emphasis on a younger senior management structure….	…..more necessary the role played by marketing in the organisation.	Nagdeman's (2009: 14) belief that a key challenge for management is to provide innovative leadership that replaces the status quo and creates a culture of opportunity.	"Our Senior Management has younger members which contribute significantly and really represent the trainees and the business."	"The thing that I see that most sucessfully promotes professional services marketing is the existence of a young, dynamic executive leader (Managing Partner, CEO, Managing Principal, etc...) that has a vision and really does lead. These people make your job less difficult."
	The less the emphasis on a younger senior management structure….	…..the less pathways to equity ownership or top management positions offered to marketing person el.			
Product/ Service	The clearer the organisations' understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s….	…..the higher the priority regarding client centric behaviour and service excellence in the organisation.	Reid (2008: 379) believes that an increase in market players and growing levels of price-based competition create a more dynamic and less profitable market place.	"The big 4 which are our largest competition's fees are still much higher."	"CPAs are notoriously poor when it comes to nurturing relationships with clients/ contacts (at least that is how it is in most firms in India)."
		…..the more in line the organisations' fees are with its competitors.			
Product/ Service	The higher the priority regarding client centric behaviour and service excellence in the organisation…..	…..the more effective and functional the client management programme in place.	Organisations have the objective of meeting and exceeding the expectations of clients by providing value-adding services, through appropriate communication, at the right location, and thereby generating sufficient appropriate revenue as a result Clow and Stevens, (2009: 80).	"There is a client management program in place, although we have to fine tune it."	"Putting themselves in the client's/prospect's shoes when considering what their hot issues and concerns might be. By helping busy fee-earners (who, let's face it, are under extraordinary pressure to hit billing targets, quite apart from actually getting their work done) to see the world through the client's eyes"
		…..the more efficient the organisational brochure and print media.	Lagrosen (2005: 65) believes that in order to encourage active communication between staff and clients by listing the corporate email addresses of key employees on the organisation's website and in professional service brochures.	"It sometimes gives a general contact number, not a specific individual"	"I think we sometimes overlook another vital benefit that flows from being able to see things from the client's perspective though."
Price	…..the more in line the organisations' fees are with its competitors.	…..the more effective and functional the client management programme in place.	Organisations have the objective of meeting and exceeding the expectations of clients by providing value-adding services, through appropriate communication, at the right location, and thereby generating sufficient appropriate revenue as a result Clow and Stevens, (2009: 80).	"The big 4 which are our largest competition's fees are still much higher."	"While I agree that repeating what the competition does is not necessarily a bad thing if you can show results, it is still a tad bit less stimulating than customising an idea that you think might work. I tend to look at what marketing ideas work in other sectors and see if we can customise that in the accounting industry. Usually they are hard to customise, but still I learn a lot as a marketing professional."
		…..the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives.			
		….the better the understanding by the marketing department about the requirements and limitations of other departments when planning a campaign.	Clow and Stevens (2009: 34-35) believe that a key aspect of operational marketing management control lies in determining the extent and strategic value of information that should be invested into practitioners or managers to empower them to play an	"I think that we have a vast knowledge and skill base that is not utilised properly."	

			effective role in the marketing process.		
Place	The more positive the image created by the offices locations to outsiders….	…..the better the office design and working environment.	Hoffman and Bateson (2010: 191-193) advises that an organisation's capacity is indicated through physical evidence such as environmental décor and apparel, may significantly influence the customer's expectations of the service offered (Shostack 1977).	"Just some of the divisions and cities have a representative office compared to our positioning in the market. More representative and more brand focused work environments should be implemented to reflect our position to our employees and clients, contacts, etc."	"I believe the biggest factor that influences or impedes is the positioning of the firm. Well positioned firms are more focused and therefore more successful and more efficient in their marketing and BD efforts."
Place	The better situated the office in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market…..	…..the better the office design and working environment. …..the more effective and functional the client management programme in place.	The provider organisation may be assisted in this regard by operating multisite locations (Carman and Langeard 1980; Langeard et al. 1981; Upah 1980) thereby making its services more accessible to its customers.	"The new building definitely is very visible."	
Promotion	The more effectively the management decisions and campaigns are communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of the organisation…..	…..the better the portrayal and adherence to the corporate visual identity and brand of the organisation by employees.	Hoffman and Batesons' (2010: 191-193) communication guidelines include creating visual pathways that reflect the organisation's quality	"To the best of our ability, we police the CVI, however there are still employees that do not adhere to it. Stricter measures need to be put in place."	"Attitude in wanting to drive things on, imagination in seeing that there are new ways to communicate and influence and confidence in those recruited to deliver."
		…..the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives.	Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing as cited in Forsyth (2003: 11) maintains that professional service organisation's marketing must enjoy recognition and participation at all levels within the organisation.	"According to me, yes, we are expected to participate - according to the others - not sure"	"….an internal understanding of, internal interest in and internal desire to undertake marketing of professional services from a firm perspective are key. Without internal buy in firms marketing teams and their initiatives are fighting an uphill struggle before even considering taking something to market."
Promotion	The more functional and effective the client management programme in place…..	….the more marketing is viewed as everyone's role in the organisation. ….the better marketing management interacts with other departments in the organisation.	Young (2005: 31) is of the opinion that marketing has an important role within the professional services organisation.	"Specially in our market, with a high recession and a strong effect of the big four entering our markets and cutting their prices down"	"Helping busy fee-earners (who, let's face it, are under extraordinary pressure to hit billing targets, quite apart from actually getting their work done) to see the world through the client's eyes is, I think, the greatest value that marketing/BD professionals can add in a PS firm"
Physical Evidence	The more that the employees adhere to the organisations corporate visual identity and brand….	….the more efficient the organisational brochure. ….the easier and less delay in making marketing decisions.	Hoffman and Batesons' (2010: 191-193) advice that an organisation's capacity is indicated through physical evidence. Furthermore, the physical evidence of the provider organisation, such as environmental décor and apparel, may significantly influence the customer's expectations of the service	"It sometimes gives a general contact number, not a specific individual"	"Clients typically tend to not select accounting services upon perceived competence but instead rely to a much greater extent upon "feel" which, of course, is a highly personal filter."

				offered (Shostack 1977).	
Physical Evidence	The better the office design and working environment….	….the more efficient the organisational brochure and print media.	Hoffman and Batesons (2010: 191-193) advise that an organisation's capacity is indicated through physical evidence. Furthermore, the physical evidence of the provider organisation, such as environmental décor and apparel, may significantly influence the customer's expectations of the service offered (Shostack 1977).	"Just some of the divisions and cities have a representative office compared to our positioning in the market. More representative and more brand focused work environments should be implemented to reflect our position to our employees and clients, contacts, etc."	"Few people hire a lawyer from an ad or press release --marketing is designed to build name recognition and reputation, and to display skills."
Physical Evidence	The more effective the organisational brochure and print media….	…..the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives.	Lagrosen (2005: 65) believes that in order to encourage active communication between staff and clients by listing the corporate email addresses of key employees on the organisation's website and in professional service brochures.	"It sometimes gives a general contact number, not a specific individual"	"My belief that the most effective professional services/accounting practice marketing is personal in nature. This can be via networking, effectively mining for referrals, speeches & presentations, writing articles, "personalizing" your website, etc. With these techniques the service provider presents him or herself to prospects on a more human level and has a higher probability of connecting with them."
People	The less that Marketing is viewed as everyone's role within the organisation….	….the less significance given to marketing a professional services organisation.	Young (2005: 31) is of the opinion that marketing has an important role within the professional services organisation.	"Specially in our market, with a high recession and a strong effect of the big four entering our markets and cutting their prices down"	"Unless a firm's fee-earners have a client-centric mindset its BD and marketing efforts will struggle to gain traction."
		…..the less the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	According to Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 14-19), many professional and technical specialists simply do not want to get involved with marketing or sales and frequently may not be behaviourally suited to become a good 'seller'.	"They are compelled to be involved, but do not always attend meetings scheduled"	
People	The more suitable the qualifications of marketing personnel….	….the more likely the organisation will offer its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.	Yelkur (2000: 111-113) identifies that to foster customer-oriented personnel, the organization needs to recruit and select the right people, offering an appropriate package of employment and growth opportunities to enhance their skills and encourage them.	"There is academic assistance, but it is not effectively encouraged."	"The biggest factor in my experience is the attitude, imagination and confidence of those who own the business, specifically managing partner. Attitude in wanting to drive things on, imagination in seeing that there are new ways to communicate and influence and confidence in those recruited to deliver."
		….the more likely that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	Coviello, Brodie, Danaher, and Johnston (2002: 33-46) identify that marketing activities are usually delegated to functional marketing personnel, and managers focus on developing internal capabilities related to the marketing mix. Integration with other functions in the organisation is limited	"I think that we have a vast knowledge and skill base that is not utilised properly."	
People	The more the marketing	….the more likely the organisation will offer its	Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing as cited in Forsyth (2003)	"There is academic assistance, but it is not effectively encouraged."	

	personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions….	marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.	organisation provides encouragement to their marketers to develop financial and commercial skills, providing training if required and thus empowering the marketing team to become self-sufficient as well as more effective.		
People	The less the marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions….	….the less significance given to marketing a professional services organisation.	Forsyth (2003: 12) asserts that marketing can only be successful in a professional service organisation if it is unreservedly embraced by all employees and management.	"Our decision makers need to be made aware of the value of marketing and give their support to this important department."	
People	The more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives….	…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.	In the absence of effective leadership and support over a centralised marketing function, this may contribute to discord and dissension in large, more complex organisations, reducing effectiveness and efficiency as individual operating units (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 2-5).	"Our resources are limited."	"How many of us are able to continuously get partners to do the actions necessary to generate the volume of referrals that we'd like?"
People	The less the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives….	…..the less the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.			
Process	The easier and less delay in the making of marketing decisions….	….the more likely that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	From a competitive marketing point of view therefore it is therefore considered essential for a partnership or other relatively democratic business unit to maintain an effective decision-making and communication process allowing for the initiation of relevant action as and when the market demands it (Forsyth, 2003: 10).	"Although there is good intention with all marketing strategy and campaigns, the red tape gets in the way and inevitably all the best laid plans get cancelled or changed because of cost."	"Decisions were made by a committee. By the time the partners all had their input, the message was watered down, execution too limited in scope, and ROI projections lowered to the point that the campaign no longer made sense. My fault for letting too many people play an active role."
		…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.			
Process	The more efficient the technological systems….	….the more likely that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 405-414) insist that a professional service organisation must make every effort to ensure that the use of technology reinforces clients' trust.	"Technology systems we use like Maximiser, Maconomy and Survey Monkey are great, they just don't work all the time."	"I try to measure everything so we can make decisions based on facts."
Process	The more marketing responsibilities	…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing	Coviello, Brodie, Danaher, and Johnston (2002: 33-46) identify that marketing activities are usually delegated to functional marketing	"I think that we have a vast knowledge and skill base that is not utilised properly."	

	assigned to the correct individuals / business units…..	functions.	personnel, and managers focus on developing internal capabilities related to the marketing mix. Integration with other functions in the organisation is limited		
Other	The more the marketing budget is affected in times of financial difficulty….	…..more necessary the role played by marketing in the organisation.	Young (2005: 31) is of the opinion that marketing has an important role within the professional services organisation.	"Specially in our market, with a high recession and a strong effect of the big four entering our markets and cutting their prices down"	"The overriding challenge, in my experience, is to secure true intellectual engagement from busy fee-earners first, in deciding where they should focus their BD efforts to best effect."
		….the more the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	The marketing coordinator frequently has little or no charter, budget, influence, or accountability (Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom 2002: 406)	"They are compelled to be involved, but do not always attend meetings scheduled"	

Source: researcher's own construction

4.9 Chapter summary

Chapter four presented the findings of the research and discussed the analysed data in detail. Information describing the 'SPSO's' employees designations and office locations were shown. The analysis of the various marketing factors from the quantitative study provided helpful insight into the factors influencing the marketing of the 'SPSO' both nationally and internationally. The responses to the statements were, in general, very clear and indicated how certain factors can influence marketing professional services.

The conclusions and recommendations from this study will be discussed in the next chapter. Conclusions about the research questions and the research problem will be shown. A framework reflecting factors influencing the marketing of professional services as well as recommendations for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this study. Firstly, conclusions about the research questions are provided, followed by the conclusions about the research problem. Thereafter, the limitations of the study are shown. Then, recommendations based on the study and the findings are demonstrated. Recommendations for future research close this chapter.

5.2 Conclusions about the research objective

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors influencing the marketing of professional services. Two objectives were developed to achieve the aim of the study. The conclusions about these research objectives are presented in the following section.

5.2.1 Explore the critical factors

The first objective of the study was to identify the critical factors that influence the marketing of professional services.

This objective was partially covered through the review of the literature in chapter two attempting to identify factors relevant to marketing, and by a triangulation approach using the survey and qualitative interviews to confirm the factors. Indications from the initial phase of this study suggest that key marketing fundamentals apparent in this business sector differ significantly from those generally recognisable in commodity, consumer product and industrial marketing. It is postulated that whilst these differences are probably symptomatic of particular professional service practice norms and business ethics the formulation, implementation and evaluation of effective marketing can be facilitated utilising appropriate contemporary marketing paradigms, e.g. 'the 7P framework'.

It can be summarised that the main factors influencing the marketing of professional services can be grouped according to **Strategy, Product/ Service, Price, Place, Promotion, Physical Evidence, People, Process, and Other.**

- The first factor group identified, **strategy**, represents the overall marketing strategy of the organisation in question. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to strategy include; there should be specific marketing strategies in place to acquire and maintain the organisations' target market, the marketing department should play a significant role in the formulation of the organisations' business strategy, resources and funds should be allocated to marketing, marketing brainstorming sessions should yield useful and measurable outcomes, and senior management should be complemented by younger and more innovative members to encourage more contemporary thinking on the running of the business.

- The second group of factors is **product/ service.** This encompasses the factors influencing the actual service being offered by the organisation. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to product/ service include; the organisation should have a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and design its service offerings accordingly, client centric behaviour and service excellence should be a priority, a functional and effective client management programme should be in place, and there should be an effective brochure available advertising all the organisations service offerings including the relevant contact people.

- The third group of factors identified, **price**, includes all the factors related to the pricing of the organisation's services. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to pricing include; the organisation's fees should be in line with competitors and relevant in the current economic climate, a functional and effective client management programme should be in place, and the marketing department should understand the requirements and limitations of other departments when planning a marketing campaign.

- The fourth group of factors is **place.** This encompasses all the factors involved in the physical location of the organisation and its satellite offices. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to place include; the location of the organisations' offices should create a positive image to outsiders, each office should be situated in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market i.e. services easily accessible to clients, and the office design and working environment should reflect a positive image for the organisation.

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- The fifth group of factors identified, **promotion**, includes all the factors related to promoting the organisation to its target market. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to promotion include; management decisions and campaigns originating at the top of the organisation should be communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of the organisation effectively, all employees should be expected to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivised accordingly, a functional and effective client management programme should be in place, and marketing management should interact well with management in other departments.

- The sixth group of factors, **physical evidence**, encompasses everything tangible and observable within its physical facilities (Bitner 1992: 60). The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to physical evidence include; the office design and working environment should reflect a positive image for the organisation, the organisation's corporate visual identity and the brand of the organisation should be adhered to and portrayed by every employee, and the organisations' brochure and print materials should advertise all service offerings including the relevant contact people.

- The seventh group of factors, **people**, include all factors related to the employees of the organisation. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to people include; marketing should be viewed as everyone's role, the organisation should offer its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications, marketing personnel should be offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions, all employees should be expected to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivised accordingly, and marketing personnel should have qualifications relevant to their current roles/ designations.

- The eighth group of factors identified is **process**. These include all the factors related to the marketing procedures/ systems in place within the organisation in question. The principal factors and recommendations derived from this study in regard to process include; Technological systems should efficiently facilitate the marketing processes, marketing responsibilities should be assigned to the correct individuals / business units, marketing support should be well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions, and marketing decisions should be made without unnecessary delay or bureaucratic 'red tape'.

- The ninth and final group of factors identified as influencing the marketing of professional services is **other**. These are 'other' contributing factors to marketing professional services and include; the marketing budget should be unaffected in times of financial difficulty, marketing a professional services organisation needs to be recognised as very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated, and the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners should be committed and compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.

5.2.2 Develop a framework

The second objective was to develop a framework for the successful marketing of professional services.

This objective was covered through the triangulation and comparison of different quantitative and qualitative findings resulting in the development of a framework identifying the primary factors influencing the successful marketing of professional services as well as correlating recommendations for effective future practice in this regard. This framework can be seen in Figure 5.1.

5.3 Conclusions about the research problem

The research problem of this study was related to factors influencing the marketing of professional services. This led to the question, *"What are the main factors influencing the marketing of professional services".*

The results of the quantitative and qualitative responses recorded in the study gave some interesting insights which helped answer this question. Insight gained from the review of relevant literature and results of the survey conducted in the 'SPSO', has led to the conclusion that marketing as practiced in the professional services business environment has particular influencing factors and that the effectiveness of formal marketing activity cannot readily be evaluated .

Further observations made within the 'SPSO', supported by the survey findings, are indicative that belief in the value of formal marketing by professional and lay personnel is strongly influenced by the degree of commitment shown by the

organisations' professional leadership to the process of marketing, the central role of interpersonal relationships in that process and modern norms of co-operative business behaviour.
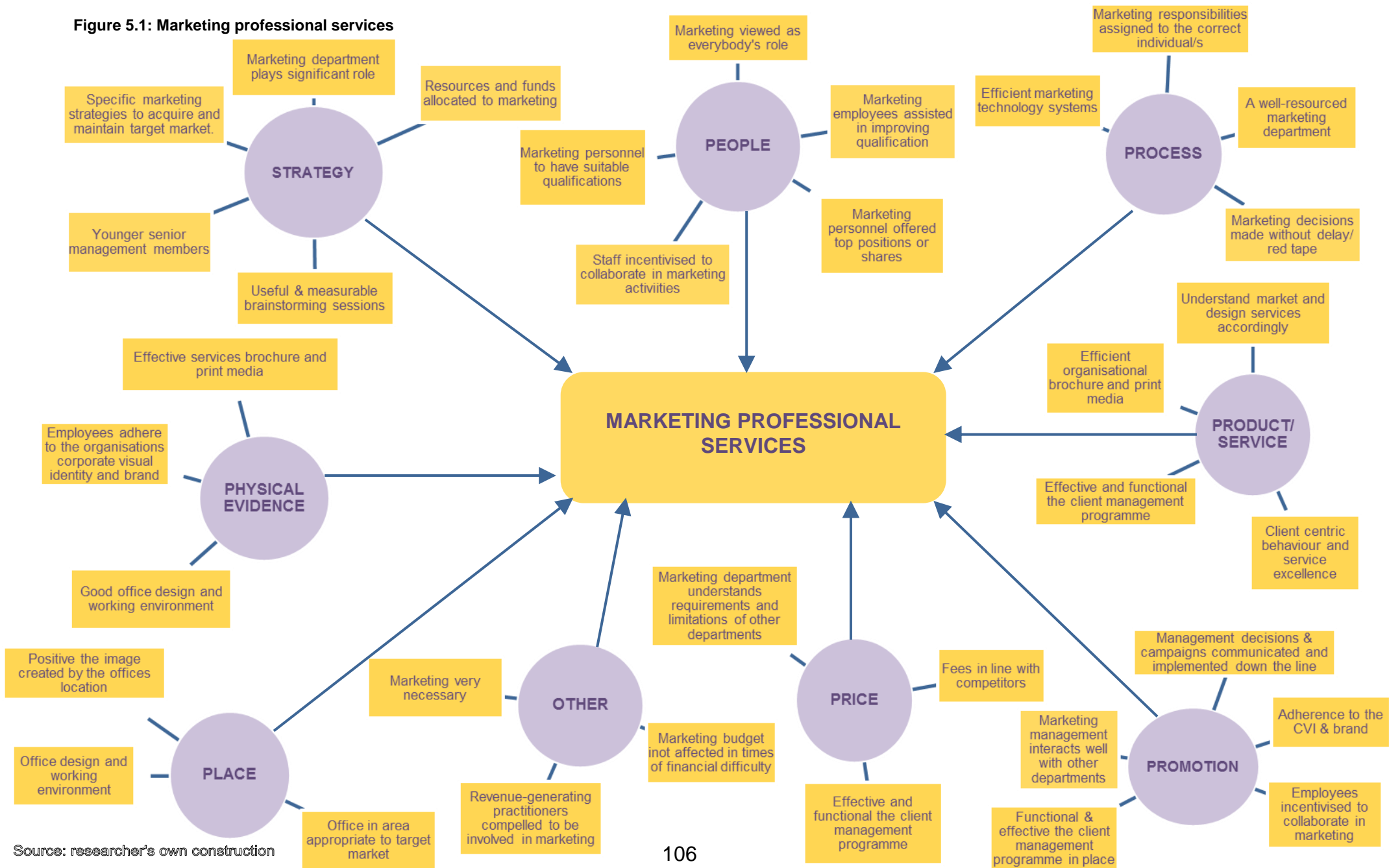
5.4 Recommendations for practice

Recommendations for practice are presented through a framework, comprising the 9 identified groups of factors including correlating recommendations, as well as a tabular outlay of additional constructive qualitative comments recorded from respondents with recommendations.

5.4.1 Framework – factors influencing professional services marketing

Figure 5.1 portrays the principal factors influencing the successful marketing of professional services grouped according to **Strategy, Product/ Service, Price, Place, Promotion, Physical Evidence, People, Process, and Other.**

Recommendations for the 'SPSO' for future marketing practice, relating to these findings, are also reflected here.

Figure 5.1: Marketing professional services

Specific marketing strategies to acquire and maintain target market.

Marketing department plays significant role

Resources and funds allocated to marketing

Marketing viewed as everybody's role

Marketing responsibilities assigned to the correct individual/s

STRATEGY

PEOPLE

PROCESS

Marketing employees assisted in improving qualification

Efficient marketing technology systems

A well-resourced marketing department

Marketing personnel to have suitable qualifications

Younger senior management members

Useful & measurable brainstorming sessions

Marketing personnel offered top positions or shares

Staff incentivised to collaborate in marketing activities

Marketing decisions made without delay/ red tape

Effective services brochure and print media

Understand market and design services accordingly

Efficient organisational brochure and print media

MARKETING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

PRODUCT/ SERVICE

Employees adhere to the organisations corporate visual identity and brand

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Effective and functional the client management programme

Good office design and working environment

Client centric behaviour and service excellence

Positive the image created by the offices location

Marketing department understands requirements and limitations of other departments

Management decisions & campaigns communicated and implemented down the line

Marketing very necessary

OTHER

Fees in line with competitors

PRICE

PROMOTION

Office design and working environment

PLACE

Marketing budget inot affected in times of financial difficulty

Marketing management interacts well with other departments

Adherence to the CVI & brand

Office in area appropriate to target market

Revenue-generating practitioners compelled to be involved in marketing

Effective and functional the client management programme

Functional & effective the client management programme in place

Employees incentivised to collaborate in marketing

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Source: researcher's own construction

5.4.2 Additional qualitative comments with recommendations

Appendix F reveals the core statement as featured in the survey, the additional (constructive) qualitative comments recorded from respondents, a literary reference, and recommendation.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of these additional recommendations according to group factor which are supported by both statistical and literary findings as seen in Appendix F:

Table 5.1: Additional recommendations

Factor Group	Recommendations
Strategy	• A marketing strategy should be in place in the form of a marketing plan. • Sufficient budget should be allocated to fund the marketing strategies arising from the marketing plan. • The marketing department should play pivotal role in formulation of the business strategy. • Marketing strategies should be communicated to staff effectively. • Further resources should be made available for effective report-taking. • Marketing brainstorming sessions should take place on a regular basis. • Marketing strategies should be followed through to the end of the project. • The marketing plan should be developed on a national basis incorporating all satellite offices. • Marketing strategies should be controlled and measured.
Product/ Service	• Further investigation should be made into the organisations key target market. • Marketing campaigns should be devised for each market segment.
Price	• Price cutting should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain integrity.
Place	• Employees should be mobile if it best serves the client and the job at hand. • The office should be located in an area best suited to the organisation's target market.
Promotion	• Marketing campaigns should be communicated to all staff effectively.
Physical Evidence	• More stringent controls should be put in place to regulate adherence to the CVI of the organisation. • Further focus should be made on promoting the organisations brand through effective office branding. • The organisational brochure should contain all relevant services provided as well as key contact people/ numbers.
People	• Further effort should be made to employ the correct calibre of marketing personnel with appropriate experience and qualifications. • Further emphasis should be made on encouraging and incentivising non-marketing staff to become involved in marketing initiatives. • Marketing personnel should be given more opportunities to improve their designations within the company. • Marketing staff should be encouraged and assisted to improve their qualifications.
Process	• The marketing department should be mindful of the requirements and limitations of other departments when planning a marketing campaign • Marketing decisions and roll-out should be made with as little delay as possible. • There should be a protocol in place for a streamlined decision-making process. • Marketing technology should be of a high standard, functioning at all times. • Marketing responsibilities should be allocated to the employee best suited for the task. • Resources and funds provided should adequately match the strategies at hand.
Other	• Fewer restrictions on marketing spend should be practiced when attempting to save on operational costs.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The results of this case study relate to the Specific Professional Services Organisation 'SPSO' being examined. The sample size was drawn through a step-wise non-probability, purposive sampling technique, so that the actual sample size was dependent on the judgement of the researcher. Consequently, generalization of the findings and results of the study to the whole population could not be provided.

Only a limited number of people were interviewed within 'SPSO' locally and internationally. As a result of the sample being smaller than intended, the findings are difficult to generalise. In order to cater for this smaller sample size and to get a broader market perspective, the open-ended question "What factors do you believe influence the marketing of professional services?" was included on a web-based social platform called LinkedIn.com.

Appropriate changes were made to the questionnaire to rectify the unacceptable negative values resulting from the pilot test.

These findings may not necessarily apply to any other professional service organisations within South Africa or internationally. In addition, the qualitative findings of the study were limited to those participants willing to interact with, and provide further input to the researcher. Therefore, care should be taken when trying to apply these findings to professional service organisations other than the 'SPSO'.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

The research study was based on a relatively small sample compared to the whole population. Researchers who want to do further research on this topic should try to get more generalisable results by using a bigger sample.

The research methodology chosen was a quantitative Likert-scale survey combined with the allowance for qualitative open-ended comments/ feedback. Further research should be done qualitatively by interviewing a bigger sample of experts in the field to get a

deeper insight into the topic. The majority of the respondents were based in South Africa and comprised non-marketing employees. It would therefore be intriguing to interview the marketing employees and management of all 138 countries in which the 'SPSO' is situated. Such research could also focus on more of the partners/ directors of the 'SPSO' both locally and internationally in order to get a clearer analysis of the perceptions of this astute demographic.

Furthermore, the research focused on only one specific professional services organisation. Further research should be done on other professional service organisations both in South Africa and internationally.

5.7 Chapter summary

Chapter five presented the conclusions and recommendations of this research project. Firstly, conclusions about the research objectives were drawn from the findings of the analysed data of chapter four. Thereafter, the conclusions about the research problem were presented. A framework was devised, comprising the 9 identified groups of factors including correlating recommendations for future practice, as well as a tabular outlay of additional constructive qualitative comments recorded from respondents with recommendations. The limitations of the study were presented and the dissertation ends with the recommendations for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of information and consent

Title of the study:

The factors influencing the marketing of professional services.

Dear Colleagues,

You may have already learned from my article in our local staff newsletter 'The Timesheet' that I am conducting a study on the Factors that influence the Marketing of Professional Services where employees from the 'SPSO' (locally and internationally) will participate in an online survey. The results of this research should, on the whole, help provide a better understanding of the best practice for marketing within a professional services organisation.

By taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire you will be adding immeasurable value to the outcome of my study and I therefore would greatly appreciate your co-operation.

Please note:
•   This questionnaire is only applicable to staff who have worked in this organisation for 6 months or more.
•   At no point shall the identities of the respondents surveyed or the organisation concerned be revealed in this dissertation or dissemination of the findings.

To access the survey please click on this link:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/████_Marketing_Survey

Alternatively, if you prefer to go through the survey telephonically, or wish to discuss any of the topics raised herein, please click here and I will contact you. All answers will be treated with totally anonymity without any link between participants and their answers.

Should you have any questions or queries, please contact Meg Enerson by phone or email. Alternatively, you may call my supervisor Prof. Roger Mason on (031 373 5385) or the DUT Research Ethics Committee Administrator Lavisha Deonarian on (031 373 2900).

Thanking you in advance for your kind support

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Appendix B: Main study – quantitative part – questionnaire

Name (optional):

Job title:

Department:

Office location:

Please note: at no point shall the identities of the respondents surveyed or the organisation concerned be revealed in this dissertation or dissemination of the findings.

Topic	Question
	Please tick how you feel about the following statements:
Strategy:	**1. There are specific marketing strategies in place to acquire and maintain your organisations' target market.**

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISSAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

2. The marketing department plays a significant role in the formulation of your organisations' business strategy.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

3. Your organisations' marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

4. Marketing Brainstorming sessions within your organization produce useful measurable outcomes.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

5. Senior management should be complemented by younger, more innovative members to encourage more contemporary thinking on the running of the business.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

Product/ Service:	**1. Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.**

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

	Comments:_____
	2. Client centric behaviour and service excellence are a priority in your organisation.
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
Price:	**1. Your organisations' fees are in line with your competitors and relevant in the current economic climate.**
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
	2. Price cutting to match competitor quotes is common practice within your organisation.
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
Place:	**1. The current location of your organisations' offices creates a positive image of your organisation to outsiders.**
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
	2. Your professional personnel are mobile (as opposed to office-based) i.e. they take the service to the client.
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
	3. Your office is situated in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market.
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
Promotion:	**1. Management decisions and campaigns originating at the top of your organisation are communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of your organisation effectively.**
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____
	2. Your organisation has a functional and effective client management programme is in place.
	<table><tr><td>STRONGLY AGREE</td><td>AGREE</td><td>UNSURE</td><td>DISAGREE</td><td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td></tr></table>
	Comments:_____

Physical Evidence:	1. The corporate visual identity and brand of your organisation are adhered to and portrayed by every employee.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISSAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	2. Your office design and working environment reflect a positive image for your organisation.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	3. Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
People:	1. There is too much emphasis on cost to company when hiring marketing staff rather than on their relevant qualifications and experience.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	2. Marketing is viewed as everyone's role in your organisation.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	3. There is currently an adequate staff complement in the marketing department of your organisation in order to achieve set goals.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	4. Marketing personnel within your organisation have qualifications relevant to their current roles/ designations.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	5. Marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions within your organisation.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	6. Your organisation offers its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.				
	STRONGLY	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY

AGREE				DISAGREE

Comments:_____

7. Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

Process:

1. Marketing management interacts well with management in other departments within your organisation.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

2. The marketing department understands the requirements and limitations of other departments within your organisation when planning a marketing campaign.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

3. The limitations and short-comings of other regions' offices within your organisation tend to hamper the marketing effectiveness within your own office.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

4. Marketing decisions are made without unnecessary delay and bureaucratic 'red tape'.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

5. Technological systems work well in your organization to facilitate marketing processes

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

6. Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

7. Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Comments:_____

Other:	1. The marketing budget is the first area affected in times of financial difficulty within your organisation, regardless of marketing's relevance and effectiveness.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	2. Marketing a professional services organization is very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				
	3. Your organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are not compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	Comments:_____				

Appendix C: Main study – qualitative part – open-ended questions

1. Open-ended question; Follow up on quantitative questionnaire

Dear Respondent

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to complete my survey on the "Factors influencing marketing professional services".
I can assure you that your feedback will be treated with the utmost confidence and will add immeasurable value to my study.

You indicated in the survey that you would like me to contact you to further discuss a topic/ s raised therein; please indicate whether this is something you would like to discuss telephonically (where I shall phone you) or if it is merely a statement you wish me to put on record (sent to me in an email)?

Either way, I truly appreciate your input and look forward to your further feedback be it via email or telephonically.

Kind Regards

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2. Open-ended question; Posted on LinkedIn.com

"What factors do you believe influence the marketing of professional services?".

Appendix D: Results – Correlations: significant relationships

Spearman's rho correlation was also performed on the (ordinal) data in order to measure the strength of association between the variables (Healey 2012: 354). Positive values indicate a directly proportional relationship between the variables and a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. All significant relationships are indicated by a * (correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; 2-tailed) or ** (correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; 2-tailed). Significant relationships are identified in the table below.

Core Statement	Correlation Coefficient	Variable statement	Correlation relationship: directly proportional The more strategies that are used to acquire and maintain target markets….
There are specific marketing strategies in place to acquire and maintain your organisations' target market.	.505**	The marketing department plays a significant role in the formulation of your organisations' business strategy.	….the more significant the role the marketing department will play in the formulation of the organisations' business strategy.
	.422**	Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	….the more the organisation understands the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more significant the role played by the marketing department in the formulation of the organisations' business strategy……
The marketing department plays a significant role in the formulation of your organisations' business strategy.	.378**	Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	…..the clearer the organisations' understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s.
	.208*	Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.	…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more your organisations' marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management…..
Your organisations' marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management.	.423**	Marketing Brainstorming sessions within your organization produce useful measurable outcomes.	…..the more useful and measurable the outcomes of marketing brainstorming sessions.
	.318**	Marketing decisions are made without unnecessary delay and bureaucratic 'red tape'.	….the easier and less delay in making marketing decisions.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more useful and measurable the outcomes produced through marketing

			brainstorming sessions within the organization…
Marketing Brainstorming sessions within your organization produce useful measurable outcomes.	.329**	Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	…..the clearer the organisations' understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more the emphasis on a younger senior management structure….
Senior management should be complemented by younger, more innovative members to encourage more contemporary thinking on the running of the business.	.250**	Marketing a professional services organization is very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated.	…..more necessary role played by marketing in the organisation.
	Correlation Coefficient	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: inverse proportion** The less the emphasis on a younger senior management structure….
	-.241*	Marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions within your organisation.	…..the less pathways to equity ownership or top management positions offered to marketing person el.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The clearer the organisations' understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s….
Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	.349**	Client centric behaviour and service excellence are a priority in your organisation.	…..the higher the priority regarding client centric behaviour and service excellence in the organisation.
	.457**	Your organisations' fees are in line with your competitors and relevant in the current economic climate.	…..the more in line the organisations' fees are with its competitors.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The higher the priority regarding client centric behaviour and service excellence in the organisation…..
Client centric behaviour and service excellence are a priority in your organisation.	.430**	Your organisation has a functional and effective client management programme is in place.	…..the more effective and functional the client management programme in place.
	.224*	Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.	The more efficient the organisational brochure.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** **T**he more in line the organisations' fees are with its competitors….
Your organisations' fees are in line with your competitors and relevant in the current economic climate.	.299**	Your organisation has a functional and effective client management programme is in place.	…..the more effective and functional the client management programme in place.
	.355**	Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in	…..the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to

			marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	collaborate in marketing initiatives.
	.340**	The marketing department understands the requirements and limitations of other departments within your organisation when planning a marketing campaign.	….the better the understanding by the marketing department about the requirements and limitations of other departments when planning a campaign.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more positive the image created by the offices locations to outsiders….
The current location of your organisations' offices creates a positive image of your organisation to outsiders.	.467**	Your office design and working environment reflect a positive image for your organisation.	…..the better the office design and working environment.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The better situated the office in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market…..
Your office is in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market.	.326**	Your office design and working environment reflect a positive image for your organisation.	…..the better the office design and working environment.
	.251**	Your organisation has a functional and effective client management programme is in place.	…..the more effective and functional the client management programme in place.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more effectively the management decisions and campaigns are communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of the organisation…..
Management decisions and campaigns originating at the top of your organisation are communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of your organisation effectively.	.366**	The corporate visual identity and brand of your organisation are adhered to and portrayed by every employee.	…..the better the portrayal and adherence to the corporate visual identity and brand of the organisation by employees.
	.353**	Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	…..the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more functional and effective the client management programme in place…..
Your organisation has a functional and effective client management programme is in place.	.263**	Marketing is viewed as everyone's role in your organisation.	….the more marketing is viewed as everyone's role in the organisation.
	.366**	Marketing management interacts well with management in other departments within your organisation.	….the better marketing management interacts with other departments in the organisation.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more that the employees adhere to the organisations corporate visual identity and brand….

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The corporate visual identity and brand of your organisation are adhered to and portrayed by every employee.	.392**	Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.	….the more efficient the organisational brochure and print media.
	.344**	Marketing decisions are made without unnecessary delay and bureaucratic 'red tape'.	….the easier and less delay in making marketing decisions.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The better the office design and working environment….
Your office design and working environment reflect a positive image for your organisation.	.301**	Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.	….the more efficient the organisational brochure and print media.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more effective the organisational brochure and print media….
Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.	.200*	Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	…..the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more that Marketing is viewed as everyone's role within the organisation….
Marketing is viewed as everyone's role in your organisation.	.335**	Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	….the more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives.
	Correlation Coefficient	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: inverse proportion** The less that Marketing is viewed as everyone's role within the organisation….
	-.269**	Marketing a professional services organization is very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated.	….the less significance given to marketing a professional services organisation.
	-.275**	Your organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are not compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	…..the less the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more suitable the qualifications of marketing personnel….
Marketing personnel within your organisation have qualifications relevant to their current roles/ designations.	.445**	Your organisation offers its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.	….the more likely the organisation will offer its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.
	.505**	Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	….the more likely that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.

Core Statement	Correlation Coefficient	Variable statement	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more the marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions….
Marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions within your organisation.	.291**	Your organisation offers its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.	….the more likely the organisation will offer its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications.
	Correlation Coefficient	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: inverse proportion** The less the marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions….
	-.219*	Marketing a professional services organization is very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated.	….the less significance given to marketing a professional services organisation.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives….
Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	.325**	Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.	…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.
	Correlation Coefficient	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: inverse proportion** The less the organisation expects and incentivises its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives….
	-.222*	Your organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are not compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	…..the less the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The easier and less delay in the making of marketing decisions….
Marketing decisions are made without unnecessary delay and bureaucratic 'red tape'.	.302**	Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	….the more likely that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.
	.432**	Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.	…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more efficient the technological systems….
Technological systems work well in your organization to facilitate marketing processes	.384**	Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	….the more likely that marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.
Core Statement	**Correlation**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly**

	Coefficient		**proportional** The more marketing responsibilities assigned to the correct individuals / business units…..
Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	.356**	Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.	…..the better resourced the marketing support allowing for an increased value of marketing functions.
Core Statement	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Variable statement**	**Correlation relationship: directly proportional** The more the marketing budget is affected in times of financial difficulty….
The marketing budget is the first area affected in times of financial difficulty within your organisation, regardless of marketing's relevance and effectiveness.	.262**	Marketing a professional services organization is very necessary and therefore an important function to which resources and funds should be allocated.	…..more necessary the role played by marketing in the organisation.
	.341**	Your organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are not compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	….the more the organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.

Appendix E: Open-ended responses – off LinkedIn.com

The following question was posed on a professional networking website called LinkedIn.com in June 2012: *"What factors do you believe influence the marketing of professional services?".*

The table below reveals comments from a number of marketing professionals on this topic. The identities of these respondents have been concealed.

Respondent	Respondent 1
Company/ origin	USP Creative (Professional Services Marketing Group) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Business Development Director
City, Country	UK
Comment/ s	For me I would say internal understanding of, internal interest in and internal desire to undertake marketing of professional services from a firm perspective are key. Without internal buy in firms marketing teams and their initiatives are fighting an uphill struggle before even considering taking something to market. However when a firm 'gets it' from the inside out and works to engage the client group in an engaging memorable manner 'things fit into place'.
Respondent	Respondent 2
Company/ origin	Spirit Consulting (Professional Services Marketing Group) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Director
City, Country	Oxford, UK
Comment/ s	Wow, there's a question Meg! How long have you got?! :-) I fully endorse Gary's comments. The overriding challenge, in my experience, is to secure true intellectual engagement from busy fee-earners first, in deciding where they should focus their BD efforts to best effect, and, secondly, in putting themselves in the client's/prospect's shoes when considering what their hot issues and concerns might be. The latter is a mindset issue, and helping busy fee-earners (who, let's face it, are under extraordinary pressure to hit billing targets, quite apart from actually getting their work done) to see the world through the client's eyes is, I think, the greatest value that marketing/BD professionals can add in a PS firm. The main reason for saying this, of course, is obvious - if fee-earners don't empathise with their clients' needs and concerns they can neither formulate an appropriate solution nor pitch it to them in a compelling way. I think we sometimes overlook another vital benefit that flows from being able to see things from the client's perspective though. Once fee-earners develop this skill, their ability and confidence in selling their services in a way that resonates with clients and prospects increases no end. There are a host of other things too that come in to play, but this is, in my view, the most significant barrier to the effective marketing of professional services. Unless a firm's fee-earners have a client-centric mindset its BD and marketing efforts will struggle to gain

	traction.
Respondent	Respondent 3
Company/ origin	cpaprofitplus (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Owner
City, Country	Portland, Oregon, USA
Comment/ s	Professional services generally possess a relatively strong personal content (as opposed to, say, buying socks at Penny's), while marketing is generally impersonal (Yellow pages, roadside sign, press release, etc.).
	Hence, my belief that the most effective professional services/accounting practice marketing is personal in nature. This can be via networking, effectively mining for referrals, speeches & presentations, writing articles, "personalizing" your website, etc. With these techniques the service provider presents him or herself to prospects on a more human level and has a higher probability of connecting with them.
	Since most purchasers of accounting services believe mainstream accounting activities (e.g. tax preparation, generating P&Ls, balance sheets and the like) are a commodity, they typically tend to not select accounting services upon perceived competence but instead rely to a much greater extent upon "feel" which, of course, is a highly personal filter.
	If they are exposed to your marketing message, I believe your odds for success are greatly improved if you provide a basis for the prospect to perceive you as someone with whom they can feel comfortable working with.
Respondent	Respondent 4
Company/ origin	Mlicki (Marketing to Professional Services (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Chief Strategist & marketing consultant
City, Country	Columbus, Ohio, USA
Comment/ s	I believe the biggest factor that influences or impedes is the positioning of the firm. Well positioned firms are more focused and therefore more successful and more efficient in their marketing and BD efforts. By contrast, lack of expertise-based positioning and lack of focus impedes successful marketing because marketing dollars are stretched too thin and therefore investments underperform and leaders lose confidence.
Respondent	Respondent 5
Company/ origin	Liberty Anchor (Marketing to Professional Services (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Strategist, President
City, Country	Dallas, USA
Comment/ s	It's been my experience that the biggest thing that impedes professional services marketing is the management of the typical professional services firm. Despite their claims that they have implemenented democratic managment, the truth of the matter is, that most of them manage by concensus. For example, if your marketing plan calls for Partners to make a certain number of visits to key accounts and a certain Partner doesn't want to do that - they can crush the whole initiative by simply doing nothing. And heaven help the pure strategy guy that is recommending the launch of a new practice group or the dissolution of another. Just

	make sure you are getting paid hourly before YOU try to drive the firm to concensus. It's likely to take a while.
	As a side note, the thing that I see that most sucessfully promotes professional services marketing is the existence of a young, dynamic executive leader (Managing Partner, CEO, Managing Principal, etc...) that has a vision and really does lead. These people make your job less dificult.
Respondent	Respondent 6
Company/ origin	Newcastle upon Tyne
Designation	Marketer Manager Mentor (PM Forum (LinkedIn Group)
City, Country	Newcastle, UK
Comment/ s	The biggest factor in my experience is the attitude, imagination and confidence of those who own the business, specifically managing partner. Attitude in wanting to drive things on, imagination in seeing that there are new ways to communicate and influence and confidence in those recruited to deliver.
Respondent	Respondent 7
Company/ origin	McGladrey LLP (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Sr. Marketing Director
City, Country	Charlotte, USA
Comment/ s	Consistency, measurement and making decisions based on facts instead of gut-feeling. Professional Services marketing stumbles quite frequently because it's not deliberate and consistent, and measurement of results against an objective are not reported back to the partners to help them understand what is and isn't working. I see the same programs run over and over with the same poor results, yet the implementers think something will change "this time."
	As Craig commented, personalization, relevancy and timing can work best for a professional services marketing effort; but this requires a deliberate strategy and well thought out delivery of a nurturing plan to align to a prospects buying-cycle.
Respondent	Respondent 8
Company/ origin	Aon Hewitt (PM Forum (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Marketing Manager
City, Country	London, UK
Comment/ s	I agree with David. Specifically, the biggest factor I have seen impede marketing in professional services firms is a reluctance/refusal on the part of the partners or business leaders to accept the marketing team's judgement on marketing matters. The biggest successes have come where marketing's expertise and views have been taken on board and allowed to positively influence decisions.
Respondent	Respondent 9
Company/ origin	Huthwaite Legal Ltd (PM Forum (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Director
City, Country	Hemel Hempstead, UK

Comment/ s	The biggest challenge for marketing is having clarity of message - with multiple sectors and practice groups, there is a tendency for firms to utilise one firmwide comms strategy. More and more firms now have strategies for individual sectors which makes it much easier to have focus and relevancy for any marketing activity.
Respondent	Respondent 10
Company/ origin	The Marcus Letter on Professional Services Marketing (PM Forum (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Editor/publisher
City, Country	New York, USA
Comment/ s	In the decades since promotional marketing for lawyers became legal, of the many obstacles to professional services marketing the most consistent has been the failure of the interface between the marketer and the lawyer. The unique factors of professional services marketing, dictated by the differences between it and product marketing, e.g. because few people hire a lawyer from an ad or press release --marketing is designed to build name recognition and reputation, and to display skills) -- and marketing runs counter to long standing traditions in the legal profession, lawyers have long misunderstood marketing and the marketer.
Respondent	Respondent 11
Company/ origin	KPMG India (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Marketer & Communications Strategist
City, Country	Bengaluru Area, India
Comment/ s	Poor risk appetite among the Partner - Director group would be the one thing that prevents firms from exploring new ways to reach clients/ prospects. Everyday I hear Partners saying "We have not tried this. I see your point, but we cant be sure of succeeding with this approach/ channel. So let's just drop it". That makes marketing a bigger challenge because you cant do the same thing over and over again and expect different results. My second point is that CPAs are notoriously poor when it comes to nurturing relationships with clients/ contacts (at least that is how it is in most firms in India). Unlike many other industries where seasoned sales professionals often own and maintain client/ prospect relationships, Accounting firms usually have managers, Directors and Partners owning these relationships. As these people are subject matter experts and work on assignments and are billed (unlike a designated sales person in other industries), they are more comfortable in this zone and are unable to put on their sales hat and network effectively. This to a great extent impedes the scope of marketing.
Respondent	Respondent 7
Company/ origin	McGladrey LLP (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Sr. Marketing Director
City, Country	Charlotte, USA
Comment/ s	Right on Archana! All you state is true for many. There are always the CPA or Tax professionals that understand that marketing is not a "sure thing" and are willing to takes risks, but most CPA's, by their very nature and training are risk adverse. I go with a 70-20-10 rule. I spend 70% of my dollars on things I know work. I spend 20% on

	trying to optimize the 70% and 10% on brand new, big risk, big win programs. I try to measure everything so we can make decisions based on facts.
Respondent	Respondent 11
Company/ origin	KPMG India (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Marketer & Communications Strategist
City, Country	Bengaluru Area, India
Comment/ s	@ Eric - Thank you for that insight on how you spend your time and money. I usually end up spending 90-95% money on things which worked in the past (because partners control budgets as well and they are not ok with spending money on new initiatives) and 50% of time thinking what more can we do, given our risk appetite. And yes, I try and measure whatever is possible, but unfortunately, few partnes are enthusiastic about results/ leads. Strangely they seem to think that marketing is purely for visibility and that enquiries dont matter. They are looking for the elusive "Quick Big wins", which is close to being a myth today. They would rather bag a large win than work on multiple small wins to reach the same target. @Dave - It is a good point you make on showing people what the competition is doing. That some time peroves to be a double edged sword. More often than not the Partners react in 2 possible ways - 1) "Why are we not doing this?" - They conveniently fail to recollect the brainstorming sessions and presentations made by the marketing team focusing on similar outcomes. 2) "Let us do the same thing" - This totally kills any scope of differentiation / Positioning that marketing can bring about. While I agree that repeating what the competition does is not necessarily a bad thing if you can show results, it is still a tad bit less stimulating than customising an idea that you think might work. I tend to look at what marketing ideas work in other sectors and see if we can customise that in the accounting industry. Usually they are hard to customise, but still I learn a lot as a marketing professional.
Respondent	Respondent 12
Company/ origin	PracticeProfs (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	President
City, Country	Greater Atlanta Area, USA
Comment/ s	This is a great topic. Thanks everyone for the examples. I've been involved in several situations this year where marketing decisions were made by a committee. By the time the partners all had their input, the message was watered down, execution too limited in scope, and ROI projections lowered to the point that the campaign no longer made sense. My fault for letting too many people play an active role. On the positive side, it is much easier today to see what competitors are doing online. I find firms much more likely to try something new when I can provide strong ROI projections AND show that a competitor is doing the same thing.
Respondent	Respondent 13

Company/ origin	Sax Macy Fromm & Co. PC (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Director of Marketing & Business Development
City, Country	Greater New York City Area, USA
Comment/ s	One of the biggest things which impedes professional services firms' marketing--and I'll expand this to encompass business development as well--efforts, in my opinion, is a lack of consistent follow-through. There are a handful of successful strategies--predominately relationship driven activities--but many firms' failures to stick to a plan and hold people accountable is often the death knell. We all know that proactively soliciting referrals is among the most effective strategies, but how many of us are able to continuously get partners to do the actions necessary to generate the volume of referrals that we'd like?
Respondent	Respondent 3
Company/ origin	cpaprofitplus (Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM)) (LinkedIn Group)
Designation	Owner
City, Country	Portland, Oregon, USA
Comment/ s	For many years I have worked with firms where some of the partners are serious about business development and understand it is an ongoing process; not an event or one time effort. The other partners (typically a greater percentage) have no interest and simply won't participate. Oh, they'll make some noise, say the right things, but nothing ever really happens. I'd describe their reaction as passive - aggressive. It's the Pareto Rule - 20% or the partners generate 80% of the new business. In response, I've seen the Managing Partners try both positive encouragement (e.g. a larger share of first year billings for new clients) and negative pressure (e.g. if you bring in less than the partner average your annual discretionary bonus will be reduced accordingly), and neither reward nor bludgeon ever seems to actually accomplish much besides generating a lot of heated discussion and angst. So, based entirely upon this functional reality, I now focus almost entirely upon working with those partners and managers who are willing to proactively engage in the process. They obtain more attention and training while the others continue down their historic road of passively receiving referrals, leveraging off of the firm's local status, etc. There is still a net gain because the proactive partners become more productive while the others stay the same. The Managing Partners eventually arrive at a place where they accept this reality as a win: the firm is adding more new clients and there is peace in the valley. Sad but true. As an addendum to the prior comment, I don't believe I have ever spoken with an employee responsible for in-house marketing or business development who doesn't continuously run into this barrier. My advice is to work around or pay lip service to the non-participants and focus your efforts on those who wish to engage in the process. You simply can't effectively make people so things they don't want to.

Appendix F: Additional qualitative comments with recommendations

The table below reveals the core statement as featured in the survey then the additional (constructive) qualitative comments recorded from respondents including recommendations for practice.

Core statement	Comment	Reference	Recommendation/s
There are specific marketing strategies in place to acquire and maintain your organisations' target market	"They however need more funding in this area as any good organisation knows. To invest in a good marketing strategy."	Clow and Stevens (2009: 12) hold compelling argument in favour of the introduction of marketing principles within service organisations' business strategies is to facilitate the definition and realisation of their business objectives.	Have marketing strategy in place in the form of a marketing plan. Allocate sufficient budget to fund the strategies.
The marketing department plays a significant role in the formulation of your organisations' business strategy	"This is not easily apparent."	Clow and Stevens (2009: 12) hold compelling argument in favour of the introduction of marketing principles within service organisations' business strategies is to facilitate the definition and realisation of their business objectives.	Marketing department should play pivotal role in formulation of business strategy. Strategies should be communicated to staff effectively.
Your organisations' marketing and public relations activities are measured and reported on effectively to management.	"Not enough resources to be more effective and accurate on these matters. Good reporting means a lot of time and people."	The cumulative result of marketing reports over an annual period constitutes vital information for the structuring of future control measures (Clow and Stevens 2009: 34-35)	Further resources should be made available for effective report taking.
Marketing Brainstorming sessions within your organization produce useful measurable outcomes	"This does not happen effectively."	Nagdeman (2009: 14) believes that a key challenge for management is to provide innovative leadership that replaces the status quo and creates a culture of opportunity.	More marketing brainstorming sessions to take place. These should be measured and followed through to the end.
Your organisation has a clear understanding of the requirements of its target market segment/s, and designs its service offerings accordingly.	"Some of the target markets are investigated with Marketing, but not all."	Nagdeman (2009) believes that the market place is becoming increasingly segmented. Consequently the successful marketing of a professional services organisation is increasingly dependent upon an ability to understand and appeal to the psycho-economic and demographic elements of discrete market segments.	Further investigation into the organisations key target market. Strategies should be devised for each market segment.
Price cutting to match competitor quotes is common practice within your organisation.	"It depends on the situation and target client"	Clow and Stevens, (2009: 80) believe that Fees to be charged to clients should be congruent with the nature and value of the services offered by the professional services organisation.	Price cutting should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain integrity.
Your professional	"Our dept is desk-	The provider organisation may	Employees should be mobile if

personnel are mobile (as opposed to office-based) i.e. they take the service to the client	bound."	be assisted in this regard by operating multisite locations (Carman and Langeard 1980; Langeard et al. 1981; Upah 1980) thereby making its services more accessible to its customers.	it best serves the client and the job at hand.
Your office is situated in an area appropriate to that of the organisations' target market.	"I think if it were feasible, we would be better off in Sandton Business District because that's where our target market is."	Organisations have the objective of meeting and exceeding the expectations of clients by providing value-adding services, through appropriate communication, at the right location, and thereby generating sufficient appropriate revenue as a result (Clow and Stevens, 2009: 80).	The office should be located in an area best suited to the organisation's target market.
Management decisions and campaigns originating at the top of your organisation are communicated and implemented down the line to the rest of your organisation effectively	"I don't think staff know what our marketing strategy is, or how it is implemented. We need work on internal communication."	Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing as cited in Forsyth (2003: 11) maintains that professional service organisation's marketing must enjoy recognition and participation at all levels within the organisation.	Marketing strategies and decisions should be communicated to staff effectively.
The corporate visual identity and brand of your organisation are adhered to and portrayed by every employee	"To the best of our ability, we police the CVI, however there are still employees that do not adhere to it. Stricter measures need to be put in place."	Hoffman and Batesons' (2010: 191-193) communication guidelines include creating visual pathways that reflect the organisation's quality	More stringent controls should be put in place to regulate adherence to the CVI of the organisation.
Your office design and working environment reflect a positive image for your organisation	"Just some of the divisions and cities have a representative office compared to our positioning in the market. More representative and more brand focused work environments should be implemented to reflect our position to our employees and clients, contacts, etc."	Hoffman and Bateson (2010: 191-193) advises that an organisation's capacity is indicated through physical evidence such as environmental décor and apparel, may significantly influence the customer's expectations of the service offered (Shostack 1977).	Further focus should be made on promoting the organisations brand through effective office branding.
Your organisations' brochure and print materials advertise all your service offerings including the relevant contact people.	"It sometimes gives a general contact number, not a specific individual."	Lagrosen (2005: 65) believes that in order to encourage active communication between staff and clients by listing the corporate email addresses of key employees on the organisation's website and in professional service brochures.	The organisational brochure should contain all relevant services on offer as well as key contact people/ numbers.
There is too much emphasis on cost to company when hiring marketing staff rather than on their relevant	"With more qualified marketing professionals, we can achieve a lot more in Marketing. We have a	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 406) postulate that in the initial phase of professional service marketing a professional service organisation's marketing	Further emphasis should be made to employ the correct calibre of marketing personnel with appropriate experience and qualifications.

qualifications and experience	culture of employing within the organisation, which is fine and well with other departments, but Marketing needs professionals that understand markets and messaging."	initiative (if any) was generally the domain of professional practitioners and partners, sometimes assisted by support personnel promoted from an administrative role to assist with events and social occasions	
Marketing is viewed as everyone's role in your organisation.	"It should be a part of all partners and professionals at 'SPSO' Spain but it isn't at the moment. Most think that selling and marketing is just a role of the marketing departments."	Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing as cited in Forsyth (2003: 11) maintains that professional service organisation's marketing must enjoy recognition and participation at all levels within the organisation.	Further emphasis should be made on encouraging and incentivising non-marketing staff to become involved in marketing initiatives.
Marketing personnel within your organisation have qualifications relevant to their current roles/ designations.	"Many were PAs before without any Marketing qualification."	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 406) postulate that in the initial phase of professional service marketing a professional service organisation's marketing initiative (if any) was generally the domain of professional practitioners and partners, sometimes assisted by support personnel promoted from an administrative role to assist with events and social occasions	Further effort should be made to employ the correct calibre of marketing personnel with appropriate experience and qualifications.
Marketing personnel are offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions within your organisation.	"I have never witnessed this so don't think that it is done."	Nagdeman's (2009: 14) belief that a key challenge for management is to provide innovative leadership that replaces the status quo and creates a culture of opportunity.	Marketing personnel should be given more opportunities to improve their job status within the company.
Your organisation offers its marketing staff enough assistance to improve their academic qualifications	"There is academic assistance, but it is not effectively encouraged."	Yelkur (2000: 111-113) identifies that to foster customer-oriented personnel, the organization needs to recruit and select the right people, offering an appropriate package of employment and growth opportunities to enhance their skills and encourage them.	Marketing staff should be encouraged and assisted to improve their qualifications.
Your organisation expects its employees to collaborate in marketing initiatives and incentivises them accordingly.	"Agree to a point, not all incentives are carried through or driven!"	Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing as cited in Forsyth (2003: 11) maintains that professional service organisation's marketing must enjoy recognition and participation at all levels within the organisation.	Further emphasis should be made on encouraging and incentivising non-marketing staff to become involved in marketing initiatives.
The marketing department understands the requirements and limitations of other departments within your organisation	"Marketing decides on a campaign and runs with it - there is little or no planning around various department's limitations."	Clow and Stevens (2009: 34-35) believe that a key aspect of operational marketing management control lies in determining the extent and strategic value of information that should be invested in	The marketing department should take more note of the requirements and limitations of other departments when planning a marketing campaign

when planning a marketing campaign.		practitioners or managers to empower them to play an effective role in the marketing process.	
Marketing decisions are made without unnecessary delay and bureaucratic 'red tape'.	"Campaigns are constantly being changed or stopped because of red tape."	Should there be indecisiveness on marketing matters there is likely to be a competitor around who will take advantage of this fact (Forsyth, 2003: 10).	Marketing decisions should be made with as little delay as possible. There should be a protocol in place for a streamlined decision-making process.
Technological systems work well in your organization to facilitate marketing processes	"Systems like Maximiser, Maconomy and Survey Monkey are great - they just don't work all the time."	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 405-414) insist that a professional service organisation must make every effort to ensure that the use of technology reinforces clients' trust.	Marketing technology should be of a high standard, functioning at all times.
Marketing responsibilities are assigned to the correct individuals / business units within your organization.	"Well there is just one person!!"	Clow and Stevens (2009: 34-35) believe that a key aspect of operational marketing management control lies in determining the extent and strategic value of information that should be invested into practitioners or managers to empower them to play an effective role in the marketing process.	Marketing responsibilities should be allocated to the employee best suited for the task.
Marketing support is well-resourced, giving marketers adequate time to increase the value of their functions.	"Resources are limited."	Coviello, Brodie, Danaher, and Johnston (2002: 33-46) identify that marketing activities are usually delegated to functional marketing personnel, and managers focus on developing internal capabilities related to the marketing mix. Integration with other functions in the organisation is limited	Resources and funds provided should adequately match the strategies at hand.
The marketing budget is the first area affected in times of financial difficulty within your organisation, regardless of marketing's relevance and effectiveness	"It is one of the several budgets, together with IT and HR."	The marketing coordinator frequently has little or no charter, budget, influence, or accountability (Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom 2002: 406)	Fewer restrictions on marketing spend should be practiced when attempting to save on operational costs.
Your organisation's revenue-generating practitioners are not compelled to be involved in marketing initiatives and meetings.	"They are compelled to be involved, but do not always attend meetings scheduled"	According to Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 14-19), many professional and technical specialists simply do not want to get involved with marketing or sales and frequently may not be behaviourally suited to become a good 'seller'.	Further emphasis should be made on encouraging and incentivising non-marketing staff to become involved in marketing initiatives
Any further comments regarding your organisations' marketing strategy (optional): - Open-	"In our office there is only 1 person (apart from directors) who is responsible for marketing. That person	Richard Chaplin, publisher of Professional Marketing as cited in Forsyth (2003: 11) maintains that professional service organisation's marketing must	Marketing strategies and decisions should be communicated to staff effectively.

Ended Response	is not sharing any information with other staff members, we don't really know what is discussed and decided. I also think it is not always fair to permanent staff members, that a lot of money is spent on marketing gifts and goodies for clerks and prospective trainees. I can't speak on behalf of other employees, but I feel very strong about this, and I am sure that there others that feel the same."	enjoy recognition and participation at all levels within the organisation.	
	"Marketing needs to be developed on a national needs basis"	In the absence of effective leadership and control over a centralised marketing function, this may contribute to discord and dissension in large, more complex organisations, reducing effectiveness and efficiency as individual operating units (Newberry and Jackson 2010: 2-5).	The marketing strategy plan should be developed on a national basis incorporating all satellite offices. These strategies should be controlled and measured.
	"Marketing tends to be centralised from my understanding in JHB but CPT tries to make its own marketing on the side."		
	"No Clear communicated strategy with no apparent measurable goals."	The cumulative result of marketing reports over an annual period constitutes vital information for the structuring of future control measures (Clow and Stevens 2009: 34-35)	
	"Although there is good intention with all marketing strategy and campaigns, the red tape gets in the way and inevitably all the best laid plans get cancelled or changed because of cost. Our decision makers need to be made aware of the value of marketing and give their support to this important department."	Should there be indecisiveness on marketing matters there is likely to be a competitor around who will take advantage of this fact (Forsyth, 2003: 10).	Marketing decisions should be made with as little delay as possible. There should be a protocol in place for a streamlined decision-making process.
	"A more international view or materials to be distributed would be useful at 'SPSO' in order to maintain our	Clow and Stevens (2009) believe that professional service organisations, in today's turbulent environment, must know how to read their clients'	There should be further marketing input on an international scale. International marketing trends and strategies to be followed

	positioning as 'bigs' in our markets where we do not have the resources to produce so many materials, news, ideas, etc. Knowledge sharing within the network is essential in my opinion to share best practice and optimize time and resources dedicated in each project that is developed individually by each firms..."	needs. They must also be able to attract relevant resources, and utilise these resources to develop programs, services, and strategies that will acquire and maintain clients.	closely to ensure uniformity within the organisation.
	"We need more professional people who know marketing, and less who try to do everything without the understanding of the bigger picture."	Yelkur (2000: 111-113) identifies that to foster customer-oriented personnel, the organization needs to recruit and select the right people, offering an appropriate package of employment and growth opportunities to enhance their skills and encourage them.	Further emphasis should be made to employ the correct calibre of marketing personnel with appropriate experience and qualifications.
	"I think it need to be clear to all employees - where we are heading.....not just be discussed behind closed doors"	Kotler, Hayes, and Bloom (2002: 26-33) believe organisations need to endeavour to ensure that management and employees are in agreement when it comes to planning communication strategies.	Marketing strategies and decisions should be communicated to staff effectively.