

**The effects of influence tactics,
manifest influence and interpersonal
trust on working relationships
between marketing managers and
sales managers**

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Abstract

Effective cross-functional working relationships between marketing managers and sales managers are critical to firms in almost every industry sector. Many factors are known to affect these relationships, and here we examine the role of various influence tactics, interpersonal trust, and the manifest influence of the sales manager on the perceived effectiveness of the marketing/sales relationship. We provide evidence on the nature of this relationship, and quantify the effects of the influence tactics, interpersonal trust, and manifest influence. To test our model, we used a sample of 100 marketing managers from Australian firms. Our findings reveal relatively high levels of trust and effectiveness, and that interpersonal trust is a strong predictor of effectiveness between marketing managers and sales managers. In addition, the influence tactics varied in their efficacy, with only rational persuasion and collaboration found to be associated with greater interpersonal trust. Further, only rational persuasion and consultation were found to increase a sales manager's manifest influence, while the use of ingratiation decreased manifest influence. Last, our results suggest that manifest influence does not directly increase the effectiveness of marketing/sales relationships.

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Introduction

Since Ruekert and Walker's (1987) landmark study, marketing's cross-functional relationships (CFRs) have become an important focus of academic research (eg. Dawes & Massey, 2005; Fisher *et al.*, 1997). CFRs are theoretically and managerially important because today's flatter organisations require personnel to secure cooperation from individuals in other departments over whom they have no hierarchical control (Williams, 2001). Similarly, Webster (1997) suggests that an ability to manage CFRs will be an important skill for marketing managers in the future.

Many factors determine whether a CFR will be effective, and a number of streams of literature examine individual level factors such as the managerial use of 'influence tactics' to secure the compliance, support or cooperation of other managers within the firm (eg. Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Knowledge regarding the effectiveness of various influence tactics is of interest to managers attempting to secure desired outcomes. Another significant body of literature examines the role of interpersonal trust in various types of relationship. Trust is important in CFRs because it facilitates informal cooperation and coordinated social interaction, and reduces the need to monitor others' behaviour, formalise procedures, or create specific contracts (Williams, 2001).

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to examine the role of five different influence tactics within CFRs, in particular their role in fostering interpersonal trust, and their effectiveness in increasing a sales manager's manifest influence within the firm. We also examine the impact of interpersonal trust, and the sales manager's manifest influence on the effectiveness of marketing/sales CFRs.

Our study makes three important contributions. Specifically, it is the first to examine the effects of five influence tactics: *rational persuasion*, *inspirational appeals*, *consultation*, *ingratiation*, and *collaboration* on interpersonal trust within the marketing/sales CFR. Second, we quantify the ability of these tactics to increase a manager's influence over a peer manager. Third, and in contrast to other significant studies of interpersonal trust (eg. Morgan & Hunt, 1994), we conceptualise this construct as a bi-dimensional variable, with cognitive and affective components.

Dependent variable: perceived relationship effectiveness

Our dependent variable is the *perceived effectiveness of the working relationship* and relates to how worthwhile, equitable, productive, and satisfying the Marketing Manager (MM) perceived his/her working relationship to be with the Sales Manager (SM) during a specific cross-functional project (*cf.* Van de Ven, 1976). Perceived relationship effectiveness is used as a proxy for objective measures of effectiveness because the literature has identified strong links between effective CFRs, cross-functional integration, and performance in key areas such as NPD (eg. Souder, 1988).

Mediating variables

Manifest influence of the sales manager

This construct refers to the actual effect that the SM had in changing the opinions and behaviours of other members of a decision-making unit (Dawes *et al.*, 1998). We include this variable because Ruekert and Walker (1987) argued that informal influence is likely to be important in coordinating the flows of resources, work, and assistance between personnel in different departments. In addition, resource dependence theory suggests that organizations are coalitions of varying interests with incompatible preferences and goals. Those whose interests will prevail are those with the power and influence to secure and control required resources. Organisations are therefore markets in which

influence and control are transacted (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), and as Yukl (2002) has argued, the effectiveness of managers depends in part on their influence over peers.

Interpersonal trust

The importance of trust is reflected in the diverse range of academic literature examining this construct, including economics, psychology, management, and marketing. Various studies have found that trust between interdependent actors is a determining factor in achieving coordinated action, and effectiveness (eg. Seabright *et al.*, 1992). In the relationship marketing literature, Morgan and Hunt (1994) found that trust was a key variable mediating exchange with relationship partners. Trust is also important in CFRs, given the need for managers to act as boundary spanners and develop effective horizontal ties within the organisation (McAllister, 1995).

Interpersonal trust has been conceptualized in various ways in the literature. A common perspective which we adopt here, suggests that trust has two dimensions, one cognitive, and the other affective (McAllister, 1995). *Cognition-based trust* derives from a person's rational bases for trusting another person, eg., previous occasions in which the other person has been competent, reliable, and dependable. In contrast, *affect-based trust* is typified by emotional bonds between individuals, in which one party exhibits genuine concern and care for the welfare of the other person.

Exogenous variables

Influence tactics used by the marketing manager

As noted, a manager's effectiveness is determined in part by their level of informal influence within the organisation, which raises the issue: how do managers attempt to increase their influence to secure desired outcomes? One key mechanism is the use of various *influence tactics* by 'agents' (ie. a peer manager) on 'target' managers. Communication strategies to influence other people can differ widely, eg., they can involve promises of rewards for compliance, threats of punishment for non-compliance, appeals to the target's feelings, morality, or altruism, or debts owed to the person making the request.

The efficacy of different tactics varies (Venkatesh *et al.*, 1995), and the tactics examined here were chosen because they are those most frequently used in 'horizontal' relationships (Yukl & Falbe, 1990). In most organisations, MMs and SMs are middle-managers at approximately the same level in the organisation's hierarchy, and hence tactics used in horizontal relations are the most appropriate ones to examine.

The tactics examined here are defined as follows: *rational persuasion* uses explanations, logical arguments, and factual evidence to demonstrate that a request is feasible and relevant to achieving task objectives. *Inspirational appeals* rely on emotional or value-based appeals to stimulate the target's emotions and appeal to their needs (eg. to feel useful), values (eg. loyalty), hopes (eg. self-fulfilment), and ideals (eg. excellence). *Consultation* involves inviting the target to participate in planning how to carry out a request, or implement a change. This may involve presenting a proposed policy or plan to someone involved in implementing it, seeking their feedback, and modifying the proposal on the basis of that feedback. *Ingratiation* involves the agent giving compliments, doing unsolicited favours, being deferential, respectful and friendly in order to make the target feel better about the agent. *Collaboration* is where the agent offers to provide the necessary resources or assistance for the target to carry out the request, and involves joint effort to accomplish tasks or achieve objectives (Yukl *et al.*, 1993; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

Model development

As depicted in Figure 1, we model *interpersonal trust* (both cognition-based trust, and affect-based trust) and *manifest influence* as mediating variables. In other words, we argue that the effect of the five *influence tactics* used by a SM will directly impact on interpersonal trust and his/her level of manifest influence. However, in this exploratory study, we posit that none of influence tactics will

have a direct effect on the dependent variable - *perceived relationship effectiveness*. The rationale for the structure of our model is that relationships form, and are enacted by means of various coordination and interaction processes, such as the use of different influence tactics. In addition, a relationship's atmosphere, as reflected in the trust between two managers, can affect the performance of the relationship.

Figure 1. Hypothesised model

Hypothesis development

Effects of the sales managers' influence tactics on manifest influence

Kelman's (1958) theory of influence processes suggests that non-coercive, socially acceptable tactics such as rational persuasion, consultation, and inspirational appeals are likely to cause internalisation of favourable attitudes about the request. They are also likely to be more successful in securing compliance and/or commitment than tactics involving coercion, eg., pressure, threats, and legitimating tactics, because the latter tactics are less socially acceptable. More recently, Yukl (2002) categorised the five tactics examined here in terms of their expected effectiveness, and argues all are likely to be moderate to high in their ability to increase the manifest influence of the agent. As such, it is hypothesised:

H_{1a-e}: As a SM increases his/her use of (a) rational persuasion, (b) inspirational appeals, (c) consultation, (d) ingratiation, and (e) collaboration, his/her manifest influence will increase.

Effects of the sales managers' influence tactics on interpersonal trust

Little direct theory or evidence exists to make predictions about the effects of these influence tactics on the two interpersonal trust dimensions. Nevertheless, because the tactics are socially acceptable, soft, and non-coercive (Yukl & Tracey, 1992), they are likely to be positively associated with interpersonal trust. Hunt and Nevin (1974) found that the use of non-coercive power can lead to a willing yielding of power, and increased satisfaction. This again implies a potential positive relationship between these influence tactics and trust.

Three of the tactics seem capable, *a priori*, of increasing trust between SMs and MMs - *rational persuasion*, *consultation*, and *collaboration*. Our reasoning for this is that these tactics involve presenting logical arguments in support of a change, or the agent actively engaging the target in discussion, consultation and debate regarding proposed changes. Such tactics are not manipulative, and do not involve guile. A manager using these tactics is therefore likely to be perceived as honest

and trustworthy, hence these tactics may help build cognitive trust. This work-related reliability and competence can then lead to emotional bonds such as those found in affect-based trust. We therefore hypothesise:

H_{2a}: As a SM increases his/her use of rational persuasion, (1) the level of cognition-based trust and (2) affect-based trust in him/her will increase.

H_{2b}: As a SM increases his/her use of consultation, (1) the level of cognition-based trust and (2) affect-based trust in him/her will increase.

H_{2c}: As a SM increases his/her use of collaboration, (1) the level of cognition-based trust and (2) affect-based trust in him/her will increase.

Tactics such as *inspirational appeals* however, are emotional and values-based, and may not provide opportunities for a manager's work-related reliability to be assessed, and lead to cognition-based trust, nor the more 'special' form of trust (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982), ie., affect-based trust. Similarly, an agent's use of *ingratiation* is unlikely to lead to either form of trust, as this tactic is likely to be perceived by a target manager as manipulative (Yukl, 2002; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Given the uncertainty regarding the effects of these two tactics, we treat these as exploratory empirical questions. However, we expect the effects of these tactics to be positive, because they are positive in orientation, socially acceptable, and do not involve confrontation, coercion, or threats.

H_{2d}: As a SM increases his/her use of inspirational appeals, (1) the level of cognition-based trust and (2) affect-based trust in him/her will increase.

H_{2e}: As a SM increases his/her use of ingratiation, (1) the level of cognition-based trust and (2) affect-based trust in him/her will increase.

Effects of the sales managers' manifest influence on perceived relationship effectiveness

Though there may well be some conflicts of interest between sales and marketing, we argue that, on balance, in teams where the SM is more effective in being able to change the opinions and behaviors of other members of the team, the MM will perceive their dyadic relationship to be more effective. SMs are likely to obtain a greater part of the available resources because of their increased manifest influence, resources which they may share with the MM because of their need to build coalitions in cross-functional teams (Conrad, 1990). Also, Ruekert and Walker (1987) argued that the amount of resource flows between marketing people and those in other functional areas is positively related to the degree of domain similarity between them. It therefore seems reasonable to expect that where a SM has high manifest influence, and a greater share of the resources, the MM is more likely to think that his/her relationship with the SM is effective.

H₃: As the SM's manifest influence increases, the perceived effectiveness of the SM/MM relationship will increase.

Effect of cognition-based trust on affect-based trust

Our hypothesized model specifies a link from cognition-based trust to affect-based trust on both theoretical and empirical grounds, as affect in close relationships needs to be founded upon an existing cognitive base (Rempel et al., 1985). As McAllister (1995) notes, a manager must first observe that their peers meet a baseline level of competence before they will invest more heavily in a relationship to the point that affect-based trust develops. We therefore hypothesise:

H₄: As the MM's cognition-based trust in the SM increases, the level of affect-based trust in the SM will increase.

Effects of cognition-based trust and affect-based trust on perceived relationship effectiveness

The effects of cognition- and affect-based trust on CFRs are not well understood. McAllister (1995 p.32) for example noted that "existing research contains little on how trust affects performance outcomes," however, he argues that trusting peers are likely to assess each other's performance more

favourably. Where someone is not able to depend on a peer manager (low cognition-based trust), they are likely to monitor that manager more closely to avoid potential adverse consequences on their own work (Pennings & Woiceshyn, 1987). Further, where cognition-based trust is low, managers will tend to 'buffer' themselves against the influence of unreliable peer managers through various forms of defensive behaviour, eg., requesting assistance well ahead of time, and drawing on multiple, redundant sources of assistance (Ashforth & Lee, 1990). Therefore, where a MM has low cognition-based trust in the SM, they will perceive their CFR to be less effective. We therefore hypothesise:

H₅: As the MM's cognition-based trust in the SM increases, the perceived effectiveness of their working relationship will increase.

Similarly, we expect affect-based trust to be positively associated with perceived relationship effectiveness. Support for this comes from McAllister (1995) who argued that relationships in which there is affect-based trust, resemble 'communal relationships' (Clark *et al.*, 1989), within which individuals have a greater propensity to track associates' needs. Where affect-based trust is present, MMs are more likely to engage in 'need based monitoring' (ie. a sensitivity to the personal and work-related needs of peer managers), and greater interpersonal citizenship behaviour (eg. behaviour with a strong affiliative content) such as providing increased levels of assistance. Managers would be unlikely to engage in such behaviour if they perceived their CFRs with a peer manager to be ineffective. On this basis, we hypothesise:

H₆: As the MM's affect-based trust in the SM increases, the perceived effectiveness of their working relationship will increase.

Method

The responding MMs were asked to focus on a specific, major cross-functional project in which they and the SM, and staff from at least two other departments, were heavily involved during the previous 18 months. Most projects (55.7%) related to new product development, while the remaining 44.3% covered: promotion and public relations (19.6%), business development activities (10.3%), and internal review of strategy and structure (5.1%). On average, 4.06 functional units were involved in the projects, with 13.81 people involved, and a budget of \$1.031 million.

Data was collected from firms in Australia using a pretested, self-administered, mailed questionnaire. The sampling frame was generated from a proprietary mailing list of firms with separate MMs and SMs. After a second-wave mailout, 113 questionnaires were returned but 13 were deemed unusable, yielding a net response rate of 25.2%. The final sample was diverse: goods-producers accounting for 45% of the organisations; service-providers 12%, and 44% sold both goods and services. In terms of market type, 42% were in business markets, 27% in consumer markets while 31% sold to both types of market.

Tests of nonresponse bias indicated no differences between early and late respondents, and the MM had worked with the SM for an average of 3.5 years, suggesting they were knowledgeable about the issues covered in this research.

Measurement

Nine reflective multi-item measures were used, and principal components analysis revealed that all multi-item constructs were unidimensional. As our sample was relatively small (n=100) we did not conduct confirmatory factor analysis because of the likelihood of nonconvergence and improper solutions (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). Instead we used partial least squares (PLS) to estimate our measurement and structural models.

Convergent validity was established in two ways. First, the t-statistics for each item in the PLS were all statistically significant (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Second, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeded .50. Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion was used, and

discriminant validity was established between all constructs. Reliability analysis revealed that the composite reliability for all scales was .89 or more.

Results

The descriptive statistics reveal that, on average, our responding MMs enjoy a good relationship with their counterpart SMs. Specifically, the level of cognitive trust is high, mean = 5.35 (sd = 1.37), out of 7, where higher numbers indicate high trust. In addition affect based trust is high, mean = 5.36, s.d. = 1.03, as is perceived relationship effectiveness, mean = 5.11, s.d. = 1.65. Also, the SMs in our study had moderately high levels of manifest influence, mean = 4.69, s.d. = 1.24. Moreover, by examining the mean scores we show that the use of the influence tactics varied: rational persuasion (mean = 3.78, s.d. = 1.56), consultation (mean = 3.54, s.d. = 1.59), collaboration (mean = 3.40, s.d. = 1.51) ingratiation (mean = 2.85, s.d. = 1.62), and inspirational appeals (mean = 2.84, s.d. = 1.74). The scale used was anchored by '0' never and '6' very frequently.

Model testing

Table 1. PLS structural model results

Linkages in the model	Hypothesis number	Hypothesis sign	Std. Beta (t-statistic)
Influence tactics → manifest influence			
Rational persuasion → Manifest influence	H _{1a}	+	.229 (1.979)*
Inspirational appeals → Manifest influence	H _{1b}	+	-.093 (1.024)
Consultation → Manifest influence	H _{1c}	+	.361 (2.654)**
Ingratiation → Manifest influence	H _{1d}	+	-.135 (1.618) †
Collaboration → Manifest influence	H _{1e}	+	.061 (0.525)
Influence tactics → Interpersonal trust			
Rational persuasion → Cognition-based trust	H _{2a1}	+	.506 (3.824)***
Rational persuasion → Affect-based trust	H _{2a2}	+	.248 (2.139)*
Consultation → Cognition-based trust	H _{2b1}	+	-.016 (0.114)
Consultation → Affect-based trust	H _{2b2}	+	-.121 (1.257)
Collaboration → Cognition-based trust	H _{2c1}	+	.195 (1.562)†
Collaboration → Affect-based trust	H _{2c2}	+	.207 (2.326)**
Inspirational appeals → Cognition-based trust	H _{2d1}	+	.093 (0.981)
Inspirational appeals → Affect-based trust	H _{2d2}	+	.018 (0.253)
Ingratiation → Cognition-based trust	H _{2e1}	+	.044 (0.353)
Ingratiation → Affect-based trust	H _{2e2}	+	.080 (0.965)
Manifest influence → Perceived relationship effect	H ₃	+	.053 (0.784)
Cognitive trust → Affect-based trust	H ₄	+	.521 (5.353)***
Cognitive trust → Perceived relationship effect	H ₅	+	.296 (2.456)***
Affective trust → Perceived relationship effect	H ₆	+	.541 (5.079)***
R² Statistics			
Perceived relationship effectiveness	= .657		
Affect-based trust	= .674		
Cognition-based trust	= .415		
Manifest influence	= .283		

*** Significant at ≤ 0.001 level (one-tailed test) ** Significant at ≤ 0.01 level (one-tailed test) * Significant at ≤ 0.05 level (one-tailed test) † Significant at ≤ 0.10 level (one-tailed test)

PLS was used to estimate our structural model because our final sample size is relatively small (n = 100), we make no assumptions about multivariate normality, and our primary concern is prediction of our endogenous variables (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Prior to model estimation, each multi-item construct was transformed into totaled scores using equally-weighted scales to represent the constructs in the simultaneous equation model (Li & Calantone, 1998).

In order to establish the stability and significance of our parameter estimates, we computed the t-statistics using 100 bootstrap samples. As shown in Table 1, ten of the nineteen hypotheses were supported. The R² for perceived relationship effectiveness is .657, suggesting that our model explains 65.7% of the variance in this endogenous variable. Similarly, the R² for cognition-based trust = .415, affect-based trust = .674, and manifest influence = .283.

Results and discussion

Overall, the model had high explanatory power in predicting perceived relationship effectiveness, and both forms of interpersonal trust, but was only moderately successful in explaining manifest influence. Our analysis revealed that only two of the influence tactics had significant positive effects on interpersonal trust. Specifically, rational persuasion had strong effects on cognition-based trust ($\beta = .506$; $p \leq .001$), and affect based trust ($\beta = .248$; $p \leq .05$). Also, collaboration influenced cognition-based trust ($\beta = .195$; $p \leq .10$, though the t-statistic only approached statistical significance), and affect based trust ($\beta = .207$; $p \leq .01$). These results are consistent with the argument that managers of equal seniority are more likely to trust each other if the influence attempt involves rational argument to support a request, or genuine collaborative efforts, e.g., offering to assist, or providing resources to support the request. In contrast, inspirational appeals and ingratiation are not associated with logical argument or provision of tangible support, and accordingly, there is little evidence on which the target manager can deem the agent manager to be competent (ie. leading to the emergence of cognition-based trust), nor sufficient social data to conclude that the agent manager has genuine care and concern for the target manager (ie. leading to the emergence of affect-based trust).

The influence tactics also had mixed effects on the manifest influence of the SM. Consultation had the strongest effect ($\beta = .361$; $p \leq .01$), followed by rational persuasion ($\beta = .229$; $p \leq .05$). These results suggest that the managers in our sample are more convinced by peers who consult with them, and use rational persuasive arguments, rather than emotive tactics when seeking cooperation or compliance. Interestingly, one of the influence tactics, ingratiation, appeared to lower rather than increase the manifest influence of the SM ($\beta = -.135$; $p \leq .10$, NB: the t-statistic fell only .027 short of significance at $<.05$).

Next we turn to the effects of interpersonal trust where both cognition- and affect-based trust had a strong positive association with perceived relationship effectiveness, cognition-based trust ($\beta = .296$; $p \leq .001$), and affect-based trust ($\beta = .541$; $p \leq .001$). These results demonstrate the potency of interpersonal trust in CFRs. Last, our results reveal that manifest influence does not directly increase the effectiveness of CFRs, suggesting that its effects within the CFR are indirect.

Limitations and directions for future research

A limitation of this study is that relationship development occurs over time, and influence tactics tend not to be used as stand alone influence attempts, but as a sequence of influence attempts. Here we used a cross-sectional research design, although future research could use a longitudinal design to better capture the dynamics of these influence attempts. Another limitation of our study which could be addressed in future research is that many forms of interaction are likely to help build trust and manifest influence, other than the ones examined here.

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