

## Getting one's own way: An investigation of influence attempts by marketers on nonmarketing members of the firm

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### Abstract

This study examines the relationship between a marketer's use of various attempts to influence a nonmarketing coworker and the coworker's perception of marketing as a credible source of high-quality communications. Research on this topic is important because both the distribution of market intelligence to other firm members and the organization's response to that intelligence depend on marketing's interactions with members of other organizational functions. Results provide general support for the effect of organizational environment and interfunctional dynamics antecedents on marketing's use of various influence strategies and on the outcomes of using those strategies. Implications and future research opportunities are discussed.

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### 1. Introduction

The authors of an early article investigating the different strategies one may use to influence others in the workplace stated, "everyone is influencing everyone else in organizations" (Kipnis et al., 1980, p.451). In one approach, a marketer might contact a co-worker and state in a rather stern manner, "I need your competitive analysis data today by 2:00 or my reports won't get done before the weekend." Alternatively, the marketer might come to a work area and engage a co-worker in a conversation about his/her family and nonchalantly mention that competitor information is needed by 2:00 pm or the marketer will have to work this weekend and miss his/her kids' soccer games. In yet another approach, the marketer may have a member of upper management contact the co-worker

to remind him/her that others are waiting on the competitor information.

Each of these approaches represents an influence attempt — specifically, assertiveness, ingratiation, and upper management appeal strategies, all designed to get one's own way. Other influence strategies used between co-workers include coalition building, bargaining, and reasoning (Kipnis et al., 1980). Influence strategies are defined as the way in which people at work sway their colleagues and superiors to obtain personal benefits or to satisfy organizational goals (Kipnis et al., 1980). The six influence strategies illustrated above are defined as follows (Kipnis et al., 1984):

1. Assertiveness — the use of a direct and forceful approach with another person.
2. Upper management appeal — the gaining of support from those in higher levels of the organizational hierarchy to back up requests.
3. Reason — the use of facts and data to support the development of a logical argument.
4. Coalition building — the mobilization of other people in the organization.

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5. Ingratiation — the use of impression management and flattery, and the creation of goodwill.
6. Bargaining — the use of negotiation through the exchange of benefits or favors.

Expanding knowledge concerning interactions between marketing and those from other organizational functions is warranted because of a growing awareness that much customer value gets created at the margins of functional boundaries within the company. Such value results from organizational members interacting to exchange ideas, information, resources, and assistance in an effort to ensure that marketing strategies are effectively implemented (Day, 1994; Ruckert and Walker, 1987). Understanding the use of influence strategies by marketers when they communicate with members of other organizational functions is central to getting at how value may be created at the margins of functional organizational boundaries, and provides insights into the challenges of creating a market orientation throughout the firm.

The remainder of the article is arranged as follows. First, we develop a proposed model of antecedents and consequences of influence strategy use in marketing. Second, hypotheses illustrated within the model are developed. Third, our methodology for testing the model is provided. Finally, the article concludes with study implications and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Influence strategy use

Although some research exists investigating the use of influence strategies in a marketing context, this prior work has focused on a *specific decision* rather than on the broader perception of how influence strategies used by a marketer impact

others’ opinions of marketing as a credible source of high-quality communications. Furthermore, extant research on influence strategy use investigates the issues from the viewpoint of those initiating the strategy (the influencer) and not those on the receiving end of the influence attempt. For example, Farrell and Schroder (1996) investigated the effects of various influence strategies on the selection of an advertising agency for the firm. These authors found that the strategies of rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, and consultation are significant predictors of manifest influence. Likewise, Venkatesh et al. (1995) studied the use of influence strategies in organizational buying decisions, finding that recommendations and information exchange are used most often, followed by direct requests. Furthermore, the recommendation strategy was found to be more successful at influencing others in the buying center. Maute and Locander (1994) examined the use of influence strategies on new product development decisions and found that the strategies of ingratiation, bargaining, assertiveness, and coalition building were used most frequently for gaining collaboration on new product decisions.

Fisher et al. (1997) examined the potential for coercive strategies to predict relationship effectiveness between marketing and other members of the organization. The results indicated that the use of coercion is not a significant predictor of relationship effectiveness. In addition, Strutton and Pelton (1998) investigated the effect of ingratiation influence tactics on lateral relationship quality within sales teams and found that successful ingratiation behaviors lead to stronger lateral relationships and reciprocal actions that reinforce those relationships.

In this article, we propose to extend the literature via a model of the antecedents and consequences of influence strategy use within organizations (see Fig. 1). Developing and

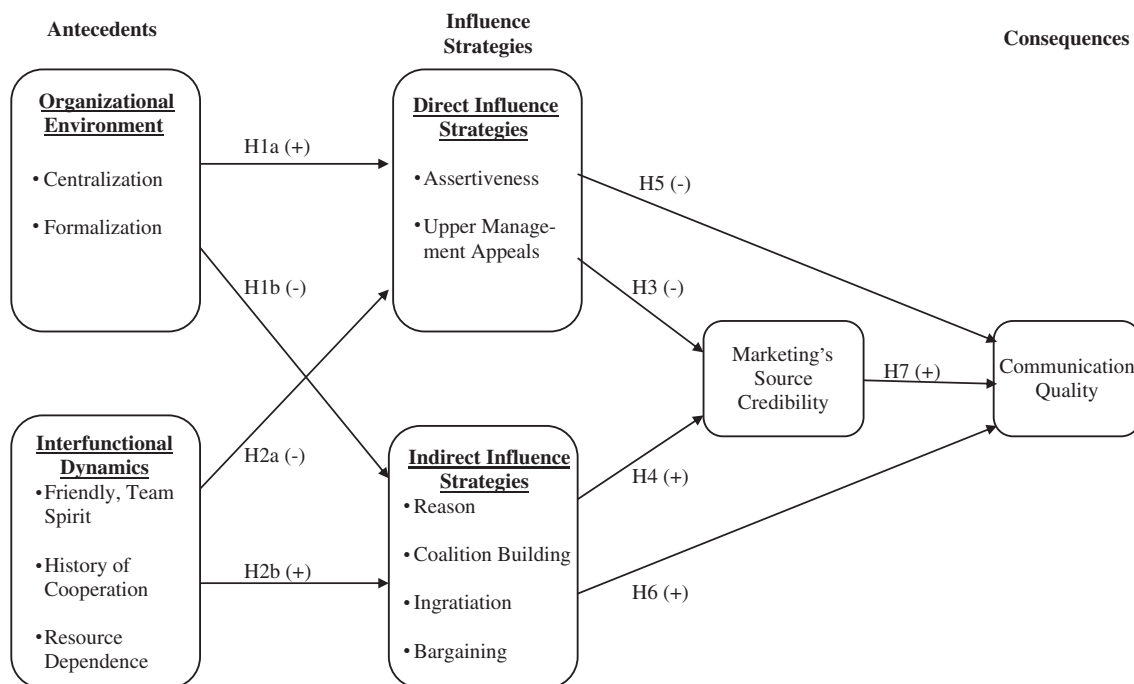


Fig. 1. A model of antecedents and consequences of influence strategy use within organizations.

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